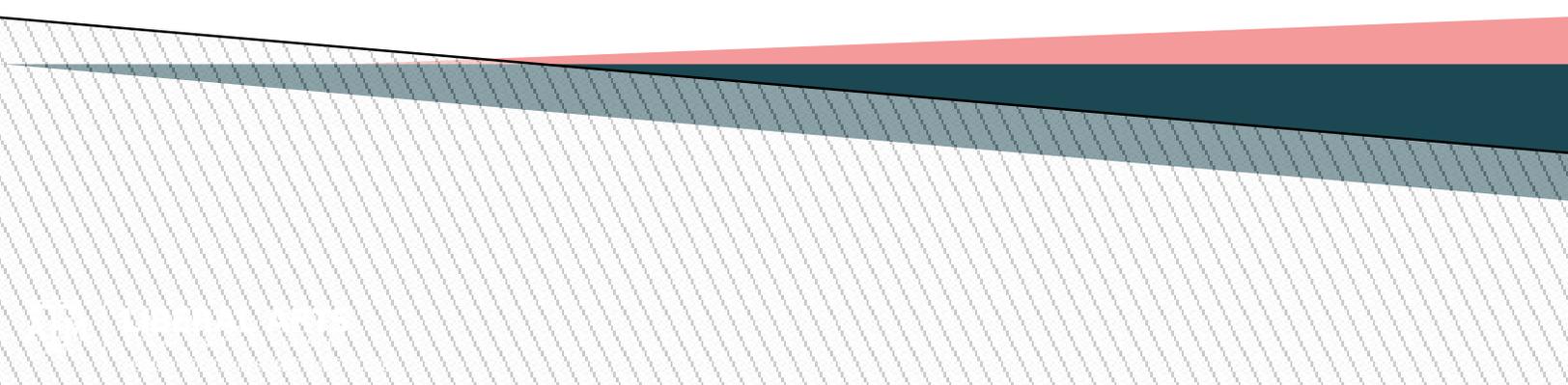


LSLA Needs Assessment Study Final Report

Public Policy Research Institute
Crime Victims' Institute
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About the Public Policy Research Institute & Crime Victims' Institute

The evaluation team for this study centers on a partnership between the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University and the Crime Victims' Institute at Sam Houston State University.

The Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University is an applied, policy-relevant research organization. PPRI was established by a Special Item appropriation of Texas A&M University during fiscal year 1983 to provide relevant scientific research to the Texas legislature and the various federal, regional, state, and community agencies actively engaged in determining public policy.

During the last 30 years, PPRI personnel have been successfully designing and implementing scientifically sound research strategies that test the effectiveness of existing governmental programs and policies, and providing the scientific foundations that aid policy makers in the development of new policies.

Currently, research activities at PPRI are focused on various program areas of regional, state and national significance: education policy, public health policy, substance abuse prevention, and criminal justice. PPRI research staff has the analytical capacity to address various kinds of policy research and program evaluation efforts. The Institute also has the facilities and experience to satisfy most survey demands such as computerized mail facilities, modern computerized data entry and optical scanners, as well as a centrally monitored Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey facility.

The Crime Victims' Institute was established by the Texas State Legislature in 1995 to conduct research on victimization, evaluate victim services, and provide recommendations for policy and programs to prevent victimization and improve crime victim services. The Institute is now housed in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. The Crime Victims' Institute has been conducting research and providing training for nearly 25 years and has completed numerous studies on topics such as intimate partner violence, campus sexual assault, identity theft, immigrant victimization, and victim services. This work has established relationships with victim service providers and agencies throughout the state and region.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful for the generous and kind assistance from the individuals, agencies and organizations who participated in the various community listening sessions conducted by PPRI and CVI.

We also sincerely thank Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA) and the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) for their continued support. Each provided financial support as well as encouragement along the way. OVC asked the tough questions that made the project better—their wealth of experience working on behalf of victims of crime turned out to be invaluable for the study team. LSLA also played a key role in securing locations and recruiting participants for the community listening sessions and identifying potential respondents for the key informant interviews.

While there are many who deserve to be thanked by name, page constraints limit us to select but a few, in alphabetical order. Jessica Alas with LSLA has served as a great liaison for the study team with LSLA. She has answered many questions on a moment's notice and gone above and beyond what her position requires. Meg Morrow with OVC has been especially helpful in managing to ensure that we proceed swiftly while navigating the proper bureaucratic channels, all the while providing invaluable advice and good cheer. Debra Wray with LSLA has also been a pleasure to work with. Despite a demanding schedule, she has always made time for anything the research team needed to discuss and always provided thoughtful insights.

The study team's special thanks are due to all the research staff members who assisted with coordination, design and implementation of the study and the development of the final report.

Executive Summary

Using grant funding from the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M and the Crime Victims' Institute at Sam Houston State University were contracted by Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA) to conduct a needs assessment study that would help them understand the gaps in implementing collaborative networks to provide free wraparound, holistic legal services to crime victims in LSLA's 72-county Texas region. Using a combination of community listening sessions, key informant interviews and web surveys, the study aimed to develop, enhance and apply evidence-based state-of-the-art assessment approaches to provide an understanding of crime victim legal needs across the LSLA service area. The pages of this report summarize the methodologies used for the various approaches involved in the different components of the needs assessment study and the final findings from the study. The recommendations are as follows:

- ▶ *Expand the resources dedicated to serving crime victims.*
- ▶ *Expand the network of possible legal resources available for referring crime victims*
- ▶ *Educate victim service providers about legal needs.*
- ▶ *Create a directory of crime victim services.*
- ▶ *Create a standing committee to enhance communication and collaboration between various types of victim service providers and legal service providers.*

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime awarded a competitive grant to agencies seeking to implement collaborative networks to provide comprehensive legal assistance to crime victims. From Texas, Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA) was awarded one of the grants in October, 2012. In partnership with Texas Legal Services Center, Catholic Charities, YMCA International Services, and the University of Houston Law Center, LSLA planned to create the Texas Crime Victim Legal Assistance Network with the purpose of providing free wraparound, holistic legal services to crime victims in LSLA's 72-county Texas service region. The Phase I project goal was to develop the comprehensive, coordinated, collaborative network of free wraparound legal services that holistically address the full range of crime victims' legal needs in connection with their victimization. Designing and conducting a needs assessment in LSLA's service region that identifies gaps in addressing crime victim legal needs was one of the project's objectives to accomplish its goal. The needs assessment was also the first objective that needed to be met in order to complete the project's second objective of designing a detailed implementation plan for serving crime victims within the network.

The Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University (PPRI) and the Crime Victims' Institute at Sam Houston State University (CVI) were contracted by LSLA to conduct this needs assessment study during Phase I of the project. The study aimed to develop, enhance and apply well-established assessment approaches to provide an understanding of crime victim legal needs across the LSLA service area. In keeping with the trend towards more scientific evidence based needs assessment designs, the multi-stage needs assessment study incorporated qualitative and quantitative techniques, inclusive and transparent approaches, and cost effective as well as specialized, perspectives. This final report summarizes findings from three key components of the needs assessment study, the community listening sessions, the key informant interviews, and the web-based survey.

Study Context

Over the last few decades, an entire field of criminal justice has become dedicated to understanding victims of crime by examining patterns, predictors, and consequences of victimization. So much so that some academic programs have become devoted only to the study of victims in an area known as victimology. Much is understood about specific types of victimization such as intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and bullying. Collaborating with psychology has allowed for even more to be learned about short- and long-term consequences of victimization including physical, mental, and emotional costs of being victimized. A smaller but growing body of literature has set its sights on victim services, seeking to develop the most appropriate programs and services to meet the needs of victims of crime, and understanding barriers to access and the impacts of help-seeking. The body of literature concerning victim services covers a number of topics including patterns regarding the use of services (Sims, Yost, & Abbott, 2005; Yun, Swindell, & Kercher, 2009), services specific to sexual assault (O'Sullivan & Carlton, 2001), service provider training (Neff, Patterson, & Johnson, 2012), and perceptions of victim service users and providers (Bradford, 2011; Ljungwald & Svensson, 2007; Logan, Stevenson, Evans, & Leukefeld, 2004). Despite the

substantial amount of research on a number of victim-related issues, including crime victim services, there is still an area of research that has largely been ignored, that of legal services offered to crime victims.

Loosely related to victim services, legal services are a specialized category of services provided by individuals with legal expertise (lawyers, paralegals, etc.) to victims of crime and may include divorce or custody services, protection orders, immigration issues, court liaisons and orientations, and housing and employment assistance. In spite of the importance of such services to crime victims, research has placed very little focus on the need for and/or use of legal services by victims of crime. Additionally, most of the research regarding legal services focuses on services provided for victims of intimate partner violence or sexual assault, leaving issues and services pertaining to other crimes largely unaccounted for. As a result, the very small body of existing literature only offers a minor glimpse into this area and results in more questions than answers.

Johnson (1997) and Cattaneo et al. (2007) focused on help-seeking patterns of crime victims who sought legal services. Johnson (1997) compared mental health outcomes among those victims who sought services, which included police services, health services, and legal services. Although legal services were not sought as often as police and health services, Johnson (1997) did find that victims who used legal services had fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety, and hostility in the 6-12 months after the victimization experience than victims who did not use legal services. While Johnson (1997) found that legal services were not sought as often as other victim related services, Cattaneo and colleagues (2007) found little difference between seeking legal and non-legal services when specifically considering victims of intimate partner violence. Rather, when women sought one particular type of service (whether it was police or health services), they were also likely to seek other types of services. Thus, help-seeking in terms of types of services accessed appears to be interrelated in that victims of intimate partner violence seemed to access either multiple types of services or no services at all. Results from these studies indicate victims may be just as likely to seek legal services as other victim services when both type of services are offered, and emphasize how the benefits of legal services extend past the actual service and can help with adverse health consequences of victimization.

A study conducted by Kelly (1984) can offer valuable insight into the legal needs of victims and their perceptions of legal services. In this study of victims of rape, common court related issues included getting property returned from police, as well as time and financial losses associated with court appointments. Victims also expressed concerns about being excluded from decision making regarding police and court services, as well as being denied information. Specific to court matters, victims were concerned about how little their opinions mattered and were often confused about their legal rights, which suggests that victims are more concerned about how well they are treated rather than how their assailant is punished. Kelly (1984) suggests ways of improving legal services to crime victims, such as including them in decisions, giving victims more information throughout the process, and providing more information regarding the types of services available to crime victims.

Hochstein and Thurman (2006) addressed the issue of communication between service providers, as they looked at how well service providers knew about services offered in other areas such as law

enforcement, legal, social, and medical service providers. Unsurprisingly, service providers had the most knowledge about their own professions and were more critical of other service provider agencies. This highlights the need for better communication and collaboration between service providers, which could strengthen the services offered to crime victims. Work by Kolb (2011) also highlights the need for collaboration as results found victim advocates belonged to a culture which embraces care work with clients such as listening, caring, and empathizing, while legal assistance to victims was seen as concrete, tangible, and immediate. Further work could be done to bridge the gap between victim advocacy and legal service provision.

Perhaps the review by Hartley et al. (2013) regarding the importance of legal services is the best way to sum up the necessity of legal services to crime victims. Although their review focused only on IPV victims, the benefits of legal services are not unique to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) victims, as literature has found many of the adverse consequences of IPV victimization, such as mental or physical health issues, are similar to other forms of victimization (Norris & Kaniasty, 1994; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003). Hartley and colleagues (2013) make convincing arguments that legal services, such as divorce or child custody services and protection orders, address long term effects of victimization such as long-term safety through divorce and custody actions, housing stability, employment issues, and economic self-sufficiency.

The limited research assessing legal services available to and accessed by crime victims encourages further attention to this issue. Victims of crime could benefit from additional resources, especially in the area of legal services. The current study then advances this research by providing a detailed assessment of the need for legal services among victims of all types of crime, the barriers crime victims may face in accessing legal services, and recommendations for improving access to legal services.

Study Research Questions & Objectives

The key goal for Phase 1 of the study objectives, as stated earlier, is to develop the collaborative network of free wraparound legal services that will help address the full range of crime victims' legal needs. To design an implementation plan for these services that accounts for the unique complexities of the LSLA service region, identifying service gaps in the area has been the focal point of this needs assessment study. The project, focusing on LSLA's 72-county Texas region, addresses the following key research questions during the needs assessment:

- ▶ What legal services are available for crime victims?
- ▶ What legal services for crime victims are lacking?
- ▶ What improvements are needed in legal service delivery for crime victims? Through what suggested ways can the service delivery systems be better crafted?
- ▶ How can the crime victim service provider community better protect the legal rights of crime victims?

In order to answer these research questions, the key goals of this needs assessment study were to:

- ▶ Identify the various legal needs, including co-existing and overlapping ones, for various types of crime victims
- ▶ List the range and types of legal assistance mechanisms available to crime victims
- ▶ Discern the breadth and quality of legal crime victim services available
- ▶ Pinpoint gaps or unmet needs in the current legal services delivery system for crime victims
- ▶ Map the existing linkages and disconnects among crime victim legal and non-legal service providers
- ▶ Detect the existing barriers to accessing crime victim legal services, particularly among underserved populations
- ▶ Understand how well Texas crime victims' rights are protected

These goals were achieved with the implementation of a multi-stage needs assessment process that included community listening sessions in sixteen different locations; a series of key informant telephone interviews that added to and/or validated the information collected during the listening sessions; a web-based survey that targeted 200+ individuals in the LSLA service regions to reconfirm and revalidate the information gathered from the listening sessions and the key informant interviews. This final report summarizes the findings from the community listening sessions, the key informant interviews, and the web-based survey. The ultimate goal of the needs assessment study, thus, is to provide LSLA with this prioritized list of unmet needs so they can design their wrap-around services for the crime victims accordingly.

These goals and objectives directly address the unique nature of LSLA's vast service area. This area has a number of issues including: high numbers of crime victims with multiple and complex legal needs especially for those in underserved groups; lack of prior research in Texas focusing specifically on crime victim legal needs; service delivery gaps and limited resources; and an overall lack of a coordinated system for the victims of crime.

Report Outline

This chapter contains a brief outline of the study context, a list of the key study research questions and study objectives. The third chapter addresses the overarching study methodology, the various study phases and challenges. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology and findings from the community listening sessions, the key informant interviews, and the web-based survey, all of which adhered to structured protocols. This final report closes with the concluding insights and the recommendations.

Chapter 2: Study Design, Phases & Challenges

This needs assessment study aimed to apply and enhance well-established assessment approaches to provide an understanding of the needs of crime victims in the LSLA service area. Generally, needs assessment is a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be. While methodologies used in needs assessment have become increasingly objective and scientific over time, it is, at its core, an evidence-based approach to identifying specific services needed for an identified population. In keeping with the trend towards more scientific needs assessments, this needs assessment study has involved a multi-phase or multi-stage design. The study design has incorporated both qualitative and quantitative techniques, inclusive and transparent approaches, cost effectiveness as well as specialized perspectives. A primary goal has been to utilize social science research techniques to ensure the overall validity and reliability of the needs assessment prioritization process. The design tried to balance ethical, sociological and economic considerations of need: of what needs to be done, what should be done, what can be done, and what can be afforded through a well-defined, inclusive, participatory and comparative process.

