



# **[Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania Needs Assessment Report]**

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# Contents

I. Executive Summary .....	2
Assessment Findings.....	2
II. Introduction .....	4
III. Responding to Legal Needs: LASP Services .....	4
A Snapshot of LASP Programmatic Activities: FY 2015-2016.....	4
Rebuilding After the Recession .....	6
IV. Assessment Methodology.....	7
V. Demographic Trends in the LASP Service Area.....	9
General Demographics.....	9
Special Populations.....	13
VI. Assessment Findings .....	15
Identification of Critical Community Civil Legal Needs .....	15
Community Awareness of LASP as a Resource.....	19
Preferred Forms of Engagement with LASP .....	21
VII. Ongoing Barriers to the Provision of Services .....	25
Funding Limitations.....	25
Client Circumstances .....	26
Technology and its Limits .....	27
Community Perceptions.....	28
VIII. Conclusion: Building on Strengths .....	28
Appendix A: Protocol for Stakeholder Interviews.....	29
Appendix B: Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals.....	30
Appendix C: Demographics of Respondents to Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals .....	35
Appendix D: Raw Data from Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals.....	38
Appendix E: Focus Group Questions .....	52

## I. Executive Summary

In 2016, Temple University's Network of Evaluation, Services & Training (NEST) conducted a legal needs assessment for Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP). The assessment included a study of the area's demographics, interviews with LASP stakeholders, a survey of income-eligible community residents, and focus groups composed of staff from nonprofit and government agencies that interact with LASP.

LASP serves people living at or below 125% of the federal poverty level, domestic abuse victims, and low/moderate income older adults. Specially targeted funding makes it possible to serve some moderate income people facing a home loss due to foreclosure.

A review of U.S. Census data shows that about 244,000 residents of LASP's service area are eligible for its services based on income. The four-county region includes areas of concentrated poverty, such as Norristown and Chester. In these communities, the proportion of residents living below the defined poverty level is approximately one-fifth and one-third, respectively. Although approximately 82% of residents in LASP's service area are white, the area also is home to people of other ethnicities. Within the service area, Delaware County has the highest proportion of African American residents, while Montgomery County has the highest proportion of Asian residents and Chester County has the highest proportion of residents who identify as Hispanic. About 12% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

During FY 2015-2016, LASP handled 8,104 cases that benefitted 17,669 people. Family law, housing law and access to benefits cases were the most common case types. LASP advocates obtained meaningful results for their clients. A conservative estimate of the direct economic impact of LASP's work exceeds \$10.8 million. In spite of these efforts, financial limitations meant that LASP was unable to serve all of the eligible people who requested assistance. About one-quarter of otherwise eligible callers to the LASP Helpline were turned away because of limited resources.

### Assessment Findings

#### *Service Priorities*

- There was agreement among stakeholders, survey respondents, and focus group participants about the top areas of legal need: family law, housing law, and benefits law. These correspond to the three case types most handled by LASP advocates.
- More than 80% of income-eligible survey respondents reported that they would prefer LASP devote its resources to intensive services for people facing immediate legal needs rather than providing a larger number of people with advice and assistance for self-representation.

#### *Communication*

- There appears to be high general awareness of LASP; however, fewer people are clear on all of the services LASP offers. It is also likely that subgroups within communities, such as non-English speakers, currently have less awareness of LASP.

- Income-eligible survey respondents reported that they prefer receiving information from LASP through traditional means such as brochures, community workshops, or emails. Yet, some focus group participants from nonprofit and government agencies indicated they found strong success using text messages and social media with their own constituents.
- Agencies participating in focus groups indicated a willingness to work with LASP to deliver information and services to their clients.

### *Barriers*

- Lack of sufficient funding was frequently identified as a major barrier to LASP's ability to meet the legal needs of all who were eligible in its service area.
- Income-eligible community members identified several barriers to obtaining services, including lack of knowledge regarding where/how to access services, feeling intimidated by the legal system, and lack of transportation.
- Focus group members and LASP stakeholders identified challenges in using the Helpline, including hours of operation and the multiple phone prompts. It also appeared that many were unaware of relatively new features designed to improve the Helpline experience.

### *Strengths*

- Staff at all levels of LASP are dedicated and skilled in their work. They are passionate about meeting clients' needs.
- LASP has strong linkages with the many other nonprofit and governmental agencies that work with the communities LASP serves.
- LASP is well known and highly esteemed in the region. The quality of its work is respected by service agencies, the courts, and county bar associations.

Results of this assessment will help LASP improve its daily operations, and will be used in a board-level strategic planning process. LASP's staff and Board of Directors are grateful to the many people who shared their experiences during the assessment.

## II. Introduction

To the outsider, the Philadelphia suburbs often conjure up images of prosperity: big business, many colleges and universities, lots of money. But the reality of life in the area is more complicated. Even though the region is home to some of the wealthiest communities in the nation, many of its residents struggle with the devastating effects of poverty. And suburbs are not immune to problems such as domestic violence, unemployment, discrimination, and lack of affordable housing.

Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP) provides free civil legal services and gives a voice to vulnerable populations that might otherwise feel they have no chance of successfully resolving serious legal problems. LASP was created in 2001 as a result of the merger of legal aid organizations that had served Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties for more than 20 years. It handles legal cases that benefit more than 17,000 people a year through direct representation by staff and pro bono attorneys, its telephone Helpline, and community outreach activities. Its primary audiences include low-income families, victims of domestic abuse, and low- and moderate-income older adults. Dedicated funding also allows the agency to serve some moderate-income people facing mortgage foreclosure.



To gain insight about how it can continue to best address the civil legal needs in the communities it serves, LASP contracted with Temple University's Network of Evaluation, Services & Training (NEST) to conduct a needs assessment. This assessment identified the types and extent of civil legal needs in LASP's service area, examined LASP's response to these needs, and explored implications for LASP as it begins its strategic planning process.



## III. Responding to Legal Needs: LASP Services

LASP is the only source of a full range of free civil legal services available to low-income people in the four counties it serves. Due to its limited resources, LASP is not able to provide direct legal representation to every eligible client. LASP sets its case priorities annually, and its Board of Directors approves these priorities. Current priorities are to ensure and protect access to basic necessities such as shelter, food, medical care, income, personal safety, and family stability.

### A Snapshot of LASP Programmatic Activities: FY 2015-2016

Examining LASP's programmatic activities during FY 2015-2016 provides insight into the organization's commitment to meet the civil legal needs of the communities it serves. The following discussion of LASP's programmatic activities focuses on the organization's overall activities, its Helpline, and its community outreach.

## Overall Activities

During FY 2015-2016, LASP handled 8,104 cases that benefitted 17,669 people. Cases that involved family law, housing law, or benefits law were the most common case types handled by LASP in FY 2015-2016, followed by cases that involved employment law, juvenile law, or another type of law. Table 1 details the types of cases handled by LASP in FY 2015-16.

**Table 1: Type and proportion of cases handled by LASP in FY 2015-16**

Case Type	% of Cases
Family law (e.g., protection from abuse, child custody, simple divorce)	40.0
Housing law (e.g., eviction, foreclosure, wrongful lockout, unsafe housing conditions, violations of tenants' rights)	20.4
Benefits law (e.g., appealing denial, termination or reduction of benefits, appealing demands for repayment of benefit "overpayments")	13.5
Consumer law (e.g., bankruptcy, creditor harassment)	10.8
Employment (e.g., criminal record expungements)	7.0
Juvenile law (e.g., child welfare)	4.4
Other	3.6

The largest portion of LASP's cases was in Delaware County (27.6%), followed by Bucks (26.2%), Montgomery (24.3%), and Chester (17.6%) counties. Another four percent of cases were from other areas.

LASP's activities during FY 2015-2016 had many positive impacts on the communities it serves. These impacts include:

- Protection From Abuse orders benefitting 1,059 children and adults
- Preserving/obtaining housing for 826 children and adults
- Stabilizing families composed of 580 adults and children through custody and visitation orders
- Stabilizing family finances through relief from overwhelming debt for 226 people
- Handling public benefits cases that affected 1,239 people
- Completing powers of attorney or wills for 122 low-income older people
- Increased employability for 212 families, made up of 432 adults and children

LASP also had substantial monetary impact on clients and communities. A conservative estimate of the direct economic impact of LASP's work in FY 2015-2016 exceeds \$10.8 million. More specifically, LASP advocates recovered \$411,317 in lump sum/back payments of benefits for clients. Advocates also recovered more than \$1.4 million in benefit payments over the course of the fiscal year. In addition, advocates helped clients discharge nearly \$7.8 million in bankruptcy, stabilizing families overwhelmed by debt. Finally, advocates preserved assets and avoided charges totaling almost \$1.3 million, including preserving equity when homes were saved from foreclosure or tax sale, contesting illegal charges, and defending low-income people in questionable debt collection cases.

## *Helpline*

FY 2015-2016 was the first full fiscal year following a substantial upgrade of the phone and database systems of LASP's regional Helpline/Central Intake Unit. This upgrade was funded by Legal Services Corporation and local matching funds. The goals of the upgrade included improving service for callers, increasing efficiency for Helpline advocates, offering a callback option for cell phone users so they do not have to wait on hold, and providing a way to quickly redirect selected groups of callers with legal problems LASP cannot handle.

The regional Helpline/Central Intake Unit handled 14,208 calls in FY 2015-2016. Helpline advocates opened 2,822 cases. In about half of those cases, Helpline advocates were able to provide the legal help that was needed. The remaining cases were referred to local LASP offices. During a recent sample period of several weeks, about 25% of Helpline callers eligible for services had to be turned away because LASP did not have sufficient capacity to serve them.

All LASP representatives who were interviewed, as well as many community advocates who participated in focus groups, agreed that the Helpline is crucial to the organization's success and survival. They also agreed that the Helpline is vital if LASP is to maintain or increase its level of services in a time of uncertain funding and growing demand. Among the benefits of the Helpline is that it allows LASP to help people who are not eligible for services by referring them to other organizations while filtering out cases in which LASP can assist. This filtering makes the best use of attorneys' limited time and the organization's limited resources. The Helpline also makes LASP more accessible to people who might not otherwise be able to visit one of the organization's offices, such as people without transportation, people with disabilities, and people who work during the day.

## *Community Outreach*

LASP has five community outreach sites where community groups host regularly scheduled intake hours staffed by LASP advocates. Sites are located in Coatesville, Phoenixville, and Kennett Square in Chester County, and in Lansdale and Willow Grove in Montgomery County. All three Chester County sites were added in the past 18 months. LASP added a small office in Media, the Delaware County seat, in 2016. This gives LASP offices in each county seat. The Media office provides a base for staff and pro bono attorneys and is an important resource for increasing the involvement of pro bono volunteers in Delaware County.

LASP advocates held 245 outreach and community education sessions during FY 2015-2016, reaching 4,447 people. In addition, advocates provided 48 legal clinics that served 336 people.

## **Rebuilding After the Recession**

LASP's current capacity to serve its communities is the result of its efforts to respond in positive ways to the financial challenges experienced during and following the recession. The recession and its aftermath had a serious impact on legal aid programs nationwide, including LASP. Decreases in government funding at all levels, and significant drops in Interest on Lawyer's Trust Accounts (IOLTA) funds, battered LASP's budget, resulting in a loss of almost \$1 million and 12 staff positions.

In FY 2015-2016, LASP continued its efforts to rebuild services. Guided by a strategic plan, LASP invested in improved technology and increased its already significant number of community partnerships as a strategy for serving additional people in need with very limited funding. Strategic staffing changes were carried out to strengthen the organization's capacity to deliver key services. These investments were funded through special project grants and judicious use of general operating funds. In addition to the Helpline upgrades and new Media office mentioned above, these improvements included:

- Creating a full-time regional pro-bono director position to strengthen LASP's program of involving volunteer attorneys in providing free services to low income people
- Partnering with community groups to provide regularly scheduled intake hours at new sites to increase accessibility of legal services
- Applying for and receiving an AmeriCorps Equal Justice Works Employment Legal Fellow to help low-income people remove barriers to employment and benefits
- Upgrading the skill level required for the technology director position to ensure that LASP is able to appropriately use technology to increase/improve services
- Investing in improved technology, including upgrading devices and systems that were more than a decade old
- Restoring a benefits paralegal position in Delaware County, the county which handles more benefits appeals than any other county LASP serves
- Providing more competitive salaries to staff and supporting staff training
- Adding a part-time communications manager to assist with outreach to increase awareness of LASP's work among key audiences and support LASP's fundraising

As a result of these efforts, LASP has seen modest increases in the number of people served in each of the last three years. However, the agency remains significantly under-resourced given the needs of the populations of its service areas.

## **IV. Assessment Methodology**

The needs assessment was conducted from March to September 2016. The assessment process consisted of four parts: 1) a study of the region's demographics; 2) stakeholder interviews conducted with LASP representatives to gain a deeper understanding of the organization and how it interacts with the communities it serves; 3) a survey of individuals eligible for LASP's services; and 4) focus groups conducted with representatives of local nonprofits and government agencies. This approach was chosen because it combined quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and encompassed the wide variety of audiences that interact with LASP. Each data collection method is explained in further detail below.

