equal justice center

Reimagining the Equal Justice Center:
Shifting from a physical to virtual space

December 2021

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Project Overview

Given the recent shift in plans from a physical to a virtual Equal Justice Center, the Philadelphia Bar Foundation engaged Novus Insight to conduct a feasibility study to understand technology and data processes and challenges among Philadelphia legal aid and advocacy providers.

The assessment included interviews with a small group of providers, a survey of the broader legal aid community, and an assessment of technology. The intent of the interviews and the survey was to gain more insight into how legal aid providers can:

- Effectively share information about legal aid access and resources with underserved communities.
- Increase the delivery of civil legal aid services without considerable investment in additional resources.
- Enhance collaboration among legal aid agencies, community partners, and the courts.
- Leverage the information they collect and their existing technology investments more effectively, without capacity building that is unrealistic at this time.

Key Takeaways

Demand for legal aid services significantly exceeds internal organizational capacity.

There are no serious technological barriers to intake/referral. The biggest challenges are tied to privacy protection and systems navigation.

Improving system navigation, both between clients and providers AND provider to provider, offers opportunities for improving service delivery.

Legal aid providers vary in internal data and technology capacity.

Solutions must be equitable and accessible, including adaptations across languages and technology.

Protecting client confidentiality remains a key priority for service delivery AND a primary challenge for technology integration.

Lack of interoperability of systems presents a key inhibitor to scalability of the EJC and to the expansion of legal aid services.

Executive summary

The path forward requires legal aid navigation + technology

Recommendations & next steps

Create a framework for system navigation, including how legal aid navigators will be utilized.

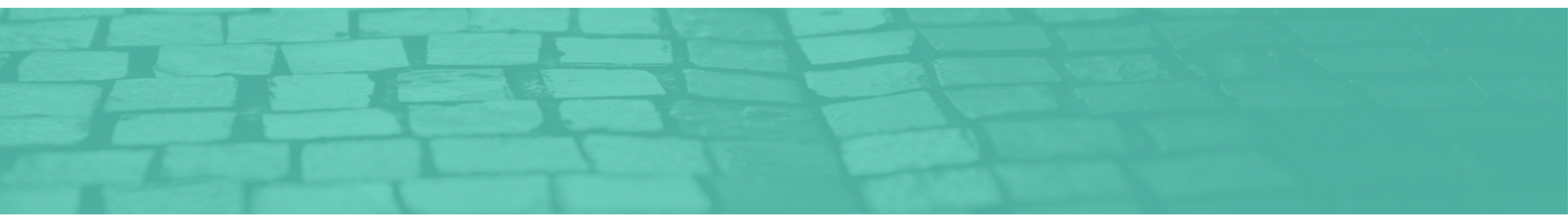
Establish accessibility, data sharing, and data privacy standards to which all partners are expected to adhere.

Elevate community voice to better understand needs and barriers.

Onboard legal aid navigators in the community

Develop a centralized repository of legal aid resources, including eligibility requirements, key contact information, services offered, intake processes, and hours of operation.

Develop a technology solution, which serves as a bridge in which de-identified and system-wide referral outcomes can be tracked and measured over time.



Project overview

As part of Equal Justice Center's (EJC) data and technology initiative, the Philadelphia Bar Foundation engaged Novus Insight to understand technology and data processes and challenges among Philadelphia legal aid and advocacy providers. Phase 1 included interviews with Philadelphia Bar Foundation staff and three grantees to understand their intake and data processes, as well as conduct a technology analysis of systems in use like LegalServer.

Key themes of Phase 1 interviews included a:

- Challenge to maintain visibility when referring clients between local legal aid partners
- Desire for increased technology interoperability
- Need to streamline navigation of services

Information from the interviews was then used to draft a survey for civil legal aid and advocacy organizations in the region.

The online EJC survey was distributed to providers in the Philadelphia region to better understand how organizations define and organize their data-related intake and referral processes. A broad definition of intake and referral was used for the survey, which included direct intake and/or referral as well as legal aid helplines and hotlines.

Organizations were invited to respond to the survey through an email request. The survey available in English and was open for approximately one month. Multiple reminders were sent to request survey completion. This report includes data from 31 civil legal aid organizations that completed the survey and one additional organization that provided verbal feedback after the survey closed.

The intent of the interviews and the survey was to gain more insight into how area legal aid providers can:

- Effectively share information about legal aid access and resources with underserved communities.
- Increase the delivery of civil legal aid services without considerable investment in additional resources.
- Enhance collaboration among legal aid agencies, community partners, and the courts.
- Leverage the information they collect and their existing technology investments more effectively, without capacity building that is unrealistic at this time.

The original vision was to co-locate civil legal aid providers.

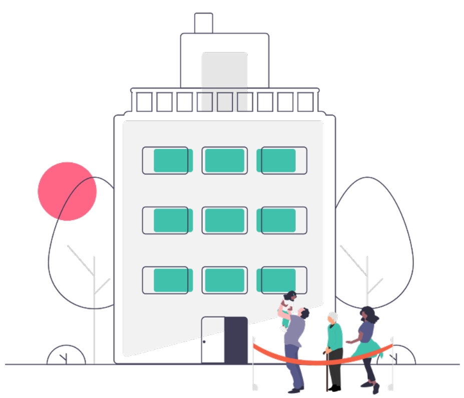
Now the EJC is shifting to a virtual environment.

Physical EJC

The EJC was originally conceptualized as a physical collocating of civil legal aid and advocacy groups in an office tower by the subway station at 8th and Race Streets. **Community members in need of assistance would enter the building and be directed towards the appropriate legal aid provider.**

The idea was that having organizations in one building would allow for increased ease, speed, and accuracy of referrals and navigation, thus reducing the barrier of having to call or visit multiple service providers to find legal aid.

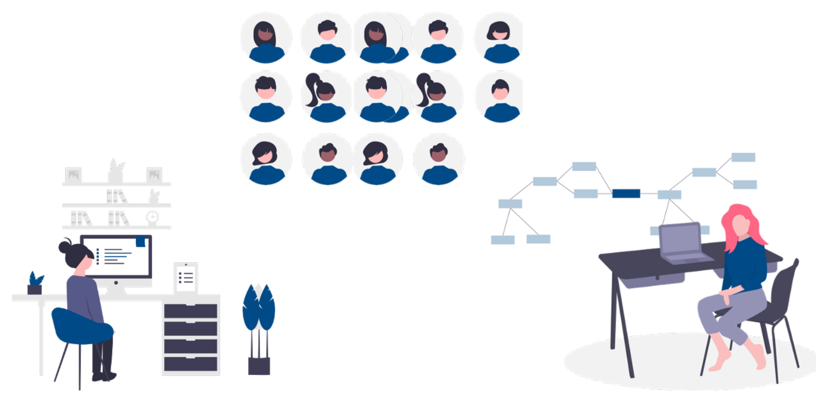
This is important when appointments are often inaccessible, requiring community members to secure child care and transportation on top of lost wages for taking time off of work.



Virtual EJC

Shifting to a virtual EJC provides new opportunities and challenges for legal aid delivery. **A virtual EJC requires new ways of collaboration and information sharing that is efficient, accessible, and protects community member privacy.** Solutions must address interoperability of systems and offer alternatives for communities members with less or no access to or comfort and trust with using technology.