The multi-stage needs assessment design consisted of 16 community listening sessions at 16 different locations in the LSLA service area; a total of 47 point of contact or key informant telephone interviews with representatives from law enforcement, human services, and victim/witness professionals, the Texas Attorney General's Office, victim service professionals with specialized knowledge on underserved populations etc; and a web prioritization survey which had 81 responses from individuals in agencies that serve Texas crime victims or refer Texas crime victims to other service providers, crime victims from underserved populations and crime victim service providers for underserved populations. Information gathered at each of the consecutive stages aimed to provide adequate and reasonable opportunity for key informants and stakeholders from targeted communities to offer their perspectives on the legal needs of the crime victims.

Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, data gathered at each of the stages is supposed to inform the next stage. From the second to the final stage in this multi-stage study design, the prioritized list of needs will become refined and narrower with the completion of each stage. Overall, this multi-stage needs assessment study has been guided by a clear vision that encompasses the full scope of the needs assessment process, from rich qualitative data collection and analysis to the validation of the process through a combination of quantitative techniques.

Study Phases

The study tasks for the four distinct phases in needs assessment are shown in the diagram below. The various tasks outlined for each stage, self-explanatory in nature, depict the implementation chronology of the different approaches, methods and tools used for the needs assessment study, the synthesizing of the needs assessment data and the final deliverables (list of unmet needs for LSLA) development.



Challenges

The PPRI-CVI-LSLA team faced several challenges in implementing the multi-stage methodological approach. In designing a multi-stage needs assessment, existing practice tends to develop conclusions that flow from a process that standardizes data collection where each stage feeds into the next. As such, the proposed design centered on both quantitative and qualitative components that was supposed to work more comprehensively with each component helping to hone the unmet needs list at every stage.

The first step of the proposed design was to interview key informants to create the background information for the community listening sessions. The purpose of these key informant conversations was to help identify victim service providers that exist in the high-risk counties and population centers in the LSLA service areas. Because of the delayed start of the project, the community listening sessions were conducted first. The listening sessions were envisioned to complement the telephone interviews and allow for a group dynamic to potentially identify issues not mentioned in the telephone interviews. In contrast, while the listening sessions still facilitated discussions where participants comfortably revealed important details about the availability, context and challenges of crime victim services in their area, the key informant interviews did not allow the development of the background knowledge about the topics beforehand. As such, the key informant interviews could not be optimally used as the first stage in the design but were used as a component that helped reconfirm and re-validate some of the information gathered from the listening sessions.

The delayed start also compacted the time available to conduct the needs assessment. Every effort was taken to get the project back onto the original schedule; this included reducing the time dedicated to the community listening sessions and to the key informant interviews.

Second, the listening session recruitment efforts conducted solely by LSLA posed a challenge for the optimal implementation of the study design. Some of the locations had less than desired numbers of participants with the rural locations posing greater participation challenges. LSLA staff tapped into their service network agencies for recruitment purposes and followed rigorous cold calling, enlisting and reminder policies that did not yield high numbers in the rural locations. Additionally, absence of incentives for participants perhaps also accounted for the recruitment challenges. Appropriately incentivizing recruitment could have yielded a better participation scenario. It should also be noted that many individuals were from smaller organizations and could not attend because no replacement staff were available to cover their time away.

Another key recruitment shortcoming was the non-participation of crime victims themselves in the listening sessions. This, however, will be a challenge for any similar session conducted across the nation due to the deeply sensitive nature of the issues facing crime victims and their reluctance to speak publicly about their victimization. In order to overcome this limitation, the study design focused on recruiting direct service providers who have a great deal of interaction with the victim population.

One additional challenge is related to the sheer diversity of types of entities that work with victims of crimes. Many of these organizations had not worked together in the past and spent valuable time getting to know more about the other organizations during the community listening sessions. This can also be seen as a positive side-effect of the listening sessions as new community networks were hopefully formed that can potentially improve the services available to victims of crime.

The PPRI-CVI research team faced other challenges with the interviews and the surveys that were conducted to validate, confirm and prioritize information collected during the listening sessions. First, as discussed earlier, the shifting of the contemplated timelines for each of the needs assessment stages compelled some methodological changes which were less than ideal. Secondly, although the interviews faced fewer participation rejections, the research team wondered if respondents would have reflected more over some of the critical questions if they were posed in a face-to-face situation. Additionally, because some of the respondents from the rural areas wear multiple hats in their employer organizations, the researchers felt that it was difficult for them to spend appropriate reflective time on each of the questions although they were motivated to participate. Even several call back attempts could not help these respondents find an adequate time window for the telephone interviews. Thirdly, although the final prioritization web survey was distributed via an easily accessible web link and adequate follow up reminders and remained active for a period of two months, only a total of 112 individuals accessed the survey while just 81 individuals completed the survey. Future reiteration efforts for a similar survey, the research team realized, should include appropriate incentives and innovative involvement of social media avenues such as Facebook and Twitter.

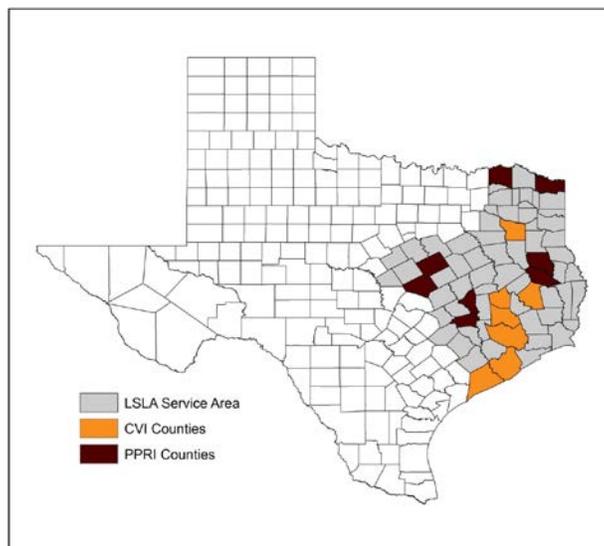
Finally, the most distinct key challenge during all the stages of needs assessment has been recruiting the crime victims themselves for this study. To achieve a greater participation from this population in the final prioritization survey, recruitment cards were created and distributed to clients by service providers at various agencies, including all LSLA offices, the Department of Public Safety Victim Service Program Coordinators and Catholic Charities. In addition, flyers were sent to many service providers for whom LSLA had contact information in the various regions. The cards included a brief description of the purpose of the survey and a web link to access the survey. Despite these efforts, this population turned out to be very hard to reach. Any future effort needs to creatively think about how to engage crime victims most appropriately and strategize better outreach and recruitment methods to more effectively investigate the relationship between victims' needs and victim services.

Chapter 3: Community Listening Sessions

The community listening sessions are free-flowing interactive discussion forums facilitated in a comfortable, nonthreatening atmosphere where community members, stakeholders, crime victim providers, advocates and local service agencies can discuss and identify crime victim needs for their respective communities. The freestyle listening session format is different from a focus group format, which generally leads from a concrete set of interview questions or themes to producing a constrained set of ideas and thoughts from a smaller group of 7 to 10 people. In contrast, the listening session consists of a slightly larger group (10 to 20 members on average) where discussion among the group is facilitated around a cluster of major topics or themes.

During summer and fall 2013, PPRI and CVI conducted 16 listening sessions for this needs assessment study in which a total of 118 individuals participated from various types of social service and human service agencies. Figure 3.1 shows the division of the locations between the two research institutes in the 72 county LSLA service area. As stated earlier, the goal of these listening sessions was to develop a comprehensive list of priority needs from each location based on input from the participants.

Figure 3.1: Listening Session Locations



As Table 3.1 below shows, both rural and urban counties were selected for inclusion. The locations were chosen primarily on the basis of their high rates of crime and possibility of service gaps by LSLA. Sites were selected to ensure an adequate representation of the LSLA service area, which included wide variation in community types. These locations were selected to represent specific populations of crime victims, especially underserved populations, including counties with large

minority, immigrant, low income, and/or college student populations. These areas were identified as having high rates of specific types of crime victimization (e.g., sexual assault, identity theft/financial crime, etc.). Participation in the community listening sessions varied by location with the maximum number of participants at the Houston and Bryan sessions and less than 5 participants at several rural locations, see Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Listening Sessions, Locations and Participants

Date of Session	Location of Session	Number of Participants
Monday, July 8, 2013	Angleton, TX	9
Monday, July 8, 2013	Bay City, TX	7
Thursday, June 27, 2013	Brenham, TX	6
Thursday, June 27, 2013	Bryan, TX	16
Wednesday, July 17, 2013	Diboll, TX	4
Thursday, July 11, 2013	Houston, TX	17
Friday, July 26, 2013	Huntsville, TX	3
Thursday, July 11, 2013	LaPorte, TX	5
Tuesday, July 16, 2013	Longview, TX	13
Wednesday, July 17, 2013	Nacogdoches, TX	4
Monday, July 15, 2013	Paris, TX	7
Tuesday, July 23, 2013	Temple, TX	4
Tuesday, July 16, 2013	Texarkana, TX	4
Thursday, July 18, 2013	The Woodlands, TX	9
Wednesday, July 17, 2013	Tyler, TX	2
Tuesday, July 23, 2013	Waco, TX	8

For the sessions that were conducted by PPRI, forty-four females and nine males participated in the listening sessions from a variety of different organizations, including district attorney offices, police departments, and non-profit organizations that specialize in services for children and victims of domestic violence. For the sessions that were conducted by CVI, fifty-seven females and eight males participated. The spread of the several types of agencies that had their members participate in the listening sessions are shown in Table 3.2. Participants included victim service providers, criminal justice professionals, public safety departments, victim advocates, members from task

forces or coalitions focused on crimes and other interested community members. The highest number of participants was from the non-profit organizations, followed by children service agencies, police departments and the domestic violence organizations. LSLA had five staff members participate in three different session locations.

Table 3.2: Agency Types Attending Listening Sessions

Social and Human Service Agencies	Number of Participants
Non-Profit Organizations	28
Children’s Agencies	18
Police Departments Victim Services Coordinators	14
Domestic Violence Organizations	11
District Attorney/County Attorney Victim Service Coordinators	6
LSLA	5
Other/Identified	36

Listening Session Methodology

The major goal for the sessions centered upon facilitated feedback where attendees offered and addressed a list of important issues and needs facing crime victims following a structured protocol that was approved by Texas A&M Institutional Review Board (IRB). Following a structured protocol, the session participants were facilitated by a two-member team in their discussions so they could comfortably consider important details about local context and challenges related to delivering services to the victims of crime. Before the discussions, however, the research team did introductory greetings, explained IRB approval and the confidentiality process, the purpose of the sessions and collected signed consent forms from the session attendees. They emphasized the importance of the participants’ feedback on the whole needs assessment process. The questions from the structured protocol allowed the participants to talk about the quality, gaps and barriers in victim services offered in their community; the identifiable barriers to services and ideas on improving the services via appropriate resources and combination of forces and capabilities from within and outside the community.

In conducting the sessions, facilitation ensured that discussions were clearly focused, well-structured in relation to the session goals and organized in a way that maximized constructive participation by all the attendees. Participant input was captured with the help of audio-tapes and flip-charts. The sessions were audio-recorded for the purposes of details capturing and also later

thematic analysis of the qualitative data. For identifying, refining, discussing and then prioritizing discussion issues appropriately, the research team essentially used a nominal group technique (NGT) and open discussion technique (ODT) that ensured equal participation opportunity by all session participants. The research team members were trained extensively to use these methodologies and techniques to facilitate group discussions and listening sessions to obtain rich qualitative data for purposes of research. Light refreshments helped set a relaxed and friendly tone that facilitated uninhibited discussion.

Feedback from the sessions was captured on flip-charts (which served as visual aids for organizing major discussion points or themes and also as external memory for the discussions) and audio-recorders. Returning from the site visits, the two-member facilitation teams created a short summary of the session, which included a record of all the need statements that emerged from the session. A detailed content analysis of the community listening session data was developed for each session based upon the audio recordings and flip-charts. The major steps in this detailed process were to create, check, and centralize the data; systematize the collected information, consolidate or refine statements on needs captured during the process so that there was conceptual clarity; and finally, analyze the crime victim needs within their given context or environment. The findings are discussed next.

Summary Findings: Common Themes from 16 Listening Sessions

The findings from the listening sessions are summarized here under thematic categories or topics that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data collected and processed from the sessions.

Non-Legal Service Needs

In talking about victim needs, many service providers highlighted the concern that victims of crime have many conjoined hurdles that need to be addressed along with their legal needs. The crime victims are often in a crisis situation and need tangible human services first to address their immediate needs, such as employment, housing, child care and food. Often in domestic violence situations, victims do not have appropriate resources available to them because the abuser is in control of the finances, making it difficult for the victim to escape the situation. This is why developing appropriate connections with workforce agencies to assist victims with employment opportunities is a critical necessity.

Additionally, housing issues need to be addressed. At one session location, absence of a homeless shelter was listed as a barrier and service providers voiced frustrations about their insufficient efforts to provide housing to victims who were unemployed. Victims experience a lot of runaround trying to obtain the basic services for their existence. The problems confound and create a lot of hurdles because the victims are mostly afraid of the system and also because the process of obtaining services is very time consuming.

Civil Law Needs

Crime victims also need help with civil law issues. For example, many victims of domestic violence would like to obtain a divorce or would like assistance with child custody issues stemming from their partner abusing them and their children. Victim assistance coordinators can only assist with protective orders, and the protective orders are only valid for the victim, thereby creating a critical

gap in services for child visitation issues. Participants also mentioned that the complexity of a victim's legal situation increases when children are involved. While these victims need to hire an attorney to handle the divorce or child custody issues, they cannot afford an attorney and must rely on availability of this help from LSLA or local pro bono attorneys. Many victim assistance coordinators had developed pro se packets with information about divorce and child custody for victims or appealed to local attorneys to take on cases pro bono. Many session attendees expressed concerns about the lack of attorneys available in their community to serve their legal needs.

Service Availability

All of the communities where the listening sessions were conducted have provisions specifically for domestic violence victims. Victim assistance coordinators from law enforcement offices were well represented at the sessions. Other available services are for victims of violence in general, child abuse victims, and for human trafficking (specifically in the larger counties). Some locations also have the services of United Way to assist in coordinating other available services. Several sites reported that no services are available for the homeless due to federal grant restrictions.

All locations are significantly lacking services for victims of property crime or identity theft. Many existing programs and services are not able to help with restitution and property crime due to grant restrictions. In these situations, victim service coordinators at the District Attorney's (DA) office may be able to help at times but still face the hurdle of insufficient resources available for victims of these types of crime.



“We can put a band aid on a legal issue, but if we don't help in a lot of other areas, not much will be accomplished beyond that.”

