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STUDY OF ODR IN FAMILY CASES WITH POSITIVE RESULTS

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STUDY OF ODR IN FAMILY CASES WITH POSITIVE RESULTS

JULY 4, 2022 | JOHN LANDE | LEAVE A COMMENT

From Donna Shestowsky:

Parties who used online dispute resolution (ODR) for child custody, parenting time or child support matters in Ottawa County, Michigan, were more likely to reach agreement and to rate their experience highly as those who were offered ODR but didn't use it, a new study by UC Davis Professor of Law Donna Shestowsky and Resolution Systems Institute Director of Research Jennifer Shack has found. This study of a program in Ottawa County, Michigan, represents the first neutral evaluation of any family law court ODR system in the United States.

The 20th Circuit Court Friend of the Court (FOC) launched its ODR program in August 2020. It used a platform that allowed participants to communicate with each other and their case-worker through asynchronous text and document exchanges.

The study, conducted from November 2020–August 2021, produced several key findings, including:

- Parties who used the online platform for custody, parenting time or child support matters were four times as likely to reach agreement as those who were offered ODR but didn't use it.
- ODR users were four times as likely to give high ratings for fairness of the process and almost twice as likely to give high ratings for satisfaction.
- In cases involving child support, parties using the online platform reached resolution nearly twice as fast as those who did not.
- The participation rate was high compared with those of other ODR programs, with both parties choosing to use it in 48% of matters in which ODR was offered.

The study can be found on both the [UC Davis](#) and [RSI](#) websites.

Take a look.

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