

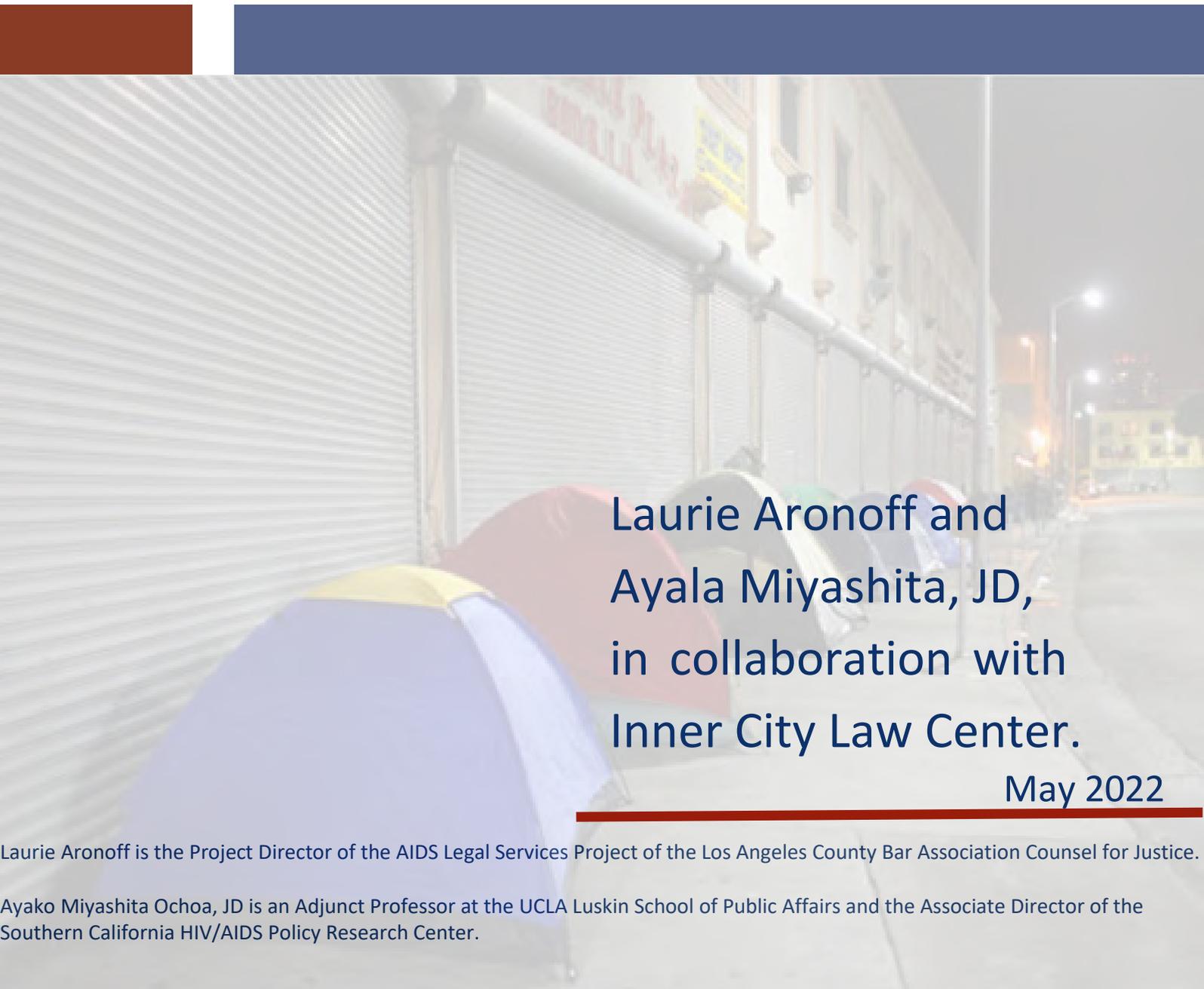
INNER

CITY

LAW

CENTER

LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV: INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY



Laurie Aronoff and
Ayala Miyashita, JD,
in collaboration with
Inner City Law Center.

May 2022

Laurie Aronoff is the Project Director of the AIDS Legal Services Project of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Counsel for Justice.

Ayako Miyashita Ochoa, JD is an Adjunct Professor at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs and the Associate Director of the Southern California HIV/AIDS Policy Research Center.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
A. FUNDERS.....	3
B. PARTNERS.....	3
C. AUTHORS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
A. INTRODUCTION.....	4
B. PRIOR LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	4
C. CURRENT LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	5
D. TOP LINE RESULTS.....	6
METHODOLOGY.....	6
A. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.....	6
B. FOCUS GROUPS.....	8
a. Provider Convenings.....	8
b. Consumer Convenings.....	8
C. QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS.....	9
ANALYSIS.....	9
RESULTS.....	10
A. CONSUMER SURVEY DATA.....	10
a. Legal Service Needs.....	13
b. Barriers to Service.....	14
c. Additional Findings.....	15
B. PROVIDER SURVEY DATA.....	16
a. Accessing Legal Services.....	16
b. Barriers to Service - Closing the legal referral loop.....	16
c. Unmet legal needs.....	16
C. CONSUMER EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL SERVICES.....	16
D. PROVIDER EXPERIENCE WITH LEGAL SERVICES.....	18
E. SERVICE DELIVERY SOLUTIONS.....	20
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	22
CONCLUSION.....	25
ATTACHMENTS.....	26
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) INFORMATION SHEET.....	27
PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP OUTREACH MESSAGE.....	28
PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	29
CONSUMER FOCUS GROUP OUTREACH MESSAGE.....	32
CONSUMER GROUP GUIDE.....	33
CONSUMER SURVEY.....	36
PROVIDER SURVEY.....	44

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A. FUNDERS

This report was funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs.

B. PARTNERS

We thank the nine members of the Community Advisory Committee for their courage, commitment, insights, and most of all, their passion to help HIV impacted communities and improve the delivery of legal services.

We acknowledge and thank the many individuals living with HIV and AIDS who were willing to engage with us through sometimes difficult conversations and complete survey instruments to share their experiences so that we may learn and be better informed.

We acknowledge and thank our community partners and the many individuals who participated since providers played a key role in this needs assessment. Their views and experiences provided us with a macro view of legal service delivery and the barriers to service faced by various client communities.

Lastly, we thank our partners at Inner City Law Center, particularly Odessia Rogers, who provided invaluable assistance and support throughout the needs assessment process along with Lisa Charles and Tai Glenn. We also thank Erica De Santiago for leading discussions with Spanish-speaking consumers, and Fely Soto, Ernesto Velasquez and Jose Luis Surio for phone outreach efforts.

C. AUTHORS

Laurie Aronoff is the Project Director of the AIDS Legal Services Project of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Counsel for Justice.

Ayako Miyashita Ochoa, JD, is the Adjunct Professor, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs & Associate Director of the Southern California HIV/AIDS Policy Research Center.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

Forty years into the HIV epidemic in Los Angeles County, there are close to 60,000 people living with HIV (“PLWH”). Nearly 75% of PLWH are non-white, 11% are women and 2% are transgender. Despite the advent of biomedical prevention technologies that have the capacity to avert HIV infections up to 99%, in 2019, there were nearly 1,500 new infections reported. The highest rates among those newly diagnosed were found among Black men and women. The overwhelming number of new infections is among men who have sex with men.

From the earliest days of the HIV epidemic, legal services were identified as an urgent need for the impacted population. Preserving the rights of PLWH’s personal relationships and surviving partners was the primary legal challenge as the impacted population was overwhelmingly young, gay men who were diagnosed with advanced illness, and who lacked protections of same sex marriage or domestic partnership laws. Additional legal service needs emerged including denial of public benefits and health coverage, in addition to HIV discrimination in housing, employment, healthcare and immigration.

B. PRIOR LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To better understand the legal needs of a growing, diverse population, there have been two prior legal needs assessment studies focusing on PLWH in Los Angeles County. The first was conducted in 1998 by the HIV & AIDS Legal Services Alliance with the goal of identifying the highest priority needs of PLWH. In May 2012, they closed their doors for lack of funding. The second assessment was published in April 2015 by the Williams Institute which, at the time, was a founding partner of the Los Angeles HIV Law & Policy Project. In the wake of HIV & AIDS Legal Services Alliance’s closure, the Williams Institute study was designed to address whether the changing legal and medical landscape for PLWH in Los Angeles County had reduced HIV-specific legal needs and whether the existing legal needs were being met by other legal service providers that were not explicitly HIV-identified. Los Angeles Law & Policy Project ceased operations in December 2017, also due to lack of funding.

The Williams Institute HIV Legal Needs Assessment found that almost all respondents who had a legal need, where legal need is defined as an issue legal services providers are known to cover (see: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Legal-Needs-HIV-People-Nov-2015.pdf>). Ninety-eight percent of respondents reported they had a legal need in the year prior to the survey and almost all of those with a legal need said that they did not have a testamentary will and/or an advanced health care directive. Ninety-one percent of all respondents reported a legal need in at least one other remaining legal issue area.

Respondents reported an average of six distinct legal needs in four legal issue areas in the year prior to taking the survey. Many respondents did not look for

legal help and those who did look did not always find qualified legal assistance. Among the respondents who had a legal need and looked for help, 26% were unable to find assistance. Of those individuals who did not get assistance, 22% reported not finding help because they felt that the provider was insensitive to their needs as a PLWH. Only 16% of the respondents who reported having a legal need were successful in receiving assistance from a lawyer. Affordability and awareness of legal services were barriers to getting legal assistance.

The study found specific trends in unmet legal needs by subgroups. One trend is that immigration was an area of legal need for Latinx participations. Secondly, gender and sexual minority statuses were a factor in some of the legal issue areas. Nearly half of all transgender women (44%) reported experiences of being harassed, attacked with violence, and/or subjected to another crime in the past year. They were also significantly more likely to report having been incarcerated in the five years prior to the survey than cisgender women (26% versus 12%,).

Perhaps unsurprising was the enduring experiences participants reported with HIV-related discrimination. In the five years prior to the survey, 31% of respondents reported experiencing HIV-based discrimination in housing, employment, and/or health care settings. Among those who reported being incarcerated for a week or more during the five-year period prior to the survey, 56% reported having problems accessing HIV medication, being separated from others due to HIV status, and/or being denied access to services in the jail or prison while incarcerated.

C. CURRENT LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2020, Inner City Law Center was awarded Ryan White CARE Act funding to deliver legal services to PLWH in Los Angeles County. It was determined that a legal needs assessment would help inform program design before commencing service delivery. ICLC contracted with Laurie Aronoff, the Project Director of the AIDS Legal Services Project, a pro bono program of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Counsel for Justice. As a longstanding member of the HIV services community, AIDS Legal Services Project was well-positioned to lead this assessment. Ayako Miyashita Ochoa, Adjunct Professor, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs & Associate Director of the Southern California HIV/AIDS Policy Research Center, served as a consultant, given her role in coordinating the prior legal needs assessment executed by the Williams Institute.

Since a comprehensive county-wide legal needs assessment was conducted six years prior, the current needs assessment aims were tailored to identify: (1) the unmet legal needs of the most vulnerable HIV-impacted populations including transgender and cisgender women, those who have experienced homelessness and incarceration, and those who have faced substance use and mental health challenges; and (2) potential service delivery options that may improve access to legal services for these diverse populations. This report summarizes the findings of this assessment conducted in 2021.

