

Superior Court of California County of Orange

News Release

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Pilot of online small claims resolution service, which can be a great time saver

Santa Ana, CA – Small claims cases submitted to the Superior Court of California, County of Orange, can now be resolved online via the Small Claims <u>Online Dispute Resolution</u> (ODR) system, a new pilot program launched recently.

This pilot program is believed to be one of the first in California and was created by the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, which serves as the Small Claims Advisor to the Court.

Parties to small claims cases can resolve their dispute on their own through ODR, saving travel-time and workday losses. They can also request the assistance of a neutral ODR facilitator to help resolve their dispute. The parties can upload evidence securely online and communicate with each other and the facilitator from the comfort of their homes or businesses. Settlement agreements and dismissals can also be e-filed with the Court through the website.

Either party can initiate the ODR process. To use the ODR system, parties must have an existing Small Claims case filed in the Orange County Superior Court and have regular access to the internet. Negotiations are voluntary and confidential. The parties can resolve the dispute earlier in the process, on their own terms, avoiding the time off necessary to go to court, and avoiding a judgment. The service became available June 30, 2018 at odr.legal-aid.com.

Online Dispute Resolution Facilitators are qualified and experienced mediators from Waymakers, which provides mediation services for Small Claims cases currently heard in the Orange County Superior Court.

The Small Claims ODR system is funded by a grant from the Legal Services Corporation. It is a free-of-charge, convenient way for parties to resolve a Small Claims disputes online.

To get started, or for more information go to <u>odr.legal-aid.com</u> or contact the Orange County Small Claims Advisory Program at (714) 571-5277, or (800) 963-7717.