As for services provided to domestic violence victims, session participants reported law enforcement in their area are quite good in referring these victims to local agencies that can provide necessary assistance. Some of the participants report their experience and the intake forms victims fill out help them recognize the legal needs of these victims. However, some others might not necessarily have the same level of experience.



Many participants expressed positive feelings about the strength of services offered in their communities. Strong informal networks exist where service providers help one another obtain services for victims. Some specific strength of agencies mentioned by participants included: working with families in creative ways to address their needs; ability to provide free counseling services; and providing educational and awareness classes for victims. Some of these services can be improved, in terms of both the quality and access for lower income individuals.

As for service gaps, session participants at a rural location mentioned that although the victim services are high quality, what is available is inconsistent due to the large need in the community. Many service providers mentioned that their organizations are overwhelmed and they need more funding to increase their service capacity. Due to lack of resources, victims may not receive all the services they need. Lack of centralization of services contributes to this problem. Many session participants expressed a need for a centralized service center to coordinate all of the victim services



“When victims get referred here to there, they get lost in the maze of complications of having to talk to three or four different agencies to fill out paperwork. Things that seem simple to us are overwhelming for victims.”



in a particular area. This central agency would be aware of all the services available and what each organization can provide to victims. Being aware of what each agency in the community can provide is also viewed as a necessity. Due to lack of adequate centralization of information, victims are often shuffled from place to place, causing frustration for both the victims and providers.

Service Provider Challenges

Session participants discussed the particular barriers and challenges their organizations were facing in the community. A common barrier focused on funding issues and the lack of a central agency to coordinate the services. Participants expressed frustration about these issues, but often they emphasized that they

knew to find ways to serve their clients as best they could with their available resources.

Transportation is a common challenge for both large urban areas and small rural communities. Participants in high population areas mentioned that although public transportation is available, lack of centralized services complicates availability of needed resources. Whereas participants in low population areas mentioned lack of public transportation means no access to necessary services.

Moreover, many session attendees expressed concern that services for mental health and substance abuse, both for victims and perpetrators, are severely lacking in most areas. They stressed that most parts of Texas are suffering from this acute gap and the problem has become more critical to crime victims who need mental health and substance abuse services in addition to other services.

Other barriers include appropriate employee education and training on the needs of crime victims. Many participants expressed the need for further education and training for employees, especially in the area of domestic violence and helping employees to understand the cycle of abuse that happens for victims. Many session participants expressed the need for sensitivity training for employees in dealing with domestic violence issues. Additionally, many participants also stated the need for the community to become more aware of the issues surrounding them and to educate the community through appropriate outreach programs. One such example of where education is critical relates to immigrants in domestic violence situations. Immigration issues complicate victim need scenarios because of lack of reporting for fear of deportation and because of specific legalities involved with immigration.



“We have individual organizations that are troubleshooting and problem solving on an individual basis and solving it effectively in their own areas, but no comprehensive, systematic way to provide it for everybody.”

The tables that follow outline the barriers and challenges mentioned by the participants from all the sessions, in order of the most mentioned challenges to the least mentioned ones (Table 3.3). In addition, barriers and challenges are also broken down by LSLA service zones in the following table (Table 3.4). The LSLA service zones are as follows:



- Zone 1 consists of Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Matagorda, and Wharton counties.
- Zone 2 consists of Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties.
- Zone 3 consists of Hardin, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, Walker, and Waller counties.
- Zone 4 includes Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Freestone, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Limestone, McLennan, Milam, and Navarro counties.
- Zone 5 includes Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, and Tyler counties.
- Zone 6 includes Camp, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood counties.
- Zone 7 includes Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus counties.

Table 3.3: Barriers and Challenges: In Order of Most Mentioned to Least Mentioned

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of central agency/central case management • Civil law issues and lack of attorneys available for assistance • Training issues (including how to handle certain victims of crime) • Lack of adequate transportation • Lack of funding • Insufficient mental health and substance abuse resources/counseling • Lack of resources for victims of identity theft and property crime • Victims afraid of system • CVC applications and turnaround time • Language barriers/immigration issues • Rural community, less access to needed services • Inadequate staffing • Lack of appropriate education and awareness • Absence of homeless shelters • Lengthy process of obtaining protective orders • Lack of community involvement • Sustainability of grant funded agencies |
|---|

Table 3.4: Barriers and Challenges by LSLA Service Zones

Zone 1	Zones 2 and 3	Zones 4 and 5	Zones 6 and 7
Training issues	Lack of adequate transportation	Civil law issues/lack of attorneys	Lack of centralized agency/central case management
Civil law issues/lack of attorneys	Lack of central agency/central case management	Lack of funding	Lack of funding
Lack of central agency/central case management	Lack of appropriate education and awareness	Lack of central agency/central case management	Civil law issues/lack of attorneys
Lack of resources for victims of identity theft and property crime	Civil law issues/lack of attorneys	Insufficient mental health resources/counseling	Training issues

Overcoming Challenges

Possible ways to overcome these obstacles were suggested by participants. In order to combat the lack of centralization of services, networking meetings were mentioned as a way to promote communication between agencies and strengthen the quality of services. Interestingly, many participants seemed to enjoy the listening sessions, due to the golden opportunity it provided to discuss the services they offered with other participating agency representatives. Participants wanted to have further meetings to network with other service providers. Many attendees expressed the need for some type of central agency or employee to coordinate local resources such as shelters, services and volunteers. At one location, as mentioned earlier, United Way was mentioned as a nice vehicle to coordinate available services.

Attendees also expressed the need for more funding in education, training, and assistance for handling mental health and substance abuse issues appropriately. They discussed the need to incorporate volunteers into their organizations, thereby increasing staffing and simultaneously involving the community in the organization. Other potential ideas for overcoming barriers included having a victims’ search page in phone books, a resource book showing availability of services and a list serve or blog that could serve as a centralized place for collaboration. Additional suggestions to improve services and overcome barriers included better resources for bilingual or

non-resident individuals, and stronger marketing of existing programs to the communities to raise awareness of victim issues and of the programs themselves.

Compassion and sensitivity training was mentioned as a necessary training for service providers. Quarterly stakeholder trainings, financial stability training, cross agency training and advocacy training were discussed as essential to overcome barriers. These trainings could be used to improve existing services, although the type of training could vary by area. Some training could be for law enforcement officers while other could be for the victim service providers. Legal training to better understand the system and assist victims was highlighted as an avenue to develop better understanding of critical foundational knowledge to assist the crime victims effectively.

LSLA Legal Services

Session participants were asked about organizations that specifically provided legal services to crime victims. At most session locations, LSLA was the only organization available to handle the legal needs of victims. At some locations, an informal network of pro-bono attorneys was available for organizations to call for assistance. When LSLA was not available, victims had to hire attorneys for assistance because no legal services were available for the victims.

Many participants had positive comments about the quality of services their clients received from LSLA. When clients have been referred to LSLA and LSLA handled the cases, victims found the case handling and services helpful. However, since LSLA serves a 72 county region with a limited number of attorneys, they cannot handle all of the cases referred to them. At one site, it was reported that in the last two years, LSLA could only take three cases out of the 15 to 20 that were referred each month. Many session participants expressed concern that there is a much larger need for legal services than is being currently provided in their communities. In addition, many participants were unsure about the types of cases that LSLA can actually handle. They are not sure about referring divorce and custody cases to LSLA. They also discussed that there was a lack of appropriate community outreach from LSLA to stakeholders about eligibility requirements, services offered, and just contact with the program in general.

It was suggested that LSLA should send representatives to various local networking meetings with service providers to clear up confusion on their cases and the eligibility requirements for clients, including income requirements. A 24 hour help line was also suggested if case service providers or victims had questions they needed assistance with during an emergency. Service providers discussed their frustrations with the paper processing system that LSLA uses, describing it as confusing, laborious, lengthy and cumbersome. Switching to an online intake form was indicated as an avenue to make the process user friendly for both victims and providers and more efficient for LSLA.

The biggest possible need mentioned by session participants to overcome LSLA's high caseload barrier was to obtain more funding for this organization through creative avenues. Another related suggestion was to further develop a pro bono network of attorneys that could be used to relieve LSLA of the burden of being the sole provider of legal services for victims in most service areas. Another creative suggestion was to develop better self-help packets as resources to crime victims in lieu of direct assistance from an attorney.

The Texas Advocacy Project (TAP)¹ was also mentioned as a valuable resource for crime victims. Victims can call this agency and have their questions answered. If it is a problem that falls within their jurisdiction, a TAP attorney can call the victim at a safe time and give free legal advice. However, the attorney cannot represent the victim in court or draft motions for the victim. Table 3.5 summarizes at a glance the session participants’ perceptions on LSLA shortcomings and their suggestions to address these problems.

Table 3.5: Comments on LSLA from Listening Sessions

Comments on LSLA Drawbacks	Suggestions to Address Drawbacks
Large caseload/overwhelmed, overtasked & unresponsive	Provide 24 hour help line Develop an online intake system Partner with Texas Advocacy Project
Underfunded	Explore creative avenues for funding; partner with other state agencies
Unclear service range and capabilities	Improve communication and branding; develop brochures on services; send representatives to networking meetings
Cumbersome and lengthy paperwork	Develop an online intake system; streamline forms
Unclear prioritization process and eligibility for cases	Partner with Texas Advocacy Project; Improve communication on eligibility
Lack of relationships with local providers	Provide 24 hour help line; send representatives to networking meetings

Summary Findings: Waco and Temple Coalitions

While conducting the listening sessions in Waco and Temple, the study team members came to meet victim service providers who were members of local crime prevention task forces and coalitions that had regular meetings. These members invited the research team to meet with the coalition members to gather valuable information. Through these opportunities, two unique listening sessions were conducted in these locations with only the coalition and task force members. The protocol used for these two sessions combined questions both from the listening session facilitation guide as well as the key informant interview questionnaires.

In these two groups, community members, stakeholders and victim service providers have united in an effort to increase awareness of victim rights, to coordinate victim services in the two areas,

¹ Texas Advocacy Project is a non profit organization working directly with victims, shelters, law enforcement agencies and courts across Texas to deliver effective legal services to Texans in need.

and to advocate on behalf of crime victims. They have members from the local police department who employ victim advocates to respond to crime scenes, provide crisis intervention services and support survivors as they navigate their way through the criminal justice system. They also include advocates from local domestic violence shelters who specialize in dealing with domestic abuse survivors and the dynamics of those relationships, and also focus on community education and outreach. Other notable members were from the local rape crisis centers and child advocacy centers that have specialists who deal with both adult and child sexual violence survivors. Through their meetings and planning, both the coalitions aim to promote quality services to victims and the protection of victim rights in the criminal justice system. They help prioritize collaboration between community organizations and agencies to remain victim focused, to develop best practices and to offer all service providers the support systems and networking opportunities they can best use.

These two sessions with coalition members mostly echoed the information gathered from the other listening sessions. Participants remarked that services are poor and consistent quality services are not provided in these communities. They feel that although communication with other victim service organizations is not mandated anymore, stakeholder agencies centered on helping crime victims should be required to do their master planning together. When engaged in crime victims' advocacy work, individuals and organizations often find that collaborating with other advocates who have similar goals can be extremely helpful. To reap the many benefits of such a partnership and maximize the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts, individuals and organizations may want to build community coalitions. The objectives of such community coalitions will be primarily to educate the general public on criminal justice issues, be proactive to create avenues for crisis intervention, networking, provide victim education and the liaison between victims, prosecutors, law enforcement and media.



"I have to keep saying
it...there is no
accountability!"

(In regards to coordinated
efforts across agencies)



A major theme that came up during discussion at one of these coalitions was the absence of accountability in non-profit grant funded work. It was emphasized that it is hard to know which agency is accountable to whom and whether or not a victim actually received a service that an organization provides. Due to the intrinsic nature of the referral system, it is difficult to currently track if victims received the intended services. Disjointed service processes and a fragmented triaging process make the scenario harder for everyone involved, including the service providers, law enforcement as well as the victims. Lack of adequate knowledge around the immigration issues add to the difficulty especially for bi-lingual, low-income immigrant and undocumented population who have too much fear of the system.

To help victims understand the criminal justice process, suggestions included having a person who could walk victims through the processes in court and orient them to the nature of the processes and timeframes; pairing a social worker with a civil legal attorney; and to leverage the coalitions' networking meetings. An attendee mentioned offering training for judges, lawyers, and police with

material that explained the cycle of abuse in domestic violence. These types of training were highlighted as necessary for service providers who handle domestic violence victims. It was also discussed that there should be written procedures and workflows in place to refer victims to appropriate agencies for services. If service providers are not sure where to refer victims, having one central agency as an information repertoire would be ideal. This is a reiteration of the theme that emerged from all the sessions that were conducted by the research team earlier.

Similar to the listening sessions, the coalition members stated that LSLA is underfunded, over tasked and unresponsive. No participant was well-informed about LSLA's accountability mechanisms and their eligibility assessment process. Some participants thought that LSLA denied everyone and then accepted people who actually appealed their case. To improve the LSLA process, similar suggestions (such as 24-hour helpline, online intake system, partnering with TAP etc.) made at the other listening sessions were expressed by coalition attendees.

Chapter 4: Key Informant Interviews

A key informant interview is a loosely structured conversation with people who have specialized knowledge about the topic that is explored. Key informant interviews allow exploring a subject in depth and the give and take of these interviews can result in the discovery of information that would not have been revealed in a survey, focus group or a listening session. In this study, the community listening sessions provided a wealth of information concerning the legal needs facing crime victims in the LSLA service area. However, by design, the listening sessions lacked the ability to probe too many different areas. With multiple individuals in the room, there was insufficient time to cover several topics and the sessions were designed to examine only a few areas in greater details. Besides, many individuals were unable to attend the community listening sessions for a variety of reasons—some worked for organizations that were so small that they were unable to leave the office, and others worked for statewide agencies that did not fit well into focusing on a single community.

To account for these recruitment, participation and logistical issues, the study team conducted key informant phone interviews with approximately 50 individuals with knowledge of the legal needs facing victims of crimes in the LSLA service region. These individuals were referred to as key informants for their areas. This approach allowed the study team to probe many more areas than the listening sessions, provided useful context to the listening sessions and facilitated the inclusion of individuals who were unable to participate in the listening sessions. In the process, the interviews helped refine the data collection efforts, helped understand further the systems and processes centering on crime victims in the targeted communities and also clarified the findings of the qualitative data gathered via the listening sessions.

Interview Methodology

Sample Design

LSLA provided the research team with a list of approximately 200 individuals who represent agencies or other organizations that provide services to victims of crime. The roster included representatives from direct service providers such as domestic violence shelters to indirect service providers such as the Texas Attorney General's office and law enforcement agencies.

In order to ensure an adequate description of the needs facing victims was obtained, the research team first identified individuals representing three key groups:

1. Providers of services to victims of specific crimes missing from the community listening sessions (e.g., elderly abuse, consumer crime)
2. Individuals representing broader groups not represented in the community listening sessions (e.g., veterans, GLBTQ community, foreign residents, homeless persons)
3. Individuals from statewide agencies that did not attend the community listening sessions (e.g., Attorney General's Office, Texas Department of Criminal Justice).