D. TOP LINE RESULTS

- The need for legal services among PLWH remains high as nearly every respondent identified seeking assistance for at least one legal service area.
- PLWH are a very traumatized population. Among the survey respondents, 60% reported interactions with the criminal justice system, 45% had experienced homelessness in the past five years, 51% have experienced violence and harassment, and 75% have been diagnosed with depression, anxiety and/or another mental health condition.
- While different subpopulations of PLWH have different legal needs, there was commonality in several issues including preserving housing, financial stability, dealing with debt, stigma and discrimination, navigating workplace issues, and facing violence and harassment.
- The lack of centralization of legal services makes it very difficult and frustrating for both providers and consumers to find appropriate assistance and to hold agencies accountable for untimely responses to consumer queries.

METHODOLOGY

A. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The first priority was to assemble a Community Advisory Committee made up of community members whose lived experiences reflected those of key target populations. As part of the outreach efforts to recruit diverse members to serve on the Community Advisory Committee, staff made numerous presentations before various consumer Committees, Task Forces and Caucuses affiliated with the LA County HIV Commission including the Women’s Caucus, Consumer Caucus, Transgender Caucus, Black African American Community Task Force, Aging Task Force, and the Executive Committee. During these presentations, emphasis was placed on announcing the launch of the legal-needs assessment and on recruiting Community Advisory Committee participants to actively contribute to the design of the assessment. Next, a Community Advisory Committee Information Sheet was developed, and widely distributed to consumer groups with the help of the HIV Commission staff. Staff at over a dozen AIDS service organizations and Ryan White CARE Act-funded programs were asked to make committee recommendations.

The Community Advisory Committee was made up of nine members from diverse backgrounds, ranging in age from 35 to 70 years old. Three members identified as Black/African American, four as Latinx, one as Asian American and one as White. There were five cisgender men, three cisgender women and one transgender woman. Five people identified as gay.

Members of the Community Advisory Committee were tasked with ensuring the needs assessment tools of semi-structured interview guides and survey

instruments were culturally appropriate and sensitive to diverse communities and informed outreach strategies. Five meetings and a Research 101 training session were conducted. The training was designed to better inform the members about the use of research tools. Two final additional Community Advisory Committee meetings were held in January 2022 to review findings and recommendations.

Focus groups were implemented using a semi-structured interview guide to collect qualitative data from providers and consumers representative of these target populations. Focus Group participants were invited to complete quantitative surveys after participating in the Focus Group. Participants received a \$25 incentive in the form of a Visa gift card for participating in a 1-to-1.5-hour Focus Group. An additional \$15 incentive was offered to complete the quantitative survey. All data were collected from October through December 2021. Focusing on the most vulnerable populations of PLWH was made possible through a robust community engagement process that allowed the team to collect more nuanced insights from qualitative data, to complement quantitative survey data collected. The assessment was initiated during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; thus, Focus Groups were held remotely and surveys were either self-administered online or administered by staff via phone.

Focus Groups were audio-recorded with participant permission for later viewing. Staff created data summaries documenting content covered by each Focus Group session. Focus Groups were intended to be anonymous and any identifying information was removed from data summaries. In total, 11 focus group discussions (Provider Focus Groups n=5; Consumer Focus Groups n=6) engaged both providers and consumers. Two Focus Groups were conducted in Spanish. A total of 82 individuals participated in the 11 Focus Groups.

The quantitative portion of the assessment included responses from consumers and providers that participated in Focus Groups. Considerable attention was paid towards outreach efforts since we wanted to reach the most vulnerable and hardly-reached populations in a remote/online format. We recognized early in the assessment process that some consumers do not have the capacity to participate in an online Focus Group and survey, and providers may have scheduling conflicts that make it infeasible to participate in the planned Focus Groups. Thus, Focus Group participants were asked to refer to additional provider and consumer participants to complete the quantitative survey. The HIV Commission was also asked to share the consumer survey link with members of the Commission's affiliated consumer groups. In addition, 19 providers were targeted with outreach messaging to promote the survey with particular attention to several of the larger agencies that had not otherwise participated in the assessment. In total, 75 consumers and 44 providers completed the quantitative survey.

B. FOCUS GROUPS

a. Provider Convenings

An outreach message tailored to providers was developed and sent to current contacts at all Ryan White CARE Act-funded programs as well as to coordinators at all Los Angeles County Medical Care Coordination clinics serving PLWH. The invitation was to program staff to participate in a discussion group to address the unmet legal needs and barriers to service for the most vulnerable consumer populations within their program/clinic. Numerous follow up and targeted emails were sent to agency contacts. Five organizations representing service providers serving a wide geographical area agreed to meet remotely to host these discussions.

In total, there were 30 provider participants. A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate Focus Groups for providers. The topics included:

- Participants' organization and role;
- The demographic background (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) of the clients/patients they work with;
- The types of legal issues and problems their clients/patients have faced;
- The barriers their clients/patients have experienced in accessing legal assistance; and
- Service delivery models that participants believe could help expand clients'/ patients' access to legal services.

b. Consumer Convenings

Members of the Community Advisory Committee were polled for suggestions and community contacts as part of the assessment's outreach efforts. Staff working with Community Advisory Committee members identified 23 geographically-dispersed Consumer Advisory Boards, social service agencies and support groups, and provided specific contacts. A joint email was sent from the Community Advisory Committee member and staff to the identified organizations. At least one follow-up message was sent to each organization.

Five agencies agreed to help organize consumer Focus Groups for their clients/patients. In addition, to provide as broad outreach as possible and include unaffiliated consumers, staff of the HIV Commission assisted with extensive outreach and helped to coordinate a sixth consumer panel discussion group. Two Focus Groups were conducted in Spanish.

Overall, there were 52 consumer participants. The semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate Focus Groups for consumers. It included the following topics:

- Consumer experiences when faced with a legal problem(s);
- Whether consumers received any help from a lawyer or legal professional;
- Whether consumers knew where to go for help;
- If the legal problem had been resolved;
- What type of legal problem caused them the most difficulty in the past year;
- What consumers felt were key barriers to accessing services (including legal services); and

- What service delivery models might be most useful in meeting consumers' legal needs.

C. QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS

Two general survey instruments were developed, one for providers and the other for consumers.

To be eligible for the consumer survey, the person had to be living with HIV and/or AIDS and residing in Los Angeles County.

The consumer survey asked for demographic information including age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin and experience with the criminal justice system and homelessness. Consumers were presented with a list of 12 legal topics and asked if they had experience with any of the issues and to rate the ones that had the greatest impact on their lives. To identify common barriers to service, consumers were asked if they had tried to access legal services, and if so, on which topics, where they went for help, in which areas of law they were unsuccessful in receiving help and why. Lastly, consumers were asked about their experiences in receiving legal assistance, including facing any HIV stigmatization as well as questions about why they had not sought legal help.

To be eligible to complete the provider survey, respondents needed to be employed at an agency that provided services to PLWH, with a particular focus on front line staff who provide direct client/patient services. The provider survey asked questions about the respondent's role in the organization and demographic information about the client population served and/or targeted for services. Providers were also presented with the same list of 12 legal issues to identify any that had been faced by their clients/patients and to rate the top five that they believed had the greatest impact on peoples' lives. Providers were asked similar questions about what legal service agencies they referred clients to, what the client experience was like, whether their clients had legal issues that were unaddressed, reasons for the lack of success, and reasons for not making any legal referrals.

ANALYSIS

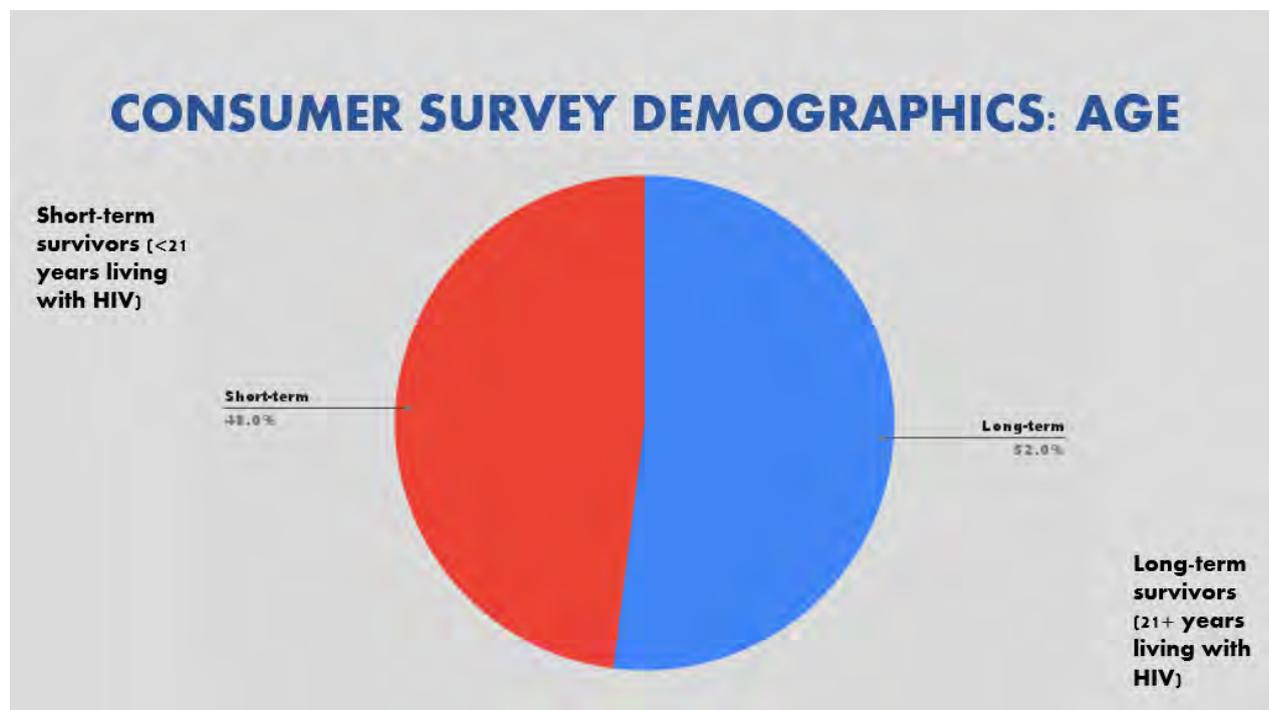
Staff drafted data summaries from each Focus Group and organized data according to conceptual domains derived from the semi-structured interview guide. Domains included experiences with legal issues, barriers to service, and service delivery solutions. Based on a model of rapid qualitative analysis in health services research (Hamilton, 2013), summary data for provider and consumer Focus Groups were combined into a single, comprehensive matrix for analysis. Themes were identified and descriptive data from quantitative surveys were tabulated.

