

APPENDIX C: Prospective Client Survey Report

Background

Survey questions were informed by legal aid needs assessment survey instruments from Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado, and Illinois. The survey primarily asked about their legal needs and barriers to legal representation. Surveys were distributed directly to prospective clients by the evaluator and through community partners. The surveys were accompanied with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Participants who completed the survey received a \$5 - \$10 gift card to a local grocery store. One hundred and seventy-four (174) individuals responded to the survey.

Results

Legal Aid Priorities. The prospective clients' highest priority included navigating social service systems. Figure 1 summarizes the top twelve ranked case types. Table 1 lists all cases that were noted in the survey results with the corresponding number of respondents.

FIGURE 1: Suggested Legal Aid Priorities

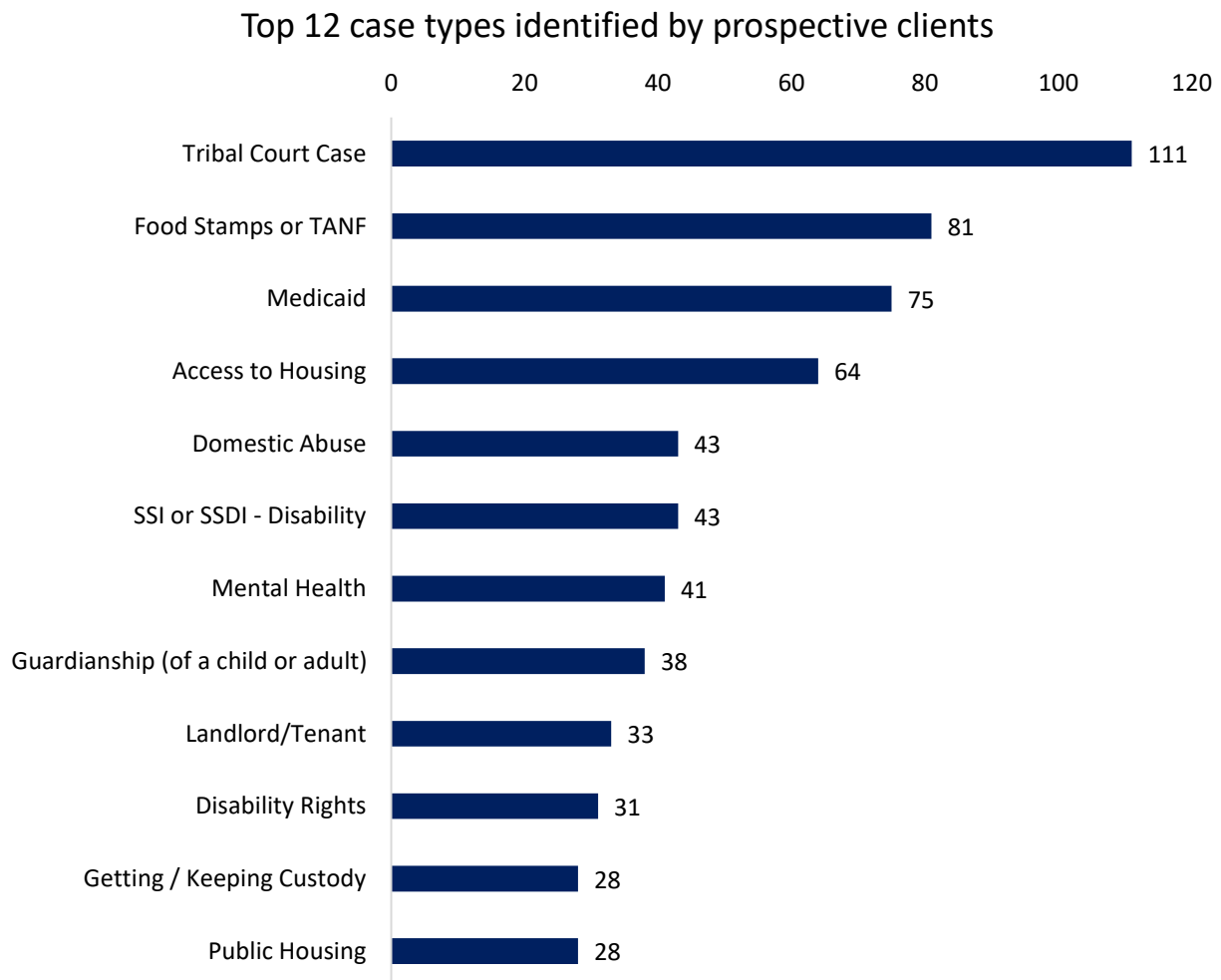


TABLE 1: Legal Aid Priority Suggestions

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| Tribal Court Cases | 111 | Food Stamps or TANF | 81 | Medicaid | 75 |
| Access to Housing | 64 | Domestic Abuse | 43 | SSI or SSDI – Disability | 43 |
| Mental Health | 41 | Guardianship (of a child or adult) | 38 | Landlord/Tenant | 33 |
| Disability Rights | 31 | Getting/Keeping Custody | 28 | Public Housing | 28 |
| Criminal Record Expungement | 25 | Health Insurance | 25 | Child Support | 25 |
| Utilities | 24 | Protection/ Restraining Order | 23 | Child Custody Modifications | 22 |
| Debt Collection | 22 | Debt Collection | 22 | Living Wills | 21 |
| Discrimination | 20 | Social Security | 19 | School Enrollment | 18 |
| Women, Infants, and Children’s Benefits | 18 | Abuse and Neglect | 16 | Insurance | 16 |
| Unemployment | 16 | Discrimination | 15 | Loan Modification | 15 |
| Financial Aid | 15 | Student Loan Debt | 15 | Elderly Abuse | 14 |
| Individual Education Program (IEP) | 14 | Medicare | 14 | Taxes | 14 |
| School Issues due to Discrimination | 13 | Sexual Harassment | 13 | Adoption | 12 |
| Divorce | 12 | Identify Theft | 12 | Rental Repairs | 12 |
| Special Education | 12 | Truancy/Delinquency | 12 | Visitation | 12 |
| Health Care Access | 10 | Bankruptcy | 9 | Benefits | 9 |
| Preventing Termination of Parental Rights | 9 | Employment | 8 | Wrongful Termination | 8 |
| Licenses and Permits | 8 | Retaliation | 7 | School Discipline/Expulsion | 6 |
| Children’s Health Insurance Program | 5 | Employment/Work Authorization | 5 | Emancipation | 4 |
