



Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project

Results from the Los Angeles Needs Assessment

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harder+company
community research

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Introduction

In April of 2012, the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation (LAFLA) responded to the FY 2012 Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project (CFDA #16.582) Request for Proposals (RFP) from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). The goal of this solicitation was to fund six sites around the country “to develop comprehensive, wraparound, pro bono legal assistance networks to meet the range of legal needs of crime victims.”¹

LAFLA convened a partnership of service providers (see pages 4-5 for a description of each organization), each of whom offer a variety of legal and other social services in Los Angeles and contribute a valuable perspective on the needs of victims.

Together, the Los Angeles partnership of service providers, named the Legal Collaborative for Survivors, outlined the following goal and objectives in their response to the Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project RFP:

GOAL: To develop a seamless legal services network for victims of crime in Los Angeles

- + Objective 1 – to conduct a needs assessment in the following high crime areas of Los Angeles County: City of Los Angeles (the Central city: Koreatown, greater Downtown and South Los Angeles), unincorporated parts of Los Angeles County that border and overlap with the City of Los Angeles (East Los Angeles and South Los Angeles) and the City of Long Beach that will determine gaps in legal services for crime victims in these areas.**
- + Objective 2 – to develop an implementation plan including proposed partners and services, procedures, protocols, and policies for providing victims with necessary services and methods for inter-agency referrals with appropriate consideration of language and cultural sensitivity.**

The LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors was awarded the grant by OVC in November of 2012 and project work commenced. The first phase of this demonstration project was a 15-month planning period during which the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors, along with the selected research partner, Harder+Company Community Research, developed and conducted a needs assessment in a defined geographical service area. The results of this needs assessment will serve as the foundation for the development of a detailed plan that includes policies, procedures, and protocols for providing LA crime victims with necessary legal services and referrals within the network. The methods, results and recommendations of the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors, are detailed in the pages that follow.

¹ Office for Victims of Crime. (2012). *FY 2012 Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network Demonstration Project* (OVC-2012-3190).

LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors Partners

The Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors included seven organizations that work with victims of crime in various capacities throughout Los Angeles. The Collaborative organizations (in alphabetical order) include:

- + **Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles (Advancing Justice - LA)** is the largest nonprofit legal services and civil rights organization in the country that is specifically focused on the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community. It is located in the Los Angeles Central area. Through its Asian Language Legal Intake Project, Advancing Justice - LA has the capacity to facilitate numerous Asian languages via toll free helplines, including Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Thai, and Tagalog. This language capacity will allow Advancing Justice - LA staff to assist individuals, in their native language, with the following legal issues: identity theft, consumer fraud, financial fraud, predatory lending, family law, immigration, landlord/tenant, foreclosure defense, and public benefits.
- + **Disability Rights California (DRC)** is a nonprofit law center that has several offices in Los Angeles and throughout the state of California and is dedicated to advancing the rights of Californians with disabilities housing, employment, transportation, benefits, education, technology, voting, community integration, and personal autonomy. DRC investigates allegations of abuse and neglect; pursues legal, administrative and other remedies; does legislative advocacy; and provides technical support, information, referrals, and training.
- + **Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)** is the lead agency on the project and is the frontline law firm for poor and low-income people in Los Angeles County and Long Beach. LAFLA has a highly diverse staff with the language capability — Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), French, Korean, Khmer, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Farsi—and cultural sensitivity to serve clients from the many different populations represented in Los Angeles. LAFLA has seven substantive law units (consumer, immigration, family law, housing law, employment law, government benefits, and community economic development) and a unit that ensures that Asian and Pacific Islanders access the full range of services in their native languages.
- + **The Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF)** is a nonprofit agency specializing in assisting Asian and Pacific Islanders who are surviving sexual assault and/or domestic violence. CPAF has a 24 hour multi-lingual hotline in over 30 API languages/dialects, an emergency shelter, transitional housing, a children's program, comprehensive case management, counseling, court accompaniment, and a wide range of linguistically and culturally sensitive victim services. CPAF's prevention and community education program's work build healthy relationships and communities.
- + **Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN)** is located in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles, conducts daily outreach and community education among extremely low-income residents throughout Downtown and South Los Angeles, and operates a weekly legal clinic in partnership with LAFLA that serves residents from the greater Downtown and South Los Angeles communities. LACAN works to promote and defend human rights in our target communities and beyond, with emphasis on housing rights, civil rights, food justice, and women's rights. Victim's rights fall within all of these projects.

- + **Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ)** is a nonprofit legal aid organization located on Los Angeles' east side, whose mission is to fight for the rights of vulnerable families and advocate for a more just legal system. LACLJ offers holistic, wraparound services in four program areas - domestic violence, immigration, teen legal advocacy, and access to justice - and focuses on providing in-depth individualized services to vulnerable populations who face significant challenges in understanding their legal issues, including undocumented immigrants, teens, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. All LACLJ program staff, including attorneys, are bilingual in Spanish and English.

- + As part of the world's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community service organization, the **Los Angeles LGBT Center's** legal services division responds to the needs of thousands of community members each year by providing legal help (hate crime, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking legal services), transgender employment based legal and advocacy services, and consultations in most areas of laws to the LGBT communities in or around Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles LGBT Center is a current and founding member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects (NCAVP), a coalition of organizations around the country working to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within LGBT communities.

Los Angeles Context

It comes as no surprise that crime in Los Angeles (LA) County - the most populous in the nation - is complex and diverse in nature. Crime rates in LA vary by area and type of crime. According to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), whose jurisdiction covers the entire City of Los Angeles, there has been a 1.4 percent decrease in violent and property crimes from 2011 to 2012.² The LA County Sheriff's Department (LASD), whose jurisdiction covers certain cities in LA County as well as unincorporated areas of the County, reports a 3.8 percent increase in violent and nonviolent crimes between 2011 and 2012.³ Both LAPD and LASD statistics show an increase in rape from 2011 to 2012, with 4.9 percent and 4.7 percent increases, respectively.

Adding to the complexity of crime patterns in LA, a 2008 report by the Economic Roundtable found that the rate of violent crimes is over 100 percent higher and the rate of nonviolent crimes is 50 percent higher in neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated compared to other parts of the City.⁴ The crime data provided by the Los Angeles Times' Mapping LA project provides additional evidence of this concentration of crime, revealing that the most violent neighborhoods tend to have higher percentages of people of color (including immigrants), lower median incomes, and lower levels of education relative to less violent parts of the County.⁵ By virtue of living in these communities, poor, uneducated, people of color are the most vulnerable to being a victim of crime in LA and also the least likely to have the resources to cope with the aftermath. These are the marginalized communities that the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors intends to serve. An effective collaborative must take a holistic approach that takes various intersections of oppression into account.

Existing and Emerging Crime Challenges in Los Angeles

Despite generally declining crime rates in LA, there are certain types of crimes that have persisted and, in some cases, even increased in recent years. Often, these crimes disproportionately affect marginalized communities to whom wraparound legal services in Los Angeles could be targeted. Specifically, some of these crimes, trends, and populations include:

- Human trafficking
- Hate crimes (specifically targeting sexual orientation and homeless individuals)
- Domestic violence and sexual assault (specifically in new immigrant communities)
- Crimes targeting people with disabilities
- Elder abuse
- Financial fraud and identity theft

² Los Angeles Police Department. (2013, December 31). *Crime and Arrest Weekly Statistics: Crimes Year to Date*. Retrieved from <http://www.lapdonline.org>

³ Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. *Department 2012 Synopsis*. Retrieved from <http://shq.lasdnews.net/CrimeStats/yir9600/yir2012/dept/synopsis.htm>

⁴ Economic Roundtable. (2008). *Concentrated Poverty Neighborhoods in Los Angeles*. Retrieved from http://www.economicrt.org/pub/cons_pov/Concentrated_Poverty_Report.pdf

⁵ Los Angeles Times. (n.d.). *Mapping L.A.*. Retrieved from: <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/>

Human Trafficking

LA's vast size and enormous demand for labor make it one of the key destination cities for immigrants in the United States (US). The US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General reports that California harbors 3 of the 13 highest sex trafficking areas in the nation – LA, San Francisco, and San Diego.⁶ LA also houses a plethora of marginalized groups such as undocumented immigrants, runaway and homeless youth, victims of trauma and abuse, and refugees and individuals fleeing conflict. According to the Polaris Project, a leading organization in fighting human trafficking, these marginalized groups are especially vulnerable to victimization and have complex social service needs.⁷

Hate Crimes

The LA County Commission on Human Relations' Hate Crime Report states that 462 hate crimes were reported in LA County in 2012.⁸ This figure, however, is likely much higher due to underreporting. A national study by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) in 2014 showed that only 45 percent of survivors reported their incidents to the police and 32 percent of those reported hostile attitudes from the police.⁹ Law enforcement's inability to appropriately respond to hate crimes leaves communities feeling isolated, vulnerable and angry at the lack of protection and discourages future reporting of crimes.

The violent nature of hate crimes based on sexual orientation in Los Angeles is reason for concern. Approximately 28 percent of the hate crimes in LA in 2012 were based on sexual orientation. Gay men were the target of most of these crimes (91% of the time) and the crimes were most often violent in nature (79% of the time).¹⁰ Unfortunately, victimization outcomes are the worst for transgender individuals. Of the 18 anti-LGBTQ homicides in 2013, more than half (72.22%) of the homicide victims were transgender women, with most (66.67%) being transgender women of color (NCAVP, 2013).¹¹

Many LGBTQ survivors of hate crimes in LA have several intersecting marginalized identities such as racial identity, gender identity, socio-economic status, immigration status and disability status. According to the American Psychological Society, violent hate crimes against the LGBTQ community pose risks of psychological distress for victims and send messages to a given group that they are unwelcome and unsafe in particular environments.¹²

The homeless are another group at high risk of violent victimization. Although the homeless are not currently recognized as a protected group by California or federal hate crime laws, many homeless advocacy groups have

⁶ United States Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Audit Division. (2009). *The Federal Bureau of Investigation's efforts to combat crimes against children, Audit Report 09-09*. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/FBI/a0908/final.pdf>

⁷ The Polaris Project. (2014). *The victims*. Retrieved from <http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview/the-victims>

⁸ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. (2012). *2012 Hate crimes report*. Retrieved from http://www.lahumanrelations.org/hatecrime/reports/2012_hateCrimeReport.pdf

⁹ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2013). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected hate violence in 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/2013_ncavp_hvreport_final.pdf

¹⁰ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2013). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected hate violence in 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/2013_ncavp_hvreport_final.pdf