Providers already report community need that exceeds the capacity for services. Increasing the number of access points to receive aid without also increasing the availability of services will likely lead to frustration and people not seeking assistance. We therefore recommended that community justice navigators be engaged in advance of adopting new technology solutions.



Virtual Equal Justice Center

Distributed Services

Civil and social justice will be delivered where it is most needed.

Equity and Justice

A focus on overcoming systemic racism in an equitable legal system.

Broader Partners

Partnerships across sectors without the limitations of physical space or geography.

Recommendation summary

While there will never be a one-size-fits-all model recommended for intake and referral navigation of services, partners shared ways in which adapting the original concept of the EJC to a virtual environment could be beneficial. Suggestions included:

- Develop a centralized repository of legal aid resources, including eligibility requirements, key contact information, services offered, intake processes, and hours of operation.
- Train legal navigators to guide community members through intake processes.
- Place paid legal navigators within 311 and other large legal aid organizations.
- Integrate technology into community organizations for on-site intake assistance.
- Develop clear communications materials for community members and providers about how to access legal aid.
- Ensure that materials, staffing, communications, and approaches are culturally responsive, communicated at appropriate literacy levels, and available in multiple languages throughout the intake and referral process.
- Create a centralized, accessible, and mobile phone-friendly intake process to collect key information and connect community members with the most appropriate provider.
- Establish accessibility, data sharing, and data privacy standards expected of all partners.
- Develop a system in which de-identified and system-wide referral outcomes can be tracked and measured over time.
- Create a collective to negotiate with LegalServer about doing more to support data and reporting needs for the Philadelphia region.

We also recommend providing ongoing data literacy and data capacity building training and technical assistance to help with:

- Defining and reporting programmatic outcomes
- Developing data collection and analysis plans
- Ensuring data quality and accuracy

Lastly, Philadelphia Bar Foundation grantees cited community navigation and integration into community organizations as key recommendations. **Presently, the perspectives of community members is missing from this assessment. Understanding how we can work with partners to seek additional information and insight from community members is an essential next step.**

Organizations shared a desire for more visibility to the outcome of referrals while also abiding by privacy protection expectations and maintaining attorney-client privilege.

Sharing case-specific information with external partners through conflict checks could have negative ramifications by alerting an opposing party that a case is being filed. Depending on the case, this could place a client in danger.

The path forward: Developing a legal navigation framework

Prior to embarking on a technology development journey to support legal aid navigation, a high-level framework supporting legal navigation must be created. This framework will provide the development teams with the necessary goals, objectives, and parameters within which they should develop the navigation platform. The framework will serve to:

- Define goals of the legal navigation program
- Identify partners and participants, organized by persona:
    - Person seeking services
    - Legal navigator at social service agency
    - Provider receiving referral and conducting intake
    - Funder receiving aggregate data reporting
- Create workflows for each persona to describe their experience with the system and desired outcomes. These workflows and stories will be compiled into a needs requirement statement
- Establish operational methods for legal aid navigation. For example, is the system designed for the general public, referral organizations, navigation between providers, or all of these?
- Develop data standards, which include:
    - Minimum amount of data necessary to achieve the desired outcome at each point in the entity's journey
    - Standard data taxonomy related to the data collected
- Develop privacy standards
    - It is known that knowledge of a person connecting with a legal aid provider (person's name referred to legal aid) may be considered privileged information. With that guideline in mind, what are the privacy requirements regarding data sharing that need to be established prior to developing a proof of concept?
    - What requirements are there for privacy protection, data isolation, aggregate repointing, and deidentification for this system to be successful? Is it enough that an entity's identity is only known to them and the agency they are referred to? Should data be entered and then immediately deidentified and obfuscated to the entering party?
- Develop operational procedures to guide the legal navigation process. The initial procedures should be technology agnostic, assume paper is used, and lay out the process by which information will flow to all involved partners.
- Select two to three organizations who will guide the creation and pilot of the navigation platform.

The path forward requires legal navigation + technology.

The future state of the Equal Justice Center requires a person-centered approach that is supported — not driven — by technology. Recognizing capacity and security concerns, recommendations include utilizing legal navigators, creating a legal aid directory, and implementing a de-identified feedback tool to track and communicate system-wide referral outcomes.

1

Gather organization feedback

Hear from organizations about needs and wants through interviews and a survey.

2

Develop framework

Create a framework for how navigators will be incorporated into the broader legal aid system.

3

Elevate community voice

Hold listening sessions with community members to hear what they need to better navigate the legal aid system.

4

Onboard legal navigators

Fund and place legal navigators in the community help community members better access services — for example, in the 311 office to help community members better access services.

5

Create a legal aid directory

Develop a centralized repository of legal aid services and contacts in the Philadelphia region.

6

Implement a feedback tool

Create a technology interface — a “bridge” — that allows organizations to provide de-identified data about internal capacity and referral outcomes.

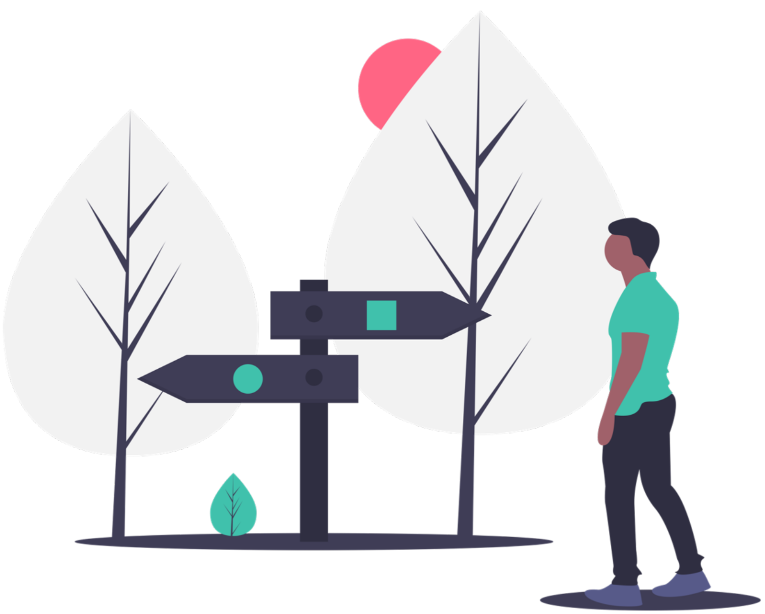
Ongoing capacity building and technical assistance

Onboard community legal navigators

Fund and place legal navigators in the community, to help community members better access services.

Organizations consistently reported that the need for services in the community outnumbers their organizational capacity to provide those services. Also shared was how challenging it can be to know whom to contact within each organization to appropriately and efficiently direct referrals for services. Regardless of how the virtual EJC gets onboarded, organizations support the utilization and partnership of community legal navigators to connect community members with services. One suggestion was to start by placing navigators within the 311 office as well as the two largest legal aid agencies.