| Private Insurance | 4 | Car Fraud/Repossession | 3 | Contracts | 3 |
| Deportation | 3 | Foreclosure | 2 | In-Home Medical Services | 2 |
| Student Visas | 2 | Nursing Home | 1 | Petitioning for a Visa for a Relative | 1 |
| Real Estate | 1 | | | | |

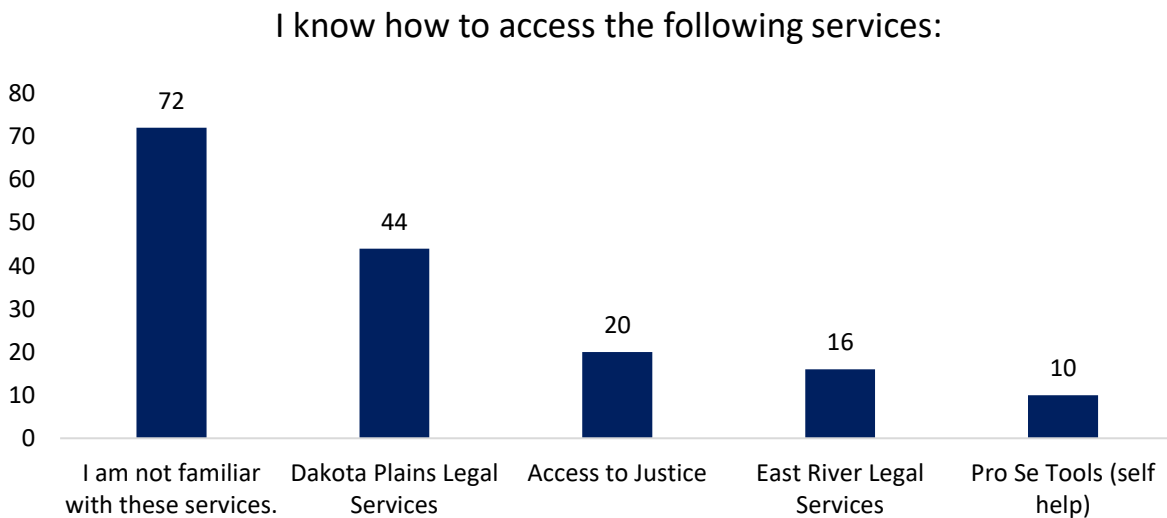
Client Barriers. The survey listed barriers that prospective clients may encounter when trying to access legal aid services. The clerks were asked to check all barriers that apply based on their observations. The top priority, struggling to understand the legal process, correlated to the community interview findings.

TABLE 2: Client Barriers

| # of responses | Barriers to receiving legal aid |
|----------------|---|
| 46 | I did not know there was legal aid. |
| 37 | I do not have a computer. |
| 30 | I do not have a telephone or cell phone to call legal aid. |
| 23 | I did not understand what legal aid services were available. |
| 21 | I could not drive to the legal aid office because I do not have a car or a car that works. |
| 21 | I struggle with understanding the legal process for my particular issues. |
| 18 | Legal aid could not take the case because it was not an eligible case type. |
| 15 | I do not know how to fill out the legal aid application form on the computer. |
| 13 | There was a conflict of interest. |
| 12 | I was nervous to call legal aid. |
| 11 | My mental health or physical disability prevented me from utilizing legal aid services. |
| 7 | Legal aid could not take the case due to time/resources. |
| 7 | The nearest legal aid office was too far away. |
| 5 | Legal aid could not take the case because I was over the income or asset guidelines. |
| 4 | Legal aid could not take the case because it was out of their service area. |
| 3 | It was too difficult to call or visit A2J, DPLS, or ERLS during the hours their office is open. |

Legal Aid Referrals. Several respondents did not know how to access legal aid or pro se forms.

FIGURE 2: Legal Aid Referrals



Suggestions for Improvement. The respondents were asked to check a list of options that legal aid agencies should do to improve the delivery of free legal services in South Dakota. Table 3 summarizes the responses.

TABLE 3: Suggestions

| # of responses | Suggestions to improve the delivery of legal aid |
|-----------------------|---|
| 86 | Hire more legal aid attorneys |
| 53 | Expand client eligibility |
| 47 | More private attorneys providing pro bono services |
| 45 | Educate prospective clients |
| 34 | Market their services |
| 32 | Expand organizational capacity |
| 31 | Fundraise |
| 26 | Educate private attorneys |