### **Demographic Data**

Demographic data were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau through its QuickFacts<sup>1</sup> and American FactFinder<sup>2</sup> services. The information in these databases comes from a variety of Census Bureau sources, including the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.census.gov/quickfacts](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts)

<sup>2</sup> [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)



County-level data were collected for each of the four counties in LASP's service area. Where possible, information also was collected for the municipalities in which LASP has permanent offices (Bristol, Chester city, Doylestown, Media, Norristown, Pottstown, and West Chester). In cases where information was not available for these municipalities, only county-level data are reported. Information for the LASP service area was calculated by either adding or averaging the U.S. Census Bureau figures for each county, depending on the nature of the information.

## **Stakeholder Interviews**

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives of LASP to gain a deeper understanding of how people inside the organization view both its relationship with the external community and its internal operations. The stakeholders served a variety of functions within LASP: board members, administration, managing attorneys, staff attorneys, Helpline staff, and intake/office staff. Stakeholders represented all four counties served by LASP, and their length of service with LASP (including with its predecessor organizations) ranged from a few years to more than three decades.

Thirteen individual interviews were conducted by phone in April 2016, and each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. Stakeholders were asked a semi-structured set of questions covering topics including their roles with LASP, the most common legal needs in their communities, and LASP services. Stakeholders also were asked to share their perceptions of LASP's areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Follow-up questions were asked as needed. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the interview guide.

## **Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals**

LASP distributed an anonymous survey to client-eligible individuals during August and early September 2016. The survey was designed to gauge these individuals' awareness of and experience with LASP, identify their most pressing civil legal needs, determine any barriers that prohibit them receiving LASP's services, and discover how LASP can best meet their legal needs. Survey respondents also were asked to share demographic data about themselves.

The survey was distributed both by paper and through a link to an online survey designed using Qualtrics software. Once survey collection was completed, the paper surveys were entered manually into Qualtrics so the data from these surveys could be analyzed with the data from the online surveys.

A total of 315 people responded to the survey. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the survey instrument, Appendix C for demographic information about survey respondents, and Appendix D for the raw survey data.

## **Focus Groups**

In August 2016, six focus groups were conducted with representatives of nonprofit organizations and government agencies in LASP's service area. Two focus groups were held in Bucks County, one in Chester County, one in Delaware County and two in Montgomery County. The organizations and agencies represented in the focus groups serve a variety of populations, including domestic violence victims, the homeless, children and youth, older adults, the unemployed, and families in poverty.

Each focus group session lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Sessions were facilitated by Temple NEST staff; LASP staff were not present. Focus group participants were asked a semi-structured set of questions covering topics such as their awareness of and relationship with LASP, their perceptions of how their clients interact with LASP, and their perspectives on how LASP could better serve the civil legal needs of their communities. Follow-up questions were asked as needed.

A total of 77 people participated in the focus groups. Please see Appendix E for a copy of the focus group questions.

## V. Demographic Trends in the LASP Service Area

The demographic data are split into two sections. The first section provides general demographic data about the LASP service area. The second section explores trends in populations of special interest to LASP, including people whose income makes them eligible for LASP services, older adults and people who speak a language other than English at home.

### General Demographics

LASP’s service area is home to more than 2.5 million people. The following tables provide a demographic snapshot of the service area, as well as the counties and municipalities within it.

#### *Population Size and Change*

Table 2 details the current and recent change in population size in the areas served by LASP. The most populous county in LASP’s service area is Montgomery County, followed by Bucks, Delaware, and Chester counties. Chester County is the county with the largest percentage increase in its population between 2010 and 2015, while West Chester experienced the largest increase among the municipalities where LASP has a permanent office.

**Table 2: Population of LASP service area (2015)**

	Population	% Change 2010-2015
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	627,367	0.3
<b>Bristol</b>	9,569	-1.6
<b>Doylestown</b>	8,301	-0.9
<b>Chester Co.</b>	515,939	3.4
<b>West Chester</b>	19,842	7.5
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	563,894	0.9
<b>Chester</b>	34,092	0.4
<b>Media</b>	5,363	0.7
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	819,264	2.4
<b>Norristown</b>	34,412	0.3
<b>Pottstown</b>	22,664	1.3
<b>LASP Service Area Total</b>	2,526,464	1.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

#### *Age and Gender*

Tables 3 and 4 detail the age and gender breakdown of the population in the LASP’s service area. The proportions of children, adults, and older adults are similar in all four counties of LASP’s service area, with adults age 18-64 comprising more than 60% of the population.

**Table 3: Age breakdown of population in LASP service area (2015)**

	% Under 18	% 18-64	% 65+
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	21.1	61.7	17.2
<b>Chester Co.</b>	23.3	61.7	15.0
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	22.3	62.4	15.3
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	21.8	61.4	16.8
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	22.1	61.8	16.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There are slightly more females than males throughout LASP's service area.

**Table 4: Gender breakdown of population in LASP service area (2015)**

	% Male	% Female
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	49.0	51.0
<b>Chester Co.</b>	49.2	50.8
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	48.0	52.0
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	48.6	51.4
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	48.7	51.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### *Race and Ethnicity*

Tables 5 and 6 detail the racial and ethnic composition of the population in LASP's service area. Most people in LASP's service area are white, but Asians and blacks/African-Americans make up significant portions of the population. The largest proportion of Asians is in Montgomery County, while the largest proportion of African-Americans is in Delaware County.

**Table 5: Race composition of LASP service area (2015)**

	% White	% African-American	% American Indian and Alaska Native	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	% Two or More Races
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	89.1	4.2	0.3	4.8	0.1	1.6
<b>Chester Co.</b>	86.4	6.4	0.3	5.1	0.1	1.8
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	70.6	21.4	0.2	5.6	NA*	2.1
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	80.6	9.5	0.2	7.6	0.1	2.0
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	81.7	10.4	0.3	5.8	0.1	1.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

\*NA indicates data not available.

Chester County has the highest proportion of Hispanic/Latino residents, while Delaware County has the lowest.

**Table 6: Hispanic origin of population in LASP service area (2015)**

	% Hispanic or Latino
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	5.0
<b>Chester Co.</b>	7.3
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	3.7
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	4.9
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	5.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Language Spoken at Home

Table 7 details the use of languages other than English among people in the LASP’s service area. Approximately 12% of people age five or older living in LASP’s service area speak a language other than English at home. Norristown has the largest proportion of people who speak a language other than English at home – nearly 24%.

**Table 7: Percent of people age 5+ in LASP service area who speak a language other than English at home (2010-2014)**

	<b>% Primarily Speaking Language Other Than English</b>
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	10.9
Bristol	9.1
Doylestown	5.9
<b>Chester Co.</b>	12.1
West Chester	12.4
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	11.8
Chester	11.2
Media	8.2
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	12.9
Norristown	23.7
Pottstown	6.7
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	11.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Education Level

Table 8 details the educational attainment of people living in LASP’s service area. More than 90% of people living in LASP’s service area have at least a high school diploma, and more than 40% have at least a bachelor’s degree. Despite the region’s overall high level of education, some areas have noticeably lower levels of educational attainment. Chief among these areas is the city of Chester in Delaware County, where less than 80% of residents have at least a high school diploma, and less than 10% have at least a bachelor’s degree.

**Table 8: Educational attainment among people age 25+ in LASP service area (2010-2014)**

	<b>% High School Graduate or Higher</b>	<b>% Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</b>
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	93.5	36.5
Bristol	87.8	13.7
Doylestown	92.8	43.0
<b>Chester Co.</b>	92.8	48.8
West Chester	89.7	45.7
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	91.9	35.5
Chester	78.9	9.5
Media	94.6	47.1
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	93.5	46.2
Norristown	81.7	18.3
Pottstown	85.3	18.1
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	92.9	41.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## *Income and Poverty*

Table 9 details the median household and per capita incomes in the LASP service area. At the county level, Chester County has both the highest median household income and per capita income, followed by Montgomery, Bucks, and Delaware counties. Even though the Philadelphia suburbs have a reputation as a wealthy area, not all residents in the LASP service area earn comfortable incomes. Incomes in Bristol, West Chester, Chester, Norristown, and Pottstown are substantially lower than in their respective counties.

**Table 9: Median household and per capita income in LASP service area (2010-2014)**

	<b>Median Household Income (2010-2014)</b>	<b>Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (2010-2014)</b>
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	\$76,824	\$37,910
<b>Bristol</b>	\$41,446	\$21,559
<b>Doylestown</b>	\$66,172	\$42,558
<b>Chester Co.</b>	\$86,093	\$42,323
<b>West Chester</b>	\$48,779	\$26,674
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	\$64,174	\$33,539
<b>Chester</b>	\$28,607	\$15,516
<b>Media</b>	\$57,327	\$40,500
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	\$79,926	\$41,699
<b>Norristown</b>	\$42,296	\$21,369
<b>Pottstown</b>	\$45,724	\$24,231
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	\$76,754	\$38,868

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 10 details the proportion of people living in poverty in the LASP service area. The poverty rates in several municipalities equal or exceed the poverty rate across Pennsylvania (13.5%) and the United States (15.6%). More than 20% of people in Norristown, more than 25% of people in West Chester, and almost 33% of people in Chester live in poverty.

**Table 10: Proportion of people living below 125% of poverty line in LASP service area**

	<b>% of Population Living Below 125% of Federal Poverty Line</b>
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	6.6
<b>Bristol</b>	15.6
<b>Doylestown</b>	6.0
<b>Chester Co.</b>	7.3
<b>West Chester</b>	25.8
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	11.0
<b>Chester</b>	33.1
<b>Media</b>	8.7
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	7.1
<b>Norristown</b>	21.7
<b>Pottstown</b>	19.3
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	8.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Special Populations

LASP serves several special populations based on factors such as income, age, and status as domestic abuse victims. Tables 11-13 below explore trends affecting two of these populations: 1) people who are eligible for LASP services based on income and 2) older adults. Table 14 outlines trends in the proportion of people in LASP’s service area who speak a language other than English at home.

### *Income-Eligible Population*

People who are considered “income-eligible” for LASP services are those who are at or under 125% of the federal poverty level, thus making them eligible for services solely based on their income. Certain other populations, such as older adults, victims of domestic abuse, and people who face loss of housing due to foreclosure may be eligible for services even if their income exceeds 125% of the poverty level.

Approximately 10% of the people living in LASP’s service area for whom poverty status can be determined have incomes under 125% of the federal poverty level. Thus, at least 244,000 people are potentially eligible for the organization’s services solely based on income. The largest number of income-eligible people live in Delaware County, followed by Montgomery, Bucks, and Chester counties. Delaware County also has the highest proportion of income-eligible people compared to the other counties.

Poverty is particularly pervasive in some of the municipalities in which LASP has a permanent office. Nearly 42% of people in Chester city are income-eligible, as are more than 30% of people in Norristown. Table 11 details the poverty status of the population in the LASP service area.

**Table 11: Income-eligible population in LASP service area (2014)**

	Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined	% of Population Under 125% of Federal Poverty Level	# of People Under 125% of Federal Poverty Level
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	617,670	8.1	50,031
<b>Bristol</b>	NA*	NA	NA
<b>Doylestown</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Chester Co.</b>	493,535	9.4	46,392
<b>West Chester</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	539,465	13.9	74,986
<b>Chester</b>	30,997	41.7	12,926
<b>Media</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	789,516	8.7	68,688
<b>Norristown</b>	33,970	30.3	10,293
<b>Pottstown</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	2,440,186	10.0	244,019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

\*NA indicates data not available.

The number of income-eligible people increased in all counties of LASP’s service area during the five-year period between 2010 and 2014. The largest county-level increase, nearly 23%, was in Chester County, and Montgomery County saw a nearly 19% increase. Also notable is the nearly 30% increase in the number of income-eligible people in Norristown. Table 12 details the

number of income-eligible people in the LASP service area each year from 2010 to 2014 and the percent change in the income-eligible population over time.

**Table 12: Number of income-eligible people in LASP service area (2010-2014)**

	# Income-Eligible People (2010)	# Income-Eligible People (2011)	# Income-Eligible People (2012)	# Income-Eligible People (2013)	# Income-Eligible People (2014)	% Change (2010 to 2014)
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	44,723	44,356	45,050	46,937	50,031	11.9%
<b>Bristol</b>	NA*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Doylestown</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Chester Co.</b>	37,758	38,657	41,398	43,655	46,392	22.9%
<b>West Chester</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	66,558	68,018	70,364	73,207	74,986	12.7%
<b>Chester</b>	13,777	12,820	12,748	13,257	12,926	-6.2%
<b>Media</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	57,765	58,970	63,232	65,913	68,688	18.9%
<b>Norristown</b>	7,950	7,715	8,784	8,665	10,293	29.5%
<b>Pottstown</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	206,804	210,001	220,044	229,712	244,019	18.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

\*NA indicates data not available

### *Older Adults*

The number of people age 65 or older living in LASP’s service area was 9% higher in 2014 than in 2010. Chester County had the largest increase, followed by Bucks, Montgomery, and Delaware counties. Montgomery County had the largest number of older adults throughout the five-year period. Table 13 details the population aged 65 and older in the LASP service areas from 2010 to 2014 and the percent change in this population over time.