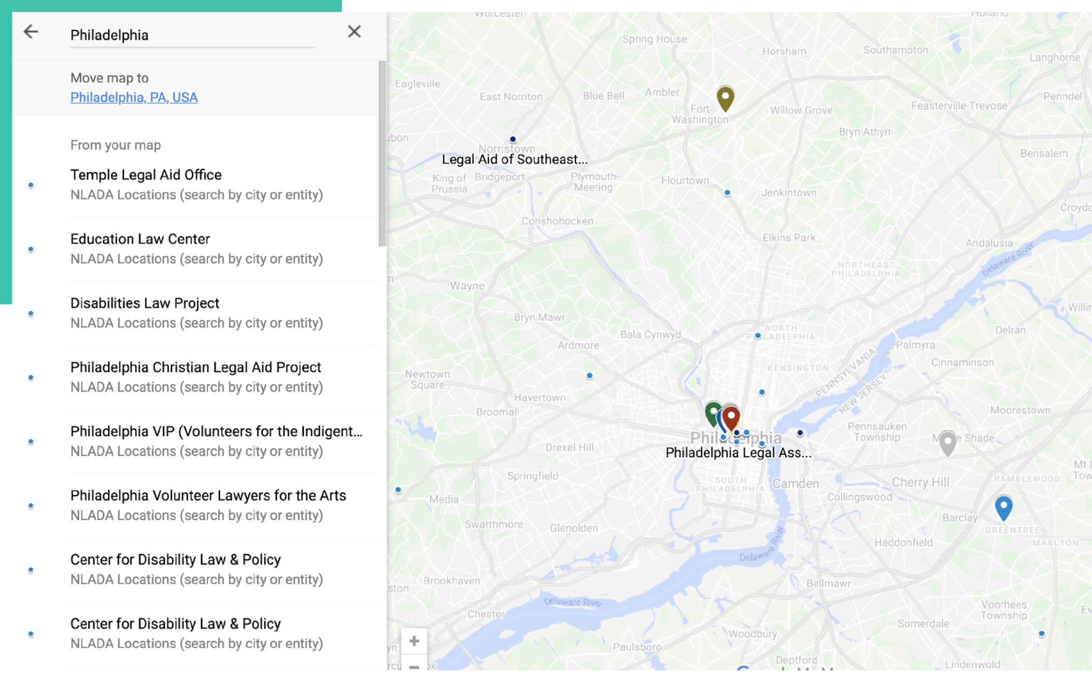
Organizations were also consistent in reporting that additional financial resources are needed to both support community legal navigators and to hire additional staff to manage legal cases. **Without adding additional financial and human resources, the EJC runs the risk of simply expanding access to the wait list for legal services, rather than truly expanding access to justice.**

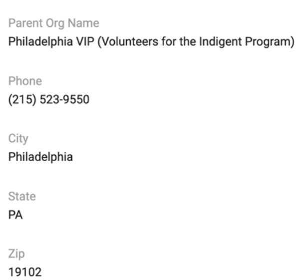


Create a legal aid directory

One source of inspiration for a directory is the Association of Pro Bono Counsel's (ABPCo) interactive map of member organizations. The map is searchable to the public by geographic region and provides a list of member organizations as well as their address and contact information.

A similar approach could be used to include information such as website, contact person, intake hours, eligibility criteria, documentation needed, and types of services provided.





Implement a referral feedback tool

Legal aid and advocacy groups want more information about the outcome of referrals made to partner organizations while also respecting client confidentiality.

Recognizing that organizations are using different databases and may operate under different levels of privacy requirements, **it is recommended that a third-party interface be implemented which collects de-identified case outcomes information from providers.** See Appendix B for more details.

Through this system, funders and provider organizations would have visibility to aggregate referral data, such as:

- Number of people on waitlist
- Number of available slots
- Number of cases that met eligibility criteria
- Number of cases assigned to an attorney
- Type of case outcome(s)

Survey says...

This report includes data from 31 civil legal aid organizations that completed the online intake and referral survey in the Summer of 2021.

Intake & referrals

Organizations were asked about the purpose of intake and referral, when and where intake is conducted, definitions of what is considered an emergency case, as well as the positives and negatives of receiving and making referrals.

Intake & referrals

The majority of organizations shared that they conduct intake and send or receive referrals for the purposes of **direct representation (84%) and/or impact litigation or legislative action (84%)**, while a quarter offer a legal helpline or hotline (26%).

Intake and referral typically happens Monday through Friday during regular business hours, with 1 in 3 organizations conducting intake outside of these hours. Of those one-third, intake generally occurs 24/7 through an online intake form with follow-up during regular business hours, in person at community events, or by phone on an ad-hoc basis.

Nearly half of organizations that conduct intake (47%) have an intended non-emergency response time of 24 to 48 hours. Emergency cases may be served more quickly or referred to another partner for service.

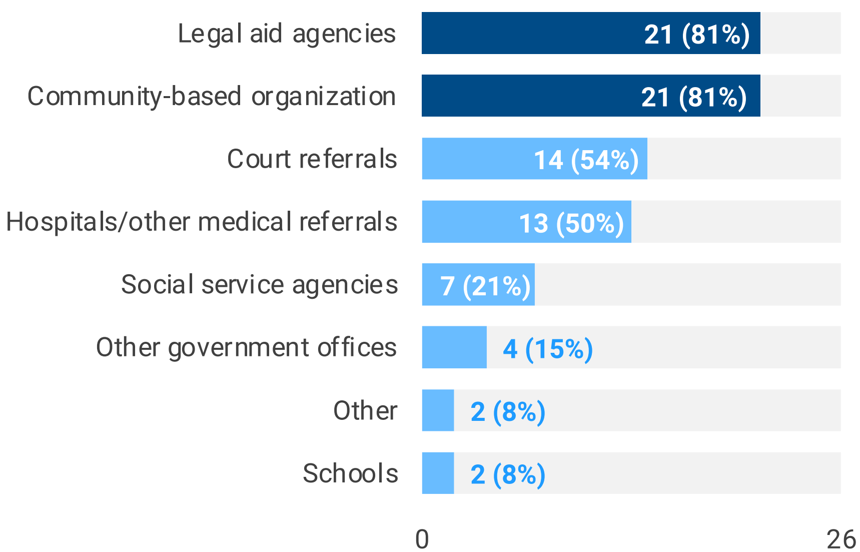
Organizations had a combination of general guidance and formal definitions of “emergency case,” which often included the client being in a crisis or eminent danger. Example definitions of an emergency case include:

- Immediate safety or wellness concern (i.e., domestic violence, imminent homelessness, lack of essential utility).
- Court dates, loss of home (eviction or mortgage foreclosure), recent utility shut off, abuse, financial exploitation.
- Court hearing within 2 weeks of the interview; utility shut-off; impending 2 week deadline for any public/private benefits issue; lack of medication because of health insurance problems; and tenant lock out.

Receiving referrals

The majority of organizations receive referrals from other legal aid agencies (84%) or community-based organizations (84%). The most common way of receiving referrals is verbally (e.g., phone) followed by secure and not-secure email. The side bar shows themes around the challenges organizations experience when receiving referrals from legal aid providers.

The two most common sources of referrals are legal aid agencies and community-based organizations.



Lack of centralized intake

Lack of centralized intake has resulted in confusion around which organizations serve what types of clients and legal issues.

Organizational capacity

The number of referrals organizations receive exceeds their internal staffing capacity.

Understanding eligibility

Significant time is required to understand if a client is eligible for services and to gather relevant background information.

Maintaining data privacy

Lawyers have high ethical & legal requirements around maintaining data privacy and security, including abiding by attorney-client privilege.

