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American Arbitration Association and Suffolk Law Launch Groundbreaking Online Dispute Resolution Innovation Clinic

Partnership aims to transform access to family law dispute resolution for underserved communities

NEW YORK -- The American Arbitration Association (AAA®) and Suffolk University Law School today announced the launch of a pioneering Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Innovation Clinic. This groundbreaking initiative combines Suffolk Law's expertise in legal technology and clinical education with the AAA's leadership in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) innovation, technology, and artificial intelligence (AI)—including through its newly-acquired ODR business, ODR.com. Suffolk Law and the AAA will create an accessible, digital process for low-contest divorces and family law matters in Massachusetts.

Addressing a Critical Need

The ODR Innovation Clinic targets a pressing issue in the legal system: the growing number of unrepresented litigants in family law cases. These individuals, often from low- and moderate-income backgrounds, struggle to navigate complex court procedures, which often leads to rejected court filings, personal stress, case backlogs, and strain on court resources.

“The ODR Innovation Clinic represents a significant step in making online dispute resolution more accessible and effective,” said Eric Tuchmann, the AAA's Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer. “It will be an important part of our new AAA-ICDR Institute, which will advance ADR through thought leadership, research, and data-driven analysis. This partnership



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highlights the AAA's commitment to developing innovative solutions to streamline arbitration and mediation processes, benefiting the public and overburdened courts."

Innovative Approach to Family Law

The clinic plans to develop and deploy a suite of user-friendly digital tools, including:

- An intuitive ODR platform for divorces and related matters
- Interactive guided interviews and "smart" court forms
- A virtual mediation component
- AI-powered guidance for the public

"Our partnership with the AAA exemplifies Suffolk Law's commitment to innovation in legal education and access to justice," said Andrew Perlman, Dean of Suffolk Law. "This clinic will not only serve our community but also prepare our students to be forward-thinking legal professionals who can harness technology to solve real-world problems."

Community-Driven Design

Central to the clinic's approach is its emphasis on community input. The project will engage court system users, legal services providers, courts, and ADR experts to ensure that the developed tools meet community needs and integrate seamlessly with existing Massachusetts court processes.

"By involving the community from the outset, we're ensuring that our solutions are not just technologically advanced, but also practical and user-friendly for those who need them most," added Dean Perlman.

Looking Ahead

The ODR Innovation Clinic is set to run for three years, with plans to beta test and launch the new platform in Massachusetts. The framework developed has the potential for replication in other jurisdictions and could be adapted for legal issues beyond family law.

This initiative builds on both organizations' strengths:

- The AAA continues to modernize dispute resolution by harnessing AI through initiatives like [ClauseBuilder® AI](#) (Beta)—its automated dispute resolution clause-drafting tool, streamlined case management, real-time case updates through APIs with parties, and embracing technological innovation. [ODR.com](#) is the leading platform for ODR, supporting more than 200 public and private clients around the world. Its



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configurable architecture supports all types of mediation and arbitration caseloads with discussion forums, file sharing, panel management, event tracking, and online intake.

- Suffolk Law is consistently recognized as a national leader in legal technology education, with its award-winning Legal Innovation & Technology Lab (LIT Lab) driving access to justice through tech-enabled solutions.

About the American Arbitration Association

The not-for-profit AAA is the leading provider of alternative dispute resolution services. It has administered more than seven million ADR cases since its founding in 1926. With offices throughout the United States and in Singapore, the AAA provides organizations of all sizes in virtually every industry with ADR services and products. For more information, visit www.adr.org.

About the International Centre for Dispute Resolution

The International Centre for Dispute Resolution is the international division of the AAA and the largest international provider of dispute resolution services. Established in 1996, the ICDR serves parties from over 100 countries with multilingual staff experienced in international dispute resolution proceedings and a roster of over 725 arbitrators and mediators. For more information, visit www.icdr.org.

About ODR.com and Mediate.com (Resourceful Internet Solutions)

[ODR.com](http://www.ODR.com), an AAA company, is the global leader in online dispute resolution. It serves courts, universities, businesses of all sizes, and governmental agencies at all levels. ODR.com offers a proven, secure, and scalable online dispute resolution platform, which is used by more than 200 dispute resolution partner organizations worldwide, including the International Monetary Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and NASA. Since its establishment in 1996, Mediate.com has been the world's foremost mediation website, offering an extensive repository of dispute resolution resources. The site provides online mediation courses through MediateUniversity.com and hosts the most widely utilized directory of global mediators.

About Suffolk University Law School

Suffolk Law, located in Boston, is consistently recognized as one of the most innovative law schools in the nation. The school's practical legal skills programs are all regularly ranked among the nation's best. Students serve the public through 13 in-house and hybrid law clinics, hundreds of externships, and pro bono volunteer projects. For more information, visit www.suffolk.edu/law.