RESULTS

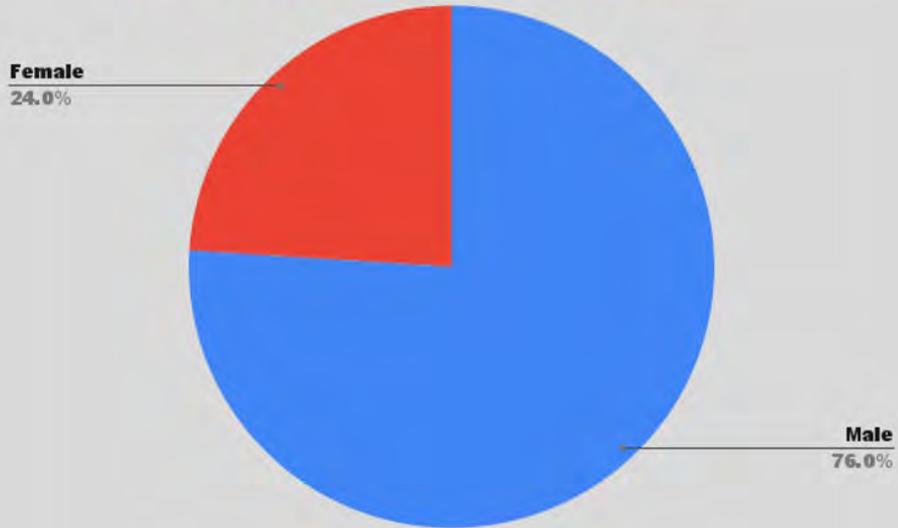
A. CONSUMER SURVEY DATA

Demographics (n=75)

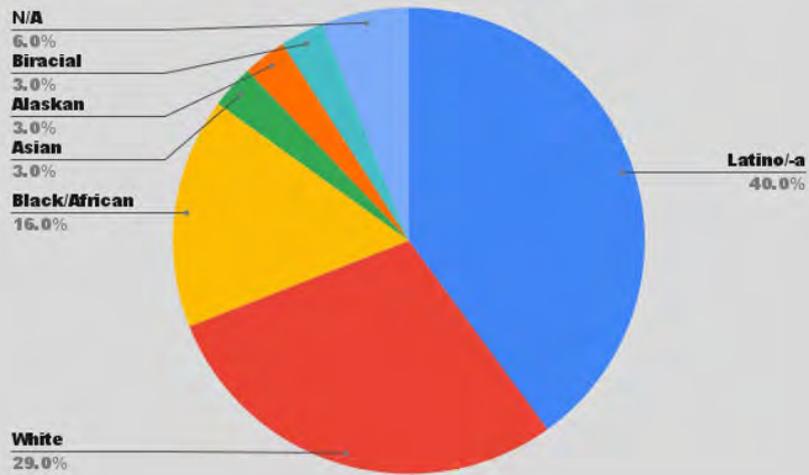
Age (n=74)	
Age (range)	27-72 years
Years Living with HIV (n=57)	
Long-term survivors (21+ years living with HIV)	52%
Sex Assigned at Birth (n=74)	
Sex at birth: Male	76%
Sex at birth: Female	24%
Gender (n=74)	
Gender Identity: Man	68%
Gender Identity: Woman	24%
Gender Identity: Transgender/Non-Binary	8%
Race/Ethnicity (n=75)	
Race/ethnicity: Latino/-a	40%
Race/ethnicity: White	29%
Race/ethnicity: Black/African American	16%
Race/ethnicity: Asian	3%
Race/ethnicity: Alaskan Native/American Indian	3%
Race/ethnicity: Biracial	3%
Nativity (n=75)	
Foreign-born	39%



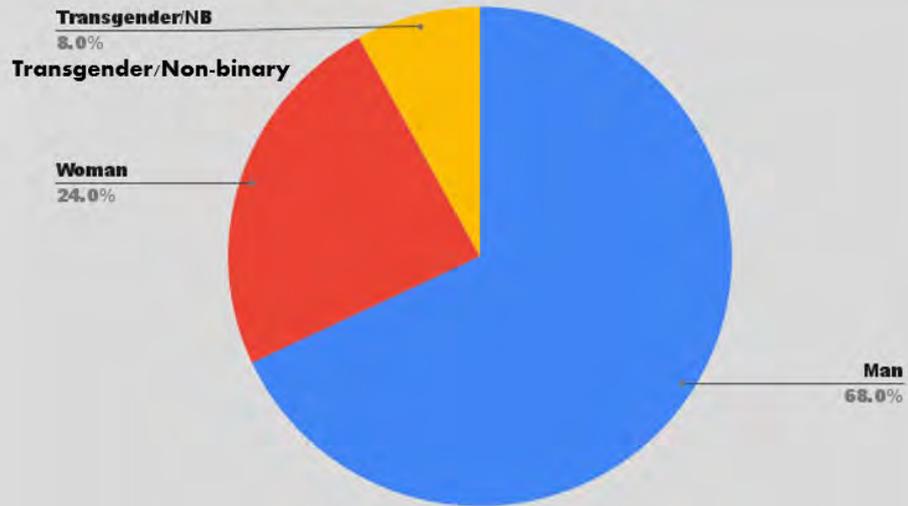
SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH



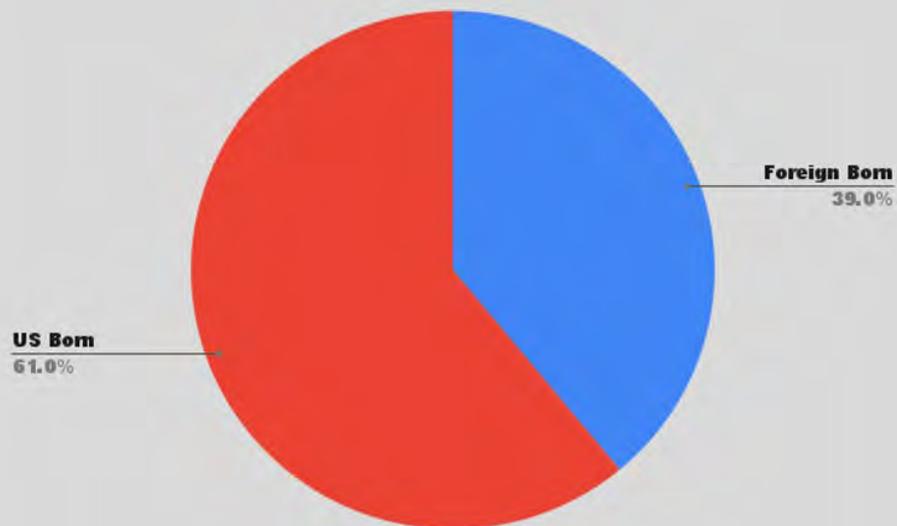
CONSUMER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE/ETHNICITY



CONSUMER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS: GENDER IDENTITY



NATIVITY

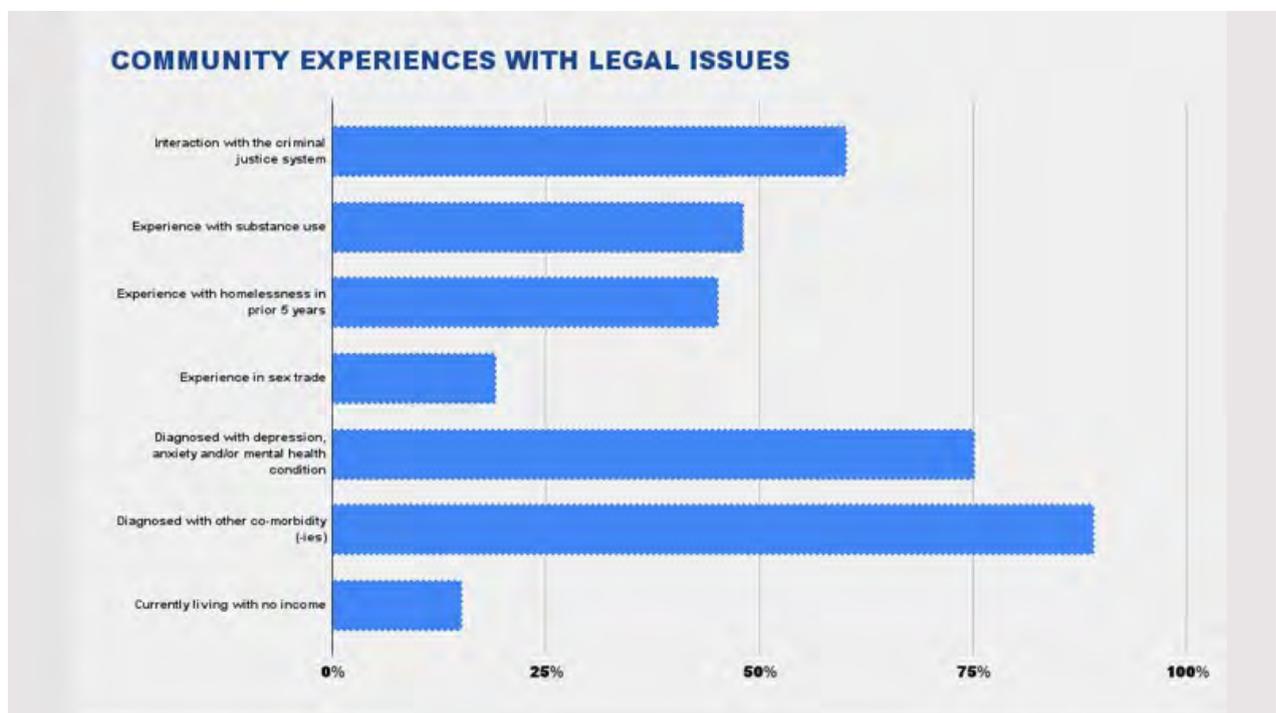


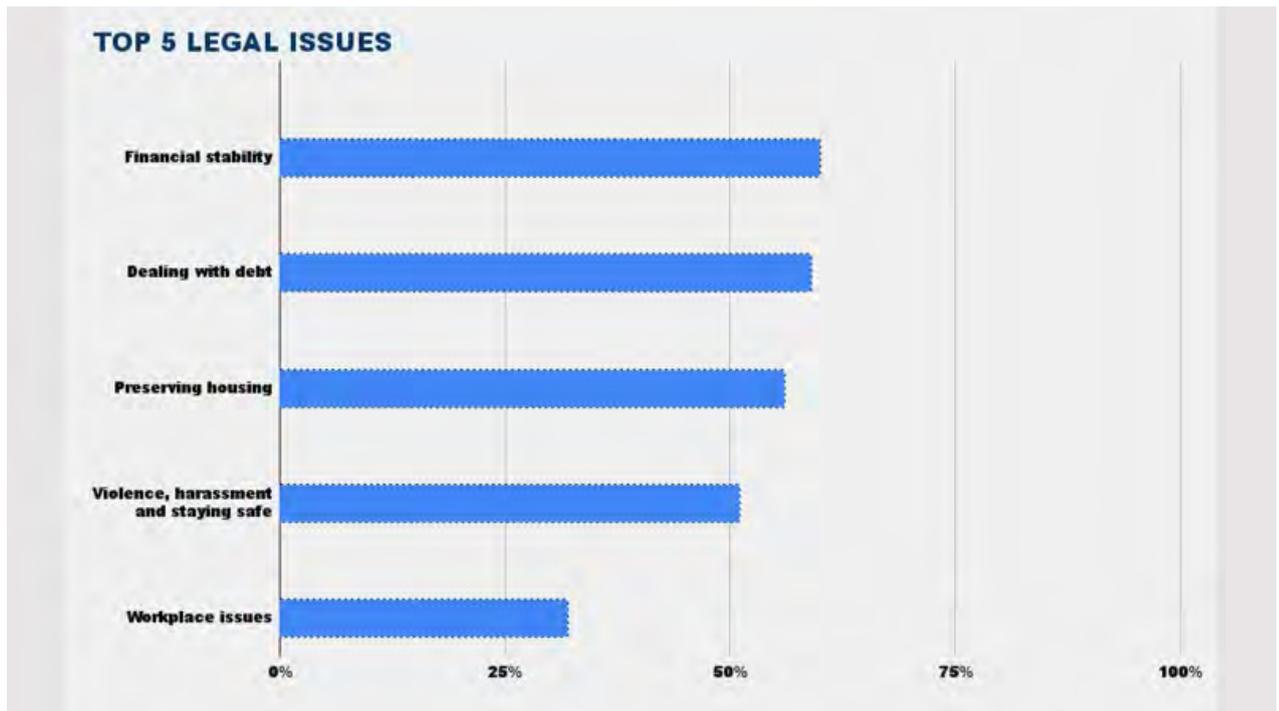
Prior Life Experiences (n=61)	
Interaction with the criminal justice system	61%
Experience with substance use	49%
Experience with homelessness in prior 5 years	46%
Experience in sex trade	20%
Currently living with no income	15%
Co-Morbidities (n=66)	
Diagnosed with a co-morbid condition(s)	88%
Diagnosed with depression, anxiety and/or mental health condition	73%
Diagnosed with substance use disorder	24%