Duplication of efforts

A lack of integrated technology has resulted in duplicate information being gathered during the intake and referral process.

Organizations shared…

Organizations provided feedback about challenges related to receiving referrals from external partners.

“There is no centralized referral system that external organizations know how to use. They contact someone they know within the organization, who then struggles to figure out how to send the case to intake.”

“We are a very small organization, and we cannot easily handle high volume of requests for help.”

“Tracking down case information once we are appointed is time consuming and generally requires a lot of attempts to get information or to make contact with others.”

“External partners then sometimes have the expectation that we will share information with them in return, which we may or may not be able to do, given confidentiality and attorney-client privilege.”

“Electronic referral features were not within our budget, so there is duplication of efforts for intake folks and sometimes for the person being referred.”

Making referrals

Nearly 3 in 4 organizations (71%) make referrals to partners, fewer than the number receiving referrals. The most common way of sharing referral information is verbally (e.g., phone), followed by email. Email exchanges are not always encrypted, which introduces a security risk — exposure of highly sensitive and privileged information.

Organizations were asked whether they provide the referral directly to the external partner or to the community member to act on themselves. The majority (73%) of organizations direct the referral to both the community member/client and the agency to which the referral is being made. Six organizations just give the referral directly to the external partner. No organizations give the referral to only the community member.

The sidebar shows themes around the challenges organizations experience when making referrals to legal aid providers.

Receiving feedback

Organizations shared a desire to understand if clients have received assistance from the provider to which they were referred.

Organizational capacity

The number of referrals organizations receive exceeds their internal staffing capacity.

Directing referrals to partners

Organizations would like clarity on which providers serve what types of clients and for what legal aid issues.

Following up with clients

Organizations experience challenges reaching clients during the intake and referral process.

Duplication of efforts

A lack of integrated technology is resulting in duplicate information collected as clients go through intake and are then referred.

Organizations said...

Organizations provided feedback about their challenges when making referrals to external partners. The following are direct quotes from the survey.

"The biggest challenge is not knowing about outcomes after a referral is made. We don't often get feedback about whether the referral was a good one."

"Since we are referring to other non-profits in the area, if we are overwhelmed with work it is almost certain that they are at maximum capacity as well. The demand is too high sometimes to take all [legal aid area] needs."

"Knowing which organization can handle the situation. Knowing who to contact within the organization."

"Ensuring follow up so that no clients fall through the cracks."

"Same as with receiving referral data – the main issues is that we don't have the resources to make electronic referrals so there is more duplication of efforts than would be ideal."

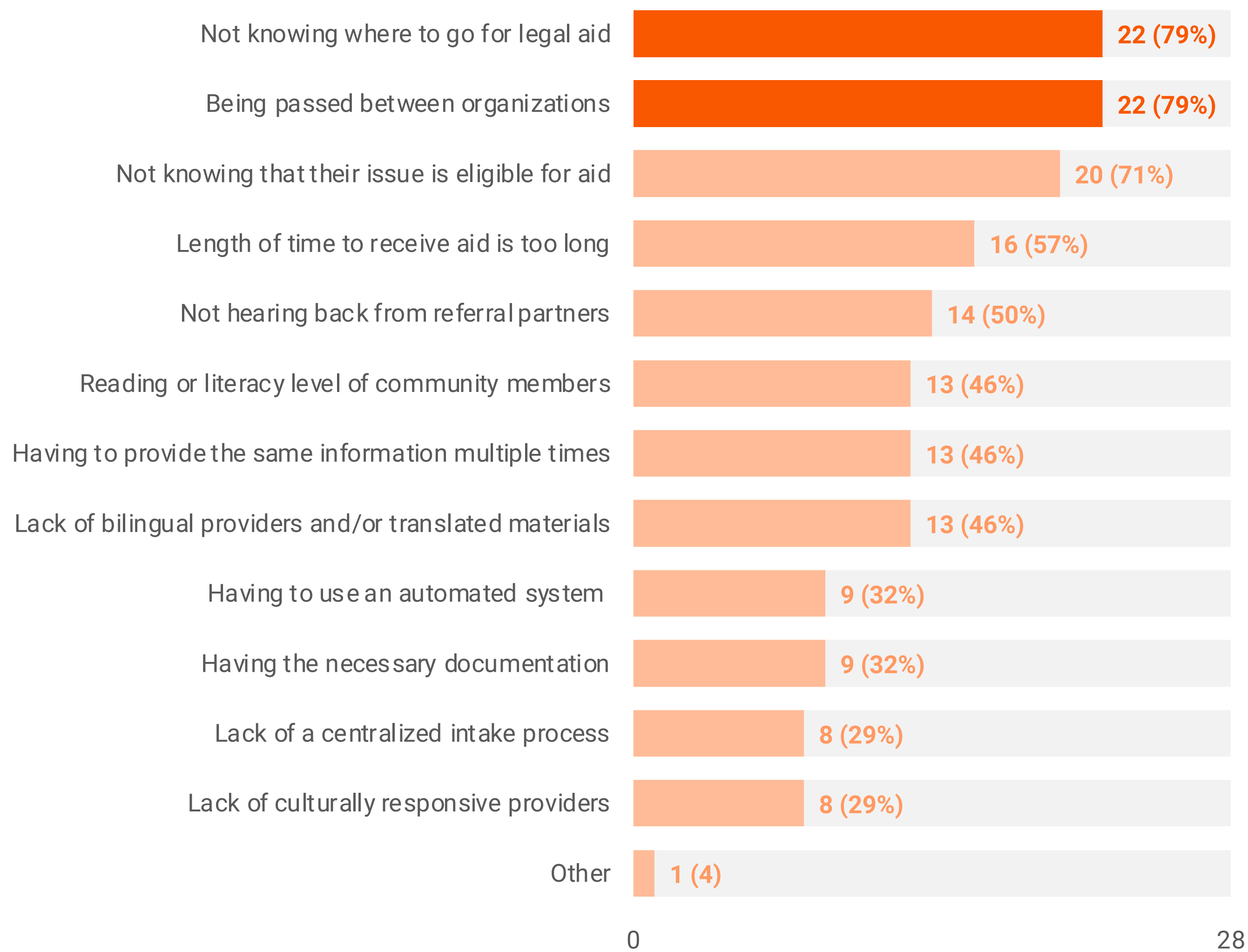
Navigation of Services

Organizations were asked about challenges and recommendations for navigation of services, for both current and potential clients (i.e., community members in need of legal aid)

Organizations shared that the two biggest challenges for people accessing legal aid is not knowing where to go for help and being passed between organizations.

Clear, efficient, and timely navigation of services remains a critical component of ensuring that community members and existing clients are able to access legal aid.

The two most commonly cited challenges experienced by community members are not knowing where to go for legal aid and being passed between organizations. Twenty-two (79%) of the organizations said not knowing where to go for legal aid was a challenge for community members while 10 (36%) said this was the biggest challenge experienced.



Improving service navigation

Potential clients

Organizations shared ideas for how to improve navigation of services for community members in need of legal aid:

- Develop centralized intake
- Improve communications around legal aid services
- Establish a legal aid directory
- Provide translation and literacy services
- Offer additional resources for staffing and support
- Provide community navigation
- Establish additional partnerships
- Offer flexible hours
- Shorten response times

Current clients

Organizations also shared suggestions for how to improve navigation for people they are already serving:

- Streamline the process
- Develop centralized intake
- Establish a legal aid directory
- Offer additional resources for staffing and support
- Establish additional partnerships

Recommendations for improving navigation of services for both potential and current clients center on the idea of having a more streamlined and transparent referral process, including making it easier for clients to know where to go and how to navigate the legal aid system in Philadelphia.