The sample design ensured that at least one individual from each of these groups was included in the final sample. In all 36 individuals were selected in this method. An additional 44 individuals were selected at random from the remaining sample provided by LSLA for a total of 80 individuals.

Recruitment

Sampled individuals were first contacted by email. The email, included in the Appendix, provided information on the project, why they were selected and asking them to call and make an interview appointment. Utilizing emails is advantageous for many reasons. First, the emails require less effort and expense. Next, and most importantly, it allows the respondent to communicate with the research team at their own convenience rather than responding to a telephone call. Given the busy schedules of the respondents, this method of communication was preferred. A follow-up email was used to increase cooperation through this lower impact methodology.

Those individuals who did not respond to the email were contacted by telephone at least three times before being considered non-responsive. In all, 47 individuals participated in the interviews.

Interview

Appointments were scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time. At the beginning of the phone call, respondents were provided with information about the survey and were read a consent script approved by the Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M University Institutional Review Boards for Ethics and the Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice to ensure respondents were aware of the voluntary nature of the survey.

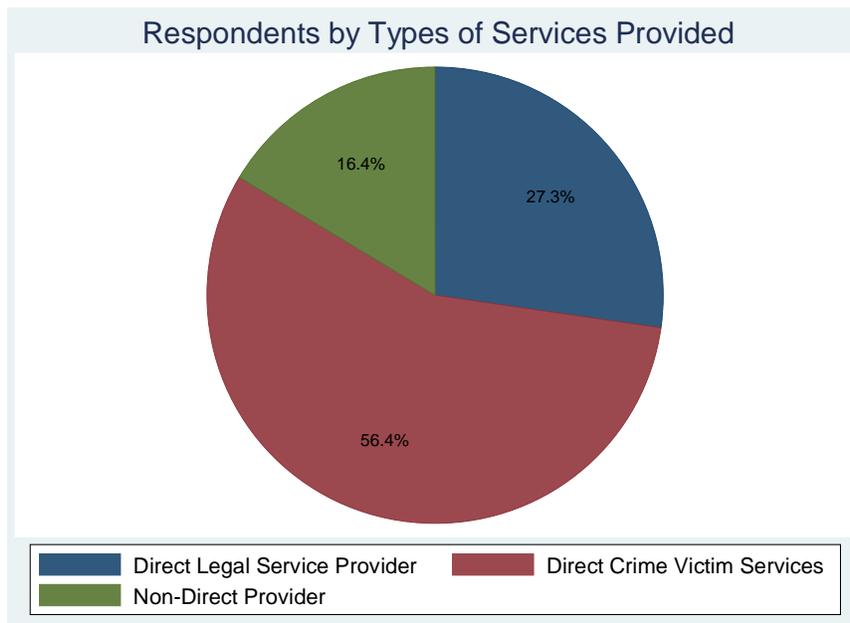
Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding the level of legal services available to victims of crime and the areas where additional services are needed. In order to ensure that individuals were not asked questions they were not qualified to answer, multiple tracks were developed within the script, which asked different questions depending on whether the respondent's organization provided direct legal services or non-direct services. In order to ensure that the proper questions were asked, the research team utilized a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) platform for the interviews. CATI systems automatically "skip" to the appropriate questions rather than rely on the interviewer to shuffle between pages to identify the appropriate next question. A copy of the interview script is available in the Appendix.

Findings

Respondents

The research team was successful in obtaining responses from a wide variety of agency representatives. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of agency types participating in the survey. The vast majority of respondents (56%) work with organizations that provide services to crime victims, but stop

Figure 4.1: Agencies Represented in Surveys



short of providing direct legal services. These organizations include violence shelters, counseling centers, and non-attorney victims’ advocates from county and district attorneys’ offices. The victim advocates were routinely in place to help victims navigate the victims’ compensation fund and helping them access other assistance; however, they rarely were practicing attorneys and were, therefore, unable to provide legal assistance. Just over one-fourth of the respondents (27%) directly provided legal services to victims. direct legal service -providers included private attorneys and advocacy organizations with legal staff. The remaining respondents (16%) work for entities that do not directly serve crime victims, though they may encounter them. Examples of non-direct providers include United Way agencies, homeless outreaches and schools.

Legal Services

Each respondent was asked to define “legal services/assistance to crime victims.” Not surprisingly, there were a variety of responses, with most focusing upon what actions constitute legal services rather than providing a definition. The most common services mentioned were assistance with protective orders and divorce. Only four individuals offered definitions that were consistent with the projects definition—“services provided to crime victims by legal staff.” While not fully consistent with this definition, one police officer gave an especially succinct and insightful response, “the legal part is something law enforcement can’t handle.” While law enforcement is often the first to provide services to crime victims, they simply cannot provide legal services to these individuals. Given the central role law enforcement plays in communicating with crime victims, helping them know where to



“The legal part is something law enforcement can’t handle.”



refer crime victims for legal services could greatly improve access to these services.

Five respondents indicated that their office had at least one lawyer and/or paralegal on staff that provided legal services to crime victims—four of these offices provide legal services at no cost, while the fifth office provides services using a sliding fee schedule. An additional 14 offices utilize private attorneys in the area to provide services to crime victims at a free or reduced rate. In all, 19 of the respondents (35%) either had legal staff in their offices or worked with private attorneys to assist victims of crime.

The research team created a list of investigated services, which included a range of legal services from assistance with protective orders to escorting victims to court. The list of investigated services can be found in the interview script in the Appendix. For the five organizations with their own legal staff, the research team inquired into which of these legal services each organization provided. Organizations varied from providing one service to twenty services. Areas where no legal services were provided include: assisting with insurance claims and acting as a liaison with defense attorneys. Only one organization provided assistance to help recover from identity theft. Each of the respondents indicated that their office provided assistance to crime victims with their immigration issues. Four out of the five offices provide restitution assistance, property return help and legal aid related to intimidation protection.

Three of the five organizations provide legal assistance to victims of any crime. Every office delivered legal services to individuals who were victimized by assault, sexual violence, human trafficking, child abuse, elder abuse and domestic violence. Overall, the type of crime an individual is the victim of does not seem to present a barrier to accessing some form of legal services.

Non-Legal Services

The research team created a list of fourteen support services that do not require the services of a lawyer, which ranged from court orientation to assistance preparing a victim impact statement. The list of support services can be found in the interview script in the Appendix. The most commonly provided support service was providing an escort to court—81% of these organizations were reported to offer this assistance to crime victims. Other services that were regularly reported were: providing compensation assistance (77%); acting as a liaison with the prosecutor (71%); assisting with the protective order process (61%); orienting the victim to the courtroom and judicial process (61%).

Of the fourteen services asked about, the non-legal direct crime victim services providers offered on average seven of the enumerated support services, with thirteen services being the highest reported. One-fourth of these organizations offered ten or more services. While the non-legal direct crime victim services providers cannot provide legal assistance, they are able to offer assistance in navigating the legal environment—many seem to be doing just that. Further, all of the respondents indicated that these support services were provided at no cost to the victim.

Only 39% of the non-legal direct crime victim services providers offer assistance to victims of any crime. Many specialize in serving victims of select crimes. 35% of the organizations provide services to victims of sexual violence (74% total when including those who represent all crimes).

Other crimes with significant representation include child abuse (29%), domestic violence (29%), elder abuse (26%), assault (26%) and stalking (23%).

The non-legal direct crime victim services providers were asked which three crimes from which were most often cited by clients seeking their services. 55% of the organizations have most often seen requests from victims of domestic violence. 40% of the non-legal direct crime victim services providers see a regular demand from victims of sexual violence while 32% see regular requests from victims of assault.

Respondents from these organizations were asked why they did not provide legal services at their agency. The overwhelming majority (63%) indicated that it was outside their organizational mission. However, a substantive minority (25%) indicated that funding issues prevented their organization from making legal services available to victims of crime.

While providing legal assistance to crime victims may be out of the organizational mission for many non-legal direct crime victim services providers, many of these organizations provide training to their employees on how to identify the legal needs of crime victims. Three-fifths of the respondents indicated that their organization provides such training to their staff. However, this leaves 40% of the respondents in organizations without training to help identify the legal needs of crime victims.

Further, 46% of the organizations have taken the additional step of creating formal guidelines and/or procedures to help identify these legal needs. These procedures can range from the informal experiential-based procedures where caseworkers have discretion to being a formal component of the intake procedure. One respondent noted that they work with their caseworkers to ensure they are actively listening to the client, “training the volunteers on how to listen—listening and hearing are different things—that is how we identify what needs done.”

When a legal need is identified, the vast majority of organizations have information available to provide to a crime victim. 84% of respondents from these entities provide either literature, websites, verbal information or a direct referral to a legal services provider. One-third of respondents indicated that their organization utilized all four of these mechanisms. 56% of the non-legal direct crime victim services providers indicated that their organizations have procedures in place for referring the individuals to legal service providers in their area.



“Training the volunteers on how to listen—listening and hearing are different things—that is how we identify what needs done.”



Demand for Services

The respondents from the five organizations with at least one lawyer and/or paralegal on staff who provided legal services to crime victims were asked to name the top three crimes from which they see crime victims. Four of the respondents indicated that domestic violence was one of the most common. While three offices indicated that child sexual abuse was one of the most common crimes affecting their clientele. Other crimes making the list of



“They (crime victims) want people to follow up with them and keep them informed of the status of their case.”



top three affecting victims seeking services from the organizations included stalking, assault, adult sexual violence, child abuse and identity theft.

Respondents also indicated what services were most desired by crime victims. Three of the individuals indicated that assistance with immigration issues are among the most frequently requested services. Family law, including divorce was also regularly requested by victims of crime. One individual offered a particularly poignant response, “they (crime victims) want people to follow up with them and keep them informed of the status of their case”—

crime victims seem to become frustrated with the lack of information concerning the particulars of how their case(s) are progressing.

The demand for legal services seems to be outpacing the ability to provide them. Four of the five individuals classified the size of their legal staff as somewhat or entirely inadequate to “serve the crime victims that need assistance,” with three of them indicating their staff size was entirely inadequate to deal with the demands placed on their organizations. The question probed the number of attorneys—not their quality. On this metric, crime victims appear to have insufficient access to legal representation.

Direct service providers—both legal and non-legal—were asked which legal services crime victims most request. Twenty-one of the respondents provided an answer; of them two-thirds indicated that family law was requested. These requests include mostly assistance obtaining a divorce and child custody issues. More than half of the respondents indicated that there is a demand from crime victims for help in acquiring a protective order against the alleged perpetrator. Other common requests include help with immigration issues and obtaining restitution.



There are a “lot of resources but they are maxed out at capacity...the need is so great.”



Legal Needs

Respondents were asked which legal services were necessary for crime victims but not provided in their service area. 39% of respondents indicated access to general services was lacking in their area. For these individuals, crime victims need access to many different services. In particular access to legal representation was a key need. For several respondents, the issue is not that there are not services available; rather, the demand for the services greatly exceeds the supply. One respondent noted, there are a “lot of resources but they are maxed out at capacity...the need is so great.”

Overall, most agreed that LSLA was doing good work; however, many respondents (15%) indicated LSLA is related to the gaps in services. For instance, they saw LSLA as overburdened, even “overwhelmed.” There was a desire for additional attorneys either through LSLA, pro bono through the private bar or some other mechanism to help alleviate a portion of the burden. Some indicated a desire for LSLA to have offices in their county to make access easier.

One individual felt that a more robust involvement of the private bar could help alleviate the demands placed upon LSLA. “More pro bono involvement needed; legal services are too costly. LSLA is good, but so many people need services—it is difficult.” If local attorneys did increase their pro bono involvement by serving crime victims, perhaps some of the unmet demand could be filled.

Further, 32% indicated that access to family law services was needed. Given the large number of service providers who serve victims of domestic violence, this finding is not surprising. Many of these victims are still married to their alleged perpetrators and/or share child custody arrangements with them. While protective orders offer a good first step at separation, many crime victims want to formally terminate the relationship with the perpetrator. Further, child custody arrangements may conflict with the terms of the protective order, making access to an attorney more important.

Barriers

Of the offices with legal staff, three of the five respondents indicated that they often encountered language issues when communicating with victims of crime. Fortunately, four of the five offices had either a translator on staff or a staff member who was bilingual. While a small sample, the results indicate that language is an important factor to consider when looking at expanding legal services to crime victims.

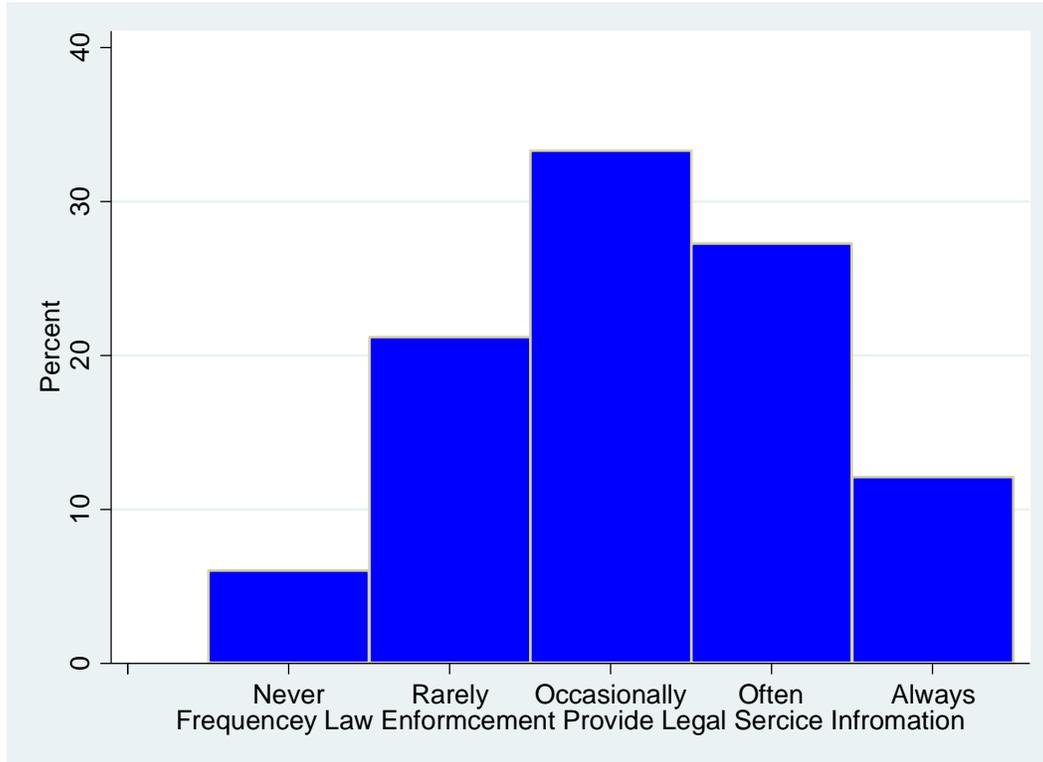
As shown in Figure 4.2, the vast majority of all respondents feel that local law enforcement officers do not provide information to crime victims about legal services available in the area. Only 40% of respondents felt that officers provided this information often or always, with one-fourth indicating that this information is provided rarely or never. Law enforcement officers are often the first service providers to contact crime victims. As such, they have a unique opportunity to provide complainants with information on the services available in their area—both legal and non-legal. For legal services, the perception amongst providers is that the criminal justice community does not communicate the available resources to crime victims.



“More pro bono attorneys are needed... private legal services are a little outrageous, but I’m not saying they are not worth it. LSLA and other legal aid services, so many people need their services that they are overwhelmed and they can only take so many cases due to their caseloads.”



Figure 4.2: Frequency Law Enforcement Inform Victims of Legal Services



Respondents were given a list of fourteen factors outlining various barriers on preventing utilization of legal services by victims of crime. They were asked to characterize the importance of these barriers. Table 4.1 displays the results. Each factor was viewed by a majority of respondents as playing a very or somewhat important role in keeping victims from legal services. According to those interviewed, the most important factor leading to an underutilization of legal services is a lack of understanding that the issues they face require legal assistance. Nearly 98% of individuals believe that this lack of understanding is at least a somewhat important factor in preventing victims from accessing legal assistance.

Table 4.1: Importance of Various Barriers on Preventing Utilization of Legal Services by Victims of Crimes

Crime Victims...	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important	Total
Do Not Understand the Process of Obtaining Legal Services	86.4%	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%	100.0%
Are Aware Services Are Offered But Do Not Know They Are Eligible	75.6%	13.3%	8.9%	2.2%	100.0%
Are Unaware Legal Services are Available	72.7%	20.5%	2.3%	4.5%	100.0%
Face an Overly Burdensome Process for Obtaining Legal Services	66.7%	28.6%	2.4%	2.4%	100.0%
Are Sometimes Culturally Disinclined to Seek Legal Services	66.7%	28.9%	4.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Do Not Receive Enough Information About Legal Services	62.8%	27.9%	7.0%	2.3%	100.0%
Are Afraid of the Legal System	62.8%	30.2%	4.7%	2.3%	100.0%
Do Not Understand Their Problems Require Legal Assistance	61.4%	36.4%	0.0%	2.3%	100.0%
Do Not Trust Legal Services Will Help Them	59.1%	29.5%	4.5%	6.8%	100.0%
Do Not have access to Legal Services/assistance in their area	58.1%	25.6%	7.0%	9.3%	100.0%
Prefer the Process be Over, and See Legal Involvement as Prolonging Matter	53.7%	29.3%	9.8%	7.3%	100.0%
Do Not Meet Income Limitations or Other Eligibility Requirements	51.2%	25.6%	11.6%	11.6%	100.0%
Believe the Incident Should Be a Private Matter	31.1%	51.1%	11.1%	6.7%	100.0%
Feel They Do Not Need any Legal Help	15.9%	40.9%	25.0%	18.2%	100.0%

Other factors viewed by more than 90% of respondents as being somewhat or very important in keeping victims from utilizing legal services include, “some crime victims are culturally disinclined to seek legal services” (96%), “the process for obtaining legal services is overly burdensome for crime victims” (95%), “crime victims are unaware that legal services are available” (93%), “crime victims do not understand the process of obtaining legal services” (93%), “crime victims are afraid of the legal system” (93%), and “not enough information about legal services is provided to crime victims” (91%).

Summary Findings: Telephone Interviews

Legal Services

There was a great deal of difference in what respondents felt legal services entail. This poses a noteworthy problem in that if the community is going to come together to improve the quality of services for victims of crimes, there needs to be some common understanding of what legal services entail so that everyone can work towards a common goal.

In addition to the services provided by LSLA, there are other organizations working on behalf of crime victims. Many types of assistance are available; however, areas where no legal services were provided include: assisting with insurance claims and acting as a liaison with defense attorneys. The most common supports services are immigration aid, restitution assistance, property return help and legal aid related to intimidation. While each legal services provider worked with victims of domestic abuse, victims of all crimes had at least one available resource. The type of crime does not prevent access to some form of legal assistance.

Non-Legal Services

Organizations that work directly with victims but stop short of providing legal services fill an important role. These entities help victims complete protective order paperwork, provide an escort to court, orient the client to the legal process and apply for restitution. While these actions do not require the use of a licensed attorney, they do help crime victims more readily navigate the legal environment.

Demand for Services

While services are available for victims of any crime, the most commonly seen are those that suffered domestic violence, child sexual abuse, stalking, assault, adult sexual violence, child abuse and identity theft. The most common legal services requested by crime victims are immigration assistance and Family law, including divorce and custody.

Legal Needs

The demand for legal services for crime victims is larger than the supply. Most entities viewed their staffs' as insufficient in size to meet the legal needs of crime victims. Most viewed LSLA as providing quality services; however, they viewed them as overburdened and unable to meet the needs of crime victims due to their staff size and budget. A wider network of pro bono attorneys was viewed as a possible way to help increase the supply of legal services.

Family law issues were seen as one area in particular need of increased legal assistance. Not surprisingly, these individuals would like to pursue a divorce and/or pursue a child custody arrangement.

Barriers

In contrast to the listening sessions, police officers were not widely seen as providing legal information to the victims they encounter. This is particularly troubling since law enforcement personnel are often the first persons a victim encounters.

Information was one theme that was commonly associated with preventing crime victims from accessing services. Respondents commonly felt that individuals did not access legal services because they either: did not know services were available; did not know they qualified; they do not understand the process for obtaining services and they do not receive enough information about services that are available.

Chapter 5: Web-Based Survey

Survey Methodology

During the winter of 2013, a web-based survey was developed to collect quantitative data regarding legal service needs of victims around the state of Texas. The web-based survey was similar to the protocol of the key informant interviews which were gathered by phone during the summer and fall of 2013. Based on the findings from the key informant interviews, the web-based survey continued to target both legal and crime victim service providers, in addition to introducing crime victims to the data collection process.

Recruitment

To conduct the web-based survey, email invitations were distributed to all service providers in the roster provided by LSLA. This roster has been previously mentioned and was also used for recruitment in the first two phases of the needs assessment. Follow-up emails were sent approximately two weeks after the initial recruitment email.

In order to recruit crime victims, recruitment cards were created and distributed to clients by service providers at various agencies, including all LSLA offices, the Department of Public Safety Victim Service Program Coordinators, and Catholic Charities. In addition, flyers were sent to many service providers within the region whom LSLA had contact information. The cards included a brief description of the purpose of the survey and a web link to access the survey.

Findings

The web survey was active for two months, during which a total of 112 individuals accessed the survey, and 81 individuals completed the survey. The majority of respondents (n = 68, 84%) had no victimization experience. Only 13 respondents indicated that they had been the victim of a crime. The results presented in the next section reflect information gathered from service providers/non-victims. Victim responses will be considered separately.

Respondents

As Table 5.1 indicates, the majority of the participants were female (89.2%) and white (68.8%), although there were a substantial number of Hispanic participants (15.6%) as well. The average age was 42, half (50.0%) held an advanced or professional degree, and the majority of the participants had an annual household income over \$40,000 (84.6%). The type of area in which the participants lived was more diverse, with half reporting that they live in a suburban area (50.8%), and approximately equal percentages reported living in a rural area (24.6%) or an urban area (23.1%). The TXCVLAN implementation plan divides the region into zones by county as noted below. Zone 1, which includes Harris County, had the largest number of participants (29.4%). Zones 5 (1.5%), 6 (5.9%), and 7 (4.4%) have particularly low numbers of respondents. Additional analyses will consider responses separately by zone. As mentioned above:

- Zone 1 consists of Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Matagorda, and Wharton counties.

- Zone 2 consists of Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties.
- Zone 3 consists of Hardin, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, Walker, and Waller counties.
- Zone 4 includes Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Freestone, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Limestone, McLennan, Milam, and Navarro counties.
- Zone 5 includes Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, and Tyler counties.
- Zone 6 includes Camp, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood counties.
- Zone 7 includes Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus counties.

Table 5.1: Demographic Information (N = 68)

Sex		
	Male	10.8%
	Female	89.2%
Age		
		42.5 (13.2)
Race/Ethnicity		
	White	68.8%
	Black/African American	7.8%
	Latino/Hispanic	15.6%
	Asian American	6.3%
	American Indian	1.6%
Education Level		
	High school/GED	3.1%
	Some college	14.1%
	Associate's degree	4.7%
	Bachelor's degree	28.1%
	Advanced or professional degree	50.0%
Annual Household Income		
	Over \$40,000	84.6%
	Under \$40,000	10.8%
	Don't know	4.6%
Living Area		
	Urban area	23.1%
	Suburban area	50.8%
	Rural area	24.6%
	On a farm or ranch	1.5%
LSLA Zone		
	1	29.4%
	2	8.8%
	3	13.2%
	4	22.1%
	5	1.5%
	6	5.9%
	7	4.4%
	Outside of zones or not provided	14.7%

Among the respondents, most (50.7%) offered crime victim services, while about 21 percent provided direct legal services to crime victims. Nearly 15% indicated that their agency offered both crime victim services and legal services, while about 13% were not associated with a direct service provider.

Table 5.2: Type of Services Provided (n = 67)

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Direct legal services	14	20.9
Crime victim services	34	50.7
Both types of services	10	14.9
Not a service provider	9	13.4

The fifty-eight participants associated with a service provider were asked what specific services they offer for crime victims. Table 5.3 presents a list of the services provided by these agencies/organizations organized by how often the services were reported. The most common services provided was an escort to court and compensation assistance at just over 47%. Near the top of the list, just under 46% of respondents offer assistance with protective orders. On the other end of the spectrum, 7.4% of respondents offer insurance claims aid or a liaison to the defense attorney. About four percent offer aid with witness receptions, and only 1.5 percent offer tribal assistance to crime victims.

Table 5.3: Specific Services Provided

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Escort to court	32	47.1
Compensation assistance	32	47.1
Protective orders	31	45.6
Victim impact statements	22	32.4
Housing assistance	22	32.4
Divorce	20	29.4
Public benefits (Medicaid, TANF)	19	27.9
Court orientation	18	26.5
Child support	18	26.5
Landlord/Tenet	17	25.0
Custody papers	17	25.0
Immigration assistance	16	23.5
Liaison to prosecution	15	22.1
Enforcements of other victims' rights in court	14	20.6
Wills and estate planning	14	20.6
Guardianship	13	19.1
Consumer claims	12	17.6
Identity theft and financial fraud	12	17.6
Restitution assistance	11	16.2
Wage claims	10	14.7
Intimidation protection	8	11.8
Property return	7	10.3
Insurance claims aid	5	7.4
Liaison to defense attorney	5	7.4
Witness reception	3	4.4
Tribal assistance	1	1.5

While the three most commonly offered services include an escort to court, protective orders, and compensation assistance, Table 5.4 provides a list of what the providers believe are the three services most commonly requested by clients and the three most important services not offered by the provider. Fifty-four percent of the providers listed protective orders as one of the most requested services for crime victims. Divorce assistance was the second most commonly requested service (41.7%), and twenty-nine percent of providers listed custody papers as another commonly requested service.

Similarly, divorce assistance, protective orders, and custody papers top the list of services viewed as most important but that are not offered by the respondent’s agency. About thirty-one percent of providers feel that divorce assistance is the most important service not being offered, while twenty-eight percent feel that protective orders are also services that are important to crime victims. Offering services pertaining to custody papers (20.6%) rounds out the top three most important services not offered by providers.

Table 5.4: Three Most Commonly Requested Services Viewed as Important but not Provided by the Agency

Services most commonly requested by clients		Most important services not provided by agency	
Protective orders	54.4%	Divorce	30.9%
Divorce	41.2%	Protective orders	27.9%
Custody papers	29.4%	Custody papers	20.6%

Assessment of Responses by TXCVLAN Zone

Zone 1

Zone 1 consists of providers located in Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Matagorda, and Wharton counties (N=20 providers). Table 5.5 provides a breakdown of the type of services offered by the organization with which the participant was associated. Half of the providers (50.0%) offered crime victim services, while 15 percent provided direct legal services to crime victims. Twenty-five percent of the organizations provided both types of services, while ten percent were not associated with a service provider.

Table 5.5: Type of Services Provided in Zone 1

	N	%
Direct legal services	3	15.0
Crime victim services	10	50.0
Both types of services	5	25.0
Not a service provider	2	10.0

Table 5.6 presents the three most commonly requested services as reported by providers in Zone 1. Fifty-five percent of the providers list protective orders and divorce as two of the most requested

services for crime victims. Custody papers were the third most commonly requested service as forty-five percent of providers reported it as a commonly needed legal service. In terms of those services needed but not provided, forty percent of the providers feel that protective orders and custody papers are the most important service not being offered, while thirty-five percent feel that divorce assistance are also services that are important to crime victims.

Table 5.6: Top Three Most Commonly Requested Services Not Provided in Zone 1

Services most commonly requested by clients		Most important services not provided by agency	
Protective orders	55.0%	Protective orders	40.0%
Divorce	55.0%	Custody papers	40.0%
Custody papers	45.0%	Divorce	35.0%

Zones 2 and 3

Due to small sample size, Zones 2 and 3 were combined (N=15 respondents). Zone 2 consists of Austin, Brazos, Burleson, Fayette, Grimes, Lee, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties. Zone 3 consists of Hardin, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, Walker, and Waller counties. Table 5.7 provides a breakdown of the type of services offered by the organization with which the participant was associated for Zones 2 and 3. Just under half (46.7%) offered crime victim services, while twenty percent provided direct legal services to crime victims. Zero providers in Zones 2 and 3 provided both crime and legal services, while a third (33.3%) of the participants were not associated with a service provider.

Table 5.7: Type of Services Provided in Zone 2 and 3

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Direct legal services	3	20.0
Crime victim services	7	46.7
Both types of services	0	0.0
Not a service provider	5	33.3

Table 5.8 presents the three most commonly requested services and those needed but not provided in Zones 2 and 3. Almost half (46.7%) of the providers list protective orders as the most requested service. One-third (33.3%) of the providers identified divorce assistance as a commonly requested service, while just over a fourth (26.7%) listed custody papers. In terms of services the providers feel are the most important to crime victims but are not offered by their associated agency/organization, Zones 2 and 3 are substantially different from the three most commonly requested services. According to service providers in Zones 2 and 3, the three most important services not offered by providers included enforcement of various victims' rights, obtaining protective orders, and assisting with public benefits.

