



Nebraska Supreme Court's Office of Dispute Resolution Victim Youth Conferencing 2018-2020 Statewide Enhancement Initiative

For Youth Involved in County and School Diversion Programs, Juvenile Courts, and Juvenile Probation: 2018 Fact Sheet

What is Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC)? Victim youth conferencing is one of several restorative justice dialogue models providing young people and those that they have harmed to attempt to repair the harm resulting from an offence through safe, constructive dialogue. Common offences referred include: burglary, vandalism, assault, criminal mischief, etc. Trained facilitators first meet one-on-one with the victim and the youth to listen to the stories of each to determine whether a joint VYC conference is appropriate and whether each individual voluntarily wishes to participate. If so, the VYC facilitator convenes a joint conference in which the victim and youth are guided to talk about the offence and its impacts, offer apologies, and propose a reparation plan. If agreed to, the plan is signed, and is tracked for completion and fulfillment.

Nebraska's Pilot Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC) Shows High Success

Pilot: 70 youth receiving VYC services through ODR-approved mediation centers

- 93% completed VYCs resulted in a reparations agreement - youth to make amends.
- 85% reparations agreements successfully fulfilled by youth, with 5% in progress.
- 81% youth and 89% victims felt the justice system was more responsive to their needs.
- 100% of victims and 97% of youth and their parents would recommend VYC to others.

Pilot is now being expanded statewide in 2018-2020.

How Does Victim Youth (Offender) Conferencing (VYC) Work in Nebraska? The Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR) coordinates a network of 6 nonprofit, community-based mediation centers[±] that covers every county in Nebraska. **Agencies may refer a case by contacting the center serving youth residing in their area. See map on reverse side.**

Various referral partnerships have been established for the centers to receive **VYC case referrals** from:

1. Schools (pre-arrest / pre-charge/SRO diversion)
2. Law Enforcement (diversion)
3. County Attorneys (diversion)
4. Courts (pre-adjudication)
5. Probation (condition of court sentence)

Nebraska's statutory authorization for juvenile mediation and conferencing includes: N.R.S. §43-274 providing that the county or city attorney may offer victim offender mediation as part of pretrial diversion; §43-245 which requires specific juvenile mediation training for mediators affiliated with ODR-approved mediation centers; §43-247.01 providing for confidentiality and privileged communications of youth conferencing; and §43-247.04 which provides that the State Court Administrator's office is responsible for contracting for juvenile victim offender dialogue and related services.