Staffing & Technology

Organizations were asked about what data systems they use as well as their level of satisfaction with those systems, strengths and weaknesses of the systems, and the staffing structures for general data management, intake and referral.

Instead of working within their main data system, organizations regularly extract data from systems like LegalServer to manipulate and analyze. Excel is the most popular tool used, followed by Google Sheets.

Data systems & staffing

Nine (33%) organizations are using LegalServer, six (22%) use a customized data system created for their organization, and four (15%) use Salesforce. The remaining systems used include Apricot, Cerenade, Clio Legal, Disability Advocacy Database, Donor Perfect, Excel, Lawlogix, and Optima.

Organizations regularly download data from their primary database for analysis and review, with 71% doing so on a monthly or more frequent basis. Excel is the most popular tool used for data download and manipulation, followed by Google Sheets.

But what happens when this data is extracted and downloaded to spreadsheet files on a computer? How is privacy protected on the computer once the data manipulation work is done? Are the files deleted or do they reside on the computer's hard drive?

The majority (79%) of organizations incorporate data analysis or management into an existing staff role rather than having one dedicated data person on staff.

Staffing for intake was more variable than that for data management. The most commonly cited staffing structure (70%) was having multiple people work on intake as part of their overall role, followed by organizations that have dedicated staff just for intake (33%), and those that rely on volunteers (30%). Some organizations rely on both paid staff and volunteers for legal aid intake.

"We ask a lot of questions about an applicant BEFORE getting to their legal issue (e.g., household, income, demographics, health insurance coverage). Responses are all documented in LegalServer for easy reference by case handlers."

"It is easy to complete the information in LegalServer."

"Although it's great that we can customize the database to meet our own needs, there's been a steep learning curve for staff as we build and refine the database."

"Reports (pulling data from the back-end) has always been more challenging and required more work in LegalServer - this is the only way in which Kemps Case Works was superior."

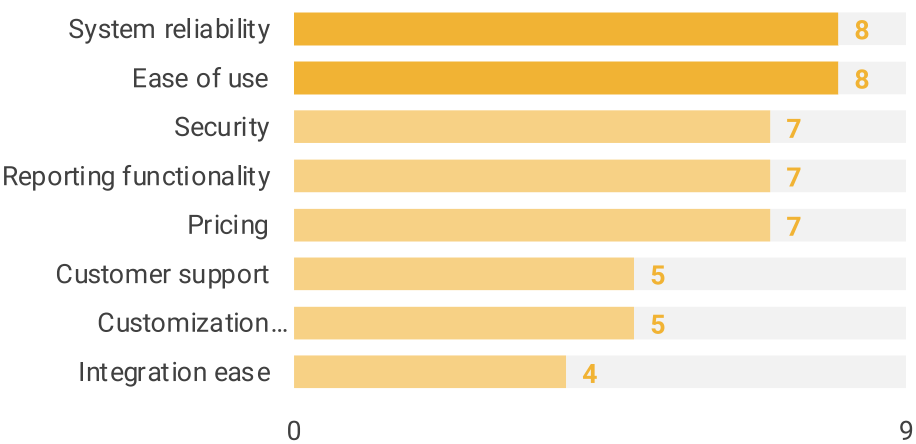
"Tracking all calls entered into Legal Server (callbacks)."

Nine (33%) organizations shared that they use LegalServer as their internal data system. When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the program, almost all nine organizations were satisfied or very satisfied with the program's system reliability or ease of use.

Organizations were less likely to be satisfied with the program's customer support, customization capability, or ease of integration with other platforms.

A few of these organizations are currently in the process of onboarding LegalServer and do not yet have extensive experience working with the program. Notably, organizations shared lower satisfaction levels during interviews than the ratings shared on the survey.

Organizations that use LegalServer were most likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the program's system reliability and ease of use.



Data system strengths and challenges

Data System Strengths

- Ease of use
- Customizable to organization needs
- Ability to integrate with other data systems
- Reporting functionality
- Centralized storage for remote access and data sharing

Our system is very dynamic because it is created in-house and can be manipulated to easily collect additional data or change the way that we are collecting data. This has been particularly helpful during the pandemic when the issues that we were seeing were changing greatly and we wanted to have a regular system to demonstrate trends to local and state policy makers.

The software we use for intake is also our case management and forms software. The information from intake is seamlessly integrated into forms needed for client representation. We can also easily run reports from the software.

Data System Challenges

- Ensuring data quality and consistency
- Training and updates require time and resources
- Systems are not integrated with each other
- Reporting does not meet organization needs
- Functionality is misaligned with organization needs

Our intake data system requires a special skill set--people who are empathetic and can spot and identify legal issues, while also being very familiar with computer systems so they can quickly and accurately input this information into [database name]. Sometimes that limits our ability to hire candidates for our intake positions.

Our software works well for intake but does not offer much in regards to referrals. We can input notes to indicate a referral was made but not much else. Through other case management software...we are able to keep updated information about the organizations we refer clients to.

Organizational data capacity

Organizations varied in their data management, analysis, and visualization skill levels. As seen in the table below, **darker yellow** represents a greater number of organizations selecting a response option. Generally, most reported their organization's skills between “Fair “and “Very Good,” depending on the item, suggesting that the group might benefit from additional training.

Organizations had the most experience customizing databases to include desired data fields and analyzing quantitative data. They rated their skills the lowest for merging multiple data sets, analyzing qualitative data, and cleaning messy data.

> **“Collating and analyzing the data is time-consuming and there are limitations to the data that we are able to extract.**

	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Unsure
Customizing data fields	0	2	5	9	8	5	2
Customizing reports	0	1	8	8	9	2	3
Merging multiple datasets	3	3	5	3	4	3	9
Cleaning messy data	1	4	6	10	4	2	3
Cleaning duplicate data	0	2	6	13	5	1	0
Analyzing quantitative data	1	2	4	10	6	5	2
Analyzing qualitative data	3	2	8	6	5	2	5
Summarizing data	0	2	7	9	7	3	3
Visualizing data	1	1	8	9	7	3	2

Appendices

[INSERT QUALITATIVE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS]

Appendix A: Technology feasibility assessment

Wider access to civil legal aid is a scalability challenge at its core. A technical solution offers both the potential to scale access without the requirement of a large investment. To achieve the level of scalability that results in greatly expanded access to legal aid, substantial efficiency and workflow automation improvements have to happen. Technology is the only thing that can make this possible.

However, the most critical missing piece that prevents the use of technology to solve this scalability challenge can be summarized in one word: Interoperability.

Interoperability is the ability of multiple technology products or platforms to "talk to each other" for exchange of data that minimizes (or eliminates) the need for human intervention. Unfortunately, it rarely exists in legal systems. Technology providers are highly competitive and self-interested, with proprietary solutions. This results in technology platforms that largely stand alone, requiring organizations to figure out interoperability on their own – usually at a steep cost.