a. Legal Service Needs

A smaller subset of participants (n=44) was asked to describe their experiences in accessing legal services. Financial stability along with preserving housing were at the top of priority legal issues identified amongst all populations living with HIV. Financial stability includes issues with accessing public benefits, as well as being unemployed, underemployed and/or want to study and are struggling day to day to meet their living expenses. Housing was identified as a top need and the most recent type of issue people sought assistance to address.

Top 5 legal issues experienced by participants	
Financial stability	60%
Dealing with debt	59%
Preserving housing	56%
Violence, harassment and staying safe	51%
Workplace issues	32%





b. Barriers to Service

The top three reasons why people did not try to access legal services were:

1. They did not know where to go.
2. They did not think they could afford services.
3. They did not think anything could be done about the legal problem.

A significant majority of participants (68%), thought they would be treated badly because of their HIV status or because of other identities including race and socioeconomic status if they sought legal assistance.

Almost a third were afraid of damaging the relationship with the opposing/other party.

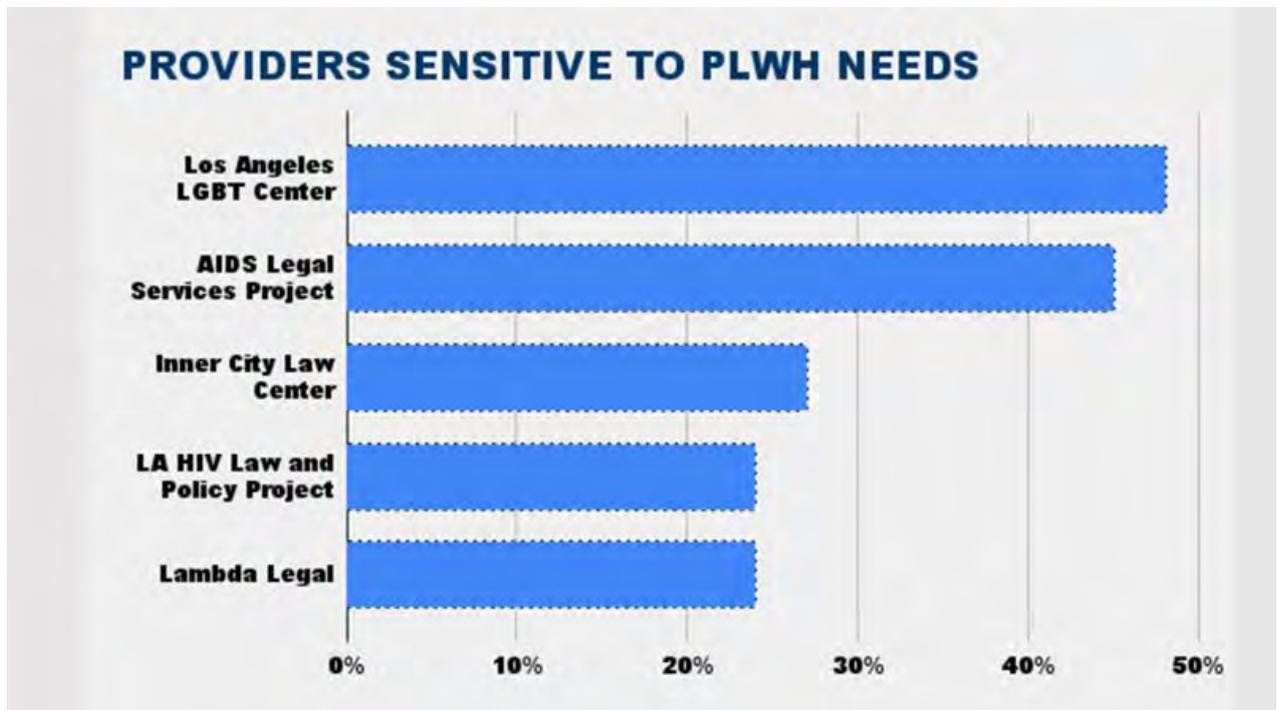
A quarter (25%) could not focus on the legal issue because of competing challenges including work, family and health.

The top two reasons why consumers were unable to access legal services were that they could not find anyone to help (47%) and they were told the legal service provider could not help for other reasons (18%).

c. Additional Findings

Overall, 11 legal service providers were identified as places where consumers received services and 42% of consumers thought providers were sensitive to their needs as PLWH. The following were the top five providers listed.

Los Angeles LGBT Center	48%
AIDS Legal Services Project	45%
Inner City Law Center	27%
LA HIV Law and Policy Project	24%
Lambda Legal	24%



B. PROVIDER SURVEY DATA

In total, 45 providers from 11 different organizations/entities participated in the survey.

a. Accessing Legal Services

Almost a third (29%) of providers said they never had a situation where they could not find legal assistance. Fifteen percent could not find assistance on immigration and criminal justice matters.

b. Barriers to Service - Closing the legal referral loop

Nearly half (49%) of providers did not know or were unsure if clients/patients were able to access services.

- They did not know if the consumer had made contact with the legal service agency.
- They did not know if legal services received were helpful.
- They did not know if the provider was sensitive to the needs of PLWH.

c. Unmet legal needs

Providers reported facing challenges with helping their clients/patients navigate the criminal justice system.

C. CONSUMER EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL SERVICES

Robust conversations took place during the Focus Groups providing important insights and rich qualitative data. Across the six consumer discussions, five key themes were identified.

1. Many legal issues identified were broad, complex, had overlapping legal issues and/or are not typically addressed by traditional legal service organizations. Consumers discussed how these “specialty” needs have enormous impact for the individual but were unresolved since they could not access legal services. For example,
 - a. Criminal cases that originate outside of California and impact receipt of public benefits.
 - b. Navigating probation.
 - c. Probate matters.
 - d. Tax fraud.
 - e. Private long-term disability benefit reviews and termination of benefits.
 - f. Benefit access and tax issues for the self-employed.
2. There are multiple barriers to receiving service.
 - a. Consumers do not know where to go for help.
 - b. Consumers were faced with COVID-related barriers such as inability to walk into service providers agencies for intake/assistance and inability to

connect with anyone on the phone or in person at government agencies (eg. Social Security Administration and IRS) and non-profit organizations. Further, consumers found program eligibility requirements overly stringent and difficult to navigate.

- c. The logistics of pursuing legal remedies was overwhelming, laborious, and time-consuming, including additional burdens faced by the unhoused in accessing technology to exchange documents, address missed calls, or even charge their devices. It was often easier to ignore the problem.
 - d. Lack of communication amongst social service provider teams.
 - e. Lack of legal service navigators. This was especially impactful to people with mental health challenges and substance users as they need additional, intensive assistance to access timely services.
 - f. Concerns about facing stigma when trying to access legal services. In addition to HIV stigma, additional stigmas were discussed for the unhoused, immigrants, racial minorities, and those with a low educational level.
3. There are multiple concerns and negative perceptions regarding attorneys.
 - a. There are not enough bilingual attorneys and important issues get lost in translation.
 - b. Attorneys are not empathetic, proactive, or helpful and some are incompetent and provide bad advice.
 - c. It is very difficult to find the right lawyer with the time and resources to appropriately handle the matter.
 - d. Attorneys only provide counsel and advice and not enough full scope representation, particularly in the areas of family law and immigration.
 4. Subgroups of PLWH have different legal needs.
 - a. Cisgender women identified family law and intimate partner abuse and the need for trauma-informed legal assistance.
 - b. Transgender women identified discrimination, particularly in housing, as well as facing violence and the need for name changes.
 - c. Seniors identified advance planning documents, including revising old documents since people named have passed away; probate for parent's estates, Medicare Part D problems; financial planning for retirement as well as long-term care and navigating working part-time to supplement public benefits.
 - d. People who self-identified as living with mental health challenges most often discussed housing preservation as their primary need.
 - e. Immigrants, both those who are successfully navigating legalization as well as those who are unable to legalize their status, discussed the need for more immigration services.
 - f. Men who have sex with men identified HIV disclosure and the criminalization of behavior in intimate partner relationships.
 - g. Needs identified across subgroups are:
 - i. **Housing** including "untraditional" tenancies, neighbor disputes, and disability accommodations,
 - ii. **Healthcare Access** and unmet healthcare needs,

- iii. **Disclosure**, including in personal relationships, as well as in employment and housing, and
- iv. **Stigma & Discrimination**, including HIV, and the intersectionality of race, sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, healthcare, and employment settings.

Subgroups of PLWH have different legal needs.

CISGENDER WOMEN		TRANSGENDER WOMEN		SENIORS	IMMIGRANTS	GAY MEN
trauma-informed legal assistance	family law	discrimination in housing		probate	immigration services (pre- and post- legalization)	HIV disclosure
intimate partner abuse		violence	name changes	financial planning		
				Medicare Part D		

- 5. Many consumers resorted to providing their own legal advocacy because they could not access services.
 - a. Conducted own research on legal topics.
 - b. Provided own self-advocacy.
 - c. Received help from providers that are not typical non-profit legal aid organizations such as the Coalition for Economic Survival and the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s Smart Law program.
 - d. Paid substantial fees for an attorney to help.

D. PROVIDER EXPERIENCE WITH LEGAL SERVICES

Across the five provider discussion groups, four key themes were identified.

