



## Rental Housing Mediation Program – Mediator & Legal Advisor Application

### 1. Introduction

Isla Vista is a vibrant, close-knit oceanside community in Santa Barbara County, home to a diverse population including a significant student demographic from the nearby University of California, Santa Barbara. With its unique mix of temporary and long-term residents, Isla Vista experiences frequent rental disputes related to high tenant turnover, housing affordability, and interpersonal conflicts within shared living spaces. These challenges underscore the importance of the Rental Housing Mediation Program, which provides critical support to both tenants and landlords.

The Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD) was established in 2017 (pursuant to Government Code § 61250), following decades of local efforts toward self-governance. As an unincorporated community, IVCSD is the first local government body dedicated to addressing the unique needs of its residents. Since its inception, IVCSD has implemented a wide range of initiatives, including enhancing public safety through community safety stations, spearheading neighborhood beautification projects, and offering essential services such as composting. These programs reflect IVCSD's ongoing commitment to community development and improving residents' quality of life.

In 2023, the Rental Mediation Program successfully handled 38 mediation requests, addressing issues ranging from tenant-tenant disputes to more complex matters involving habitability, rent payments, and security deposits. In addition to these formal mediations, the program received numerous inquiries via phone and email, demonstrating its broader reach in providing guidance to Isla Vista residents. The District is committed to expanding its efforts to reach a wider community audience, including developing a robust outreach plan in collaboration with District staff.

To meet community needs, IVCSD is seeking proposals from qualified professionals to fill two positions, either provide mediation services or legal advice for our Rental Housing Mediation Program. The selected Mediator will help resolve landlord-tenant disputes, enhance community stability, and reduce conflicts related to housing. The selected Law Advisor will focus on legal guidance and education on housing laws, tenant rights, eviction processes, and landlord responsibilities. For more detailed information on the scope of services and the impact of our Rental Housing Mediation Program, please visit [Free Rental Housing Mediation](#).



## 2. Scope of Services

The mediator will:

- **Provide comprehensive conflict resolution services** between landlords, tenants, and neighbors, facilitating structured, impartial discussions to achieve mutually agreeable resolutions.
- **Conduct in-person and virtual mediations** to ensure accessibility and flexibility for all parties involved, especially in a community with high turnover and a large student population.
- **Educate all parties** about their rights and responsibilities under local, state, and federal housing laws, providing guidance on best practices for maintaining harmonious relationships.
- **Assist in drafting mediation agreements** and household compacts that outline clear, actionable steps to resolve conflicts and prevent future disputes.
- **Maintain detailed records of cases, outcomes, and feedback**, ensuring transparent reporting and continuous improvement in service delivery.
- **Submit quarterly reports** detailing mediation services provided, types of disputes resolved, and community outreach activities conducted.
- **Review and update mediation request forms** and the data tracking system to enhance program efficiency and ease of access for community members.
- **Work with District staff and Law Advisor to develop and deliver community workshops and educational sessions**, covering topics such as tenant rights, fair housing practices, and effective conflict resolution strategies
- **Analyze feedback and outcomes to improve the program**, continuously adapting mediation strategies to the unique needs of Isla Vista residents.
- **Create and maintain a strong community presence**, collaborating with the IVCS to reach a broader audience.

The Legal advisor will:

- **Provide expert legal guidance** on housing laws, tenant rights, eviction procedures, and landlord responsibilities, ensuring that all parties understand their legal standing in mediation and beyond.



- **Research and interpret current and emerging housing laws**, including local, state, and federal regulations, to ensure compliance and provide up-to-date advice.
- **Review legal documents such as rental agreements and eviction notices**, offering detailed assessments of their legality and compliance with housing regulations.
- **Work with District Staff to develop and host educational workshops and webinars**, focusing on critical topics like tenant protections, eviction moratoriums, and housing law updates (e.g., AB 1482).
- **Prepare educational materials** on new housing law developments, ensuring that the community is well-informed on critical legislative changes.
- **Collaborate with other legal advisors** to offer free consultations as needed, expanding access to legal expertise for Isla Vista's most vulnerable residents.
- **Support program outreach efforts**, ensuring legal information is communicated clearly to the broader Isla Vista community through public events, online platforms, and written materials.

### 3. Program Mission & Goals

Mission: To create a culture of mutual respect and understanding between all members of our community while ensuring housing security for all. To fulfill this promise, both tenants and landlords have the opportunity to resolve housing disputes/issues, safely, fairly, and economically. Our District's Mediator will meet and discuss the best way to find an equitable solution.

- Resolve housing disputes amicably and efficiently to prevent conflict escalation and promote long-term community harmony.
- Enhance relationships between tenants, landlords, and neighbors, fostering a more cohesive and supportive community.
- Promote fair housing practices through education, outreach, and mediation, ensuring that all parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Contribute to community well-being by reducing housing-related stressors and ensuring stable living conditions for Isla Vista residents.

### 4. Qualifications

Mediator:



- Expertise in conducting impartial mediation and conflict resolution, specifically in rental housing matters.
- Proven track record of successful mediation outcomes, using effective conflict resolution techniques, with a demonstrated ability to de-escalate tensions.
- Comprehensive understanding of California tenant-landlord law, including local housing regulations and policies specific to Isla Vista and Santa Barbara County.
- Experience working with vulnerable populations, including students, low-income tenants, and immigrant communities, showing a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Cultural competence and sensitivity.
- Bilingual in Spanish.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision, while maintaining close collaboration with IVCSD staff and community partners.
- Experience in community outreach and education is preferred, helping to expand the program's presence and engage with the broader community.

#### Legal Advisor:

- Licensed to practice law in the State of California, with expertise in tenant-landlord law, eviction proceedings, and housing rights.
- An unwavering commitment to equal access to justice.
- In-depth understanding of relevant California housing legislation (e.g., AB 1482) and local ordinances specific to Isla Vista and Santa Barbara County.
- Experience conducting legal workshops and public education on housing rights and laws, with a focus on empowering tenants and landlords through knowledge is preferred.
- Experience reviewing rental agreements, drafting legal documents, and providing clear legal guidance.
- Experience working with vulnerable populations, demonstrating a strong commitment to providing equitable access to legal resources for underserved communities.
- Bilingual in Spanish is preferred but not required, to assist Spanish-speaking tenants and landlords.
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision, while collaborating with community partners and IVCSD staff.
- Knowledge of community engagement strategies, specifically aimed at promoting legal literacy and housing stability in Isla Vista.



#### 5. Wage Range

- \$75-\$100/hr for Mediator
- \$200-\$250/hr for Legal Advisor

#### 6. Submission Requirements

Interested applicants should submit:

- Brief proposed approach to the Isla Vista Rental Mediation Program
- A cover letter and resume
- A minimum of three references
- Fee structure

#### 7. Submission Deadline

Proposals must be submitted by November 18, 2024 to the IVCSA Assistant General Manager at [assistantgm@islavistacsd.com](mailto:assistantgm@islavistacsd.com). For questions, contact Sydney Castaneda at 805-770-2752 ext. 1.

#### 8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and qualifications.
- Understanding of the program goals.
- Cost-effectiveness and proposed fee structure.
- References and prior performance.
- Proposed approach to mediation and/or legal guidance.
- Capacity for collaboration with IVCSA staff and community partners.

The IVCSA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive informalities in the RFP process.