Small agencies without in-house expertise or funding for external consultants are left to develop "workarounds" to this problem. This leads to frustration, duplicative work, lack of data integrity, and a poorer user experience.

What if an intermediary layer existed between organizations and their various systems (LegalServer, Salesforce, etc.) as the way to scale access to justice? An independent, vendor-agnostic bridge to achieve interoperability where none is happening today. Could this be a viable starting point?

A review of the software platforms in use by legal service providers indicated that interoperability is possible with two of the main platforms in use: LegalServer and Salesforce. Both platforms have robust APIs (application program interface) available to help facilitate interoperability. However, barriers exist to prevent interoperability from being easily achieved, including:

- Need for additional resources and knowledge to program and implement connections between disparate data systems.
- Need for an established strategy to support meaningful integrations.
- Need for a unified data taxonomy across systems that classified data into categories and sub-categories.
- Need for governance standards that outline protocols such as how data discrepancies are resolved.
- Privacy regulations or internal policies preventing data sharing.

Appendix A: Technology feasibility assessment

Each of these identified barriers are not technology dependent. Organizations with either established databases or those using more simple spreadsheets could participate in and benefit from a well-chosen data interoperability system.

Given the barriers, establishing a major data sharing initiative across multiple provider agencies is unlikely to be successful without a large staffing investment and the formation of a data collaborative. A data collaborative would serve the purpose of helping to drive the program, establishing data sharing standards, overcoming privacy and compliance barriers, and acting as a neutral facilitator.

Much as the physical EJC would have had a neutral party assisting with collaboration between building tenants, the virtual EJC requires a similar role with a big emphasis on facilitating data collaboration. Without it, data sharing is not scalable and will likely only result in pockets of interoperability.

One short-term goal for consideration by the Philadelphia Bar Foundation would be the creation of a proof of concept (POC) that could potentially scale to the greater community. This POC would be centered around legal services navigation, with the goal of reliably connecting people to services. This aligns with the number one priority voiced by survey respondents.

To facilitate the connection, interoperability would be created between a referral agency in a navigator role (such as 311) and a legal services provider. Two organizations would be selected to pilot the implementation, with the intent of scaling to more organizations in phase two. The goals of phase one would be to:

1. Establish a means of querying the provider agency to determine the following:
   - If the program is the right fit for those seeking services
   - Program eligibility
   - Program availability

2. Provide a means of connecting the entity seeking services with an automated or semi-automated process of “light touch” referral and appointment scheduling. Light touch is defined as basic demographic information and appointment details; no confidential or regulated information would be transferred.

3. Provide a means of reporting on the following aspects of service delivery:
   - Aggregate report on referrals sent
   - Aggregate report on referral acceptances
   - Aggregate outcomes data

Appendix A: Technology feasibility assessment

The intermediary platform (also commonly referred to as "middleware") would integrate with both the navigator and provider's data systems, allowing for the navigator to enter information on behalf of the entity and facilitate the process of connecting the entity with the provider.

The intent of the middleware is to provide a "warm connection" between the navigator and the provider. Upon entry in the system, both the entity receiving service and the provider would be notified of the connection and additional contact or intake could then be facilitated.

If privacy policies dictate, the middleware platform could be configured to delete personally identifiable information once it has been transferred to the provider's system of record. At no point would specific details of the engagement between the entity and provider be recorded. Only de-identified, aggregate records of connections would be stored for reporting purposes.

The intent of the middleware platform is not to replace existing intake systems but to provide a unified method – **a bridge** – for connecting people with services, while addressing the top two stated concerns of the legal aid community.

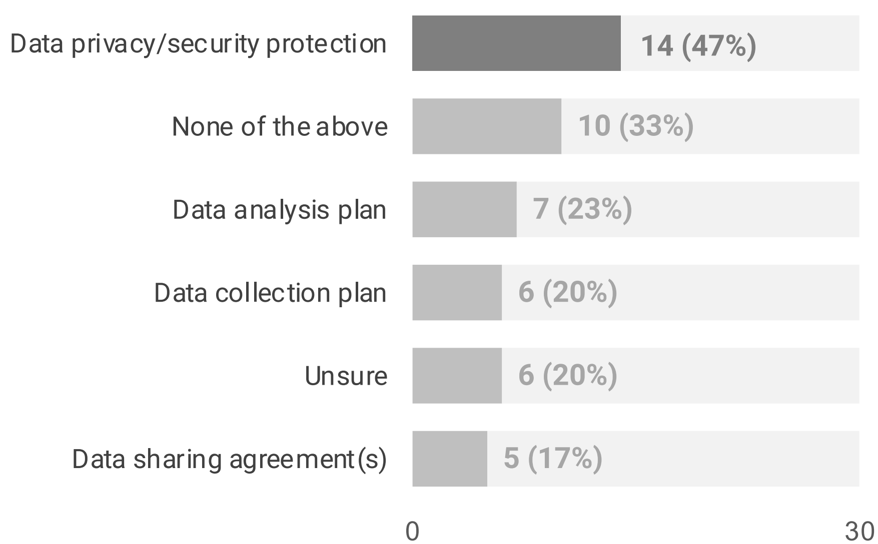
1. Accessibility to legal services.
2. Ensuring people are connected to services without being bounced in an uninformed way to a variety of organizations.

While technically feasible, even a proof of concept will require an investment in data strategy, data taxonomy, and privacy/data sharing agreements. Without these key components, the effort will result in nothing more than a "one off" data integration between two organizations.

Appendix B: Data capacity building

Organizations varied in their documentation of data processes. Nearly half (47%) have documented processes for data privacy/security protection while less than 1 in 5 (17%) reported having existing data sharing agreements.

Follow-up conversations with organizations suggested that maintaining client privacy protections and attorney client privilege were likely the reasons for few organizations having formal data sharing agreements.



Appendix C: Challenges receiving referrals

What are your biggest challenges with receiving referral data from external partners?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, “what are your biggest challenges with receiving referral data from external partners?” Twenty-six (26) organizations provided feedback.

Lack of centralized intake

- Centralizing intake.
- Not a well-established pathway because we typically want to establish our own relationship with clients and therefore encourage those clients to call our helpline directly.
- Our primary challenges stem from lack of consistent training of referral partners which leads to multiple emails or calls to get the necessary information to complete the referral or referrals that are not appropriate for [organization name].
- There is no centralized referral system that external organizations know to use. They contact someone they know within the organization, who then struggles to figure out how to send the case to intake.

Insufficient organizational capacity

- Our biggest challenge would be getting it into our system so it can be assigned.
- Sheer number.
- So many people contact us and we have limited resources.
- Staffing on our end. Occasional referrals for cases we don't handle.

Appendix C: Challenges receiving referrals

- Volume.
- We are a very small organization, and we cannot easily handle high volume of requests for help.
- Tracking down case information once we are appointed is time-consuming and generally requires a lot of attempts to get information or to make contact with others on the case.
- We offer specific services at a low-cost, affordable rate. Sometimes, we are referred by other organizations, although we do not offer the services they are looking for. They were referred to us because of their low-income status. Since some of our services vary dependent on our capacity at the moment and funding for the year, it is a little difficult to keep other organizations up to date about the services we offer.

