Considerations for Needs Assessment Design

Please see the Section II(3)(B) of the “Guide for Developing a Victim Legal Assistance Network” for considerations regarding length of surveys and efforts to minimize re-traumatization and vicarious trauma.

Formats & Methodologies
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Listening Sessions

Data Sources / Participants

Crime Victims & Community Members – where to recruit
- Victim service providers
- Systems-based victim/witness assistance, DA’s offices
- Service providers (mental health centers, homeless shelters, departments of health or social services, medical)
- Public institutions: libraries, community centers, community action programs
- ESL, GED, Citizenship classes
- Community-specific organizations
  - Faith communities
  - Cultural centers
- Public spaces & events: fairs, tabling at community events, transportation hubs, grocery stores,
- Social media, partner’s emails
- Additional notes on increasing access: offer written materials in multiple languages, offer in-person interpretation, offer one-on-one assistance with completing surveys

Types of service providers/stakeholders to consider including
- Attorneys, legal service providers
- Social service providers, advocates (community-based & systems-based)
- Law enforcement, prosecutors
- Compensation staff
- Immigration attorneys
- City or District Attorney’s office
- Police Department
- Probation/Corrections
- County/State Human Services
- County Attorney
- Educational institution
- Medical facility
- Legal Aid
- Private lawyer
- Private for-profit agency
- Private nonprofit agency
• Religious faith community
• NOTE: Consider seeking the input of both front line and leadership among service providers and systems partners.

Content Areas

Sections of surveys, interviews or focus groups for survivors and/or community members
• Demographics
• Crimes
• Legal issues
• Help-seeking
• Barriers to accessing services
• Questions about a specific victimization
• Age at the time of crime
• Relationship to offender
  • Recency
  • Disclosure/help seeking
  • Consequences of Victimization

Sections of surveys, interviews or focus groups for service providers/stakeholders
• Geographic & demographic communities (service area, population # in that area)
• Crimes experienced by clients
• Legal Services needed by clients
• Caseloads
• Length of time / depth of relationship with communities served
• Related issues / needs in communities that impact victimization and/or services
• Collaborations/Partnerships & Referrals
  o Referrals received from which organizations or types of organizations
  o Referrals made to which organizations or types of organizations
• Barriers
  o Barriers to providing services
  o Barriers to victims receiving services
  o Thoughts on overcoming those barriers
• Strategies for increasing awareness of services
• Interest level in using resources (training, website, printed materials, meeting, etc.)

Menu of specific topics or subtopics for content areas

Demographics
• Income
• Education
• Race/ethnicity
• Gender identity
• Disabilities
• Language(s) spoken
• Age (or age category: children, teens, elders)
• Living situation (homeless, with perpetrator, number of people in household, etc.)
• Unique Jurisdiction: Military, campus, tribal, incarcerated
• Citizenship/Immigration status

**Crimes**

• Abuse of a person with disabilities/dependent or vulnerable adult
• Assault, aggravated assault
• Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence
• Disability-related issues (examples: lack of accommodations, accessing services, benefits)
• Child Abuse/ Neglect
• Educational access
• Elder Abuse/ Neglect
• Employment victimization (examples: work-place discrimination/harassment, fired unfairly, wage theft)
• Family Issues (examples: divorce, custody, support, guardianship)
• Financial Issues & Fraud (examples: identity theft, bankruptcy, compensation, benefits, restitution)
• Gang violence
• Gun violence
• Hate crimes (examples: crimes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion)
• Housing-related issues (examples: evictions, safety, breaking lease)
• Human Trafficking (examples: forced sex or labor)
• Immigration-related issues (examples: deportation, can’t obtain job due to status)
• Kidnapping
• Murder/homicide/manslaughter
• Police Misconduct (examples: wrongly arrested, harassed by the police)
• Property Crime (examples: arson, burglary, larceny, shoplifting, theft, vandalism)
• Sexual Assault/ Rape
• Vehicular crimes (DUI, homicide)

**Legal Issues**

• Civil restraining or protective orders
• Civil tort claims
• Compensation (medical, lost wages, relocation, or counseling costs)
• Criminal record expungements
• Crime Victims’ rights in criminal
• Educational
  ○ Access
- Title IX
- Fraud

- Elder law
  - Reasonable accommodation
  - Estate
  - Fraud
  - Guardianship, competency, power of attorney
  - Government benefits, entitlements
  - Mandatory reporting
  - Protective services

- Employment
  - Discrimination
  - Wage claims
  - Workplace harassment
  - Employment affected by crime

- Family law
  - Custody/visitation
  - Dissolution
  - Paternity
  - Domestic violence restraining orders
  - Spousal support

- Financial fraud/Consumer
  - Identity theft
  - Mortgage fraud
  - Vocational school fraud
  - Credit remediation

- Fraud
- Government benefits/Health access
- Guardianship
- Hate crimes
- Housing/Eviction
  - Affordable housing
  - Unlawful detainer defense
  - Housing affected by crime (lock changes, eviction, lease or mortgage co-sign with perpetrator)
  - Mortgage fraud

- Identity Change
- Immigration
  - Asylum
  - Family-based
  - Naturalization
  - Removal hearing
  - SIJS
  - T visas
  - U visas
  - VAWA/IMFA
• Internet redress
• Language discrimination/ Access claims
• Privacy
• Property return
• Public benefits (Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps, Indigent healthcare)
• Representing in
  o Criminal matter
  o Civil matter
  o Campus proceeding
  o Military proceeding
  o Immigration matter
  o Compensation claim
  o Benefits claim or application
  o Small claims court
  o Housing issue
  o Employment law violation
• Restitution
• Safety issues
• Title IX
• Veterans’ benefits

Help-seeking
• Law Enforcement
• Medical/Mental health
• Social services
• Legal services
• Other support
• How did you find that help? (brochure, web, referral, etc.)
• How helpful was it? What could have been different?
• Length of services

Barriers to accessing services
• Costs
• Eligibility
• Fear of retaliation or harm
• Fear of losing custody of children
• Fear of losing housing
• Fear of the legal system / lack of trust
• Fear of deportation, other immigration concerns
• Fear of bias from providers or systems personnel
• Lack of support (family, community)
• Lack of resources for basic needs
• Lack of knowledge
Considerations for Needs Assessment Design

- about services available
- about complex legal terms and processes
- about crime victims’ rights

- Lack of transportation, distance to services or courts
- Lack of time or energy
- Lack of access to technology
- scheduling (needing assistance outside of regular office hours)
- Language barriers
- Not able to identify self as a victim
- Feelings of trauma, shame or embarrassment
- Service providers or systems’ professionals lack of understanding about
  - Trauma
  - Culture or identity
  - Mental health issues
  - Disability
  - Needing to go to many different places for help
- Criminal record
- Too much information all at once
- Asked to repeat story too many times
- Given conflicting information about crime, legal options or services

**Services offered**

- Mission
- Communities/Populations served
- Services provided
- Length of time offering services in community (years)

**Collaborations/Partnerships referrals**

- Courts
- Law enforcement
- Compensation
- Tribal jurisdictions
- Social services
- Advocates (community, systems)
- Immigration services
- Medical or mental health services
- Other legal organizations
- Faith communities

**Barriers to offering services or coordination of services**

- Staffing
- Funding
- Training
- Internal policies, rules, etc.
- Expertise
  - Victims’ rights
  - Area of law
  - Crime types
  - Referrals
- Communication & coordination (with other providers, systems)
- Language