

NAFCM'S 2024 ANNIVERSARY HANDBOOK

Honoring our past, present and future – together!



Advancing and advocating the 1964 Civil Rights Act by aggregating the experience,
processes,
and impacts of the many so we may be the hub as envisioned in 1994.

NAFCM's 30th Anniversary

Civil Rights Act – Part 10's 60th Anniversary

Celebrating Across the United States and Canada



After years of dialogue and discernment, Community Mediation Centers from around the country joined together to establish a national organization in 1994. This organization would serve as a hub through which over 400 centers could communicate, collaborate, and exchange resources. Now, 30 years later, the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) still serves as **this hub**, aggregating the wisdom of the field of community mediation in widely accessible platforms.

Being the Hub is you, me, us...

Together we meet the needs for each of us to continue by aggregating our wisdom, amplifying our voice, advancing our work.

Together we focus on abundance; the possibility of sustainable transformable peace, justice and engagement.

Together we impact all our relationships, recognized and unrecognized, by acknowledging that community mediation is community mobilization.

Together we empower each other to live out our values, collaboration, curiosity, integrity, quality and vision; and our 9 Hallmarks.

Together we are diverse and together we are one in the Hub of the NAFCM family.

Let us honor and let us celebrate this our 30th year of working together with you, by you, and for you and our field's history of 60 years of embedding the Civil Rights Act. This Act that called each of us to lean in, because where there is a disruption, disagreement, or disturbance, we are all in the midst of the impact and the possibilities of a new and a more just moment.



2024: NAFCM, at 30, celebrates 60 years of the Civil Rights Act from which the modern community mediation movement was born

In celebration of NAFCM's 30th anniversary, and 60 years of embedding the Civil Rights Act, NAFCM invites associate and student members, member centers, member institutions, and partner organizations to participate in a year of engaged community action.

For each month of 2024, there is a correlating, unifying theme related to peace, justice and engagement work. There are several suggestions for ways that all our diverse members, in every geographical corner in both the United States and Canada, can actively engage with the month's theme.

Throughout, these ideas and themes connect intentionally with the 9 Hallmarks that guide the work and presence of Community Mediation Centers. NAFCM hopes that each and every one of the association's members can find meaningful ways to participate in these anniversary celebrations all the while serving and strengthening their own communities and work.

NAFCM encourages participating members to share information about all of the creative ways these suggestions are implemented in their community. In turn, these stories will be featured in the bi-weekly newsletter "Highlights from The Hub," on the NAFCM website, and via NAFCM's social media.

Sharing information about these initiatives, the NAFCM network heightens awareness of the important peacebuilding work happening nationwide.

The suggestions outlined on the following pages are just that – suggestions. Each option is intended as a starting point from which the project can be tailored to the specific context of your community as well as adapted to the resources available to you. The 2024 yearlong celebration of NAFCM's 30th and the Civil Rights Act's 60th anniversary is intended to empower and strengthen NAFCM's network, making local communities better through national collaboration and communication.



Increasing Impact

As you prepare, implement, and/or adapt the month-by-month suggestions provided, here are some important considerations to keep in mind:

- 1) Assess** Where does your community need you to go? What needs does this project meet in your community?
Does this project add real value to your community?
Consider: Hold a community listening session to identify how the project can be most effectively adapted to the needs of your community.
- 2) Collaborate** Are there others (individuals or organizations) in your community that would support the integrity and capacity of your project? Which community partners could be invited to the table to make the most impact through this project? How can your volunteers be integrated into this project's implementation?
Consider: Create a project planning committee that includes volunteers and community partners to help plan the project.
- 3) Advance** How does the project advance your center's mission? Has enough time been allocated to planning the project? How can you continue to integrate this theme/project going forward?
Consider: Invite input from your board about ways that this project could serve as a means of implementing the board's priorities for the organization going forward? Specifically, ask about the ways that the partnerships developed through this project's implementation might be meaningful in the future.
- 4) Share** How can you share information about this project locally, nationally, and globally? At which stage(s) of the process are there opportunities to share stories, information, and images about this project? Who is designated to share information about this project?
Consider: Send photos, quotes, news stories, and information about your project to NAFCM! We can share information about your work via our social media accounts, website, email listserv, and online NAFCM community calendar. Use the NAFCM anniversary hashtag, #NAFCM30. (Remember to send out press releases to local news outlets as well.)
- 5) Evaluate** Did the project meet your organization's goals? What are areas for improvement in the future? How can you share the project's success with your community?
Consider: Circulate a survey to participants (including volunteers and community partners) to invite feedback. Make time to celebrate the hard work you put into the project with the planning committee!

January 2024: Creating Peace through Collaboration (H9)



Suggested Action:

Take this month to reach out to other organizations and agencies that work for peace in your community. (These might be, for example, a local Habitat for Humanity, human relations commission, a school system, an African- American Heritage Council.) Discuss the possibility of providing support or volunteers for an event they are organizing to honor the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. Another option is to offer your organization's facilities for a public meeting or holiday event, if needed.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Be present and participatory at community Martin Luther King Jr. Day events.
- Create banner or float, if appropriate, for local parade(s) and other holiday events commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Facilitate a workshop at a local educational institution on inclusive dialogue.
- Host a showing of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and, afterwards, facilitate a post-video discussion.