Understanding eligibility

- Determining whether client fits our profile of economic need.
- Ensuring that the client is interested in receiving services at that time and consents to follow up.
- Identifying precisely who/where referrals are coming from and what intake has already been conducted prior to the applicant's referral to our organization.
- Incomplete info on adverse parties.
- Receiving clients with issues that we don't handle.
- Referred individuals sometimes are not interested in our services.
- Understanding what the organization really wants.

Appendix C: Challenges receiving referrals

Maintaining data privacy and security

- Data security.
- External partners then sometimes have the expectation that we will share information with them in return, which we may or may not be able to do, given confidentiality and attorney-client privilege.
- We cannot provide case services to anyone but the client or the client's legal guardian. Unless the external partner has permission and consent from the client to speak with [organization name] directly and request assistance, we are limited to just information, referral, and/or technical assistance.

Duplication of efforts

- Electronic referral features were not within our budget, so there is duplication of effort for intake folks and sometimes for the person being referred.

Other

- Since we are not on LegalServer, all referrals need to be emailed to us.
- No problems.
- None to speak of.

Appendix D: Challenges providing referrals

What are the biggest challenges with providing referral data to external partners?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, “what are the biggest challenges with providing referral data to external partners?” Twenty (20) organizations provided feedback.

Receiving feedback from partners

- Knowing whether the client followed up with the referral.
- Knowing whether the individual was able to make contact to obtain services.
- Knowing whether they will be able to help the client.
- Lack of feedback.
- Receiving feedback on outcomes of referrals.
- The biggest challenge is not knowing about outcomes after a referral is made. We don't often get feedback about whether the referral was a good one.
- We do not know if the client contacted the external partner and/or was able to receive assistance unless the client calls [organization name] again to provide this information.

Directing referrals to appropriate providers

- Finding an appropriate referral partner.
- Knowing which organization can handle the situation.
- Knowing who to contact within the other organization.

Appendix D: Challenges providing referrals

- Referrals are very individualized, in response to specific problems.

Following up with clients

- Client follow up.
- Ensuring follow up so that no clients fall through the cracks.
- It is not always clear what the next steps are going to be after information is shared, so it can be difficult to manage client expectations.

Organizational capacity

- Need for more referral resources.
- Partners also swamped.
- Since we are referring to other non-profits in the area, if we are overwhelmed with work it is almost certain that they are at maximum capacity as well. The demand is too high sometimes to take all immigrant needs.

Duplication of efforts

- Same as with receiving referral data - the main issue is that we don't have the resources to make electronic referrals so there is more duplication of effort than would be ideal.

None

- None.
- None that I can think of.

Appendix E: Improving potential client navigation

What would help improve potential clients' ability to navigate legal services?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, “what would help improve clients’ ability to navigate legal services?” Twenty-three (23) organizations provided feedback.

Develop centralized intake

- A managed, centralized intake method for clients who are interested in receiving services but don't necessarily know where to turn (ex- Philly tenant hotline that incorporates multiple agencies).
- Centralized intake process.
- Centralized intake/ source of information
- Centralized (shared) intake systems
- Having one place to go and knowing what type of help they could receive.
- Perhaps having one organization that a client can contact and get an appropriate referral to the agency or agencies that can potentially help them. Knowledge of local, regional, and statewide social service agencies and what they do would be critical, so clients don’t get sent to multiple places that will ultimately not be able to help them.

Improve communication around legal aid services

- Better access to information but I don't know how to achieve that.
- For younger people, more information online, accessible by phone (apps, websites that are mobile friendly, social media, etc.)

Appendix E: Improving potential client navigation

- Information on where to go and how to request legal services, including what documents/information is necessary in order to verify eligibility.
- I think more public information about the work that our organizations do and transparency about how we can help would be useful.
- More information on the front end when clients are engaging with court systems so that clients who need a higher level of service are identified earlier.

Establish a legal aid directory

- Clarity on who handles which types of matters (in lay terms).
- Information on where to go and how to request legal services, including what documents/information is necessary in order to verify eligibility.
- Making it easier for clients to provide the documentation they are referencing. Often times, a client will call and say he received a letter says "a, b and c." But, he can't find the letter or if he can locate the letter, he does necessarily know how to provide you with a copy of that letter. Without seeing the underlying documentation, it is difficult to determine whether there is a legal issue, what type of legal issue it may be, where to go for help and what the remedy may be.
- Making it easier to connect somehow...and with the appropriate organization.

Provide translation and literacy services

- Access to literacy.
- Increased availability of bilingual intake workers
- Language access: Organizations should provide in-person services and materials in multiple languages, through multilingual staff or interpretation/translation services. The gatekeepers (intake/reception) should be able to adequately direct potential clients to the correct staff/program.

Appendix E:
Improving potential client navigation

Offer additional resources for staffing and support

- More support!
- If organizations were provided with more funding, then teams could grow, which would also help to grow the organizations capacity.
- [Organization name] just needs a bigger staff to provide better support for clients.

Provide community navigation

- Having legal aid providers available in their neighborhoods and communities.

Establish additional partnerships

- One of the populations [organization name] is really eager to assist is those who have been victims of firearm injuries and making sure they get health coverage and services. One of the ways to address this issue is to build stronger partnerships with community-based victim service agencies.

Offer flexible hours

- Flexible hours: Evening and weekend hours at legal service providers would help.

Shorten response times

- Hearing back from legal aid providers more quickly and in terms that the client can understand

Other

- Unsure
- We do not do direct client services so I can't speak to this issue.

Appendix F: Improving current client navigation

What would help your organization improve current clients' navigation of services?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, "what would help your organization improve current clients' navigation of services?" Nineteen (19) organizations provided feedback.

Streamline the process

- A more streamlined and transparent referral process.
- Having an easier way to understand all the clients' needs at once and being able to immediately refer if need be.
- Streamlined referrals with loop back to confirm follow-up.

Develop centralized intake

- A centralized and knowledgeable point of access to the wide range of services available in the public interest legal community.
- Electronic referrals, and shared intake (or referral) system/program to refer existing clients to other organizations for specific issues

Establish a legal aid directory

- Having the appropriate contact to access intake information at various organizations
- External partners better understanding what [organization name] does and the potential limits on who we can help and what level of service we can provide to clients.
- I think having a central database or even more primitive type of list of what issues are available for legal aid/representation at the organizations would be helpful.

Appendix F: Improving current client navigation

Offer additional resources for staffing and support

- Additional funding to be used for advertising and promotion and, ultimately, to increase staff in order to attend more community events.
- Increased volunteer engagement.
- More internal resources so we can serve more clients, who present for services.

Establish additional partnerships

- Opportunities to convene with other non-legal organizations--especially those on the front lines of Philadelphia's public health crises--i.e., firearms injuries, drug overdose deaths.

Other

- Access to digital technology.
- I am not sure there is a solution since much of the problem is a combination of the technological divide. Literacy and families under crushing amounts of financial, mental and emotional stress.
- More direct referral processes that allow us to see if clients were able to access other services.
- More training of clients.
- We do not do direct client services. For the few individual cases we do have, the current remote environment can be challenging for reaching clients when they can't be seen in person.
- Unsure.

Appendix G:
Positives about data systems used

What is working well with your intake/referral data systems?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, “what is working well with your intake/referral data systems?” Twenty-five (25) organizations provided feedback.