Table 5.8: Three Most Commonly Requested Services in Zone 2 and 3

Services most commonly requested by clients		Most important services not provided by agency	
Protective orders	46.7%	Enforcement of other victims' rights	20.0%
Divorce	33.3%	Protective orders	20.0%
Custody papers	26.7%	Public benefits	20.0%

Zones 4 and 5

Zone 4 (Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Freestone, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Limestone, McLennan, Milam, and Navarro counties) and Zone 5 (Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, and Tyler counties) were also combined due to small sample size (N=16). Table 5.9 provides a breakdown of the type of services offered by organizations with which the participant was associated. Over half of the providers (56.3%) offered crime victim services, while twenty-five percent provided direct legal services to crime victims. Twelve percent of providers provided both crime victim and legal services, while six percent of respondents were not associated with a service provider.

Table 5.9: Type of Services Provided in Zone 4 and 5

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Direct legal services	4	25.0
Crime victim services	9	56.3
Both types of services	2	12.5
Not a service provider	1	6.3

Table 5.10 presents the three most commonly requested services in Zones 4 and 5. Almost two-thirds (62.5%) of the providers list protective orders as the most requested service. Over forty percent (43.8%) of the providers list compensation assistance, while over a third (37.5%) of the providers list divorce assistance as a commonly requested service. Those services viewed as important but not provided differed in Zones 4 and 5. Over thirty percent (31.3%) feel that divorce assistance and intimidation protection are important services that should be offered. Twenty-five percent feel that protective orders and wage claims are also important services to be offered to crime victims.

Table 5.10: Three Most Commonly Requested Services in Zone 4 and 5

Services most commonly requested by clients		Most important services not provided by agency	
Protective orders	62.5%	Divorce	31.3%
Compensation assistance	43.8%	Intimidation protection	31.3%
Divorce	37.5%	Protective orders/Wage claims	25.0%

Zones 6 and 7

Zone 6 (Camp, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood counties) and Zone 7 (Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus counties) were also combined due to small sample size (N=7 respondents). Table 5.11 provides a breakdown of the type of services offered by the organization with which the participant was associated. Forty-three percent of the providers offer direct legal services, and forty-three percent of the providers offer crime victim services. Fourteen percent of the providers offer both legal and crime victim services.

Table 5.11: Type of Services Provided in Zone 6 and 7

	N	%
Direct legal services	3	42.9
Crime victim services	3	42.9
Both types of services	1	14.3
Not a service provider	0	0

Table 5.12 presents the three most commonly requested services in Zones 6 and 7. Well over fifty percent (57.1%) of the providers list divorce services as the most requested service. Over forty percent (42.9%) of the providers list protective orders and custody papers as the other most commonly requested services. Services the providers in Zones 6 and 7 feel are the most important to crime victims but are not offered by their associated agency/organization are also included. Over twenty-eight (28.6%) percent feel that property return and protective orders are the important services to be offered to crime victims that are not currently offered by their agency.

Table 5.12: Three Most Commonly Requested Services in Zone 6 and 7

Services most commonly requested by clients		Most important services not provided by agency	
Divorce	57.1%	Property return	28.6%
Protective orders	42.9%	Protective orders	28.6%
Custody papers	42.9%		

Ranking of Legal Needs of Crime Victims

Respondents were asked to review a set of items reflecting legal needs that crime victims identified during the community listening sessions and key informant interviews. Web survey participants were asked to rank the items in order of most important (1) to least important (9). Table 5.13 presents the rank-ordered items.

Table 5.13: Average Rank of Legal Needs of Crime Victims

Legal Need	Average Ranking	Range
Assistance with Protective Orders	1.42 (0.96)	1 – 6
Assistance with Divorce	2.70 (1.65)	1 – 8
Assistance with Immigration Issues	4.81 (2.32)	1 – 9
Restitution Assistance	5.63 (1.94)	1 – 9
Legal Aid for Intimidation Protection	5.81 (2.50)	1 – 9
Liaison with Defense Attorneys	5.98 (2.10)	2 – 9
Help with Return of Property	6.00 (1.95)	2 – 9
Assistance with Insurance Claims	6.28 (2.23)	2 – 9
Assistance to Help Recover from Identity Theft	6.37 (1.93)	3 – 9

As shown in Table 5.14, the ranking of legal needs varied somewhat by zone. Assistance with protective orders and assistance with divorce were ranked first and second most important, respectively, across all of the zones. While assistance with immigration issues ranked third in Zones 1, 2, and 3, it was ranked as less important in the remaining zones. Alternatively, restitution assistance was ranked somewhat more highly in Zones 4-7. When asked about other needs not included in the list, two respondents from Zone 1 and two respondents from Zone 4 identified child custody and support assistance as a need. Additionally, one respondent from Zone 4 included assistance with victim impact statements, and another suggested relocation and shelter assistance.

Table 5.14: Average Ranking of Legal Needs by Zone

Zone 1 (n = 20)	Zones 2 and 3 (n = 14)	Zones 4 and 5 (n = 16)	Zones 6 and 7 (n = 7)
Assistance with Protective Orders (1.63)	Assistance with Protective Orders (1.07)	Assistance with Protective Orders (1.38)	Assistance with Protective Orders (1.20)
Assistance with Divorce (2.16)	Assistance with Divorce (3.07)	Assistance with Divorce (3.38)	Assistance with Divorce (3.00)
Assistance with Immigration Issues (3.16)	Assistance with Immigration Issues (5.21)	Restitution Assistance (4.46)	Liaison with Defense Attorneys (5.20)
Legal Aid for Intimidation Protection (5.79)	Assistance with Insurance Claims (5.57)	Help with Return of Property (4.54)	Assistance with Insurance Claims (5.20)
Liaison with Defense Attorneys (6.11)	Liaison with Defense Attorneys (5.71)	Legal Aid for Intimidation Protection (5.62)	Restitution Assistance (5.40)
Restitution Assistance (6.16)	Legal Aid for Intimidation Protection (5.71)	Assistance with Immigration Issues (5.69)	Assistance to Help Recover from Identity Theft (6.00)
Assistance to Help Recover from Identity Theft (6.53)	Assistance to Help Recover from Identity Theft (5.79)	Liaison with Defense Attorneys (6.46)	Help with Return of Property (6.20)
Help with Return of Property (6.68)	Restitution Assistance (6.36)	Assistance with Insurance Claims (6.69)	Assistance with Immigration Issues (6.40)
Assistance with Insurance Claims (6.79)	Help with Return of Property (6.50)	Assistance to Help Recover from Identity Theft (6.77)	Legal Aid for Intimidation Protection (6.40)

Ranking of Barriers to Providing Legal Services for Crime Victims

Web survey participants were presented with a list of five barriers to providing legal services for crime victims that were identified during the community listening sessions and key informant interviews. Again, respondents ranked the barriers in terms of most significant (1) to least significant (5). Table 5.15 provides the overall ranking of barriers. The primary barrier as ranked by these respondents was a lack of funding or available attorneys.

Table 5.15: Average Rank of Barriers to Providing Legal Services to Crime Victims

Legal Need	Average Ranking	Range
Lack of Funding or Available Attorneys	1.58 (1.09)	1 - 4
Victims Not Informed about Availability of Legal Services	2.95 (1.13)	1 - 5
Victims Don't Know that They Are Eligible for Services	3.47 (1.40)	1 - 5
Victims Don't Understand that the Issues They Face may require legal assistance.	3.50 (1.26)	1 - 5
Language/communication issues	3.50 (1.19)	2 - 5

Considering barriers by zone, as in Table 5.16, finds that lack of funding is ranked as the most significant barrier to providing legal services across all of the zones. Language and communication issues are ranked as the second most significant barriers in Zones 6 and 7 but are ranked lower in the other zones. Victims not being informed about legal services or not knowing that they are eligible are also ranked near the top in terms of barriers. Victims not understanding that they may need legal assistance, however, is ranked near the bottom. Three respondents (one in Zone 3 and two in Zone 4) also identified transportation issues as a significant barrier to providing legal services.

Table 5.16: Average Ranking of Barriers to Providing Legal Services by Zone

Zone 1 (n = 20)	Zones 2 and 3 (n = 14)	Zones 4 and 5 (n = 16)	Zones 6 and 7 (n = 7)
Lack of Funding or Available Attorneys (1.53)	Lack of Funding or Available Attorneys (1.85)	Lack of Funding or Available Attorneys (1.80)	Lack of Funding or Available Attorneys (1.00)
Victims Not Informed about Availability of Legal Services (2.58)	Victims Don't Know that They Are Eligible for Services (3.15)	Victims Not Informed about Availability of Legal Services (2.87)	Language/communication issues (2.67)
Language/communication issues (3.53)	Victims Not Informed about Availability of Legal Services (3.31)	Victims Don't Know that They Are Eligible for Services (3.00)	Victims Not Informed about Availability of Legal Services (3.33)
Victims Don't Understand that the Issues They Face may require legal assistance. (3.58)	Language/communication issues (3.31)	Victims Don't Understand that the Issues They Face may require legal assistance. (3.33)	Victims Don't Know that They Are Eligible for Services (3.67)
Victims Don't Know that They Are Eligible for Services (3.79)	Victims Don't Understand that the Issues They Face may require legal assistance. (3.38)	Language/communication issues (4.00)	Victims Don't Understand that the Issues They Face may require legal assistance. (4.33)

Findings Regarding Victims of Crime

Thirteen web survey respondents indicated that they had experienced some type of victimization. While this does not provide a full consideration of the needs of crime victims (especially considering the sizable number of victims in the region compared to the number who participated in the survey), some brief results are presented here to begin the consideration of the victims' perspective. As Table 5.17 shows, the majority of the crime victims were female (75.0%) and white (69.2%), with an additional 23.1% Hispanic participants. The average age was 45, with a range from 20 to 73. All of the participants had at least some college education, and the majority of the participants had an annual household income over \$40,000 (69.2%). Most of the crime victims reported living in an urban area (46.2%), with 38.5% living in a suburban area and 15.4% living in a rural area.

Table 5.17: Demographic Information for Crime Victims (N = 13)

Sex		
	Male	25.0%
	Female	75.0%
Age		
		45.0 (15.53)
Race/Ethnicity		
	White	69.2%
	Black/African American	0.0%
	Latino/Hispanic	23.1%
	Asian American	0.0%
	American Indian	7.7%
Education Level		
	High school/GED	0.0%
	Some college	23.1%
	Associate's degree	30.8%
	Bachelor's degree	15.4%
	Advanced or professional degree	30.8%
Annual Household Income		
	Over \$40,000	69.2%
	Under \$40,000	30.8%
Living Area		
	Urban area	46.2%
	Suburban area	38.5%
	Rural area	15.4%
County (number of respondents indicated)		
	Bell	1
	Brazoria	1
	Cherokee	1
	Fort Bend	1
	Galveston	1
	Gregg	2
	Harris	3
	McLennan	1
	Walker	2

Among the 13 respondents who had experienced victimization, two (15.4%) had experienced only violent victimization within the previous year, six (46.2%) reported only property victimization,

and five respondents (38.5%) reported experiencing both violent and property victimization. Eight of these respondents (61.5%) reported that they had contacted police about their experience. Of the 13 respondents who had experienced victimization, none reported using legal services. When asked to identify they reason they had not used those services, the most common reason noted was that they did not feel they needed legal services. In addition to the options provided, two respondents provided additional reasons. One stated “I applied 4x at lonestar legal aid and they wouldn’t help me.” Another other said, “I believe the perpetrator was my step-son and it was awkward.”

Table 5.18: Victimization Experiences and Agency Response

	%
Type of Victimization	
Violent Only	15.4%
Property Only	46.2%
Both Violent and Property	38.5%
Contacted Police	61.5%
Reasons for Not Using Legal Services	
Did not feel they needed legal services	46.2%
Did not know they needed legal services	7.7%
Did not think they could afford legal services	7.7%

Although none of the crime victim respondents reported using legal services, a number of specific services were mentioned that were needed but not received. Most commonly reported were assistance with property return, intimidation protection, and restitution assistance.

Table 5.19: Legal Services Needed but not Received

Service	Number reporting
Property return	2
Intimidation protection	2
Restitution assistance	2
Protective orders	1
Divorce	1
Housing	1
Compensation assistance	1

Chapter 6: Concluding Insights & Recommendations

Through the course of the community listening sessions, key informant interviews, and web-based survey, many valuable insights were gathered that can help guide efforts to develop a wraparound network to better meet the legal needs of crime victims in the targeted communities. However, four common themes that emerged from the data we processed are listed below:

- ▶ ***Victim service and legal service providers are overwhelmed.*** Large numbers of clients, understaffing, and underfunding were commonly mentioned as problems in responding to the needs of crime victims. In this context, meeting the needs of all—or even most—of the victims is often difficult or impossible. Many noted that they have to respond to the immediate needs of crime victims, suggesting a triage approach to service provision, dealing with the most severe needs first, then moving to less severe issues if time and resources ever permit. Quite often, this means the legal needs of crime victims are not adequately represented due to an overburdened staff.
- ▶ ***Inter-agency communication is lacking.*** Additionally, respondents noted that there is an overall lack of communication between the various agencies in the region. This lack of communication leads to a duplication of efforts—or worse, services not being provided. There also seemed to be a lack of understanding about what types of cases LSLA could and could not take and an overall hesitancy to refer to LSLA due to an assumption that they would not be able to handle the case.
- ▶ ***Response to different types of crime victims is inconsistent.*** While still not as robust as one would like, there are a number of agencies that report working with victims of domestic violence frequently (along with interpersonal physical and/or sexual abuse) and seem more confident in responding to those types of clients. However, services appear to be less available and/or accessible for victims of other types of crime.
- ▶ ***There is a great need for family law services.*** Far-and-away, the most common legal needs noted by respondents included issues of family law, such as divorce and custody. Many agencies are prepared to assist with protective order paperwork, but lack the personnel or expertise to pursue family law matters.

Based on the issues identified above, this report identifies the following general recommendations to consider in moving forward to the next phase of the project:

- ▶ ***Expand resources dedicated to serving crime victims.*** Nearly all respondents understood that LSLA staff were overburdened and unable to meet the needs of all crime victims due to resource restrictions and funding limitations. To the extent that LSLA staff attorneys could be further dedicated and maximized to serving the legal needs of crime victims, this problem can be eased somewhat by expanding or re-allocating resources.
- ▶ ***Expand the network of possible legal resources available for referring crime victims.*** While some agencies indicated that they relied on pro bono attorneys to some extent, LSLA is

the key resource most agencies recognize as providing legal services. Victim service agencies could benefit from having a broader set of options to which to refer clients for their legal needs, and that would also reduce the demand on LSLA. To accomplish this, LSLA and partners will likely need to engage the local bar association to seek out attorneys willing to offer pro bono hours or serve select individuals on a sliding scale. This step will likely take some time to implement as it will require community outreach, engagement and relationship building; however, the results could be quite beneficial.

