Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts

Needs Assessment Survey

March 2008
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*Polling and Program Evaluation Research Series No. 60*
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The Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts retained the UMass Dartmouth Center for Policy Analysis to conduct an update of its 2003 Legal Needs Assessment Survey. The goal of the survey is to identify the most critical legal needs of low-income residents in Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket and Plymouth Counties as well as the towns of Avon and Stoughton in Norfolk County. Low-income persons are defined as those with incomes less than 125 percent of the federally-defined poverty level.

The study includes three major components: a telephone survey of low-income residents in the five county target area, a self-administered survey completed by low-income residents at various sites throughout the five county target area, and two focus groups held in New Bedford and Barnstable, Massachusetts.

Survey Results

A total of 409 telephone and self-administered surveys were completed by low-income residents in the fall of 2007. There are no statistically significant differences between the telephone and self-administered samples, thus the data in most cases has been combined to increase its validity. The results represent a valid cross-section of low-income residents based on various demographic indicators including gender, age, disability, ethnicity/race and ability to speak English.

Demographic Background

A majority of respondents live in the region’s cities, with 30.7 percent of respondents living in New Bedford, 16.3 percent living in Fall River and 13.6 percent living in Brockton. Almost two-thirds of respondents (65.2%) are female, while 34.8 percent are male, and nearly all (95.7%) are U.S. citizens. Respondents represent a broad range of age groups, with 13.6 percent of respondents age 18 to 29, 17.4 percent age 30 to 39, 19.7 percent age 40 to 49, 19.4 percent age 50 to 59, 13.6 percent age 60 to 69 and 16.2 percent age 70 and over. Nearly three-in-four respondents (74.4%) are white, while 9.5 percent are Hispanic, 7.5 percent are Cape Verdean, 4.5 percent are African-American, 1.8 percent are Native American, 1.0 percent are Asian, 1.0 percent are an “other” race and 0.3 percent are Pacific Islander.

A third of respondents (33.6%) are disabled and more than half (55.1%) have not worked in the last six months. Most respondents who have not worked are retired or disabled. Of respondents who have worked in the last six months, 42.0 percent worked part-time and 58.0 percent worked full-time.

Forty seven percent of respondents (47.2%) own their home, while 46.4 percent rent and 6.3 percent have other arrangements (e.g. live with parents). Just over two-thirds of respondents (67.7%) are a parent or guardian. Of these respondents, 46.1 percent are single parents. Nearly eighty-five percent of respondents (84.1%) primarily speak English at home.
Most Important Legal Issues

A major component of the survey is the identification of the most important legal issues facing low-income residents in the region. Respondents were asked to rate or rank the importance of ten legal issues by placing a “1” next to the most important issue on the list and ranking the other issues up to number 10, the least important issue on the list (self-administered survey) or to rate each category on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important (telephone survey).

While there are some differences between the results of the telephone and self-administered surveys, results of both surveys indicate that the most important legal needs among respondents are healthcare and housing. Employment and education are also among the top five issues in both samples. Conversely, immigration and neighborhood services are the least important issues among respondents in both samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Legal Issues</th>
<th>Telephone Survey</th>
<th>Self-Administered Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Family &amp; Domestic Needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Government Benefits</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consumer/Financial</td>
<td>Consumer/Financial</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family &amp; Domestic Needs</td>
<td>Legal System</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legal System</td>
<td>Government Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood Services</td>
<td>Neighborhood Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Important</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were also provided subcategories for each of these major issues and asked if they have had a problem in any of these areas in the past year. Importantly, some of these sub-categories are beyond the scope of legal services (e.g. drug use, high crime rates) but were included in the survey to construct a comprehensive profile of the major issues faced by low-income residents in the region.

As the following table shows, the highest percentages of respondents report problems with drugs in their neighborhood (24.4%), neighborhood crime (19.8%), finding work (16.9%), harassment from bill collectors (16.9%), prescription drug coverage (14.7%), police protection (11.7%), and finding Section 8/subsidized housing (10.3%).
### Top 20 Problems Faced in Last 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs in neighborhood</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood crime</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>Child support</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding work</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>Food stamps</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment from bill collectors</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>Access to health care</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription drug coverage</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>Getting/Keeping utility service</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police protection</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>Laid-off</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding subsidized housing</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>Obtaining housing due to income</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping housing due to repair costs</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>Abandoned buildings</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding reliable transportation</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>Job discrimination</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>Waste in neighborhood</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Importance of Legal Aid Services and Practices

Nearly fourteen percent of respondents (13.9%) have sought legal help in the last twelve months, with nearly half of that assistance (49.0%) coming from legal aid, 44.9 percent from a private attorney and 6.1 percent from both legal aid and a private attorney. All respondents, whether or not they have used legal aid, were asked to rate the importance of various legal aid services on a scale of not important, somewhat important, important and vital. The list of services includes assistance with a court appearance, outreach and community legal education, court/agency representation, in-office access to an attorney and immediate telephone access to an attorney.

Respondents rate each service or practice highly, with more than three-quarters of respondents rating each service or practice as important or vital. In addition, more than thirty percent of respondents rate all services as vital, with 45.3 percent reporting that assistance with a court appearance is most vital, followed by outreach/community legal education (41.7% vital), court/agency representation (38.9% vital), in-office access to an attorney (35.7% vital) and immediate telephone access to an attorney (32.7% vital). Conversely, no more than seven percent of respondents rate any of the services or practices as not important.

### Pro Bono Services

Nearly forty-five percent of respondents (44.8%) indicate that pro bono work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help, while 33.2 percent do not agree and 22.0 percent do not know. Among respondents who have sought legal help in the last twelve months (a group that may have a more informed opinion about this issue), 36.2 percent agree that pro bono work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help, while 51.1 percent do not agree and 12.8 percent do not know. Importantly, many respondents who feel that pro bono work does not meet the demand of low-income residents indicate that the small number of legal aid attorneys is the primary reason that demand is not met and not because of the poor quality of legal aid services.
Responsiveness to Client and Community Needs

In addition to measuring how well *pro bono* services meet the legal needs of low-income residents, respondents were asked how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to individual client needs. A majority of respondents (57.5%) “don’t know” how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to individual client needs, as most have not used legal aid or know much about the program. When respondents who have not sought legal aid in the last twelve months are excluded from the sample, twenty percent of respondents feel that the legal aid program is very responsive to client needs, while 36.0 percent feel that legal aid is somewhat responsive, 14.0 percent feel that legal aid is not at all responsive to community needs and 30.0 percent do not know.

Respondents were also asked how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to community needs. A majority of respondents (58.7%) “don’t know” how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to community needs, again because most have not used legal aid or know much about the program. When respondents who have not sought legal aid in the last twelve months are excluded from the sample, 21.2 percent of respondents feel that the legal aid program is very responsive to community needs, while 32.7 percent feel that legal aid is somewhat responsive, 9.6 percent feel that legal aid is not at all responsive to community needs and 36.5 percent do not know.

What Would Most Improve Legal Aid in the Community?

Respondents were asked to provide comments regarding the actions that would most improve legal aid services in their community. Comments were numerous and varied, however, two major themes emerged, which were also echoed in the focus groups:

- Increasing the awareness of legal aid services through education and outreach so that potential clients are aware of the types of legal aid available and how and where to access those services. Suggestions include forums, posters, seminars, workshops, advertising on local cable access, email and newsletters.

- Improving access to legal aid by increasing the number of attorneys, expanding the number of office locations and instituting more flexible hours of operation (although these solutions may be constrained by limited resources).

Additional Areas in which Legal Aid Should Focus

Respondents were asked if there are additional areas in which legal aid should focus. The major legal aid services reported by respondents are housing (N=12), domestic abuse/violence (N=10), education (N=6), family (N=6), healthcare (N=6), immigration (N=6), children (N=4) and elder affairs (N=4). Importantly, many of these issues are currently provided by legal aid, which again demonstrates the need for more outreach to educate the public on the types of legal aid that is available.
Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted to elicit more detailed responses based on the results of the self-administered and telephone surveys. The focus groups encouraged discussion about various legal aid issues that supplement the data collected from the telephone and self-administered surveys and that provides greater insight about legal aid that cannot be derived from a survey. The focus groups were held in New Bedford at the New Center for Legal Advocacy (7 participants) and in Barnstable at the Cape United Elderly/Community Action Center (10 participants). The focus group discussions were guided by a set of ten questions that were developed in concert with the telephone and self-administered survey results.

The awareness of legal aid among focus group members was mixed, with about half knowing about the legal aid program. However, all participants were not aware of the broad spectrum of services provided by legal aid. For example, most participants were able to only identify the legal aid service that they actually accessed (e.g. assistance with a divorce, child support or domestic violence). This again confirms that outreach may be an important strategy to increase the effectiveness of legal aid services. Some participants were also not aware that legal aid includes representation for only civil, not criminal legal issues. In terms of the effectiveness of the representation, most participants are satisfied with the services they received. For example, one participant commented “Yes, the advice helped very much with my issue” and another commented “my dispute was settled quickly once I got legal aid on my side.”

Participants who were previously aware of legal aid heard about these services through a variety of sources, although most learned about the services by word of mouth, particularly through friends, an employer or in a judicial environment. In addition, most participants were informed about legal aid from only one source, which again indicates a need for more outreach and education, although two participants commented that increasing the awareness of legal aid will simply increase the demand for services that are not currently being met due to limited resources.

Focus group participants were also asked to provide methods in which legal aid can be publicized so that more people know about these services. Responses to this question include:

- Advertise on local access programs, community bulletin boards and public transportation.
- Broaden the distribution of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation newsletter and legal aid information in general to locations such as senior centers, libraries, churches, school departments, events such as First Night, restaurant placemats, social advocacy and veterans groups and email.
- Develop a comprehensive webpage.
- Sponsor more clinics and workshops, for example, at elderly facilities and homeless shelters.
- Publicize in several languages.
- Advertise on public transportation.
- Train social workers about the types of legal services available and how to access these services so that this information can then be passed on to their clients.
Focus group members were asked to indicate the importance they place on *pro se* services, that is, obtaining legal advice so that they can represent themselves in their legal issue. Nearly all participants agree that *pro se* services, whether in a personal meeting with an attorney, on the telephone, or through a workshop provide useful direction for common issues such as child support and divorce proceedings. Other participants indicate that *pro se* services are important to simply “get direction” of “where to go” or how to proceed with their legal issue. It was noted that direct representation is not always important and that in many instances simply “knowing how to maneuver through the legal process” is all that is needed.

While nearly all participants indicate that *pro se* services are important, they caution that the advice provided by attorneys both in face to face meetings and through workshops should be very specific in its scope. For example, it was noted that attorneys have made presentations about the types of documents that people should prepare (e.g. wills), but they do not provide details about the type of information that should be included in those documents. Participants commented that they would rather have more narrowly focused workshops that provide more detail, rather than workshops that only touch broadly on topics. In addition, several members indicated that *pro se* services should be advertised more extensively.

There were also many suggestions by participants as to how legal services can improve. For example, several participants noted that it is difficult to speak to an attorney when calling legal services and that often times the receptionist will not allow the potential client to speak to an attorney or paralegal. Another suggestion was to provide a list of attorneys who will work on a reduced-fee basis, particularly for people who do not meet the income guidelines. This will also provide a wider geographic coverage of attorneys and potential clients who have transportation issues or do not want to drive long distances can consult with a local attorney, even if it requires some out-of-pocket cost.

Participants also noted that various service providers (e.g. attorneys, elder organizations, veterans affairs) do not provide accurate information in terms of legal aid eligibility guidelines. For example, one participant noted that an attorney who made a presentation at an elder service organization told her that she was not eligible for legal aid, although a call to legal services proved otherwise. Other members complained that there was too long a wait for personal appointments with a legal aid attorney. Additional suggestions included having the offices open later in the evening and on weekends, increasing the number of offices, having 24 hour access to attorneys (telephone help-line) and increasing the number of attorneys.

Finally, focus group participants were asked if telephone assistance is effective in obtaining legal advice rather than meeting personally with an attorney. Most all participants agree that telephone assistance is an effective means to obtain legal advice, particularly because it often takes a few days to a week to get a face-to-face appointment and also because a telephone interview eliminates transportation issues. One caveat reported by participants is that the effectiveness of telephone interviews is contingent on the fact that they speak to an attorney the same day as they call. In other words, potential clients are willing to exchange a face to face interview for a telephone interview if it expedites the process.
1.00 INTRODUCTION

Civil (non-criminal) legal aid is often beyond the means of poorer Americans. To address this issue, a variety of providers offer free legal assistance to clients who meet certain household income thresholds, primarily individuals whose household income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. For a family of four, the threshold is $20,614 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). Examples of civil legal issues that are addressed by legal service providers include:

- employment (discrimination, worker’s compensation)
- family (divorce, custody, child support, domestic violence)
- public benefits (SSI, disability, Medicaid)
- housing (finding or obtaining safe and affordable housing, eviction)
- health care (Medicaid, access, nursing home care)
- probate (wills, estates, licenses)
- consumer issues (harassment from bill collectors, bankruptcy, small claims, fraud)

Unfortunately, most legal aid programs have constrained financial and organizational limits and the availability of legal assistance to the poor is lower than for the population as a whole. For example, there is approximately one full-time advocate working in legal aid programs for every 3,507 low-income people, compared to one lawyer in practice for every 136 people in the total population (Legal Needs Study Advisory Committee, 2003).

In Southeastern Massachusetts and the Cape and Islands, 11.1 percent of households are below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. Free legal aid for these individuals is provided by the New Center for Legal Advocacy (NCLA), a primarily federally funded provider of legal assistance in Southeastern Massachusetts and the Southeastern Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (SMLAC), a state funded provider of legal assistance in the NCLA service area.

1.10 Needs Assessment Survey

In its “Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid,” the American Bar Association recommends that “a provider should be aware of the most compelling legal needs of the low income persons that it serves” so that “the most compelling, unmet needs of that population” can be addressed. This requires “having the means to identify the most significant legal problems and to understand how they impact low income individuals as well as the low income population as a whole” (American Bar Association 2006).

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1 Southeastern Massachusetts is defined as Bristol and Plymouth Counties.
It is essential that providers use their limited resources effectively to meet the legal needs of low-income individuals. To this end, a needs assessment was conducted in 2003 by the UMass Dartmouth Center for Policy Analysis on behalf of New Center for Legal Advocacy and the Southeastern Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation. The assessment identified the most critical legal needs of low-income residents in Southeastern Massachusetts in areas such as education, housing, health care and employment. The results of the survey were used as a planning tool to assist NCLA and SMLAC to prioritize their goals and to direct resources to where they are most effective.

Results of the report indicate that the most important legal issue to low-income respondents were in the categories of (in rank order) family, education, health care, housing and employment, followed by government benefits programs, consumer and financial issues, the legal system, neighborhood services and immigration (Southeastern Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation 2003). In addition, NCLA participated in the statewide Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) client needs appraisal in 2002 (published in 2003) that found “major increases in legal needs for problems exacerbated by economic growth such as housing, health and public benefits” (Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, 2003).

Since these studies, SMLAC merged with Legal Services for Cape, Plymouth and Islands to form a new program called South Coastal Legal Services Inc. (SCCLS). While both the NCLA and SCCLS serve the same 5-county geographic area, the NCLA primarily receives funding from federal sources, while SCCLS primarily receives state funds, which generally defines the types of services offered by each organization. Both of these organizations exist under the umbrella of the Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

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Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts

New Center for Legal Advocacy (federally funded)

South Coastal Legal Services Inc. (state funded)
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1.11 Legal Needs Assessment Update

The Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts retained the UMass Dartmouth Center for Policy Analysis to conduct an update of the 2003 Legal Needs Assessment Survey. The goal of the project is to identify the most critical legal needs of low-income residents in Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod and the Islands. The target population for the survey is low-income residents of Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties, as well as the towns of Avon and Stoughton in Norfolk County (see Figure 2). Low-income persons are defined as those with incomes less than 125 percent of the federally-defined poverty level.

![Figure 2](image_url)

The Legal Needs Assessment Survey includes three major components:

1. A telephone survey of low-income residents in Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties
2. Self-administered surveys completed by low-income residents at various sites throughout the five county target area
3. Two focus groups held in New Bedford and Barnstable.

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2 A survey of local service providers was conducted to solicit the opinions of organizations who directly serve low-income residents. These organizations include social service providers, staff attorneys, private attorneys, judges and court employees. Identification of these organizations was determined by NCLA and SCCLS. Unfortunately, cooperation by these organizations was low. Despite several follow-up calls and re-mailing and re-faxing the survey to these organizations, only 22 of 223 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 9.9 percent. Due to the low response rate, significant conclusions cannot be derived from the data and it is not included in this report.
2.00 METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY TABULATION

2.10 Telephone Survey

The telephone survey was conducted using a survey instrument developed by the Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Center for Policy Analysis. Some questions from the 2003 Legal Needs Assessment Survey were included so that comparisons can be made over time, although the surveys are not identical. A total of 235 telephone interviews were conducted over a two week period from September 27, 2007 to October 11, 2007. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. Surveys were conducted in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

2.11 Sampling Procedures

The Center for Policy Analysis uses the Genesys Sampling System to generate random telephone numbers. The Genesys Sampling System is used by many major survey organizations. The system uses a list of all possible telephone numbers in the United States to randomly generate a telephone sample for a designated geographic area. The survey was conducted using a random digit dialing (RDD) sample. The RDD sample ensures an equal and known probability of selection for every residential telephone number in the sample frame.

2.12 Telephone Interviewer Training and Supervision

Student research assistants and employees from a local temporary employment agency were employed as telephone interviewers. Staff at the Center for Policy Analysis trained the interviewers intensively before they began interviewing, including practice interviews. Senior-level staff at the Center for Policy Analysis monitored the interviewers at all times to ensure high quality data collection. Interviewers who speak Spanish and Portuguese were available to conduct surveys with respondents who speak those languages.

The Center for Policy Analysis conducted interviews between 9:00 am and 8:00 pm on weekdays and 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturdays. This range of hours provides the interviewers with an opportunity to contact hard to reach respondents, a procedure crucial to producing high quality survey data. Callbacks were scheduled at the convenience of the respondents. The Center’s senior staff continually monitored the progress of interview outcomes to prevent problem cases that could interfere with the integrity of survey procedures. The survey procedures used by the Center for Policy Analysis adhere to the highest quality academic and government research standards.
2.20 Self-Administered Survey

One hundred and seventy-four surveys were self-administered by low-income residents at community organizations throughout the service area.3 The New Center for Legal Advocacy identified sites to administer the survey and secured the cooperation of these agencies. The survey is nearly identical to the telephone survey and was available in English, Spanish and Portuguese. The identification of organizations were carefully selected to ensure access to persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency and other limitations allowing for appropriate geographic distribution across the region.

2.30 Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted to elicit more detailed responses based on the results of the self-administered and telephone surveys. The focus groups were held in New Bedford and Barnstable.4 Potential participants were identified through the telephone and self-administered surveys as well as through social service providers. Each participant was given $50 to attend as a means to increase participation.

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3 A list of these organizations can be found in Appendix B.
4 Three focus groups were initially scheduled; however, weather issues and lack of interest by potential participants permitted only two focus groups during the project timeline.
3.00 TELEPHONE AND SELF-ADMINISTERED SURVEY RESULTS

A telephone and self-administered survey of low-income households and residents in the Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket and Plymouth Counties was conducted to determine the legal needs of low-income residents in the five-county service area. The survey instrument was developed by the Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Center for Policy Analysis.

A total of 409 telephone and self-administered surveys were completed by low-income respondents in the fall of 2007. The telephone survey (N=235) was conducted over a two week period from September 27, 2007 to October 11, 2007, while the self-administered surveys (N=174) were completed by respondents from October 10, 2007 through December 20, 2007. There are no statistically significant differences between the telephone and self-administered samples, thus the data has been combined to increase the validity of the data.

3.10 Respondent Background

The survey results represent a valid cross-section of low-income residents based on various demographic indicators including gender, age, disability, ethnicity/race and ability to speak English. However, while the target population for the survey includes low-income residents of Dukes and Nantucket Counties, no surveys were completed by residents in these areas. Because the low-income population of these counties is small, the omission of respondents from these counties is not exceedingly problematic, although a more focused effort should be exercised in future needs assessments to include low-income residents from these counties, since these residents may have different needs and issues than residents in Barnstable, Bristol and Plymouth Counties.

3.11 Place of Residence and Living Arrangement

A majority of respondents live in the region’s cities, with 30.7 percent of respondents living in New Bedford, 16.3 percent living in Fall River and 13.6 percent living in Brockton (see Table 1). This geographic distribution is expected, as these areas are the population centers of the region and also contain the highest percentage of low-income individuals.

More than forty percent of respondents (43.2%) live in Bristol County, while 39.1 percent of respondents live in Plymouth County and 17.8 percent live in Barnstable County (see Table 2). While the percentage of respondents who live in Bristol County is higher than the actual percentage of adults as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, the survey’s target population is low-income residents and in this respect the survey sample closely matches the demographic background of each county.
### Table 1

*City/Town of Respondent*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Bedford</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall River</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>Westport</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockton</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>Berkley</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>Bourne</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>Marshfield</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>Mattapoisett</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairhaven</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>Nantucket</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wareham</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>Scituate</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>Bridgewater</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falmouth</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>Eastham</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>Freetown</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincetown</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>Harwich</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Hingham</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>Stoughton</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

*County of Residence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>*Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: 2006 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau Estimate – adults 18 years of age and older*
3.12 Age

Respondents represent a broad range of age groups, with 13.6 percent of respondents age 18 to 29, 17.4 percent age 30 to 39, 19.7 percent age 40 to 49, 19.4 percent age 50 to 59, 13.6 percent age 60 to 69 and 16.2 percent age 70 and older.

Table 3
Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.13 Income

All respondents have household incomes that are below 125 percent of the federal poverty line, which is determined by household income and the number of persons living in the household. Nearly thirty percent of respondents have household incomes below $15,000, while 44.3 percent have incomes between $15,001 and $25,000 and 26.0 percent have incomes between $25,001 and $35,000.

Table 4
Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $15,000</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,001 to $25,000</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001 to $35,000</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 Household income is defined as the sum of money income received by all household members 15 years old and over, including household members not related to the householder, people living alone, and other non-family household members. Income includes wage or salary income, interest, dividends, supplemental security income, public assistance or welfare payments, and retirement, survivor, or disability pensions.
3.14 Ethnicity/Race and Language

Nearly sixty-four percent of respondents (63.6%) indicate that they are white. When Portuguese and Brazilian (who are classified as white by the U.S. Census Bureau) are included, the percentage of white respondents increases to 74.4 percent. Almost ten percent of respondents (9.5%) are Hispanic, 7.5 percent are Cape Verdean, 4.5 percent are African-American, 1.8 percent are Native American, 1.0 percent are Asian, 1.0 percent are an “other” race and 0.3 percent are Pacific Islander.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity/Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdean</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.15 Other Demographic Variables

- Almost two-thirds of respondents (65.2%) are female and 34.8 percent are male.
- Nearly all respondents (95.7%) are U.S. citizens.
- A third of respondents (33.6%) are disabled.
- Just over two-thirds of respondents (67.7%) are a parent or guardian. Of these, 46.1 percent are single parents.
- Nearly half of respondents (48.8%) who have children have only one child, while 78.4 percent have two children or less. The average number of children is 1.9 per household.
- More than half of respondents (55.1%) have not worked in the last six months. Many of these respondents are retired or disabled. Of respondents who have worked, 42.0 percent worked part-time and 58.0 percent worked full-time.
- Forty-six percent of respondents (46.4%) rent their home, while 47.2 percent own their home and 6.3 percent have other arrangements (e.g. live with parents).
- Nearly eighty-five percent of respondents (84.1%) primarily speak English at home. Other languages spoken at home include Arabic (N=1), Cape Verdean Creole (N=5), Chinese (N=2), French (N=2), Haitian Creole (N=1), Portuguese (N=19), Spanish (N=23) and Vietnamese (N=1).
3.20 Most Important Legal Issues

Respondents were asked to rate or rank the importance of ten legal issues facing low-income residents in the region. The self-administered survey asked respondents to rank the ten issues by placing a “1” next to the most important issue on the list and then rank the other issues up to number 10, the least important issue on the list. This method was used so that comparisons could be made to data from the 2003 legal needs survey. However, rank ordering is not conducive to telephone surveys, thus respondents who completed the survey by telephone were asked to rate each category on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important.6 Due to the difference in scale, results of the telephone and self-administered surveys are not strictly comparable and have been reported separately.7

While there are some differences between the results of the telephone and self-administered surveys, results of both surveys indicate that the most important legal needs among respondents are healthcare and housing. Employment and education are also among the top five issues in both samples. Conversely, immigration and neighborhood services are the least important issues among respondents in both samples (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). In addition, there are no statistically significant conclusions that can be drawn between the most important issues and a respondent’s demographic background, for example, age, race, gender or county of residence.

Figure 3

Most Important Issue – Telephone Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Benefits</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer/Financial</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal System</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Domestic Needs</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Services</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 A telephone survey was not included in the 2003 study.
7 The scale of the self-administered survey results has been reversed in the analysis so that a “10” represents the most important issue and 1 represents the least important issue. This will allow for more meaningful comparisons between the telephone and self-administered surveys in terms of the order in which the issues are ranked, but comparisons of the actual scores between the telephone and self-administered surveys should be made with caution.
Results from the 2003 and 2007 surveys show that while the order of the most important issues reported by respondents has changed, healthcare, housing, employment, family and domestic needs and education still rank in the top five issues in both surveys. Immigration and neighborhood services also rank as the least important issues in both survey years (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

**Figure 4**
Most Important Issue: Self Administered Survey, 2007

**Figure 5**
Most Important Issue: Self Administered Survey, 2003
3.30 Has Respondent Sought Legal Assistance in Last 12 Months?

Respondents were asked if they have sought legal help in the last 12 months for any of the issues listed in the previous section and whether that assistance came from a legal aid or private attorney. Nearly fourteen percent of respondents (13.9%) have sought legal help in the last twelve months, with nearly half of that assistance (49.0%) coming from legal aid, 44.9 percent from a private attorney and 6.1 percent from both legal aid and a private attorney (see Table 6 and Table 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Have You Sought Legal Help in the Last 12 Months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Did the Legal Help Come from Legal Aid or a Private Attorney?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Attorney</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.40 Pro Bono Work

Respondents were asked if pro bono work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help. Nearly forty-five percent of respondents (44.8%) agree that pro bono work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help, while 33.2 percent do not agree and 22.0 percent do not know. Among respondents who have sought legal help in the last twelve months (a group that may have a more informed opinion about this issue), 36.2 percent agree that pro bono work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help, while 51.1 percent do not agree and 12.8 percent do not know. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8</th>
<th>Does Pro Bono Work Meet the Demand for Legal Help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent All Respondents</td>
<td>% Respondents Who Sought Legal Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of respondents who have sought legal assistance is low, thus conclusions should be made with caution.
3.50 Importance of Various Legal Aid Services and Practices

Respondents were asked how important several legal aid services are to them and to the community at large. Respondents rate each service or practice highly, with more than three-quarters of respondents rating each service or practice as important or vital. In addition, more than thirty percent of respondents rate all services as vital, with 45.3 percent reporting that assistance with a court appearance is most vital, followed by outreach/community legal education (41.7% vital), court/agency representation (38.9% vital), in-office access to an attorney (35.7% vital) and immediate telephone access to an attorney (32.7% vital). No more than seven percent of respondents rate any of the services or practices as not important (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6](chart.png)

How Important Are the Following Services and Practices?

- Assistance with court appearance (pro se): 45.3% Important, 37.5% Somewhat Important, 12.3% Not Important
- Outreach/Community Legal Education: 41.7% Important, 40.6% Somewhat Important, 13.2% Not Important
- Court/Agency representation (litigation): 38.9% Important, 45.0% Somewhat Important, 10.5% Not Important
- In-office access to an attorney: 35.7% Important, 42.4% Somewhat Important, 15.5% Not Important
- Immediate telephone access to an attorney: 32.7% Important, 46.8% Somewhat Important, 13.8% Not Important

Note: The chart is sorted by the most vital services and practices.
3.60 Responsiveness to Client and Community Needs

3.61 Client Needs

Respondents were asked how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to individual client needs. A majority of respondents (57.5%) “don’t know” how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to individual client needs, as most have not used legal aid or know much about the program, while 13.4 percent of respondents report that the legal aid program in their area is very responsive to individual client needs, while 21.4 percent indicate that it is somewhat responsive and 7.8 percent report that legal aid is not responsive at all.

When respondents who have not sought legal aid in the last twelve months are excluded from the sample, twenty percent of respondents (20.0%) feel that the legal aid program is very responsive to client needs, while 36.0 percent feel that legal aid is somewhat responsive, 14.0 percent feel that legal aid is not at all responsive to community needs and 30.0 percent don’t know (see Figure 7).9

![Figure 7](image-url)

Figure 7

How Responsive to Individual Client Needs is the Legal Aid Program in Your Area?

- Very responsive: 13.4%
- Somewhat responsive: 21.4%
- Not at all responsive: 7.8%
- Don’t know: 57.5%

- Very responsive: 20.0%
- Somewhat responsive: 36.0%
- Not at all responsive: 14.0%
- Don’t know: 30.0%

9 The number of respondents who have sought legal assistance is low, thus conclusions should be made with caution.
3.62 Community Needs

Respondents were asked how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to community needs. A majority of respondents (58.7%) “don’t know” how responsive the legal aid program in their area is to community needs, again because most have not used legal aid or know much about the program. In addition, 12.6 percent of respondents report that the legal aid program in their area is very responsive to individual client needs, while 21.7 percent indicate that it is somewhat responsive and 7.0 percent report that legal aid is not responsive at all (see Figure 8).

When respondents who have not sought legal aid in the last twelve months are excluded from the sample, 21.2 percent of respondents feel that the legal aid program is very responsive to community needs, while 32.7 percent feel that legal aid is somewhat responsive, 9.6 percent feel that legal aid is not at all responsive to community needs and 36.5 percent don’t know.\(^\text{10}\)

---

\(^{10}\)The number of respondents who have sought legal assistance is low, thus conclusions should be made with caution.
3.70 Open-Ended Comments

3.71 Improving Legal Aid Services

Respondents were asked to provide comments regarding the actions that would most improve legal aid services in their community. Comments were numerous and varied, however two major themes emerged, which were also echoed in the focus groups:

- Increasing the awareness of legal aid services through education and outreach so that potential clients are aware of the types of legal aid available and how and where to access those services. This is confirmed in Section 3.50, where 82.3 percent of respondents indicate that outreach to the community is important (40.6%) or vital (41.7%). Suggestions include forums, posters, seminars, workshops, advertising on local cable access, email and newsletters.

- Improving access to legal aid by increasing the number of attorneys, expanding the number of office locations and instituting more flexible hours of operation (although these solutions may be constrained by limited resources).