February 2024: Voting and Positive Systems Change (H8)



Suggested Action:

Take this month to look at the history of your organization. Create space(s) for this story to be told, including recognition of the past or present partners that have provided support and resources to keep the center doors open over the years. This might invite conversations about overcoming inequities and addressing issues of social justice, in keeping with NAFCM Hallmarks 1, 2, and 3.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Host a “Founders Unity Day” event with t-shirts, vendors, and entertainment, drawing on the diverse cultures found in your community. Finding sponsors and connecting with local educational institutions could help make this possible.
- Honor a “Healer and Transformer of the Year.” This is a way to recognize the work of those, like volunteers, who work for unity in the community outside of their job. It could also provide an opportunity to thank a community-minded local business or elected official.
- Establish an annual training scholarship in the name of one of your founders to honor their past work, legacy, and passion for peacebuilding work.
- Contact your local elections office and volunteer! This is a time to make sure access to elections are open, fair and equitable.

March 2024: Aggregating Our Wisdom/ Celebrating All Voices



Suggested Action:

This month, honor a woman peacemaker or a feminist (of any gender) in your community or organization. Highlight the impact this community member makes by sharing their story through print and social media platforms. Invite other community members to join them in their hard and important work in the community. Reach out to local media (and NAFCM) to amplify the message of this individual's work.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Offer a free community workshop about how to develop methods of self-care and/or self-reflection learning. (You could invite behavioral health practitioners and counselors to partner with your organization for this workshop.)
- Partner with a local spa to get a discount for women volunteers at your center.
- Coordinate volunteers to provide childcare at an event in your community honoring International Women's Day.

April 2024: Community Impact on Justice (H7)



Suggested Action:

Take this month to honor your center and community elders. Invite them to share their memories about your center's "origin story". You could center these stories by hosting an open house for elders to talk about how they first became involved in community mediation and peacebuilding. Consider recording this meeting to share community-wide as a future film screening or to keep for your organization's archives.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Conduct interviews with elders, asking questions about pivotal moments in their lives as well as how they overcame challenging experiences.
- Offer a mixer as an opportunity for new community members and volunteers to build stronger relationships with the center and elder mediators.
- Host a "speed dating" networking event with new mediators/volunteers and elders.
- Start a mentoring initiative which matches new folks with experienced, elder mediators. Each new volunteer could be paired with a mentor six months out of their training.

May 2024: We are because I am/ I am because we are



Suggested Action:

This month, hold a fundraising “peace walk” for your local center. Gather community members together to stroll along a scenic walking path or, if appropriate, at the site of a historic conflict in your community. Through walking together, community members have an opportunity to express their visions for peace in the community and embody the expression, “walking the walk.”

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Partner with another organization to hold a “diversity day.” This could include facilitating a meeting of unlikely allies to have a safe conversation on a shared topic of interest. Emphasize an appreciation of differing opinions.
- Hold a “visioning day” for your organization with exercises about imagining and creating a better Community.
- Have a conversation about implicit bias and calling out the “isms.” Emphasize the role that ignorance plays in perpetuating implicit bias.
- Host “house” parties on **May 21 and join NAFCM’s Momentum May on-line Assembly!**

June 2024: Community Anchored



Suggested Action:

This month, honor NAFCM Hallmarks 8 and 9 by facilitating a conversation about an issue of social justice, fairness, and equity. Or, your organization could hold a workshop about how to disagree productively, promoting community civic engagement.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Host a circle conversation to discuss questions such as: “What do principles of community mediation add to our lives?” “How do you balance the pursuit of happiness/ freedom?”
- Host a training for volunteer mediators about power imbalances in the mediation process and ways to ensure that the process is experienced as fair by all parties.
- Reach out to local organizations who are celebrating Juneteenth and learn how they would like you to support the celebration(s).
- Hold affirmative recruitment drives to invite new volunteer mediators that represent the community your organization serves.
- Raise funds to help interested individuals attend a mediator training.
- Use accessible terms such as “people” or “participants” rather than “parties,” which is tied to the legal work.

July 2024: *Removing the real costs to Justice (H4)*



Suggested Action:

Take this month to promote peace-building work on social media. You could involve youth in the community in your social media planning and implementation. When you develop your social media plan, reach out to NAFCM for additional support and promotion. (Don't forget to use the 2024 anniversary hashtag, #NAFCM30.)

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Partner with a local organization that works with youth to start an initiative that could simultaneously teach kids about nonprofit marketing and outreach as well as provide an opportunity for them to use their technological strengths to make the world a better place.
- Collaborate with a local library to select a book on peace for its summer reading program. Incentivize the program with a “future peacemaker” award for youth that read a certain number of thematically relevant books. Feature these award recipients on social media.
- Invite local youth to participate in a photovoice project (or similar art competition using mixed media) on their interpretation on peace and peacebuilding. Feature submitted works of art at a local event and on social media.