- ▶ ***Educate victim service providers about legal needs.*** Many of the service providers lack adequate knowledge of how to identify legal needs and what to do when needs are pinpointed. Proper identification and guidance can help ensure that the victim is placed with the right agency at the right time—limiting the amount of time wasted for both the victim and LSLA and/or partners. Implementing a regular (quarterly, semi-annual or annual) training with a dedicated staff and appropriate training material. In addition, appropriate inventories would help ensure that individuals had training available to them, even if they are new to their jobs, and can have refreshers on a regular basis. These trainings can benefit all parties involved.
- ▶ ***Create a directory of services.*** Related to training, many individuals felt as if they did not know where to send a client. Some even noted that it would be helpful to have a central place to find resources. An online directory of services would be a low-cost, searchable solution that could be updated in real-time. Such a directory could highlight all services available to crime victims.
- ▶ ***Create a standing committee to enhance communication and collaboration between various types of victim service providers and legal service providers.*** Lack of communication stands out as an important concern. A committee with representatives from across the spectrum of service providers would help address this issue. This group could facilitate collaboration between agencies, identify gaps in existing services or areas within the region, identify problems in service provision or referrals as they arise, develop a community outreach plan for awareness and relationship building, and devise solutions to those problems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Key Informant Interview Recruitment Email and Protocol

Dear {FIRSTNAME},

Hello, my name is Gena Monroe from Texas A&M University. We are contacting you to see if you are willing to participate in a phone interview that aims to identify what various perceived legal needs and gaps in services exist for victims of crime in your area. You were selected because of your status as a crime victim service provider (including legal services) or related agency. The interviews are being conducted by us on behalf of Lonestar Legal Aid.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked a number of questions about your experiences in providing services to crime victims in terms of their overall needs for legal services. This interview is voluntary and will take approximately 20-30 minutes. You can stop participating at any time, and you are free to not answer any questions without any negative outcomes from Sam Houston State University, Texas A&M University, or Lonestar Legal Aid. Unless you object, the interview will be recorded to facilitate notetaking. Audio recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and related computer files will be password protected. Only the researchers conducting the project will have access to audio recordings or interview notes. Upon completion of the project, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

There are no foreseeable inconveniences, discomforts, or risks involved with participation. There are no direct benefits to you by participating in the discussion – you will not receive monetary or other compensation for participating in the project.

Please email gmonroe@ppri.tamu.edu or call Gena Monroe at (800) 338-0119 to schedule an interview at your earliest convenience. We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, they can be answered Dr. Trey Marchbanks at the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, who can be reached by phone at 979-458-3250 or by email at trey@ppri.tamu.edu.

Thank you for your time,

Gena Monroe

**LSLA Key Informants
Phone Interview Protocol**

INTRODUCTION/SCREENING

Hello, my name is [NAME] from [INSTITUTION]. You have been asked to participate in a phone interview that aims to identify what various perceived legal needs and gaps in services exist for victims of crime in your area. You were selected because of your status as a crime victim service provider (including legal services) or related agency.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked a number of questions about your experiences in providing services to crime victims in terms of their overall needs for legal services. This interview is voluntary and will take approximately 20-30 minutes. You can stop participating at any time, and you are free to not answer any questions without any negative outcomes from Sam Houston State University, Texas A&M University, or Lone Star Legal Aid. Unless you object, the interview will be recorded to facilitate note-taking. Audio recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet, and related computer files will be password protected. Only the researchers conducting the project will have access to audio recordings or interview notes. Upon completion of the project, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

There are no foreseeable inconveniences, discomforts, or risks involved with participation. There are no direct benefits to you by participating in the discussion – you will not receive monetary or other compensation for participating in the project.

If you have any questions, they can be answered by [Dr. Leana Bouffard at the Crime Victims' Institute, Sam Houston State University, who can be reached by phone at 936-294-3123 or by email at lab042@shsu.edu OR Dr. Trey Marchbanks at the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, who can be reached by phone at 979-458-3250 or by email at trey@ppri.tamu.edu]

Do you agree to participate in the phone interview at this time?

-
1. What size population does your agency/department serve?
 - a. Less than 15,000
 - b. 15,000-49,999
 - c. 50,000-99,999
 - d. 100,000-199,999
 - e. 200,000-999,999
 - f. 1,000,000 or more
 - g. statewide

 2. Do you provide direct services to crime victims?
 - a. Yes, direct legal services (**GO TO SECTION 1**)
 - b. Yes, direct crime victim services (**GO TO SECTION 1**)
 - c. No, we do not provide direct services to crime victims (**GO TO SECTION 4**)

SECTION 1: DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION

1. On average, what is the number of crime victims served per month by your office?
[If “I don’t know”] Could you estimate the number per month?
2. In the past year, have you received referrals from any of the following source(s)?
 - a. Crime victims’ family or friends
 - b. Law enforcement agencies
 - c. Judges
 - d. District/County attorneys
 - e. Courts
 - f. Legal Aid and/or Other Legal Services Organizations
 - g. Human service organizations
 - h. Walk-ins
 - i. Telephone book
 - j. Internet
 - k. Advertisement
 - l. Word of mouth
 - m. Churches
 - n. Hospitals
 - o. School districts
 - p. Private medical facilities
 - q. Did you receive referrals from any other sources not already mentioned?
[If “YES”, please specify what other sources of referrals you received.]
3. Do crime victims get in touch with you or do you get in touch with them?
 - a. They get in touch with us
 - b. We get in touch with them
 - c. Neither
 - d. Both
4. Describe the process of getting in touch with crime victims/how crime victims get in touch with you. (open ended)
5. The purpose of this interview is to learn about the provision of legal services/assistance to crime victims. When we say “legal services/assistance to crime victims,” how would you define this?

For the purposes of this interview, “legal services” refers to services provided to crime victims by legal staff employed by your agency (attorneys and/or paralegals working under the supervision of an attorney).

6. Does your agency have attorneys and/or paralegals on staff?
 - a. Yes (**GO TO QUESTION 7**)
 - b. No (**GO TO QUESTION 8**)

7. Do those attorneys and/or paralegals offer legal services to crime victims?
 - a. Yes (**GO TO SECTION 2**)
 - b. No (**GO TO SECTION 3**)

8. Does your agency work with private attorneys in your area who provide services to crime victims pro bono or at reduced rates?
 - a. Yes (**GO TO SECTION 3**)
 - b. No (**GO TO SECTION 3**)

SECTION 2: LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO CRIME VICTIMS

1. Specifically, do the attorneys and/or paralegals in your agency offer any of the following legal services to crime victims:
 - Protective orders
 - Divorce
 - Custody
 - Guardianship
 - Child support
 - Public benefits (Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps, Indigent healthcare)
 - Housing
 - Landlord/tenant
 - Consumer
 - Wage claims
 - Wills and Estate Planning
 - Tribal assistance
 - Legal services for the enforcement of crime victims' rights
 - a. Property return
 - b. Intimidation protection
 - c. Victim impact statement
 - d. Restitution assistance
 - e. Compensation assistance
 - Immigration – VAWA petitions, T-visas, U-visas
 - Identity theft and financial fraud
 - Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
 - Liaison to defense attorney and staff
 - Witness reception area
 - Court orientation – Adult
 - Court orientation – Child
 - Escort to court
 - Insurance claims aid
2. Does your agency offer other legal services that were not listed? (open ended, please specify)
3. Are the legal services/assistance you provide to crime victims...
 - a. Provided for free
 - b. Provided on a sliding scale of charges with some crime victims eligible for free services
 - c. Provided on a sliding scale of charges
 - d. Provided for a set fee
 - e. Other _____
4. Are any of the legal services you provide only available to victims of a specific crime? [If “Yes”] Please indicate which service is specific to which crime.

5. The legal services your agency provides are for victims of which type of crime (please mark all that apply):
 - a. We provide legal services for victims of any crime
 - b. DUI
 - c. Homicide
 - d. Injury
 - e. Property damage
 - f. Stalking
 - g. Victim/Witness Intimidation
 - h. Robbery or burglary
 - i. Simple or aggravated assault
 - j. Adult sexual violence
 - k. Child sexual violence
 - l. Human trafficking
 - m. Child abuse
 - n. Domestic violence
 - o. Elder abuse
 - p. Identity theft
 - q. Mortgage fraud
 - r. Property crime (theft, fraud, etc)
 - s. Other (please specify) _____

6. What are the three most common crimes from which you see crime victims?
 - a. DUI
 - b. Homicide
 - c. Injury
 - d. Property damage
 - e. Stalking
 - f. Victim/Witness Intimidation
 - g. Robbery or burglary
 - h. Simple or aggravated assault
 - i. Adult sexual violence
 - j. Child sexual violence
 - k. Human trafficking
 - l. Child abuse
 - m. Domestic violence
 - n. Elder abuse
 - o. Identity theft
 - p. Mortgage fraud
 - q. Property crime (theft, fraud, etc)
 - r. Other (please specify) _____

7. What legal services have crime victims most requested?
 [For each service listed] Are those services offered by your agency? (open ended)

8. What legal services are not provided by your agency that you think would be beneficial to crime victims? (open ended)

9. Why do you think those legal services are not provided by your agency?
 - a. Funding/money issues
 - b. Lack of staff expertise/training
 - c. Lack of community support
 - d. Outside of organizational mission
 - e. Other (please specify) _____

10. In your opinion, does your office/unit have enough legal staff to adequately serve the number of crime victims who need legal assistance?
 Would you say that staffing is “entirely inadequate,” “somewhat inadequate,” “adequate,” or “more than adequate” to meet the demand for legal services?

11. In your opinion, does your office/unit have enough legal staff to adequately serve all of the legal needs that each crime victim has?
 Would you say that staffing is “entirely inadequate,” “somewhat inadequate,” “adequate,” or “more than adequate” to meet the demand for legal services?

12. What information, if any, is available at your agency on additional legal services that your crime victim clients might need?
 - a. Crime victims receive literature (i.e. brochures) on legal services when they come to our agency
 - b. Crime victims are given a website and/or phone number where they can obtain more information
 - c. Crime victims are referred to another legal services organization
 - d. A staff member in the agency informs crime victim clients of other legal services
 - e. No information is provided
 - f. Other (please specific) _____

13. How often do you encounter language issues in communicating with crime victim clients (e.g., problems communicating, need for a translator)? Would you say that you encounter these issues “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?

14. Do you have access to a translator when you encounter communication issues?
 - a. Yes, we have a translator on staff (language?)
 - b. Yes, we contract with a translator as needed
 - c. Yes, we have a staff member who is bi/multi-lingual (language)
 - d. No

15. How often do you think law enforcement officers in your jurisdiction provide legal services information to crime victims? Would you say that law enforcement provide this information “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?

16. How often do you think non-legal crime victim service providers in your jurisdiction provide legal services information to crime victims? Would you say that these agencies provide this information “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?

17. What legal services do you think are necessary for crime victims but not provided in your area?

*****GO TO SECTION 5*****

SECTION 3: SERVICES PROVIDED TO CRIME VICTIMS

1. Does your agency offer any of the following services to crime victims:
 - Protective orders assistance
 - Enforcement of crime victims' rights
 - a. Property return
 - b. Intimidation protection
 - c. Victim impact statement
 - d. Restitution assistance
 - e. Compensation assistance
 - VAWA petition assistance
 - Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
 - Liaison to defense attorney and staff
 - Witness reception area
 - Court orientation – Adult
 - Court orientation – Child
 - Escort to court
 - Referrals to private attorneys who offer legal services free of charge to crime victims (if yes what is the referral process)

2. Are the crime victim services you provide to crime victims...
 - a. Provided for free
 - b. Provided on a sliding scale of charges with some crime victims eligible for free services
 - c. Provided on a sliding scale of charges
 - d. Provided for a set fee
 - e. Other _____

3. Are any of the services you provide that we just discussed only available to victims of a specific crime?
[If "Yes"] Please indicate which service is specific to which crime.

4. The services your agency provides are for victims of which type of crime (please mark all that apply):
 - a. We provide services for victims of any crime
 - b. DUI
 - c. Homicide
 - d. Injury
 - e. Property damage
 - f. Stalking
 - g. Victim/Witness Intimidation
 - h. Robbery or burglary
 - i. Simple or aggravated assault
 - j. Adult sexual violence
 - k. Child sexual violence
 - l. Child abuse
 - m. Domestic violence
 - n. Elder abuse

- o. Property crime (theft, fraud, etc)
 - p. Other (please specify) _____
5. What are the three most common crimes from which you see crime victims?
- a. DUI
 - b. Homicide
 - c. Injury
 - d. Property damage
 - e. Stalking
 - f. Victim/Witness Intimidation
 - g. Robbery or burglary
 - h. Simple or aggravated assault
 - i. Adult sexual violence
 - j. Child sexual violence
 - k. Child abuse
 - l. Domestic violence
 - m. Elder abuse
 - n. Property crime (theft, fraud, etc)
 - o. Other (please specify) _____
6. Do the crime victims your agency serves request legal assistance? If so, what legal services have crime victims most requested? (open ended)
7. What legal assistance or services would be most beneficial to crime victims? (open ended)
8. Why do you think those legal services are not provided by your agency?
- a. Funding/money issues
 - b. Lack of staff expertise/training
 - c. Lack of training on identifying legal needs of crime victims
 - d. Lack of community support
 - e. Outside of organizational mission
 - f. Other (please specify) _____
9. Which of these do you think is the most significant barrier to providing legal services at your agency?
10. Have you or your staff received any training on identifying legal needs of crime victims?
[If YES...] What types of training are available to or required of staff?
- a. Local programs, workshops or conferences
 - b. County-wide programs, workshops or conferences
 - c. State-wide programs, workshops or conferences
 - d. National programs, workshops or conferences
11. Does your agency have guidelines or procedures for identifying crime victim legal needs?
[If YES] Please describe those guidelines or procedures.
12. Does your agency have procedures for referring identified legal needs to legal services providers?
[If YES] Please describe those procedures.

13. What information, if any, is available at your agency on legal services that your crime victim clients might need?
- a. Crime victims receive literature (i.e. brochures) on legal services when they come to our agency
 - b. Crime victims are given a website and/or phone number where they can obtain more information
 - c. Crime victims are referred to a legal aid agency
 - d. A staff member in the agency informs crime victim clients of legal services
 - e. No information is provided
 - f. Other (please specific) _____
14. How often do you encounter language issues in communicating with crime victim clients (e.g., problems communicating, need for a translator)? Would you say that you encounter these issues “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?
15. Do you have access to a translator when you encounter communication issues?
- a. Yes, we have a translator on staff (language?)
 - b. Yes, we contract with a translator as needed
 - c. Yes, we have a staff member who is bi/multi-lingual (language)
 - d. No
16. How often do you think law enforcement officers in your jurisdiction provide legal service information to crime victims? Would you say that law enforcement provide this information “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?
17. How often do you think non-legal crime victim service providers in your jurisdiction provide legal service information to crime victims? Would you say that these agencies provide this information “never,” “rarely,” “occasionally,” “often,” or “always”?
18. What legal services do you think are necessary for crime victims but not provided in your area?