Ease of use

- Ease of inputting data.
- Ease of use for staff.
- Ease of use.
- It is easy to complete the information in LegalServer.
- Our system is easy to use.
- The system is pretty easy to train people on (which we do at least 3 times per year).
- Our system is very dynamic because it is created in-house and can be manipulated to easily collect additional data or change the way that we are collecting data. This has been particularly helpful during the pandemic when the issues that we were seeing were changing greatly and we wanted to have a regular system to demonstrate trends to local and state policy makers.
- Easy to jump around from a case profile to a client profile to a volunteer profile; good filters available in various tabs.

Customized to organization needs

- Customizability of our CRM.
- The ability to customize the questions & information collected (particularly demographic information), as well as the legal problem codes, are very useful.

Appendix G: Positives about data systems used

- We have a specialized data system that is designed and maintained by the [national network] that allows us to collect intake/referral data from our clients consistent with the information that we need to report back to our Federal funders.

Integration with other data systems

- Both clients and other organizations are able to use a form that uploads into salesforce. It works!
- Integration with our health center and social services data.
- Quick e-referrals from [organization name] and [organization name].
- The software we use for intake is also our case management and forms software. The information from intake is seamlessly integrated into forms needed for client representation.

Reporting functionality

- It's [Excel] also very easy for data tracking when a report needs to be made for the quarterly Board Meeting.
- Helpful for tracking intake and trends as well as responses and referrals.
- Once information is in our CMS, we can track and mine data easily through its own reporting system.
- We can also easily run reports from the software.

Centralized storage of data

- Referrals are centralized within the intake team, which increases consistency in screening, scheduling, and follow-up.
- The data is centralized which makes it easier to run reports.
- We ask a lot of questions about an applicant BEFORE getting to their legal issue (e.g., household, income, demographics, health insurance coverage). Responses are all documented in LegalServer for easy reference by case handlers.

Appendix G: Positives about data systems used

- When we have the data it is easy to find.
- We are able to refer back to previous case information and analyze current data.
- We just started using it so it is brand new, but the ability for faculty and staff to see the list of potential clients has been helpful in assigning cases to students this semester. It is also helpful that all the intake caller's information is in one place.
- We receive many calls and respond to them efficiently. We have a wide network of referrals for callers who need further assistance.

Online storage allows for remote access and data sharing

- Able to internally share info.
- Completely online.
- Excel is great because it can be shared with new members added to our team.
- Salesforce allows us to communicate remotely.

Other

- Pennsylvania Free Legal Answers
- Generally, the judges make appointments to [organization name] at a pace we can meet, with the exception of our [name] program (which we have a large waiting list for).
- We are very pleased with our relationship with the intake staffs of [organization name] and [organization name]. They do an amazing job handling referrals to [organization name]. Because our staff is so small, we simply don't have the staff to handle direct intake.

Appendix H:
Challenges about data systems used

What challenges are you experiencing with your intake/referral data systems?

Below are the open-ended responses to the question, “what challenges are you experiencing with your intake/referral data systems?” Twenty-four (24) organizations provided feedback.

Need outnumbers internal capacity

- We do not have reliable data/enough time to enter the data
- Tracking all calls entered into Legal Server (callbacks)
- Over 6000 requests for help annually
- Not enough staff to complete or receive referrals
- Many of our referrals require considerable time and we do not have sufficient capacity to take them to the next step and sometimes do not have a referral for them

Data quality and consistency

- We sometimes have challenges with data consistency due to our use of short-term law students and volunteers to do intake.
- We rely heavily on law student interns and volunteers, which means re-training frequently (but that's more about our program than the system). For the system, it would be great to be able to customize the "block" for a specific matter (which shows name, legal server number, case status, etc.) to include pronouns. We've customized the screen to show that at the top when the file is opened, but when someone starts typing a new casenote, the pronouns are not visible.

Appendix H: Challenges about data systems used

- Salesforce is complicated and not intuitive, so people use it differently, which can lead to inconsistencies in data.
- Occasionally, when searching for a phone number, the search function (ctrl + f) won't find the phone number if it is not input correctly in the Excel sheet (format needs to be xxx-xxx-xxxx). But this is a rare inconvenience.
- Data integrity, corrections.

Reporting functionality does not meet organization needs

- Running reports cumbersome. Difficult to modify.
- Reports (pulling data from the back-end) has always been more challenging and required more work in Legal Server - this is the only way in which Kemps was superior.
- Collating and analyzing the data is time-consuming and there are limitations to the data that we are able to extract.

Updates require additional resources

- We just learned we can create a documents folder for our Prescreens so we have some work to do to get those files organized but once a system is in place our intake process will be easier.
- We changed databases in May and it's been some work to clean-up the data exported from Salesforce but we are getting there. We are still using SF for donor management but switched to OPTIMA for volunteer and client management.
- Need to rewrite large portions of online intake
- Need to customize/update our systems after having spent a considerable amount of time sharing access with another organization (many of the fields/categories of data are no longer relevant to our operations).

Appendix H: Challenges about data systems used

Training is time consuming

- Training folx on the database is very intensive
- Our intake data system requires a special skill set--people who are empathetic and can spot and identify legal issues, while also being very familiar with computer systems so they can quickly and accurately input this information into Legal Server. Sometimes that limits our ability to hire candidates for our intake positions.
- [Organization name] recently transitioned to LegalServer. Although it's great that we can customize the database to meet our own needs, there's been a steep learning curve for staff as we build and refine the database.

Functionality misaligned with need

- Our software works well for intake but does not offer much in regards to referrals. We can input notes to indicate a referral was made but not much else. Through other case management software (Apricot) at our organization, we are able to keep updated information about the organizations we refer clients to.
- Our data base is not nearly as sophisticated as LegalServer. While it can certainly track our clients' cases, it does not provide the same level of data or allow for data analysis as Legal Server. In addition, it doesn't have the ability to capture cases notes or communicate with other agencies like Legal Server.
- Information could be more searchable.

Lack of integration across multiple systems

- We use both our case management system as well as google sheets in order to track intake, when one system only would be preferable.

Appendix G: Partner feedback about the report

In December 2021, EJC partners who participated in either the survey or interviews were given the opportunity to review this report and provide feedback. Representatives from three organizations shared feedback about the report, around the following guiding questions:

- What resonated with you?
- What surprised you?
- What is missing?
- What else would you like to know?

What resonated with you?

- The commitment to collectively focusing on equity and justice in the region as it related to legal aid.
- The conclusion that people do not know where to go for legal aid services.
- The emphasis on mobile phone access to services, since access to computers and internet is not equitable. Would like this access to include a person that answers the phone over an answering system.
- The concerns about maintaining data quality and consistency, as well as internal staffing and data capacity.

What surprised you?

- No surprises.

What is missing?

- Would like to see a clearer definition of "legal navigators," as it pertains to the EJC, and clarification on whether this role includes lawyers.
- Would like the centralized repository of resources to go beyond a legal aid director and include legal aid forms, court-access information, and how-to guides.

What else would you like to know?

- The role that legal aid advocacy organizations can play in the virtual EJC environment.

Next steps

We are grateful for our partners for sharing their thoughtful feedback on the report. Each of these comments has been shared with the Philadelphia Bar Foundation Board of Directors to shape the development of the next phase of the EJC project.

We look forward to continuing to co-create the virtual EJC with our legal aid partners, and continue to seek input about next steps, including how advocacy organizations would like to be involved.

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