- 1. Lack of centralized services creates an enormous amount of confusion about where to refer consumers for assistance on any given legal issue.
 - a. At least two thirds of providers reported that they have identified a legal need of a consumer and attempted a legal referral, but they lacked basic information about legal providers and what specific issues each addressed. Nineteen different legal topics were identified.
 - b. Providers do not fully understand how to identify legal needs but once

- they do, they do not know where to refer clients.
- c. As a default, front line staff often try to play the role of advocate and legal navigator.
 - d. When clients/patients are referred, there is a lack of follow-up from the legal service organization. When there is no confirmed linkage, front line staff are often unaware if the consumer is receiving the legal assistance they need. In turn, there was limited anecdotal information about the outcomes of legal service delivery. In general, consumers did not report back on outcomes, but when they did, it was often positive.
2. Legal service providers do not return calls at all or do not provide a timely return of call as it can take several months to get an initial response.
 - a. This results in an enormous amount of frustration by both providers and consumers. Many consumers simply give up trying to get legal help.
 - b. Legal assistance comes too late.
 - c. Out of frustration, some consumers wind up paying significant amounts of money to private attorneys to receive the legal assistance needed.
 3. Access to technology and other challenges often prevents consumers from following up in a timely manner or at all.
 - a. Many consumers (particularly those that are unhoused and/or have substance use and mental health challenges), lack email addresses and telephones which often prevent them from accessing services at all.
 - b. Even if initial contact is made, the need to exchange documents can quickly overwhelm a consumer.
 - c. Many consumers, often seniors, are uncomfortable using technology.
 4. Negative perceptions of attorneys, cultural appropriateness, lack of childcare and transportation further hamper service access.
 - a. There is often a poor perception of attorneys and/or the consumer has had a bad experience with a lawyer.
 - b. Language barriers continue, particularly for monolingual Spanish speakers.
 - c. Lack of transportation and childcare were additional challenges identified that hamper the consumer's ability to engage with an attorney.
 - d. There seemed to be consensus that the legal service providers are welcoming to PLWH. However, stigma is an ongoing concern, and some providers would only refer consumers to an explicitly HIV and/or LGBTQ identified provider. But this was not a universal sentiment and depending on the legal issue, there were other considerations. One provider, serving primarily the Latinx community commented that it depended on the comfort level of the consumer in terms of how "out" they are regarding their HIV+ status. For example, he makes immigration referrals for Central Americans to CARECEN, a Central American relief agency, and felt that geographical/ethnic connection was more important.

A broad theme across providers touched on the additional challenges brought on by

the COVID-19 pandemic. Provider participants reported that access to legal services became even more difficult since agencies were no longer holding legal clinics or accepting walk-in clients to initiate the intake process. Participants reported that the use of technology took immediate effect as legal service providers quickly transitioned to working remotely and relied on the use of technology to reach and communicate with clients. Participants shared that this was and continues to present an additional barrier to service for clients facing challenging circumstances, including those who are unhoused, have low literacy levels, do not speak English, do not have access to phones or computers or are not technologically literate. Operational changes seemed to accelerate agency staff turnover making it difficult to identify a consistent contact person to facilitate a warm hand off or be able to coordinate services. Finally, participants reported that employees living with HIV faced additional challenges including reasonable accommodation requests to work remotely as well as having to navigate vaccination mandates.

E. SERVICE DELIVERY SOLUTIONS

Provider and consumer participants offered potential facilitations to improving access to legal services that could begin to address unmet legal needs among the target populations. They included five key recommendations.



1. Co-locate services
 - a. Allows ready access to legal assistance at the agencies where the consumers receive medical services or social services.
 - b. Provides initial intake at a “pop-up” legal clinic at various AIDS service provider agencies with rotating locations.
 - c. Facilitates better communication between legal service providers and social service/medical staff regarding referrals and follow up needs.
 - d. Medical Care Coordination teams with wraparound services and service

navigators were identified as being very effective.

2. Centralize legal information and referrals
 - a. Provides a “one-stop” shop for legal education, direct services and referrals.
3. Provide a Legal Service Navigator
 - a. Provides more technical assistance, support and personalized services for consumers which is particularly useful for vulnerable populations.
 - b. A warm hand off would improve access to legal services as the consumer can leave with an appointment or call back instructions.
 - c. Could utilize enhanced technology to provide remote legal intake and consultations similar to the Telehealth model.
4. Provide more educational opportunities and materials to improve understanding of legal issues.
 - a. Expand the provision of community-based presentations on specific legal topics for both providers and consumers. For consumers, the program should include an opportunity for onsite confidential individual consultations and follow up referrals if needed.
 - b. Provide more written brochures on various legal topics, in English and Spanish.
 - c. Provide videos on legal topics.
5. Enhance outreach by providing more networking opportunities for providers and consumers to share information.
 - a. CHIRP LA was identified as a useful repository of information and referrals.
 - b. Establish working groups of providers and consumers based on geographical location to share information and better identify emerging needs.
 - c. Create and keep current a Facebook page on relevant legal topics and a calendar of events including the location of legal workshops, presentations, and clinics.
 - d. Create listservs.

While there was acknowledgement that the current patchwork of legal service provision for PLWH can be effective for some, not all, overall frustration with the status quo was the most common theme of the needs assessment discussion groups. Fortunately, many of the broad concerns over the lack of legal education, information, and centralization can be addressed without a significant outlay of resources. Below, we summarize ten key recommendations to improve legal service delivery

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Keep the community engaged and working towards solutions.**

Continue working with the Community Advisory Committee and convert it into a permanent Community Advisory Board to address the issue of legal needs for PLWH. Members of the current Community Advisory Committee are very engaged and well educated around legal issues confronting particularly vulnerable PLWH as they also have a lot of shared experience. They have expressed interest in continuing this work and recognize the importance of the need for ongoing assessment and conversations around current and emerging legal issues. Their input was vital to the success of the current needs assessment and will be equally important moving forward.

- **Address the lack of legal information for consumers and providers.**

Develop and disseminate more educational materials and make them available across multiple platforms (e.g., brochures, videos, Facebook page, Instagram, listservs) and provide regular community presentations on a wide range of legal topics to better inform both consumers and providers on legal rights and responsibilities. These presentations will also help dispel the negative perceptions of attorneys that are held by many in the community.

- **Get legal services out into the community.**

Provide regular, rotating legal intake clinics at HIV service provider sites including those delivering health and social services. This will assist with numerous identified barriers including overcoming lack of knowledge on where to go for help, transportation needs, the onerous need to exchange documents, slow or no response from phone queries, enhanced communication between legal service and social service providers as well as improve on the negative perception of attorneys. In addition, it would be helpful to explore the strengths of the Medical-Legal Partnership model, which is being successfully executed at some of the Medical Care Coordinator clinics through the LA County Health Department's Whole Person Care program (See <https://dhs.lacounty.gov/our-services/resources/legal/>).

- **Address the confusion about where community members can go for help.**

Provide centralization of intake and referrals to combat against one of the top barriers identified by both consumers and providers about where to go for specific legal needs. There were 19 different areas of law that providers identified as issues faced by their clients/patients and different subgroups of PLWH identified a wide variance of needs. No single legal service agency addresses that many individual legal needs, and providers and consumers are overwhelmed with having to conduct their own research on to where to go for help and navigate the different criteria each agency has to access services.

- **Address the lack of immigration services.**

Provide a dedicated immigration attorney. Given that 39% of survey respondents were born outside of the United States, it was perhaps unsurprising that some of the most impassioned comments from Focus Groups related to the myriad challenges

faced by undocumented immigrants. When considering the challenges faced by vulnerable populations of PLWH, the mere fact that this subgroup cannot access most public benefits or cannot legally work puts them near or at the top of the needs scale. In addition, immigrants are also represented in many of the other vulnerable populations including cisgender and transgender women, the unhoused and those with substance use and mental health challenges. Despite the significant numbers of this subpopulation, there is no dedicated immigration attorney in Los Angeles County serving immigrant PLWH who often have complicated immigration histories but still have potential paths to legalization with intensive legal intervention. The importance of acquiring legal status cannot be overemphasized.

- **Address the lack of specialized HIV legal knowledge.**

Provide a dedicated civil rights attorney who can address employment, healthcare access, disclosure, criminalization, and discrimination issues. It is important to acknowledge the unique and continuing stigmatization of HIV as well as the disproportionate impact of HIV on communities of color. The intersection of HIV stigma with racism, misogyny and homo- and transphobia too often leads to a toxic brew of discrimination in housing, healthcare and employment which was a consistent theme amongst consumers of color during the discussion groups. While many of the identified legal needs follow under the traditional “poverty law” categories of housing, benefits, and financial security, it is equally important to prioritize HIV-specific legal issues particularly as they relate to disclosure, stigma and discrimination. These HIV-specific legal issues should form the core of HIV-dedicated legal service delivery, especially because there are very limited service options in these crucial issue areas. In fact, employment was the top category in which consumers could not access services.

- **Provide a Legal Services Navigator to address the need for intensive wraparound services for the most vulnerable populations.**

In addressing the needs of the most vulnerable subgroups of PLWH, the need for intensive intervention to assist consumers in accessing legal services and staying engaged was repeatedly stated. In addition, a Legal Services Navigator, who is part of the legal team, would also take the burden off providers and consumers in identifying the appropriate legal service agency that can assist with a given legal issue and can facilitate a warm hand off and provide a legal roadmap when wraparound legal services and other social services are needed.

- **Address high rates of violence faced by PLWH.**

It is imperative for the community to address the extraordinarily high level of violence experienced by PLWH. Since the purpose of this legal needs assessment was to gather general demographic information on participants, further research should be conducted to identify touchpoints on where legal services can intervene in a meaningful way. At minimum, there should be robust community education to bring violence, including intimate partner violence and hate crimes targeting LGBTQ people, out of the shadows and openly discussed to create a more hospitable environment for survivors to seek assistance. This experience also illustrates the need for a legal roadmap to wraparound services that many PLWH would benefit

from. In this instance, it may include help with restraining orders, immigration (e.g., U Visas and Violence Against Women’s Act or “VAWA”), housing, family law, victim’s compensation, and cyber harassment.

- **Address high rates of criminal justice interaction experienced by PLWH.**

With 60% of respondents having interactions with the criminal justice system, we need to identify ways to assist these consumers even though civil legal service providers do not provide criminal defense work. A legal navigator could provide vital assistance on specific issues that were identified including inmate location, accessing medication while incarcerated, and probation concerns. Further research should be conducted to address the challenges people face in transitioning out of incarceration that will better inform specific service delivery. For example, peer support has proven to be very effective in working with this subgroup. In addition, multiple providers identified that successful re-entry programs connected inmates with service provision before they were released. Legal agencies can coordinate with these social service and healthcare providers to assist with needed advocacy such as restoring government benefits and voting rights, and expunging criminal records.

- **Build a community-wide coalition of legal service providers who are sensitive to the needs of PLWH, LGBTQ community and racial and ethnic minorities.**

It is important to note that while most consumers did not actually face stigma or discrimination when accessing legal services, 68% were fearful they would have a negative experience and therefore chose not to seek legal assistance for fear of being treated badly. This too falls under the category of negative perceptions of attorneys that must be overcome. Since one agency cannot address all the legal issues that PLWH face, and given geographical and transportation challenges clients face, it is important to build a broader coalition amongst the general legal service community by providing HIV training and updates that are culturally appropriate and consider HIV and LGBTQ rights and identities. Creating an HIV law specific listserv for Los Angeles County or Southern California attorneys might also be a valuable tool for sharing information and emerging needs of the community. This will also help to build a more robust HIV law community.