**Table 13: People Age 65+ in LASP service area (2010-2014)**

	# People Age 65+ (2010)	# People Age 65+ (2011)	# People Age 65+ (2012)	# People Age 65+ (2013)	# People Age 65+ (2014)	% Change (2010 to 2014)
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	87,252	89,499	92,139	94,941	97,905	12.2
<b>Chester Co.</b>	61,253	62,856	64,932	67,078	69,406	13.3
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	79,364	79,644	80,224	81,024	81,977	3.3
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	117,435	119,243	121,573	124,275	127,132	8.3
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	345,304	351,242	358,868	367,318	376,420	9.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### *Language Spoken at Home*

The proportion of people age five or older who speak a language other than English at home remained relatively flat between 2010 and 2014. The proportion dropped slightly in several municipalities, including Bristol, Media, and Norristown. Table 14 details the proportion of the population in the LASP service area speaking a language other than English at home by year and percent change in this population over time.

**Table 14: Language spoken at home by persons age 5+ (2010-2014)**

	% Speaking Language Other Than English (2010)	% Speaking Language Other Than English (2011)	% Speaking Language Other Than English (2012)	% Speaking Language Other Than English (2013)	% Speaking Language Other Than English (2014)	% Change (2010 to 2014)
<b>Bucks Co.</b>	10.5	10.6	10.7	10.9	10.9	0.4
<b>Bristol</b>	9.5	9.8	9.0	9.3	9.1	-0.4
<b>Doylestown</b>	4.8	4.5	5.0	5.6	5.9	1.1
<b>Chester Co.</b>	11.4	11.6	11.9	11.8	12.1	0.7
<b>West Chester</b>	11.2	11.9	13.3	13.5	12.4	1.2
<b>Delaware Co.</b>	10.9	11.0	11.2	11.6	11.8	0.9
<b>Chester</b>	8.7	10.1	9.7	10.0	11.2	2.5
<b>Media</b>	10.0	9.2	8.1	9.2	8.2	-1.8
<b>Montgomery Co.</b>	11.8	12.1	12.4	12.5	12.9	1.1
<b>Norristown</b>	24.8	26.4	26.2	24.8	23.7	-1.1
<b>Pottstown</b>	5.5	5.9	6.3	4.8	6.7	1.2
<b>LASP Service Area</b>	11.2	11.3	11.6	11.7	11.9	0.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## VI. Assessment Findings

### Identification of Critical Community Civil Legal Needs

Data about community civil legal needs were collected both through qualitative means (i.e., interviews with LASP representatives, focus groups with community advocates) and quantitative means (i.e., surveys of client-eligible individuals). These data offer insights about the most-identified civil legal needs in LASP’s service area, community awareness of LASP as a resource to meet civil legal needs, and community preferences about how LASP can best engage with people who have civil legal needs.

#### *Needs Identified by LASP Stakeholders and Focus Groups*

When LASP representatives and focus group participants were asked to identify the most pressing civil legal issues in their communities, they mentioned the following areas:

- Family law
  - Custody, divorce, child support, spousal support
- Domestic violence/protection from abuse
- Housing law
  - Landlord-tenant disputes, evictions, security deposits, lack of affordable housing, housing discrimination, federal housing subsidy terminations, low-quality housing, infestations
- Public benefits law
  - Social Security, SSI, Social Security Disability, unemployment benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, appeal of benefit denials



- Bankruptcy law
- Expungement of criminal records
- Consumer law
  - Credit card debt, identity theft, predatory lending, scams, debt collection, utilities
- Elder law
  - Power of attorney, bankruptcy, consumer issues, nursing home abuses, senior citizens' rights
- Employment issues
  - Sexual harassment, workplace disputes

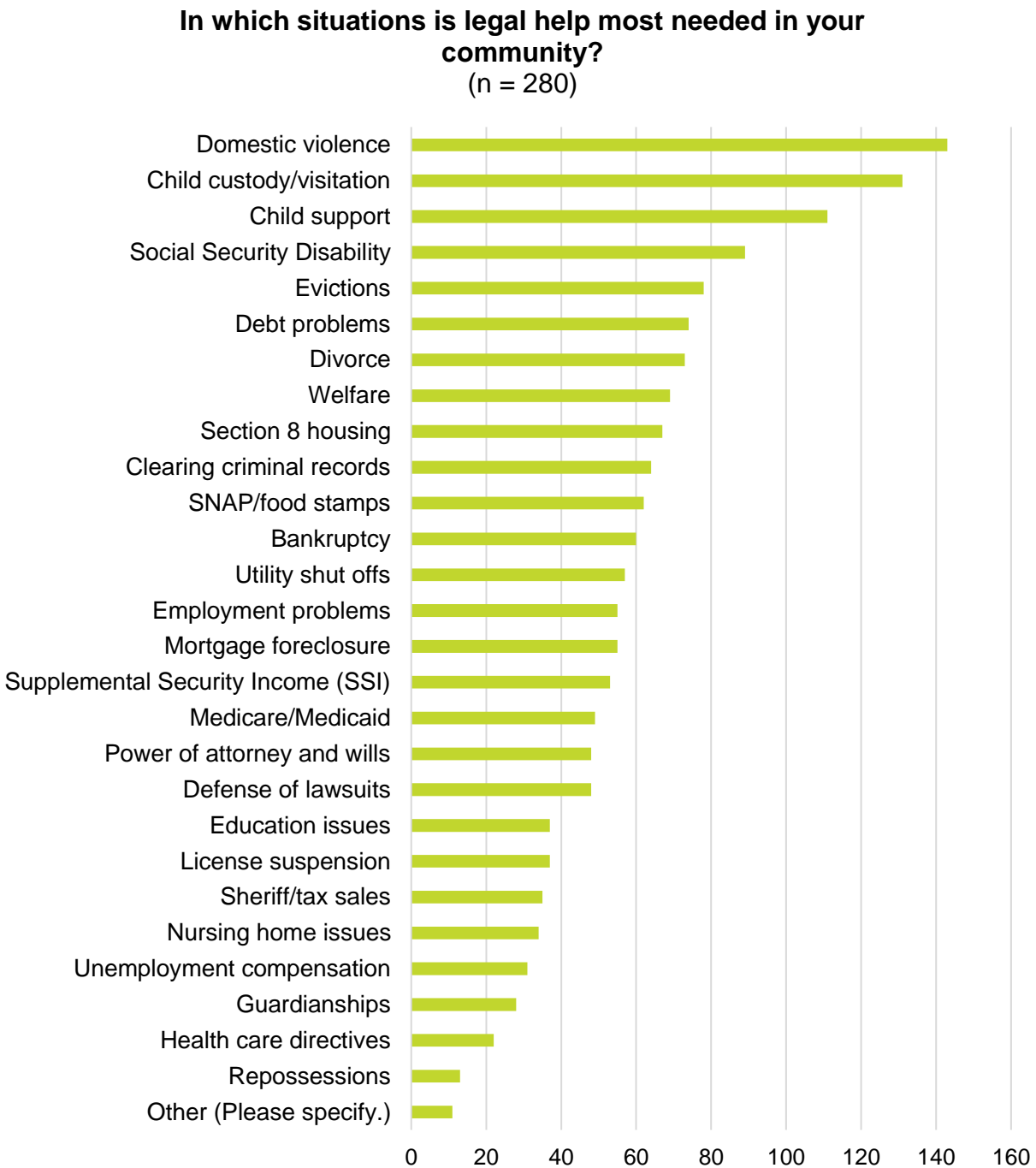
Most LASP representatives who were interviewed said the nature of issues addressed by their offices has not changed much in recent years, although the number of cases in each category can shift depending on factors such as time of year. For example, a representative of one office commented there tends to be an uptick in custody cases during the summer, while divorce cases often increase during the holiday season. In addition, several LASP representatives noted the increasing complexity of cases they encounter; they attributed this complexity to the fact that many clients must deal with challenges that cut across multiple legal issues, such as when clients face eviction because their public benefits have been cut so dramatically that they no longer have money to pay rent. One representative mentioned that some custody cases have become more complicated because an increasing number of grandparents are petitioning for custody or visitation.

Many LASP representatives mentioned that the cases that pass through their offices are the result of a complex set of factors, including federal regulation of the types of cases LASP is able to handle and community perceptions about LASP's areas of expertise. These factors can limit LASP's exposure to certain legal needs, such as those of people residing in this country without proper documentation – a group LASP is prohibited from serving. Changes in laws or regulations also can play a role in what legal issues LASP addresses. One representative said she believes more people will approach LASP in the future for assistance in expunging or sealing criminal records due to a new Pennsylvania law that makes it possible for people to seal certain misdemeanor records so that they can be viewed only by law enforcement and cannot be seen by others, such as potential employers or landlords.

### *Needs Identified by Client-Eligible Community Members*

When client-eligible individuals were surveyed and asked to choose up to seven situations in which they feel legal help is most needed in their communities, the top choices included domestic violence, child custody, and child support. Figure 1 shows the frequency with which client-eligible individuals mentioned a range of legal needs.

**Figure 1: Areas of greatest legal need reported by client-eligible community members**



Survey respondents also were invited to share written comments about their legal needs. These comments focused on a variety of legal issues, including lack of affordable housing, landlord-tenant disputes, custody conflicts, guardianship issues, and clearing of criminal records. In addition, several respondents used the comments to express frustration about perceived unfair treatment by the judicial system. Most of these comments focused on how the system “takes advantage” of poor people and other vulnerable populations who do not have the resources to fight for themselves. Table 15 provides examples of the comments written by survey respondents.

**Table 15: Examples of written survey comments about legal needs**

<p><b><i>Comments about legal issues</i></b></p>	<p>“...All of my SSDI goes to pay rent because not too many places are Section 8 and my landlord increases rent every year despite my pleading to waive it.”</p> <p>“Need help with filing for guardianship of mother who has Alzheimer’s Disease, need elder law attorney.”</p> <p>“Cannot get SNAP.”</p> <p>“Most people I know do not know that first thing on how to represent or protect themselves in court.”</p>
<p><b><i>Comments about how the judicial system treats low-income and disadvantaged people</i></b></p>	<p>“The judicial system need [sic] to stop running over, or taking advantage of low-income/disadvantage [sic] people.”</p> <p>“The judicial system sucks in this area depending on the case, especially PFA.”</p> <p>“Being a full-time mom &amp; working full time then not working &amp; still have to fight the government for money is ridiculous.”</p>

***Discussion of Identified Needs***

There was general agreement among LASP stakeholders, focus groups, and client eligible survey respondents that family law, housing law and public benefits law were the areas of greatest need. Legal problems cited included protection from abuse, child custody, eviction, various types of landlord-tenant disputes, and access to benefits such as TANF, SNAP, Medical Assistance, or Social Security Disability. Participants in the needs assessment also indicated a significant need for legal assistance with consumer law, including debt problems and bankruptcy; expungements to clear criminal records; bankruptcy; employment law; and issues of special concern to older adults such as health directives and problems with nursing home care.

The needs assessment process involved diverse groups (LASP stakeholders, focus group members and client eligible survey respondents) and, as expected, each group’s perspective varied depending on the personal experiences of those participating. Involving these varied perspectives helps to obtain a more complete view of community needs. LASP was limited by practical and financial considerations in distributing surveys and recruiting community members for focus groups, which may have affected the assessment results.

LASP successfully delivers legal services targeted to meet the needs identified during the assessment. While it is clear that resource limitations mean that LASP cannot serve all those who need free civil legal services, the organization has the capacity to address the common types of problems experienced by low income people in its service area.

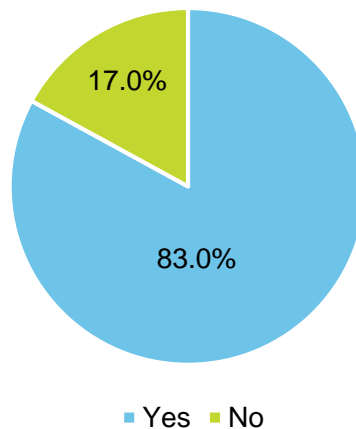
## Community Awareness of LASP as a Resource

Data gathered through the survey of client-eligible individuals and focus groups with local advocates show that there is significant community awareness of LASP as a resource to meet civil legal needs, particularly the needs of low-income people and domestic abuse victims of any income. For example, more than 80% of client-eligible individuals who were surveyed had heard of LASP before they received the survey (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Prior awareness of LASP among client-eligible individuals**

**Had you heard of LASP before receiving this survey?**

(n = 311)

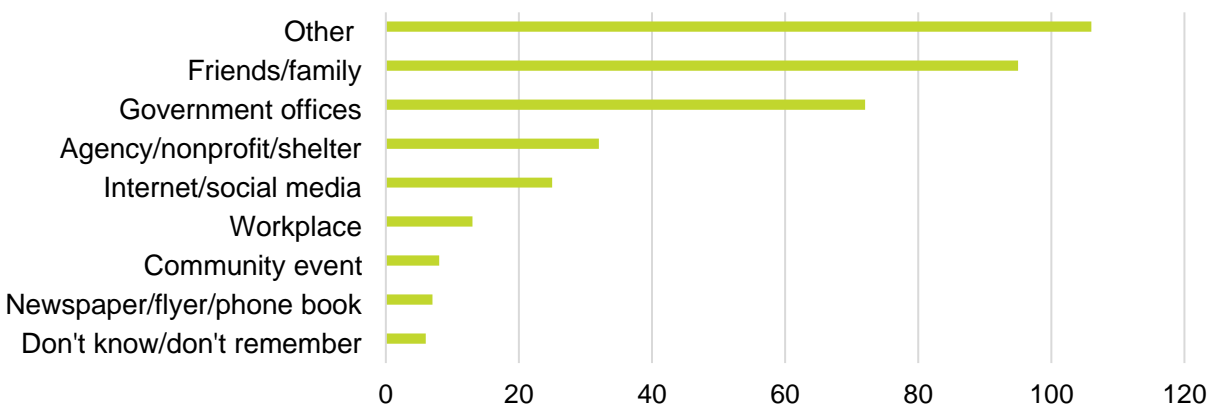


When asked to identify the ways they had learned about LASP’s services, “other” was most commonly chosen. The primary “other” response was court. Other popular sources of information about LASP were friends/family, government offices, and nonprofit agencies. Figure 3 details the sources of information about LASP services identified by client-eligible survey respondents.

**Figure 3: Sources of LASP information identified by client-eligible individuals**

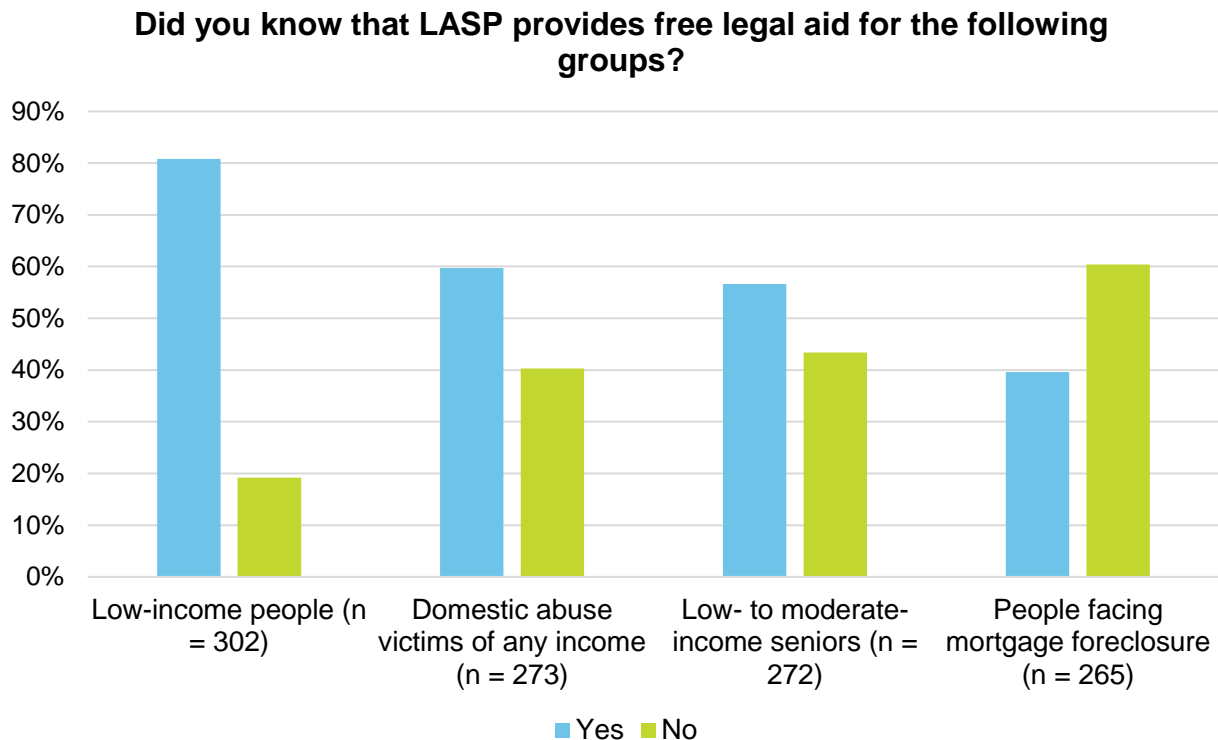
**How did you learn about LASP services?**

(n = 257)



Slightly more than 80% of client-eligible survey respondents were aware that LASP provides services to low-income people, and nearly 60 % were aware that the organization also serves domestic abuse victims of any income, and low- to moderate-income seniors. Only about 40% of respondents were aware that LASP assists people facing mortgage foreclosure. Figure 4 details the level of awareness of the different populations LASP assists.

**Figure 4: Level of awareness of populations served by LASP reported by client-eligible individuals**



Focus group participants were also asked to indicate their awareness of the groups that LASP serves, and if they knew about LASP’s four-county service area. Almost all participants knew LASP serves low-income people, and a majority knew the organization serves domestic abuse victims and seniors. Less than half of participants were aware of LASP’s work with people facing mortgage foreclosure. In addition, almost all participants knew LASP covers a four-county service area.

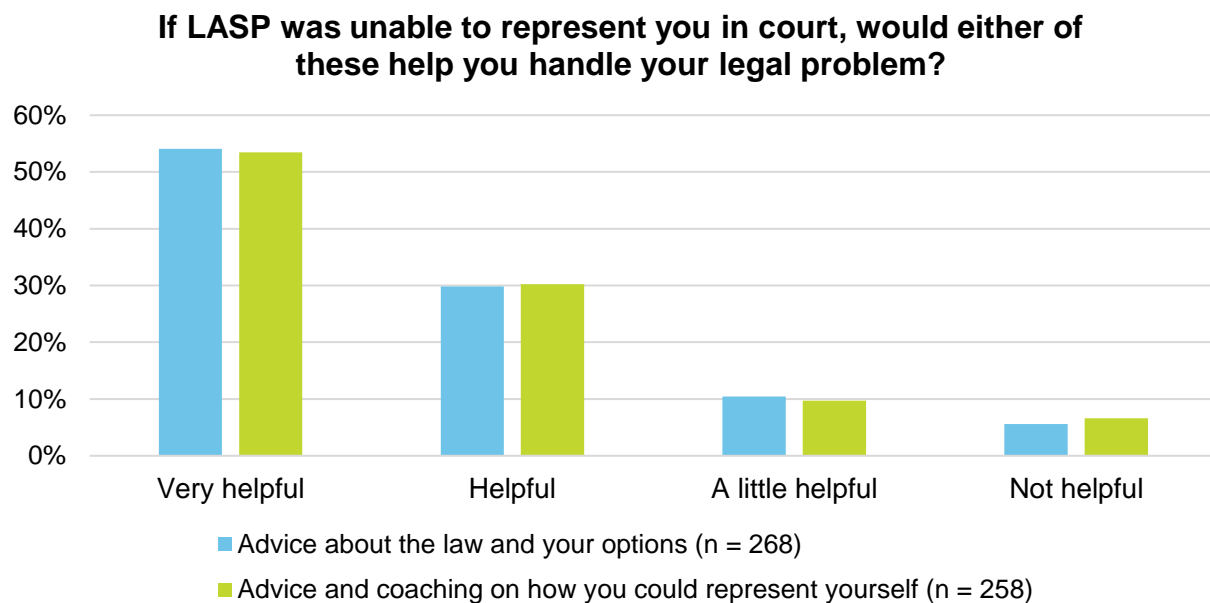
Focus group participants gave mixed responses when asked whether their clients were aware of LASP. Many participants said their clients know about the organization, while others perceived that many of their clients “had no clue” about it. One participant specifically mentioned that awareness of LASP seems to be lower among Hispanic clients as compared to white and African-American clients, perhaps due to language barriers. In addition to referring clients directly to LASP, focus group participants said their agencies try to help clients become more aware of LASP by distributing brochures, posting LASP’s contact information, and offering to assist clients connect with LASP through the agency’s Helpline. Several participants mentioned that they sometimes walk people to a LASP office to ensure they get help.

## Preferred Forms of Engagement with LASP

Due to its limited resources, LASP is forced to make tough decisions about which clients it serves and how much assistance it will provide. Several of the survey questions explored respondents' perspectives on how LASP can best engage the community despite the organization's limitations.

When asked how LASP could best assist them if it was unable to represent them in court, almost 85% of client-eligible survey respondents said advice about the law and their legal options would be either "Helpful" or "Very Helpful." Almost the same proportion of respondents said advice and coaching about how they could represent themselves in court would be "Helpful" or "Very Helpful." Only about six percent of respondents said neither option would be helpful. Figure 5 details the types of assistance preferred by survey respondents.

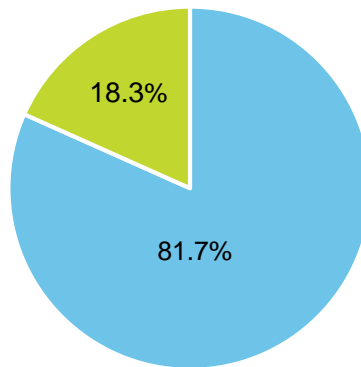
**Figure 5: Assistance from LASP preferred by clients whom LASP cannot represent in court**



Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether, if forced to choose due to limited resources, LASP should focus on intensely serving a smaller group of individuals with pressing legal needs, or provide less in-depth service to a larger group of people. Although survey respondents showed a willingness to handle some legal issues on their own, they overwhelmingly indicated that they think LASP should continue to concentrate on in-depth individualized services. Nearly 82% of respondents said LASP should continue to provide intensive services to people with immediate legal needs, while only 18% said LASP staff should develop different ways to help larger numbers of people with information/advice/self-help materials. Figure 6 details preference among survey respondents for intensive versus broad services from LASP.

**Figure 6: Preference among survey respondents for intensive vs. broad services**

**If LASP had a choice, what should it do?**  
(n = 262)

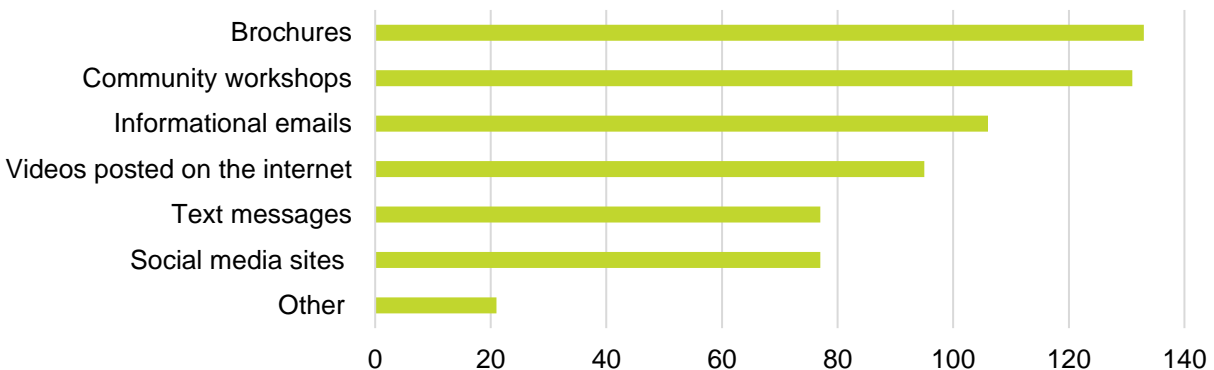


- Continue to provide intensive services to people with immediate legal needs, including representing individuals in court cases
- Use LASP staff to develop different ways to help larger numbers of people with information/advice/self-help materials

When respondents were asked to identify the most useful ways to receive information from LASP, traditional outreach methods such as brochures, community workshops, and informational emails topped the list. However, many respondents also were interested in more contemporary forms of engagement, including videos posted on the Internet, text messages, and social media sites. “Other” responses included face-to-face instruction, a law library, and information by mail. Figure 7 details the preferred forms of engagement with LASP among survey respondents.

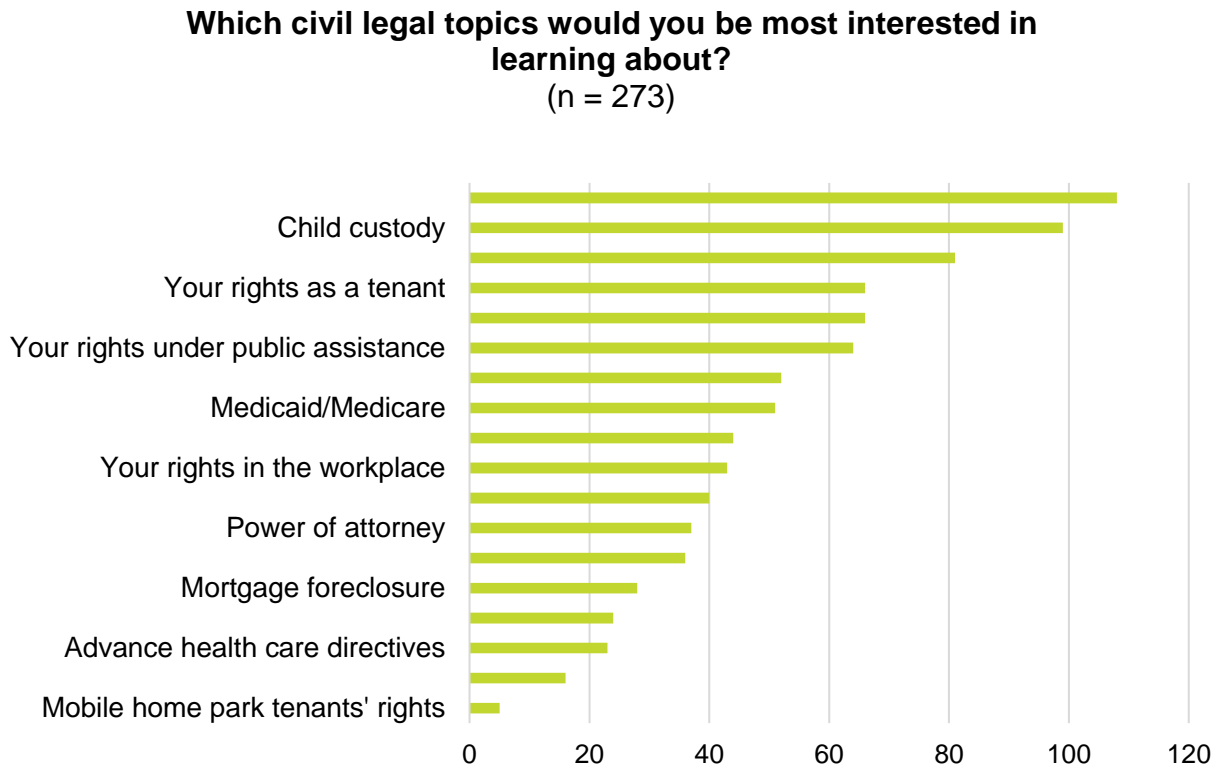
**Figure 7: Preferred forms of engagement with LASP**

**Which would be the most useful ways for you to receive self-help materials and information about important civil legal topics?**  
(n = 258)



When asked which civil legal topic they most would like to learn about, the highest number of respondents said they wanted to learn how to represent themselves at District Court. Other popular topics of interest included child custody, protection from abuse, tenants' rights, child support, and public assistance rights. Mortgage foreclosure, consumer rights, advance health care directives, and mobile home park tenants' rights were among the topics with the least amount of interest. Figure 8 details preferred topics of legal education among survey respondents.

**Figure 8: Preferred topics of legal education**



Focus group participants provided a wide variety of answers when asked for opinions about the most effective strategies LASP could use to provide legal education and information to existing and potential clients. These strategies included:

- Brochures/information sheets
- One-on-one coaching
- Email
- Face-to-face interaction
- YouTube videos
- Texting
- Social media
- Smartphone apps/mobile-friendly website
- Attendance at community events
- Engagement with faith communities
- Open forums with legal experts
- Partnerships with local libraries



- Newspaper ads
- Shows on public-access television stations

There was much debate within the focus groups about how high-tech forms of communication such as texting, social media, and online videos would be received by the populations eligible for LASP services. Some focus group participants adamantly asserted that most of their clients, even ones of limited financial means, have access to the Internet through their smartphones, friends or family, or local libraries. Many of these participants reported that their clients respond only to texts or information posted online, and that more traditional forms of communication such as mailings and phone calls are no longer effective. However, other focus group participants said their clients still struggle to get consistent Internet access and prefer to work one-on-one with someone who can guide them through the legal process. The need for individualized attention seemed particularly important for people with limited English skills, people with disabilities, and people with mental health problems.

Community organizations that participated in the focus groups indicated a willingness to help LASP serve more people. In almost every focus group and without prompting, participants expressed a desire to reduce the burden on LASP by helping their clients navigate LASP's processes, and perhaps prevent clients from needing the organization's services at all. Focus group participants quickly acknowledged, however, that they could not engage in this work until they were better educated about LASP, its services, and the legal matters it addressed. Focus group participants were particularly eager to learn about what services LASP offers and who is eligible for them. Participants were also interested in learning about how to help the legal process go more smoothly for clients so they don't become frustrated and abandon their efforts.

Participants eagerly offered ideas about how LASP could provide this education to people in nonprofit and government agencies. These included:

- Classes on legal topics
- Half-day/full-day workshops to provide basic information about LASP and a basic understanding of legal issues such as simple wills and power of attorney
- Community task forces to address legal problems of high interest (e.g., landlord-tenant issues)
- Presentations at nonprofit organizations' and government agencies' staff meetings
- Email blasts
- Webinars
- Videos posted online
- Twitter account posting an interesting legal factoid each day

High rates of employee turn-over in social services agencies are likely to make efforts to educate staff challenging, according to focus group participants. One participant suggested that LASP use a train-the-trainer model to train a group of people who could go back to their communities and organizations to train others on legal topics and LASP services.

Client-eligible individuals who were surveyed were given the opportunity to provide written comments about the quality of LASP's services. A majority of these comments were complimentary, praising LASP staff for being helpful and for working on behalf of the

disadvantaged. A few of the comments were negative, and largely reflected the realities of LASP’s limited funding and service area. Table 16 provides examples of the comments written by survey respondents.

**Table 16: Examples of written survey comments about quality of LASP services**

<p>“LASP is a great organization, staffed by competent, caring people.”</p> <p>“[LASP] helped me a LOT. Thank you SO much!”</p> <p>“Keep doing what you are doing for low-income families.”</p> <p>“Wish I knew about it a long time ago, sooner.”</p> <p>“Legal Aid has never given my child and me a lawyer to represent us in court even though we were mistreated and abused by several different parties.”</p>
---

## VII. Ongoing Barriers to the Provision of Services

Despite LASP’s best efforts to make its services as accessible and expansive as possible, the organization still faces significant barriers to meeting the level of need for its services in the community. The primary barriers identified through the needs assessment were related to funding limitations, client circumstances, and community perceptions.

### Funding Limitations

All participants in the needs assessment in some way commented upon the impact that limited funds and highly restricted funding sources have on LASP’s work. Participants clearly understand that the organization serves only a fraction of the people it could if it had more money. They also recognize how the lack of funding affects the organization’s ability to hire more staff, increase the wages of existing staff, and address on-going needs for technology and infrastructure improvements. Focus group participants shared the frustrations they and their clients experience when they learn LASP cannot help them because it does not have the necessary resources.

LASP representatives who were interviewed specifically cited the limitations placed on LASP’s work by funding sources which restrict LASP to certain types of legal work or to serving certain types of clients (e.g., adults aged 60+, or residents of Bucks County). As a result, some services may not be available in all counties, or may be unavailable during part of the year. While not versed in the specific causes of these problems, focus group participants reflected frustration that help is sometimes not available to their clients. One LASP representative also referenced the restrictions imposed by the Legal Services Corporation, which prohibits LASP from serving certain groups of clients (e.g., prisoners, undocumented immigrants) or handling certain types of cases (e.g., abortion, euthanasia). These restrictions also prevent LASP from political organizing and advocacy.

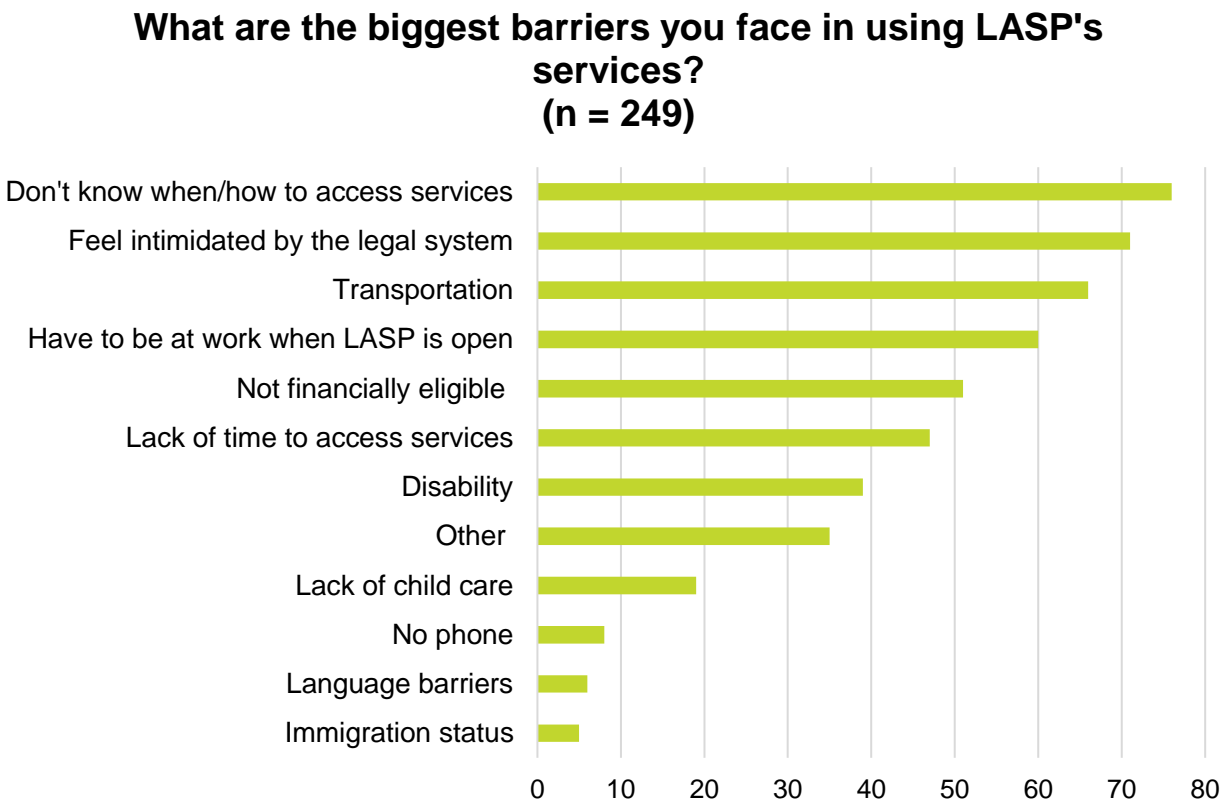
Despite these concerns, participants in the needs assessment applauded LASP for trying to maximize its existing resources. In addition to recognizing the importance of the Helpline, LASP representatives cited the establishment of the pro bono coordinator position to increase the private bar’s participation in LASP’s work, as well as the organization’s efforts to pursue

funding as a regional entity. Focus group participants overall viewed LASP as a vital community resource. While some expressed frustrations, they also understood that LASP operates with limited resources. Many focus group participants praised LASP for its work, and said their clients who access LASP services have mostly positive experiences. In particular, LASP’s attorneys earned praise for their dedication to the organization and its clients. Several focus group participants spoke about the professionalism of LASP attorneys, especially that they stay calm and focused at a time when a client can be in a panic and/or highly emotional.

### Client Circumstances

When client-eligible individuals were asked by survey to indicate barriers that prevented them from accessing LASP’s services, the most common responses were not knowing when/how to access services, feeling intimidated by the legal system, and a lack of transportation. Many respondents also reported that having to be at work when LASP is open, not being financially eligible for services, and lack of time were significant barriers to working with LASP. The least-cited barriers were lack of a phone, language barriers, and immigration status. The “other” responses to this question included incarceration, the long wait time for assistance, health issues, and parking. Figure 9 details barriers to accessing LASP services among survey respondents.

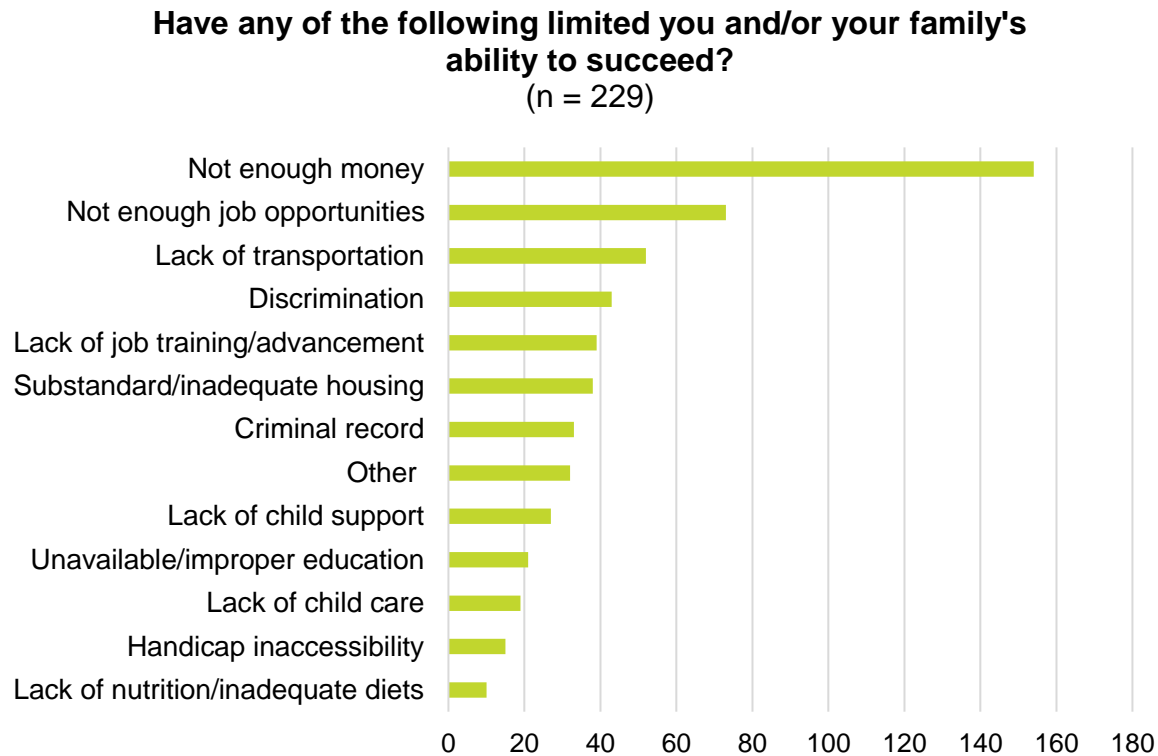
**Figure 9: Barriers to accessing LASP services reported by client-eligible survey respondents**



Client-eligible individuals also identified factors that have limited their ability to succeed in general, and the most respondents cited a lack of money. Other limitations included not enough job opportunities, lack of transportation, discrimination, and lack of job training/advancement. The least-cited limitations were lack of child support, unavailable/improper education, lack of

child care, handicap inaccessibility, and lack of nutrition/inadequate diets. Limitations identified in the “other” category included incarceration, disability, and educational loans/creditors. Figure 10 details factors limiting survey respondents’ success.

**Figure 10: Factors limiting success reported by client-eligible survey respondents**



## Technology and its Limits

Comments by focus group participants and some LASP stakeholders related to the LASP Helpline and its usefulness for various populations. While the Helpline is generally praised for making access to help readily available, participants pointed out areas for improvements. Focus group participants commented that some of their clients have jobs where they cannot take breaks during the day to call the Helpline and have a lengthy discussion or wait on hold for an advocate to become available. One participant who works with older adults said that even though they are usually available to call during the day, the Helpline is still a challenge for many of them because of hearing difficulties. Participants also indicated that their clients can find the Helpline’s phone prompts confusing or intimidating, and that clients may not know which prompts to choose because they cannot clearly articulate their legal issues. Clients’ frustration only rises if they finally reach someone and are told that LASP cannot help in their situation.

Several comments from focus group members demonstrated either a lack of familiarity with current Helpline features, or that their clients are somehow not accessing these features while using the Helpline. One participant said many clients call the Helpline from cell phones with limited minutes, and can’t afford to wait on hold. In fact, a recently added Helpline feature addresses this concern and allows callers with cellphones to leave a call back number without losing their place in the cell phone queue. Concern was also raised about whether the Helpline

experience was as successful for Spanish-speaking callers. Currently, callers have an option at the beginning of the call to select the Spanish-speaking option that bypasses the phone trees that frustrate some other callers. Either the call is answered by one of the Helpline's bilingual staff, or the caller hears a message in Spanish explaining that they are on hold and that their call will be handled by the next available advocate.

## Community Perceptions

Several focus group participants reported that, in the past, they had struggled to convince clients to give LASP a try due to their clients' perceptions and stereotypes related to legal services programs. They indicated that some clients assume the organization does not provide high-quality services because its services are free and its primary audience is low-income people. Some clients also assume that lawyers who work for LASP are there because they could not succeed in private practice or a more-lucrative legal career. When a community member has a bad experience or is turned away because of LASP's limited resources, word spreads quickly and sometimes deters others from using the organization.

## VIII. Conclusion: Building on Strengths

Despite the challenges LASP faces, the needs assessment revealed that the organization has many strengths that will help it endure and prosper in the future. These strengths include:

- **Staff commitment.** Staff members at all levels of LASP's hierarchy are clearly dedicated to, and passionate about, the organization's work. Many staff members have been with the organization for more than a decade. Not only are staff members competent in legal practice, but they also understand the civil legal needs of their communities, as well as the complexities of poverty and how it affects individuals and families.
- **Community involvement.** LASP chooses not to isolate itself. It is an organization that is highly engaged with the communities it serves. LASP attorneys participate in numerous community education initiatives and serve on various community collaborations dedicated to issues such as hoarding and homelessness. The organization actively seeks the input of people in communities hardest hit by poverty and other problems.
- **Organizational reputation.** LASP is well known and well respected in the region. It is regarded as an organization that provides high-quality, competent, and professional services. Community agencies have a high awareness of LASP and do not hesitate to refer their clients to the organization. LASP also has a good reputation with the private bar and judiciary, as evidenced by the strong pro bono networks, connections to county bar associations, and funding from a variety of local agencies.

These strengths form a strong base from which LASP can seek to further expand and improve the services it provides to the client communities within its service area.

## **Appendix A: Protocol for Stakeholder Interviews**

Please tell me about your work at LASP. How long have you worked there, and what is your role?

Tell me about the intake process. How does it work? What different “paths” can people take through your services?

What are the most common legal issues faced by the clients with whom you work? Has the nature of these issues changed during your time with LASP?

What do you feel is LASP’s reputation in the community? Do community members know that they can go to LASP for legal services?

What is your level of communication among the LASP offices? Are the offices well-connected, or are they pretty autonomous?

How does funding affect what LASP does?

What is one thing you think LASP does really well, and one thing you think it could do to make itself even more effective?

How can LASP best prepare itself for the future?

## Appendix B: Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals



### Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP) Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals Summer 2016

Please take a few minutes to tell us what types of civil legal services you need most and what services you think are most needed in your community. Your opinions are important to us and will help LASP decide how to best use our limited resources to provide legal assistance. This survey is anonymous and should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. If you have questions about this survey, please call us at 610-275-5400. Thank you!

#### How did you get this survey? (Check one.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a LASP office                     | <input type="checkbox"/> From a link in an email  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After a call to LASP's helpline      | <input type="checkbox"/> From a link posted on a website or social media site (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a LASP community education event  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From an organization other than LASP | _____   |

#### Had you heard of LASP before receiving this survey? (Circle one.)

Yes

No

If "Yes", how did you learn about LASP services? (Check all that apply.) If "No", skip this question.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/family             | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet/social media     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government offices         | <input type="checkbox"/> Court                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community event            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace                  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/flyer/phone book | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/don't remember |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agency/nonprofit/shelter   |  |

**Do you know that LASP provides free legal aid for the following groups? (Circle your replies.)**

Low-income people	Yes	No
Domestic abuse victims of any income	Yes	No
Low- to moderate-income seniors	Yes	No
People facing mortgage foreclosure	Yes	No

**Have you ever received services from LASP? (Circle one.)**

Yes                                  No

**Sometimes low- and moderate-income people need help with civil legal issues. Underline up to seven (7) situations where you think legal help is most needed in your community.**

- |                          |                             |                                    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Domestic violence        | Mortgage foreclosure        | SNAP/food stamps                   |
| Child custody/visitation | Evictions                   | Unemployment compensation          |
| Divorce                  | Section 8 housing           | Supplemental Security Income (SSI) |
| Child support            | Utility shut offs           | Social Security Disability         |
| Welfare                  | Bankruptcy                  | Medicare/Medicaid                  |
| License suspension       | Employment problems         | Clearing criminal records          |
| Education issues         | Repossessions               | Nursing home issues                |
| Defense of lawsuits      | Debt problems               | Health care directives             |
| Sheriff/tax sales        | Power of attorney and wills | Guardianships                      |
| Other (Please specify.)  |                             |                                    |

---

**What are the biggest barriers you face in using LASP's services? Underline up to three (3) choices.**

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Transportation                         | Lack of child care              |
| Don't know when/how to access services | Disability                      |
| Feel intimidated by the legal system   | Lack of time to access services |
| Have to be at work when LASP is open   | Language barriers               |
| Not financially eligible               | Immigration status              |
| Other (Please specify.)                | No phone                        |

---



**If LASP was unable to represent you in court, would either of these help you handle your legal problem? (Circle your replies.)**

**Advice about the law and your options**

Very helpful                      Helpful                      A little helpful                      Not helpful

**Advice and coaching on how you could represent yourself**

Very helpful                      Helpful                      A little helpful                      Not helpful

**If LASP had a choice between a) representing individuals in court cases or b) providing information to more people through telephone advice, community education programs and/or working with the courts to develop more self-help legal systems, which do you think would best serve your community? (Check one.)**

- Continue to provide intensive services to people with immediate legal needs, including representing individuals in court cases  
or  
 Use LASP staff to develop different ways to help larger numbers of people with information/advice/self-help materials

**Which would be the most useful ways for you to receive self-help materials and information about important civil legal topics? Underline up to three (3) choices.**

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Brochures               | Videos posted on the internet                |
| Community workshops     | Social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) |
| Informational emails    | Text messages                                |
| Other (Please specify.) |  |
- 

**Which civil legal topics would you be most interested in learning about? Underline up to four (4) choices.**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| How to represent yourself at District Court | Housing discrimination           |
| Child custody                               | Your rights as a tenant          |
| Child support                               | Mortgage foreclosure             |
| No-fault divorce                            | Mobile home park tenants' rights |
| Protection from abuse                       | Consumer rights                  |
| Your rights under public assistance         | Clearing criminal records        |
| Bankruptcy                                  | Medicaid/Medicare                |
| Your rights in the workplace                | Power of attorney                |
| Other (Please specify.)                     | Advance health care directive    |
-

**Have any of the following limited you and/or your family's ability to succeed? Underline all that apply.**

Discrimination  
Substandard/inadequate housing  
Lack of child care  
Handicap inaccessibility  
Lack of transportation  
Not enough job opportunities  
Other (Please specify.)

Unavailable/improper education  
Lack of nutrition/inadequate diets  
Lack of job training/advancement  
Lack of child support  
Criminal record  
Not enough money

---

**Please share any comments you have about LASP and/or legal issues facing low-income/disadvantaged people in suburban Philadelphia.**

Many of the organizations that provide funding to make free legal services available ask us questions about who we serve. You can help us by answering the following questions. We have not asked for your name, so there is no way to identify you from these answers.

**In which county do you live? (Circle one.)**

Bucks          Chester          Delaware          Montgomery          Other (Please specify.)

---

**What is your zip code?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your gender? (Circle one.)**

Male                                  Female                                  Other

**What is your age? (Circle one.)**

Under 18      18-24      25-34      35-44      45-54      55-64      65+

**What is your ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)**

\_\_\_ White  
\_\_\_ Black or African-American  
\_\_\_ Latino  
\_\_\_ Asian  
\_\_\_ Native American  
\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

- Multi-racial
- Other (Please specify.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What is the highest level of school you have completed? (Check one.)**

- Less than high school diploma
- High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- College degree
- Post-graduate degree (e.g., master's degree, PhD)

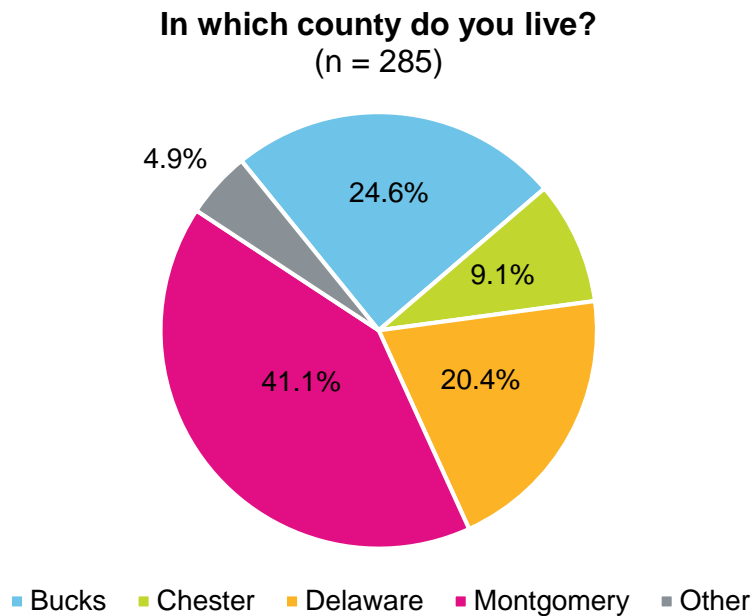
**What is the primary language you speak at home? (Check one.)**

- English
- Spanish
- Other (Please specify.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Demographics of Respondents to Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals

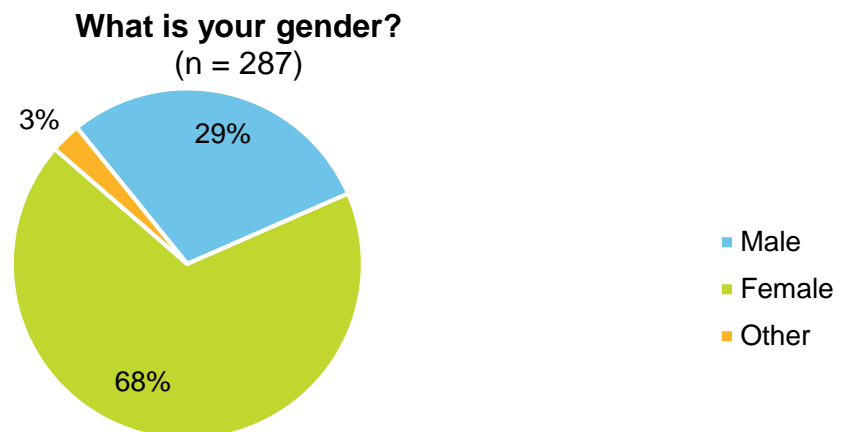
A total of 315 people responded to the survey of client-eligible individuals. Survey respondents represented all four counties in LASP’s service area. Montgomery County was the best represented, with slightly more than 41% of respondents, followed by Bucks, Delaware and Chester counties. Almost five percent of respondents lived in a county outside LASP’s service area, primarily Philadelphia County. Figure C-1 details survey respondents’ counties of residence.

Figure C-1: County of residence



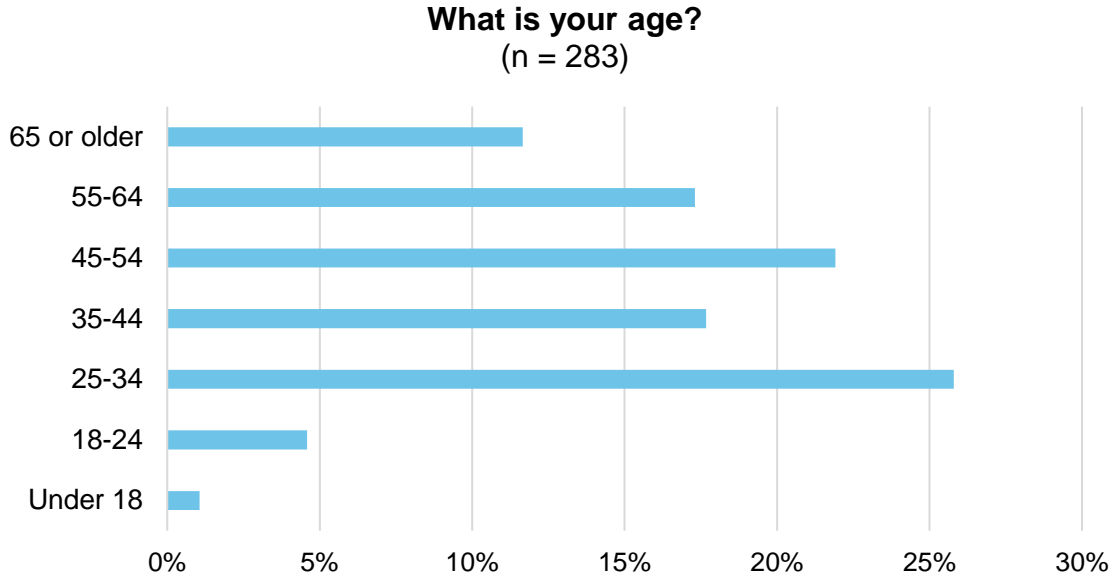
More than two-thirds of respondents were women, with the remainder identifying as men or “other.” Figure C-2 details gender of survey respondents.

Figure C-2: Gender of survey respondents



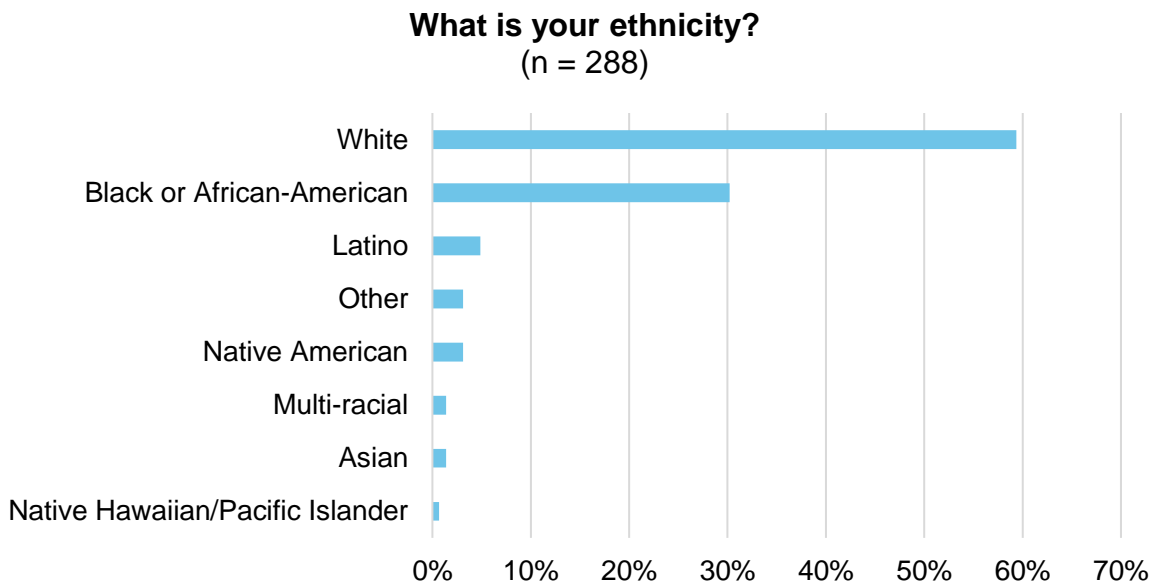
The largest proportion of respondents were between the age of 25 and 34, followed by respondents age 45-54 and respondents age 55-64. Figure C-3 details the age of survey respondents.

**Figure C-3: Age of survey respondents**



Whites comprised nearly 60% of respondents, while 30% were black/African-American and 5% were Latino. Figure C-4 details ethnicity of survey respondents.

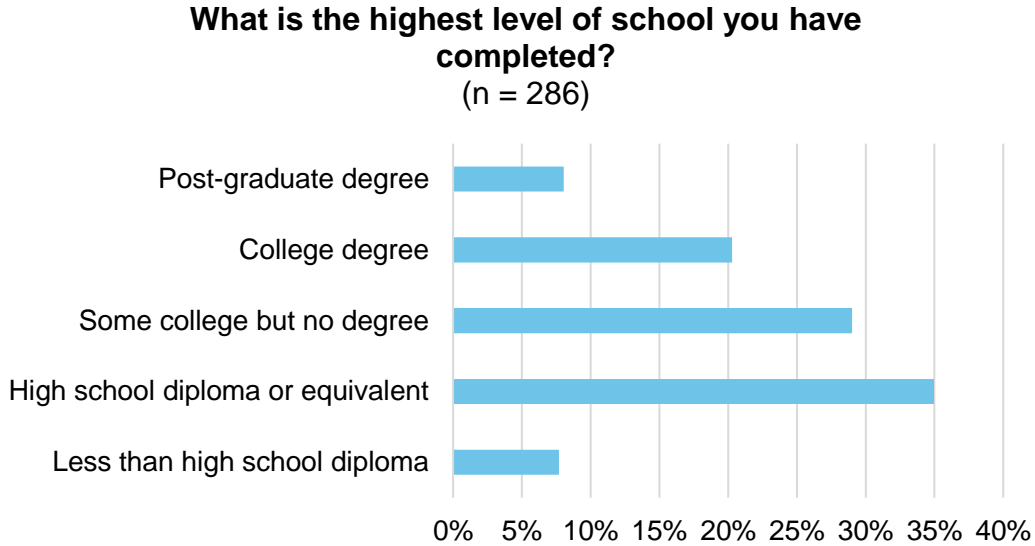
**Figure C-4: Ethnicity of survey respondents**



Almost 60% of respondents had attended college courses, though not all had completed a degree. Slightly more than one-third of respondents had a high school diploma or equivalent, and about

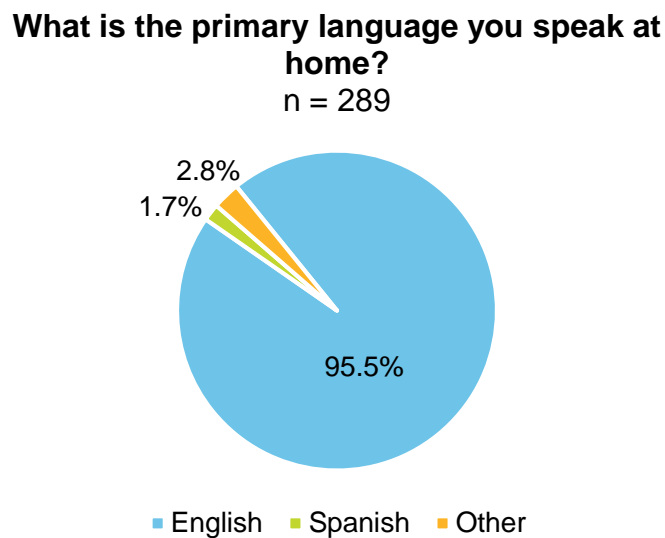
eight percent had less than a high school diploma. Figure C-5 details survey respondents' education attainment.

**Figure C-5: Educational attainment of survey respondents**



Almost all respondents said English was the primary language they spoke at home. Only about two percent of respondent reported Spanish as their primary language, another three percent cited another language. These other languages included American Sign Language, Arabic, Thai, and Czech. Figure C-6 details the languages spoken by survey respondents.

**Figure 6: Survey respondents' language spoken at home**



## Appendix D: Raw Data from Survey of Client-Eligible Individuals

### What is the source of this survey?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	LASP Bristol office	5.40	17
2	LASP Chester office	14.29	45
3	LASP Doylestown office	19.37	61
4	LASP Media office	3.17	10
5	LASP Norristown office	22.22	70
6	LASP Pottstown office	7.62	24
7	LASP West Chester office	6.35	20
8	Reply to LASP mailing	12.38	39
10	Online	7.30	23
9	Unknown	1.90	6
	Total	100	315

### How did you get this survey? (Select one.)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	At a LASP office	70.82	216
2	After a call to LASP's helpline	5.57	17
3	At a LASP community education event	1.31	4
4	From an organization other than LASP	2.62	8
5	From a link in an email	3.93	12
6	From a link posted on a website or social media site (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	3.61	11
7	Other (Please specify.)	12.13	37
	Total	100	305

Other (Please specify)

<b>"Other" source of survey</b>	<b># of responses</b>
Mailing	13
LASP office/attorney	8
Non-profit or government agency	4
LASP website	3
Referral by friend/family	3
Non-LASP attorney	3
Courthouse	3
Internet search	2

**Had you heard of LASP before receiving this survey?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	82.96	258
2	No	17.04	53
	Total	100	311

**How did you learn about LASP services? (Select all that apply.)**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Friends/family	36.96	95
2	Government offices	28.02	72
3	Community event	3.11	8
4	Workplace	5.06	13
5	Newspaper/flyer/phone book	2.72	7
6	Agency/nonprofit/shelter	12.45	32
7	Internet/social media	9.73	25
8	Other (Please specify.)	41.25	106
9	Don't know/don't remember	2.33	6
	Total	100	257



Other (Please specify.)

<b>"Other" source of information about LASP</b>	<b># of responses</b>
Court	49
Non-profit or government agency	16
Respondent has used LASP services	13
Law enforcement	9
Respondent is an attorney	8
211 or internet search	3
Unspecified	6

**Did you know that LASP provides free legal aid for the following groups?**

Question	Yes		No		Total
	%	Count	%	Count	Count
Low-income people	80.79	244	19.21	58	302
Domestic abuse victims of any income	59.71	163	40.29	110	273
Low- to moderate-income seniors	56.62	154	43.38	118	272
People facing mortgage foreclosure	39.62	105	60.38	160	265

**Have you ever received services from LASP?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	27.03	80
2	No	72.97	216
	Total	100	296

**Sometimes low- and moderate-income people need help with civil legal issues. Select up to seven (7) situations where you think legal help is most needed in your community.**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Domestic violence	51.07	143
2	Child custody/visitation	46.79	131
3	Divorce	26.07	73
4	Child support	39.64	111
5	Welfare	24.64	69
6	License suspension	13.21	37

7	Education issues	13.21	37
8	Defense of lawsuits	17.14	48
9	Sheriff/tax sales	12.50	35
10	Other (Please specify.)	3.93	11
11	Mortgage foreclosure	19.64	55
12	Evictions	27.86	78
13	Section 8 housing	23.93	67
14	Utility shut offs	20.36	57
15	Bankruptcy	21.43	60
16	Employment problems	19.64	55
17	Repossessions	4.64	13
18	Debt problems	26.43	74
19	Power of attorney and wills	17.14	48
20	SNAP/food stamps	22.14	62
21	Unemployment compensation	11.07	31
22	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	18.93	53
23	Social Security Disability	31.79	89
24	Medicare/Medicaid	17.50	49
25	Clearing criminal records	22.86	64
26	Nursing home issues	12.14	34
27	Health care directives	7.86	22
28	Guardianships	10.00	28
	Total	100	280

Other (Please specify.)

<b>“Other” legal help needed</b>	<b># of responses</b>
Elderly/senior rights	2
Estate issues	1
Immigration	1
PFA/custody	1
General pro-bono legal consultation & advice	1
Non-legal issue	3

**What are the biggest barriers you face in using LASP's services? Select up to three (3) choices.**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Transportation	26.51	66
2	Don't know when/how to access services	30.52	76
3	Feel intimidated by the legal system	28.51	71
4	Have to be at work when LASP is open	24.10	60
5	Not financially eligible	20.48	51
6	Other (Please specify.)	14.06	35
7	Lack of child care	7.63	19
8	Disability	15.66	39
9	Lack of time to access services	18.88	47
10	Language barriers	2.41	6
11	Immigration status	2.01	5
12	No phone	3.21	8
	Total	100	249

Other (Please specify.)

<b>"Other" barriers to accessing LASP services</b>	<b># of responses</b>
None/no barriers	17
Limited LASP resources (e.g., hours open, number of attorneys, wait time)	7
Physical accessibility of LASP office	3
Was unaware of LASP services	2
Incarceration	1
Comments not related to barriers	7

**If LASP was unable to represent you in court, would either of these help you handle your legal problem?**

Question	Very helpful		Helpful		A little helpful		Not helpful		Total
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
Advice about the law and your options	54.10	145	29.85	80	10.45	28	5.60	15	268
Advice and coaching on how you could represent yourself	53.49	138	30.23	78	9.69	25	6.59	17	258

**If LASP had a choice between a) representing individuals in court cases, or b) providing information to more people through telephone advice, community education programs and/or working with the courts to develop more self-help legal systems, which do you think would best serve your community?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Continue to provide intensive services to people with immediate legal needs, including representing individuals in court cases	81.68	214
2	Use LASP staff to develop different ways to help larger numbers of people with information/advice/self-help materials	18.32	48
	Total	100	262

**Which would be the most useful ways for you to receive self-help materials and information about important civil legal topics? Select up to three (3) choices.**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Brochures	51.55	133
2	Community workshops	50.78	131
3	Informational emails	41.09	106
4	Other (Please specify.)	8.14	21
5	Videos posted on the internet	36.82	95
6	Social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	29.84	77
7	Text messages	29.84	77
	Total	100%	258

Other (Please specify.)

<b>“Other” useful ways to receive information about legal topics</b>	<b># of responses</b>
One-on-one/face-to-face	4
Telephone	3
Email	2
Mail	2
Classes/group sessions	2
Website/blog	2
Law library	1
Newspaper	1

**Which civil legal topics would you be most interested in learning about? Select up to four (4) choices.**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	How to represent yourself at District Court	39.56	108
2	Child custody	36.26	99
3	Child support	24.18	66
4	No-fault divorce	13.19	36
5	Protection from abuse	29.67	81
6	Other (Please specify.)	5.86	16
7	Your rights under public assistance	23.44	64
8	Bankruptcy	16.12	44
9	Your rights in the workplace	15.75	43
10	Housing discrimination	14.65	40
11	Your rights as a tenant	24.18	66
12	Mortgage foreclosure	10.26	28
13	Mobile home park tenants' rights	1.83	5
14	Consumer rights	8.79	24
15	Clearing criminal records	19.05	52
16	Medicaid/Medicare	18.68	51
17	Power of attorney	13.55	37
18	Advance health care directives	8.42	23
	Total	100	273

**Have any of the following limited you and/or your family's ability to succeed? (Select all that apply.)**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Discrimination	18.78	43
2	Substandard/inadequate housing	16.59	38
3	Lack of child care	8.30	19

4	Handicap inaccessibility	6.55	15
5	Lack of transportation	22.71	52
6	Not enough job opportunities	31.88	73
7	Other (Please specify.)	13.97	32
8	Unavailable/improper education	9.17	21
9	Lack of nutrition/inadequate diets	4.37	10
10	Lack of job training/advancement	17.03	39
11	Lack of child support	11.79	27
12	Criminal record	14.41	33
13	Not enough money	67.25	154
	Total	100	229

Other (Please specify.)

<b>“Other” limitations</b>	<b># of responses</b>
None/No limitations	17
Disability	5
Limited income/bankruptcy/debt	6
Transportation	1
Incarceration	1
Trauma	1

**Please share any comments you have about LASP and/or legal issues facing low-income/disadvantaged people in suburban Philadelphia.**

LASP is a great organization, staffed by competent caring people.

state inmates need help too

Everyone deserves to have representation in court. When one party has a lawyer and the other doesn't, it is not a fair hearing. Judges take advantage of this and rarely rule in favor of the person who doesn't as lawyer even when that person is in the right. Judges have broken the laws and custody statues in many of my cases because I didn't have a lawyer, and the defendant did. 8 years of experiencing this unjust treatment first hand is why I chose to take this survey. Legal aid has never given my child and me a lawyer to represent us in court even though we were mistreated, and abused by several different parties. Please obtain more lawyers for low income victims..... Not just criminals.

bucks county resident age 50 social security disability all of my ssdi goes to pay rent because not too many places are section 8 and my landlord increases rent every year despite my pleading to waive it.

Unless your a minority, senior citizen or from a certain ethnic background or have kids 5yrs or younger NO ONE will help you! !!!!!

Continue to help those that truly need your help and push those that are not confident in themselves to seek help. Enable and not to settle for the injustices that society presents!

Not enough shelters

They was very helpful towards my situations.

They was very helpful and very polite and concern about your situation.

Most people I know do not know the first thing on how to represent or protect themselves in court.

Officers not telling the truth when it comes to arrests & Taylor Hospital not making officers sign in stating that a person is their for blood testing. They lie & have help through the system.

No help w/cases that [illegible] in Phila Fam Ct.

Need help with filing for guardianship of mother who has Alzheimer's Disease, need elder law attorney

They were very interested and prompt in helping me.

Landlord is not truthful with me about the ongoing problem with the 2nd floor tenants.

Be helpful

There are not enough transportation provided for the handicapped whom need medical assistance in Phila and with Physicians in Philadelphia who are far.

The judicial system need to stop running over, or taking advantage of low income/disadvantage people. I thank LASP for trying to help us.

Low income/disadvantaged individuals tend to be not well versed making LASP reps a little abrasive and a little standoffish to some.

Wish I knew about it a long time ago, sooner

LASP was extremely helpful to me.

The judicial system sucks in this area depending on the case, especially PFA.

When you are separated they still county the income from the person are separated from.

I think LASP is great!!!

You helped me a LOT. Thank you SO much!

Low wages, high cost of food

I found legal aid to be helpful in helping me with clearing my criminal record. For low income persons legal aid is a benefit.

There is no aspect of one's life at the poverty level/low income level that does not require public lawyers.

No comment

Being a full time mom & working full time then not working & still have to fight the government for money is ridiculous (unemployment nonpayment [illegible] 2 appeals.

We were referred by our accountant as my husband lost his job after 43 years with no pension or help of any kind. No reason was given. We didn't know if we would be "welcomed" but were treated very well; their service/recommendation was excellent.

Cannot get SNAP

how to access information

LASP is very caring and professional advocacy for low income persons with legal issues.

N/A

They are a great company.

Very resourceful with low income families

It's good that people without a lot of money can get legal help.

Keep doing what you are doing for low income families

LASP has helped me so much with a custody issue and a PFA. I could not be more grateful for all they've done for me!

No idea

I really feel LASP is going to be a great help for getting through my PFA case & my custody case...I don't know what else to do...I have to protect my son. So all I can do is pray!!

This is the first time using the services. I hope I am able to benefit and understand my options.

I'm very grateful that LASP is available to assist me in my time of need. My unemployment is crucial right now and am looking towards a good outcome per your services.

low income ppl feel we dont have a chance going up against ppl

None

#### In which county do you live?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Bucks	24.56	70
2	Chester	9.12	26
3	Delaware	20.35	58
4	Montgomery	41.05	117
5	Other (Please specify.)	4.91	14
	Total	100	285

Other (Please specify.)

"Other" counties of residence	# of responses
Philadelphia	7
Lebanon	2
Lancaster	1
Camden County, New Jersey	1
Potter	1
Middlesex	1



**What is your zip code?**

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
16720	Austin	1
17042	East York	1
17078	Palmyra	1
17602	Lancaster	1
18036	Coopersburg	1
18041	East Greenville	1
18073	Pennsburg	1
18077	Reiglesville	1
18901	Doylestown	2
18902	Doylestown	1
18925	Furlong	1
18938	New Hope	1
18940	Newtown	2
18944	Perkasie	2
18951	Quakertown	7
18954	Richboro	1
18964	Sourdertown	1
18966	Southampton	3
18974	Ivylnd	1
18977	Washington Crossing	1
19001	Willow Grove	1
19002	Ambler	2
19003	Ardmore	1
19006	Huntingdon Valley	1
19007	Bristol	7
19013	Chester	18
19015	Brookhaven	4
19018	Aldan	1
19020	Bensalem	8
19021	Croydon	4
19023	Darby	2
19026	Drexel Hill	4
19027	Elkins Park	5
19029	Essington	1
19032	Folcroft	1
19036	Glenolden	1
19038	Glenside	3
19040	Hatboro	1
19043	Holmes	2
19047	Langhorne	2
19050	Lansdowne	5
19053	Feasterville-Trevose	3
19054	Levittown	3
19055	Levittown	2
19056	Levittown	3
19057	Levittown	4
19061	Boothwyn	4
19063	Elwyn	3
19067	Yardley	4
19073	Newtown Square	1

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
19075	Oreland	1
19078	Ridley Park	1
19079	Sharon Hill	2
19082	Upper Darby	3
19083	Havertown	1
19087	Wayne	1
19090	Willow Grove	1
19094	Woodlyn	1
19136	Philadelphia	1
19143	Philadelphia	1
19147	Philadelphia	1
19148	Philadelphia	1
19149	Philadelphia	1
19151	Philadelphia	1
19320	Coatesville	6
19330	Cochranville	2
19335	Downingtown	3
19341	Exton	1
19342	Glen Mills	2
19348	Kennett Square	1
19355	Malvern	1
19362	Nottingham	1
19365	Parkesburg	4
19380	West Chester	1
19382	West Chester	2
19401	Norristown	28
19403	East Norriton	2
19405	Bridgeport	1
19406	King of Prussia	3
19422	Blue Bell	1
19426	Collegeville	3
19428	Conshohocken	3
19438	Harleysville	3
19444	Lafayette Hill	1
19446	Lansdale	7
19454	North Wales	3
19460	Phoenixville	2
19462	Plymouth Meeting	3
19464	Pottstown	20
19465	Pottstown	1
19468	Royersford	7
19473	Schwenksville	2

**What is your gender?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	29.27	84
2	Female	67.94	195
3	Other	2.79	8
	Total	100	287

**What is your age?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under 18	1.06	3
2	18-24	4.59	13
3	25-34	25.80	73
4	35-44	17.67	50
5	45-54	21.91	62
6	55-64	17.31	49
7	65 or older	11.66	33
	Total	100	283

**What is your ethnicity? (Select all that apply.)**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	White	59.38	171
2	Black or African-American	30.21	87
3	Latino	4.86	14
4	Asian	1.39	4
5	Native American	3.13	9
6	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.69	2
7	Multi-racial	1.39	4
8	Other (Please specify.)	3.13	9
	Total	100	288

Other (Please specify.)

<b>“Other” ethnicities</b>	<b># of responses</b>
Caucasian	2
Italian-Irish	1
Semitic	1

**What is the highest level of school you have completed?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than high school diploma	7.69	22
2	High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)	34.97	100
3	Some college but no degree	29.02	83
4	College degree	20.28	58
5	Post-graduate degree (e.g., master’s degree, PhD)	8.04	23
	Total	100	286

**What is the primary language you speak at home?**

#	Answer	%	Count
1	English	95.50	276
2	Spanish	1.73	5
3	Other (Please specify.)	2.77	8
	Total	100	289

Other (Please specify.)

<b>“Other” primary language spoken at home</b>	<b># of responses</b>
English and Spanish	2
Arabic	1
American Sign Language	1
Czech	1
Thai	1

## Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

### Past Experience with LASP

Please introduce yourself and talk a little bit about your past experiences with Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania. How have you and/or your clients interacted with LASP?

### Perceptions/Awareness of LASP

What words or phrases come to mind when you think of Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania? How would you describe it to someone who was not aware of it?

How many of you are aware that LASP provides free civil legal aid for the following groups?

Low-income people (show of hands)

Domestic abuse victims of any income (show of hands)

Low- to moderate-income seniors (show of hands)

People facing mortgage foreclosure (show of hands)

How many of you are aware that LASP provides services in four counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery? (show of hands)

Are your clients adequately aware of LASP and its services? How do you spread awareness of the organization and its work?

### Client Needs

What are the most pressing civil legal needs among the clients you serve? Have these needs changed during the past several years?

Do you feel that LASP adequately serves the civil legal needs of your clients? Are there needs that the organization is not adequately serving?

### Delivery of LASP Services

Would your clients prefer that LASP provides intensive, in-person services to a smaller number of people or less-intensive, telephone or technology-based education and services to a larger number of people?

How many of you are aware of LASP's Helpline? (show of hands)

What do you hear from your clients/constituents about their experiences with the Helpline? What are their feelings about receiving legal assistance by telephone?

How could LASP improve its service delivery and make it more effective?

### Receiving Information about Legal Topics

What are your clients' preferred ways to receive information about your services and/or topics related to your services? (Answers could include in-person interaction, direct mail, brochures, email newsletters, websites, social media, videos, etc.)

How well connected are your clients to the Internet? How do they access it? Do they use it to look up information related to their care?

LASP is considering how it can leverage online technology to reach a broader audience. This would involve a shift toward communicating with clients and potential clients using its website, social media, online videos and texting. Do you think your clients would prefer these forms of communication to more traditional ones, such as printed materials and brochures? Why or why not?

### Quality of LASP Services

How would you describe the overall quality of LASP's services, based on your experiences and the experiences of your clients?

What do you feel are LASP's biggest strengths as an organization?

What do you feel are the areas in which LASP could use improvement?

### Community Collaboration

In what ways could LASP work better with organizations in your community to best respond to community needs and ensure that the civil legal needs of low-income people and other vulnerable populations are being met?

### Closing Question

Are there any other comments you would like to share about LASP or about the civil legal needs of people in your community?