¹¹ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2013). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected hate violence in 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/2013_ncavp_hvreport_final.pdf

¹² American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *The psychology of hate crimes*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/violence/hate-crimes-faq.pdf>

argued that they should be. A 2014 report by the National Coalition for Homeless examined crimes against homeless people by housed people that appeared to be motivated by bias against the victim due to his or her housing status. They documented over 100 of these violent incidents in 2013 across 26 states and Puerto Rico and found that 30 percent of cases occurred in California.¹³ With a homeless population in Los Angeles that has increased in recent years, legal services for homeless victims of crime will continue to be an important facet of the larger movement to provide services to victims of crime. In order to effectively serve homeless survivors of violence, the issues surrounding homelessness, such the lack of affordable housing, poverty, domestic violence, mental health issues and addiction must also be taken into account.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Immigrant Communities

According to the US Census' American Community Survey population statistics from 2008 to 2012, about 35 percent of LA County's residents are foreign born persons.¹⁴ LA houses the largest Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population in the US and the largest population of Koreans, Cambodians and Salvadorans outside of their respective home countries. A 2002 California-wide survey by the National Asian Women's Health Organization found that Korean families in LA County experience very high rates of domestic violence among all the diverse Asian groups.¹⁵

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are over 3 million incidents of reported domestic violence annually.¹⁶ S.A.F.E. LA reports that in 2013 there were 18,420 domestic violence and related crimes in LA City alone.¹⁷ Immigrant communities that experience domestic violence and sexual assault face many obstacles in reporting abuse and seeking help. Language barriers, financial dependence, lack of information and threat of deportation keep victims from coming forward. To illustrate this point, the 2002 NAWHO survey examining awareness, prevalence, and access to services found that API women lack awareness of behaviors that constitute sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and stalking.¹⁸ This lack of awareness, combined with cultural barriers and stigmas, lead to an extremely low utilization of support services.

Providing services for limited English proficient (LEP) communities is an important component in providing culturally competent services for victims coming forward to seek help. According to the US Census Bureau, more than of 56 percent of residents five years and older spoke a language other than English at home from 2008 to 2012. The 2013 National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project survey on police response to immigrant crime victims found that a police report was never taken in roughly 10 percent (n=1,356) of immigrant sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking victims' calls.¹⁹ The National Institute of

¹³ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2014). *Vulnerable to hate: A survey of hate crimes & violence committed against the homeless in 2013*. Retrieved from <http://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Hate-Crimes-2013-1.pdf>

¹⁴ United States Census Bureau. *State and County QuickFacts*. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06037.html>

¹⁵ National Asian Women's Health Organization. (2002). *Silent epidemic: A survey of violence among young Asian women*. Retrieved from http://new.vawnet.org/summary.php?doc_id=609&find_type=web_desc_GC

¹⁶ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2014). *Special report: Nonfatal domestic violence 2003-2012*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4984>

¹⁷ S.A.F.E. LA. *Statistics 2013*. Retrieved from <http://www.safela.org/statistics-2/>

¹⁸ National Asian Women's Health Organization. (2002). *Silent epidemic: A survey of violence among young Asian women*. Retrieved from http://new.vawnet.org/summary.php?doc_id=609&find_type=web_desc_GC

¹⁹ Lee, N., Quinones, D., Ammar, N., & Orloff, L. (2013). National Survey of Service Providers on Police Response to Immigrant Crime Victims, U Visa Certification and Language Access. *National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.niwap.org/reports/Police-Response-U-Visas-Language-Access-Report-4.6.13.pdf>

Justice finds that 67 percent of police and court officials believe that recent immigrants report crimes less frequently than other victims because of fear or retaliation, lack of information on the criminal justice system and language barriers.²⁰

People with Disabilities

Another group of victims whose crimes are vastly under-reported are people with disabilities (PWD). Sobsey and Varnhaggen note that identifying abuse in PWD is complicated by factors such as cognitive deficits, which may hinder recognition of unlawful activity, dependence on others to assist with activities of daily living, and verbal or physical limitations making it difficult to defend against abuse.²¹ Disability Rights California (DRC) estimates that the true rate for victimization for people with developmental disabilities ranges between four to ten times that of the non-disabled population and that crimes against PWD are also more likely to be violent, recurring, and to occur over longer periods of time.²² Lack of education and support to recognize and resist abuse make PWD more susceptible to predatory behavior from service providers and persons they know.

Stefan found that about 80 to 85 percent of crimes towards institution residents go unreported; 95.5 percent of serious crimes committed against PWD, 70 percent of crimes against people with severe mental retardation and 97 percent of sexual assault cases involving a victim with a developmental disability are not reported.²³

Elderly Population

According to estimates from the US Census Bureau, LA County's senior population is expected to double in the next two decades from 1,145,721 in 2012 to over two million in 2030. Given the large immigrant base in LA, minorities in this age group represent the fastest growing group.

The steady rise and vulnerability of LA's aging population presents unique service needs. Sasha Lala with Adult Protective Services estimates that there are between 36,000 to 37,000 reported cases of elder abuse annually in LA County.²⁴ Although the number of reported cases is high, many older adults deny the abuse. According to Bell Chen with the LA District Attorney's Office, the elderly are deterred from reporting various forms of elder abuse and financial exploitation due to factors such as isolation, fear of being put into a nursing home and physical and cognitive limitations.²⁵

In addition to problems with reporting, meeting the needs of seniors can be complex due to the devastating outcomes resulting from abuse. Victimization can include physical injuries, depression, shame and financial

²⁰ National Institute of Justice. (2014). *Immigrants as Victims*. Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/topics/victims-victimization/Pages/immigrants.aspx>

²¹ Sobsey, D., & Varnhaggen, C., (1991). *Sexual abuse and exploitation of disabled individuals. Child sexual abuse: Critical perspectives on prevention, intervention, and treatment*. C.R. Bagley & R.J. Thomlinson, (Ed.). Wall & Emerson, Inc. Toronto.

²² Disability Rights California. (2003). *Abuse and neglect of adults with developmental disabilities: A public health priority for the state of California*. Retrieved from http://www.sccd.ca.gov/res/docs/pdf/Publications/Abuse_and_Neglect_WhitePaper.pdf

²³ Stefan, S., (2005). *Crime victimization in adults with severe mental illness: Comparison with the National Crime Victimization Survey*. Archives of General Psychiatry.

²⁴ Lala, S. (2014). Financial elder abuse. How APS can help – the extent of APS's jurisdiction and how APS coordinates their work with other agencies. *Public Counsel*. Panel discussion on elder abuse at Public Counsel in Los Angeles, California.

²⁵ Chen, B. (2014). Criminal financial elder abuse. *Public Counsel*. Presentation on elder abuse at Public Counsel in Los Angeles, California.

problems.²⁶ Much needs to be done to educate service providers on how to adequately respond to the growing needs of older adults.

Financial Fraud

Financial fraud is common in many metropolitan cities like LA, particularly with vulnerable groups such as the elderly. According to the LA County District Attorney's Office, one in five seniors has been a victim of a financial crime. In her work with Bet Tzedek, a non-profit legal services organization in Los Angeles, attorney Janet Morris has found that perpetrators are getting more sophisticated. Real estate fraud and abuses in the use of power of attorney are some common types of fraud that are being committed against older adults.²⁷

Deputy District Attorney Kathy Showers deems identity theft the fastest growing crime in LA.²⁸ California leads all states in the number of computer systems hacked and victims of identity theft.²⁹ Javelin Strategy and Research estimates that there were 13.1 million US adult victims of identity theft in 2013, with Californians representing over 8 percent (1.6 million) of that number.³⁰ CBS Local News reports that California is the top target in the US for international criminal enterprises that operate from safe havens in other parts of the world.³¹

²⁶ Comijs, H.C., Penninx, B.W.J.H., Knipscheer, KPM, & van Tilburg W. (1999). Psychological distress in victims of elder mistreatment: The effects of social support and coping. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 54(B), 240-245.

²⁷ Morris, J. (2014). *Overview of financial elder abuse and current trends*. Presentation on elder abuse at Public Counsel in Los Angeles, California.

²⁸ Identity Theft 911 (2008). *White Paper: Identity Theft in California*. Retrieved from <http://www.idt911.com/KnowledgeCenter/ResearchAndReports/Whitepapers.aspx>

²⁹ CBS Sacramento. (March 20, 2014). Report: California businesses targeted by cyber criminals. Retrieved from <http://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2014/03/20/report-california-businesses-targeted-by-cyber-criminals>

³⁰ Javelin Strategy and Research. (2014). Identity fraud report. Retrieved from <https://www.javelinstrategy.com/brochure/314>

³¹ CBS Sacramento. (March 20, 2014). Report: California businesses targeted by cyber criminals. Retrieved from <http://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2014/03/20/report-california-businesses-targeted-by-cyber-criminals>

Needs Assessment Methods

The goal of the OVC Wraparound Victim Legal Assistance Network needs assessment was to gain a better understanding of the needs of crime victims in Los Angeles and develop a comprehensive, collaborative model for delivering wraparound legal assistance services with the ability to meet the legal needs of victims of crime. With the desire to reach the most vulnerable communities who are the most likely to be victimized but the least likely to seek help, the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors elected to conduct in-depth interviews of key community stakeholders and victims of crime as the primary method of data collection. A short demographic post-interview questionnaire was also administered to both groups of interviewees.

The needs assessment was guided by the following research questions:

- Who are the vulnerable populations? (For the purposes of this needs assessment, “vulnerable populations” were defined as groups of people who are at high risk for victimization, but when victimized do not access services.)
- What are the services needed?
- What are the barriers to accessing these services?
- What kind of outreach is needed to make people aware of these services?
- What types of resources are needed to help people overcome the barriers to accessing these services?
- What partnerships can be formed to improve and provide legal services?

Harder+Company Community Research and the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors co-developed semi-structured interview guides based on previous legal need assessment interviews and the goal of the current needs assessment (see Appendix A). The Partners’ knowledge of the populations, communities, and substantive content areas were paramount in the instrument design process. In general, interview questions were designed to assess existing services for victims of crime, gaps in available services, and barriers to accessing services. Based on their knowledge of the community assessment areas and the ethnic groups who live there, interview guides and consent forms were translated and professionally certified in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), Khmer, and Korean.

The entire study protocol, including the interview guides, the post-interview questionnaires and all translations thereof, were approved by the Office for Victims of Crime and Western IRB prior to the start of recruitment.