- **Promote economic justice and security by providing legal advocacy for PLWH to achieve economic security and wellness through education, financial literacy, and small business development.**

This includes shifting the paradigm of poverty and providing the advocacy tools needed for PLWH to move beyond their diagnoses and transcend the reactive nature of legal services. Proactive legal assistance should be provided to assist with workforce readiness and economic stability initiatives which might include:

- a. Disability Rights & Education - Assist and promote enrollment in higher education or vocational training. A legal rights primer should be provided to address disabilities and accommodations in school settings, health insurance issues, affording fees, housing, student loans, and preparing for employment.
- b. Financial Literacy - Share knowledge to help shed understanding about

rights, obligations and opportunities. Topics should cover a wide range of consumer issues, including budgeting, understanding credit reports, rebuilding credit, the pitfalls of pay day loans and how best to handle financial challenges.

- c. Entrepreneurship and Microbusiness Development - Assist in starting or developing self-employment opportunities by addressing a wide range of issues including licensing, regulations, tax, leases, entity formation, federal contracts, trademarks and employment.

CONCLUSION

It is important to recognize the kind of trauma this community has experienced – 60% of survey respondents reported interactions with the criminal justice system, 45% had experienced homelessness in the past five years, 75% have been diagnosed with depression, anxiety and/or another mental health condition, and over 50% had experienced some sort of violence or harassment. Given these experiences, there is a great need to revise current legal service delivery models to facilitate not just access to legal services but to provide services that are empathic, collaborative, culturally-appropriate and more streamlined. This, in turn, will help clients stay engaged and should assist with successful legal services outcomes.

A client population facing this much trauma desperately needs legal service delivery to be timely, responsive, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate. It is essential for attorneys to communicate with clients in a way that is understandable and provide them with a roadmap of the next steps so that consumers are well informed and not at a loss as to what is being done, if anything, on their behalf. With legal services dispersed amongst so many different providers, it is difficult to hold agencies accountable and the negative perceptions of attorneys need to be addressed in a meaningful way. Lastly, there is a need for ongoing legal assessments to delve deeper into some of the issues identified, and for connecting more with the various health and social service providers who are already serving the most vulnerable groups to provide more legal intervention and needed wraparound services. Working with a legal services Community Advisory Board would prove essential in this ongoing work.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CAC Information Sheet
2. Provider Focus Group Outreach Message
3. Provider Focus Group Interview Guide
4. Consumer Focus Group Outreach Message
5. Consumer Focus Group Interview Guide
6. Consumer Survey
7. Provider Survey

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Information Sheet

The Assessment

An HIV Legal Needs Assessment study will be implemented in Los Angeles County (LAC), funded by the California Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs. The study will be led by Laurie Aronoff (LACBA AIDS Legal Services Project) and Indira Cameron-Banks (Inner City Law Center). The study will identify the unmet legal needs and greatest barriers to service for the most vulnerable people living with HIV in LAC. Results will include recommendations on how best to address these issues. During the first phase of the study, we seek to recruit a diverse group of people living with HIV to form a Community Advisory Committee (“CAC”).

Assessment Design

Designing and implementing a legal Needs Assessment is an investment in resources and time. Designing the assessment with input from the CAC will strengthen the study. With help from the CAC, we look to engage members of the broader community and reach people who are the most vulnerable and directly impacted by unmet legal needs.

Role of the CAC

The CAC will consist of consumers who have agreed to take a leadership role in developing the Needs Assessment. We are seeking 8-10 members to help tailor this study to reach diverse communities impacted by HIV. CAC members will provide feedback on outreach strategies and survey tools. We also plan to hold remote focus group discussions with both providers and consumer groups and want individual CAC members to actively participate in at least two of these guided discussions. It is anticipated that members will be on camera unless prevented by specific circumstances (such as a computer without a camera).

Responsibilities of the CAC

CAC membership is an approximately seven-month commitment from June-December 2021. We anticipate the overall hourly commitment to be approximately ten hours. Volunteers will receive a \$50 gift card for attending each meeting to encourage active engagement. One of the primary responsibilities of the CAC is to help ensure cultural humility throughout the Needs Assessment process including a review of the study materials. We anticipate four meetings to be held remotely including an initial introductory meeting to help inform the study, two discussions with consumer groups and a final meeting to discuss findings.

Interested?

Your voice is important! Let it be heard and make an impact in your community. If you are interested in participating in the CAC, please reach out to Laurie Aronoff through email at laronoff@lacba.org or by phone at 213-833-6776. Laurie can answer your questions and provide more details if needed.

Provider Focus Group Outreach Message

Dear Colleagues,

We invite your agency to participate in a focus group discussion to identify the unmet legal needs and greatest barriers to service for the most vulnerable people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Los Angeles County (LAC). This effort is funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs. Our team includes Laurie Aronoff (LACBA AIDS Legal Services Project), Ayako Miyashita Ochoa (UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs) and Tai Glen (Inner City Law Center).

Designing and implementing a legal needs assessment is a community-wide initiative with a significant investment in resources and time. We are working with a highly engaged and diverse Community Advisory Committee to help inform our outreach strategies and assessment tools. Our next step is to convene remote meetings of front line workers at some of the leading HIV service provider agencies in LAC and hope we can include your agency in this list so that we can hear the opinions and views of your staff.

We also plan to convene similar meetings with consumers who represent particularly vulnerable populations including those who have experienced homelessness and incarceration, trans and cisgender women and those who have faced substance use and mental health challenges.

To participate, we invite you to a one-time 45-60-minute Zoom conference call with your case management and social service staff to discuss the work they do and the types of legal issues they have identified amongst their clients with a particular focus on the most vulnerable populations. We are flexible in scheduling these sessions.

The session will be followed by a request to complete an online survey.

PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A \$25 VISA GIFT CARD FOR DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPATION AND ANOTHER \$15 IF THEY COMPLETE THE SURVEY (\$25 + \$15 = \$40 total per participant).

In a group setting, participants can expect to be asked questions about:

Their organization and role as well as the demographic background (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) of the clients they work with.

The types of legal issues and problems their clients have faced.

The barriers their clients have experienced in accessing legal assistance.

In addition, the meeting will be recorded, however, no personally identifying information will be included.

Your agency's perspective and the experiences of your clients is vital for the success of this study and our goal of creating accessible legal services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable PLWHA.

To schedule a meeting, [please complete a brief survey](#) regarding your agency's availability.

Questions? Contact Laurie Aronoff at laronoff@lacba.org or 213-833-6776.

Provider Focus Group Interview Guide

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group. Our discussion today will focus on identifying the unmet legal needs and greatest barriers to service for the most vulnerable people living with HIV (PLWH) in Los Angeles County (LAC). This discussion will help inform recommendations on how best to address these issues in the future. Today we will discuss HIV legal services generally, your prior experiences with helping clients/patients access legal services, and barriers to accessing legal services. Finally, we will brainstorm potential solutions, including service delivery models that might work best for your client/patient population.

The focus group will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Directly following our group discussion, you will be asked to complete a survey. At the end of the survey, we will ask you for an email address where we can send you a \$40 electronic gift card to thank you for your participation in this focus group AND survey. Please know that all of the information you provide will be kept confidential and will not be connected to any personal identifying information in any way. The focus group session will be recorded so we can transcribe your comments, but, again, these recordings as with everything else in this study will remain confidential. Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

I. Introductions

[Facilitator introductions: name, gender pronoun, affiliation]

I'd like to begin by asking some general questions about your organization, your role in your organization and basic demographic background of the clients/patients you serve.

If you are comfortable, can you change your name on Zoom to your preferred name (first name only is okay) and your gender pronoun?

- A. Can you tell me about your organization?
- B. What are the services you provide?
- C. Who are your clients/patients? Can you share a bit about their background (e.g. race/ethnicity, SES, SGM status, housing status)?

II. HIV Legal Services

Next, I'd like to talk about legal services. I am going to start with a quick poll to get an idea of your experience with legal services providers.

[Launch Poll #1]

- 1. Have you ever identified a legal need a client/patient might have?
- 2. Have you ever referred a client/patient to a legal services provider?
- 3. Can you think of 3 legal services providers that serve your client population?

[Review Poll #1 results]

I am going to start by providing you with a definition.

Legal needs are needs that could be addressed with the help of a lawyer or legal services professional. Legal services can address problems with housing, such as Landlord-Tenant problems. Legal services can help people appeal denials of public benefits. Legal services can also address illegal discrimination that has an impact on specific protected groups, including people living with HIV (on the basis of disability). Legal services can also help with debt relief, provide advance planning documents, such as a will, or assist immigrants with their legal status.

- A. Some of you shared that you have referred a client/patient to a legal services provider. Can you tell me more about the types of legal issue your clients/patients commonly face?
- B. What was your experience like in terms of referring clients/patients to legal services?
- C. If you happen to know, what was the experience like for your clients/patients? Was there any resolution or outcome?
- D. If you do not have experience referring clients/patients to legal services, thinking back, can you think of times when it might have been appropriate to do so?

III. Vulnerable Populations

We know hard to reach populations have a tougher time accessing existing resources in the community, including HIV legal services. A lot has changed in the past decade in LAC, too. Some of you may recall HALSA or LA HLPP (previous organizations dedicated to delivering legal services to PLWH).

As we enter a new phase with partners at Inner City Law Center, what we would like to explore is how we might design services to better serve these populations. Keeping your most vulnerable clients/patients in mind...

- A. What do you think are the key barriers to accessing services (including legal services)?
 - a. Are any of these barriers specific to accessing legal services?
- B. Can you think of creative strategies that your organization or others use to address gaps in services to these populations?

IV. Service Delivery Solutions

Remembering our purpose for this conversation, we would like to spend our final minutes talking about service delivery models. We understand how we structure services, the way

people are able to access help, matters.

- A. What service delivery models could help to expand access to legal services?
 - a. What are effective partnership models you have seen in your organization?
 - b. Would your organization be interested in conducting legal intake/screening and/or workshops on-site for clients/patients?
 - c. Are online platforms helpful to clients/patients, providers?
 - d. Do brochures or written materials help clients/patients?
 - e. Has multi-media content (e.g. video tutorials, social media posts) been useful in service delivery?
- B. Do providers (including yourself and others at your organizations) have the information needed to make informed referrals to legal services providers?
 - a. What might help close the information gap?
- C. Is there anything else you might want to share?

V. Closing

Thank you, again, for your time. We appreciate your input in understanding how to address unmet legal needs of PLWH and we look forward to sharing our findings with you when we complete data collection. Again, I want to stress that any information you shared that is reported to the broader public will not include any identifying information and will be reported in the aggregate (e.g. x% of providers said y).

[Place in the chat the bit.ly link to the survey—do not share any sooner!]

Please complete this survey in the link provided. At the end of that survey is the opportunity to list your preferred email address where we will send the e-gift card. You will first receive an email requesting confirmation that we have the correct email address. As soon as you respond “yes,” we will transmit the e-gift code to you. In case you have any further questions, our staff will stay on this Zoom to answer any questions you may have.

[Drop Laurie’s email and phone number in chat]

Finally, if you have any other colleagues or other organizations you think we should engage, please contact Laurie directly. Her name, phone number and email is included in the chat. She would be happy to follow up with you.

Consumer Focus Group Outreach Message

Dear (Specific Contact Name),

We are reaching out on behalf of the HIV Legal Needs Assessment team to invite members of Name of the CAB, support group, agency, etc. to participate in an online focus group to discuss the legal issues they have faced and any problems or barriers they had in receiving help.

The Legal Needs Assessment study is a community wide initiative. I am part of a diverse group of consumers who make up a Community Advisory Committee and we have been working for the last several months to help create outreach strategies and assessment tools. Our next step is to convene these remote meetings of PLWHA and we hope we can include the Group Name so that we can hear the opinions and experiences of your members.

Participation is easy. We will schedule a one-time 45-60-minute Zoom conference call with your consumer group to discuss the types of legal issues they have faced. We are particularly interested to hear from the most vulnerable consumer populations including those who have experienced homelessness and incarceration as well as those living with mental health and/or substance use challenges. **We are flexible in scheduling these sessions.**

The session will be followed by a request to complete an online survey. **PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A \$25 VISA GIFT CARD FOR DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPATION AND ANOTHER \$15 IF THEY COMPLETE THE SURVEY (\$25 + \$15 = \$40 total per participant).**

In a group setting, participants can expect to be asked questions about:

- Their demographic background (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) and the agencies they receive services from.
- The types of legal issues and problems they have faced.
- The barriers to services, if any, they experienced in accessing legal assistance.

In addition, the meeting will be recorded, however no personally identifying information will be included.

This effort is funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs. Our team includes Laurie Aronoff (LACBA AIDS Legal Services Project), Ayako Miyashita Ochoa (UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs) and Tai Glen (Inner City Law Center).

Your consumer's perspectives and experiences are vital for the success of this study and our goal of creating accessible legal services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable PLWHA. To schedule a meeting, please respond to this email to Laurie Aronoff with the preferred day/time of the week to hold a session sometime in September, October or early November 2021. Our regularly scheduled meeting on _____ would make a good target date. Questions? Contact Laurie Aronoff at laronoff@lacba.org or 213-833-6776.

Consumer Group Guide

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group.

FACILITATOR INTRODUCES SELF AND ASKS COLLEAGUES TO DO SAME, Name, Gender pronouns & Organization

Our discussion today will focus on identifying the unmet legal needs and greatest barriers to service for people living with HIV (PLWH) in Los Angeles County (LAC).

This discussion will help inform recommendations on how best to address these issues in the future.

Specifically, we would like to discuss the types of legal issues you have personally experienced, whether you were able to access legal services as well as any barriers you faced in getting legal help.

We'd also like to brainstorm ideas and potential solutions to delivering legal services that you think would help yourself and others in the community to receive the legal help they need.

The focus group will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Directly following our group discussion, you will be asked to complete a survey. At the end of the survey, we will ask you for an email address where we can send you a \$40 electronic gift card to thank you for your participation in this focus group AND survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY - *Please know that all of the information you provide will be kept confidential and will not be connected to any personal identifying information in any way.*

RECORDING - *The focus group session will be recorded so we can transcribe your comments, but, again, these recordings as with everything else in this study will remain confidential. Does anyone have any questions before we begin?*

I. Introductions

Small group can popcorn intros

I'd like to begin by asking some general questions about your experiences as a person living with HIV or AIDS.

If you are comfortable, can you change your name on Zoom to your preferred name (first name only is okay) and your gender pronoun?

Also, if you are comfortable, can you tell us a little about yourself – how long have you been living with HIV, maybe share some of the challenges you have faced

II. HIV Legal Services

Next, I'd like to talk about legal services. I am going to start with a quick poll to get an idea of your experience with legal services providers.

[Launch Poll #1]

- A. What are the legal challenges you have faced?
- B. What were your experiences in accessing legal services?
- C. What was the outcome of your legal matter?

[Review Poll #1 results]

I am going to start by providing you with a definition.

Legal needs are needs that could be addressed with the help of a lawyer or legal services professional. Legal services can address problems with housing, such as Landlord-Tenant problems. Legal services can help people appeal denials of public benefits. Legal services can also address illegal discrimination that has an impact on specific protected groups, including people living with HIV (on the basis of disability). Legal services can also help with debt relief, provide advance planning documents, such as a will, or assist immigrants with their legal status.

- A. Some of you shared that you have faced legal issues before.
- B. Can you tell me more about the types of legal issues that have come up for you?
- C. Did you know where to go for help?
- D. What was your experience like in terms of accessing legal assistance?
- E. How was your matter resolved?

III. Vulnerable Populations

One of our goals is to improve legal service delivery for hard to reach populations as they have a tougher time accessing existing resources in the community, including HIV legal services. A lot has changed in the past decade in LAC, too. Some of you may recall HALSA or LA HLPP (previous organizations dedicated to delivering legal services to PLWH).

As we enter a new phase with partners at Inner City Law Center, what we would like to explore is how we might design services to better serve these populations. As consumers with varying experiences, we'd really like to hear your thoughts on key barriers to accessing services particularly for some of the most vulnerable folx.

- A. What do you think are the key barriers to accessing services (including legal services)?
 - a. Are any of these barriers specific to accessing legal services?

IV. Service Delivery Solutions

Remembering our purpose for this conversation, we would like to spend our final minutes talking about service delivery models. We understand how we structure services, the way people are able to access help, matters.

- A. Can you think of creative strategies that you have seen work at other organizations to address gaps in services particularly for hard to reach populations?
- B. Are there service delivery models that have helped you in the past or that you think would be helpful?
 - a. Would legal intake/screening and/or workshops on-site where you receive medical or other social service support be helpful?
 - b. Are online platforms helpful to you or other multi-media content such as video tutorials or social media posts?
 - c. Do brochures or written materials help you? Are you able to access these?
 - d. Do providers have the information needed to make informed legal referrals?
 - e. What might help close the information gap?
- C. Is there anything else you might want to share?

V. Closing

Thank you, again, for your time. We appreciate your input in understanding how to address unmet legal needs of PLWH and we look forward to sharing our findings with you when we complete data collection. Again, I want to stress that any information you shared that is reported to the broader public will not include any identifying information and will be reported in the aggregate (e.g. x% of providers said y).

[Place in the chat the bit.ly link to the survey—do not share any sooner!]

Please complete this survey in the link provided. At the end of that survey is the opportunity to list your preferred email address where we will send the e-gift card. If you prefer to receive a gift card in the mail, You will first receive an email requesting confirmation that we have the correct email address.

[Drop Laurie's email and phone number in chat]

Finally, if you have any other colleagues or other organizations you think we should engage, please contact Laurie directly. Her name, phone number and email is included in the chat. She would be happy to follow up with you.

Consumer Survey

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this legal needs assessment.

As we explained, we want you to know that everything you tell is confidential and anytime you do not want to answer a question, you are welcome to not answer it. We are asking you to share your experiences. We understand you may not always remember everything you have experienced. Please respond to the questions to the best of your ability.

[Include bit.ly to resources document—LACBA, ICLC could host document or post on g-drive].

As a reminder, this survey will last approximately 15 minutes. At the end of the survey, we will ask you to input an email address where we can send you an e-gift card valued at \$25 for your participation in this survey. Please know that your email address will be kept confidential and will not be connected to survey data. If you also participated in a discussion group panel, you will receive e-gifts totaling \$40.00.

If you don't use email, please provide your mailing address, which will also be kept confidential, so that we can mail you the gift card.

First, we need to determine your eligibility to participate in this survey:

1. What is your home zip code? _____
(Eliminate non-LAC zip codes)

2. Are you currently living with HIV? (If "No" or "Unknown" end survey)
 - Yes→ Skip to Q3
 - No→ Ineligible
 - Unknown→ Ineligible

For ineligible respondents:

Thank you for your interest in completing this survey. You are ineligible to participate in this survey at this time.

3. In what year were you born? _____

4. What was the year you were first diagnosed with HIV? _____

5. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Decline to answer

6. If you had to choose only one of the following terms, which best describes your current gender identity?

- Woman
- Man
- Transgender Woman
- Transgender Man
- Non-binary/Genderqueer
- Other
- Decline to answer

7. Which of the following best describes your current sexual orientation?

- Straight/heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Same-gender loving
- Other: _____
- Decline to answer

8. Were you born in the United States?

- Yes → Skip to Q9
- No
- Decline to answer → Skip to Q9

8b. If no, where were you born?

- Central America
- South America
- Caribbean
- Europe
- Asia
- Africa
- South Pacific
- Canada
- Mexico
- Decline to Answer

8c. How many years have you lived in the U.S.? _____

9. Have you experienced any of the following? Please check all that apply.

- Touched by the criminal justice system (arrested, charged, convicted, received probation, held in jail/prison and/or on parole)
- Homelessness in the past 5 years
- Work in the sex trade (this can include exchange sex)
- Drug use *excluding* taking any medication prescribed to you by a doctor
- Decline to answer

10. Although the choices listed below may not represent your full identity or use the language you prefer, for this survey, please select the choice that most accurately

describes your racial/ethnic identity:

- Alaska Native → Skip to Q11
- American Indian → Skip to Q11
- Asian/Asian American → Skip to Q11
- Biracial/Multiracial
- Black/African American → Skip to Q11
- Latino/a/Hispanic → Skip to Q11
- Middle Eastern/North African → Skip to Q11
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander → Skip to Q11
- White/European American → Skip to Q11
- A racial/ethnic identity not listed above: _____ → Skip to Q11
- Decline to answer → Skip to Q11

10a. If you identify primarily as biracial or multi-racial, which groups make up that identity? _____

OR

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian/Asian American
- Black/African American
- Latino/a/Hispanic
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White/European American
- A racial/ethnic identity not listed above: _____
- Decline to answer

11. What is your monthly income \$ _____

12. Including yourself, how many people (including children) live on that household income? _____

13. What is the primary source of your income?

- Employment
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- General welfare (General Relief, CalWorks)
- Friends/Family
- Other, please specify _____
- None
- Decline to answer

14. In addition to being diagnosed as a person living with HIV, have you received any other health diagnoses? Please check all that apply.

- cardiovascular disease
- chronic kidney disease
- diabetes

- osteopenia and/or osteoporosis
- hepatic or liver disease
- cancer
- neurocognitive disorders
- substance use disorders
- depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders

15. Have you experienced any of the following issues? Please check all that apply.

- Keeping your family together
 - This may include dealing with the foster care system, juvenile delinquency, child custody, visitation, alimony, and discrimination on the basis of HIV-status.
- Violence, harassment & staying safe
 - This may include problems with domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, police abuse and incidents in the neighborhood/street.
- Preserving housing
 - This may include being able to afford rent and stay housed, neighbor disputes, avoiding eviction, living in safe housing conditions, discrimination by housing providers/landlords.
- Financial stability
 - This may include accessing public benefits to help supplement income such as GR, SSI, SSDI. Unemployment.
- Benefit denials
 - This may include situations where public benefits or private insurance have been denied due to program eligibility guidelines, overpayments, back-to-work eligibility, or post-incarceration access.
- Accessing medical care
 - This may include problems with insurance, discrimination in healthcare settings on the basis of HIV status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and violation of confidentiality and privacy.
- Dealing with debt
 - This may include problems with unpaid bills, including student loans, car loans, personal loans, or payday loans, harassment by creditors, cleaning up and improving credit.
- Other discrimination
 - This may include any other instances of discrimination.
- Workplace Issues
 - This may include problems with workplace harassment, unlawful termination

or firing, wage and hour disputes, disability accommodations, privacy concerns, discrimination in the workplace.