*****GO TO SECTION 5*****

SECTION 4: NON-DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION

1. What legal services do you think crime victims need? (open ended)
2. Are any of these legal services for crime victims NOT provided in the jurisdiction served by your agency?
[If YES] Please describe.
3. What strengths do you see in the crime victim legal services provided in your jurisdiction?
4. Do you see any limitations in the crime victim legal services provided in the jurisdiction served by your agency?
[If YES] Please describe.
5. Does your agency/organization promote legal services for crime victims?
[If YES] Please describe.
6. Does your agency/organization have any specific partnerships with legal services providers that benefit crime victims?
[If YES] Please describe.
7. How often do you think law enforcement officers in your jurisdiction provide legal service information to crime victims? Would you say that law enforcement provide this information "never," "rarely," "occasionally," "often," or "always"?
8. How often do you think non-legal crime victim service providers in your jurisdiction provide legal service information to crime victims? Would you say that these agencies provide this information "never," "rarely," "occasionally," "often," or "always"?

*****GO TO SECTION 5*****

SECTION 5: OPINIONS ON ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES

Next, I will list a number of factors that might discourage crime victims' utilization of legal services. Using the options offered, please tell us how important you think the following factors are in limiting crime victims' use of legal services in your area.

Very important Somewhat important Not very important Not important at all

1. Crime victims are unaware that legal services are available.
2. Crime victims do not understand that their problems require legal assistance.
3. Crime victims are aware services are offered but do not know they are eligible for assistance.
4. Crime victims do not meet income limitations or other eligibility requirements.
5. Crime victims do not understand the process of obtaining legal services.
6. Not enough information about legal services is provided to crime victims.
7. The process for obtaining legal services is overly burdensome for crime victims.
8. Crime victims do not have access to legal services/assistance in their area.
9. Crime victims prefer that the process be over as quickly as possible, and see the involvement of legal services as extending their involvement with the system.
10. Crime victims believe the incident should be a private matter.
11. Crime victims do not trust that the legal services will help them.
12. Some crime victims are culturally disinclined to seek legal services.
13. Crime victims are afraid of the legal system.
14. Crime victims feel that they do not need any legal help.

15. Are there other factors that you think limit victims' use of legal services in your area?

*****GO TO SECTION 6*****

SECTION 6: CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

1. What suggestions can you offer for improving the utilization of legal services by crime victims in your jurisdiction? (open ended)
2. Do you have suggestions for collaboration or coordination of services between legal and non-legal crime victim service providers that would enhance crime victim legal services?
3. Can you suggest any service delivery mechanisms that would enhance legal services for crime victims?
4. Are there gaps in the legal services that crime victims receive? (for example lack of communication between agencies, disconnects between legal service providers and victim service providers, geographic isolation, language barriers, etc.)

[If Yes] Please explain what those gaps are.
What do you think are the most significant gaps?
Are there any other gaps that you can think of?
Why do you think those gaps exist?

5. Do you have any other suggestions for improving legal services for crime victims?
6. Do you have any other comments about legal services for crime victims that you would like to share with the research team?

Thank you very much for your time and your input on legal services for crime victims in your area. If you have any questions or would like to provide any additional information, you may contact me at [CONTACT INFORMATION]

Appendix II: Web Survey Protocol

**Lone Star Legal Aid Grant
Survey for Crime Victims and Service Providers**

1. Are you male or female?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. How old are you? _____

3. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Black/African-American
 - c. Latino/Hispanic
 - d. Asian American/Pacific Islander
 - e. American Indian/Native American
 - f. Other: _____

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. 0-8 years, no GED
 - b. 8-12 years, no high school diploma or GED
 - c. High school diploma or completed GED
 - d. Some college, no degree
 - e. Associate's degree (AA, AS)
 - f. Bachelor's degree (BA, BS, AB)
 - g. Advanced or professional degree (MA, JD, PHD, MD, etc.)
 - h. Other _____

5. Is your total annual household income, from all sources before taxes, over or under \$40,000? Include money from jobs (wages, salary, tips, bonuses), interest, dividends, child support, alimony, welfare, social security, disability and retirement, net income from a business, farm, or rent, or any more income received by members of your family.
 - a. Over \$40,000
 - b. Under \$40,000
 - c. Don't know

6. Do you live in an urban area, a suburban area, a rural area, or on a farm or ranch?
 - a. Urban area
 - b. Suburban area
 - c. Rural area
 - d. On a farm or ranch

7. What county do you live in? _____

8. How many years have you lived in that county? _____

9. Do you provide services to crime victims or work for an agency that provides services to crime victims?
- a. Yes, I/we provide direct legal services **(GO TO QUESTION 10)**
 - b. Yes, I/we provide crime victim services **(GO TO QUESTION 10)**
 - c. Yes, I/we provide both legal and crime victim services **(GO TO QUESTION 10)**
 - d. No, I am not a service provider **(GO TO QUESTION 17)**

10. Please select all legal services that are offered by your organization/agency:

Legal Services:

Selected:

- Protective orders
- Divorce
- Custody papers
- Guardianship
- Child support
- Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)
- Housing
- Landlord/Tenet
- Consumer claims
- Wage claims
- Wills and estate planning
- Tribal assistance
- Property return
- Intimidation protection
- Victim impact statements
- Restitution assistance
- Compensation assistance
- Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)
- Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)
- Identity theft and financial fraud
- Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
- Liaison to defense attorney and staff
- Witness reception
- Court orientation for adults or children
- Escort to court
- Insurance claims aid
- Other (please specify) _____

11. Please select the three legal services from the list below that are most commonly requested/needed by crime victims at your organization/agency.

Legal Services:

Selected:

- Protective orders
- Divorce
- Custody papers
- Guardianship
- Child support
- Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)
- Housing
- Landlord/Tenet
- Consumer claims
- Wage claims
- Wills and estate planning
- Tribal assistance
- Property return
- Intimidation protection
- Victim impact statements
- Restitution assistance
- Compensation assistance
- Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)
- Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)
- Identity theft and financial fraud
- Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
- Liaison to defense attorney and staff
- Witness reception
- Court orientation for adults or children
- Escort to court
- Insurance claims aid
- Other (please specify) _____

12. Please select three legal services from the list below that you feel are important for crime victims but are not offered by your organization/agency.

Legal Services:

Selected:

- Protective orders
- Divorce
- Custody papers
- Guardianship
- Child support
- Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)
- Housing
- Landlord/Tenet
- Consumer claims
- Wage claims
- Wills and estate planning
- Tribal assistance
- Property return
- Intimidation protection
- Victim impact statements
- Restitution assistance
- Compensation assistance
- Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)
- Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)
- Identity theft and financial fraud
- Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
- Liaison to defense attorney and staff
- Witness reception
- Court orientation for adults or children
- Escort to court
- Insurance claims aid
- Other (please specify) _____

13. Why do you think your organization/agency is unable to provide these services? Please rank the following items in terms of importance (1 = most important reason).

- ___ Funding/money issues
- ___ Lack of proper training
- ___ Lack of community support
- ___ Outside the organizational mission
- ___ Other (please specify) _____
- ___ Other (please specify) _____
- ___ Other (please specify) _____

14. Does your organization/agency have a lawyer or paralegal on staff?

- a. Yes **(GO TO QUESTION 15)**
- b. No **(GO TO QUESTION 16)**

15. Please select the three most common legal services the lawyer or paralegal offers to crime victims.

Legal Services:

Selected:

Protective orders
Divorce
Custody papers
Guardianship
Child support
Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)
Housing
Landlord/Tenet
Consumer claims
Wage claims
Wills and estate planning
Tribal assistance
Property return
Intimidation protection
Victim impact statements
Restitution assistance
Compensation assistance
Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)
Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)
Identity theft and financial fraud
Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
Liaison to defense attorney and staff
Witness reception
Court orientation for adults or children
Escort to court
Insurance claims aid
Other (please specify) _____

16. What are the three most common crimes from which you see crime victims or survivors?

Type of Crime:

Selected:

Intimate/Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault
Child physical/sexual abuse
Human trafficking
Other violence (non-family assault, robbery, etc.)
Identity theft
Other theft
Hate crimes
Homicide
Other (please specify: _____)

In the next section, you will be asked about your experiences with crime.

17. In the past twelve months, has anyone used violence against you, or threatened to use force or violence, to hurt you, to take something from you, or to make you do something you did not want to do, including making you engage in unwanted sexual activity?

- a. No
- b. Yes

IF YES...

Was the person who did this known to you or a stranger?

- Stranger
- A friend or acquaintance
- An intimate partner (boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, etc.)
- A family member (father/mother, sibling, etc.)

18. In the past twelve months, has anyone damaged, destroyed, or taken any of your property without your permission that did not involve the use of violence or force? [This could include your home, vehicle, purse, or anything else that belongs to you.]

- a. No
- b. Yes

IF YES...

Was the person who did this known to you or a stranger?

- Stranger
- A friend or acquaintance
- An intimate partner (boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, etc.)
- A family member (father/mother, sibling, etc.)

19. In the past twelve months, have you ever contacted the police because you thought you were the victim of a crime?

- a. No
- b. Yes (**GO TO QUESTION 22**)

IF NO VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES SELECTED (“No” to Questions 17, 18, and 19), GO TO QUESTION 34.

IF VICTIMIZATION BUT NO REPORTING TO POLICE (“Yes” to Question 17 or 18 and “No” to Question 19), GO TO QUESTION 20.

20. If you did not report your experience as a victim of crime to the police, which of the following best describe your reason(s) for not contacting police (mark all that apply).

Reason:

Selected:

- Dealt with another way – reported to another official (school official, guard, etc.)
- Private or personal matter – took care of it myself or informally
- Minor or unsuccessful crime, small or no loss
- Offender was a child
- Not clear that it was a crime or that harm was intended
- Insurance wouldn't cover it
- Police couldn't do anything
- Police wouldn't think it was important enough
- Police would be inefficient or ineffective
- Police would be biased
- Offender was a police officer
- Didn't want to get offender in trouble with the law
- Was advised not to report to police
- Afraid of retaliation by offender or others
- Immigration concerns
- Inconvenient – did not want to or couldn't take the time
- Other (Please specify) _____

21. Which of these reasons was the most important in your decision to not contact police?

GO TO QUESTION 27

22. If you contacted police about your experience as a crime victim, which of the following best describe your reason(s) for contacting police (mark all that apply)

Reason:

Selected:

- To stop or prevent the incident from happening again
- Needed help after the incident due to injury, etc.
- To recover property
- To collect insurance
- To stop the specific offender from committing other crimes against anyone else
- To punish the offender
- To let police know – improve police surveillance or awareness
- It's a person's responsibility to let police know if something like this happens
- Other (please specify): _____

23. Which of these reasons was the most important in your decision to contact police?

24. What did the police do when they responded to the incident? (mark all that apply)

- a. Took a report
- b. Questioned witnesses and/or suspects
- c. Did or promised surveillance/investigation
- d. Recovered property
- e. Made arrest
- f. Stayed in touch with you
- g. Provided information about victim service providers
- h. Provided information about legal service providers
- i. Other (please specify): _____
- j. Nothing (to the best of your knowledge)

25. Did this interaction with the police lead to any charges being pressed against the offender?

- a. Yes
- b. No

26. Overall, how satisfied are you with your interaction(s) with the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied

27. Have you had contact with any other authorities about the incident? (mark all that apply)

- a. Prosecutor
- b. Other court official
- c. Attorney
- d. Juvenile officer
- e. Probation officer
- f. Other (please specify): _____
- g. None

28. Did you receive any help or advice from any office or agency other than the police that deals with victims of crime? (mark all that apply)

Help line
Counseling
Medical services
Advocacy agency
Legal aid/lawyer
Victim services agency
Public Housing office/agency
Other (Please specify: _____)

29. Did you use any legal services (such as protective orders, child custody assistance, housing or employment assistance, etc.) as a result of this victimization?

- a. Yes (**GO TO QUESTION 32**)
- b. No (**GO TO QUESTION 30**)

30. Why did you not utilize legal services? (Please select all that apply) **(GO TO QUESTION 33)**

Reason:

Selected:

- Did not feel I needed legal services
- Did not know I needed legal services
- Did not know where to obtain legal services
- Did not want to involve anyone else
- Did not feel I could afford legal services
- Legal services were not offered close to where I live (i.e. transportation issues)
- Did not know what services were offered
- Other (Please specify) _____

31. Which of these reasons was the most important?

GO TO QUESTION 34

32. From the list below, please select all the legal services you needed and received as a result of the victimization:

Legal Services:

Selected:

- Protective orders
- Divorce
- Custody papers
- Guardianship
- Child support
- Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)
- Housing
- Landlord/Tenet
- Consumer claims
- Wage claims
- Wills and estate planning
- Tribal assistance
- Property return
- Intimidation protection
- Victim impact statements
- Restitution assistance
- Compensation assistance
- Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)
- Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)
- Identity theft and financial fraud
- Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff
- Liaison to defense attorney and staff
- Witness reception
- Court orientation for adults or children
- Escort to court
- Insurance claims aid
- Other (please specify) _____

33. From the list below, please select all the legal services you needed but DID NOT receive as a result of the victimization:

Legal Services:

Selected:

Protective orders

Divorce

Custody papers

Guardianship

Child support

Public benefits (Medicaid, TANIF, food stamps, indigent healthcare, etc.)

Housing

Landlord/Tenet

Consumer claims

Wage claims

Wills and estate planning

Tribal assistance

Property return

Intimidation protection

Victim impact statements

Restitution assistance

Compensation assistance

Enforcement of other victims' rights in court proceedings (e.g., right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, right to privacy)

Immigration (VAWA petitions, t-visas, u-visas)

Identity theft and financial fraud

Liaison to prosecuting attorney and staff

Liaison to defense attorney and staff

Witness reception

Court orientation for adults or children

Escort to court

Insurance claims aid

Other (please specify)_____

34. Based on previous research on the legal needs of crime victims, below is a list of 9 commonly identified legal needs of crime victims. Please rank them in order of importance where 1 indicates the most important service needed by crime victims and 9 indicates the least important service needed by crime victims.

Legal Services:

Ranking:

- Assistance with protective orders
- Assistance with divorce
- Assistance with insurance claims
- Liaison with defense attorneys
- Assistance to help recover from identity theft
- Assistance with immigration issues
- Restitution assistance
- Help with return of property
- Legal aid for intimidation protection

35. Did we miss any legal services you feel are important or necessary as a crime victim?

- a. Yes (please list)
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
- b. No

36. Based on previous research on the legal needs of crime victims, below is a list of 5 common barriers victims may face in terms of accessing legal services. Please rank them in order of importance where 1 indicates the most important or prevalent barrier and 5 indicates the least important or least common barrier.

Barriers:

Ranking:

- Lack of funding or available attorneys
- Language/communication issues
- Victims not informed about availability of legal services
- Victims don't understand that the issues they face may require legal assistance
- Victims don't know that they are eligible for services

37. Did we miss any potential barriers to legal services victims may face?

- a. Yes (please list)
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
- b. No

38. To what extent do you agree that victims of crime should be educated about legal services offered in their area by police officers if/when they report their crimes and should be allowed to choose if they want to contact service providers?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

39. To what extent do you agree that police should provide contact information of crime victims to local service providers, who should contact each victim to offer assistance and legal services?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

40. To what extent do you agree that victims of crime should determine their own needs and find information about service providers and make contact themselves?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree