

**New York Community Trust
Access to Justice Project
Final Report
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CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES RESEARCH
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The Access to Justice project advanced research into the comparative effectiveness of different forms of legal assistance, namely pro se support and full representation. Her Justice partnered with the Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) at SUNY Albany to determine whether clients who received legal help of a kind other than Full Representation (i.e., Pro Se support) achieved their own goals with the same, less than, or greater regularity than those who received full representation. The steps taken in implementing this project, and the results found, are provided in this report. This knowledge will help Her Justice ensure that they are matching the best service to each client, and represents an important contribution to the access to justice effort more broadly, in particular in the area of research around civil legal services.

Methodology.

- Project activities included retrospective analyses of Her Justice's legal cases to inform next study steps; pre-service data collection; and post-service data collection. Clients with divorces/separations, custody/visitation, child or spousal support, or domestic abuse/order of protection cases were determined to be eligible for the sample. Clients were categorized as receiving either Pro Se support (e.g., advice and counsel, limited assistance with document preparation, but no further representation) or Full Representation (i.e., placement with a pro bono lawyer).
- Pre-Service and Post-Service surveys were developed; both captured clients' feelings on their legal situation and the legal system in general, including aspects of procedural justice (fairness and legitimacy), and feelings of empowerment. The Post-Service survey also included questions on legal and extralegal outcomes, and ratings of outcome and court experience satisfaction.
- The Pre-Service Survey was implemented by Her Justice's legal assistant intake interviewers before clients spoke with a lawyer. In total, 563 clients at least started the survey; 510 were able to be included in the final sample. Most clients had divorce cases; most clients received Pro Se support. The Post-Service Survey was implemented by CHSR interviewers; client contact was attempted at least six months after Her Justice intake. Contact was attempted both over the phone and over email, where such information was available. 65 clients at least started the Post-Service Survey.
- Scale validation work was performed to establish the reliability and validity of the scales used. Analyses demonstrated that the fairness, legitimacy, legitimacy of lawyers, and empowerment scales were answered consistently and reflected distinct concepts, and thus were appropriate to use for further work.

Key Findings.

- About half of clients surveyed, at both the pre-service (52%) and post-service (58%) intervals, were seeking a divorce.
- Divorce clients were also more likely to obtain Full Representation than other case types: 42% of divorce cases were placed with a lawyer, versus 12% of custody/visitation, 23% of order of protection, and 27% of support cases.
 - In the post-service sample, clients were similarly likely to get full representation whether or not they had previously gone through a divorce. None of the 5 clients

with contested divorces received full representation, but the small number makes generalization difficult.

- Level of service did appear to impact reported case procedure for divorce cases. Full representation clients were more likely to report resolution via settlement than pro se cases and reported going to court less frequently.
- Otherwise, across all four case types, most clients had never gone to court for such a legal matter before. Most resolved their cases either by settlement or by some other way. Most cases took less than a year, and one to five court appearances, to resolve, though custody and visitation cases appeared to take longer (at least one year, and at least six court appearances).
- In general, full representation clients reported more positive outcomes, or at least had a lower rate of negative outcomes, than pro se clients, though several of these differences were not significant, likely due to the small sample sizes available.
 - Most clients (60%) reported that their financial situation had not changed as a result of their case. However, Full Representation clients were less likely to report worsened financial circumstances than Pro Se (8%, versus 26% of Pro Se clients).
 - While similar numbers of pro se and full representation clients reported gaining custody and visitation, only pro se clients reported losing custody.
 - Most clients (58%) reported that their living situation had not changed as a result of their case. However, Full Representation clients were less likely to report worsened circumstances than Pro Se (4%, versus 21%).
 - More Pro Se clients reported having to pay for childcare for court appearances (26% versus 12.5%), and being penalized at work for attending court (32%, versus 8%).
 - Most clients (73%) reported feeling safer after their cases had concluded.
- Responses to the procedural justice scales were compared both between timepoints and by level of service received.
 - Scores on the fairness and legitimacy items were stable, indicating consistent evaluations of procedural and distributive fairness and the legitimacy of the court system even after going to court.
 - Pro se clients showed more of a decrease in their legitimacy ratings for lawyers than did full representation clients, illustrating a potentially experience-driven change.
 - Empowerment scores did not differ by group, but did show a significant overall decrease (of almost half a point) across the timepoints, demonstrating decreased feelings of empowerment after going to court regardless of level of service received.
 - Full Representation clients reported greater satisfaction than did Pro Se clients (mean = 3.35 versus 2.73, out of 4). However, both were similarly satisfied with their experiences in court and with judges.

Conclusions.

As such, full representation clients do appear to have better court outcomes, and better court experiences, than do pro se clients. However, the small number of clients with recorded outcomes makes generalization of these points difficult, particularly as we are unable to compare outcomes or evaluations by client characteristics (e.g., race, level of education), or even to break comparisons down further by case type to see which groups of clients are well served by pro se support and which truly require full representation to be able to achieve positive outcomes.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROJECT FINAL REPORT.

INTRODUCTION

The Access to Justice Project was designed to advance research into the comparative effectiveness of two different forms of legal assistance provided by Her Justice: Pro Se support and Full Representation. The mission of Her Justice is to address the gap in access to civil justice by providing free civil legal services in family, matrimonial, and immigration matters to historically underserved women in New York City. Their free legal services address the urgent needs of indigent women and their children, especially those who have suffered domestic violence and immigrants isolated by language and culture. As part of their process, Her Justice invests much of their legal staff's time and effort in screening clients with the aim of identifying those who can resolve their situations with Pro Se services and support, and those who would be better served by being placed for Full Representation with a volunteer pro bono attorney or staff attorney. Through its "pro bono first" model, Her Justice attorneys then train and mentor the volunteer attorneys throughout the life of the client's case. This process aims to match the best, most appropriate legal service to each client and bring the power of the legal profession to those who need it most.

While court-appointed representation is a constitutional right in criminal legal proceedings, such is not the case for civil cases. Not surprisingly, there is a severe shortage of free civil legal services for low-income litigants in New York City: poor households were estimated to experience 2.37 unmet civil legal needs, or approximately 2.5 million legal problems, annually (Klempner, 2006). Some of these cases may still come to court, though without any legal support for the client: for some of the cases in family court where there is no right to counsel like child support, more than 90% of litigants proceed without an attorney; even for family court cases in which there is a right to counsel, many litigants proceed pro se (Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, 2015). Additional funding for legal services is clearly needed, but many of those involved in providing civil legal services believe that new and complementary approaches to addressing the justice gap must be examined.

One important legal services offering is Pro Se support: information, know-your-rights clinics, advice and counsel, and brief services. In these situations, a lawyer performs specific tasks, but does not undertake all the work involved in traditional full-service representation. For example, a lawyer may mentor a client through a series of structured meetings that assist the client in eventually representing herself, or a lawyer may give advice and counsel to a client during a phone call, but not provide further support. As part of its practices, Her Justice provides Pro Se support to clients as a major portion of its work, thus ensuring all clients who contact them receive some help even when there are no available volunteer lawyers for further representation. Her Justice works to "match" clients with the most appropriate level of service, based on factors such as the perceived case complexity and its likelihood of success without Full Representation; subjective client assessments (e.g., , client expectations, previous court involvement and outcomes); objective facts (e.g., children in the household, W-2 wage earning litigants); and the availability of volunteer attorneys.

With the Access to Justice research project, Her Justice partnered with the Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) at SUNY Albany to determine whether clients who received legal help of a kind other than Full Representation (i.e., Pro Se support) achieved their own goals with the same, less than, or greater regularity than those who received Full Representation. The steps taken in implementing this project, and the results found, are provided in this report. This

knowledge will help Her Justice ensure that they are matching the best service to each client, and represents an important contribution to the access to justice effort more broadly.

This report details the agencies involved in the project; the steps taken to implement this work; final analyses and results; limitations of this work; and current conclusions.

DEFINITIONS.

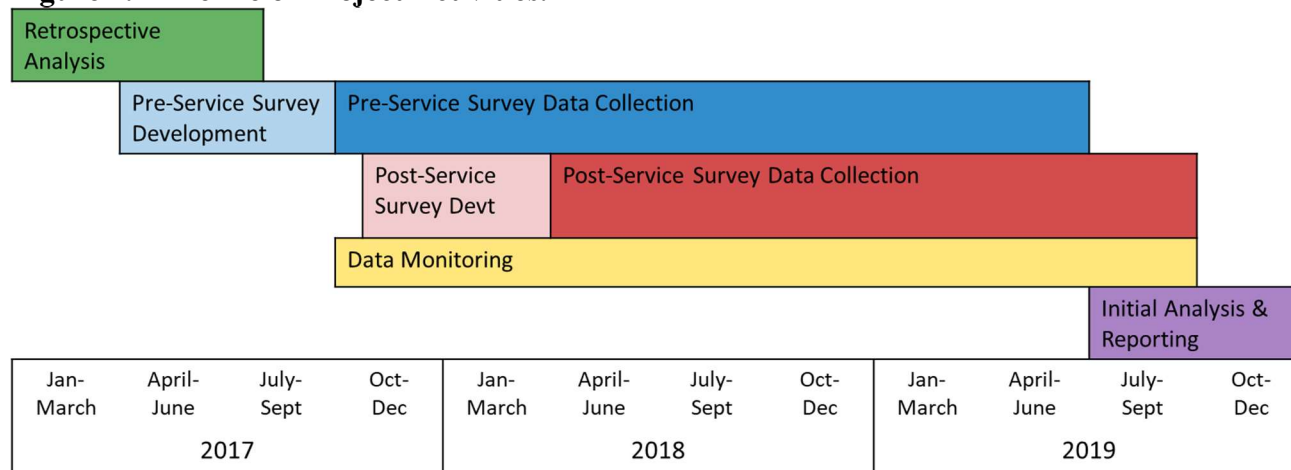
In this study, client experiences and case outcomes are compared between those who received Pro Se support and those who had Full Representation. Each level is defined as such: *Pro Se support* reflects cases where clients represented themselves through their court experiences, though they obtained some legal support outside of their court appearances. It is typically characterized by one-time legal aid provided by an attorney. It may include advice and counsel, including strategizing with clients to help them weigh their legal options and decide how they want to proceed, and giving them information they can use as next steps; and brief services, such as drafting responsive pleadings or other document support. Pro Se support may also include provision of referrals and information about legal resources and options; however, this level was not included in this analysis. *Full Representation* includes placement of a client's legal case with an attorney, typically a volunteer pro bono attorney. In these cases, the same attorney works with the client for (potentially) the duration of their legal case, including all services under Pro Se support as well as accompanying the client to court as needed.

METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES.

Project activities included several steps over the three-year period (see **Figure 1** for timeline of project activity implementation). The major phases included:

1. Retrospective analysis: This phase consisted of collecting data that was gathered of Her Justice's legal cases from 6/1/2015-6/1/2017. Analysts examined case type (e.g., legal matter), duration, and level of service provided to inform next steps of the study.
2. Pre-Service Data Collection: Data were collected prior to receiving services from Her Justice.
3. Post-Service Data Collection: Data were collected at least six months after administration of the Pre Service Survey.

Figure 1. Timeline of Project Activities.



Instrumentation.

Pre-Service Survey. CHSR developed an initial “intake” survey tool, in consultation with Her Justice. This instrument was intended to capture client’s feelings on their legal situation, and the legal system in general, before they received services from Her Justice.

Scales were chosen to focus on different aspects of procedural justice, or the perceived *fairness* and *legitimacy* of the dispute resolution process. These components have been demonstrated to be both stable and important in understanding procedural justice in criminal proceedings, and so were adapted for the civil cases in question here. Fairness refers to the perceived fairness of the dispute resolution process, mostly independent of respondents’ satisfaction with the decision in their own individual case (see Tyler, 1988). Aspects of fairness are typically thought to include consistency and accuracy, or *procedural* fairness (e.g., were the decision-making processes transparent and accurate?); and impartiality, or bias suppression, and representation or *distributive* fairness (e.g., was fairness distributed equally across all people?). Legitimacy refers to whether judges, lawyers, and the court system itself, should be considered legitimate authorities working in service of their clients. Clients’ ratings of procedural justice would be hoped to at least remain stable and not decrease after their court experience (e.g., faith in the legal system should be preserved after using the system); Pro Se and Full Representation clients’ responses would also be hoped to be similar, supporting the idea that clients can achieve strong outcomes for themselves after Pro Se support.

Additionally, *empowerment* was selected as an important concept to measure before receiving legal services and after the conclusion of a client’s case. Empowerment is conceptualized as enabling women to access skills and resources to cope more effectively with current as well as future stress and trauma (Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005). Her Justice argues that their provision of Pro Se support provides access to legal resources for women in need, and also allows these women to be the main actors enacting the changes for which they hope, thereby returning their own power to them. As such, Pro Se clients might be expected to report increased feelings of empowerment after the resolution of their legal case, while Full Representation clients’ ratings may not show such a shift.

Question scales were selected and adapted from measures developed and validated for criminal court proceedings and empowerment generally, and were reviewed with the team from Her Justice. Scales were chosen to balance acquiring ratings of critical aspects of clients’ legal experiences, especially those likely to be influenced by their current cases and level of representation, and overall survey length.

Fairness and legitimacy items were adapted from Sunshine and Tyler (2003), which focused on the fairness of the procedures used by the police and the distribution of police services, and the legitimacy of the police. Questions were updated to ask about the court system, judges, and lawyers, rather than the police department and individual officers. Female empowerment items were selected from two sub-factors of the Personal Progress Scale-Revised (Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005): autonomy, and perceptions of power and competence. One item in each sub-factor was heavily adapted, while the rest were able to be more direct uses.

The full intake interview instrument thus consisted of 30 questions, divided into four sections (fairness; legitimacy: court system and judges; legitimacy: lawyers; empowerment), and was expected to take five to seven minutes to administer. *See Appendix A1 for scales.*

Post-Service Survey. A post-service survey was developed to assess both changes in these intake measures and final client outcomes. This instrument was also used to complete some gaps

in intake data collection on points thought to be important for outcome evaluation, such as prior experiences with the legal system (particularly prior experiences with the same legal issue) and client level of education. The survey also included items about all legal matters for which clients may have had a case; method of resolution, case duration, and number of court appearances for each case type; satisfaction with case outcomes and court experiences; and legal and extralegal outcomes and notes on their experience. Finally, clients were asked to repeat the same scales as presented at intake, to determine any changes after their legal experiences.

To ensure appropriate questions and answer options, particularly for case proceedings and legal and extralegal outcomes, the survey was developed in close consultation with Her Justice. These outcome and satisfaction items were notably difficult, given the potential gap between client expectations and outcomes: clients who had unreasonably high expectations may report dissatisfaction even with what an experienced lawyer might consider to be very positive results. This situation was thought to be especially likely for Pro Se clients, who did not have access to the continuous expertise of a lawyer who could reinforce appropriate expectations, thus leading to potential bias in responses.

As such, we focused on asking about overall satisfaction with both the case outcomes and the court experience, and noting simple changes in status in relevant domains after conclusion of their legal case, instead of asking about the extent of change (e.g., did the support you receive increase?, instead of asking by how much it increased). Specifically, clients were asked about any changes in their financial situation, child custody or visitation, living situation, and feelings of safety as a result of their case outcome. The satisfaction items were based on Her Justice's current post-service satisfaction questionnaire. *See Appendix A2 for full instrument.*

All of the scales implemented in this project demonstrated high reliability and validity, at least as measurable based on the data available. As such, each can be considered consistent and representing a unique underlying concept. These scales can thus be used for further pre-post analyses, or comparisons between different levels of service. *See Appendix A3 for analyses of reliability and validity.*

Data Collection.

Pre-Service Survey. Her Justice began implementing the pre-service survey in October 2018, and continued to offer it through June 2019. Her Justice's legal assistant intake interviewers screened clients who contacted Her Justice's legal services "warm line."¹ Those with legal issues within the four included case types, and who spoke English or Spanish, were asked if they would be interested in answering some additional questions on their opinions about the legal system. Clients were informed that the survey would take about five minutes; that their answers would be confidential, would not be recorded in any Her Justice file, and would not be shared with any lawyers; and that their participation would not impact how much legal help they were offered. Clients were also notified that if they chose to participate, an outside research team (CHSR) would eventually be in contact to ask about their final experience with the legal system.

¹ To serve clients with family and matrimonial legal needs, Her Justice operates a weekly helpline. Clients obtain the helpline number from the Family and Supreme Courts, partner community-based organizations, and other legal services providers. When an individual calls the helpline, a staff member or intake volunteer screens the caller and records certain basic information in a case database (*LegalServer*). If the caller expresses the need for advice or representation in one of the legal areas in which Her Justice has expertise, the intake staff or volunteer connects the caller with a Her Justice attorney for advice and counsel and further assessment of legal need. Her Justice also screens individuals who need immigration legal assistance in person at the New York City Family Justice Centers and records similar information from these consultations in *LegalServer*.

CHSR staff visited the Her Justice offices in December 2017 to provide a training on best practices in phone survey administration, and to give some additional background on the evaluation itself, to ensure consistent and reliable implementation and data collection.

In total, 563 clients at least started the survey. See Consort Diagram (**Figure 2**) for more information on client intake, and the **Sample Characteristics** section for further analysis of pre-service survey data.

Post-Service Survey. Trained data collectors at CHSR began implementing the post-service survey over the phone in June 2018, just over six months after the initial implementation of the pre-service survey, and continued to offer it through October 2019. Client contact information was obtained from Her Justice’s LegalServer.

All English-speaking clients whose phone numbers were not marked as “not safe”² were attempted to be contacted over the phone on a rolling basis, at least six months after they had completed the intake survey. Generally, three attempts at initial client contact were made. Contact attempts were ceased when a client either explicitly refused the survey or participated. A second round of contact (again, up to three calls) was attempted after at least six months for clients with unsuccessful contact or who had reported that their legal case was not yet finished. All Spanish-speaking clients were attempted to be contacted over the phone during July and August 2019, again with up to three attempts at contact.

English-speaking clients who had not completed the survey over the phone and who did not refuse the survey were also emailed direct, individualized links to the post-service survey at several points over the data collection window (October 2018, and February, April, July, and October 2019, or approximately once per quarter). Clients who did not respond in one wave and had not yet taken the survey were emailed again in subsequent waves.

In total, post-service survey calls were made to the 419 clients with “safe” phone numbers, and English-speaking clients were emailed. Sixty-five clients at least started the post-service survey. See Consort Diagram (**Figure 2**) for more information on client contact attempts, Sankey Diagram (**Figure 3**) for information on how clients were contacted over time, and **Results** section for further analysis of post-service survey data.

² Her Justice marks clients’ phone numbers or other contact information (i.e., addresses, emails) as “not safe” in LegalServer if a client indicates that contact would put her at risk of harm by an abusive partner or family member.

Figure 2. Consort diagram of client flow through data collection process to final sample.

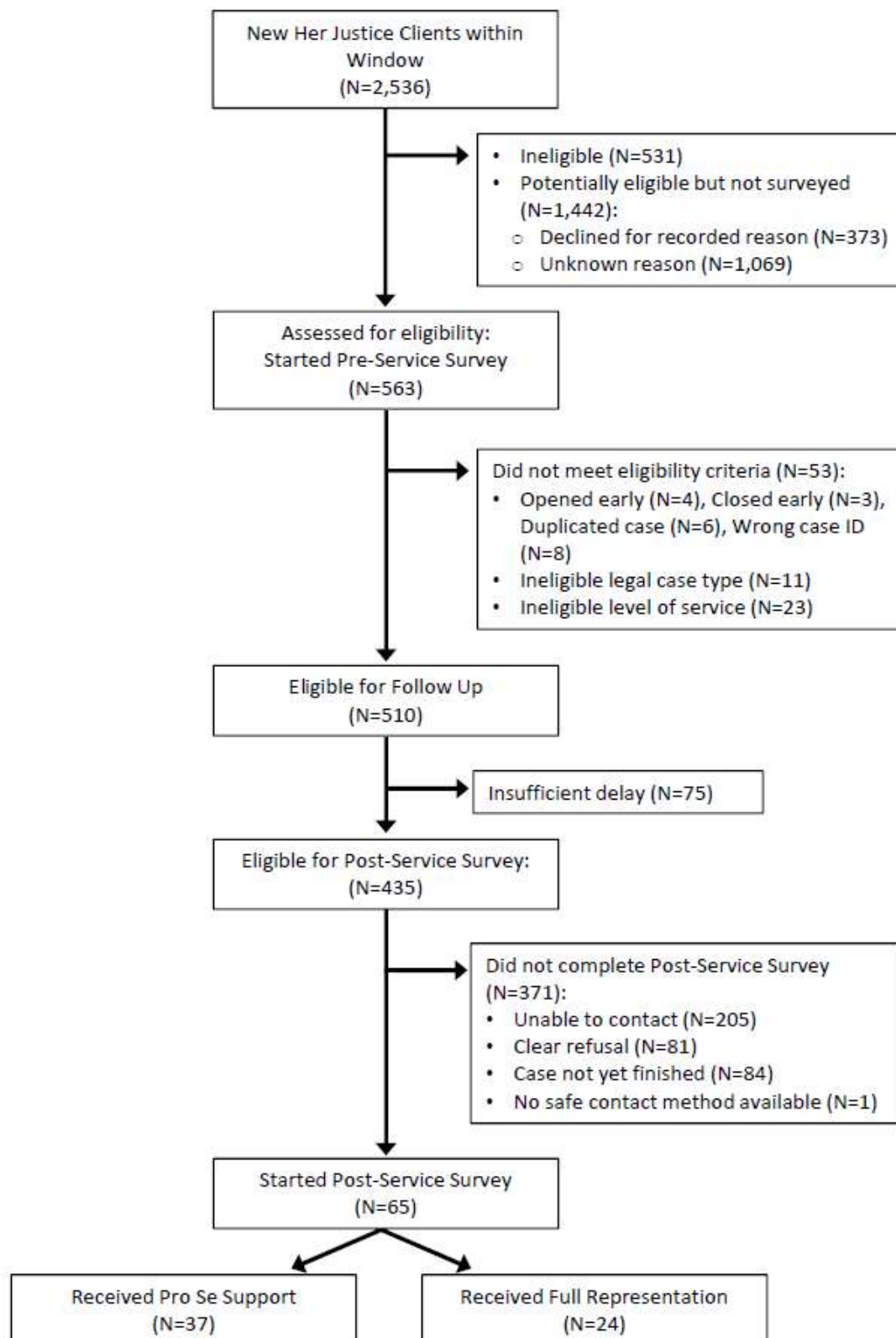
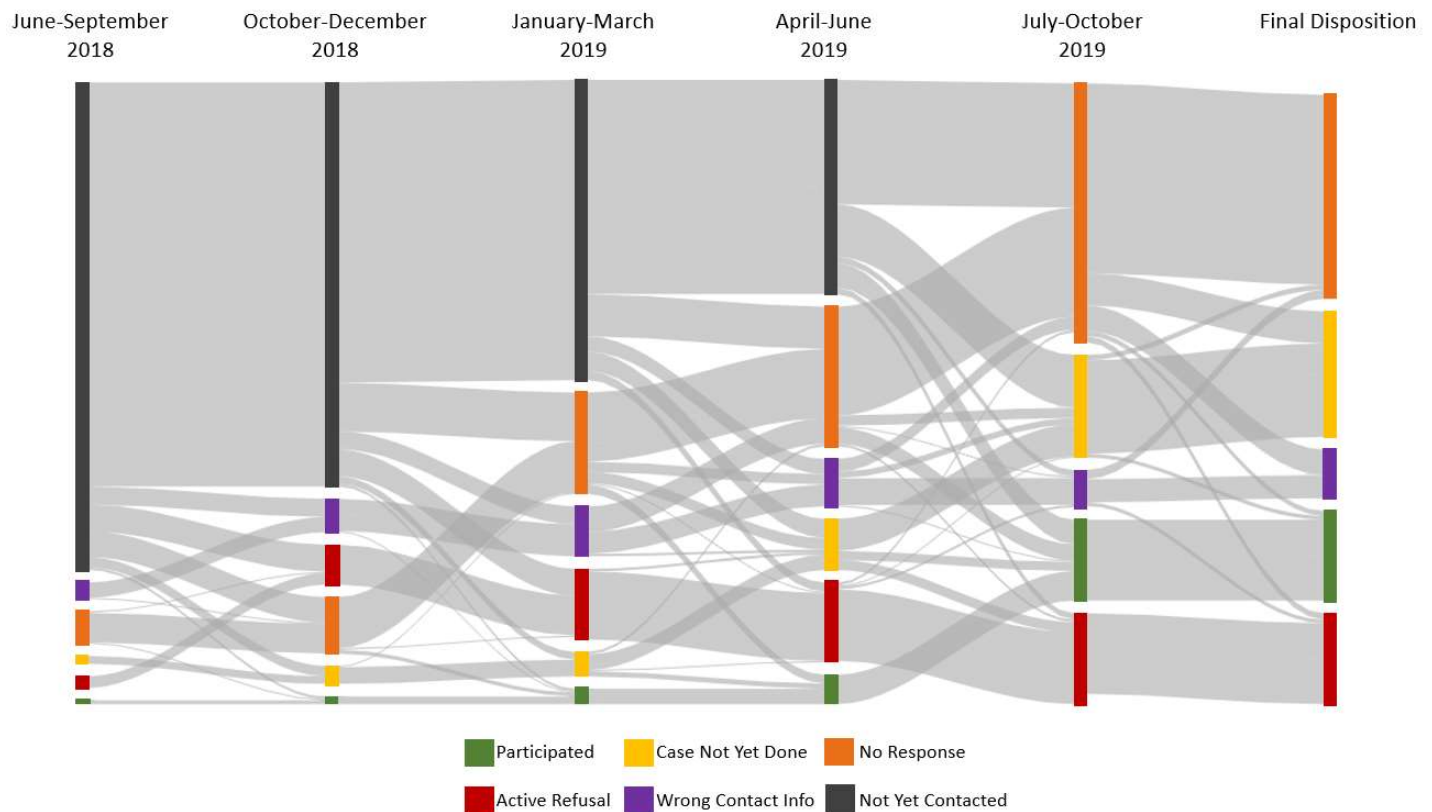


Figure 3. Sankey Diagram demonstrating client disposition during each quarter of Post-Service Survey data collection, and final client dispositions.



Importantly, in a series of attempts to improve contact and response rates, several changes to these procedures were made over this period:

First, in an attempt to address the noted low post-service survey response rates, a “post-intake call” was implemented in November 2018. This call was intended to provide an initial contact with CHSR as the external research team immediately after contact with Her Justice, and thus before clients were likely to forget about the intake survey or their Her Justice experience. Clients were informed that CHSR would be reaching back out to them in about six months to see if their legal case had finished, and if so, to take a similar survey. Clients called after January 2019 were also informed that they would receive a \$10 gift card at that time if they completed the survey. Client contact information was then confirmed. It was hoped that these calls would allow for greater contact success for the eventual post-service survey. In total, CHSR spoke with 56 clients at this initial point; voicemails were left for a further 45 clients. Ten clients were unable to be reached (due to disconnected numbers, full voicemail mailboxes or mailboxes that were not set up, and calls that were not answered but did not go to voicemail). Two additional clients had phone numbers that were marked as “not safe,” so were not called. However, these initial calls did not appear to have a larger impact on the later post-service survey contact or response rates.

Second, a \$10 Target gift card incentive was implemented in January 2019. The delayed timeframe was due to some need for Her Justice to do sufficient research to ensure that this

incentive would not cause undue influence on the participants, and that there would be a clear separation between their services and any incentives. As this incentive eventually came from CHSR and not Her Justice, it was eventually able to be implemented. This incentive did appear to have a small but significant impact on response rates, though its late implementation did limit its impact.

“Warm handoff” emails were implemented in February 2019. These emails were sent from a Her Justice email account once six months had passed from the clients’ pre-service survey date, and notified clients of CHSR’s impending contact. This contact was hoped to remind clients of Her Justice and their previous contact with pro bono attorneys, if any, alert them to the legitimacy of CHSR and their upcoming phone call, and hopefully improve contact and response rates. However, these emails did not appear to have an impact on the post-service survey contact or response rates.

Finally, CHSR’s contact procedures shifted to incorporate an initial text message as the first contact attempt in June 2019. This text introduced CHSR as a research partner of Her Justice for this project and described the survey and forthcoming calls. This method was hoped to familiarize clients with CHSR, allow clients to process the attempt and respond on their own time, and potentially schedule a time for next contact. Clients typically responded positively to these texts, but again, their impact was limited due to their later implementation. Additionally, these texts were unsuccessful in cases where client contact information had changed or phone lines had been disconnected.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.

Pre-Service Survey Sample.

Data Preparation.

In total, 563 clients at least started the pre-service survey. 53 cases were lost due to ineligibility (11 were of an ineligible case type, 26 were recorded as not receiving any services from Her Justice, so had an ineligible level of service), or due to case-level issues (4 were originally opened by Her Justice before the window; 6 were duplicates; 8 had incorrect LegalServer case ID numbers and so could not be identified). The final pre-service survey sample consisted of the remaining 510 clients, with 633 legal cases opened in Her Justice's records in this window.

Survey Sample: Case Type and Level of Service Distributions

Four hundred eighty-one clients completed the pre-service survey over the phone; 29 completed it on paper at a Family Justice Center. Four hundred forty-eight clients completed the survey in English, and 62 completed it in Spanish. Notably, seven clients who completed the survey in English were recorded by Her Justice as having Spanish as their primary language; further, six more English-survey clients were marked as having some other language as their primary language (Arabic, Czech, Portuguese, Romanian, Ukrainian, Urdu).

Divorces/separations account for just over half of the cases for these clients, followed by custody/visitation (23%) and support (19%). The number of domestic abuse/order of protection cases in the sample is relatively small (7%; see **Table 1**).

The legal level of service was examined for each client: if the client ever received Full Representation for a case during this window, all their legal matters were recorded as receiving Full Representation. Under this metric, just over two-thirds of cases (69%) received Pro Se support, and 31% received Full Representation (**Table 1**). Proportionally more clients with divorce cases (42%) received Full Representation than for any other case type (12%, 23%, and 27%, respectively).

Table 1: Divorces/separations accounted for over half of the cases in the Pre-Service Survey sample.

		Legal Case Type				Total
		Custody/ Visitation	Divorce/Sep	Domestic Abuse/Order of Protection (OOP)	Support	
Level of Service	Pro Se	129	185	34	88	436 (69%)
	Full Representation	18	134	10	32	194 (31%)
Total		147 (23%)	319 (51%)	44 (7%)	120 (19%)	630

General Her Justice Intakes: Case Type and Level of Service Distributions

In this same period, Her Justice had 3,748 new legal cases of these case types for 2,536 clients. Of these, 1,779 cases (1,442 clients) were for clients who received advice and counsel or brief services (Pro Se support) or Full Representation; spoke English or Spanish; and were for a client who did *not* respond to the Her Justice survey.

Legal case type and level of service distributions were quite close to those of the surveyed sample, with about half of the cases (53%) being divorce/separation (**Table 2**). Seventy-nine percent of clients received advice and counsel; 21% received Full Representation. Again, Full Representation was more common for divorce cases (28%), though this difference was not as stark as for surveyed cases (7%, 13%, and 21% for the other case types, respectively).

Table 2: Divorces/separations accounted for more than half of all cases, and almost all cases receiving Full Representation, in full Her Justice sample.

	<i>By maximum level of service</i>	Legal Case Type				Total
		Custody/ Visitation	Divorce/Sep	Domestic Abuse/OOP	Support	
Level of Service	Pro Se support	270	537	115	215	1137 (79%)
	Full Representation	19	211	17	58	305 (21%)
Total		289 (20%)	748 (52%)	132 (9%)	273 (19%)	1442

Survey Sample versus General Group: Demographic Comparisons

These analyses aim to determine whether the types of clients surveyed are representative of Her Justice's typical client distribution. Only the first case per client was included.

There were several significant differences between the surveyed and not surveyed client groups, indicating that the surveyed sample may not be entirely representative of Her Justice's typical client distribution (see **Table 3**). First, surveyed clients were more likely to end up receiving Full Representation. They were also more likely to be divorced and more likely to speak English (e.g., a lower proportion of Spanish speakers took the survey). Surveyed clients were more likely to be Black and marginally less likely to be Hispanic. Finally, surveyed clients were more likely to be US citizens, less likely to be victims of domestic violence, marginally more likely to be disabled, and more likely to be veterans.

Table 3: Surveyed and Not Surveyed clients differed on several demographic indicators.

	Measure	Surveyed mean/% (N=510)	Not Surveyed mean/% (N=1442)	<i>p</i> value ³
Level of Service	% ever Full Representation	27%	21%	0.004
Current Age	Current Age	40.12	39.79	>0.5
Marital Status	Married	55%	59%	0.136
	Single	23%	23%	>0.5
	Divorced/Separated	20%	12.5%	<0.001
	Other/Unknown.	1%	5%	0.001
Language	English (not Spanish)	87%	75%	<0.001
Race	White (non-Hispanic)	14%	14%	>0.5
	Black (non-Hispanic)	35%	26%	<0.001
	Hispanic	38%	43%	0.056
	Other/Unknown	13%	17.5%	0.020
US Citizen		75%	66%	<0.001

³ Bolded = significant, $p < 0.05$.

DV Victim		64%	73%	<0.001
Disabled		13%	10%	0.061
Veteran		1%	0.5%	0.039
Start Income		\$1302	\$1727	>0.15
Start Income \$0		30%	33%	>0.2

Within Survey Sample: Demographic Comparisons and ANOVAs

To determine whether the demographics of clients surveyed differed by legal case type or level of service received, two sets of multivariate ANOVAs were performed.

Main Effect of Legal Case Type

As clients could have multiple legal matters for which they are seeking help, analysis of differences by legal case type allowed multiple case types per unique client. There were several differences on demographic factor distributions between case types (**Table 4**). Not surprisingly, divorce/separation clients are more likely to be married than clients with other case types, and none are single. Additionally, support cases were most likely to involve divorced clients. Almost all (91%) domestic abuse/order of protection (OOP) cases report domestic violence, a rate significantly higher than for any other case type. These case type differences are obviously closely linked to the legal needs at hand.

Additionally, custody/visitation clients tended to be the youngest, and divorce clients the oldest. Divorce cases were the least likely to be closed as recorded in LegalServer. Divorce clients were the least likely to be White, and the most likely to be Hispanic; support clients were the most likely to be white, and custody/visitation the least likely to be Hispanic. Finally, domestic abuse/order of protection clients were the most likely to be US citizens; divorce and support clients were the least likely.

Table 4: Within surveyed clients, legal case types differed on several demographic factors.

	Measure	Custody/ Visitation mean/% (N=147)	Div/Sep mean/% (N=320)	DA/OOP mean/% (N=44)	Support mean/% (N=122)	<i>p</i> value ⁴
Closed	Case has status of Closed	97%	74%	96%	86%	
Current Age	Current Age	36.79	41.06	38.18	39.45	<0.001
Marital Status	Married	23%	85%	45%	31%	<0.001
	Single	50%	0%	41%	35%	<0.001
	Divorced/Separated	24%	14%	9%	32%	<0.001
	Unknown marital stat.	2%	1%	5%	2%	>0.15
Language	English (not Spanish)	90%	85%	84%	86%	>0.4
Race	White (non-Hispanic)	16%	10%	14%	20%	0.029
	Black (non-Hispanic)	38%	33%	34%	30%	>0.5
	Hispanic	31%	45%	41%	39%	0.031
	Other/Unknown	15%	12%	11%	11%	>0.5
US Citizen		81%	71%	86%	73%	0.032
DV Victim		71%	59%	91%	62%	<0.001
Disabled		11%	13%	16%	8%	>0.3

⁴ Bolded = significant, $p < 0.05$.

Veteran		1%	1%	2%	0%	>0.5
Start Income		1383	1205	1433	1536	>0.15
Start Income \$0		29%	29%	30%	21%	>0.4

Main Effects of Level of Service

The level of service received by a client was typically the same across all their legal matters (e.g., clients did not receive Pro Se support on their support case but Full Representation on their custody case). As such, these analyses allowed for only one case per client. There were few overall group differences between cases receiving Pro Se support (N=370) and those receiving Full Representation (N=140; see **Table 5**). Not surprisingly, almost all Pro Se cases were closed in Her Justice's system, while only 46% of Full Representation cases were closed. Marital status also differs significantly between these two groups, which again is likely driven by the higher allocation of Full Representation to divorce cases. Pro Se cases were slightly likelier to have a higher starting income than Full Representation cases, though this difference only trended toward significance.

Table 5: Pro Se and Full Representation clients were reasonably similar on demographic indicators.

	Measure	Pro Se mean/% (N=370)	Full Rep mean/% (N=140)	<i>p</i> value ⁵
Closed	Case has status of Closed	98%	46%	<0.001
Current Age	Current Age	39.98	40.55	>0.5
Marital Status	Married	48%	76%	<0.001
	Single	28%	9%	<0.001
	Divorced/Separated	22%	15%	0.069
	Unknown marital stat.	2%	0%	0.103
Language	English (not Spanish)	12%	16%	>0.2
Race	White (non-Hispanic)	15%	10%	0.123
	Black (non-Hispanic)	34%	39%	>0.2
	Hispanic	37%	41%	>0.3
	Other/Unknown	14%	9%	0.138
US Citizen		75%	74%	>0.8
DV Victim		64%	62%	>0.6
Disabled		12%	13%	>0.8
Veteran		2%	1%	>0.4
Start Income		1382	1091	0.069
Start Income \$0		31%	29%	>0.6

Pre-Survey Data Summary

The proportions of legal case types and level of service provided are quite similar between surveyed and non-surveyed Her Justice clients. However, the two groups are significantly different on a number of potentially important demographic factors, including marital status, language, race, citizenship, and history of domestic violence. As such, the surveyed group does not exactly represent to Her Justice's typical client distributions.

⁵ Bolded = significant, *p*<0.05.

But within the surveyed sample, the client roster appears to be reasonably well-balanced in terms of the demographic factors measured, excepting situations likely related to the legal problem at hand (e.g., marital status, domestic violence). As such, this cohort represents a reasonable group for potential pre-post analyses, provided sufficient sample size from the post-service survey.

Post-Service Survey Sample.

Of the 510 clients who at least started the pre-service survey, 435 had a Her Justice intake date at least six months prior to the end of data collection, and thus were potentially due for follow-up post-service survey calls. Three hundred sixty-six of these cases were for English-speaking clients; 70 were for Spanish-speaking clients. Seventeen clients (16 English, one Spanish) had a phone number that was marked as “not safe”. Further, 83% of English-speaking clients (N=304) had email addresses, including 16 whose phone numbers were not safe. No clients had safety notes regarding their email addresses.

Phone calls were thus made to the 419 clients with safe phone numbers. English-speaking clients who had not completed the survey over the phone and who did not refuse the survey were emailed an individualized link to the survey. Emails were sent in October 2018, and February, April, July, and October 2019. Clients who did not respond in one wave and had not yet taken the survey were emailed again in subsequent waves.

Contact Outcomes and Rates.

In total, of the 435 potential clients, 65 clients completed the survey; the majority of completions were from English speakers who took the survey over email. As such, the “successful contact” rate, where clients at least answered that their case is not yet done *or* took the survey, is $(65+84)/435$, or **34%**. The survey completion rate was $65/435$, or **15%** (see **Table 6**; see **Appendix A4** for more information on these categories).

Table 6: Sixty-five clients completed the Post-Service Survey.

Post-Survey Status	Language		Total
	English	Spanish	
Unsuccessful attempts	149	59	205
Refused survey	79	2	81
Case Not Done	79	5	84
Participated	61	4	65
<i>Total</i>	365	70	435

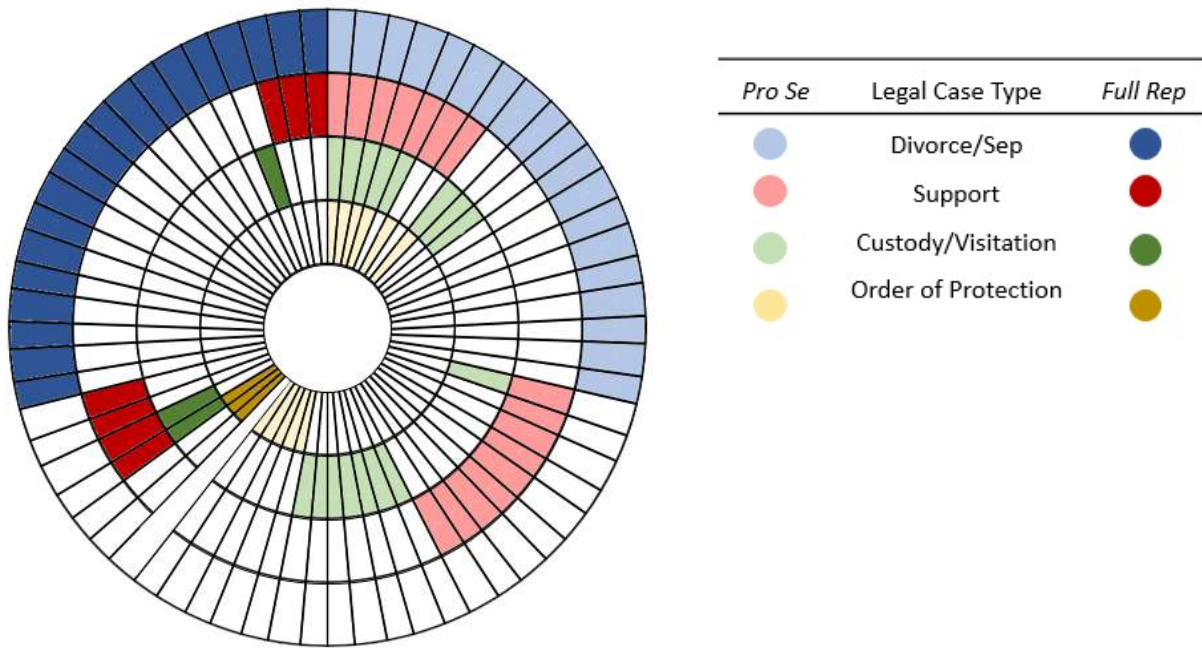
Most clients (N=48, 74%) reported having only one legal issue; nine (14%) had two, four had three, and four reported having legal cases involving all four types of legal issues.

According to Her Justice’s records, 25 clients received Full Representation for at least one legal matter; 40 only ever received Pro Se support. Not surprisingly, the majority of clients receiving Full Representation were obtaining a divorce; half of all divorce cases had Full Representation (see **Table 7**, **Figure 4**). This high rate of placement for divorce cases is consistent with Her Justice’s overall placement patterns.

Table 7: Distribution of legal case type and level of service of Post-Service Survey clients.

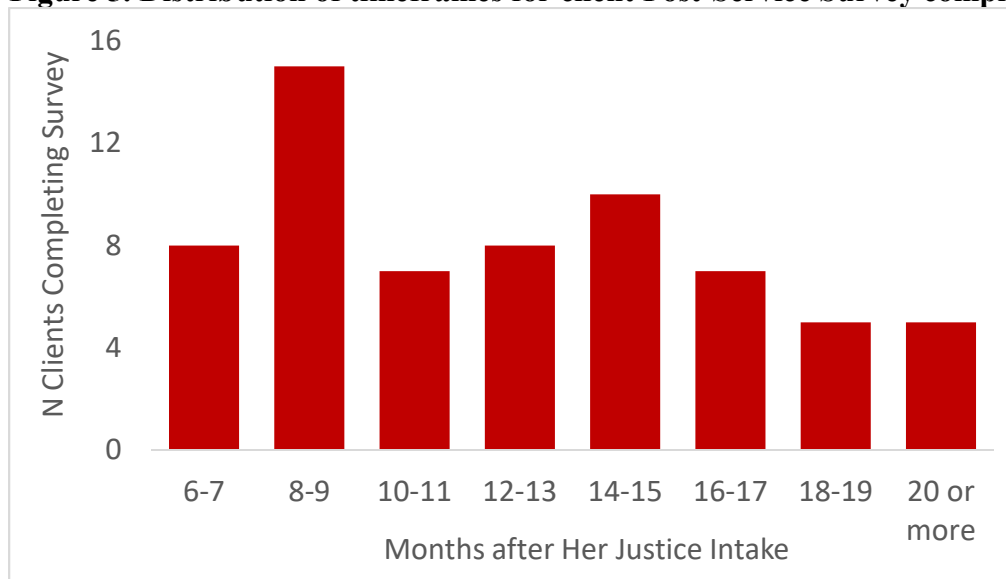
		Legal Case Type				Total
	<i>By maximum level of service</i>	Custody/ Visitation	Divorce/Sep	Domestic Abuse/OOP	Support	<i>Unique Clients</i>
Level of Service	Pro Se support	16	19	11	16	40
	Full Representation	3	19	3	7	25
Total		19	38	14	23	65

Figure 4. Distribution of legal case type and level of service of Post-Service Survey clients.



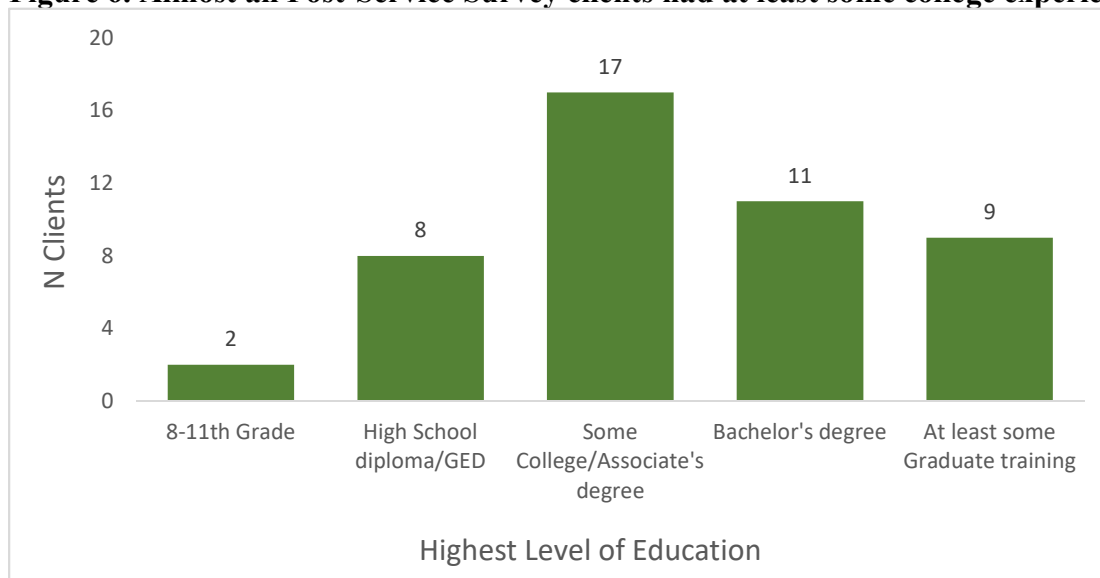
On average, surveys were completed about 13 months after first contact with Her Justice, though timings ranged from six months after intake to two years after (mean = 394 days, minimum = 189, maximum 730 days; see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5. Distribution of timeframes for client Post-Service Survey completion.



Most clients reported having completed at least some college. Only eight had only completed high school or obtained a GED, and two had not completed high school (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6. Almost all Post-Service Survey clients had at least some college experience.



Pre-Service versus Post-Service Sample.

The 65 cases who completed the Post-Service Survey were then compared to the full sample of those who had taken the Pre-Service Survey (minus these cases) to determine whether this subsample can be considered representative (**Table 8**).

Table 8: Pre-Service and Post-Service Survey clients were similar on most demographic indicators.

	Measure	Pre-Service Survey mean/% (N=445)	Post-Service Survey mean/% (N=65)	<i>p</i> value ⁶
Level of Service	% ever Full Representation	26%	38.5%	0.033
Current Age	Current Age	40.32	38.65	>0.2
Marital Status	Married	57%	48%	>0.15
	Single	22%	26%	>0.4
	Divorced/Separated	19%	26%	>0.2
	Other/Unknown.	2%	0%	>0.3
Language	English (not Spanish)	85%	97%	0.010
Race	White (non-Hispanic)	15%	15%	>0.7
	Black (non-Hispanic)	36%	34%	>0.7
	Hispanic	38%	35%	>0.6
	Other/Unknown	13%	15%	>0.5
US Citizen		74%	78%	>0.4
DV Victim		65%	55%	0.125
Disabled		13%	11%	>0.6
Veteran		1%	5%	0.016
Start Income		\$1270	\$1503	>0.2
Start Income \$0		32%	18%	0.027

Post-Service Data Summary.

The subgroup who participated in the post-service survey were more likely to have received Full Representation than the full pre-survey group; these clients may thus have been particularly willing to respond to the survey after receiving more extended services from Her Justice. The post-service survey sample was also more likely to speak English (likely due to CHSR's difficulties in contacting Spanish-speaking clients) and to be veterans, and likely to have slightly higher incomes as of intake. However, the samples are otherwise reasonably comparable. As such, the results found for this group should be expected to generalize reasonably across all Her Justice clients, though the post-survey group itself is quite small.

Level of Service in Post-Service Survey Comparison.

The 40 clients who received Pro Se services were then compared to the 25 who received Full Representation to determine whether there were any differences between the two samples (see **Table 9**). The Full Representation clients were much more likely to be married, and not single, as of Her Justice intake; this difference is not surprising, given that the Full Representation sample was also more likely to be obtaining a divorce. However, no other items were significantly different between the two sample halves, which indicates that the two groups can reasonably be compared in further analyses.

⁶ Bolded = significant, $p < 0.05$.

Table 9: Pro Se and Full Representation clients were similar on most demographic indicators.

	Measure	Pro Se support mean/% (N=40)	Full Representation mean/% (N=25)	<i>p</i> value ⁷
Level of Service	% ever Full Representation	0%	100%	-
Current Age	Current Age	38.8	68.5	>0.9
Marital Status	Married	32.5%	72%	0.002
	Single	40%	4%	0.001
	Divorced/Separated	27.5%	24%	>0.7
	Other/Unknown.	0%	0%	-
Language	English (not Spanish)	95%	100%	>0.2
Race	White (non-Hispanic)	17.5%	12%	>0.5
	Black (non-Hispanic)	27.5%	44%	>0.15
	Hispanic	37.5%	32%	>0.6
	Other/Unknown	17.5%	12%	>0.5
US Citizen		72.5%	88%	>0.14
DV Victim		52.5%	60%	>0.5
Disabled		7.5%	16%	>0.2
Veteran		5%	4%	>0.8
Start Income		\$1602	\$1344	>0.4
Start Income \$0		12.5%	28%	>0.12
Education		6.74	6.22	>0.5

⁷ Bolded = significant, $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS.

Retrospective Analyses.

Project activities began with a retrospective analysis of Her Justice's legal cases over the past several years (6/1/2015-6/1/2017). Case type (e.g., legal matter), duration, and level of service provided were each examined, with the aim of informing prospective next steps. Only clients recorded as speaking English or Spanish were included; approximately one-fifth of Her Justice's clients do not speak English comfortably and require an interpreter.

Case type examination led to the decision to focus on the four most common civil legal issues with which Her Justice deals: divorce/separation; order of protection; custody and visitation; and child and spousal support. These cases were expected to have sufficient clients over the period to allow for potential comparative analyses. Guardianship and conservatorship, name change, paternity, and other family legal issues were relatively infrequent and not expected to have sufficient clients for full analysis, so were excluded. Her Justice also serves clients with immigration cases under the Violence Against Women Act, but those case types were not included in this project.

Further, average case durations in LegalServer for Full Representation clients were used to estimate the necessary interval for a sufficient number of cases to open and close, thereby determining timeframes for post-case survey data collection. Pro Se cases are typically opened (e.g., Her Justice gives legal advice) and immediately closed (Her Justice has no further involvement in the case) or closed within one month (Her Justice may help draft a document or support additional phone calls for advice within this time period, but then has no further involvement). The case is thus finished from Her Justice's view, but legally remains open for longer while court proceedings occur. As such, estimated case duration was thus based on Full Representation cases only, which are likelier to have close dates reflecting legal resolutions. But it is important to note that even these durations may differ from actuality, as clients frequently contact Her Justice after their case has commenced, and Her Justice may not obtain the final order for a case (on the basis of which the case is closed) until after the case has concluded.

Within the 24-month retrospective period considered, almost 90% of the 3,230 clients with legal issues in these four major categories whose cases opened and closed in this window received some form of Pro Se support; about 10% were placed with a lawyer for Full Representation. Full Representation cases had a mean duration of 6.9 months (minimum = 0, maximum = 21, with no significant skew from normal). Divorce cases were the most common case type, followed by custody and visitation cases. Rates of Full Representation versus Pro Se support were similar across case type.

As a result of this work, CHSR was able to narrow the case types used for this study, and determine a reasonable window for data collection where a sufficient number of cases would be expected to be opened and subsequently resolved and closed, allowing for the sample to build over the period. Her Justice was also able to make some updates to their intake processes to consistently record client information in the available fields, instead of solely in textual case note files (e.g., marital status, race, and citizenship status), thus making it more available to CHSR. These steps supported further use of LegalServer data for the prospective work.

Post-Service Survey Client Outcomes.

Resolution Method, Timing, and Court Appearances by Case Type.

As clients with a divorce/separation case made up the largest portion of the sample, and were evenly distributed between Pro Se and Full Representation support, there was sufficient N

to compare experiences between these levels of service within this case type. However, there was not sufficient N, either in total or split by level of service, for any other case type; as such, statistical comparisons are not made for those groups, but descriptive statistics around client responses are provided. See **Figures 7 through 10** for graphical comparisons of legal experiences between case types.

Divorce.

Most clients with divorce cases (N=38, 87%) reported that their divorces were uncontested; only 5 reported contested divorces. Interestingly, none of the 5 with contested divorces received Full Representation ($t=2.535, p=0.016$).⁸ Further, most (N=29, 78%) had never previously gone through a divorce; eight had been divorced before. These rates did not differ by level of service ($p>0.3$).

Most divorce clients reported that their divorce was resolved through a settlement (N=16, 42%) or “some other way” (N=16). Four reported going to trial, one decided to withdraw or end the case, and one reported that the other party decided to withdraw. These rates differed significantly by level of representation ($t=2.24, p=0.031$): Full Representation clients were likeliest to have their case resolved by settlement ($n=11, 58\%$), while Pro Se support clients were likeliest to have their case resolved “some other way” (N=12, 63%). Only five Pro Se clients reported settling.

Most clients reported that their divorce took less than one year (10 reported six months or less; 10 reported six to 12 months; 16 reported 12 or more months). These timeframes did not differ between Full Representation and Pro Se cases ($p>0.9$). Most divorce clients reported that they went to court between one and five times (N=17); eight Pro Se reported going six or more times ($t=2.56, p=0.018$).

Custody/Visitation.

Most clients with custody cases (N=12, 63%) had never gone to court over child custody arrangements before this current case; four had gone to court once previously, and three had gone to court two or more times. Most custody/visitation clients reported that their case was resolved “some other way” (N=7, 37%): five reported settling; two went to trial; two decided to withdraw their case; and two reported that the other party decided to withdraw. Most reported that their case took at least one year (10 reported 12 or more months; four reported six to 12 months; five reported six months or less). Most custody/visitation clients reported that they went to court at least six times (N=12, 63%); only seven reported going between one and five times.

Support.

Most clients with support cases (N=14, 61%) had never gone to court over support before this current case; six had gone to court once previously, and three had gone to court two or more times. Most support clients reported that their case was resolved through a settlement (N=9, 41%) or “some other way” (N=8, 36%); three went to trial, and two decided to withdraw. Most

⁸ There is great need for pro bono representation in contested (litigated) divorce cases in New York City, even with the efforts of Her Justice and other legal service providers. These cases typically take several years to wind through the Supreme Court and can often involve complicated asset and debt division. Given the demands of clients’ other legal needs, and the interests of pro bono attorneys and law firms, there are times during the year – as at points during the grant period – when Her Justice closes its helpline for contested divorces and refers those callers to other organizations for assistance, thus resulting in the small number of contested divorce cases receiving Full Representation in the final sample.

reported that their case took less than one year (10 reported six months or less; five reported six to 12 months; and eight reported at least 12 months). Most support clients reported that they went to court between one and five times (N=13); eight reported going six or more times.

Order of Protection.

Most clients asking to obtain orders of protection (N=8, 57%) had never gone to court for this purpose before; five had gone to court once previously, and one had gone to court two or more times. Most order of protection clients reported that their case was resolved “some other way” (N=5, 36%) or because they decided to withdraw (N=4, 29%); three settled, and in two cases the other party decided to withdraw. Most reported that their cases took less than one year (six reported six months or less; five reported six to 12 months; and two reported at least 12 months). Most order of protection clients reported that they went to court between one and five times (N=10); three went six or more times.

Figure 7. Most respondents did not have previous legal experience with their current case type.

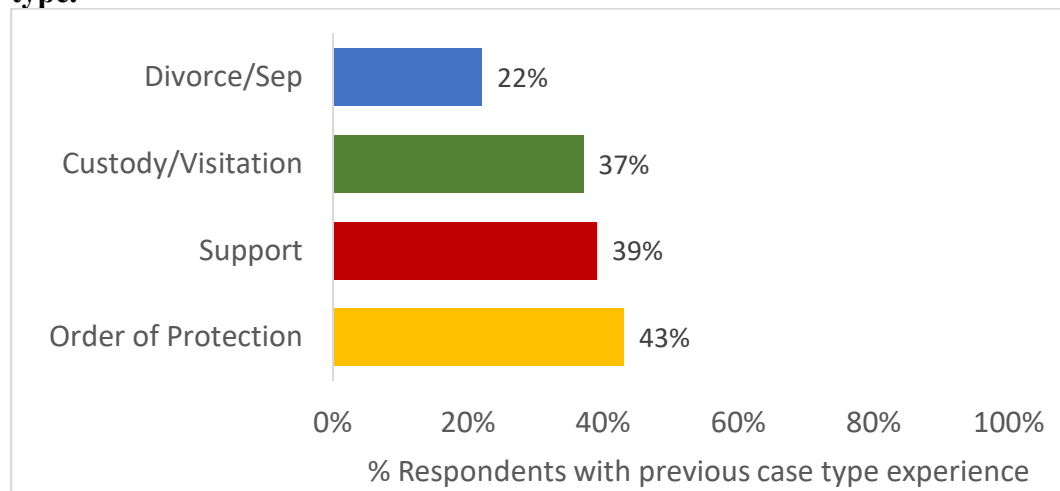


Figure 8. Most respondents' cases were closed after a settlement, or “some other way.”

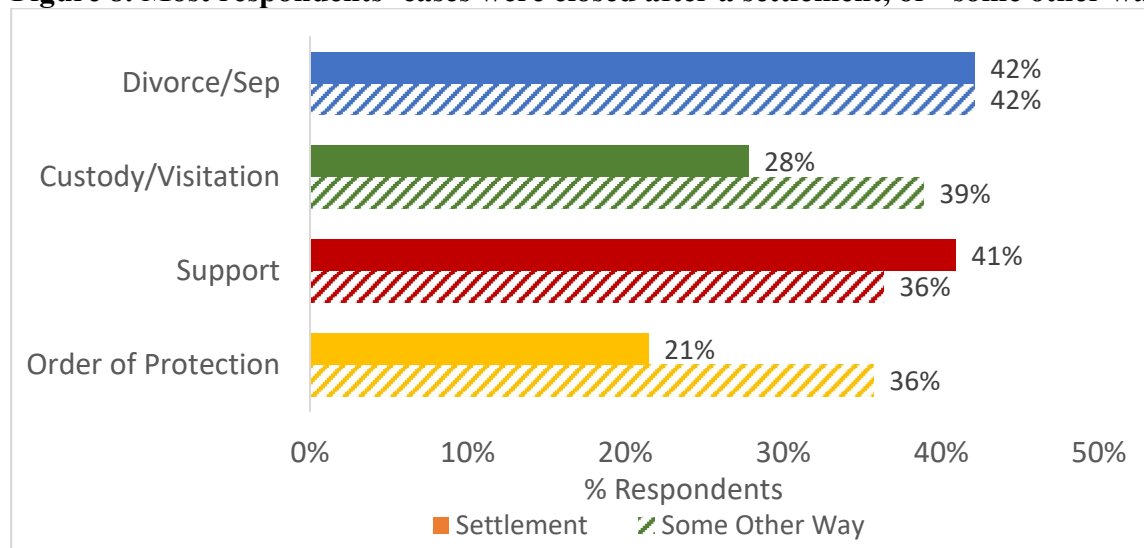


Figure 9. Most respondents' cases were closed within one year; only custody/visitation clients tended to take more than one year.

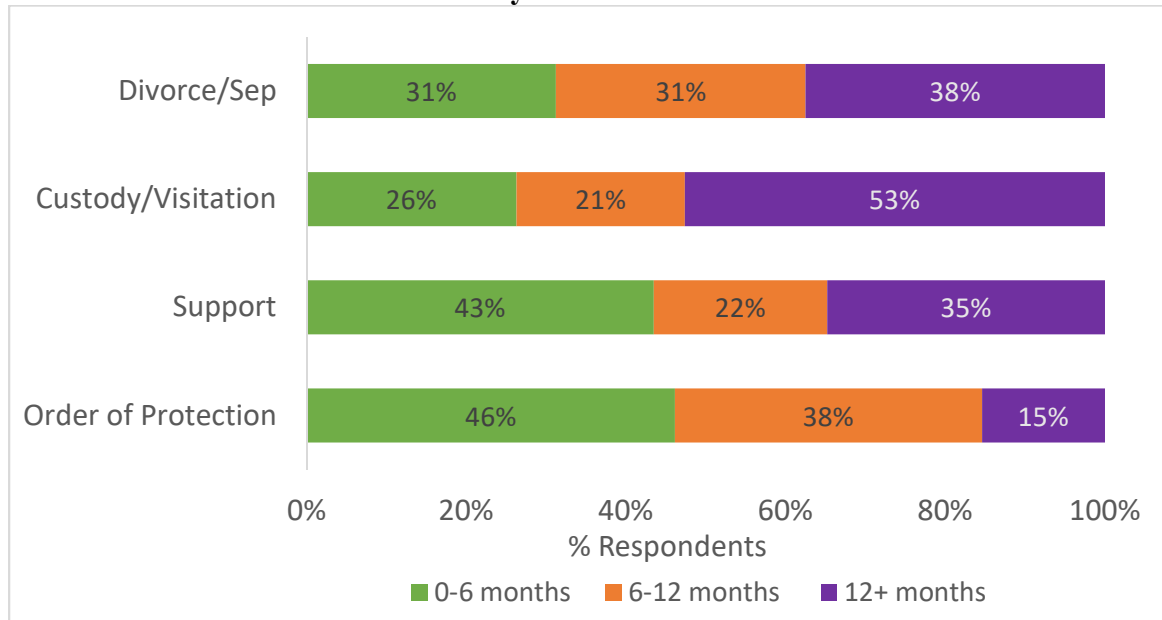
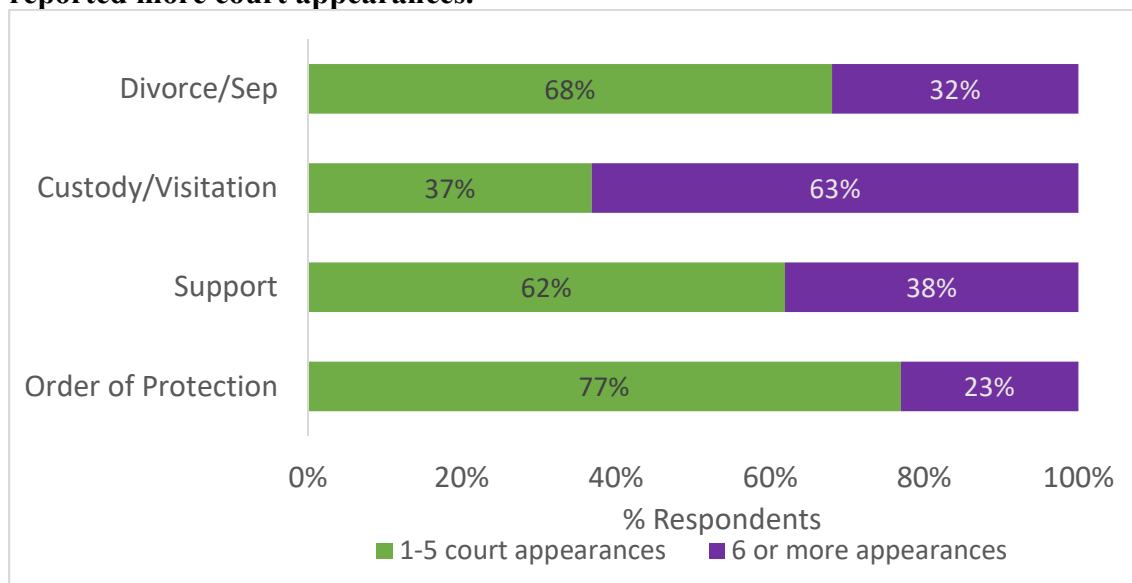


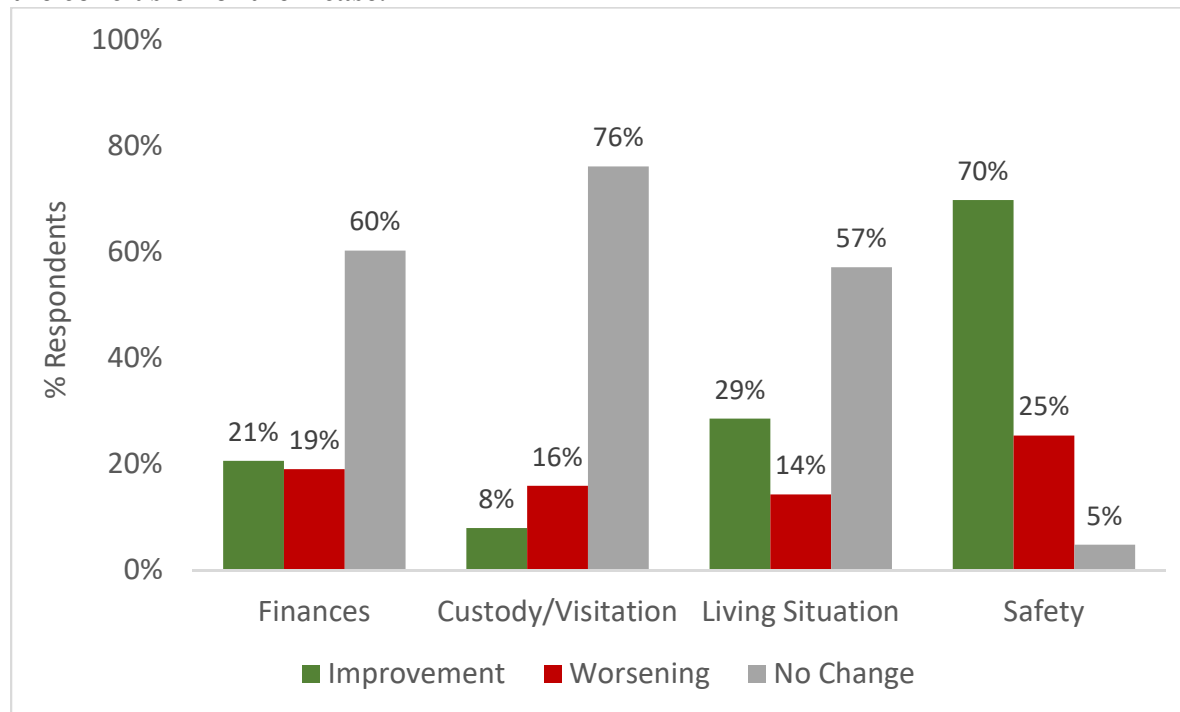
Figure 10. Most respondents went to court one to five times; only custody/visitation clients reported more court appearances.



Overall Legal and Extralegal Outcomes in Each Domain.

Each of these items was presented to respondents regardless of their case type. Given the small number of total clients, and number of unique clients with each legal matter, comparisons are made only by level of service received, using Pearson χ^2 . However, the small numbers of clients reporting each outcome resulted in few significant differences, though some potentially interesting patterns (see **Figure 11** for graphical summary).

Figure 11. Most clients reported no change, or slight positive changes, in their situations after their legal case finished. However, most reported improvements in safety following the conclusion of their case.



Finances.

Most clients (N=38, 60%) reported that their financial situation had not changed as a result of their case. Thirteen reported that it had improved: eight now receive child support, and five reported improvement for some other reason (typically being able to work more and recuperation of benefits). Of those who now received support, most (N=6) agreed that it would have a positive long-term effect on their life; all were confident that the court system would ensure they received their support payments as decided.

Twelve clients reported that their financial situation had gotten worse: one now receives no spousal support, one now receives no child support, one now pays child support, and one lost money or assets as part of their settlement. Ten reported worsening for some other reason, including bankruptcy and expenses due to their legal case, needing additional legal cases to fully resolve the issues, not receiving agreed-upon support, and having to leave the state for safety reasons.

Notably, only two Full Representation (8% of group) clients reported that their financial situation had gotten worse, versus 10 Pro Se clients (26% of group).

Custody/Visitation.

Fifteen clients reported that child custody or visitation had changed as a result of their legal case. Three gained custody, and two gained visitation (or more visitation); however, three lost custody, one lost visitation (or received less visitation), and six reported that the other parent gained visitation (or more visitation).

While similar numbers of Pro Se and Full Representation clients reported gaining custody and visitation, or other parents gaining visitation, only Pro Se clients reported *losing* custody or visitation, though this group difference was not significant.

Living Situation.

Most clients (N=36, 57%) reported that their living situation did not change as a result of their case. Eighteen reported that it had improved: six can support themselves better; seven reported that their children are better off; three felt safer; and one can afford a better place to live. Seven reported some other reason, including finding a new partner and peace of mind and relief.

Nine reported that their living situation had gotten worse as a result of their case. Most reported evictions or having to move. One noted that she now has to travel much farther to see her children.

Only one Full Representation client (4% of group) reported that their living situation had gotten worse, versus eight Pro Se clients (21% of group), though this group difference was not significant.

Safety.

Most clients (N=44, 73%) reported feeling safer as a result of the court decisions in their case. This rate was consistent between Full Representation and Pro Se clients. Five felt safer because of the orders of protection received; 33 provided some other reason. Most reasons centered around feelings of safety due to separation from an abuser (“I don’t have to speak to him never again”; “There was no contact between myself and my ex-husband for the divorce process”), due to the backing of the court’s decisions (“I’m legally divorced therefore not responsible for my ex’s actions”; “With the full support of my lawyers I felt safer”), or due to the client’s own actions (“I have developed a lot of survival skills to survive without all of the other resources that I had prior”; “I am able to provide a better security for my child”; “Moved to Long Island and has a new partner”). Several simply reported that “there’s no more problems” after their case finished.

However, 16 did not feel safer, though reasons were not provided. This response was given at similar rates between Pro Se (28%) and Full Representation (25%) clients ($p > 0.8$).

Other.

Eight clients noted that the court provided an interpreter when they said they needed one; however, six reported that the court did not. These rates were consistent between Pro Se and Full Representation clients ($p > 0.8$).

Thirteen had to pay for childcare so they could go to court, but 24 did not. A greater proportion of Pro Se clients reported having to pay for childcare (26% versus 12.5%, Pearson $\chi^2 = 3.333$, $p = 0.067$).

Fourteen were penalized at work for missing time because they had to go to court, but 27 were not. A greater proportion of Pro Se clients reported being penalized than Full Representation clients (32% versus 8%, Pearson $\chi^2 = 14.855$, $p < 0.001$).

Pre-Service vs. Post-Service Survey Scaled Responses.

Clients’ mean responses to the scaled measures were then computed. Mean scores on each scale were computed for each scale at each timepoint; responses for negatively framed

items were reversed. Scores were included in further analyses if participants answered at least half the items on each scale (e.g., at least four of the eight fairness, four of the nine legitimacy, two of the four lawyer, and four of the nine empowerment items); between 45 and 59 clients had acceptable pre and post data for each scale. Mean scores on each scale were then compared within participants by time point (pre- and post-service) and between participants by maximum level of service received (Pro Se and Full Representation) using a series of 2x2 repeated measures ANOVAs to examine any changes in scaled answers over time, and differences and divergences between these two groups.

Fairness (N=58).

No significant differences were seen by time, level of service, or the interaction of these two factors. As such, scores remained relatively stable and were not disproportionately impacted by level of service received.

Legitimacy (N=59).

While there were no significant main effects of timepoint and no significant interaction between time and level of service, there was a marginally significant main effect of group: Full Representation clients (mean = 2.74) demonstrated higher average scores at both intake and post-service than did Pro Se clients (mean = 2.50; $F(1,57)=3.624, p=0.062$). As such, the two groups were somewhat different on this scale to start, but scores for both remained relatively stable over time.

Legitimacy of Lawyers (N=56).

There were at least marginally significant main effects of both time ($F(1,54)=3.763, p=0.058$) and level of service ($F(1,54)=5.440, p=0.023$), but no significant interaction between the two ($p>0.15$). Pro Se clients demonstrated a notable score decrease (about 0.4 points) from the pre- to post-survey, while Full Representation clients started higher (about 0.3 points) and showed only a very slight decrease (less than 0.2 points).

Empowerment (N=45).

Interestingly, there was a significant main effect of time on empowerment scores ($F(1,43)=18.265, p>0.001$), but no effect of level of service and no significant interaction. Empowerment scores declined by about 0.4 points (on a seven-point scale) for both Pro Se and Full Representation clients from the pre- to post-survey.

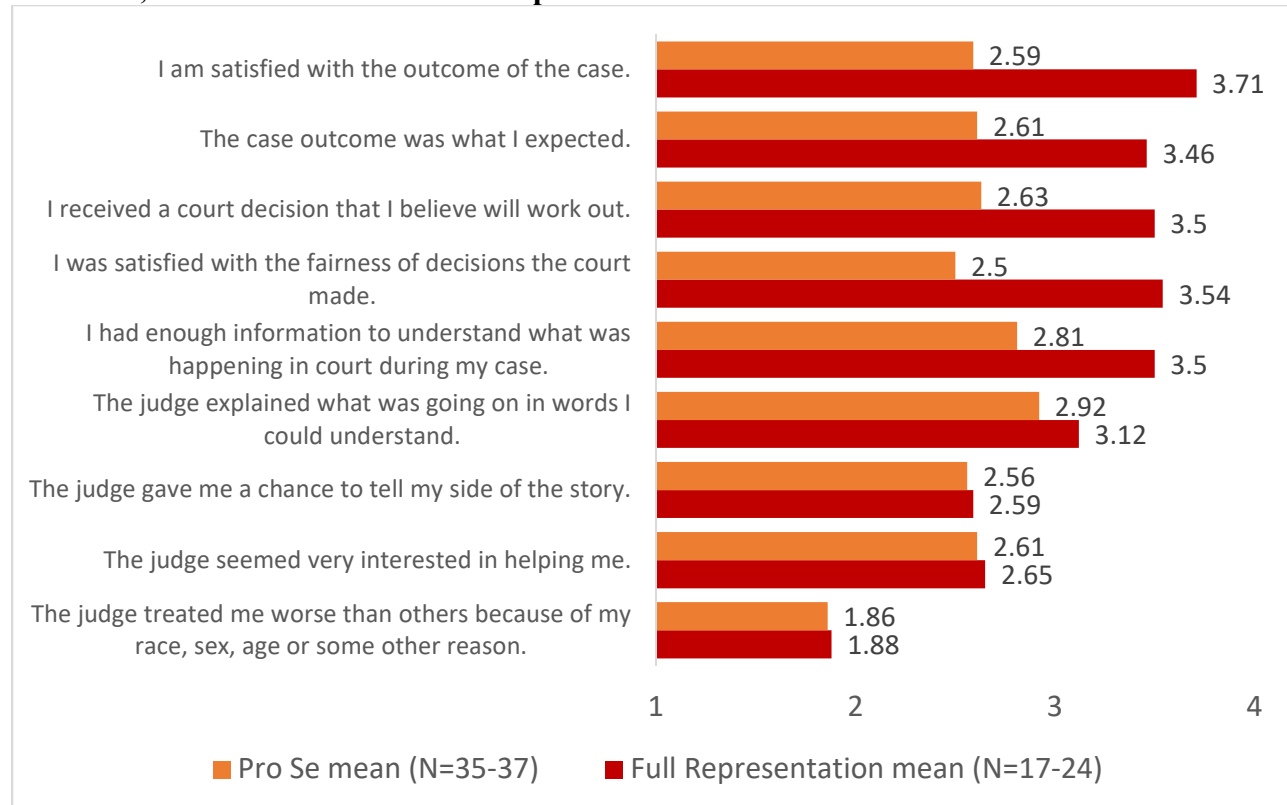
Satisfaction.

Clients' responses to the post-survey satisfaction items were then evaluated. Scores on the final item were reversed, and only clients who answered at least half (4 of the 9) items were included, for a final sample of 61 clients. The overall mean satisfaction score was 2.98 (SD 0.82) out of 4, where 4 was "Very Satisfied," indicating that clients were generally somewhat satisfied with their court experiences and outcomes.

Clients receiving Full Representation reported significantly greater satisfaction overall (mean = 2.73 versus 3.35, $t = 3.096, p = 0.003$; **Figure 12**). Specifically, Full Representation clients reported greater satisfaction for the first five items asking about outcome satisfaction (t 's $> 3, p$'s <0.001 to 0.007), but did not report different answers to the items asking about their experiences with the judge for their case (t 's $<1, p$'s >0.4). As such, Full Representation clients

were more satisfied with the legal results of their case, but did not necessarily have better court experiences than Pro Se clients.

Figure 12. Full Representation clients reported higher satisfaction on items related to outcomes, but not about their court experiences.



STUDY LIMITATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED.

Limited Post-Service Survey Data.

The greatest limitation for this project was the small amount of post-service surveys that were successfully completed. As only 65 post-service surveys were obtained, Propensity Score Matching procedures could not be undertaken, and statistical analyses and comparisons by case type and client demographic were unable to be performed.

This response rate was markedly lower than that originally projected. Her Justice had initially felt that many clients would be likely to remember their organization, feel goodwill towards the group due to receipt of services, and thus be willing to complete the post-service survey. However, implementation experience demonstrated that these assumptions did not carry through for several reasons.

First, many clients reported that they did not remember Her Justice. While this point was not a criteria for participation, it removed one of the major levers driving potential participation. The six-month remove may have dampened memories of their contact, particularly if clients received only Pro Se services and thus only had one initial instance of contact with Her Justice. Additionally, in their attempts to find services and support for their cases, clients may have been in contact with multiple institutions during this period, thus weakening memories of any one in particular.

Client contact also proved to be particularly difficult, especially after the necessary six-month delay. Almost half of the clients for whom contact was attempted were unable to be reached, even after multiple attempts. This population may be especially likely to have changed contact information over the intervening six or more months, or to have periods of disconnected service due to lapses in paying bills, resulting in the many instances of wrong or disconnected numbers. Further, many clients did not return voicemails or text messages or respond to emailed surveys, perhaps reflecting a perception of these contacts from unknown numbers or addresses as potential spam. While CHSR worked with Her Justice to position itself as a known contact source (e.g., mentions of contact in the pre-service survey; the post-intake phone call; the “warm handoff” email from Her Justice’s email account), these efforts were apparently insufficient to overcome this barrier for many clients.

Further, almost 20% of clients who were successfully contacted reported that their legal case had not yet finished. This high rate is not surprising, as intakes and post-service calls continued on a rolling basis through the data collection window; clients whose intake was only six months ago were not especially likely to have reached resolution by the end of data collection. However, it does remove these clients from the post-service survey pool.

Unfortunately, CHSR also had a limited ability to contact Spanish-speaking clients. While CHSR employed a female native Spanish speaker for a few months in the summer of 2019, and made calls to all Spanish-speaking clients at that point (exempting the client whose phone number was marked as “not safe”), these clients were not able to be contacted on as timely a basis as the English-speaking clients, and the data collection window was quite limited. As such, the four Spanish-speaking clients who participated, and the five who reported that their case was not yet done, represent a high contact rate for the time period, but a low rate overall.

Post-Service Survey Procedural Shifts Attempted.

As noted in the timeline of activities, several new practices were implemented over the course of post-service survey data collection in an attempt to boost contact and response rates.

Efforts included a short “post-intake call,” a \$10 gift card incentive, a “warm handoff” email, and text messages as the first post-survey contact. Unfortunately, none of these procedures had a strong enough impact to improve response rates to the necessary thresholds for statistical analyses. Client responses did improve somewhat after implementation of the gift card incentive, but its late implementation limited its impact, and it alone was not enough to overcome the other barriers.

Pre-Service Survey Implementation Limitations.

While the pre-service survey was able to be implemented much more widely than the post-service survey, there were some remaining limitations at this starting stage.

First, the survey was not implemented as universally as planned: surveys were administered to approximately one-quarter (510 of 1,952, or 26%) of the potentially eligible clients who contacted Her Justice over the intake period, severely limiting the incoming sample. Originally, the survey had been planned to be implemented both over the phone, for clients calling the legal help “warm line,” and in person, on paper, at New York City’s Family Justice Centers during Her Justice’s in-person “clinic hours.” This in-person venue was hoped to garner a strong response, as clients could take the survey at their own pace while waiting to speak to the lawyer. However, in practice, very few clients were able to complete the survey in person, and most of the responses collected were of particularly low data quality; Her Justice intake interviewers reported that clients were “too much in crisis” to be able to take the survey at that venue. Her Justice estimates that approximately one-third of their clients come in through these Family Justice Centers, resulting in a substantial portion of their population effectively excluded from this study.

Additionally, the survey was unable to be offered successfully even to all potentially eligible clients even over the phone. Some intake interviewers also demonstrated significant reluctance to offer the survey due to stated concerns that clients often had limited time on the phone and were anxious to speak with a lawyer, and that interviewers felt uncomfortable asking some of the more personal survey questions during an initial conversation with clients. This resistance likely resulted in the survey being offered to fewer phone-intake clients than expected. This resistance likely also translated into the depressed response rates and higher-than-expected rate of refusal seen even when the survey was offered. About 40% of phone-intake cases had a recorded reason for refusal, with most clients reporting that they did not have time for an additional step, were not interested, or simply wanted to talk to a lawyer. Again, Her Justice had initially estimated a high acceptance rate for this population, but experience did not bear out this assumption.

The sample of clients who did participate in the pre-service intake survey were not completely representative of Her Justice’s overall client population: they were more likely to be divorced, English-speaking, Black, and US citizens, and less likely to be Hispanic or victims of domestic violence. The sample was also not evenly distributed across case types: half of clients’ cases were for divorces (mostly uncontested divorces), while less than 10% were for orders of protection, seriously limiting the final sample size for this case type. Additionally, clients with a divorce/separation case were by far the most likely to receive full representation than for any other case type. This distribution was not significantly different from Her Justice’s overall client sample over this window, but was not expected at the outset.

Other Limitations

During the course of this work, CHSR attempted to obtain records directly from the Office of Court Administration. This component was not part of the original grant application or proposed procedures, but represented an additional step towards obtaining client outcome data, particularly since the post-service survey data was quite limited. These records were hoped to contain final court decisions, thus allowing an objective determination of case outcomes for the purpose of comparison. Unfortunately, while individual case records are considered to be part of the public record and can be requested, release is based on the discretion of the Court to permit such inspection. Further, requests based on the compilation of records, as would be needed here, are specifically excluded from this statute.⁹ As such, our application for access was denied due to an already high workload at the Office, and we were unable to use this potential data source.

Finally, we were unable to implement the Propensity Score Matching approach originally proposed. While this method would have allowed selection of similar, well-matched Pro Se and Full Representation clients, we unfortunately did not have enough clients in either category to undertake this matching procedure. As such, simple comparisons by level of service were performed where possible.

⁹ See <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/foil/AdministrativeRecords.shtml>: “You should note that FOIL does not require the creation or compilation of records or a response to questions. Public Officers Law, § 89(3).”

SUMMARY AND CURRENT CONCLUSIONS.

The Access to Justice Project allowed examination of the relative impacts of Pro Se support and Full Representation on client legal experiences and case outcomes. It also established several scales for evaluations of procedural justice in civil legal settings. While there was a much more limited sample than anticipated, the project did garner similar final numbers of Pro Se and Full Representation clients, allowing some direct comparisons between the groups.

Both the pre-service and post-service survey samples had more divorce cases than anticipated; further, clients with divorce cases were substantially more likely to receive Full Representation support than were other case types. Interestingly, by the post-service sample, clients were similarly likely to get Full Representation whether or not they'd previously gone through a divorce, but were significantly less likely to be placed with a lawyer if they had a contested divorce. However, the small number of contested divorces in this sample makes broader conclusions about resource allocation for divorces difficult at this point.

Level of service did appear to impact reported case outcomes for divorce cases. Full Representation clients were more likely to report resolution via settlement than Pro Se cases; they also reported going to court less frequently, though there were no differences in overall case duration.

Otherwise, across all four case types, most clients had never gone to court for such a legal matter before. Most resolved their cases either by settlement or by some other way. Most cases took less than a year, and one to five court appearances, to resolve, though custody and visitation cases appeared to take longer (mostly at least one year, and six or more court appearances).

Client outcomes were also evaluated across case types. In general, Full Representation clients reported more positive outcomes, or at least had a lower rate of negative outcomes, than Pro Se clients, though several of these differences were not significant, likely due to the small sample sizes available. Most clients reported no change in their financial status, but Full Representation clients were less likely to report worsened circumstances than Pro Se. Of clients who reported changes in custody after their case, only Pro Se clients reported losing custody. Most clients reported no changes in their living situations, but again, Full Representation clients were less likely to report worsened circumstances than Pro Se. Both Full Representation and Pro Se clients reported feeling safer after their cases had concluded. More Pro Se clients reported having to pay for childcare for their court appearances, and being penalized at work for having to attend court. These findings suggest interesting areas for further research.

Responses to the procedural justice scales were compared both between timepoints and by level of service received. Scores on the fairness items were stable, indicating consistent evaluations of procedural and distributive fairness even after going to court. Scores on the legitimacy items were also stable, though Full Representation clients had higher scores than Pro Se; this group difference likely represents a selection issue due to the very small sample. However, Pro Se clients showed more of a decrease in their legitimacy ratings for lawyers than did Full Representation clients, illustrating a potentially experience-driven change. Empowerment scores did not differ by group, but did show a significant overall decrease across the timepoints, demonstrating decreased feelings of empowerment after going to court regardless of level of service received. Finally, Full Representation clients reported greater satisfaction with their outcomes than did Pro Se clients, though both were similarly satisfied with their experiences in court and with judges.

As such, Full Representation clients do appear to have better court outcomes, and better court experiences, than do Pro Se clients. However, the small number of clients with recorded outcomes makes generalization of these points difficult, particularly as we are unable to compare outcomes or evaluations by client characteristics (e.g., race, level of education), or even to break comparisons down further by case type to see which groups of clients are well served by Pro Se support and which truly require Full Representation to be able to achieve positive outcomes. Nevertheless, some of the outcomes – for example, the significantly higher numbers of Pro Se clients versus represented clients who faced adverse consequences for missing work due to court appearances and whose financial circumstances worsened as a result of court involvement – suggest areas for further research.

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APPENDIX A1.

Pre-Service Survey.

We're asking everyone who receives legal help from us to answer some questions on your opinions about the legal system.

Answering these questions will help us provide better services and advocate for changes in the system. It'll take about 10 minutes.

After, I'll connect you to the lawyer or have them contact you later today if they are not able to talk now.

Your answers to these questions will be confidential: they will not appear in any legal documents or in your Her Justice file and Her Justice lawyers will not know your responses.

Your answers will not in any way determine whether or how much legal help you get. They will be seen only by an outside research team who will look at all of the responses to questions across all participants. They will later share overall results with us to help us improve our services, but they will not tell us how individual people responded.

If you choose to participate, the research team will contact you after your case has ended to ask you about your experience with the legal system.

Again, answering these questions is voluntary, **so if you do not want to participate**, I'll connect you to the lawyer now or have them contact you today.

I am going to read a list of statements and I would like you to indicate how strongly you disagree or agree. Please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. It's ok if the answer choices don't exactly fit how you feel: do your best to pick whichever answer is closest.

For the first set of statements, consider the statement in relation to the court system and judges.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

The court system and judges...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Make decisions about how to handle problems in fair ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat people fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat everyone in your community with dignity and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately understand and apply the law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make their decisions based upon facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat everyone equally regardless of their race.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide better services to the wealthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes give minorities less help due to their race.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable being around lawyers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyers do the best for their clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's better to go to court with a lawyer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyers listen to their clients about their situation and wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, the courts are a legitimate authority and people should obey the decisions that court officials make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have confidence that the court can do its job well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People's basic rights are well protected by the courts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The courts care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court officials are often dishonest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are many things about the courts and its policies that need to be changed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat men and women equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat mothers better than fathers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat fathers better than mothers.				

The following statements identify feelings or experiences that some people use to describe themselves. When answering, please keep in mind what is important to you as a woman, including all aspects of your personal identity, which might include gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Indicate the frequency with which you experience these feelings on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents "never" and 7 represents "always":

	1 Almost Never	2	3	4 Sometimes	5	6	7 Almost Always
I have equal relationships with important others in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important to me to be financially independent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I realize that given my current situation, I am coping the best I can.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am feeling in control of my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel competent to handle the situations that arise in my everyday life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of direction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that a woman like me can succeed in any job or career that I choose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When making decisions about my life, I do not trust my own experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thanks for answering these questions. An outside research team will analyze your responses, along with those from many other people, and will share some group results with Her Justice to help us improve our work.

The outside team will call you to confirm your contact information in about a week. Then they'll follow up with you in about 6 months and, if your case has finished, ask you some more survey questions. You'll receive a \$10 gift card for completing that second survey.

Thanks again, and the lawyer will meet with you soon.

APPENDIX A2.

Post-Service Survey.

Her Justice is working with a team of researchers at SUNY Albany to learn more about our clients' needs. When you first spoke with Her Justice, you answered some questions about your opinions of the legal system. Now, the team at SUNY Albany would like to follow up with you to see if your legal case has finished, and if so, to ask you a few more questions about your experiences.

This survey will take about 10 minutes and your answers will be confidential. Nothing you say will appear in any legal documents or in your Her Justice file, nor will anything be shared with any of the lawyers who helped you. Only the research team at SUNY Albany will have access to your data, and they will only share overall results with us at Her Justice.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Rachel Braunstein at Her Justice at: RBraunstein@herjustice.org or (646) 442-1192.

If you have questions about the survey itself, please contact Margaret Gullick at: mgullick@albany.edu or (518) 591-8749.

Has your legal case finished?

- ☐ Yes, legal case has finished
- ☐ No, case has not finished

Did your most recent case involve: *[check all that apply]*

- ☐ a divorce?
- ☐ child custody arrangements?
- ☐ child or spousal support?
- ☐ an order of protection?

Display This Question:

If Did your most recent case involve: [check all that apply] = a divorce?

Was your divorce:

- ☐ contested?
- ☐ uncontested?

Display This Question:

If Did your most recent case involve: [check all that apply] = a divorce?

Have you ever previously gotten a divorce?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, two or more times
- ☐ No, never

Display This Question:

If Did your most recent case involve: [check all that apply] = child custody arrangements?

Had you ever gone to court over child custody arrangements before this case?

- ☐ Yes, once
 - ☐ Yes, two or more times
 - ☐ No, never
-

Display This Question:

If Did your most recent case involve: [check all that apply] = child or spousal support?

Had you ever gone to court over child or spousal support before this case?

- ☐ Yes, once
 - ☐ Yes, two or more times
 - ☐ No, never
-

Display This Question:

If Did your most recent case involve: [check all that apply] = an order of protection?

Had you ever gone to court to obtain an order of protection before this time?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, two or more times
- ☐ No, never

The following questions will focus on your $\{\text{lm://Field/2}\}$ case. Please think about this case when answering these questions.

How was your case resolved?

- ☐ Trial
 - ☐ Settlement
 - ☐ I decided to withdraw or end my case
 - ☐ The other party decided to withdraw or end their case
 - ☐ Some other way
-

How long did your case last, from when the petition or complaint was first filed to when you received a final order or decision?

- ☐ 6 months or less
 - ☐ between 6 and 12 months
 - ☐ 12 months or more
-

How many times did you go to court during your case?

- ☐ 1 to 5 times
- ☐ 6 times or more

Considering your contact with the court, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with the outcome of the case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The case outcome was what I expected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I received a court decision that I believe will work out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was satisfied with the fairness of decisions the court made.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had enough information to understand what was happening in court during my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The judge explained what was going on in words I could understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The judge gave me a chance to tell my side of the story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The judge seemed very interested in helping me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The judge treated me worse than others because of my race, sex, age or some other reason.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did your financial situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of your case?

If client hedges or says "both", prompt: Overall, do you think it improved, got worse, or stayed the same?

- ☐ Improve
- ☐ Get Worse
- ☐ Stay the same

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Did your financial situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of your case? If c... = Improve

How did it improve?

- ☐ I now receive new spousal support, or the amount of spousal support I receive increased
- ☐ I have to pay no spousal support, or the amount of spousal support I pay decreased
- ☐ I now receive new child support, or the amount of child support I receive increased
- ☐ I now have to pay no child support, or the amount of child support I pay decreased
- ☐ I received money or assets as part of divorce settlement
- ☐ Some other reason

Display This Question:

If Loop current: How did it improve? = Some other reason

Can you tell me that other reason?

Display This Question:

If Loop current: How did it improve? = I now receive new spousal support, or the amount of spousal support I receive increased

Or Loop current: How did it improve? = I now receive new child support, or the amount of child support I receive increased

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Receiving this support will have a positive long-term effect on my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident the court system will ensure I receive support payments as was decided in my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Did your financial situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of your case? If c... = Get Worse

How did it get worse?

- ☐ I now receive no spousal support, or the amount of spousal support I receive decreased
- ☐ I now pay spousal support
- ☐ I now receive no child support, or the amount of child support I receive decreased
- ☐ I now pay child support
- ☐ I lost money or assets as part of divorce settlement
- ☐ Some other reason

Display This Question:

If Loop current: How did it get worse? = Some other reason

Can you tell me that other reason?

Did child custody or visitation change as a result of this case?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Did child custody or visitation change as a result of this case? = Yes

In what way did child custody or visitation change from this case?

- ☐ I gained custody of my child(ren)
 - ☐ I lost custody of my child(ren)
 - ☐ I gained visitation, or more visitation
 - ☐ I lost visitation or received less visitation
 - ☐ The child(ren)'s other parent gained visitation, or more visitation
-

Did your living situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of this case?

- ☐ Improve
 - ☐ Get worse
 - ☐ Stay the same
-

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Did your living situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of this case? = Improve

How did your living situation improve?

- ☐ I can support myself better
 - ☐ My children are better off
 - ☐ I feel safer
 - ☐ I can afford a better place to live
 - ☐ Some other reason
-

Display This Question:

If Loop current: How did your living situation improve? = Some other reason

Can you tell me that other reason?

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Did your living situation improve, get worse, or stay the same as a result of this case? = Get worse

Can you tell me how your living situation got worse as a result of this case?

Do you feel safer as a result of the court decisions in your case?

- ☐ Yes, I feel safer
- ☐ No, I do not feel safer

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Do you feel safer as a result of the court decisions in your case? = Yes, I feel safer

Why do you feel safer?

- ☐ I feel safer because of the order of protection I received
- ☐ I feel safer because of some other reason

Display This Question:

If Loop current: Why do you feel safer? = I feel safer because of some other reason

Can you tell me more about why you feel safer?

Did the court provide an interpreter if you said you needed one?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Did you have to pay for childcare so that you could go to court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A
-

Were you penalized at work for missing time because you went to court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

I am going to read a list of statements and I would like you to indicate how strongly you disagree or agree. Please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. It's ok if the answer choices don't exactly fit how you feel: do your best to pick whichever answer is closest.

For the first set of statements, consider the statement in relation to the court system and judges.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:
The court system and judges...

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Make decisions about how to handle problems in fair ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat people fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat everyone in your community with dignity and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately understand and apply the law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make their decisions based upon facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat everyone equally regardless of their race.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide better services to the wealthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes give minorities less help due to their race.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable being around lawyers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyers do the best for their clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's better to go to court with a lawyer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyers listen to their clients about their situation and wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, the courts are a legitimate authority and people should obey the decisions that court officials make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have confidence that the court can do its job well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People's basic rights are well protected by the courts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The courts care about the well-being of everyone they deal with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court officials are often dishonest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are many things about the courts and its policies that need to be changed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat men and women equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat mothers better than fathers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts treat fathers better than mothers.				

The following statements identify feelings or experiences that some people use to describe themselves. When answering, please keep in mind what is important to you as a woman, including all aspects of your personal identity, which might include gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Indicate the frequency with which you experience these feelings on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents "never" and 7 represents "always":

	1 Almost Never	2	3	4 Sometimes	5	6	7 Almost Always
I have equal relationships with important others in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important to me to be financially independent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I realize that given my current situation, I am coping the best I can.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am feeling in control of my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not feel competent to handle the situations that arise in my everyday life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of direction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that a woman like me can succeed in any job or career that I choose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When making decisions about my life, I do not trust my own experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Less than 8th grade
- ☐ 8-11th grade
- ☐ Completed high school
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Completed vocational training
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Any graduate training

Thank you for completing our survey!

We will now confirm your contact information so we can mail you the \$10 Target gift card.

APPENDIX A3.

Scale Validation Analyses.

The scales implemented here represent adaptations of measures used to quantify feelings of procedural justice in criminal cases, not civil. Further, the empowerment measure implemented only a subset of items instead of using the full scale. As such, reliability and validity analyses were performed to ensure that the items here used were answered consistently and continued to reflect distinct concepts, thus supporting their use in this report and in further civil legal evaluations.

Data selection and Preparation.

These tests were performed on the 424 clients who took the pre-service survey over the phone in English. Clients who took the survey on paper at a Family Justice Center, or in Spanish, were thus excluded, as they represented only small, potentially quite different populations.

Additionally, clients who skipped at least one item within a scale were dropped from analyses of that scale; only those who answered all items were included (**Table A1**). Luckily, only a small portion of clients skipped any items (between 10 and 20% for each scale), leaving between 336 and 385 respondents with useable data for each scale. Scores for negatively framed items were reversed.

Table A1: Scale reliability and validation results.

Scale	Original N	At least one missing response N	Final N	Reliability		Validity	
				Spearman- Brown Prophecy Formula	Cronbach's α	N items Convergent validity	N items Divergent validity
Fairness (8 items)	424	54	370	0.91	0.89	8	8
Legitimacy (9 items)	424	88	336	0.80	0.81	7	7
Legitimacy of Lawyers (4 items)	424	39	385	0.73	0.76	4	4
Empowerment (9 items)	392	47	345	0.75	0.74	9	9

Reliability.

Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument consistently measures the construct it is designed to measure (Last & Porta, 2008). Reliability can be measured by test-retest similarity; however, as clients here only answered these items once before receiving services (and potentially having legitimately changed scores), this option was not available for this analysis. As such, internal consistency, or the degree to which clients answered all items within a scale similarly (thus demonstrating that all items “point” to the same underlying concept), was here used to determine reliability.

Two methods of quantifying internal consistency were used. The Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula examines how well two even subsets of items correlate with each other (Hulin,

Netemeyer, & Cudeck, 2001). Cronbach's α reflects inter-relatedness among all items within an instrument (Cronbach, 1951). In both cases, higher scores reflect greater internal consistency, and thus hopefully greater reliability. Only Cronbach's α has defined cutoffs, where scores of at least 0.7 are considered "acceptable." Here, all four scales demonstrated reasonable scores on both of these measures (all scores >0.7), and scores between these two methods were highly similar (within 0.03), indicating similarity between the measures. As such, these tests demonstrate acceptable internal consistency and reliability (George & Mallery, 2016), and thus support further use of these scales.

Validity.

Validity concerns the degree to which an instrument measures the concept(s) of interest accurately (DeVellis, 2012; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). Validity is sometimes established by combining external qualitative data on a concept with other scaled data to establish consistency between measures; however, only the scales immediately asked were available for analysis here. As such, validity was established by determining the degree to which items in each scale were related to each other (convergence), and not related to items in other scales (divergence), thereby establishing at least uniqueness and differentiability between the scales used.

Under this approach, a total score was computed as the sum of responses to each items. Convergent validity is the number of items within each scale that are correlated with other scaled items at a threshold of at least 0.4; divergent validity is the number of items with correlation coefficients greater for within-scale than between-scale comparisons (Perrot, 2018). Almost all items on each scale show both convergent and divergent validity. As such, these tests demonstrate high validity, establishing that each scale asks about a concept distinct and separable from the others, and supports further use of these scales as independent items.

APPENDIX A4.

Post-Service Survey Contact Outcomes and Rates.

Client contact was attempted as an ongoing process. Final disposition distributions are recorded in the following categories and counts:

- **205** clients were unable to be contacted over the phone or via email, typically after at least three attempts. Many had disconnected or wrong numbers, or had incorrect or outdated email addresses; others did not return voicemails or text messages or did not respond to the emailed surveys.
- **81** clients gave a clear refusal, stating that they did not remember Her Justice and/or did not wish to complete the survey.
- **84** clients stated that their case had not yet finished; one client reported that they dropped their legal case and thus did not wish to take the survey. Sixty-seven clients answered over the phone (five of whom were Spanish speakers), and 16 answered via the online survey (one of whom was a client whose phone number was marked as not safe).
- **65** clients completed the survey (26 over the phone, four of whom were Spanish speakers; 39 over email, three of whom were clients whose phone number was marked as not safe).