Interviews were conducted by members of the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors and the Harder+Company research team during the span of eight months. Every interviewer completed an online human subjects training and certification through a local university, National Institutes of Health, or the National Institute of Justice. Interviewers from organizations in the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors also completed a comprehensive recruitment and qualitative interviewing training, conducted by the Harder+Company research team prior to the beginning of the participant recruitment phase. In addition to these initial trainings, monthly debriefing sessions were held for interviewers to discuss and seek feedback about questions or problems that came up during the interviewing process.

Recruitment and Participants

Given the size of Los Angeles County, both in population size and in geography, the following areas of Los Angeles County were identified as primary target areas for recruitment of interview participants:

- Koreatown
- Greater Downtown Los Angeles
- South Los Angeles
- East Los Angeles
- The City of Long Beach

These areas were selected for three primary reasons. First, using census data and data on crimes reported to the police, these areas were identified as high crime, high poverty areas, suggesting a high level of victimization and need for victim services. Second, the Partner organizations have a physical presence (such as an office location) and/or experience working in these communities, which would facilitate the recruitment of participants for the assessment and ultimately the wraparound legal services the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors intends to offer. And lastly, these areas are homes to either more isolated ethnic groups (such as the refugee Cambodian population in Long Beach) or known vulnerable groups (such as a large homeless population in Downtown Los Angeles).

Stakeholders and Local Experts

The LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors sought the input of community stakeholders and other local experts to provide information about groups most in need of legal services and service gaps in their communities.

Recruitment of stakeholders began with the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors establishing a list of key local stakeholders that worked in the target communities or had expertise working with the demographic communities who live there (for example the homeless population in the Skid Row area of Downtown). To be included in these interviews, stakeholders must have been: 1) age 18 or older; 2) working (or have worked in the past 5 years) in one of the five target communities; and 3) identified as key community leaders and experts who have special knowledge of the crimes occurring within the assessment area, the population living within the assessment area, and/or the community assessment area itself. This group included staff at local organizations that provide social services to victims of crime, victim advocates, and organizations that provide legal services.

From this list, the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors reached out via phone or email and invited stakeholders to participate in an interview. Stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed were consented and interviewed, typically by phone, by one of the members of the interview team. Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes to 1 hour. After the interview, stakeholders completed the post-interview questionnaire also by phone, or if they preferred, it was emailed to them and they sent it back to the interviewer upon completion. Each stakeholder was offered a gift card in the amount of \$15 in appreciation for his/her time.

A total of 37 community stakeholders in Los Angeles were interviewed for the needs assessment.

Victims of Crime

The input of crime victims in Los Angeles was sought to provide critical insight about the types of crimes residents experienced in the target communities and the barriers they face to seeking legal services.

The LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors began by recruiting victims of crime through their own organizations (typically by reaching out to former clients). Recruitment via this method proved to be challenging and some additional interviewees were referred through a snowball sampling method. When there was a perceived conflict of interest or sensitivity about privacy issues, a Collaborative organization would refer a potential interviewee to another Collaborative organization to conduct the actual interview. LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors organizations also referred potential interviewees to other Collaborative organizations when another organization had specialized language capacity and/or specialized experience working with the demographic community to which the victim belonged (for example a victim of crime with a disability might have been referred to an interviewer from Disability Rights California).

In order to be included in these interviews, victims of crime must have been: 1) age 18 or older; 2) able to self-consent; 3) NOT currently receiving legal services; and 4) able to speak of the identified interview languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese or Khmer.

Victims of crime who agreed to be interviewed were consented and interviewed in person by one of the members of the interview team. Interviews typically lasted 1-2 hours and were audio-recorded with the interviewees consent. After the interview, victims of crime completed the post-interview questionnaire. Each interview participant was offered a gift card in the amount of \$15 in appreciation for his/her time.

A total of 27 victims of crime were interviewed for the needs assessment.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed by the interviewer or another member of the interview team and translated to English, as necessary. Interview transcripts and audio files were uploaded to a secure website for analysis by the Harder+Company research team. Post-interview questionnaires were scanned and uploaded to the same site.

Based on Strauss and Corbin's method of open coding and Miles and Huberman's concept of data reduction, a double coding method was used to analyze all interview transcripts.^{32,33} Two members of the Harder+Company research team coded an initial set of interviews from each group (stakeholders and victims of crime) and then compared, discussed, and clarified themes until coding consensus was reached and coding frameworks were finalized. These two researchers then independently coded and analyzed the remaining interview transcripts. The results of the two independent analyses were compared to ensure a consistent understanding of the coding framework. From there, the key themes that emerged in both coders' analyses were identified and summarized.

Harder+Company used SPSS Version 19 to analyze the data from the post-interview questionnaires by conducting frequency analyses.

³² Strauss, A., Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

³³ Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Needs Assessment Results

Interviews with community stakeholders and victims of crime provided key insights about the varied nature of crime and victimization in Los Angeles County. Specifically, these interviews shed light on the experiences victims face during and after their victimizations, the kinds of crimes affecting the five target communities of Los Angeles, and the ways in which victims are most likely to access services. This section highlights key findings of the Needs Assessment, which will guide the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors in developing an implementation plan for wraparound legal services in the County.

Participant Characteristics

The LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors conducted in-depth interviews with 64 people, including 37 stakeholders and 27 victims of crime, between July 2013 and April 2014. The characteristics of these two groups are described in the sections below.

Victims of Crime Characteristics

Victims of crime interviewed for the needs assessment were a part of diverse socio-demographic and geographic communities. Similar proportions of crime victims were male (48%) and female (52%, including one transgender woman) and their ages ranged from 26 to 81 years old (median age was 44.5 years).

Consistent with the 5 target regions of Los Angeles identified as starting points for the needs assessment data collection, crime victims reported living in the following high needs areas of Los Angeles: Boyle Heights/East LA, Downtown LA (including Skid Row), Hollywood/West Hollywood, Central LA, South LA, the South Bay Region (including South Bay, Torrance, Inglewood, and Wilmington), and the City of Long Beach. In addition to representing these varied geographic communities, victims also represented six distinct marginalized groups: immigrants/refugees, homeless, elderly, people of color, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ community. Most victims belonged to more than one of these groups.

Victims of crime represented multiple races and ethnicities, with Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino most represented (see Exhibit 1). While the majority (58%) of crime victims spoke English as their primary language, others spoke Spanish (15%), Chinese (12%), Korean (12%), or Khmer (4%) (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 1: Race and Ethnicity (n=27)

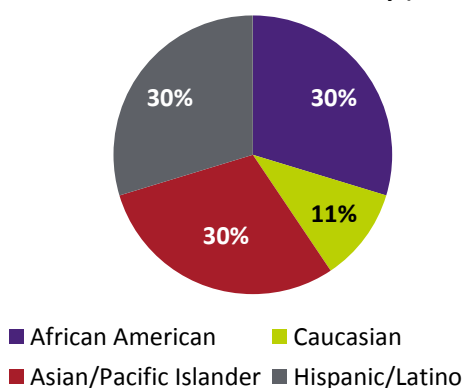
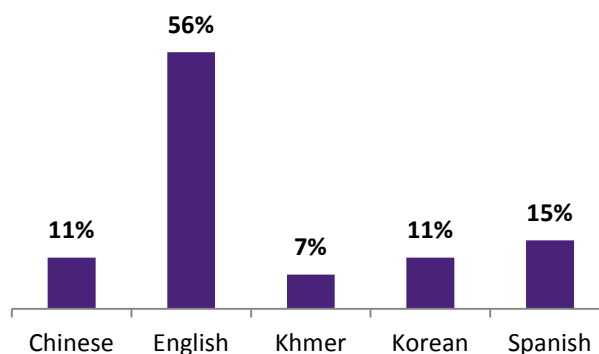


Exhibit 2: Primary Language (n=27)



The victims interviewed for this needs assessment were among the very poor in Los Angeles. Of those who disclosed their income, 95 percent earned less than \$25,000 annually. About 20 percent of crime victims reported living in subsidized housing (e.g. Section 8, transitional housing, senior living facilities) and 20 percent reported being homeless. About one-quarter of victims of crime interviewed (26%) had less than a 9th grade education or had not received a high school diploma. The remaining victims of crime reported that they had graduated high school (35%), attended some college but not received a degree (17%), or had an Associate's or Bachelor's degree (22%).

Stakeholder Characteristics

The stakeholders interviewed for the needs assessment worked for many different nonprofit and community organizations in Los Angeles, holding positions such as case manager, staff attorney, nonprofit director, physician, and independent consultant. Stakeholders had many years of experience; most (76%) had worked in their fields for at least five years, and some (18%) had worked in their field for over 20 years. Nearly half of stakeholders worked in three or more regions across the County. Additionally, about 25 percent of stakeholders worked in Central LA or Downtown, with many of them working on Skid Row specifically.

"I think there's a whole range of these legal services which are chronically lacking for many of the communities that I work with because they can't afford to get quality legal services."

~Community Stakeholder

Overview of Victimization in Los Angeles County

During interviews, stakeholders and victims of crime spoke about a wide range of issues and crimes which they (in the case of victims) or their clients (in the case of stakeholders) have faced. **Across all interviewees, the most commonly cited victimizations included: intimate partner violence, property and other violent crimes, and police misconduct.** Intimate partner violence emerged as the crime reported most frequently by both victims and stakeholders (as affecting the clients they serve), yet one for which very few victims sought services until after the domestic violence had continued for many months or even years. Nearly 75 percent of stakeholders noted that intimate partner violence affected "a lot" of people in the communities they served. Further, of the 27 victims of crimes who were interviewed, 8 reported having experienced some form of intimate partner violence.

Stakeholders also noted financial crimes and fraud as issues frequently faced by their clients, though these were less often mentioned by victims in their interviews. In addition to the top four crimes mentioned above, other commonly cited legal issues included housing disputes (such as wrongful evictions), sexual assault/rape, and immigration-related concerns.

Duration and Characteristics of Victimization

Victims of crime often faced multiple victimizations and legal issues over an extended period of time. Interviewees spoke about issues that occurred as long ago as the 1980s and as recently as a few months prior to the interview. However, the majority of the crimes discussed (80%) occurred in the last five years and almost half (47%) of crimes that interviewees spoke about occurred within the last two years.

Crimes by People in Positions of Power

About a third of victims mentioned having been victimized by a non-relative in a position of power, such as **members of law enforcement, property owners or housing managers, and employers.**

Case example: While working for the same employer for 10 years, one victim shared that he was not given any rest breaks and sometimes was not allowed to take a lunch break. Because this victim was both undocumented and HIV positive, he feared that if he complained or reported his employer, he could lose his job and would not be able to regain employment.

Los Angeles crime victims faced a wide range of crimes. Some were committed by intimate partners, others by complete strangers. Some crimes involved physical harm while others involved psychological harm or a combination of both. About half of victims spoke about isolated victimizations, for example a burglary or assault, while the other half spoke about ongoing victimizations, especially when discussing intimate partner violence and police brutality, misconduct or discrimination as well as abuse by an employer.

On average, each victim discussed two to three types of recent victimizations and often these incidences occurred concurrently or consecutively. For example, one interviewee who was homeless recounted her experiences as a victim of a hit-and-run, as well her experiences as a victim of multiple rapes since she was a child and continuing into her adulthood. In this case, the woman had experienced multiple types of victimization throughout her life.

Stakeholders also spoke about their clients' concurrent victimizations, especially when discussing clients who were elderly or disabled. One stakeholder, for example, shared a story about an elderly Cambodian couple with limited English proficiency that was being victimized by their children who were cashing their parents' benefits checks and emotionally abusing and isolating them.

Overall, victims of crime belonged to at least one marginalized or disenfranchised group. Their experiences reflected many different types of victimizations, in both the criminal or legal sense as well as the broader sense of the word. While the types of victimization varied, a few key themes emerged from the interviews, which are discussed in the following section.

On average, each victim interviewed noted 2-3 types of recent victimization.

A Closer Look at Victimization in Los Angeles County

Across both victims of crime and stakeholders, the most common forms of victimization reported were intimate partner violence, police brutality or misconduct, and property and other violent crimes. Victims almost always reported that they were affected by these crimes in multiple ways, including financially, emotionally, and physically. There were no observed differences in the kinds of crimes victims spoke about based on the geographic area of Los Angeles in which they lived. Trends were more commonly observed based on victims' demographic characteristics, such as their racial or ethnic group, whether they were homeless, immigrants, disabled, LGBTQ, and so on. This section provides a more detailed account of the characteristics of the most frequently discussed types of victimization and the trends observed within and between them.

Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence was by far the most common form of victimization discussed during the needs assessment interviews. Multiple stakeholders talked about intimate partner violence being a problem in the communities they serve and several victims of crime, both LGBTQ and straight, identified intimate partner

violence as a crime they had experienced. Similar themes were observed between LGBTQ and straight victims, but they also departed on key points that may be important when considering the services needed for each group.

- + **Intimate partner violence in opposite-sex relationships often lasted several years, creating social isolation and financial dependence.** Female interviewees who discussed being victims of violence at the hands of their male partners detailed long-term, abusive relationships, sometimes lasting more than 10 years. One of these long-term victims described:

I went to a parenting class...I met some women that were part of a DV [domestic violence] group also. One of the women came to my house and when she saw how my husband was with me she told me that I was a domestic violence victim. I was so stressed I lost my hair. I did not have any financial state to leave him at that time.

Victims of intimate partner violence in opposite-sex relationships spoke about the stigma associated with their victimization. One victim noted that she did not like sharing what was happening behind “closed doors” to her friends and family. Another shared that she did not want to worry her family by letting on that she was in an abusive relationship. It often took these victims years before sharing their experiences with their friends and family, and this typically happened only after the victims had left their partners.

- + **Victims of intimate partner violence in LGBTQ relationships also dealt with stigma and shame, but faced the additional challenge of not being taken seriously by police.** Interviewees across both stakeholder and victims groups stated opinions that law enforcement in Los Angeles lacks education about the LGBTQ community. One stakeholder, for example, talked about a victim of crime who was arrested along with his abusive partner. Another victim noted that he did not bother calling the police during his most recent incident of intimate partner violence because of his negative past encounters with police as a result of him being a gay man in a same-sex relationship.

In addition to feeling unsupported and misunderstood by law enforcement, victims of crime and stakeholders both spoke about the added stigma of domestic violence in the LGBTQ community. As one victim noted in his interview:

Domestic violence is typically seen as a ‘women’s issue’, so domestic violence among same sex [male] couples is not taken seriously. And people in the [LGBTQ] community don’t really talk about it, either.

Stigma and shame may serve as a barrier for intimate partner survivors in coming forward to seek needed services. Financial dependence is also an obstacle and victims may benefit from services that help them establish themselves independently (e.g. computer and job training, resume assistance, budgeting and financial planning). The LGBTQ community may also need a safe alternative to calling the police and/or benefit from specialized training for police officers around how to properly respond to LGBTQ domestic violence calls.

Experiences with Property Crime and Violent Crimes

Victims of crime who were interviewed for this needs assessment discussed being the victim of a range of property and violent crimes including: hate crimes, assaults, hit and runs, and burglaries. Despite the diversity of crimes in this category, two key themes emerged:

- + **Property crimes and violent crimes were most often isolated events committed by strangers.** Contrary to the characteristics of the intimate partner violence incidents discussed above, interviewees who were affected by crimes in this category were most often victimized during a single incident and by people they did not know. Examples of these incidents include: a hit and run experienced by a homeless woman walking near Skid Row, an armed robbery of a victim's store near Koreatown, and assault experienced by a victim from a nearby business owner in South LA.
- + **Victims are more likely to speak out and seek help for property and violent crimes committed by strangers.** Victims of crimes committed by strangers are often conferred "legitimate victim" status that victims of crimes by friends, intimates, or family members are not. This generally is the result of the belief that victims of crimes by strangers are blameless, whereas victims of crime by friends, intimates or family may have played some role in their own victimization. This legitimacy gives victims permission to tell people what happened to them, to report the crime to police, and to seek supportive help as needed, as they don't face the same stigmas or shame. This phenomenon was observed in interviews with victims of crime in this needs assessment. Most interviewees who were the victims of property or violent crimes by strangers reached out to their families for emotional and/or financial support. The way victims were treated by law enforcement varied case-by-case (see the following section), but victims were more willing to engage law enforcement or seek assistance from local organizations in these instances. For example, one man shared his experience of being the victim of armed robbery at the store he owned. He called the police and when the perpetrator was caught, he pressed charges and eventually the case against the perpetrator was taken to trial, where the victim was able to testify about the incident.

Victims of single incidents of property or violent crime committed by strangers appeared more likely to report these crimes as they more readily identified as a victim. However, this also assumes that the victim does not fear retaliation for reporting the crime, as was the case with the victims of crime we interviewed.

Negatives Interactions with the Police

Mistreatment by law enforcement was a major theme across interviews. This was somewhat unexpected as there were no questions in the interview guides that specifically asked about interactions with the police. However, multiple victims and community stakeholders talked about negative encounters with the police, including discriminatory behavior, verbal and physical abuse and other forms of misconduct. While victims didn't necessarily identify their experiences with police as crimes, it is evident that interactions with law enforcement played a large role in both the victimization and re-victimization of some interviewees. Two overarching themes emerged in the context of negative interactions with police:

- + **First, inappropriate police behavior was often normalized.** Victims expressed a somewhat resigned attitude, expressing there isn't anything they can do to address or fight back against perceived misconduct by police. For example, victims often spoke about police discrimination due to their race, gender, or sexual orientation, but spoke of it as the norm in the County. One victim noted:

I've been in many situations with the police which makes me weary of calling them. For example, I was driving into a fast food restaurant... before I could do anything, the police had their guns on me. They both hit me on the sides when I asked what was going on – it escalated so quickly! They started questioning me and they asked for my ID.

This same victim spoke about several other incidents where he was pulled over for “being black in a nice car.” When asked if there was anything he did in response, the victim said:

I let things go... I probably should file something, but nothing would happen anyways.

- + **Second, stakeholders and victims alike identified specific groups in the population as being more susceptible to discriminatory treatment by law enforcement.** These groups included: people of color, limited-English proficient, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, and the homeless. One stakeholder shared that people are consistently viewed as perpetrators of crime, even when they are victims:

This is true of many historically oppressed groups, but in our experience most acutely for formerly incarcerated people, homeless people, people with mental illness, and African-American men with minor or non-violent criminal histories.

It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive and victims often occupy more than one of these identities.

- **People of color.** Multiple victims of color, particularly African American men, reported strong mistrust of police after having experienced abuse. A few African American men shared instances where they felt the police stopped them without cause or did not take them as seriously as their non-African American peers when reporting a crime. These experiences are consistent with racial profiling research nationally and, in particular, are consistent with a 2008 report that showed that black and Hispanic residents are stopped, frisked, searched and arrested by LAPD officers far more frequently than white residents.³⁴
- **Limited-English Proficient.** Stakeholders reported that limited-English proficient victims often faced barriers in communicating with the police. Police often would not obtain proper interpretation and refused to take reports. This was exacerbated in cases where the perpetrators were English-speaking and would handle most of the communication with law enforcement.
- **LGBTQ Community.** As conveyed elsewhere in this report, a LGBTQ victim may not be taken as seriously as a heterosexual victim when reporting intimate partner violence to the police. LGBTQ individuals face similar obstacles even when the episodes of violence aren't domestic. One transgender woman, for example, shared that she reported an incident of physical assault by several men to a police officer who was nearby. The police officer initially

³⁴ Ayres, I. & Borowsky, J. (2008). *A Study of Racially Disparate Outcomes in the Los Angeles Police Department*. Los Angeles: ACLU of Southern California.

expressed concern and took down a full report of what had occurred; however, after learning that she was transgender the police officer demanded she leave his vehicle since “*men don’t assault men.*”

- **People with disabilities.** Individuals with disabilities also confront unique challenges when interacting with the police. One stakeholder reported that clients with speech impediments have been harassed or ticketed by police for public drunkenness as their speech pattern is mistaken for inebriation:

...A lot of times the law enforcement [does] not understand disability...so they make wild conclusions about the person being drunk or a person who’s out of it.

Additionally, people with mental illness may also be arrested or treated as criminals when having an episode. A stakeholder who works with people with mental illness explained that often the police and the criminal justice system are left to serve people with mental illness because other more appropriate systems are not adequately serving them.

- **Homeless.** Homeless victims often reported feeling that the police are not there to serve them, even when they experience a crime. One homeless man said that, generally speaking, the police treat him as if he were a nuisance and should be removed from the area. This was particularly common for victims living in Skid Row or South Los Angeles.

Negative interactions with police as experienced by these groups can further victimize people who are already disenfranchised, restricting their access to the full range of police and other public services available. Further, any hesitation to contact police when needed may mean that these crime victims are not accessing a key service of the legal system and that the crimes they experience are then more likely to go unreported.

Post Victimization Experiences

During the needs assessment interviews, victims were asked what they did immediately after their victimization, including whether they told anyone, sought services and/or contacted the police. This section largely focuses on these post-victimization experiences as reported by crime victims themselves, supplemented with input from stakeholders, who shared their experiences offering support to crime victims as they dealt with the immediate and long-term aftermath of victimization.

“What was helpful [with sharing my experience with friends] is just that—knowing that people care about you and they were concerned and that they were, you know, offering some kind of support if you need it.”

~Victim of Crime

When Do Victims Seek Support?

Most crime victims reported telling someone they knew about the crime, such as a friend or family member, soon after the crime occurred. Victims often shared that they felt vulnerable and needed emotional support after their victimization. Sharing their experiences, for many, was an important step in coping with the crime and its aftermath. This pattern, however, was most frequently seen with victims of crimes committed by strangers. For example, those who experienced property or violent crimes or police brutality felt much more comfortable seeking the support of their friends or family.

On the other hand, victims of crimes by family members or intimate partners shared that it took them much longer to discuss the victimizations with anyone. In several cases, fear of retaliation was noted as the primary reason for not seeking emotional or legal support. As noted in the previous section, several victims of domestic violence reported remaining with their abusive partners for as long as 13 years. One victim of domestic violence, a recent immigrant to the US, explained her hesitancy to report the abuse, saying she didn't have the courage to tell. She furthered:

I was an immigrant. We came here in 2004. We didn't know anything when we just got here. There were a lot of things that I didn't know and was not aware of. Things like being hit by my husband. I was very afraid and didn't know what to do. I didn't know how to look for help. I also felt it was an embarrassment to be hit by my husband. I was afraid to share with friends. Therefore, I was always home alone. I was bullied by him and I was too afraid to say anything.

Even when well-resourced, it can be very difficult for intimate partner victims to seek help and leave their situations. When victims are also marginalized by virtue of their sexual orientation, citizenship status, race or ethnicity, primary language, socioeconomic status and so forth, the challenges are compounded.

Victim Experiences with Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is often the first responder in a crime, positioning them in a place of great influence, both positive and negative, for victims. Interviews with victims revealed that a victim's prior experiences with police played a large role in whether or not the victim reported the crime to the police at all.

Law enforcement is often the first responder when a crime occurs – their impact on a victim's experience after a crime can shape their entire post-victimization experience.

The ways in which victims described how police first became involved in a case varied widely. In some cases, victims voluntarily called the police to report the incident or seek support. In other instances, strangers or other people called the police. Some victims had minimal to no interaction with police, as they chose not to report their victimizations. Those who did not seek law enforcement reported varying reasons, though many who chose not to tell the police appeared to do so because they perceived the police would not or could not help them. For example, one woman, to whom an acquaintance was sending threatening messages soliciting money, chose not to tell police since she viewed that reporting the crime to the police would only escalate the situation. This is the same reason why a number of victims of intimate partner violence also decided not to involve the police. Fear of escalating an already bad situation or suffering repercussions influenced victims' decisions not to involve police.

Issues of police brutality, misconduct, cultural and linguistic barriers, and poor treatment of certain communities explored in the previous section, influenced the perceptions victims have of police. A number of victims shared that general mistrust of the police led them to avoid contacting law enforcement altogether.

Conversely, a few crime victims interviewed reported highly positive interactions with police. They shared that law enforcement was a critical source of support for them after they experienced a crime. For example, one woman shared that in the two instances she called the police to report instances of domestic violence, the police were very helpful. The police not only removed her husband from the home and arrested him, but

recognized her limited English proficiency, found her an interpreter immediately, and shared other domestic violence resources with her.

Victim Experiences with Community Organizations

Given that most victim of crime interview participants were recruited through community organizations, it is not surprising that most victims reported receiving at least some support services after they experienced a crime. Those that did not receive support tended to fall into two categories: 1) those that did not feel support was needed and thus did not seek it or, 2) those who did not qualify for free or low cost services (e.g. income was higher than eligibility threshold).

Examples of services received after victimization included assistance filing restraining orders or divorce papers, identifying and applying for affordable housing (e.g. Section 8), receiving the support of interpreters to access services, and connecting victims with mental health services. Interviews with stakeholders suggested that certain legal service needs are still not being met by existing stakeholders such as assistance with scams or financial fraud (e.g. vocational school fraud where students pay fee but do not receive schooling), obtaining government benefits, filing for restraining orders, child support, or divorce, counseling for victims after they experience a crime, and obtaining immigration-related papers, among many others.

Crime victims often had some connection to the community organization at which they received services. In some cases, victims' friends and/or family members shared formal resources—such as particular social or legal service organization—that could assist the victim. These 'referrals' often came from friends and family who had received services from the organization(s) firsthand. Referrals from trusted friends and family members in turn often led crime victims to seek formal forms of support that then assisted them with the aftermath of the crime.

Victims who connected to at least one service appeared more likely to be referred to additional services. For example, after calling the police to report domestic violence, one woman said that the police told her about a domestic violence shelter. She was able to call and then stay at the shelter and, through the shelter, learned of a community organizations that helped her with translations (the woman had limited English proficiency), preparation of necessary legal documents (e.g. divorce papers, a restraining order), and connections to available government benefits and support for her and her children as she transitioned.

Conversely, crime victims who did not have at least a 'foot in the door' to one or more community organizations were less likely to locate these services. For example, one elderly man who was assaulted by another tenant in his building reported that he didn't know where to turn for the support he needed. While he did report the crime to the police, he was overwhelmed by steps required to secure a restraining order:

I'm 82 years old. I can't do all that they asked me to do.

This example highlights the services needed to support victims, particularly the most vulnerable like the elderly, to access and navigate the legal services available to them in the aftermath of a crime.

Finally, interviews with victims revealed that the quality of their experience with community organizations matters; they mostly reported very positive experiences. For example, one victim of domestic violence shared her very positive experience at a domestic violence shelter:

They were really great. During the first two months, it was [difficult]...but they would start [to] encourage you to study, to work, and to become independent. I didn't know anything at the time. I had nothing and I didn't know anything...Gradually, I was able to get through it.

It's important to note, however, that because many of the victims interviewed in this needs assessment were recruited through community organizations where they may have received services, as a group they may have had more favorable experiences with those organizations. Interviews with victims who were not actually served by a community organization, or those were unwilling to participate in an interview at an organization's invitation, may have revealed very different experiences. As discussed in the next section, the quality of a victim's experience with a community organization is important and can encourage a victim to come forward and seek services if they are victimized or in need of legal services again. Conversely, if their interactions are negative it may discourage a victim from seeking services altogether.

The next section outlines additional barriers to seeking legal services as reported by both victims and stakeholders.

Barriers to Accessing Legal Services

Stakeholders and victims described multiple barriers crime victims face when they try to access and utilize legal services. Interviews also revealed that crime victims often confront more than one barrier at a time.

- ✚ **Lack of knowledge about who to contact or how to contact them.** The majority of stakeholders said that a lack of knowledge about the system prohibited crime victims from seeking legal services. These stakeholders said that crime victims—and often the service providers themselves—did not know who to contact for legal services or who was eligible for services.

Though many crime victims who were interviewed had accessed legal or other social services after experiencing a crime, they usually had heard about the organization providing services from a friend or acquaintance. Without the 'referral' from the friend or acquaintance, it is possible that the crime victim would not have known where to turn. In very few cases had crime victims accessed services without prior knowledge of the service.

Victims and stakeholders also reported that the 'system,' (e.g. criminal justice system, legal system, social service system, etc.) can be confusing, complex, impersonal and very difficult to navigate. Having someone to help crime victims navigate the system can be especially helpful. Many stakeholders spoke of the need for 'cultural ambassadors' to help people in the community access and navigate through multiple systems and the services they need. Stakeholders stressed that such cultural ambassadors would help crime victims understand and follow the appropriate protocols of each system. Ideally, these cultural ambassadors would be members of the same community that the crime victim is a part of and be able to support the crime victim in a culturally appropriate way.

- ✚ **Lack of low-cost legal and other services.** Over half of stakeholders said that the financial cost of legal and other legal support services pose barriers to victims seeking appropriate services. Many victims reported living in precarious financial situations. One victim shared that, after experiencing domestic violence, she did not seek medical treatment since she did not have insurance. Sometimes victims were accused of crimes in the process of their victimization and could not afford legal services to defend

themselves. For example, one man reported intervening when he saw police using excessive force against another woman. In this case, the man was accused of assaulting a police officer and charges were filed against him. In cases like this, victims who were accused of crimes often relied on a public defender who didn't have a lot of time to assist them with the case.

- ✦ **Low levels of trust in the system.** The majority of stakeholders shared that the crime victims they serve have low trust in the legal system and sometimes fear the police. This was especially true of victims from communities of color, disabled individuals, and people from immigrant/refugee communities with a history of corruption or police violence in their home countries. This is also consistent with victims' own accounts, detailed in prior sections of this report, of negative experiences with law enforcement.

Stakeholders also shared that many crime victims and members of marginalized communities in general have often confronted poor customer service at various government service offices and community organizations. For example, some stakeholders reported that their clients have faced long lines and impersonal or rushed staff that did not explain legal services in a way that their clients could understand. Furthermore, stakeholders reported that clients would sometimes be referred to a service, but then, after waiting in line or being placed on hold for some time, be told that they in fact were not eligible or could not be served. One stakeholder explained:

Legal aid is open certain hours and is first-come-first-serve. You may have a question that will only take three minutes. However, when you call you are number 18 and then an hour later [they are] only on number 14 and [you're] still on hold. Our population [doesn't] have the most patience and they are not going to sit on hold.

This stakeholder further explained that the location of some of the legal services discourages clients from participating. He gave the example of a domestic violence clinic located at a court house, saying:

This is not a place you want to go for help if you are distrustful of the system. There needs to be more reasonable accommodations.

- ✦ **Lack of culturally appropriate services.** Stakeholders and crime victims shared that a lack of culturally appropriate services also posed a barrier to crime victims in accessing legal services. They said that it was important to have places that provide culturally-based services, adhering to the cultural norms and values of a community.

For example, one stakeholder who was also a service provider expressed that it is important for crime victims to feel they have representation as they navigate the system. He explained that representation meant:

knowing that there are people that can help me that look like me and speak like me, versus talking down upon me...

Expressing a similar sentiment, one transgender woman who had experienced multiple assaults shared that she wished there was a place for transgender people "to be serious together" and share real

experiences. She felt that transgender people were often not fully accepted within the LGBTQ community so transgender people needed a safe place that was specifically for them.