- Advance Planning Documents
 - This includes executing a will, power of attorney for finances, or advance health care directive.
- Immigration
 - This may include problems faced by undocumented immigrants, those seeking immigration relief or a better status, those in detention, as well as any document renewals such as for work permit or green card.
- Criminal Justice
 - This may include problems with accessing healthcare, employment, housing, licensing (e.g. professional, driver's) as a result of prior incarceration, unpaid fines and restitution, outstanding tickets/warrants.
- I have not identified and/or experienced any of these legal issues. → Skip to the "Thank You" message
- However, I have experienced a different legal issue, listed below
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Decline to answer → Skip to the "Thank You" message

16. Among the legal issues you identified, select the top 5 legal issues that you believe have the greatest impact on your life, with 1 being the most impactful.

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____
- 4: _____
- 5: _____

17. Have you ever tried to access a legal service program?

- Yes
- No → Skip to Q19
- I'm not sure → Skip to Q19
- Decline to answer → Skip to Q19

18. Thinking about the prior 3 years...Among the 5 top legal issues you identified, what was the legal issue(s) you tried to find help for? Please list all that apply [Pull response from Q16 to create list]

- 1: _____
- 2: _____

3: _____
4: _____
5: _____

19. Were there ever any legal issues you could not find help for? Please check all that apply.

- I have always found help for any legal issues. → Skip to Q21
- Employment
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Public Benefits
- Private Insurance
- Consumer debt
- Family/personal Safety
- Living with a disability
- Advance Planning
- Immigration
- Privacy/Confidentiality
- Discrimination
- Incarceration
- Other:
- Decline to answer → Skip to Q21

20. What were the reasons why you were unable to access legal services? Please mark all that apply.

- Could not find anybody to help
- No one returned my calls
- The legal services provider said they did not handle the area of law I needed
- The legal services provider did not help for other reasons
- The legal services provider was insensitive to my needs as a person living with HIV
- I did not have transportation
- I did not have childcare
- I solved the issue on my own
- Other
- Decline to answer

21. If you sought legal services, which of the following agencies have you contacted for assistance? Please check all that apply.

- HALSA
- LA HLPP
- LAFLA
- Inner City Law Center
- AIDS Legal Services Project
- Public Counsel
- ACLU
- Lambda Legal

- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Bet Tzedek
- Other: _____
- Decline to answer

22. If you accessed services, please check the statement(s) listed below if it was something you experienced in working with the provider.

- Sensitive to issues related to HIV
- Took HIV stigma into consideration
- Respected you and treated you with dignity
- Affordable
- Helped to resolve the legal issue
- Decline to answer

23. If you have never accessed legal services, what was the reason?

- I have not had a legal need
- I didn't know where to go
- I didn't want to try to find help
- I was helped by my case manager/social worker to resolve the problem
- I resolved the problem on my own
- I couldn't afford legal services
- I thought nothing could be done about the legal problem
- Other:
- Decline to answer

24. When faced with a legal problem, have you felt any of the following sentiments?
Please check all that apply.

- Fear of being treated badly because of HIV status
- Fear of being treated badly for other reasons (race, socioeconomic status, etc.)
- Could not focus on legal issue because of other things (work, family, health)
- Didn't want to think about the problem
- Didn't think I would get a positive outcome
- Believed the opposing party was more powerful
- Fear of damaging the relationship with the other party/make things worse
- Didn't have enough time to follow up
- Didn't think it was serious enough
- Other:
- Decline to answer

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey questions. We really appreciate your efforts and willingness to serve the community.

Please provide your email address so we can send you a e-gift card: _____

If you don't use email, please provide your mailing address, and we will mail a gift card to you _____

Please also feel free to provide us with any feedback or other comments you may have about the survey or Needs Assessment here: [QA SURVEY FOR FEEDBACK ON SURVEY]

Would you like to receive future communications regarding the final results from this Needs Assessment? Please provide your email address where we may send you updates: _____

Provider Survey

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this legal needs assessment.

As we explained, we want you to know that everything you tell is confidential and anytime you do not want to answer a question, you are welcome to not answer it. We want to ask you to share your experience. We understand you may not always have the most accurate and/or detailed information. Please respond to the questions to the best of your ability.

*As a reminder, this survey will last approximately 20 minutes. At the end of the survey, we will ask you to input an email address where we can send you an e-gift card valued at \$15 for your participation. **If you also participated in the group discussion you will receive a gift card valued at \$40.** Please know that your email address will be kept confidential and will not be connected to survey data.*

1. Name of Agency (optional):
2. Job Title (optional):
3. Role (required):
 - Healthcare provider
 - Behavioral health services provider
 - Substance use services provider
 - Housing services provider
 - Social work/case management services provider
 - Other healthcare provider
 - Other social services provider
 - Decline to answer
4. How best would you describe the clients you primarily work with? Please check all that apply.
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or queer/questioning individuals
 - Heterosexual, Straight-identified individuals
 - Transgender and/or gender non-conforming individuals
 - Cisgender women
 - Youth and young adults
 - Seniors
 - People with criminal justice involvement
 - People with experiences of homelessness
 - People with experiences in the sex trade
 - People who use drugs
 - Decline to answer
5. How best would you describe the racial/ethnic identity of the clients you primarily serve? Please check all that apply.
 - African American/Black Individuals

- Hispanic/Latinx Individuals
 - Asian/Asian American Individuals
 - White Individuals
 - American Indian/Alaska Native Individuals
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Individuals
 - Decline to answer
6. Do you or your organization target services to specific populations? Please check all that apply.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or queer/questioning individuals
 - Transgender and/or gender non-conforming individuals
 - Cisgender women
 - Youth and young adults
 - Seniors
 - Black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC)
 - Latinx individuals
 - People with criminal justice involvement
 - People with experiences of homelessness
 - People with experiences in the sex trade
 - People who use drugs
 - Decline to answer
7. What is the primary source of income for most of your clients?
- Employment
 - Disability Benefits: SSDI, SSI; State Disability, or private insurance
 - Welfare benefits: Cal Works; General Assistance; Cal Fresh
 - Friends/Family
 - Multiple sources
 - None
 - All of the Above
8. What legal issues have you identified and/or noticed that your clients face? Please check all that apply.
- Preserving the family
 - This may include dealing with the foster care system, juvenile delinquency, child custody, visitation, alimony, and discrimination on the basis of HIV-status.
 - Violence, harassment & staying safe
 - This may include problems with domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, police abuse and incidents in the neighborhood/street.
 - Preserving housing
 - This may include being able to afford rent and stay housed, neighbor disputes, avoiding eviction, living in safe housing conditions, discrimination by housing providers/landlords.

- Financial stability
 - This may include accessing public benefits to help supplement income such as GR, SSI, SSDI. Unemployment.
- Benefit denials
 - This may include situations where public benefits or private insurance have been denied due to program eligibility guidelines, overpayments, back to work eligibility, post-incarceration access
- Accessing medical care
 - This may include problems with insurance, discrimination in healthcare settings on the basis of HIV status race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity) and violation of confidentiality and privacy.
- Dealing with debt
 - This may include problems with unpaid bills, harassment by creditors, cleaning up and improving credit, student loans, car loans, personal loans, payday loans.
- Other discrimination
 - This may include any other instances of discrimination.
- Workplace Issues
 - This may include problems with workplace harassment, unlawful termination or firing, wage and hour disputes, disability accommodations, privacy concerns, discrimination in the workplace.
- Advance Planning Documents
 - This includes executing a will, power of attorney for finances, advance health care directive or advanced directive for health.
- Immigration
 - This may include problems faced by undocumented immigrants, those seeking immigration relief or a better status, those in detention or any document renewals such as for work permit or green card.
- Criminal Justice
 - This may include problems with accessing healthcare, employment, housing, licensing (e.g. professional, driver's) as a result of prior incarceration, unpaid fines and restitution, outstanding tickets/warrants.
- I have not identified and/or noticed clients/patients experiencing legal issues
- Decline to answer

9. Among the legal issues you identified, select the top 5 top legal issues that have the greatest impact on your clients with 1 being the most impactful.

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

10. Have you ever referred a client/patient to a legal service program? [If Yes, go to Q11; for all other responses, skip to Q17]

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure
- Decline to answer

11. Thinking about the prior 3 years...Among the 5 top legal issues you identified, what was the legal issue(s) you referred clients/patients to legal services for? Please list all that that apply.

[Pull response from Question 9 to create checklist]

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

12. Were there ever any legal issues your clients/patients could not find help for? Please check all that apply.

- I have not experienced this problem
- Employment
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Public Benefits
- Private Insurance
- Consumer debt
- Family/personal Safety
- Living with a disability
- Advance Planning
- Immigration
- Privacy/Confidentiality
- Discrimination
- Incarceration
- Other:
- Decline to answer

13. Which agencies have you referred clients/patients to? Please check all that apply.

- HALSA
- LA HLPP
- LAFLA
- Inner City Law Center
- AIDS Legal Services Project

- Public Counsel
- ACLU
- Lambda Legal
- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Bet Tzedek
- Other: _____
- Decline to answer

14. Were the clients/patients that you referred able to access legal services? [If No, go to Q15; For all other responses, skip to Q16]

- No, they were not able to access legal services
- Yes, they were able to access legal services
- I don't know or I am not sure if they were able to access legal services
- Decline to answer

15. What were reasons why clients/patients were unable to access legal services? Please mark all that apply.

- Could not find anybody to help
- No one returned calls
- The legal services provider said they did not handle that area of law
- The legal services provider did not help for other reasons
- The legal services provider was insensitive to the needs as a person living with HIV
- Client/patient lacked transportation
- Client/patient lacked childcare
- Client/patient solved the issue on their own
- Other
- Decline to answer

16. Do you know if the legal services clients/patients received were... Please check all that apply.

- Sensitive to issues related to HIV
- Took HIV stigma into consideration
- Respected clients/patients and treated them with dignity
- Affordable for the clients/patients
- Helped to resolve the legal issue
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

17. If you have never referred a client for legal services, what was the reason? Please check all that apply.

- Have not identified a client/patient with a legal need
- Did not know where to refer the client/patient to
- Client/patient didn't want a referral
- I helped client/patient resolve the problem
- Client resolved problem on their own

- Client couldn't afford legal services
- Thought nothing could be done about the legal problem
- Other:
- Not applicable
- Decline to answer

18. When it comes to addressing legal needs, have your clients/patients expressed any of the following sentiments? Please check all that apply.

- Fear of being treated badly because of HIV status
- Fear of being treated badly for other reasons (race, socioeconomic status, etc.)
- Could not focus on legal issue because of other things (work, family, health)
- Didn't want to think about the problem
- Didn't think they would get a positive outcome
- Believed the opposing party was more powerful
- Fear of damaging the relationship with the other party/make things worse
- Didn't have enough time to follow up
- Didn't think it was serious enough
- Other:
- Decline to answer

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey questions. We really appreciate your service and commitment to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Please provide your email address so we can send you a e-gift card: _____.

We will first send you a confirmation email to make sure we have the correct email address. After you confirm, we will send you the e-gift card.

Please also feel free to provide us with any feedback or other comments you may have about the survey or Needs Assessment.

Would you like to receive future communications regarding the final results from this Needs Assessment? Please provide your email address where we may send you updates:
