

New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.

Community Needs Survey

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

2006-07

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NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION, INC.
PRIORITY SETTING (2006-07)

I. Executive Summary

Introduction

New Haven Legal Assistance (LAA) provides free civil legal assistance to low-income residents of the greater New Haven area. Periodically LAA reviews its program priorities to ensure they are responsive to the needs of its client community. LAA seeks input from clients, potential clients, as well as other interested individuals and groups to determine both their perceptions of LAA's current work and their thoughts about which are the most important services LAA should provide.

LAA will utilize the results of this survey as a planning tool to help strategize how to best meet the needs of its client community over the next five years. This is particularly important at this time, as LAA anticipates a continued increase in its Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) funding which will allow for an expansion of resources.

Procedure

LAA conducted its 2006-07 survey from February 1 - April 30, 2007. LAA contacted social service providers and community leaders as well as elected officials and members of the probate judiciary in the 21 towns and cities located in its service area. (See Appendix A for the full list of the providers who were sampled.) At the same time, LAA surveyed clients and potential clients. LAA mailed its survey to the former group, and distributed its survey to a number of community organizations in order to obtain responses from their clients, patients, etc. (See Appendix B for a list of these sites) In addition, LAA made its survey available to all the individuals who came into its State Street office during this 3 month period.

LAA utilized an open-ended survey available in both English and Spanish. (See Appendix C for a copy of both surveys.) To ensure that the survey was comprehensive, LAA asked clients to check items from substantive area lists, and answer questions designed to elicit individual responses.

LAA received 66 completed provider surveys and 185 client surveys by the end of the survey period.

Conclusions

A. Overview

LAA attempted to determine the most prominent needs of the community based on the results of this survey. It looked for consensus issues - those issues noted by 50% or more of the providers and at least 30% of clients. It also examined the

comments relating to the types of assistance LAA currently provides. A number of themes consistently emerged:

- Expand the size of the advocacy staff, including through the use of volunteers;
- Increase the number of bilingual staff members;
- Enhance access through a satellite office, as well as other more direct means of client contact;
- Offer more outreach, particularly programs designed to develop clients' advocacy skills; and
- Provide more support and advice to community organizations also serving low-income clients.

B. Comparison of consensus issues selected by providers and clients

Providers had a higher percentage of responses on almost every issue, except in the areas of employment and education. A brief summary of comparisons by substantive law areas follows:

Health: Both providers (74%) and clients (43%) most frequently selected paying medical bills, although clients found Medicare to be of similar importance. Providers next noted prescription drug issues, Medicaid (Title XIX), and home health care issues while clients focused on prescription drug issues and Medicaid.

Employment: Both providers and clients listed the same concern - making the transition from welfare to work and all the issues accompanying such a transition - although providers (77%) noted this issue twice as frequently as clients (39%) did. Both groups next noted the trouble individuals have when trying to find work if they have a criminal record.

Housing: Providers (64%) emphasized their concern about homelessness and shelter issues while clients (44%) most frequently noted the importance of getting landlords to make repairs. Providers (55%) next indicated concerns about security deposits, while clients (42%) listed fighting evictions, as well as homelessness and shelter issues. Every issue other than combating housing discrimination and avoiding foreclosure was listed as important by more than 30% of both groups.

Family and Children: Providers (65%) most frequently noted the need to find and/or afford daycare as well as dealing with DCF, followed by child support enforcement and protecting individuals from domestic abuse and violence. In contrast, clients (36%) most frequently noted child support enforcement and protection from domestic abuse and violence, followed by custody and visitation. Less than a third (28%) of the clients noted dealing with DCF and daycare as important issues.

Income and Benefits: Providers (67%) and clients (51%) both emphasized the importance of getting and keeping cash benefits. Providers next listed the importance of obtaining child support (62%), something a third of the clients (33%) noted. Clients (45%) secondarily noted getting and keeping food benefits; this was noted by slightly

more than half of the providers (55%). Both groups (17%/12%) listed obtaining Veteran's benefits least frequently by a wide margin.

Consumer: Both groups listed the same three problem areas most frequently. Providers (64%) and clients (47%) first specified dealing with debt collectors followed by problems with home repairs (36%/25%). Both groups ranked bankruptcy (32%/22%) as the third most important consumer issue. Foreclosures were listed last (23%/17%) by both groups.

Individual Rights: More than half the providers (53%) noted discrimination based on mental illness while clients (42%) most frequently noted discrimination based on race, gender, and family status. In contrast, clients (31%) indicated discrimination based on mental illness as the least critical of the three categories.

Education: Providers and clients were in agreement; providers (59%) and clients (45%) noted special education issues most frequently, and both groups (30%/25%) next listed educational advocacy in juvenile court.

Immigration: Both groups (48%/29%) most frequently listed becoming a citizen. Providers (47%) closely followed this with becoming a legal permanent resident and helping undocumented individuals learn their legal rights. Although these were also the next frequently noted client concerns, providers recorded both issues twice as often as clients did. The two groups both indicated family petitions least frequently.

Elder Law: Both the providers and the clients listed the same three issues most frequently, although in differing orders. More than half the providers (53%) noted both nursing home and Medicaid/Title XIX issues followed by Medicare (50%) issues. In contrast, clients listed Medicare (42%) most frequently, followed by nursing home (33%) and Medicaid/Title XIX (32%) issues.

C. Ranking of most urgent issues

The same 5 substantive areas – housing, health, employment, family and children, and income and benefits – were deemed “most urgent” by both providers and clients. Both groups considered housing and health to be the top two areas. However, the groups did not enumerate the next three areas in the same order. Providers listed the final 3 areas in the order listed above; clients noted family and children, employment, and income and benefits as the remaining 3 of the five “most urgent” areas. LAA is currently addressing issues in all 5 of these areas of the law.

D. Changes in the substance and/or means of the provision of legal assistance

Despite indications from both groups that they wanted LAA to provide legal assistance in other areas of the law, there was no consensus among either providers or clients around any truly original suggestions. Similarly, in response to LAA's inquiry about different ways in which it could approach its work, both providers and clients repeatedly referred to areas and efforts already being covered and performed by LAA.

Individual providers did suggest that LAA help develop clients' grassroots advocacy skills as well as enhance clients' personal ability to represent their interests at public hearings; provide more support and advice to community organizations; provide mediation services; and expand its presence in the Valley.

Similarly, a number of individual clients made noteworthy suggestions regarding LAA's substantive work. They proposed that LAA help individuals with issues relating to home purchases; investigate the Section 8 application process; and educate clients about jobs and budgeting. Clients also suggested that LAA staffers accompany clients to court to reduce their sense of intimidation; expand outreach by setting up off-site locations, assist area churches with providing legal help, and offer more workshops.

E. Working with Community Groups and Lobbying

Providers and clients agreed that LAA should be involved in such efforts; both groups indicated, by wide margins, that it was very important for LAA to perform this work. Given that LAA currently works with numerous groups and lobbies on behalf of numerous client-related issues, the survey responses only reinforce LAA's existing efforts.

F. Utilization of the agency

More than half the providers who responded to this question had referred a client to LAA within the past year; the referrals most frequently related to housing, family and child issues.

In contrast, only about a third of the clients who responded indicated they had used or been referred to LAA for help. Client contacts were mainly for either family and child or housing matters.

G. Impression of LAA held by the community

The survey indicated that both the providers and clients who knew of LAA held a generally favorable impression. Two-thirds of the clients who responded to this question replied favorably, while 85% of the providers who answered hold a favorable impression. Many of those who replied expressed LAA's need for more resources.

Although few providers were unfamiliar with LAA, a quarter of the clients who responded to this question indicated they did not know the agency well enough to reply.

H. Potential for change

Although most providers and clients did not respond when asked what one thing about LAA should be changed, several good practical suggestions were made by those who did reply. For example, providers suggested that LAA sponsor workshops for agencies dealing with low income clients. Clients proposed that LAA provide more direct client access, expand the number of its offices, employ more bi-lingual staff, and make more use of volunteers.

I. Demographics

One-third of the clients who completed LAA's survey responded to the demographic questions. (See Section IIC for full demographic details.) According to their responses, the clients who participated represented a wide range of ages, geographic locations, and income levels.

II. Responses

The data obtained is divided into two categories, the responses received from area providers and the responses received from clients or potential clients.

A. Provider Responses

LAA received replies from slightly more than one-third of the 173 providers who were contacted. Only two respondents returned an incomplete survey form. A number of the surveys were completed by someone other than the person to whom they were formally addressed. Some providers who completed the survey did not identify themselves.

PROVIDER SURVEY DATA

Providers were asked to check off any of the following problems which they thought were important to low income clients.

	# of Responses	% Survey Responses
HEALTH		
Paying Medical Bills	48	73%
Prescription Drug Issues	40	61%
Medicaid (Title XIX)	39	59%
Home Health Care Issues	33	50%
Medicare	30	45%
Nursing Home Access or Issues	28	42%
Getting Needed Medical Equipment	24	36%
EMPLOYMENT		
Making the Transition from Welfare to Work by Gaining Access to Job Training, Child Care, Transportation, and Other Related Services	51	77%
Trouble Finding Work Because of a Criminal Record	34	52%
Denied Time Off Work When Needed to Care for Child or Ill Family Member	21	32%
Not Getting Paid Wages or Overtime	15	23%
Discrimination at Work	12	18%
Denial of Unemployment Benefits	12	18%
Getting Hurt on the Job	11	17%

HOUSING

Homelessness or Shelter Issues	42	64%
Obtaining Security Deposits or Getting Deposits Returned After Moving Out	36	55%
Getting Landlords to Make Repairs	35	53%
Fighting Evictions (Keeping Decent, Safe and Affordable Housing)	32	48%
Working with Community Organizations to Develop Affordable Housing	32	48%
Stopping Shutoffs and Other Utility Issues	32	48%
Section 8 Issues	29	44%
Combating Housing Discrimination	20	30%
Avoiding Foreclosure	15	23%

FAMILY AND CHILDREN

Assistance in Dealing with DCF	43	65%
Cannot Find or Afford Daycare	43	65%
Child Support Enforcement Problems	39	59%
Getting Protection from Domestic Abuse or Violence	39	59%
Divorce, Separation or Annulment	25	38%
Custody or Visitation	24	36%
Representing Abused or Neglected Children	23	35%
Guardianship/Conservatorship Issues	22	33%
Protecting the Rights of Teenagers in DCF Care	20	30%
Defending Parents in Abuse or Neglect Cases	18	27%
Delinquency Issues	17	26%
Adoption	6	9%
Emancipation	6	9%

INCOME AND BENEFITS

Getting or Keeping Cash Benefits, Such As SAGA, TFA, AABD, Social Security, or SSI	44	67%
Obtaining Child Support	41	62%
Getting or Keeping Food Benefits, Such As Food Stamps and Therapeutic Diets	36	55%
Getting Child Care Benefits	33	50%
Obtaining Additional Benefits, Such As Help Paying for Special Expenses Moving, Storage, Telephone, Deposits, Clothing, etc.	27	41%
Obtaining Veteran's Benefits	11	17%

CONSUMER

Dealing with Debt Collectors	42	64%
Problems with Home Repairs Made or Promised by Contractors	24	36%
Bankruptcy	21	32%
Unfair Sales Practices	16	24%
Refinancing or Mortgage Problems	13	20%
Loan or Installment Problems	11	17%

INDIVIDUALS RIGHTS

Facing Discrimination on the Basis Of Mental Illness	35	53%
Facing Discrimination on the Basis Of Race, Gender, or Family Status	29	44%
Facing Discrimination on the Basis Of Physical Disability	27	41%

EDUCATION

Getting Assistance for Child(ren) with Special Needs at School	39	59%
Providing Educational Advocacy to Children in Juvenile Court	20	30%
Preventing Unwarranted Referrals by School to Juvenile Court for Truancy or Behavior Issues	13	20%
Fighting Suspensions or Expulsions	8	12%

IMMIGRATION

Becoming a Citizen	32	48%
Becoming a Legal Permanent Resident	31	47%
Helping Undocumented Persons Learn About Their Rights	31	47%
Aiding People who Depend on an Abusive Spouse for Legal Immigration Status	17	26%
Work Petitions	15	23%
Deportation or Detention Problems	13	20%
Family-Based Petitions	9	14%

ELDER LAW

Medicaid (Title XIX)	35	53%
Nursing Home Issues	35	53%
Medicare	33	50%
Home Care Issues	31	47%
Conservatorship Issues	24	36%
Estate Planning or Wills	20	30%
End of Life Decision-Making	19	29%

When asked which of the three problems areas described above were the “most urgent,” most providers indicated at least two areas. Their responses are listed below in descending order of priority:

1	Housing	21	Education	1
	Health	11	Ind. Rights	1
	Employment	6	Elder Law	1
	Family and Children	5	Miscellaneous	1
	Income and Benefits	3	Consumer	-
	Immigration	3	No Response	11

Some providers more specifically mentioned the following:

Housing: affordable housing; fighting evictions; homelessness

Health: health care-related issues; home health care; Medicare; medical insurance for the uninsured; paying medical bills; prescription drug issues

Employment: lack of jobs; trouble finding work because of criminal record

Family and Children: affordable child care; assistance with DCF; domestic violence

Income and Benefits: access to temporary benefits

Immigration

Education: advocacy for children in juvenile court

Individuals Rights: discrimination due to disabilities

Elder

Miscellaneous: presence in the Valley

2	Health	11	Consumer	1
	Housing	10	Education	1
	Family and Children	10	Ind. Rights	1
	Income and Benefits	8	Immigration	-
	Employment	3	No Response	16
	Elder Law	2		

Some providers more specifically mentioned the following:

Health: prescription drug issues; paying medical bills; medical transportation; Title XIX (Medicaid)

Housing: avoiding foreclosures; housing for disabled; fighting evictions

Family and Children: affordable day care; dealing with DCF; divorce; guardianship issues; protection from domestic violence

Income and Benefits: Care-4-Kids benefits; increased benefits; SAGA benefits; disability claims

Employment

Elder Law: conservatorships; health issues of the elderly

Consumer: debt collection

Education: special needs

Individuals Rights: discrimination

Immigration

3	Health	12	Elder Law	2
	Family and Children	7	Immigration	1
	Income and Benefits	6	Consumer	1
	Housing	5	Education	-
	Employment	5	No Response	23
	Ind. Rights	3		

Some providers more specifically mentioned the following:

Health: affordable health care; affordable prescription drugs; medical bills; home care issues; Title XIX/Medicare

Family and Children: custody; domestic abuse; child support enforcement.

Income and Benefits: getting/keeping cash benefits.

Housing: getting landlords to make repairs; affordable housing; slum landlords.

Employment: trouble finding work due to criminal record; work programs; employment issues for parents.

Individuals Rights: discrimination.

Elder Law: nursing home issues.

Immigration

Consumer: debt collection.

Education

Providers were also asked whether LAA should be providing assistance in other areas of the law. They responded:

Yes	13
No	17
Not Sure/No Opinion	5
No response	31

Those who answered "yes" thought that LAA should be providing work in the following other* areas:

Health: Medicare

Family: *divorce, custody, neglect cases*

Housing: *utility issues, state assistance with utilities/rent*

Income and Benefits: *problems with inconsistencies in State programs/SAGA, SSI denials*

Immigration: *assistance to undocumented individuals*

Consumer: people being taken advantage of for food and housing

Miscellaneous: automobile citations, civil cases, *outreach & training*, presence in the Valley

*As indicated by the italics, LAA is already providing services in most of these areas.

When asked whether LAA should be involved in giving support and advice to community-based organizations, such as tenants groups and neighborhood organizations, providers responded:

Yes, it is Very Important	28
Yes, it is Important	30
No, it is Not Important	5
No Response	3

When asked whether LAA should be involved in doing things such as drafting regulations and statutes or testifying on behalf of clients' in front of legislators, on issues which hurt or help poor people, providers responded:

Yes, it is Very Important	38
Yes, it is Important	24
No, it is Not Important	1
No Response	3

When providers were asked whether there is anything LAA should be doing to help low income people in the greater New Haven area that it is not currently doing, they replied:

Yes	17
No	16
Not Sure	3
No Response	30

The providers who answered "yes" listed the following efforts:

Health: Title XIX spenddowns

Housing: work to obtain more Section 8 or affordable housing units; diversify housing work to help people other than those with public housing issues; help with heating programs; help with slumlords

Family: obtain child support

Benefits: deal with DSS non-responsiveness

Consumer: explains rights of seniors to creditors; deal with unfair loans

Ind. Rights: help for mentally disabled patients

Other: help develop grassroots advocacy skills of clients, including voter registration; increase brochures describing services; raise eligibility ceiling; provide more support/advice to community organizations; further involvement in regulations and legislation; mediation; expand presence in the Valley; help individuals learn how to effectively use the system; improve presence of clients at public hearings

When asked whether they had reason to refer a client to LAA for assistance or advice within the last year, providers answered:

Yes	35
No	22
No Response	9

Those providers who stated they had referred clients to LAA indicated they made the following number of referrals:

1-5	18
6-10	4
11-19	3
20+	5
No Response	5

The provider referrals concerned the following type(s) of problem(s):

Housing: evictions, repairs, avoiding foreclosure, utilities, housing discrimination	22
Family and child: divorce, domestic violence, child support, child custody, family relations, DCF, family issues relating to an elderly parent, guardianship, rights of a child with an institutionalized parent	15
Income and benefits: Social Security	8
Employment: discrimination in the work force	4
Immigration	2
Elder: wills	2
Education	1
Ind. Rights: mental disability	1
Miscellaneous: criminal infractions	1

When providers were asked to note their general impression of LAA, they responded as follows:

Favorable	42
Not Sufficiently Familiar with LAA to Respond	5
Unfavorable	2
No Response	17

The favorable comments included:

- Excellent resource for low income clients
- Responsive/accessible/effective/helpful
- Positive
- Professional and competent staff
- Fills a community need
- Valuable for those without resources
- Well-run organization

A number of people commented on LAA's need for more resources:

- Great, but understaffed
- Do good work when are available
- Under-resourced

The unfavorable comments included:

- Lots of red tape; difficult to get help
- Need more outreach
- Sometimes LAA assumes the opposition is wrong without thoroughly investigating matters

When asked what one thing about LAA they would most like to see changed, about half the providers responded. Possible changes suggested by survey respondents included:

- Increase in staff so more people can be served
- A presence in the Lower Naugatuck Valley
- Workshops for agencies dealing with low income clients
- Work with agencies rather than oppose them
- More user-friendly; not have to call SLS
- Better visibility
- Open services to all people regardless of income (or at least to increase the income guidelines)
- Not expend lots of resources on fringe cases

B. Client Surveys

A total of 185 client surveys were completed. The following community organizations participated: Beth-El Shelter (8), Birmingham Group (14), Columbus House (20), Community Dining Room (5), Fair Haven Community Health Center (9), Guilford Food Bank (3), Guilford Housing Authority (6), Hamden Housing Authority (2), Hill Health Center (14), IRIS (5), LAA (22), LEAP (20), SCOW (11), Spooner House (11), TEAM, Inc. (17), Tinney Community Center (4), and Umbrella (11). LAA received 157 English surveys and 28 Spanish surveys.

CLIENT SURVEY DATA

	# of Responses	% Survey Responses
HEALTH		
Medicare	79	43%
Paying Medical Bills	79	43%
Prescription Drug Issues	72	39%
Medicaid (Title XIX)	67	36%
Getting Needed Medical Equipment	45	24%
Home Health Care Issues	43	23%
Nursing Home Access or Issues	31	17%
EMPLOYMENT		
Making the Transition from Welfare to Work by Gaining Access to Job Training, Child Care, Transportation, and Other Related Services	73	39%
Trouble Finding Work because of a Criminal Record	67	36%
Discrimination at Work	60	32%
Denied Time Off Work When Needed to Care for Child or Ill Family Member	52	28%
Denial of Unemployment Benefits	49	26%
Getting Hurt on the Job	46	25%
Not Getting Paid Wages or Overtime	45	24%

HOUSING

Getting Landlords to Make Repairs	82	44%
Fighting Evictions (Keeping Decent, Safe and Affordable Housing)	77	42%
Homelessness or Shelter Issues	77	42%
Working with Community Organizations On the Development of Affordable Housing	75	41%
Section 8 Issues	68	37%
Obtaining Security Deposits or Getting Deposits Returned After Moving Out	64	35%
Stopping Shutoffs and Other Utility Issues	60	32%
Combating Housing Discrimination	38	21%
Avoiding Foreclosure	31	17%

FAMILY AND CHILDREN

Child Support Enforcement Problems	66	36%
Getting Protection from Domestic Abuse or Violence	66	36%
Custody or Visitation	57	31%
Assistance in Dealing with DCF	52	28%
Cannot Find or Afford Daycare	52	28%
Representing Abused or Neglected Children	50	27%
Divorce, Separation, or Annulment	47	25%
Defending Parents in Abuse or Neglect Cases	42	23%
Guardianship/Conservatorship Issues	37	20%
Delinquency Issues	33	18%
Adoption	28	15%
Protecting the Rights of Teenagers in DCF Care	28	15%
Emancipation	15	8%

INCOME AND BENEFITS

Getting or Keeping Cash Benefits, Such as SAGA, TFA, AABD, Social Security, or SSI	9	51%
Getting or Keeping Food Benefits, Such as Food Stamps and Therapeutic Diets	84	45%
Obtaining Additional Benefits, Such as Help Paying for Special Expenses Moving, Storage, Telephone, Deposits, Clothing, etc.	74	40%
Obtaining Child Support	61	33%
Getting Child Care Benefits	56	30%
Obtaining Veteran's Benefits	23	12%

CONSUMER

Dealing with Debt Collectors	87	47%
Problems with Home Repairs Made or Promised by Contractors	46	25%
Bankruptcy	41	22%
Loan or Installment Problems	37	20%
Unfair Sales Practices	34	18%
Refinancing or Mortgage Problems	31	17%

INDIVIDUALS RIGHTS

Facing Discrimination on the Basis of Race, Gender, or Family Status	77	42%
Facing Discrimination on the Basis of Physical Disability	61	33%
Facing Discrimination on the Basis Of Mental Illness	58	31%

EDUCATION

Getting Assistance for Child(ren) with Special Needs at School	83	45%
Providing Educational Advocacy to Children in Juvenile Court	46	25%
Preventing Unwarranted Referrals by School to Juvenile Court for Truancy or Behavior Issues	39	21%
Fighting Suspensions or Expulsions	33	18%

IMMIGRATION

Becoming a Citizen	53	29%
Helping Undocumented Persons Learn About Their Rights	44	24%
Becoming a Legal Permanent Resident	40	22%
Aiding People who Depend on an Abusive Spouse for Legal Immigration Status	39	21%
Deportation or Detention Problems	21	11%
Work Petitions	18	10%
Family-Based Petitions	15	8%

ELDER LAW

Medicare	78	42%
Nursing Home Issues	61	33%
Medicaid (Title XIX)	60	32%
Home Care Issues	58	31%
End of Life Decision-Making	43	23%
Estate Planning or Wills	34	18%
Conservatorship Issues	29	16%

When asked which of the three problems areas described above were the "most urgent," clients indicated the following problem areas:

1	Housing	36	Education	6
	Health	31	Consumer	4
	Family and Children	25	Ind. Rights	3
	Employment	9	Elder Law	1
	Income and Benefits	7	No Response	47
	Immigration	7		

Some clients more specifically mentioned the following:

Housing: affordable housing; Section 8; homeless shelter issues; eviction; homelessness; rent; stopping utility shutoffs

Health: Medicare/Medicaid; paying medical bills; home health care; prescriptions

Family and Children: custody or visitation; affordable child care; child support; domestic abuse; help with DCF; alimony; guardianship; protection for kids

Employment: employment problems due to criminal records; lack of adequate paying work; denial of unemployment; making the transition from welfare to work; not getting wages

Income and Benefits: dealing with State and Federal benefits; Food Stamps; getting disability benefits; obtaining Title XIX; SSI

Immigration: citizenship; becoming a Legal Permanent Resident; aiding people who depend on an abusive spouse for legal immigration status; helping undocumented individuals learn about their rights

Education: special education; school suspensions

Consumer: debt collectors; past due old bills; bankruptcy

Individuals Rights: discrimination; discrimination at work

Elder Law: access to long term nursing care

Other: helping to receive handicapped parking; need a place to live; probate

2	Housing	25	Education	2
	Family and Children	18	Immigration	2
	Health	15	Elder Law	2
	Income and Benefits	11	Ind. Rights	1
	Employment	9	No Response	93
	Consumer	5		

Some clients more specifically mentioned the following:

Housing: access to affordable housing; combating; housing discrimination; Section 8 issues; utility issues; evictions; getting landlords to make repairs; getting security deposits returned

Family and Children: child support; divorce; DCF issues; affordable child care; custody or visitation; protection from domestic violence

Health: prescription drug issues; Medicaid/Medicare; medical assistance; dental assistance

Income and Benefits: benefits to pay bills or deposits or moving costs; cash or vouchers; Food Stamps; getting child care benefits; help with SSI/DSS; keeping benefits; income; SAGA; SSD; State programs and benefits; cost of special expenses

Employment: trouble finding work because of a criminal record; unemployment; making the transition from welfare to work; permanent job assistance

Consumer: bankruptcy; dealing with debt collectors; loan or installment problems; mortgage; getting a credit card

Education

Elder Law: estate issues; Medicare

Immigration: becoming a citizen; deportation or detentions

Individuals Rights: discrimination

3	Housing	14	Education	4
	Employment	13	Ind. Rights	4
	Health	10	Immigration	-
	Family and Children	8	Elder Law	-
	Income and Benefits	8	No Response	113
	Consumer	5		

Some clients more specifically mentioned the following:

Housing: getting the landlord to make repairs; evictions; Section 8

Employment: finding work with a criminal record; medical insurance; time off for sick children; worker's compensation cases

Health: Medicare; paying medical bills; cost of healthcare; doctor's appointments; mental health issues

Family and Children: conservatorship or guardianship; child support; divorce; domestic violence

Income and Benefits: SSI; getting and keeping cash benefits; State assistance

Consumer: bankruptcy; credit card debt; debt collectors; problems with home repairs; sales practices

Education: educational advocacy for children in Juvenile Court; special education; unwarranted referrals to Juvenile Court

Individuals Rights: discrimination on the basis of color; facing discrimination

Other: probate court

Clients, when asked whether LAA should be providing assistance in other areas of the law, responded as follows:

Yes	69*
No	53
Do Not Know	8
No response	55

Those who answered "yes" stated that LAA should be providing work in the following areas:

Employment: *obtaining pardons for convictions*

Housing: *evictions*; finding a place to live; abuse in shelters

Family: helping kids; child support; *divorce*; "disclosure" of information becoming a safety issue for those in domestic violence shelters; *protection of rights of teens and others in DCF care*

Consumer: filing bankruptcy; dealing with bankruptcy caused by spouse

Health: *getting medical insurance*

Elder: probate

Motor vehicle: reinstatement of driver's license; Department of Motor Vehicle licenses and fines; represent victims of car accidents

Miscellaneous: income tax trouble; identity theft issues; allow people to take a few minutes to ask questions and get brief legal advice; raise income guidelines so people who do not have a lot of money can be protected; assist the churches with providing legal help; expand efforts in Wallingford; be open to all areas of the law

Criminal

* As indicated by the italics, LAA is already providing services in a number of the areas enumerated by the clients.

When asked whether LAA should be involved in giving support and advice to community-based organizations, such as tenants groups and neighborhood organizations, clients responded:

Yes, it is Very Important	120
Yes, it is Important	43
No, it is Not Important	4
No Response	18

Clients were asked how important it was for LAA to be involved in making or changing the laws that affect poor people; such LAA activities could include telling lawmakers about their clients' experiences and suggesting how laws might be written. Clients responded as follows:

Yes, it is Very Important	131
Yes, it is Important	29
No, it is Not Important	7
No Response	18

When asked whether there is anything LAA should be doing to help low income people in the greater New Haven area that it is not currently doing, clients replied:

Yes	71
No	44
Do Not Know	10
No Response	61

Those who answered "yes" thought that LAA should be providing the following additional services:

Housing: housing and elder care; affordable housing; more low income housing; home closings or anything pertaining to home buying; internal investigation about Section 8 application process and use of time by workers; providing assistance for homeless; finding or providing housing

Family: getting custody of children; divorce; represent more men; help more with housing and care for children

Income & Benefits: fight for more benefits within the community; better caseworkers at DSS and more of them; helping with State assistance

Health: helping with Title XIX and Medicare

Employment: train people to obtain and maintain mobility in employment; helping to educate clients about jobs and budgeting; finding better paying jobs; helping people who are unemployed

Service provision: get more involved with its clients; not make people have to wait on acceptances; be able to come to the office and get assistance the same day; provide more services; help each individual with their problem; provide clients with more time and effort; go to court with clients so they won't feel so intimidated by the whole justice system

Outreach: set up off-site gathering in different areas; help people get educated about their rights; offer more workshops

Visibility: put out word; advertise what you offer and do; get out more to allow people to know about this association

Miscellaneous: many things are being done but it doesn't help everyone it should; not assist low income families who need help with criminal issues or probate or bankruptcy; at present, very low income, possibly illegal aliens are swamping the needs based services; Long-time tax-paying citizens who can't afford regular lawyers should be offered some help also; network with other organizations re policy and legislative issues, lobby; be more involved; there are people who receive benefits without needing them and there are many people who have lots of needs and are not getting help

Clients, when asked whether they had reason to seek assistance or advice from LAA within the last year, replied as follows:

Yes	48
No	102
No Response	25

Those clients who sought advice indicated the frequency with which they contacted LAA:

1 time	22
2 times	10
3 times	4
4 or more times	5

Clients who had already contacted LAA sought assistance concerning the following type(s) of problem(s):

Family and Children: divorce; custody or visitation; child support; DCF; conservatorships	25
Housing: landlord deposit; issues with landlord; utilities; gas and light bills; eviction; Section 8; homelessness	13
Income and Benefits: SSI/SSD; disability appeal; keeping benefits	7
Consumer: bankruptcy; collection agency action	3
Employment: employer did not pay wages; job seeking	3
Immigration: domestic violence involving an undocumented immigrant	2
Education: special education	1
Health	1
Other: criminal; fines and penalties on license; car insurance; insurance problems; whistle blowing protection; probate	6

When asked about their general impression of LAA, clients replied:

Favorable	56
Neutral	18
Unfavorable	12
Do Not Know	24
No Response	75

Clients' favorable comments included the following:

- Helpful; important help for those who need it
- Great organization
- Outstanding; the best
- Excellent program that gives good advice
- They're the best and I refer a lot of people to LAA
- Valuable service; much needed
- Thank you for your help and support
- Excellent team and do well when they can take a case
- Fair and good
- I wished I knew about it sooner-good help
- Helped me a lot—I was very happy to get the help
- For the people, for a good cause
- Is of good intention
- Helps out the homeless
- Good WHEN requested help and they do it ASAP
- First time going to LAA-but daughter has gone and got me to take problem to them
- Staff is attentive and friendly
- Caring about community

A number of people commented on LAA's need for more resources:

- Overworked and does the best it can, but has too limited resources
- Caseloads are overflowing
- Not enough staff
- Very hard to get a case accepted

The unfavorable comments included:

- Need to spend more time with clients
- Too hard to contact if you have a job
- Insensitive on DCF issues and uninformed about DCF and domestic violence
- Overworked and its services are limited to helping only very low income people at the expense of others who need help

- So far not good
- Not fair to men
- Very poor- many homeless people are still out and about
- They don't help in emergencies

When asked what one thing about LAA they would most like to see changed, clients responded:

No Change	19
Do Not Know	12
No Response	109

The following recommendations were made by the 45 individuals who suggested changes:

- **Accessibility:** help line accessibility; handle walk-ins; more flexible hours; more easily accessible staff; expand area-wise; office in Fair Haven; allow access to services directly rather than requiring individuals to call SLS
- **Resources:** more time helping people understand their legal problems; hire more attorneys; provide legal representation in all areas of the law for low income individuals who can't afford a lawyer and really need support; need to get volunteers; help more people with more issues, more time efficiently; more bilingual staff to help us resolve our problems
- **Improved provision of services:** stop letting clients fend for themselves - most cannot do things on their own; be more personable; get more involved with clients; spend more time with clients; more advocacy; more services for men; provide faster assistance
- **Eligibility changes:** increase income guidelines; help those above the Income guidelines who can't afford attorney.
- **Visibility:** become more visible in community; advertise more; inform more people about the program.

C. Demographics

More than half of the clients who completed the survey also answered the questions regarding their personal characteristics. Their demographics included the following information:

Age:

18-25	31
26-35	25
36-45	31
46-55	24
56-65	13
66+	9

Gender:

Male	52
Female	86

Town or city of residence:

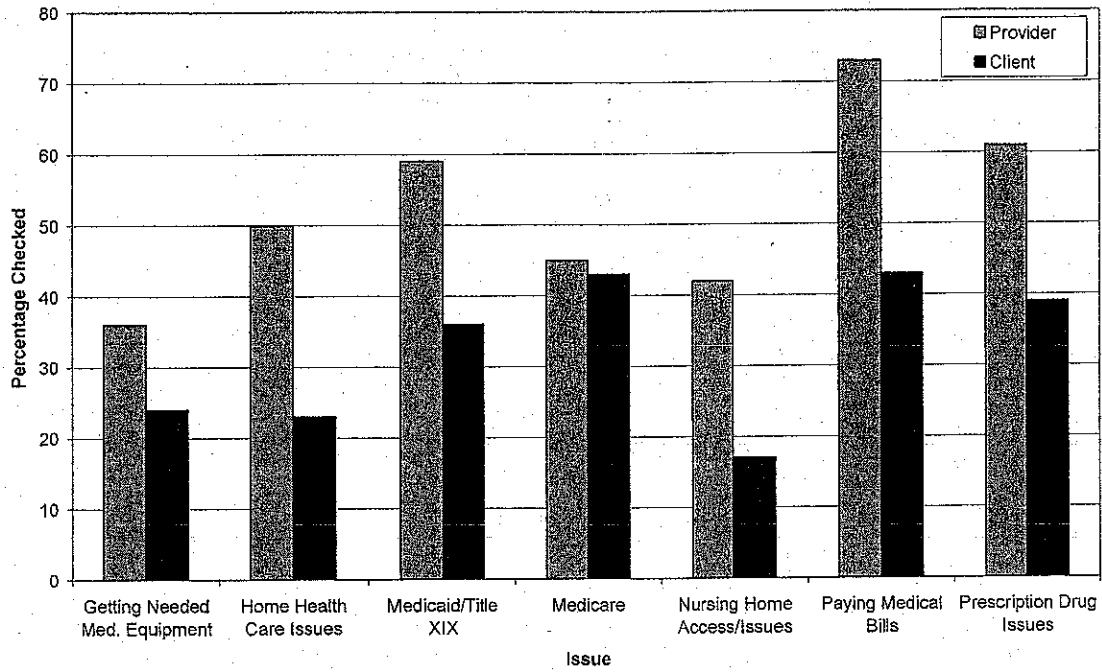
Ansonia	18	New Haven	59
Bloomfield	1	North Branford	1
Branford	2	North Haven	1
Derby	9	Shelton	4
Guilford	7	Stratford	1
Hamden	5	Wallingford	11
Milford	6	West Haven	5
Monroe	1		

Yearly household income:

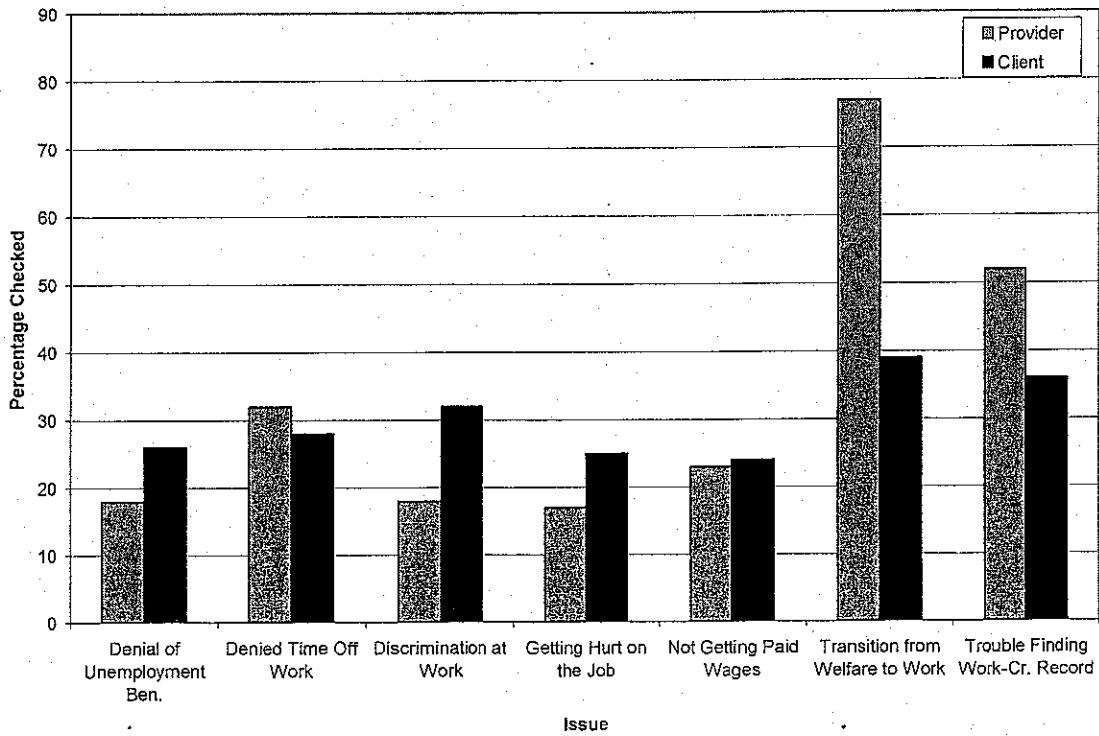
\$0 - \$4,999	45
\$5,000 - \$9,999	27
\$10,000 - \$19,999	20
\$20,000 - \$29,999	19
\$30,000 - \$39,999	7
\$40,000 or more	11

III. Selected Charts

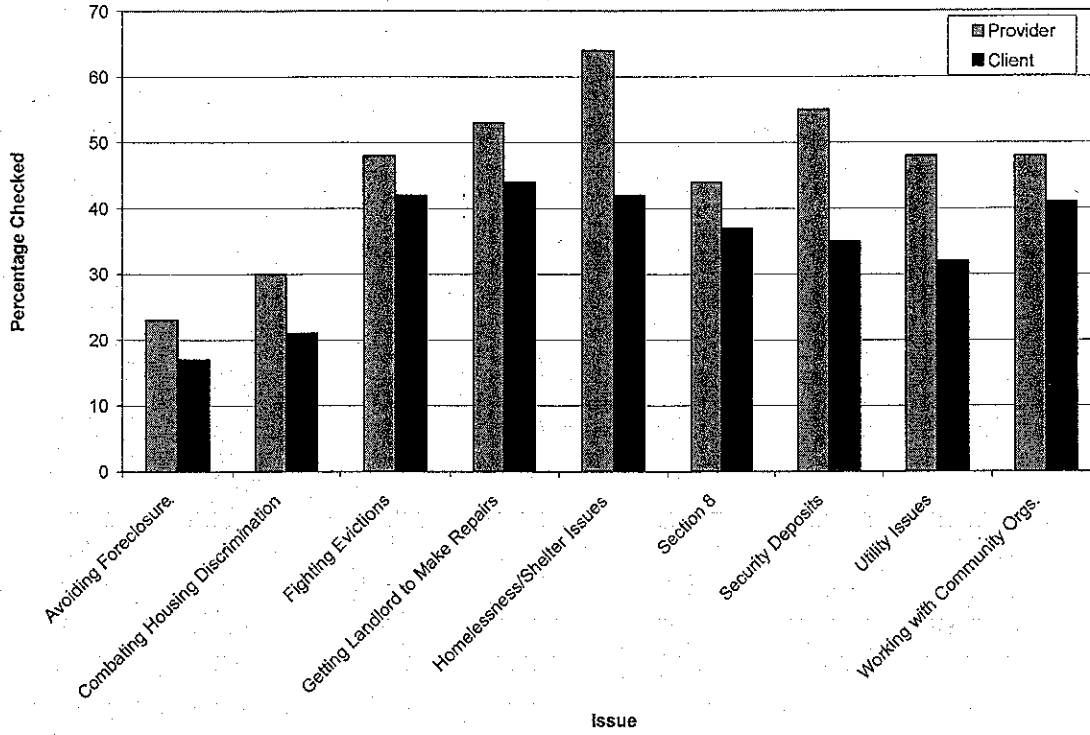
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Health



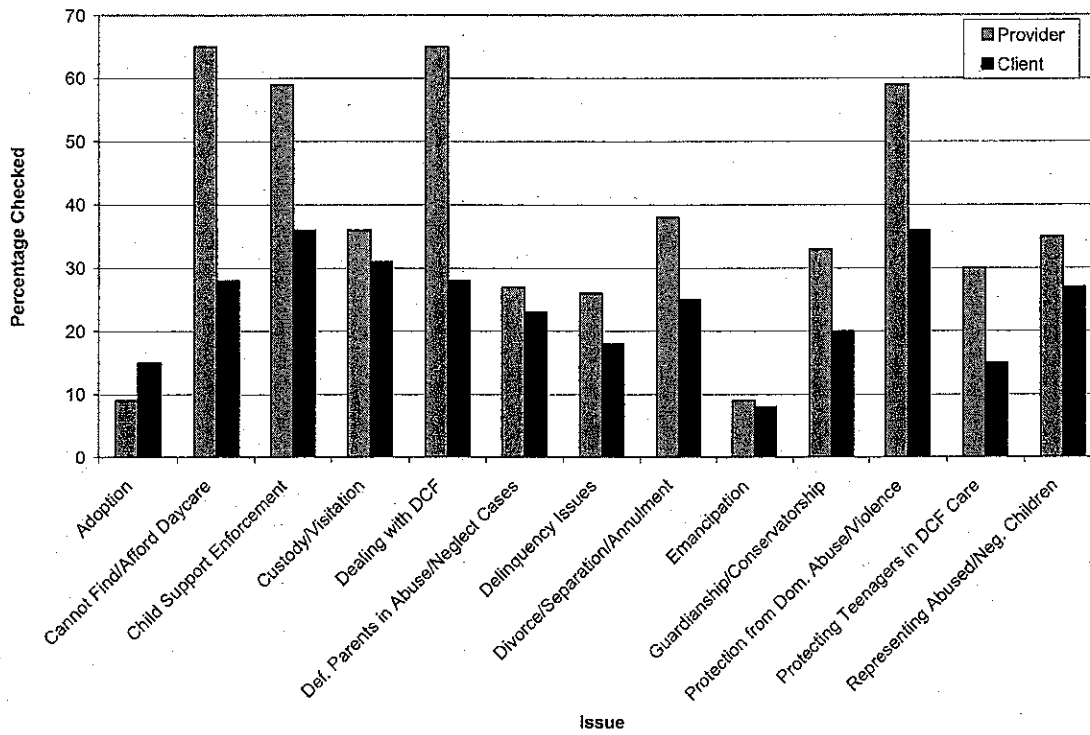
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Employment



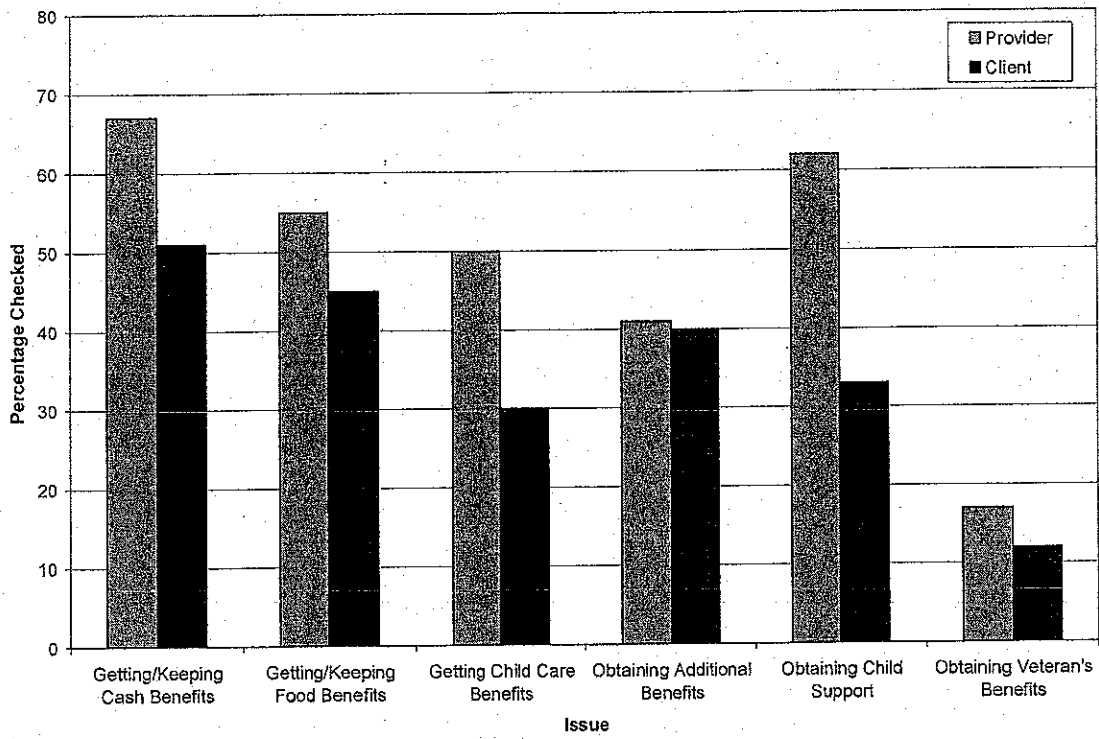
Provider/Client Survey Comparison- Housing



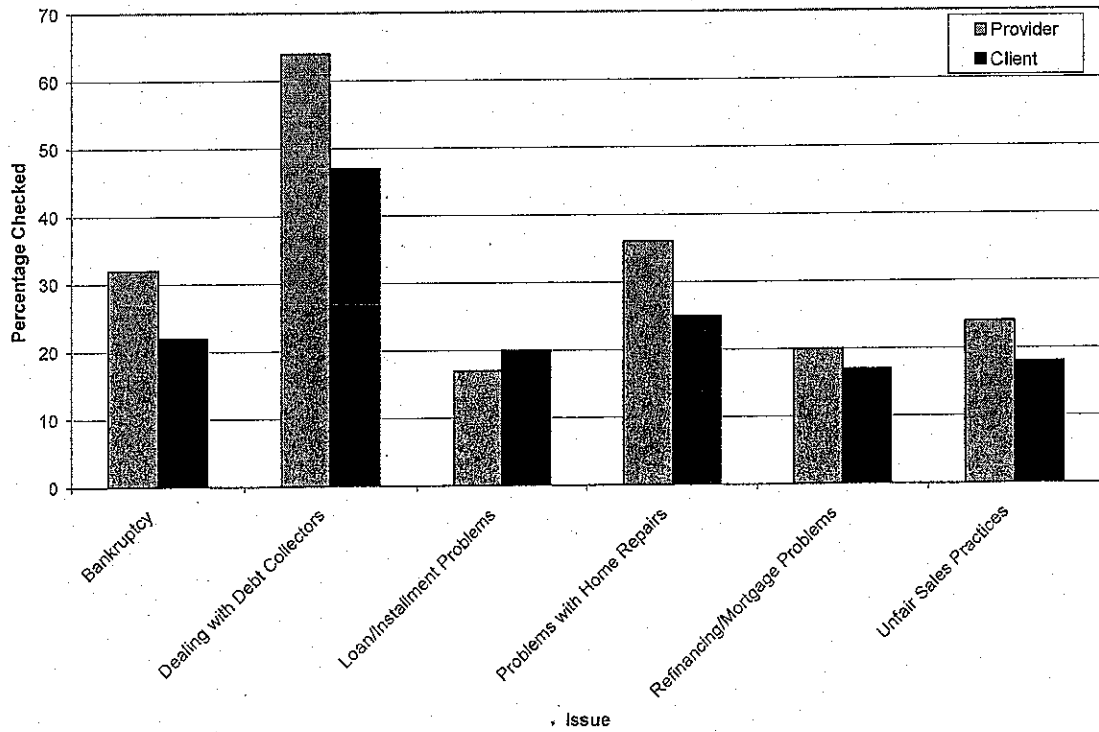
Provider/Client Survey Comparison- Family and Children



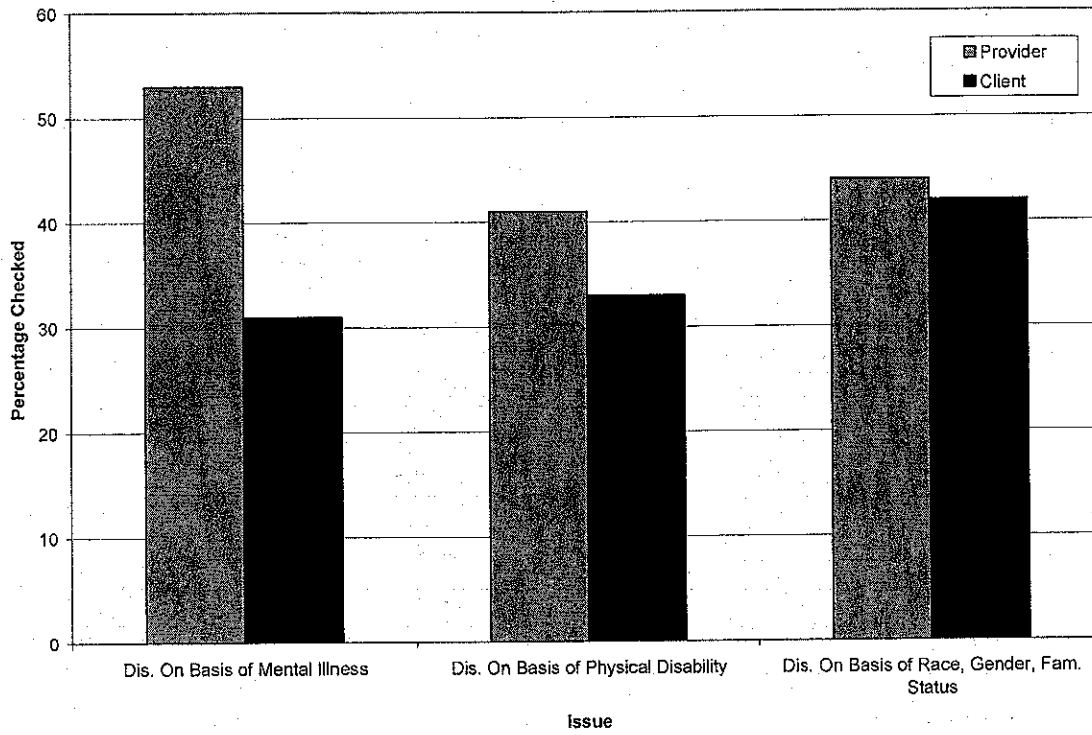
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Income and Benefits



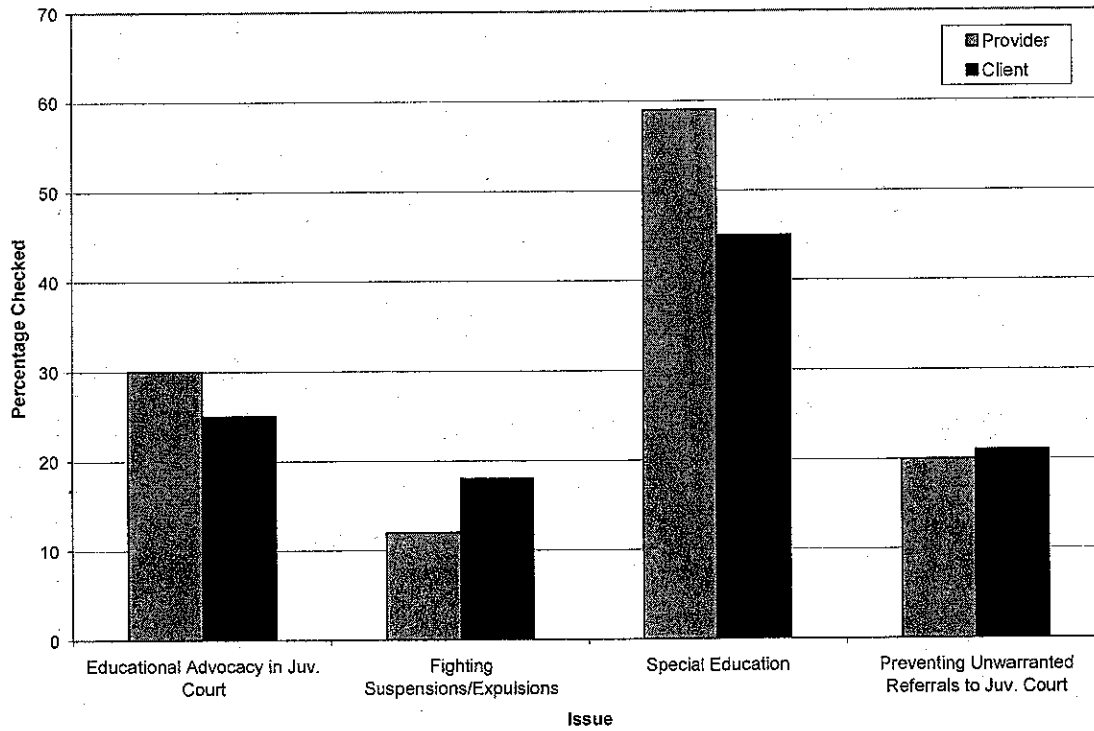
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Consumer



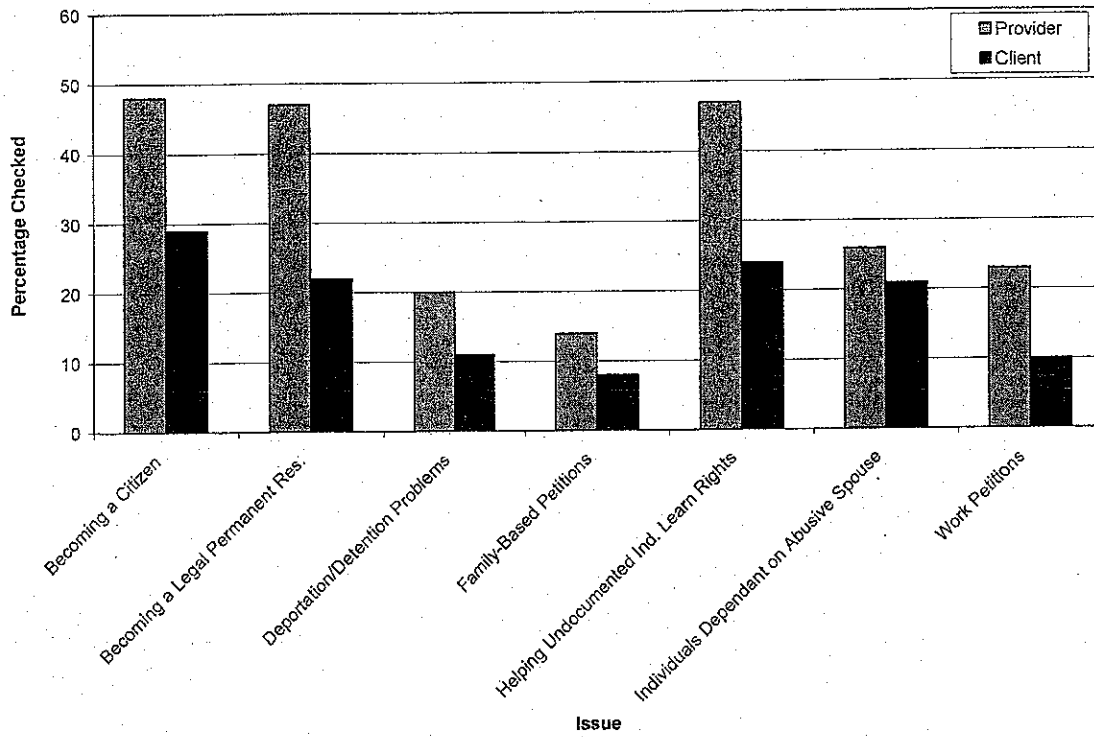
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Individuals Rights



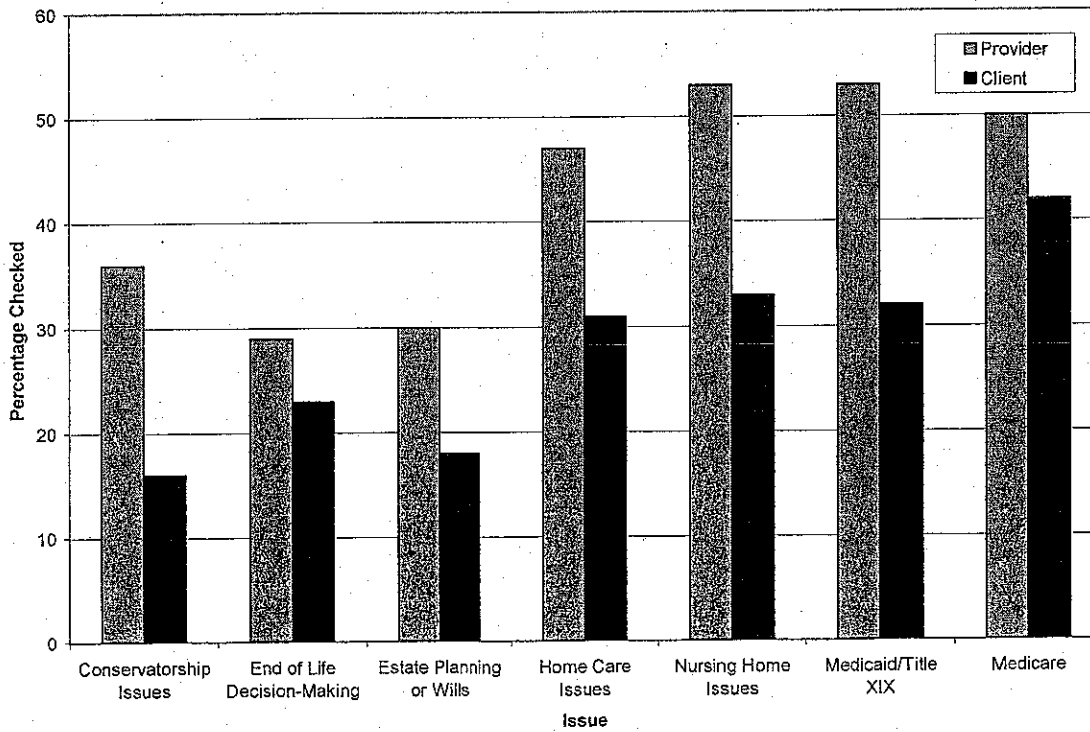
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Education



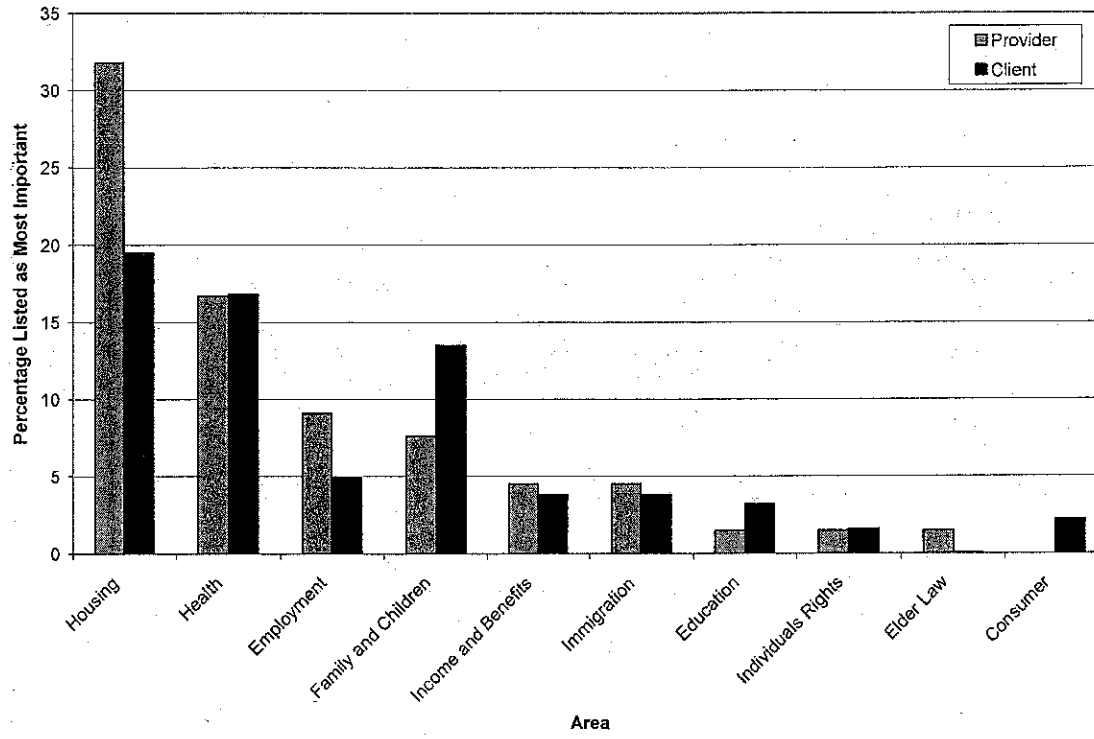
Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Immigration



Provider/Client Survey Comparison-Elder Law



Provider/Client Survey Comparison- Most Important Issue



IV. Appendices

APPENDIX A

LAA contacted the following 134 agencies for inclusion in this survey:

- Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut
- ACT, Inc.
- African Community Center for Educational and Social Services
- All Our Kin
- ALSO-Cornerstone, Inc.
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- Ansonia Community Action
- Ansonia Housing Authority
- Ansonia Doyle Senior Center
- APT
- Association for Retarded Citizens
- Beth-El Shelter
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- The Birmingham Group
- Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley
- Bridges
- Christ Episcopal Church
- Connecticut Yankee Council
- Calvin Hill Day Care Center
- Career Resources
- Casa Otonal, Inc.
- Catholic Charities Lower Naugatuck Valley
- Catholic Family Services
- Center for Disability Rights
- Centro San Jose
- Chapel Haven
- The Children's Center
- The Children's Pre-School
- Christian Community Action
- Citywide Youth Coalition
- Clifford W. Beers Guidance Clinic, Inc.
- Columbus House, Inc.
- Common Ground High School
- Community Action Agency
- Community Dining Room
- The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven
- Community Mediation
- Connecticut Aids Residence Program
- Connecticut Bar Association
- CT Trails Council of Girl Scouts, Inc.
- Connecticut VNA
- Connecticut Voices for Children
- Continuum Home Health
- Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis

- Crossroads, Inc.
- Department of Social Services, Regional Office
- Derby Senior Citizen Center
- Dixwell Neighborhood Corp., Inc.
- Dixwell-Newhallville Community Mental Health Center
- Domestic Violence Services
- Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen
- Easter Seal Goodwill Industries Rehab Center
- Fair Haven Community Health Center
- Family Counseling of Greater New Haven
- Families in Crisis
- Farnam Neighborhood House, Inc.
- Fellowship Place
- First Congregational Church
- Gateway Community-Technical College
- Guilford Family Life Center
- Guilford Housing Authority
- Guilford Social Services Department
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven
- Hamden Elderly Services
- Hamden Housing Authority
- Healthy Start of Naugatuck Valley
- Healthy Start of New Haven
- Hill Development Corporation
- Hill Health Medical Center
- The Hispanic Clinic
- Housing Authority of New Haven
- Infoline of South Central Connecticut
- Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services
- International Institute of CT
- Jerome A. Frank Yale Legal Services Organization
- Jewish Community Center
- Jewish Family Service
- JUNTA for Progressive Action
- Labor Council
- Leila Day Nursery
- Liberty Center
- Liberty Community Services
- Life Haven
- Livable City Initiative
- Milford Bar Association
- Milford Human Resources Development
- Milford Senior Citizen Center
- Milford United Way
- M.L. Keefe Community Center
- Mutual Housing Association of South Central CT
- National Student Partnerships
- Naugatuck Valley Health District
- New Haven Adult Education
- New Haven Boys and Girls Club, Inc.

- New Haven County Bar Association
- New Haven Family Resource Center
- New Haven Home Recovery
- New Haven Home Recovery Careways Shelter
- New Haven Homeless Resource Center
- New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court
- New Haven YWCA
- Parent Child Resource Center, Inc.
- Planned Parenthood
- Quinnipiac University School Of Law
- Recreation Camp
- Regional Visiting Nurse Agency, Inc.
- Regional Workforce Development Center
- Riverside Tenants Association
- Salvation Army
- Santa Rosa de Lima Church
- Shelton Senior Center
- Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW)
- St. Francis Home for Children
- TEAM, Inc.
- Tinney Community Center
- The Umbrella
- Unidad Latina en Accion (Latinos United in Action)
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- Valley Bar Association
- Valley Interfaith Caregivers
- Valley Regional Adult Education
- Valley United Way
- Visiting Nurse Association of South Central CT, Inc.
- VOICES
- West Haven Community House Association, Inc.
- West Haven Housing Authority
- West Haven Human Resources Department
- West Haven Youth & Family Services
- WHEAT
- Women's Health Coordination Center
- Women in Transition Program
- YMCA of Greater New Haven
- Yale Child Study Center

We also surveyed the following public officials and members of the judiciary:

- 1st Selectman Carl Balestracci, Town of Guilford
- 1st Selectwoman Susan Cable, Town of Beacon Falls
- Mayor James DellaVolpe, City of Ansonia
- Mayor John DeStefano, City of New Haven
- 1st Selectwoman Derrylyn Gorski, Town of Bethany
- Mayor Craig Henrici, Town of Hamden

- Karl Kilduff, North Branford Town Manager
 - 1st Selectman Kevin Kopetz, Town of North Haven
 - 1st Selectman Robert Koskelowski, Town of Seymour
 - Mayor Mark Lauretti, City of Shelton
 - Michael Malone, Cheshire Town Manager
 - Mayor Joseph Maturo, Jr., Town of East Haven
 - 1st Selectwoman Cheryl Morris, Town of Branford
 - 1st Selectman August Palmer, Town of Oxford
 - Mayor John Picard, City of West Haven
 - Mayor James Richetelli, City of Milford
 - 1st Selectman Thomas Scarpati, Town of Madison
 - 1st Selectman Edward Maum Sheehy, Town of Woodbridge
 - Mayor Tony Staffieri, City of Derby
 - 1st Selectman James Zeoli, Town of Orange
-
- Probate Judge Michael Albis, East Haven Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Fred Anthony, Shelton Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Michael Brandt, North Haven Probate Court
 - Probate Judge John Carangelo, Orange Probate Court
 - Probate Judge John Donegan, Branford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge John Fertig, Oxford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Frank Forgione, North Branford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Salvatore Giglio, Hamden Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Joel Helander, Guilford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Robert Horowitz, Woodbridge Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Clifford Hoyle, Derby Probate Court
 - Probate Judge John A. Keyes, New Haven Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Carol Lougee, Madison Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Peter Mariano, Naugatuck Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas, Milford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge E. Michael Heffernan, West Haven Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Raymond Voelker, Cheshire Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Philip Wright, Wallingford Probate Court
 - Probate Judge Guy Yale, Bethany Probate Court

APPENDIX B

Client surveys were received from the following community sites:

Ansonia

Birmingham Group Health Services
435 East Main St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Tinney Community Center
6 Olsen Dr.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Umbrella
435 E. Main St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Branford

Community Dining Room
30 Harrison Ave.
Branford, CT 06405

Derby

Spooner House
119 Caroline St.
Derby, CT 06418

Team, Inc.
30 Elizabeth St.
Derby, CT 06418

Guilford

Guilford Food Bank
78 Boston St.
Guilford, CT 06437

Guilford Housing Authority
32 Guilford Court
Guilford, CT 06437

Hamden

Hamden Housing Authority
51 Worth Ave.
Hamden, CT 06518

Milford

Beth El Center
90 New Haven Ave.
Milford, CT 06460

New Haven

Columbus House
586 Ella Grasso Blvd.
New Haven, CT 06519

Fair Haven Community
Health Center
374 Grand Ave.
New Haven, CT 06513

Hill Health Center
428 Columbus Ave.
New Haven, CT 06519

Integrated Refugee &
Immigrant Services
235 Nicholl Street
New Haven, CT 06511

LEAP
31 Jefferson Street
New Haven, CT 06511

New Haven Legal
Assistance
426 State St.
New Haven, CT 06510

Wallingford

SCOW (Spanish Community
of Wallingford)
284 Washington St.
Wallingford, CT 06492

APPENDIX C

A. Provider Survey

1. Please take a moment to think about any problems you think low income people have had or may be having in the following areas. We have listed some types of problems that might fall under each category. Please check any which you think are important.

<p>Health</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid (Title XIX) <input type="checkbox"/> Getting needed medical equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription drug issues <input type="checkbox"/> Paying medical bills <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing home access/issues <input type="checkbox"/> Home health care issues other: _____	<p>Housing</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting evictions (keeping decent, safe and affordable housing) <input type="checkbox"/> Getting landlords to make repairs <input type="checkbox"/> Working with community organizations on the development of affordable housing <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining security deposits/getting deposits returned after moving out <input type="checkbox"/> Section 8 issues <input type="checkbox"/> Combating housing discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Stopping shutoffs and other utility issues <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness/shelter issues other: _____	<p>Income and Benefits</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Getting/keeping cash benefits, such as SAGA, TFA, AABD, Social Security, or SSI <input type="checkbox"/> Getting/keeping food benefits, such as food stamps and therapeutic diets <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining additional benefits, including the cost of special expenses (moving, storage, telephone, deposits, clothing, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining child support <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining veteran's benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Getting child care benefits other: _____	<p>Education</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Getting assistance for child(ren) with special needs at school <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting suspensions/expulsions <input type="checkbox"/> Providing educational advocacy to children in juvenile court <input type="checkbox"/> Preventing unwarranted referrals by school to juvenile court (truancy/behavior issues) other: _____
<p>Employment</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Making the transition from welfare to work by gaining access to job training, child care, transportation, and other related services <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination at work <input type="checkbox"/> Denial of unemployment benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble finding work because of a criminal record <input type="checkbox"/> Denied time off work when needed to care for child or ill family member <input type="checkbox"/> Not getting paid wages or overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Getting hurt on the job other: _____	<p>Family and Children</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Getting protection from domestic abuse/violence <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation/annulment <input type="checkbox"/> Child support enforcement problems <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance in dealing with DCF <input type="checkbox"/> Representing abused/neglected children <input type="checkbox"/> Defending parents in abuse/neglect cases <input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship/conservatorship issues <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting the rights of teenagers in DCF care <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption <input type="checkbox"/> Custody/visitation <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot find/afford daycare <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulation <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency issues other: _____	<p>Immigration</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a legal permanent resident <input type="checkbox"/> Helping undocumented persons learn about their rights <input type="checkbox"/> Aiding people who depend on an abusive spouse for legal immigration status <input type="checkbox"/> Family-based petitions <input type="checkbox"/> Work petitions <input type="checkbox"/> Deportation/detention problems other: _____	<p>Elder Law</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid (Title XIX) <input type="checkbox"/> Estate planning/wills <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing home issues <input type="checkbox"/> Home care issues <input type="checkbox"/> Conservatorship issues <input type="checkbox"/> End of life decision-making other: _____

PLEASE TURN OVER

2. Of the problems you described or checked above, please indicate which you think is the most urgent:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3. Should LAA be providing assistance in other areas of the law?

- ___ Yes ___ No
- If so, what other areas?

4. Should LAA be involved in giving support and advice to community-based organizations, such as tenants groups and neighborhood organizations?

- ___ Yes, it is very important
- ___ Yes, it is important
- ___ No, it is not important

5. Should LAA be involved in doing things such as drafting regulations and statutes or testifying on clients' behalf in front of legislators, on issues which hurt or help poor people?

- ___ Yes, it is very important
- ___ Yes, it is important
- ___ No, it is not important

6. Is there anything LAA should be doing to help low income people in the greater New Haven area that we are not currently doing? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please describe

7. Have you had reason to refer a client to LAA for assistance or advice within the last year?
 ___ Yes ___ No

8. If so, about how many times?

9. If so, concerning what type(s) of problem(s)?

10. What is your general impression of LAA?

11. What is the one thing about LAA you would most like to see changed?

12. The following questions are optional. However, your answers to these questions would help us to make sure that we have obtained a wide variety of responses:

Name of person filling out survey: _____

Name and description of agency or group: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Thank you very much. Please call Patricia Kaplan, Executive Director, at 203-946-4811, Ext. 115 if you have any questions. We will send you a copy of the report on the outcomes of our priority setting process.

NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION, INC. (LAA)
 426 State Street
 New Haven, Connecticut 06510-2018
 Telephone: (203) 946-4811
 Fax: (203) 498-9771
 Email: mail@nhlegal.org



COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY 2007

New Haven Legal Assistance Association (LAA) provides free legal services to low-income individuals and families. As we do not have the resources to help everyone who has a legal problem, we try to focus our work on a few areas where we can do the most good for the most people. Your answers to the following questions will help us decide what our priorities will be for the next five years.

B. Client Survey

1. Please take a moment to think about any problems you or someone you know have had or may be having in the following areas. We have listed some types of issues that might fall under each category. Please check any which you think are important.

Health

- Medicare
- Medicaid (Title XIX)
- Getting needed medical equipment
- Prescription drug issues
- Paying medical bills
- Nursing home access/issues
- Home health care issues
- other:

Employment

- Making the transition from welfare to work by gaining access to job training, child care, transportation, and other related services
- Discrimination at work
- Denial of unemployment benefits
- Trouble finding work because of a criminal record
- Denied time off work when needed to care for child or ill family member
- Not getting paid wages or overtime
- Getting hurt on the job
- other:

Housing

- Fighting evictions (keeping decent, safe and affordable housing)
- Getting landlords to make repairs
- Working with community organizations on the development of affordable housing
- Obtaining security deposits/getting deposits returned after moving out
- Section 8 issues
- Combating housing discrimination
- Stopping shutoffs and other utility issues
- Avoiding foreclosure
- Homelessness/shelter issues
- other:

Family and Children

- Getting protection from domestic abuse/violence
- Divorce/separation/annulment
- Child support enforcement problems
- Assistance in dealing with DCF
- Representing abused/neglected children
- Defending parents in abuse/neglect cases
- Guardianship/conservatorship issues
- Protecting the rights of teenagers in DCF care
- Adoption
- Custody/visitation
- Cannot find/afford daycare
- Emancipation
- Delinquency issues
- other:

Income and Benefits

- Getting/keeping cash benefits, such as SAGA, ITA, AABD, Social Security, or SSI
- Getting/keeping food benefits, such as food stamps and therapeutic diets
- Obtaining additional benefits, such as help paying for special expenses (moving, storage, telephone, deposits, clothing, etc.)
- Obtaining child support
- Obtaining veteran's benefits
- Getting child care benefits
- other:

Consumer

- Bankruptcy
- Dealing with debt collectors
- Refinancing/mortgage problems
- Loan/installment problems
- Unfair sales practices
- Problems with home repairs made/promised by contractors
- other:

Individuals Rights

- Facing discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or family status
- Facing discrimination on the basis of mental illness
- Facing discrimination on the basis of physical disability
- other:

Education

- Getting assistance for child(ren) with special needs at school
- Fighting suspensions/expulsions
- Providing educational advocacy to children in juvenile court
- Preventing unwarranted referrals by school to juvenile court (truancy/behavior issues)
- other:

Immigration

- Becoming a citizen
- Becoming a legal permanent resident
- Helping undocumented persons learn about their rights
- Laiding people who depend on an abusive spouse for legal immigration status
- Family-based petitions
- Work petitions
- Deportation/detention problems
- other:

Elder Law

- Medicare
- Medicaid (Title XIX)
- Estate planning/wills
- Nursing home issues
- Home care issues
- Conservatorship issues
- End of life decision-making
- other:

PLEASE TURN OVER

**NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE
ASSOCIATION, INC. (LAA)**
426 State Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510-2018
Telephone: (203) 946-4811
Fax: (203) 498-9271
Email: mail@nhlegal.org



**COMMUNITY
NEEDS SURVEY 2007**

New Haven Legal Assistance Association (LAA) provides free legal services to low-income individuals and families. As we do not have the resources to help everyone who has a legal problem, we try to focus our work on a few areas where we can do the most good for the most people. Your answers to the following questions will help us decide what our priorities will be for the next five years.

12. The following questions are optional. However, your answers to these questions would help us to make sure that we have obtained a wide variety of responses.

Age: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Town or city of residence: _____

Occupation: _____

Yearly household income:

- _____ \$0 - \$4,999
- _____ \$5,000 - \$9,999
- _____ \$10,000 - \$19,999
- _____ \$20,000 - \$29,999
- _____ \$30,000 - \$39,999
- _____ \$40,000 or more

Thank you very much. If you have any questions, please call Patricia Kaplan, Executive Director, at 203-946-4811, Ext. 115.

6. Is there anything LAA should be doing to help low income people in the greater New Haven area that we are not currently doing? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please describe: _____

7. Have you had reason to seek assistance or advice from LAA within the last year? Yes _____ No _____

8. If so, about how many times? _____

9. If so, concerning what type(s) of problem(s)? _____

10. What is your general impression of LAA? _____

11. What is the one thing about LAA you would most like to see changed? _____

2. Of the problems you described or checked above, please indicate which you think is the most urgent:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3. Should LAA be providing assistance in other areas of the law?

Yes _____ No _____ If so, what other areas? _____

4. Should LAA be involved in giving support and advice to community-based organizations, such as tenants groups and neighborhood organizations?

- _____ Yes, it is very important
- _____ Yes, it is important
- _____ No, it is not important

5. Should LAA get involved in making or changing the laws that affect poor people? Such activities could include telling lawmakers about their clients' experiences and suggesting how laws might be written.

- _____ Yes, it is very important
- _____ Yes, it is important
- _____ No, it is not important