Stakeholders also shared that their clients often face a language barrier when accessing legal services. For example, many crime victims who do not speak English as their first language reported difficulty obtaining services due to the language barrier. When crime victims were able to locate services in their native language, these services were often through a cultural center that specialized in serving a specific ethnic population (e.g. Cambodian, Samoan, Filipino, etc.).

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of service providers knowing the specific communities they are working with and modifying the materials they provide and the overall service model appropriately. Of equal importance is that services and materials are presented in a way that everyday people can understand. One stakeholder explained:

Victims need support people in court. A much fuller explanation of the court systems in language they understand—presented to them in their own language and non-legalese.

Culturally appropriate services are not only needed by immigrant or refugee communities, but also by other communities of people whose values or practices may differ from mainstream American society. Services can help victims of crime navigate the system by ‘translating’ the process in a way that victims of crime can relate and by ensuring their service model is inclusive of disenfranchised cultural groups.

+ Shame, stigma, and not identifying as a victim. Stakeholders shared that, in some cultural communities, people accept things as they are, even if it means continuing to be victimized. For example, one stakeholder explained that in Thai culture people tend to accept what comes their way, and so may not think of themselves as victims, and don’t apply for services when they could.

Other stakeholders described the shame that victims feel about their victimization or their personal situation such that they don’t want to call attention to themselves by seeking services. For example, one stakeholder explained that the stigma associated with mental disabilities may prevent people from coming forward when they’ve been victimized and can even affect whether legal and social service providers take people with mental disabilities seriously. Others, such as victims who have experienced sexual crime, may feel embarrassed to report that kind of personal violation. One victim of harassment shared that he was not raised to disclose his personal problems to others; consequently, it was very difficult for him to talk about the problems he faced until the situation escalated to a critical point.

+ Fear of retaliation or deportation. Stakeholders also reported that crime victims often fear retaliation or deportation as a result of reporting a crime or accessing legal services. For example, one woman who was the victim of human trafficking recounted paying people to help her receive her identification, only to be scammed. While the victim warned friends not to fall for the same trick, she did not report the fraud to the authorities for fear of retaliation. She explained:

...I was an illegal immigrant, and I didn’t have any form of identification. I didn’t know I could receive these services...I didn’t have any ID, and I was afraid that the person might get me deported. I thought I couldn’t stay in the U.S.

Stakeholders furthered that their clients often feared that they would be deported if they reported a crime or sought legal services. This was particularly true for undocumented people who feared calling attention to a crime would also call attention to themselves and get them in trouble. As a way to combat this misconception, one stakeholder suggested the importance of passing laws that explicitly state that undocumented people will not be prosecuted for their resident status if they report a crime, and then heavily publicizing those laws to the community.

While each of these barriers in isolation is enough to deter some victims of crime from seeking legal services, victims of crime interviewed for this needs assessment often faced multiple barriers at once, further discouraging them from seeking legal services. For example, one domestic violence victim, who was a recent immigrant to the United States and who had limited English proficiency, spoke about facing many barriers at once. She did not know about the services available because in her native country domestic violence services do not exist. Additionally, she relied on her partner for financial support as he did not allow her to work outside the home. She spoke about the support obtained from her church which, though it was helpful to ease her emotional pain and provide her with a place where she felt cared for, also taught her that her husband could improve and that she should remain alongside him. For cases such as these, service providers will need to consider how to best address multiple barriers that victims of crime face—working to confront barriers that impede victims from first accessing services in the first place, as well as those that restrict victims’ ability to advocate for and receive what they need.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the Los Angeles Needs Assessment, the following are recommended actions and considerations for the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors as they move forward in developing the implementation plan for the Collaborative.

- + Identify and train cultural ambassadors.** In order for the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors to actualize its goal of developing a comprehensive service network that will serve the most marginalized, vulnerable communities of Los Angeles, it not only needs to broaden its network of service providers, but also deepen its reach into the communities it currently serves. Engaging trusted cultural ambassadors who are knowledgeable about their respective communities is one way the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors can move towards this goal. Cultural ambassadors are individuals who can act as a bridge between two different cultural communities, advocating on behalf of another individual or group.³⁵ Often they are trusted leaders, spokespeople, or advocates in a community, who understand the values, beliefs and practices of community members. Working with cultural ambassadors can be particularly useful for engaging isolated individuals and communities where there is skepticism and mistrust of outsiders. Engaging cultural ambassadors in the process of implementing a wraparound service network could deepen the LA Collaborative's reach into the marginalized communities they aim to serve.
- + Establish a case navigator model to help guide individuals through the process of connecting to and accessing necessary services and improve collaboration between agencies.** Victims of crime in Los Angeles are facing multiple barriers to services including language, immigration status, lack of understanding of the law or the justice system, lack of knowledge about where to seek services, concern about the cost of seeking services, fear, shame and stigma, and so on. Having a dedicated advocate to help them navigate the different systems in their language can go a long way in demystifying the process and helping a victim recover from their victimization. Additionally, navigators can serve as a single point of contact that can be accessed by agencies within the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors. This will streamline communication between agencies, facilitating a more efficient process by which inter-agency referrals and sharing of expertise occurs.
- + Develop a comprehensive assessment tool that can be used by all the partners in the Collaborative.** As revealed during the interviews conducted with both victims of crime and community stakeholders, victims of crime in Los Angeles are often dealing with multiple victimizations, but don't always realize or acknowledge this. A comprehensive assessment tool, used by all partners in the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors, will allow providers to evaluate all of a victim's possible needs, even those for which the victim is not explicitly seeking help. The information gathered on this intake form can be used by the screening provider and the victim's case navigator to connect the victims to all the services he/she needs, ensuring a truly wraparound approach.
- + Support victims who have had negative experiences with police.** Perhaps the most unexpected finding of the Los Angeles Needs Assessment was the frequency with which victims spoke,

³⁵ Jezewski, M.A., & Sotnik, P. (2001). *Culture brokering: Providing culturally competent rehabilitation services to foreign-born persons*. (J. Stone, Ed.). Buffalo, NY: Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange.

unprompted, about having negative experiences with the police. These negative experiences were discussed both in the context of events that followed a victimization (e.g. not being taken seriously when reporting a crime) and sometimes were discussed as the instances of victimization themselves (e.g. being harassed or otherwise abused by police officers). Re-victimization by police has been a phenomenon well-documented in the literature, particularly when it comes to victims of intimate partner violence and sexual assault.³⁶ While working alongside the formal justice system, as appropriate, the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors should provide service options and a safe haven for victims who have been mistreated or ignored by the police.

- + **Educate stakeholders and service networks about existing services.** Stakeholders frequently said that they did not always know which organizations provided services that could support the crime victims that walk through their door. To ensure that stakeholders know of the existing services, the Los Angeles Legal Collaborative for Survivors should host trainings to educate stakeholders about the services available, including who is eligible and when particular services are offered. Additionally, the Collaborative should cross-train service providers on topics such as advocacy by type of crime, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed care.
- + **Continue to monitor and assess the changing needs and landscape.** The needs of any community will inevitably change over time. This needs assessment report provides a snapshot of the current crime victimization needs and barriers to seeking legal services for some of the most vulnerable demographic and geographic communities in Los Angeles. However, changes in local, state or federal laws, shifts in the economy, and small fluctuations in crime rates can have a greater impact on marginalized communities than on the general population. Therefore, the LA Legal Collaborative for Survivors should continually reassess the changing needs of the Los Angeles communities they intend to serve.

³⁶ See for example: Patterson, D., Greeson, M., & Campbell, R. (2009). Understanding rape survivors' decisions not to seek help from formal social systems. *Health & Social Work*, 34(2), 127–136.

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Community Members

Interviewer:	
Interviewee ID #:	
Language:	
Date:	
Start Time:	
End Time:	

My name is _____ and I work for _____. We are part of a group of community organizations in Los Angeles who want to gain a better understanding of the experiences of people who have been the victim of a crime or may be at risk for being a victim of crime. We are conducting these interviews to learn more about how people decide whether or not to seek legal services. I really appreciate your willingness to talk with me today and share your experiences. The information you provide will be extremely helpful and will be used to improve the legal services available to people in the Los Angeles area.

I will take some notes as you talk, but if it is okay with you, I'd also like to tape-record this interview. It's going to be hard for me to get everything down on paper; the tape can help fill in anything I might have missed and it also can help me accurately capture what you say. The only other people who might listen to this tape will be the Harder+Company research staff. The tape will be destroyed once it has been transcribed. May I tape record our discussion?

Everything we discuss today is private. That means your name, or anything that could be used to identify you, will not be attached to what you say in this interview or this tape.

Before we get started, I would like to tell you more about your rights and get your consent to be interviewed.

Go through procedures to obtain informed consent.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section One: Background

Thank you for sharing your experience with me. I'd like to ask you a few specific questions so that I can understand more fully.

If they clearly answered one of the probes during their story, you may document the answer during the story and skip asking it. However, if you are unsure- please probe for greater clarification. The response options are listed 1, 2, 3, etc... These are meant to help the interviewer record responses at the time of the interview. They are not to be read out loud as options to the interviewee. However, they may be used as examples of answers if the interviewee does not understand the question fully. These directions pertain to the remaining interview protocol.

Q1: Have you ever felt like something happened to you that was not right or against the law?

- Access to care, services, benefits
- Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence
- Disability-related issues (examples: lack of accommodations, accessing services, benefits)
- Child Abuse/ Neglect
- Crime & violence (examples: aggravated assault, robbery, gang/drug-related violence, manslaughter)
- Educational access (examples: high drop-out rate, bad/poor schools)
- Elder Abuse/ Neglect
- Employment Opportunities (examples: work-place discrimination/harassment, lack of jobs, can't get job because of past, fired unfairly)
- Family Issues (examples: divorce, custody, support, guardianship)
- Financial Issues & Fraud (examples: identity theft, bankruptcy, compensation, benefits, restitution)
- Hate crimes (examples: crimes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion)
- Homelessness
- Housing (examples: evictions, lack of safe/affordable housing)
- Human Trafficking (examples: prostitution, forced labor, other exploitation)
- Immigration-related issues (examples: deportation, can't obtain job due to status)
- Labor Crime (examples: failure to pay wages/ minimum wage, workers compensation/ unemployment insurance)
- Police Misconduct (examples: wrongly arrested, harassed by the police)
- Property Crime (examples: arson, burglary, larceny, shoplifting, theft, vandalism)
- Sexual Assault/ Rape
- Other: Specify: _____

1a. When did this happen?

- Less than a yr ago
- 1 yr-2 yrs ago
- 2 yrs-3 yrs ago
- 3 yrs-4 yrs ago
- 4yrs-5yrs ago
- Over 5 yrs ago Specify: _____

1b. How old were you at the time it happened?

- Under 18 Specific age: _____
- Over 18 Specific age: _____

1c. Did it happen once or more than once?

- Single incident
- Multiple incident(Specify _____)

1d. What was your relationship with the person(s) who did this?

- None, were strangers

- Knew each other by sight
- Friends, casual
- Friends, close
- Dating
- Married/ intimate partner
- Separated
- Divorced
- Someone in a position of power (employer, legal guardian, care taker, etc...)
Specify: _____
- Other (Specify _____)
- Don't remember

1e. Did you get hurt- physically, emotionally, or financially?

- Yes (Specify _____)
- No
- Don't know

Section Two: Experience after the Event

Q2. What happened right after? What did you do immediately afterwards?

Q3. When this happened to you, did you tell anyone?

They may have sought services from some systems and didn't reach out to others. Be sure to fully understand who they told and why, as well as who they didn't tell and why.

Q3a. IF THEY SOUGHT SERVICES/ TOLD... (GO TO THE CORRESPONDING SECTION)

- Police/ Law Enforcement
- Medical Personnel/Mental Health
- Community Organization/ Advocacy Services..
- Legal Representative
- A friend or family member
- Another source of support, not listed

Q3b. IF THEY DID NOT SEEK SERVICES/ TOLD...

People have many reasons for not telling others. Can you tell me some of your reasons for not seeking services?
Probe for concerns and barriers.

- Potential financial cost
- Language barriers
- Feelings of shame/stigma
- Fear of deportation/ legal status
- Fear of retaliation to self and/or family
- Lack of social support/isolation

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of knowledge about services/victim's rights
- Lack of trust in the system
- Didn't identify as victim
- Other: Specify: _____

Section Three: Experiences with Law Enforcement System *Ask only if relevant.*

Q4: Where did you go for services or for help (specific station/location)?

4a. How did you find them?

Probe for if they were referred and by whom.

Q5: Why did you decide to contact the police?

Q6: Did you have any concerns about contacting the police? What were they?

Q7: What happened when you went to the police?

7a. Can you tell me about why you (did or didn't) report it to the police?

7b. Can you tell me about why you (did or didn't) decide to participate in the investigation?

Q8: What were your experiences with the police like?

8a. What was helpful?

8b. What do you wish had been different?

8c. What help did you need, but did not get?

8d. Why do you think you did not receive the help you needed?

Section Four: Experiences with Medical Care/Mental Health *Ask only if relevant.*

Q9: Where did you go for services or help (specific location)?

9a. How did you find them?

Probe for if they were referred and by who.

- Brochures or other written materials in (other) offices
- Community Outreach
- Walk-in
- "Word of Mouth" (can't tell who referred them)
- Other: Specify: _____

Q10: Why did you decide to seek medical care and/or mental health services?

Q11: Did you have any concerns about seeking medical care and/or mental health services? What were they?

Q12: What were your experiences with the medical professionals like?

12a. What was helpful?

12b. What do you wish had been different?

12c. What help did you need, but did not get?

12d. Why do you think you did not receive the help you needed?

Section Five: Experiences with Community Organization/ Advocacy Services *Ask only if relevant.*

Q13. Where did you go for services (specific location)?

13a. How did you find them?

Probe for if they were referred and by who.

- Brochures or other written materials in (other) offices
- Community Outreach
- Walk-in
- "Word of Mouth" (can't tell who referred them)
- Other: Specify: _____

Q14: Why did you decide to seek out the help of this community organization?

Q15. Did they offer you an advocate or a person (who is outside of friends and family) to support you?

15a. What type of support did they provide?

- Counseling
- Legal
- Referral to another source
- Other support (specify) _____

15b. What kind of advocate(s) did you work with?

- No, an advocate was not offered
- One was offered, but I am not sure what kind
- Corrections-based advocate
- Court advocate
- Domestic violence advocate
- Law-enforcement advocate
- Prosecutor-based advocate
- Rape crisis advocate
- Medical/ Hospital-based advocate
- Other (Specify _____)

Q16: Did you have any concerns about seeking help from this organization? What were they?

Q17: What were your experiences like?

17a. What was helpful?

17b. What do you wish had been different?

17c. What help did you need, but did not get?

17d. Why do you think you did not receive the help you needed?

Section Six: Experiences with Legal System *Ask only if relevant*

Q18: What made you decide to seek legal services?

Probe for if they were referred and by whom.

Q19: What kind of legal service(s) did you seek?

19a. What did you want legal services to do for you?

- Civil harassment restraining orders
- Civil tort claims
- Criminal record expungements
- Educational assess
- Elder abuse
- Employment: Discrimination
- Employment: Wage claims
- Employment: Workplace harassment
- Family law: Custody/ visitation
- Family law: Dissolution
- Family law: Paternity
- Family law: Domestic violence restraining orders
- Family law: Spousal support
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Identity theft
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Mortgage fraud
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Vocational school fraud
- Government benefits/ Health access
- Guardianship
- Hate crimes
- Housing/ Eviction: Affordable housing
- Housing/ Eviction: Unlawful detainer defense
- Immigration: Asylum
- Immigration: Family-based
- Immigration: Naturalization
- Immigration: Removal hearing
- Immigration: SIJS
- Immigration: T visas
- Immigration: U visas
- Immigration: VAWA/ IMFA
- Language discrimination/ Access claims
- Veterans' benefits
- Victim services: Compensation
- Victim services: Court accompaniments
- Victim services: Other rights enforcement during criminal proceedings
- Other: Specify: _____

Q20: Did you have any concerns about seeking legal services? What were they?

- Potential financial cost
- Language barriers
- Feelings of shame/stigma
- Fear of deportation/ legal status
- Fear of retaliation to self and/or family
- Lack of social support/isolation
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of knowledge about services/victim's rights
- Lack of trust in the system
- Didn't identify as victim
- Other: Specify: _____

Q21: Where did you go for services (specific location)?

21a. How did you find them?

- Brochures or other written materials in (other) offices
- Community Outreach
- Walk-in
- "Word of Mouth" (can't tell who referred them)
- Other: Specify: _____

21b. *If referred-* Would you have sought out legal services without the referral? If so, how might you have located legal services in your area?

Q22: What were your experiences like? *Probe for experiences like seeking counsel, going to court, outcome.*

22a. What was helpful?

22b. What do you wish had been different?

22c. What kinds of legal services or resources would have been helpful to you? For example, some people have said that [give examples of appropriate legal services for their story] - would any of those been helpful to you?

22d. Approximately, how long did you receive legal services?

- Less than 1 week
- One week to a month
- 1 month – 3 months
- 3 months – 6 months
- 6 months – 12 months
- More than 12 months
- Don't know

Section Seven: Experiences with Friends and Family *Ask only if relevant.*

Q23: Who did you speak with?

Q24: Why did you decide to talk with [___insert name(s)___]?

Q25: What concerns did you have about sharing your story?

- Q26: What were your experiences like?
- 26a. What was helpful?
 - 26b. What do you wish had been different?
 - 26c. What help did you need, but did not get?

Section Eight: Experiences with Other Sources of Support *Ask only if relevant.*

- Q27: Who did you speak with?
- Q28: Why did you decide to talk with [___insert name(s)___]?
- Q29: Did you have concerns about sharing your story? What were they?
- Q30: What were your experiences like?
- 30a. What was helpful?
 - 30b. What do you wish had been different?
 - 30c. What help did you need, but did not get?

Section Nine: Closing

We've talked about many different issues related to the crime, and now I would just like to ask some final questions about your overall experience of the crime.

- Q31: Overall, how were you affected by this event- emotionally, financially?
- Q32: Given what you experienced, how do you feel those who knew about the event treated you?
- 32a. Why do you think they treated you this way?
- Q33: Is there anything that has helped you heal and/or put this behind you?
- Q34: Can you tell us about the obstacles or barriers you would have faced or did face when seeking services?
- 34a. How would you have or how did you overcome these obstacles?
- Q35: What do you think are the best ways to help victims or people at risk for victimization in Los Angeles know what legal resources are available to them?
- Q36: What do you think are the best ways to help victims or people at risk for victimization in Los Angeles access and utilize legal resources?

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate you sharing your experience.

- Q37: Given what we have discussed, is there any other information you think I should know?
- Q38: Do you have any questions for me?

Post Interview

INTERVIEWER: COMPLETE REMAINING QUESTIONS AFTER ENDING THE INTERVIEW

How would you (the moderator/ note taker) rate the quality of the information obtained?

[1] Excellent (No problems at all)

[2] Good (A few problems but overall comprehension good)

[3] Fair (A number of problems, but overall acceptable)

[4] Poor (Many problems, but overall quality open to question)

[5] Inadequate (Interview was terminated by the interviewer or quality too poor to be in data set)

If NOT excellent, what were the reasons the quality of information was less than excellent?

Were there any particular questions that did not work well? Why?

Did any information contradict or confirm data collected in previous sessions?

Were there any trouble spots that came up during the interview?

Community Member Post-Interview Questionnaire

Directions: Thank you for participating in this interview! We would like to ask you some questions about yourself to get a more accurate picture of the people interviewed. If any of the questions feel too personal, please tell me and we will skip them.

1. How old are you? *Please specify* _____ years old

2. What race or ethnicity do you identify with? (*Check one box*)

African –American/ Black

American Indian/ Alaskan Native

Asian/ Pacific Islander (*Please specify*)

Cambodian

Korean

Chinese

Thai

Filipino

Vietnamese

Other Asian/Pacific Islander (*Please specify*)

Caucasian/ White (non-Hispanic)

Hispanic/ Latino

Multi-racial/ Multi-ethnic (*Please specify*) -

Other (*Please specify*) -

3. What language are you most comfortable communicating in? (*Check one box*)

English

Chinese

Korean

Spanish

Khmer

Other (*Please specify*) _____

4. What gender do you identify with? (*Check one box*)

Man

Transgender: MtF

Prefer not to disclose

Other (*Please specify*) -

Woman

Transgender: FtM

5. What sexual orientation do identify with? (*Check one box*)

Heterosexual

Gay

Questioning/Unsure

Bisexual

Lesbian

Prefer not to disclose

Other (*Please specify*) -

6. What is your current living situation? (*Check one box*)

Living with family

Living with romantic partner (significant other)

Living with others (roommates)

Living alone, no roommates

Living in transitory housing (shelter, rehabilitation)

Homeless

Other (*Please specify*) -

6a. If you have a permanent living situation, please write the zip code of that residence: _____

7. If you identify as having a disability or disabilities, what are they? _____

8. Which of the following categories best describes the highest level of education you have completed? (Check one box)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 9 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th to 12 th grade, but no diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate or equivalent | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate / professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college, but no degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / decline to answer |

9. Which of the following categories best describes your total family income in the last 12 months? (Check one box)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000 – less than \$50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 – less than \$15,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 – less than \$75,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 – less than \$25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 – less than \$35,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / decline to answer |

10. Below is a list of problems people may face in their community. Think about the people you know in your community and indicate how many of these people you think are affected by these issues every year.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES	NO ONE	AFEW people	ALOT of people	I don't know how to answer
Access to health care, services, benefits				
Crime & violence (examples; break-ins, stabbings)				
Child abuse/ neglect				
Domestic violence/intimate partner violence				
Disability-related issues (examples: lack of accommodations, accessing services, benefits)				
Drugs				
Educational access (examples: high drop-out rate, bad/poor schools)				
Elder abuse/ neglect				
Employment opportunities (examples: lack of jobs, can't get job because of past, fired unfairly)				
Family issues (examples: divorce, custody, support, guardianship)				
Financial Issues and Fraud (examples: mortgage, financial, identity theft, bankruptcy)				
Gangs				
Hate crimes (examples: crimes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion)				
Homelessness				
Housing problems (examples: evictions, lack of safe/affordable housing)				

Human trafficking (examples: prostitution, forced labor, other exploitation)				
Immigration-related issues (examples: deportation, can't obtain job due to status)				
Language barriers (examples: services, employment, education)				
Police misconduct (examples: wrongly arrested, harassed by the police)				
Rundown buildings (broken windows, abandoned houses) & Rundown environment (lack of lights, broken sidewalks)				
Sexual assault or Rape				
Stalking/ harassment (at workplace, school)				
Other:				

11. What are some barriers in seeking out or pursuing legal services to address these issues?

	Not at all				Very much
Concern about potential financial cost involved	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of deportation/legal status	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of retaliation to self and/or family	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of social support (i.e., isolated)	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings of shame or embarrassment	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge about available services	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge about victims' rights	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of trust of the system	1	2	3	4	5
Language barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of transportation to legal offices or court	1	2	3	4	5
Not able to identify self as a victim	1	2	3	4	5
Office is not open when I am available (e.g., after work/school hours)	1	2	3	4	5
Other; please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

12. What other BIG issues or problems do people face in your community?

Interview Guide for Key Stakeholders

<i>Interviewer:</i>	
<i>Interviewee ID #:</i>	
<i>Language:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Start Time:</i>	
<i>End Time:</i>	

My name is _____ and I work for _____. We are part of a group of community organizations in Los Angeles who want to gain a better understanding of the experiences of people who have been the victim of a crime or at risk for being a victim of crime. We are conducting these interviews to learn more about how people decide whether or not to seek legal services as part of a project funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. I really appreciate your willingness to talk with me today and share your experiences. The information you provide will be extremely helpful and will be used to improve the legal services available to people in the Los Angeles area.

I will take some notes as you talk, but if it is okay with you, I'd also like to tape-record this interview. It's going to be hard for me to get everything down on paper; the tape can help fill in anything I might have missed and it also can help me accurately capture what you say. Everything we discuss today is private. That means your name, or anything that can be used to identify you, will not be attached to what you say in this interview or this tape. The only other people who might listen to this tape will be the Harder+Company research staff. The tape will be destroyed once it has been transcribed.

May I tape record our discussion?

Before we get started, I would like to tell you more about your rights and get your consent to be interviewed.

Go through procedures to obtain informed consent.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

Q1: Can you please start by telling me about what community(ies) you interact with in your work? Both geographic and demographic communities would be fine.

Q2: Who do you generally work with/interact with most within your community(ies)?

- Adolescents
- Elderly (forensic abuse center)
- Children
- Disabled
- Homeless
- Immigrants
- LGBTQ
- Limited-English/ English- proficient individuals
- Perpetrators

- Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or trafficking
- Other: Specify: _____

Q3: What is your role in the community?

3a. How long have you worked as a -----?/ Been invested in this community?

Q4: Through your position as [fill in respondent's occupation], can you describe how you might come into contact with victims/potential victims?

4a. In what ways are people victimized in your community(ies) and by whom (see also list at Q6)?

Q5: In your observations, are there certain groups of people in [name of community] that are in need of legal services?

- Adolescents
- Elderly
- Children
- Disabled
- Homeless
- Immigrants
- LGBTQ
- Limited-English/ English- proficient individuals
- Perpetrators
- Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or trafficking
- Other: Specify: _____

Q6: What types of crimes have members of these groups been victims of?

- Access to care, services, benefits
- Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence
- Disability-related issues (examples: lack of accommodations, accessing services, benefits)
- Child Abuse/ Neglect
- Crime & violence (examples: aggravated assault, robbery, gang/drug-related violence, manslaughter)
- Educational access (examples: high drop-out rate, bad/poor schools) children who require IEP and are not getting the resources needed
- Elder Abuse/ Neglect
- Employment Opportunities (examples: work discrimination/harassment, lack of jobs, can't get job because of past, fired unfairly)
- Family Issues (examples: divorce, custody, support, guardianship)
- Financial Issues & Fraud (examples: identity theft, bankruptcy, compensation, benefits, restitution)
- Hate crimes (examples: crimes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion)
- Homelessness
- Housing (examples: evictions, lack of safe/affordable housing)
- Human Trafficking (examples: prostitution, forced labor, other exploitation) south la
- Immigration-related issues (examples: deportation, can't obtain job due to status)
- Language

- Labor Crime (examples: failure to pay wages/ minimum wage, workers compensation/ unemployment insurance)
- Police Misconduct (examples: wrongly arrested, harassed by the police)
- Property Crime (examples: arson, burglary, larceny, shoplifting, theft, vandalism)
- Sexual Assault/ Rape
- Other: Specify: _____

Q7: What kinds of legal services do they need?

- Civil harassment restraining orders
- Civil tort claims
- Criminal record expungements
- Educational assess
- Elder abuse
- Employment: Discrimination
- Employment: Wage claims
- Employment: Workplace harassment
- Family law: Custody/ visitation
- Family law: Dissolution
- Family law: Paternity
- Family law: Domestic violence restraining orders
- Family law: Spousal support
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Identity theft
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Mortgage fraud
- Financial fraud/ Consumer: Vocational school fraud
- Government benefits/ Health access
- Guardianship
- Hate crimes
- Housing/ Eviction: Affordable housing
- Housing/ Eviction: Unlawful detainer defense
- Immigration: Asylum
- Immigration: Family-based
- Immigration: Naturalization
- Immigration: Removal hearing
- Immigration: SIJS
- Immigration: T visas
- Immigration: U visas
- Immigration: VAWA/ IMFA
- Language discrimination/ Access claims
- Veterans' benefits
- Victim services: Compensation
- Victim services: Court accompaniments
- Victim services: Other rights enforcement during criminal proceedings
- Other: Specify: _____

Q8: In your experience, what are some of the obstacles or barriers these victims face in seeking legal services?

- Potential financial cost

- Language barriers
- Feelings of shame/stigma
- Fear of deportation/ legal status
- Fear of retaliation to self and/or family
- Lack of social support/isolation
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of knowledge about services/victim's rights
- Lack of trust in the system
- Didn't identify as victim
- Other: Specify: _____

Q9: From your point of view, what would be some successful strategies for helping them overcome legal barriers?

9a. What types of resources are needed to help victims overcome legal barriers?

Q10: Overall, what do you think would be the best way to help victims in Los Angeles know what legal resources are available to them?

Q11: Given what we have discussed, is there any other information you think I should know?

Q12: Do you have any questions for me?

Key Stakeholder Post-Interview Questionnaire

1. How many people in the communities you serve do you think are affected by these issues?

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES	NO ONE	AFEW people	ALOT of people	I don't know how to answer
Access to health care, services, benefits				
Crime & violence (examples; break-ins, stabbings)				
Child abuse/ neglect				
Domestic violence/intimate partner violence				
Disability-related issues (examples: lack of accommodations, accessing services, benefits)				
Drugs				
Educational access (examples: high drop-out rate, bad/poor schools)				
Elder abuse/ neglect				
Employment opportunities (examples: lack of jobs, can't get job because of past, fired unfairly)				
Family issues (examples: divorce, custody, support, guardianship)				
Financial Issues and Fraud (examples: mortgage, financial, identity theft, bankruptcy)				
Gangs				
Hate crimes (examples: crimes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion)				
Homelessness				
Housing problems (examples: evictions, lack of safe/affordable housing)				
Human trafficking (examples: prostitution, forced labor, other exploitation)				
Immigration-related issues (examples: deportation, can't obtain job due to status)				
Language barriers (examples: services, employment, education)				
Police misconduct (examples: wrongly arrested, harassed by the police)				
Rundown buildings (broken windows, abandoned houses) & Rundown environment (lack of lights, broken sidewalks)				
Sexual assault or Rape				
Stalking/ harassment (at workplace, school)				
Other:				

2. How much of a barrier/challenge do the following present in terms of providing critical legal services?
If you do not provide direct legal services, but work closely with legal organizations or attorneys as part of your clients' cases, please try to answer this question as to any barriers/challenges you have observed. If you do not know, then please skip this question.

	Not at all				Very much
Lack of adequate staff/personnel	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of adequate infrastructure (e.g., space)	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of adequate training	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of formal rules/regulations/in-house procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge about victims' rights	1	2	3	4	5
Language barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Other; please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

3. How much of a barrier/challenge do the following present in terms of victims seeking out or pursuing services **offered by your organization?**

	Not at all				Very much
Concern about potential financial cost involved	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of deportation/legal status	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of retaliation to self and/or family	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of social support (i.e., isolated)	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings of shame or embarrassment	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge about available services	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge about victims' rights	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of trust of the system	1	2	3	4	5
Language barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of transportation to legal offices or court	1	2	3	4	5
Not able to identify self as a victim	1	2	3	4	5
Office is not open when crime victim is available (e.g., after work/school hours)	1	2	3	4	5
Other; please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

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