August 2024: Advancing the Work: Think Globally, Act Locally



Suggested Action:

All around the world, community mediation centers support restorative conversations to repair harm and plant seeds for forgiveness. This month, explore the work of community mediation centers internationally that are doing this important work in their local communities. Search for ways to build relationships across geographic boundaries.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Research strategies for peacemaking in other areas of the world. Then, bring this new knowledge to your local community and in NAFCM network. You might look into initiatives addressing homelessness, hunger, ethnic violence, violence against women, political turmoil, bullying, or rehabilitating former extremists.
- Partner with international student populations near you. Begin a dialogue about their country of origin and strategies for creating peace. Showcase new questions and possibilities from this conversation in a workshop, on social media, or in a press release.
- Develop a process for training mediators who work across language barriers. Alternatively, reach out to local interpreters (possibly those who work with local refugee communities) to share information about the mediation process or to provide mediation training.
- Launch a sister program with a center across the country. While we may do things differently, we share core values and a vision for a better, more peaceful world.

September 2024: Accessing Peace, Justice, Engagement (H3)



Suggested Action:

In the spirit of International Peace Day, take this month to participate in peace co-creative events in your community. Often, communities host a celebration for Peace Day. Centers could have a table at these events. Alternatively, ask the owner of a local storefront if your center can put up a display to highlight International Peace Day, including information about the center and local resources.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Draw inspiration from the resources and activities listed for International Peace Day on the UN webpage: <http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/>.
- Turn Peace Day into a week-long celebration of the diversity and work of your volunteers and staff. This could be an in-person celebration in the office and/or a digital celebration on social media.
- Arrange a showing of the NAFCM Implicit Bias presentation. Afterwards, facilitate an open discussion on the information discussed in the presentation.
- Hold a potluck. Ask community members to bring foods that are meaningful to them. Invite attendees to share the stories of their dishes. Breaking bread together and listening to one another can foster a peaceful community!

October 2024: The Justice System- NAFCM @ 30 (H6)



Suggested Action:

Take this month to reflect on the past year's incredible challenges, hard work, and successes locally and across the U.S. and Canada. Look back on the year with fresh eyes through a group activity like creating a vision board, showing a montage of photos, creating a time capsule, honoring a volunteer or staff member, dedicating a wall, or producing a retrospective video.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Facilitate a conversation circle with volunteers to learn about their lessons learned, best practices, goals for the future, and constructive feedback for the organization.
- Hold a retreat for your center as an opportunity for self-reflection on the mission statement, vision statement, and future goals of your organization.
- Celebrate your center's birthday party! Toast to your organization, honor staff members and volunteers with certificates recognizing their accomplishments, and have a great time together. Invite NAFCM to your birthday party and invite virtual attendees through Zoom. Title your event *NAFCM Celebration Across the Nation* and connect with centers across North America!

November 2024: *Volunteers Open New Paths (H2)*



Suggested Action:

This month, building on Hallmark 1, centers can showcase their volunteers and mediators on a panel. The panelists can be divided into three different groups based on years of experience (New: 0-2 years; Middle: 3-5 years; and Experienced: 5+ years). Take pictures of each group to showcase areas in need of increased engagement as well as areas of strength. NAFCM can re-share these images to the national network.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Each day of this month, recognize and thank a volunteer on social media.
- Reflect on diversity in your community. Work with other nonprofits and/or agencies in your area that serve diverse populations to build strong collaborative relationships, gather insights and data, and discuss the possibility of exchanging quid-pro-quo trainings among different organizations to aggregate the wisdom of your community. Ask these partnering organizations about their primary interests and concerns.
- Reach out to medical centers and senior centers who might benefit from conflict resolution training. Brainstorm creative strategies to make these trainings accessible for staff members.
- Revisit your list of previous mediation clients to see if there are potential future mediators.
- Collect data on, and celebrate, the variety of people who have gone through your trainings.
- Self-reflect on what institutional barriers may hinder the recruitment of a diverse roster of mediators.

December 2024: *Inclusivity- The Civil Rights Act @ 60 (H5)*



Suggested Action:

This final month of 2024, take time with your board and stakeholders to evaluate the lessons and discoveries of the past year as well as to create a plan that strives toward the dream of positive sustainable peace. Use your public platforms and those of your partners to share future plans with your community, moving forward. Keep in mind the importance of supporting other community members and partners who are working hard to cultivate peace, justice and engagement.

Alternative options to make the month your own:

- Conduct an online survey of your team to learn more about team members' goals. Share the results with NAFCM so we can create resources that support these goals.
- Host a conversation on what people believe "peace and justice" to be. Ask questions like: "what does a peace-filled and just community look like to you as an individual?" and "how do we get there?" You could invite internal stakeholders (volunteers, staff, board), external stakeholders (partners, other local agencies), and virtual stakeholders (NAFCM) to this conversation to get a variety of perspectives. Other options include: 1) asking participants to identify people that embody peace and justice and 2) have participants draw a symbol that represents these individuals to them.
- Hold tabling sessions to promote future growth. In warmer climates, "Lights On After Dark in the Park" could be a possible tabling option.