The complete list of comments was grouped into categories (the “N” after each category indicates the number of responses). These categories include:

- Increase awareness of legal aid/Outreach/Education (forums, posters, seminars, workshops, local cable access) (N=27).
- More legal aid attorneys, increased availability and access to legal aid (N=25).
- More bilingual resources and interpretive services (N=4).
- More funding (N=5).
- Cost of legal services should be lower (N=3).
- Housing (N=3).
- Pay attorneys more money (N=3).
- Assistance with health issues (N=2).
- [Better] communication between attorneys and clients (N=2).
- Community involvement/meetings (N=2).
- Higher quality attorneys (N=2).
- Less red tape (N=2).
- Trust/Understanding (N=2).
- 24/7 hotline - access to legal aid in an emergency (N=1).
- Actual in-person assistance and not just getting paperwork (N=1).
- Assist legal citizens before assisting illegal immigrants (N=1).
- Assist more poor people (N=1).
- Assist renters with legal issues (N=1).
- Better referrals to other agents when unable to provide assistance (N=1).
- Callbacks should be quicker (N=1).
- Caring about each individual and their issues. Everyone is different (N=1).
- Client rights (N=1).
- Consumer benefits (N=1).
• Deal with more probate court issues (N=1).
• Educational lawyers (N=1).
• Help with taxes (N=1).
• Immigration issues (N=1).
• Larger office spaces (N=1).
• Make the legal aid program more responsive to community needs (N=1).
• More attention to smaller issues (N=1).
• More dedicated [legal services] staff (N=1).
• Representation not needs-based (N=1).

Note: Comments that do not specifically apply to legal aid are not included.

3.72 Additional Areas in which Legal Aid Should Focus

Respondents were asked if there are additional areas in which legal aid should focus. The major legal aid services reported by respondents are housing (N=12), domestic abuse/violence (N=10), education (N=6), family (N=6), healthcare (N=6), immigration (N=6), children (N=4) and elder affairs (N=4). Importantly, many of these issues are currently provided by legal aid, which again demonstrates the need for more outreach to educate the public on the types of legal aid available.

The complete list of comments includes:

• Housing (N=12)
• Domestic violence (N=10)
• Education (N=6)
• Family (N=6)
• Healthcare (N=6)
• Immigration (N=6)
• Children (N=4)
• Elder affairs/abuse (N=4)
• Disability (N=3)
• Homelessness (N=3)
• Employment (N=3)
• Assisting elderly (N=2)
• Child support (N=2)
• Domestic issues (N=2)
• Single mothers/parents (N=2)
• [Legal services] should be focusing on low income families (N=1)
• Adult education (N=1)
• Child care (N=1)
• Consumer issues (N=1)
• Crime (N=1)
• Drug abuse (N=1)
• DSS problems (N=1)
• Environmental standards (N=1)
• Evictions (N=1)
• Getting youth involved in program (N=1)
• Government benefits (N=1)
• Grandparents rights (N=1)
• Harassment from bill collectors (N=1)
• Help illegal immigrants become citizens (N=1)
• Identity theft (N=1)
• Mental health (N=1)
• Minority rights (N=1)
• Obtaining legal status (N=1)
• Poverty (N=1)
• Probate and district court (N=1)
• Referrals for domestic women's issues (N=1)
• Retirement funds (N=1)
• Rights of guest workers (N=1)
• Scams aimed at the elderly (N=1)
• Seniors in their nursing homes (N=1)
• [Aid for individuals with] special needs (N=1)
• Tenant issues (N=1)
• Troubled teens (N=1)
• Women's shelters (N=1)
• Workers' compensation (N=1)

Note: Comments that do not specifically apply to legal aid are not included.
3.80 Most Significant Areas of Legal Needs

Section 3.20 asked respondents to rank ten legal issues facing low-income residents in the region. In this section, respondents were provided subcategories for each of those ten issues and asked if they have had a problem in any of these areas in the past year.

The ten major categories are:

- Employment
- Education
- Family and Domestic Needs
- Consumer/Financial
- Housing
- Health
- Government
- Legal
- Immigration
- Neighborhood

3.80a Employment

In terms of employment, the highest percentage of respondents report problems finding work (16.9%), finding/keeping reliable transportation (10.0%), disability issues (8.6%) and being laid-off (7.8%) (see Table 9 and Figure 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding work</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding/Keeping reliable transportation</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid-off</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job discrimination</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting paid</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker’s Compensation</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” problems include:

- Being replaced by immigrants for a lower salary.
- Child care so I can get a job.
- Job intimidation.
- Training center would be helpful.
- Transitional assistance is difficult to receive.
- Workers are not organized and have no job security. Whether locals or students or foreign workers, they are not treated with dignity.
3.80b Education

In terms of education, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with job training (5.9%), adult/post secondary education (5.1%) and special education (4.9%) (see Table 10 and Figure 10).

### Table 10
**Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Training</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education (IEP Services)</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult/Post Secondary Education</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency/Enrollment</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10**

“Other” problems include:

- College ADD-disabled student services
- Lack of bus service for special needs children
- Transportation to school for children
3.80c Family and Domestic Needs

In terms of family and domestic needs, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with child support (8.3%), verbal/emotional/physical abuse (5.6%) and divorce (4.6%) (see Table 11 and Figure 11).

Table 11
Family and Domestic Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child support</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal/Emotional/Physical abuse</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitation</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in relationship</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocating to a new state</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” comments include:

- Harassing and threatening telephone calls
- Son has a drug/alcohol addiction—feels system could do more to help
3.80d Consumer/Financial

In terms of consumer and financial problems, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with harassment from bill collectors (16.9%), getting and keeping utility service (7.8%), unfair sales practices (6.4%) and getting a loan (6.1%) (see Table 12 and Figure 12).

Table 12
Consumer/Financial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harassment from bill collectors</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting/Keeping utility service</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair sales practices</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a loan</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts (rent to own, auto repair, home improvement)</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small claims</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankruptcy</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garnishment</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” comments include:

- Harassment from telemarketers (N=9).
- Telemarketing fraud (N=2).
- Hard to find somebody to work for people of color.
- Need a bank to go to for people with little or no credit.
- Property not returned after divorce.
3.80e Housing

In terms of housing, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with finding Section 8 and subsidized housing (10.3%), problems keeping housing due to getting repairs made (10.0%), renting issues (9.0%) and problems with obtaining housing due to income (6.8%) (see Table 13 and Figure 13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding Section 8/Subsidized</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Housing Due to Getting Repairs Made</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining housing due to income</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Housing Due to Inability to Pay</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining housing due to credit</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining housing due to discrimination</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened eviction</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Deposit</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassed by landlord</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying a home</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay with friends</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining housing due to references</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Housing Due to Eviction - Non-Monetary</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Housing Due to Tax Problems</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Housing Due to Shelter</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” comments include:

- [Problems with] condo association.
- House was repossessed by the government.
- Inspectors not doing their jobs.
- Landlord is slow with making repairs.
- Lost house because of divorce.
- Parking on city streets.
3.80f Healthcare

In terms of healthcare, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with prescription drug coverage (14.7%), access to healthcare (8.1%), Medicaid (4.4%) and Medicare (3.7%) (see Table 14 and Figure 14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prescription coverage</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to health care</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid (eligibility, spend-down)(^{11})</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to mental health care</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical planning</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home health care</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing home care</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) A spend-down is similar to a deductible under a conventional insurance policy.
Figure 14

Healthcare

- Prescription coverage: 14.7%
- Access to health care: 8.1%
- Medicaid (eligibility, spend-down): 4.4%
- Other: 3.7%
- Medicare: 3.7%
- Medical planning: 1.5%
- Access to mental health care: 1.5%
- Home health care: 1.2%
- Nursing home care: 0.5%

“Other” comments include:

- Better access for disabled people.
- Dental plan from work is not working, coverage is not accepted in areas.
- Exorbitant co-pays and deductibles.
- Insurance costs (N=2).
- Lack of access to physicians.
- Need doctors who will give prescriptions to people who have MassHealth/Medicare.
- Need health insurance.
- Not enough doctors in area.
- Price of medication is very high (N=2).
- Problems with Mass Eye and Ear care.
- Restrictions placed on psychiatric care.
- The requirements of MassHealth include counting the cash value of life insurance as a liquid asset. This can force a person to cancel their insurance, thus leaving no means for burial or for family.
3.80g Government Benefits

In terms of government benefits, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with food stamps (8.1%), SSI (5.9%), SSDI (5.6%) and daycare assistance (4.4%) (see Table 15 and Figure 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food stamps</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security (SSDI)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare Assistance</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDC</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” comments include:

- Confused with checks because of over-payment. Hard to understand letters and explanations.
- Benefits come late.
- Lack of compensation.
- More provisions for legal citizens.
- When laid off, [Division of Employment Security] made getting pay difficult.
3.80h Legal System

In terms of the legal system, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with wills/estates (2.7%) and interpreters (2.2%), although the percentage of respondents reporting problems with legal system issues is low for all issues (see Table 16 and Figure 16).

Table 16
Legal System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wills/Estates</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreters non-English</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare proxy</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of Attorney</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign language</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with criminal matter</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Other” comments include:

- A need for more bilingual non-English speaking lawyers.
- Attorney never returned phone calls.
- Child support payments too expensive.
- Divorce papers.
- Hidden small claims court fees are unfair.
- Lack of legal assistance..
- Property settlement with ex-husband.
- Tried to get legal aid but couldn't because father of children used their services.
- Would like better access to pro bono attorneys.
3.80i Immigration

In terms of immigration, only small percentages of respondents report having a problem with the three issues listed (see Table 17 and Figure 17).

### Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting a green card</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a citizen</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faced with deportation</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 17

![Immigration Chart]

Respondents who are facing immigration problems were asked to explain their problem. Responses include:

- Does not have residency.
- May move back to home country because of anti-Arab bias in the U.S.
3.80j Neighborhood Services

In terms of neighborhood services, the highest percentage of respondents report problems with drugs in the neighborhood (24.4%) and the need to reduce neighborhood crime (19.8%) (see Table 18 and Figure 18).

Table 18
Neighborhood Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% Reporting Problem in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs in neighborhood</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce neighborhood crime</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police protection</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix or demolish abandoned buildings</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of waste from neighborhood</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Other” comments include:

- Negative assumption by city officials thinking that all Cape Verdeans are criminals.
- Police protection could be better.
- Police should have more presence in the neighborhood.
3.81 Summary of Most Significant Areas of Legal Needs: Top 20 Problems Reported by Respondents

Figure 19 summarizes the top 20 problems reported by respondents in the previous sections. Importantly, many of these sub-categories are beyond the scope of legal services (e.g. drug use, high crime rates). The highest percentage of respondents report problems with drugs in their neighborhood (24.4%), neighborhood crime (19.8%), finding work (16.9%), harassment from bill collectors (16.9%), prescription drug coverage (14.7%), police protection (11.7%), and finding Section 8/subsidized housing (10.3%).
3.90 Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments. The responses are varied and include:

- Make grants available to Cape Verdean/Portuguese speaking law school students to motivate them to work in the community, where we need them the most.
- Lack of handicapped accessible services.
- [Provide] elders with real estate lawyers to assist with reverse mortgages, wills, health proxy forms, etc.
- Fall River Legal Services' job training center is excellent.
- I think they should tell a person that they don't have the manpower to help someone from the beginning, not after they've spilled their guts and then received no help and no referral.
- If you don't have the money or if you've been in trouble before, the courts don't care about you. Attorneys are overworked- too many free clients and representations are affected because of it. Certain citizens are treated differently for all kinds of reasons.
- Legal aid services MUST help our citizens first.
- Legal aid attorneys are not very qualified or caring (has experience working for an organization designed to stop homelessness, and found this to be true).
- Legal Aid is the best. I would love to thank the lady who is helping me!
- Legal aid is very important to lower income people.
- Legal services need to be more available to people, especially those with financial trouble.
- More advertising. Doesn't know where the Legal Aid center is or how to get legal aid.
- More info about legal aid.
- Need for more attorneys (N=3).
- Need more help for disabled people.
- Need more housing advocacy for renters, especially in Dartmouth
- Education on legal help and other issues is needed. Not many know about getting help.
- Outreach for Halifax Council on Aging. Seniors run into problems and need legal advice, but most cannot afford it.
- People should receive more direct access to legal assistance when in need.
- The assistance of legal aid is very important in areas of discrimination in the workplace.
- There should be more information and education for seasonal workers. If possible, regular orientation for seasonal foreign workers.
- [Use] legal aid to find out where to go when you want to push a new law.
- When lawyers make promises to clients, they should keep them. Legal services are not always honest with clients.
• Would be better if [legal service attorneys] dealt with all cases and were serious about it. [They] only take cases that they want to.
• Would like more volunteer assistance for the elderly.
• Would like to know where legal aid services in Taunton are.
• Would like to understand the steps of foreclosure and what I can do to prevent it from happening.

Note: Comments that do not specifically apply to legal aid are not included.
4.00 FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus groups were conducted to elicit more detailed responses based on the results of the self-administered and telephone surveys. The focus groups encouraged discussion about various legal aid issues that enriched the data collected from the telephone and self-administered surveys and provided greater insight to the legal needs of low-income residents.

The focus groups were held in New Bedford at the New Center for Legal Advocacy and in Barnstable at the Cape United Elderly/Community Action Center. Potential participants were identified through the telephone and self-administered surveys and through local social service agencies. Each participant was given $50 to attend the focus group in an effort to increase participation. The New Bedford focus group included seven participants, while the Barnstable focus group included 10 participants. Each participant in the Barnstable focus group was 65 years of age and older.

The focus group discussions were guided by a set of ten questions that were developed in concert with the telephone and self-administered survey results. The focus group questions are:

1. Prior to this focus group, were you aware that free legal aid existed?
2. If so, how did you hear about these services?
3. What type of services do you think legal aid provides?
4. In what ways can legal aid be publicized so that more people know about these services?
5. Have you previously used legal aid and how effective was the representation?
6. What services should legal aid provide that are not currently offered?
7. How important are pro se services, that is, legal aid staff provide guidance/workshops so that people can represent themselves in court?
8. Are legal aid workshops useful, for example, workshops focused on divorce or writing a will?
9. Are there any other areas in which legal services can improve?
10. Is the phone assistance program used for access to paralegals and other advice effective?

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12 Three focus groups were initially scheduled; however, weather issues and lack of interest permitted only two focus groups during the project timeline.
4.10 Prior to this focus group, were you aware that free legal aid existed?

The awareness of legal aid among focus group members was mixed, with about half knowing that legal aid services are available. In addition, some respondents were unsure if they meet the income requirements for legal aid.

4.20 If so, how did you hear about these services?

Participants were made aware of legal aid through a variety of sources, although most learned about the services by word of mouth, particularly through friends, an employer or in a judicial environment. As one might expect, a majority of respondents from the Barnstable focus group, all who are 65 years of age and older, heard about legal services from elder organizations. In addition, most participants were informed about legal aid from only one source, which again may indicate a need for more outreach, although two participants commented that increasing the awareness of legal aid will simply increase the demand for services that are not currently being met due to limited resources.

Other sources from which focus group participants heard about legal aid include:

- Divorce court
- Clients
- Legal aid attorneys

4.30 What type of services do you think legal aid provides?

Focus group participants are generally not aware of the broad spectrum of services provided by legal aid. For example, most participants were only able to identify the legal aid service that they actually accessed, for example, assistance with a divorce, child support or domestic violence. This again confirms that an increase in the level of outreach and education that improves the awareness of the legal aid is important. Some respondents were also not aware that legal aid includes representation for only civil, not criminal legal issues.

Many specific issues cited by respondents pertain to housing, particularly eviction. Other issues include:

- Domestic assistance
- Child support
- Divorce proceedings
- Civil matters
- Wills
- Bankruptcy
4.40 In what ways can legal aid be publicized so that more people know about these services?

Focus group participants were asked to provide methods in which legal aid can be publicized so that more people know about these services. Responses to this question are varied and fairly comprehensive. For example, one focus group member suggested that social workers should be knowledgeable of the types of legal services available, how to access those services and who qualifies for these services. This information can then be passed on to their clients, many who meet the legal aid income guidelines and who are in need of legal aid. It was suggested that social workers attend a workshop to make these individuals more cognizant about legal services and more consistent and correct in the advice that they give.

Another participant suggested that ministers are a good source of legal aid information, as many people seek the advice of a minister when problems arise. It was also suggested that the comprehensive newsletter produced by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation should have a wider distribution. For example, the newsletter could be sent and displayed in locations such as senior centers, libraries, churches, school departments, events such as First Night, restaurant placemats, social advocacy and veterans groups and email.

Other ideas to publicize legal aid services include:

- Advertise on local access programs, community bulletin boards and public transportation
- Develop a comprehensive webpage
- Sponsor more clinics and workshops, for example, at elderly facilities and homeless shelters
- Publicize in several languages
- Advertise on public transportation

4.50 Have you previously used legal aid and how effective was the representation?

About half of the respondents from both focus groups have used legal aid in the past for services such as divorce, assistance with personal dispute and settlement with general contractor and drawing up wills and other estate planning documents. In terms of the effectiveness of the representation, most participants are satisfied with the services they received. For example, one participant commented “Yes, the advice helped very much with my issue” and another commented “my dispute was settled quickly once I got legal aid on my side.” Conversely, one respondent commented that they received poor customer service and received no assistance with their issue.
4.60 What services should legal aid provide that are not currently offered?

Numerous suggestions were provided by focus group participants in terms of services that legal aid should provide that it does not currently offer. In particular, the Barnstable focus group members cited the need for more workshops and services related to document preparation, particularly wills and estate planning. Other suggestions were provided, although some do not fall under the scope of legal aid, while others are services already provided by legal aid. These include:

- Assistance in restructuring medical care and drug administration at nursing homes. There are currently poor standards, short visits and general lack of care by doctors.
- Credit management
- Criminal representation
- Debt and bankruptcy assistance
- Food stamp assistance
- Identity theft assistance
- Increase the focus on housing issues
- Training/workshops for citizens on their rights as workers, for example, preference over illegal immigrants

4.70 How important are pro se services, that is, legal aid staff provides guidance/workshops so that people can represent themselves in court?

Nearly all participants agree that pro se services, whether in a personal meeting with an attorney, on the telephone or through a workshop provide useful direction for common issues such as child support and divorce proceedings or simply to “get direction” of “where to go” or how to proceed with their legal issue. It was noted that direct representation is not always important and that in many instances simply “knowing how to maneuver through the legal process” is all that is needed. In addition, several members indicated that pro se services should be advertised more extensively.

4.80 Are legal aid workshops useful, for example, workshops focused on divorce or writing a will?

Nearly all participants agree that workshops are useful. However, one participant cautioned that the advice provided by attorneys both in face to face meetings and through workshops should be very specific in its scope. For example, it was noted that attorneys have made presentations about the types of documents that people should prepare (e.g. wills), but they do not provide details about the type of information that should be included in those documents. Participants commented that they would rather have more narrowly focused workshops that provide more detail, rather than workshops that only touch broadly on topics.
4.90  Are there any other areas in which legal services can improve?

Focus group participants provided several suggestions to improve legal services. One recommendation is that attorneys be available to answer questions by telephone without delay. Participants explained that their calls were not forwarded to a legal aid attorney when they called, but they were instead asked to make an appointment to meet or speak with a legal aid attorney at a later date (this issue is discussed further in Section 4.91 below). In addition, several participants indicated that they had to wait a long period of time to meet personally with a legal aid attorney. Several possible solutions to this issue were discussed, including expanding the hours of operation of the legal services offices, providing 24-hour access to attorneys (e.g. a telephone help-line) and increasing the number of attorneys.

Another suggestion made by focus group participants is to provide a list of attorneys who will work on a reduced-fee basis, particularly for individuals who do not meet legal aid income guidelines. This is particularly true of seniors, many who do not meet low-income guidelines but also do not have the financial resources to pay a private attorney. In addition, it was suggested that individuals seeking legal aid may rather pay an out of pocket cost to a reduced-fee attorney if that attorney alleviates what may otherwise be a long drive to the legal services office.

Focus group participants also reported incidents where they received incorrect information from various service providers (e.g. attorneys, elder organizations, veterans affairs) in terms of legal aid eligibility guidelines. It was recommended that this issue be rectified by requiring service providers to attend a training seminar to ensure that the information being forwarded to potential clients is accurate. Lastly, it was noted that the income guidelines that qualify one for legal aid are too low, particularly for senior citizens living on Cape Cod. One participant suggested that the state does not provide enough legal service resources to the Cape and Islands because the state believes that the Cape and Islands region is more affluent than it actually is.

4.91  Is the phone assistance program used for access to paralegals and other advice?

Most all participants agree that telephone assistance is an effective means to obtain legal advice, particularly since many of their legal issues can be answered in just a couple of minutes over the telephone. In terms of potential clients who have more significant issues, the expediency of the legal information is tantamount. While it often takes a few days to a week to get a face-to-face appointment with a legal aid attorney, participants noted that they would rather speak to an attorney over the telephone if it means that they can receive legal advice the same day they call. In other words, potential clients are willing to exchange a face-to-face interview for a telephone interview if it expedites the process. Participants also pointed out that a telephone interview eliminates transportation issues for clients without a car or who live a long distance away from a legal aid office.
SOURCES


APPENDIX A – TELEPHONE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Hello, my name is ___________ and I am calling from UMass Dartmouth. How are you today? We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts to determine the most pressing legal problems and needs of residents in the area. Do you have a few of minutes to complete the survey?

[If yes] Can I please ask if you are eighteen years of age or older? [If yes, proceed. If no, ask if anyone is available eighteen years of age or older. If not, end interview].

Let me begin by assuring you that all your responses will be strictly confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Income Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt; $12,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt; $16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt; $20,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt; $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt; $29,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt; $33,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt; $37,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt; $42,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Respondent Background
1. In which city or town do you live? _________________________
2. How many years have you lived at your current address? __________
3. Do you rent or own your home or have some other arrangement? [Please circle]
4. Are you a U.S. citizen?  o Yes  o No
5. What is your age? ________
6. Sex:  o Male  o Female
7. Are you or anyone in your home disabled?  o Yes  o No
8. Are you a parent or guardian?  o Yes  o No
   [If yes] How many children do you have living at home? __________
9. Are you a single parent?  o Yes  o No
10. Have you worked in the last six months?  o Yes  o No
    [If yes] Did you work part-time, full-time or both? [Please circle]
11. What is your race or ethnic group? [Please read all responses]
   ○ White
   ○ Hispanic
   ○ Cape Verdean
   ○ Portuguese
   ○ Native American
   ○ African-American
   ○ Asian
   ○ Brazilian
   ○ Pacific Islander
   ○ More than one race/ethnicity
   ○ Other __________________________

12. Do you primarily speak English at home?
   [If no] What language do you primarily speak at home?
   ____________________________________________________________

13. We will be conducting three focus groups in the next 2 months to discuss legal services in your area. Each person will be given $50 to attend. The focus groups will be held in Bristol, Plymouth and Barnstable Counties (locations to be determined). Are you interested in being part of these focus groups?

   If yes, please take down name and telephone number [please write clearly].
   ____________________________________________________________________________

B. Issue Importance

14. Now I would like to ask you to identify the most important legal issues in our area. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important, please tell me how important the following legal issues are to you. How about:

   ___ Employment  ___ Family and Domestic Needs  ___ Housing
   ___ Healthcare  ___ Education  ___
   Consumer/Financial
   ___ Government Benefits  ___ Legal system  ___ Immigration
   ___ Neighborhood services

15. Have you sought legal help for any of the issues that we just talked about in the last 12 months?
   ○ Yes   ○ No
   [If yes], did the legal help come from legal aid or a private attorney? [Please circle]
16. Do you feel that *pro bono* work, that is, free work provided by local private attorneys meets the demand of people unable to pay for legal help?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - Don’t Know

17. Can you please tell me how important the following legal aid services are to you or perhaps to the community? Please tell me if each of these is not important, somewhat important, important, or very important. How about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate telephone access to an attorney</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-office access to an attorney</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court/Agency representation (litigation)</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach/Community Legal Education</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with court appearance (<em>pro se – means representing yourself in court</em>)</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. How responsive to individual client needs is the legal aid program in your area? Is it
   - Not at all responsive  
   - Somewhat Responsive  
   - Very Responsive  
   - Don’t know

19. How responsive to community needs is the legal aid program in your area? Is it
   - Not at all responsive  
   - Somewhat Responsive  
   - Very Responsive  
   - Don’t know

20. What do you think would most improve legal aid services in your community, if any?

21. Are there areas that legal aid services should be focusing on?
22. Now I’d like to read you some issues and have you tell me if you have had any trouble in any of
the following areas in the past year. Keep in mind that all your responses are strictly confidential.

| Employment:     | Finding work  | Job Discrimination | Getting paid | Laid-off | Disability |
|                |               |                     |             |         |            |
|                | Finding/keeping reliable transportation | Unemployment | Worker’s Comp. |
|                | Other (please explain) |                       |             |         |            |

| Education:     | Special Education (IEP services) | Discrimination | Residency/Enrollment |
|                | Discipline | Safety | Adult/Post-Secondary Education | Job training |
|                | Other (please explain) |                     |             |         |            |

| Family and Domestic needs: | Divorce | Custody | Child support | Guardianship | Visitation |
|                           | Live-in relationship | Adoption | Relocating to a new state |

| Domestic violence: | Verbal/emotional abuse | Physical abuse | Sexual abuse | Stalking |
|                   | Other (please explain) |                     |             |         |            |

<p>| Consumer/Financial: | Harassment from bill collectors | Garnishment | Bankruptcy | Small claims |
|                    | Contracts (purchases, rent-to-own, auto repair, home improvement) | Getting/keeping utility service (excess charges, shut-offs, etc.) | Getting a Loan |
|                    | Unfair sales practices (home windows, autos) | Fraud |
|                    | Other (please explain) |                     |             |         |            |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing:</th>
<th>Renting</th>
<th>Security Deposit</th>
<th>Threatened eviction</th>
<th>Buying a home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>Finding Section 8/Subidized</td>
<td>Harassed by Landlord</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay with friends</td>
<td>Obtaining housing due to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>References</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping housing due to:</td>
<td>Inability to pay</td>
<td>Eviction for non-money reasons</td>
<td>Getting repairs made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property tax problems</td>
<td>Neighbor disputes</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Staying with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Please explain)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare:</td>
<td>Medicaid (eligibility, spend-down)</td>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>Prescription coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to health care (medical, dental, vision)</td>
<td>Access to mental health care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical planning</td>
<td>Home health care</td>
<td>Nursing Home care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Please explain)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Benefits:</td>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Social Security (SSDI)</td>
<td>AFDC</td>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day Care Assistance</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Please explain)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal System:</td>
<td>Wills/Estates</td>
<td>Healthcare Proxy</td>
<td>Power of Attorney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreters non-English speaking</td>
<td>Sign-language (for deaf)</td>
<td>Help with a criminal matter</td>
<td>Other (please explain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration:</td>
<td>Getting a Green Card</td>
<td>Becoming a citizen</td>
<td>Face with Deportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, please explain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood services</td>
<td>Police Protection</td>
<td>Reduce neighborhood crime</td>
<td>Drugs in neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of waste from the neighborhood</td>
<td>fix or demolish abandoned buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Any additional comments or concerns with legal services in your area?

Those are all the questions that I have. Thanks for your time and have a nice day.
APPENDIX B – PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations were provided legal needs surveys and asked to distribute these surveys to their clients.

- Affirmative Action/Labor Relations
- Al-Anon/Alateen Information Center
- Anchor House, Inc.
- Barnstable County Bar Advocates, Inc.
- Barnstable County Department of Human Services
- Barnstable Housing Authority
- Belmont Counseling
- Bristol Elder Services
- Brockton Area Multi-Services Inc.
- Brockton Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.
- Brockton Family and Community Resources
- Brockton Family Planning
- Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
- Brockton Visiting Nurse Association
- Brockton Young Family
- Cape & Islands United Way
- Cape Cod Child Development Corporation
- Cape Cod Human Services
- Catholic Social Services
- Center for Health and Human Services
- Chatham Council on Aging
- Child & Family Services
- Citizens for Citizens, Inc.
- Coalition Against Poverty
- Coalition for Social Justice
- Coatline Elderly Services
- Commonworks
- Community Action Committee
- Community Care Services
- Community Connections
- Community Counseling of Bristol County
- Community Rehabilitation Services
- Consumer Assistance Council, Inc.
- Council on Aging
- CURA Visiting Nurse Association
- Damien's Place Food Pantry
- David John Louison Foundation
- Deaconess Home
- Dennis Housing Authority
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Mental Retardation
- Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Project
- Dorn Davies Senior Center
- DTA-DV Specialist
- Edgartown Council on Aging
- Edwina Martin House
- Elder Services of Cape Cod & Islands
- Elders First
- Falmouth Human Services
- Falmouth Senior Center
- Family Connections of the Nemasket Group, Inc.
- Fall River Family Resource Center
- Family Nonviolence, Inc.
- First Step Inn
- Gay Head Council on Aging
- Greater New Bedford Women's Center
- Greater Taunton Council on Alcoholism
- Halifax Council on Aging
- Hanover Council on Aging
- Hanson Food Pantry
- Health 1st Community Center
- Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts
- High Point Treatment Center
- Home of Hope
- Hospice Care of Nantucket
- Housing Assistance Program (HAP)
- Independence House
- Interfaith Council
- Island Councils on Aging
- Kennedy Donovan Center
- Life Center for the Handicapped
- Lighthouse Health Access Alliance
- Lower Cape Outreach Council
- Lower-Outer Cape Community Coalition
- Mainspring Shelter
- Market Ministries
- Martha's Vineyard Community Services
- Mentor Inc.
- Monomoy Community Services, Inc.
- My Brother's Keeper
- Nantucket AIDS Network
• Nantucket Cottage Hospital
• Nantucket Family Planning
• Nauset, Inc.
• New Bedford Council on Addiction
• New Bedford Prevention Partnership
• New Hope, Inc.
• New Vision Organization
• Oak Bluffs Council on Aging
• Old Colony Elderly Services, Inc.
• Outer Cape Health Services, Inc.
• PACE, Inc.
• Parks & Recreation Commission
• Pembroke Board of Health
• People Inc.
• Plymouth Council on Aging
• Plymouth Family Network
• Plymouth Veterans Service
• Saltmarsh Senior Center
• Sandwich Council on Aging
• Self Help Energy Office
• Seven Hills Community Services
• South Bay Mental Health
• South Shore Women's Center
• Southshore Haitian United for Progress
• SSTAR Transitional Assistance Program
• Steppingstone, Inc.
• The ARC of Northern Bristol County
• Tisbury Council on Aging
• Truro Council on Aging
• Up-Island Council on Aging
• Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc.
• Yarmouth Council on Aging