



Model Self-Help Pilot Program

A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

MARCH 2005



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS

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Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts
Center for Families, Children & the Courts
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Litigants

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*Managing Attorney, Self-Help Assistance
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*Director, Self-Help Legal Access Center,
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Ventura*

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Center for Families, Children & the Courts Staff

Diane Nunn
Division Director

Charlene Depner, Ph.D.
Senior Manager

Lee Morhar
Managing Attorney

Deana Piazza
*Senior Research Analyst and
Project Manager*

Don Will
Supervising Research Analyst

Bonnie Rose Hough
Supervising Attorney

Deborah Chase
Senior Attorney

Harry Jacobs
Attorney

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Executive Summary

The Model Self-Help Center Pilot Program is one part of the California Judicial Council's effort to address two key goals in its strategic plan: increasing access to justice and improving the quality of justice and service to the public. The availability of court-based assistance to self-represented litigants is critical to accomplishing these goals, and one of the strategies the council has adopted is to increase the number of self-help centers in the courts. The legislature has supported these goals by providing funding for this project.

Since the early 1990's, the number of people coming to the courts without lawyers has grown dramatically. Courts report that 80 percent of parties in family law cases are representing themselves, as well as 90 percent of tenants and 34 percent of landlords in eviction cases. The number of self-represented litigants has also steadily increased in other areas of the law. Because court procedures were designed for lawyers, the large number of people coming to the courts without lawyers presented new challenges in the courts' ability to efficiently process cases. For the past eight years, the Judicial Council and its staff arm, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), have worked on a group of projects designed to assess and address the needs of the public and the courts with respect to cases involving self-represented litigants.

In 1997, California's family law facilitator program was implemented. Funding for this program provided an attorney in each of the 58 counties to provide assistance with issues of child support. In 1999, three pilot Family Law Information Centers were created to address a broad array of family law matters involving low-income self-represented litigants. In 2001, four conferences were held in which courts developed preliminary action plans for serving self-represented litigants. To encourage further planning, funding has been provided to local courts to assist in additional development and implementation of these plans. As the courts continued to work at the local level, a statewide Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants was appointed by the Chief Justice in May 2001 and charged with developing a statewide Action Plan to Assist Self-Represented Litigants for the judicial branch.

The Model Self-Help Center Pilot Program, implemented in 2002, is a key component of this statewide plan. The program was designed to develop solutions to four major challenges local courts said they faced in meeting the needs of self-represented litigants:

- Self-represented litigants need access to more legal information;
- Many people have limited English proficiency;
- Geographic and transportation barriers reduce access; and
- Resources are limited.

To respond to these issues, staff at the AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts devised five models and asked courts around the state to propose model self-help centers in the following areas:

- Comprehensive self-help services in small rural courts;
- Services to a Spanish-speaking population;
- Services to a population speaking a range of languages;
- Use of technology to assist self-represented litigants; and
- Coordination and support for an array of services in a large urban community.

Courts that submitted proposals also had to agree to develop materials and information for self-help centers that could be used statewide. Five proposals were selected for implementation, and each program received the same amount of funding, \$166,400 per year; the selected projects also agreed to test a variety of new approaches. Whereas most of the earlier court-based self-help programs had provided only family law assistance, these models provided assistance in a broad range of civil cases.

The five pilot models chosen to participate in the project were:

- 1) *Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties*: This is a regional project designed to explore how counties can work together to share self-help resources effectively and to provide legal information and education to self-represented litigants in rural areas where courts are spread over large distances and residents have limited access to community legal services.
- 2) *Fresno County*: This is a Spanish-language project exploring ways to provide services for a primarily Spanish-speaking population.
- 3) *San Francisco County*: This is a multilingual project testing methods to provide services to litigants who speak a variety of languages.
- 4) *Los Angeles County*: This project is designed to test the most effective ways for a large urban court to coordinate the various independent existing self-help programs operated by the court and by legal services.
- 5) *Contra Costa County*: This is a technology project developed to assess the potential of Internet technologies to assist individuals outside the courthouse and to experiment with use of videoconferencing services to multiple locations.

Over the course of two and a half years, the projects underwent a comprehensive evaluation of the strategies they had designed and implemented. Data collected during the evaluation included intake and service information on self-help center customers, interviews with court and program staff and other stakeholders, court file review, post-hearing interviews, and customer satisfaction surveys. The evaluation found that no

single model provides an all-inclusive solution for all courts. Instead, the evaluation identifies a number of strategies that are highly effective in providing services to self-represented litigants and that can be adopted by courts throughout the state. The evaluation also identifies challenges for the courts as they implement these strategies.

Key Findings

Self-help centers are a valuable method for providing services to people who need access to legal education and information and for improving the quality of justice for litigants.

People who were interviewed during the evaluation, including judicial officers, court staff, members of the bar, and representatives of community agencies, overwhelmingly

“I think that the self-help centers are the most dramatic improvement in our justice system in a decade.”

Presiding Judge

agreed that self-help services help self-represented litigants navigate the justice system effectively. Most judicial officers and court staff interviewed for the evaluation asserted that they can usually identify which self-represented litigants have received assistance from the self-help centers because they have a better

understanding of the process, their paperwork is more accurate, and they are better prepared for court. Judicial officers reported that when self-represented litigants are able to present their cases more effectively (in writing and verbally), the court has more complete information on which to base its decision.

Self-help centers facilitate a litigant’s ability to participate effectively in the legal process.

Data from a preliminary case file review suggest that receiving assistance from a self-help center not only increases initial access to the justice system, it also facilitates a litigant’s ability to participate more effectively in the court process in those matters in which they are able to represent themselves. For example, with self-help center

assistance, plaintiffs in civil harassment cases were able to prepare declarations containing enough specificity to greatly reduce the need for filing supplemental declarations. In unlawful detainer cases, self-help center assistance appears to contribute to the ability of defendants to raise affirmative defenses and to encourage landlords and tenants to reach settlements in such cases.

Data also suggest that when dissolution

petitioners receive assistance, they are more likely to raise all relevant issues correctly in their initial pleadings, to file proper accompanying paperwork, and to accomplish service of process. Improvements such as these are likely to contribute to a higher quality of justice for self-represented litigants.

“The self-help center really empowers people. It gives them a sense of what’s going to happen. It reduces their stress. They feel far better about the legal process.”

Commissioner
Civil law

Self-help centers improve court efficiency.

According to people who were interviewed during site visits by the evaluation team (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B for details), when a large number of previously unassisted self-represented litigants began receiving assistance from a self-help center, the court began to process cases more efficiently. The following are examples:

- Cases that had been delayed in the court process due to a procedural problem were corrected and completed;
- Paperwork presented to filing clerks was correct the first time, eliminating repeated trips to the clerks’ window;
- Litigants appeared for hearing with papers properly served so cases could proceed the first time, and many continuances were eliminated;
- Courtroom staff was interrupted less often by litigants asking for help;
- More responsive declarations were filed, giving the judicial officer more information on which to base an order; and
- Litigants tended to understand the proceedings and ask appropriate questions so that hearings could proceed more smoothly.

According to court employees and judicial officers interviewed for the evaluation, when

“The litigants have correct paperwork, timely filed. They understand what is going on in the courtroom and what is expected of them. This expedites the court process. It has eased the calendars by reducing the numbers of cases that must be continued.”
Presiding Judge

self-represented litigants are better prepared for court, have accurate paperwork and supporting documents, and have a better understanding of the court process, the court is less likely to have to continue a case or to make a decision based on incomplete information. Less courtroom time was spent responding to requests for help from self-represented litigants; several judicial officers

also reported that having a place to send litigants to get their questions answered helps them to maintain their appearance of neutrality on the bench.

Self-help centers help the court design systems to serve self-represented litigants more effectively.

The programs also worked with the court to facilitate operational systems designed to serve self-represented litigants more effectively. By identifying issues that self-represented litigants face in trying to navigate the court system, the programs helped the courts develop creative ways to process these cases more efficiently, saving time and reducing frustration for both the litigants and the court staff. The following are some examples of actions taken at various centers:

- Facilitating the implementation of *pro per* calendars (exclusively for hearings involving self-represented litigants) so that in-court assistance can be provided;

- Redesigning the unlawful detainer settlement conference calendar to facilitate assistance to self-represented litigants;
- Standardizing procedures throughout multiple courthouses for processing default divorce judgments;
- Developing a small-estates affidavit procedure for self-represented litigants;
- Preparing a packet to explain service of process for self-represented litigants, which can be distributed at hearings regarding sanctions for failure to complete service in civil cases; and
- Implementing a small claims mediation program.

Self-help centers promote public trust and confidence in the court system; litigants were highly satisfied with the services they received from the self-help centers.

More than 80 percent of litigants surveyed at the self-help centers report that as a result of assistance from the center they:

- Understood their situations better;
- Knew more about how laws work;
- Knew what they needed to do next;
- Were less worried about their situation; and
- Were less confused about how the court works.

“The litigants are more aware of the process, more comfortable – not looking so much like a stranger in a strange land. They know the right questions to ask and seem aware of the time limits for hearings. They are less frustrated than before.... They are just more patient with the process.”

Judge
Family law

They also reported that center staff seemed knowledgeable, explained things clearly, and treated them with respect. As the most helpful services, they ranked having staff to help them with their forms and getting answers to their questions.

Post-hearing interviews indicated that, compared with litigants who had not been to the self-help centers, litigants who had used such services were:

- Less likely to be surprised by the outcome of the hearing;
- Less likely to feel that the judge would have ruled differently if they had a lawyer; and
- More likely to report that they were *extremely* able to communicate with the judge.

Self-help centers meet a great need for service in their communities.

Given the volume of services provided by the direct service programs and the high proportion of customers who did not receive assistance from other resources, it is clear

that the pilot programs are meeting a huge need in their communities. More than 60 percent of the customers in each program reported that they did not seek help before coming to the self-help center, and 70 percent or more had not considered hiring a lawyer. The most common reason for representing themselves was that customers could not afford a lawyer. The vast majority of customers had monthly household incomes of \$2,000 or less.

The ability to provide self-help services to Spanish-speaking litigants is critical.

Intake data show that Spanish is the language most commonly spoken by litigants who do not speak English. This was true in all programs, including San Francisco County's multilingual project. The census, interpreter needs surveys, family court services, court-based custody mediation data, and other data sources provide similar evidence. For example, in fiscal year 2002–2003, 84 percent of interpreting expenditures went to Spanish language interpretation.

Directions for the Future

The Judicial Council should continue to implement the statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants approved by the Judicial Council in February 2004. The key component of that plan is that court-based, attorney-staffed self-help centers should be developed throughout the state. This evaluation points out major attributes that should be considered in these self-help centers.

Videoconferencing and coordination between courts is an effective way to help address issues of limited funding.

California has more than 25 rural counties with relatively small populations who have little access to self-help services, combined with courts lacking the resources to provide those services. The Self-Help Assistance Regional Project (SHARP) in Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties implemented a regional model of service that allowed a single managing attorney and her small staff to provide assistance in a range of case types to thousands of self-represented litigants in four locations. SHARP used videoconferencing, workshops, and the collaboration of other court programs to make the regional model effective. Contra Costa County used a volunteer attorney to provide workshops in one location that were broadcast to other court facilities, overcoming geographic and transportation barriers. Having an attorney in one location who is able to provide workshops, supervise staff, answer questions, and support paraprofessional staff in other locations—all through videoconferencing—is a model that can be implemented throughout the state to address geographic and transportation barriers.

Although knowledgeable and well-trained nonattorney staff can perform many self-help center functions, the day-to-day availability of a managing attorney is critical.

The presence of highly qualified managing attorneys to direct, train, supervise, and manage nonattorney staff in a self-help center is critical. Some of the pilot programs required that their directors be licensed attorneys, whereas others did not. Programs headed by attorneys had several advantages. First, day-to-day availability of the attorneys' legal expertise was invaluable to the nonattorney staff. The level of information and education given by self-help centers distinguishes them from other areas of court operations. Staff must be able to understand the procedural complexities of a case from beginning to end. Familiarity with legal terminology and professional ethics, along with ability to find the relevant law, are required. Furthermore, attorneys are trained to spot problems such as improper *ex parte*

“Staffing is critical. When you start a program make sure that you find the right person to direct it. Having an experienced attorney is best because that person can speak with authority, and from experience in the legal community.”

Presiding Judge
Family law

communications, improper legal advice, or court operations that impose unequal burdens on self-represented litigants. Attorney supervision also assures that information given by the court to the public will be reliable and accurate. When the managing attorney is partnered with staff that are highly experienced in court operations, the combination of professional expertise can contribute greatly to the ability of the self-help center to serve the public as well as the court.

Volunteers can be used effectively to provide assistance; however, they should not be relied on to perform core daily operations of a self-help center.

The pilot projects developed extremely promising models for recruiting and training. Volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including providing assistance in languages other than English and helping with workshops. Programs also found, however, that extensive reliance on volunteer help to perform core center functions can make consistent quality and availability of service extremely difficult. Furthermore, volunteer turnover is often high, resulting in an increased and recurring need for training.

Workshops are a valuable part of self-help center assistance.

The pilot projects found that workshops allowed a large number of litigants to be served at one time. Videoconferencing workshops provided effective delivery of legal and procedural information over physical distances. All of the direct service programs experienced a steady monthly growth in customers, and all of the programs explored ways of providing workshops. Workshops make efficient use of attorney time and allow the centers to manage increasing demand. Workshops can effectively include preparation for hearings and settlement conferences.

Self-help centers should be designed to provide services to litigants at all stages of case processing.

Data from case file reviews indicate that self-represented litigants need assistance beyond the point of entry into the legal system. Particularly in family law cases, assistance is required to ensure that, once started, cases are actually completed, court orders written, and judgments entered. The multipart workshops designed by the pilot programs to help litigants complete their family law cases are a valuable model.

Self-help centers should be located at the courthouse.

Providing services at the courthouse is more efficient for both self-represented litigants and court staff. Although a variety of services can be provided at outlying locations, separating self-help centers from the core of court operations limits the day-to-day contact between center staff and other court staff. Court staff members are often not fully aware of the program and may not make referrals as easily. Having to make a second trip to the center is a burden on customers who have gone to the courthouse for help—or who have to go back and forth from the courthouse to the center if problems arise. Although outposts are helpful for access to services, the main center should be at the courthouse.

The materials developed by the programs were helpful not only to provide instruction in English and other languages but also to help the court serve self-represented litigants more effectively; they should be disseminated statewide.

Each of the programs developed helpful instructions, translations, Web site content, and materials to help the court meet the needs of self-represented litigants. These are posted at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/evaluation/5pilots. The materials cover a broad range of topics and include:

- Step-by-step instructional sheets;
- Scripts for handling telephone calls regarding different legal issues;
- Guidance in five languages on how to be an effective witness; and
- Referral slips that judges can use to inform self-help staff of the assistance that a litigant needs.

In urban areas with a range of services, a coordinating function such as the Self-Help Management Project can reduce duplication of services and provide materials, curricula, and volunteer resources to all services in the area.

In Los Angeles, where coordination of existing providers was an issue, the Self-Help Management Project coordinated key functions of these services and provided resources to them. The management project helped the court plan new self-help services, served as a clearinghouse for materials, developed standardized workshop curricula, found new funding, and identified sources of volunteers and interns. The management project helped improve communication among agencies and the court so that problems could be

identified and solved, new methods of service provision could be developed, and self-represented litigants got better services.

Telephone assistance should be offered to help address geographic and transportation barriers and enhance self-help center efficiency and effectiveness.

Some pilot projects were able to provide some assistance over the telephone. This included identification of issues, determination of whether or not the center could provide the help needed, case status information from the court's registry of actions, and substantial procedural information and education on a variety of legal topics. Telephone contact facilitates assistance to individuals who cannot get to the self-help center during business hours due to work, lack of child care, or disability.

Triage of cases is a critical function in the operation of self-help centers.

When customers first enter the self-help center, assessment of their legal needs (triage) is critical to the operation of the program. Initial determinations must be made about what cases the center can and cannot handle, and appropriate referrals should be made for legal representation. The pilot programs developed methods to help assess what type of services a litigant needs, including identifying the legal issue and its complexity, the status of the case, and the litigants' ability to understand the proceedings. To do triage, staff need a thorough knowledge of relevant court procedures, as well as possible referrals and resources for self-represented litigants.

Self-help centers have the capacity to meet the needs of many non-English speakers.

Data from interviews and case file review demonstrate that customers who got help in centers providing services in languages other than English were able to do at least as well as a randomly selected group of self-represented litigants who were not specifically targeted as non-English speaking.

Bilingual/bicultural staff are required to provide efficient services in counties where a significant proportion of the population speak a language other than English.

The self-help centers found that the use of volunteers to interpret for paid staff was not an effective substitute for bilingual center staff. Non-English-speaking litigants come from cultures with different legal systems. They require staff not only to translate words, but also to help them understand the basic concepts and differences from their system. Staff must be sensitive to differences in interpersonal dynamics and orientations to authority based on a customer's native culture, and they need to interact with customers accordingly. Recruiting bilingual and bicultural staff should be a priority to provide efficient service and build trust in the community.

Interpreters are needed in family law and other civil hearings.

Both centers whose services focused on non-English speakers found that besides providing interpreters at the centers, they needed to send interpreters into the courtroom

“Having interpreters available in the courtroom is an enormous help. Without them, the only options have been boyfriends, girlfriends, children, some inappropriate person or no one at all. With interpreters available we can proceed the first time—it reduces our continuances.”

Judge
Family law

for people whose cases required hearings. Each of the language programs developed a system to provide volunteer interpreter services for those cases in which court-supplied interpreters are not mandated. (Funding is currently not available for interpreters in family law and other civil hearings.) Judicial officers and court staff explained that when self-represented litigants were accompanied by interpreters, fewer cases were continued or cases heard and decided with

questionable information provided by informal interpreters.

Limiting self-help center services to non-English-speaking litigants is not practical when comparable English-language services are not available.

Both language access projects found that providing services only to non-English-speaking litigants when no comparable services were available for English speakers resulted in a high demand for services provided in English. The programs found that it was not feasible to deny services to English-speaking litigants. In addition, a notably large number of those who spoke a language other than English at home nevertheless wanted to receive services in English.

Given limited funding, providing self-help assistance in a variety of languages remains significantly challenging and requires strong volunteer support.

Although it is preferable to have bilingual and bicultural staff, providing services in a variety of languages potentially means that one or more staff members must be proficient in each of the target languages, a goal that would be difficult or prohibitively expensive to achieve. Relying on other court staff with language skills, although helpful at times, proved difficult given the significant cutbacks in court staffing during the study period. Volunteers were used effectively at San Francisco’s multilingual center, allowing it to provide one-on-one or workshop services to non-English-proficient customers in languages other than Spanish. Having volunteers available by telephone helps to alleviate the problem of litigants coming to the self-help center at times when no services are available in their language.

Coordination with existing community programs is one way to serve multilingual populations.

Another effective way to serve communities that speak a variety of languages is to develop relationships with community resources that serve those populations to help with outreach, establish trust, and provide translation of information. Providing workshops at

those agencies and being available for referral support for their staff are efficient ways to reach out to broader communities.

Court-based self-help programs should be integrated as much as possible to increase efficiency and quality of service.

Collaborating with existing resources is critical to creating a successful program. Given the limited resources provided, the opportunity to work with the small claims advisor, family law facilitator, public law libraries, legal services self-help providers, and clerk staff were critical for effective functioning of the programs. Sharing of expertise, space, volunteers, and professional and support staff can increase efficiency and the ability of programs to serve more litigants.

"It is very important for a self-help center to work very closely with the parts of the court handling the cases that the center also handles."

Commissioner
Probate

Web sites with self-help information are effective in responding to geographic and transportation problems.

Providing information using self-help Web sites is another strategy to address geographic and transportation difficulties. Using the Web overcomes problems associated with the schedules of both litigants and self-help services (for example, courthouses are open during the hours when most people are at work). Web sites can also help people who are exploring their options, are finding information for family and friends, or may not want or need to take a trip to the courthouse at that stage in their case.

In-person support appears to be needed to assist people who are not traditional computer users.

Self-help Web site content currently appears to be used by people who are regular users of the Internet. Reports from interviews and usage testing, however, indicate the potential usefulness of providing Web-based assistance in a courthouse setting—where litigants may not fit the typical Web site user profile—in coordination with in-person staff assistance. Programs should also consider strategies for expanding the access to Web site content by people who are not typical Internet users, for example, by partnering with community agencies that serve these populations and integrating content into services provided at physical locations. Contra Costa County is in the process of implementing these strategies now, and the results should be shared with other programs.

Conclusion

In the statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants, the task force reported finding a unity of interest between the courts and the public regarding assistance to self-represented litigants. This evaluation supports that finding. While the Model Self-Help Center Pilot Programs were successful in providing valuable services to self-represented litigants, they also facilitated the ability of the courts to manage these cases efficiently. Because the models targeted specific areas of need, they were not designed to

provide an all-inclusive solution to serving self-represented litigants. As a group, the projects offer a range of strategies that courts and programs should consider in developing more comprehensive self-help services, taking into account their unique issues and needs. This evaluation found, as did the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants, that self-help centers are an optimal strategy for providing legal information and education to the public. Furthermore, self-help centers can effectively provide services in languages other than English, particularly through the use of volunteers. The ability to provide bilingual services to Spanish-speaking litigants was found to be particularly critical due to the high level of demand. Regional planning was found to be effective in areas with few community resources. Videoconferencing, telephone help lines, and Web-based assistance can be successful in reaching individuals in distant geographic locations. It was also found that integration of self-help services could maximize assistance to the public and avoid duplication of effort.

In February 2004, the Judicial Council adopted the recommendations set out in the Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants. The first of those recommendations reads as follows: “In order to expedite the processing of cases involving self-represented litigants and increase access to justice for the public, court-based, staffed self-help centers should be developed throughout the state.” The findings in this evaluation strongly support this recommendation. The specific lessons learned by the five Model Self-Help Center Pilot Projects, strategies they employed, and materials they developed should be of great benefit as the implementation of the Statewide Action Plan proceeds, and all of California’s courts continue developing their own self-help centers.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Model Self-Help Center Pilot Program

In 2002, the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), introduced the Model Self-Help Center Pilot Program, which provides funding for five new self-help projects designed to address difficulties faced by self-represented litigants in navigating the court system. Operating in seven California counties, these projects are intended to provide examples of innovative practices for future self-help services in counties across California. The demonstration project aims to increase the effectiveness and the reach of court-based self-help programs, as well as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts in handling cases involving self-represented litigants.

To start the program, the AOC asked the courts for applications to implement five models that would respond to three specific challenges that California's courts face: providing self-represented litigants with access to more legal information, assisting a large population of people with limited English proficiency; and overcoming geographic and transportation barriers. The five models were built around five core tasks:

- Providing comprehensive self-help services in small rural courts;
- Providing services to a Spanish-speaking population;
- Providing services to a population speaking a range of languages;
- Developing and implementing technology for self-represented litigants; and
- Coordinating and supporting an array of services in a large urban community.

Proposals from around the state were submitted, and five pilot projects were selected, one to implement each of the models. The five demonstration projects awarded funding are described below.

Butte/Glenn/Tehama. This is a regional project designed to explore how counties can work together to share self-help resources effectively and to provide legal information and education to self-represented litigants in rural areas, where they are spread over large distances and have limited access to community legal services.

Fresno. This is a Spanish-language project exploring ways to provide services for a primarily Spanish-speaking population.

San Francisco. This is a multilingual project testing methods to provide services to litigants who speak a variety of languages.

Los Angeles. This project is designed to see how a large urban jurisdiction can coordinate the various independent existing self-help programs operated by the court and by legal services.

Contra Costa. This is a technology project developed to assess the potential of the Internet to assist individuals without requiring them to come to the courthouse and to experiment with use of videoconferencing services to serve multiple locations.

The pilot centers were selected after a careful review of 21 proposals. Each of the projects received the same amount of funding, \$166,400 per year, and each had to be supervised by an attorney. No single project was expected to provide an all-inclusive program for serving self-represented litigants. Each of the programs had to be new rather than an expansion of ongoing services so that the development of the centers could be studied and data available for analysis would be comparable. Projects agreed to participate in an extensive evaluation of their development and success in meeting their objectives to help assess the best strategies and techniques for addressing the identified challenges.

Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA), in partnership with Northwest Professional Consortium (NPC) Research, conducted an evaluation of the five self-help pilot projects between the fall of 2002 and the summer of 2004. Their work was supplemented by additional research and analysis by AOC staff. The goal of the evaluation was to document the effectiveness of the five models in improving the experiences and outcomes of self-represented litigants in the California court system. The results of this evaluation are described in this report.

Self-Represented Litigants in California Courtrooms

Increasing numbers of litigants in California courtrooms represent themselves rather than hire an attorney to represent them.¹ Rates of self-represented litigants are high in several areas of law in California. For example, an average of 34 percent of unlawful detainer petitioners and more than 90 percent of unlawful detainer defendants are self-represented. More than 20 percent of probate petitioners are self-represented at the time of filing. Two-thirds of family law petitioners are self-represented at the time of filing, and this rate appears to be even higher for large counties.²

These self-represented litigants face challenges at every step of the court process, from filling out and filing initial court forms to understanding and acting on court orders. The court faces challenges in assisting these litigants and incorporating them into the justice system while maintaining a functional level of efficiency, high standards of equality

¹ Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial Council of California, "Program Descriptions: Model Self-Help Centers Pilot Program," <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/programs/description/pilotshcenters.htm> (accessed June 28, 2004).

² Judicial Council of California, *Report of the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants and Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants* (February 2004).

under the law, and adequate access to justice for all. The difficulties experienced by self-represented litigants grow significantly when they do not speak English, especially when interpretation resources are limited or unavailable, as is the case in many courts.

Barriers Faced by Self-Represented Litigants

Although judicial processes and the courtroom experience itself can be intimidating to all, this anxiety may be heightened when a litigant enters the system without the help of an attorney. The legal system relies heavily on proper terminology, etiquette, and often opaque, mandatory procedures. Self-represented litigants often lack adequate preparation and familiarity with the process. Once in court, if not before, litigants encounter legal terminology with which they may not be familiar. According to interviews conducted for this evaluation, it is not uncommon for self-represented litigants to have difficulty following through on legal assistance they receive, and as a result, they either get stuck at a particular step in the process or give up entirely. Self-represented litigants face numerous barriers in their attempts to access the justice system. These include:

- Self-represented litigants often lack knowledge about how to initiate a legal action. They may not know where to go first or even what questions to ask. Court officials interviewed for this evaluation stated that this is a major barrier, and it is likely that many potential cases are never brought because would-be litigants do not know where to begin.
- Self-represented litigants lack familiarity with legal terms used in mandatory forms and hearings. Even among native-English speakers, legal terminology can be confusing and off-putting. Litigants often need legal terms explained to them in plain English.
- Self-represented litigants are often unable to accurately complete mandatory forms due to the complicated nature of the forms, limited English proficiency, or low educational attainment.
- Respondents interviewed for the evaluation report that self-represented litigants often misunderstand procedural requirements, especially those regarding properly serving or giving notice to the other party.
- Finally, self-represented litigants lack the familiarity with court procedures needed to fully follow or comprehend court proceedings, resulting in misunderstandings about orders given in court or uncertainty about the next step in the process.

Difficulties facing self-represented litigants increase significantly for non-English speakers. The California Constitution mandates that court proceedings be conducted in English exclusively. Different courts have different rules regarding interpreters, although

in all courts, interpreters are provided for criminal and domestic violence cases.³ Some courts have more extensive protocols authorizing court-appointed interpreters for specific types of cases, but the range of interpretation services offered is driven in large part by the availability of funding as well as lack of certified interpreters. As a result of the lack of interpreter services in most civil cases, it is usually the litigant's responsibility to bring an interpreter. Even if they have some proficiency in English, some litigants may find it difficult to speak or understand English when under the stress of participating in the court process. According to a bench officer interviewed for this evaluation, "whatever English facility [non-English-speaking self-represented litigants] have deserts them. They are upset to be there."

Consequences for Court Efficiency

In February 2004, the Judicial Council of California approved its *Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants* in response to the challenges posed by the increasing volume of self-representation.⁴ Courts are designed to process cases in which litigants have legal representation, and the increasing level of self-representation has had a profound impact on the court system. Furthermore, budgetary constraints exacerbate these challenges by limiting resources that might otherwise be available to assist self-represented litigants. According to the Action Plan and data from interviews conducted for the evaluation, the increasing number of self-represented litigants poses the following administrative and management challenges for the court:

- Cases may take longer to resolve because of continuances ordered when self-represented litigants do not have sufficient information or have not followed procedures properly;
- There is a lack of sufficient or comprehensive resources to which self-represented litigants may be referred for assistance, often leaving court staff to try to meet litigants' needs for information and help;
- Effectively presiding over a calendar of self-represented litigants requires greater resources than is necessary for a calendar of litigants with legal representation; and
- Many self-represented litigants have limited English proficiency, and court resources to assist them are inadequate. Court services and materials are often not available in languages other than English.

³ Court-appointed interpreters are not typically available for noncriminal cases, including family or other civil law cases. See *Jara v. Municipal Court for San Antonio Judicial Dist.* (1978) 21 Cal.3d 181. Under California Evidence Code Section 755, the court "shall provide" an interpreter in domestic violence, parental rights, and divorce proceedings when one party does not speak English and when a protective order has been sought or is being sought.

⁴ Judicial Council of California, *Report of the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants and Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants* (February 2004).

Services for Self-Represented Litigants

Although resources are limited, self-represented litigants in California courts have a number of different ways to obtain assistance in preparing for, presenting, and following through on their cases. Depending on the type of case, legal assistance may be available from advocacy groups, the Internet, public and law libraries, community centers, and the courts themselves. The availability of self-help resources for litigants varies considerably from court to court across California. Two formal resources for self-represented litigants are available in every county: the family law facilitator and some type of a small claims advisory service. Those services, along with additional programs available in some counties, are described below.

Each county has an Office of the Family Law Facilitator. These facilitators are attorneys with experience in family law who assist self-represented litigants with cases involving child support and spousal support.⁵ Many courts have provided supplemental funding to allow the facilitators to provide additional family law assistance. Services may be provided in a variety of ways.⁶ To provide assistance with other types of family law cases, pilot Family Law Information Centers were established in conjunction with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator in Los Angeles, Fresno, and Sutter counties. These Family Law Information Centers can provide assistance with dissolution of marriage, paternity, child support enforcement, domestic violence prevention, and other family law matters.⁷

In addition to family law services, counties are required by law to provide assistance with small claims cases, and in many counties, litigants receive assistance from a small claims advisor. This person provides information on procedures for filing a claim. Depending on the volume of cases filed in small claims court, counties may provide services via recorded messages, literature available in the court, or individual personal services.⁸

In more than half of California counties, courts have self-help centers that offer a wider range of services to self-represented litigants in a variety of different cases.⁹ The availability and scope of services, along with the types of cases and issues covered, vary across the counties, with the range of services driven in large part by available funding. The courts themselves operate most self-help centers, but sometimes, centers are sponsored by the court in cooperation with other organizations, such as legal services organizations, county bar associations, and county human services agencies.

⁵ California Family Code, section 10000.

⁶ F. Harrison, D. Chase, and L. T. Surh, "California's Family Law Facilitator Program: A New Paradigm for the Courts" (2000) 2 *Journal of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts*, pp. 61-97.

⁷ D. Chase, B. Hough, and C. Huffine, Judicial Council of California, *A Report to the California Legislature: Family Law Information Centers: An Evaluation of Three Pilot Programs* (March 2003).

⁸ California Department of Consumer Affairs, "Basic Considerations and Questions: What is Small Claims Court?" http://www.dca.ca.gov/legal/small_claims/basic_info.htm (accessed June 28, 2004).

⁹ Judicial Council of California, *Report of the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants and Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants* (February 2004).

In addition to these formal resources available to self-represented litigants, court clerks are often called upon to assist customers. Clerks are often the first point of contact for anyone needing help at the courthouse. Court clerks and their staff assist customers, including lawyers and self-represented litigants, with the filing of legal papers, provide court forms, explain court rules and schedules, and offer general information about how to locate legal representation and obtain legal assistance. However, the level of assistance available from clerks varies significantly throughout the state and even between clerks based upon their training and experience in the court.

The California Courts Web site, maintained by the AOC, has an online self-help center (<http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp>) that provides information and assistance with a range of cases and refers visitors to local courts and other legal service providers for further assistance. The information on the Web site is presented in both English and Spanish. Some materials are also available in Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean.

Systemic Review and Planning

In the spring of 2001, four regional conferences were held in California to discuss how courts and communities could work together to address the needs of self-represented litigants. More than 600 people attended these conferences, representing 57 out of 58 of California's counties. In the course of the conferences, courts began to develop local action plans to assist self-represented litigants. To support the further development of those plans and active community involvement in the planning, the Judicial Council made \$300,000 of Trial Court Improvement Funds available in 2000–2001 to assist courts in developing their action plans. An additional \$300,000 has been offered in each successive year to assist courts that had not yet received planning funds and to provide funding to begin implementation of plans developed by the courts.

To date, 53 courts serving more than 99 percent of California's population have participated in this action planning process. As part of that process, the courts assessed the barriers faced by self-represented litigants with respect to access to justice. Three basic themes emerged from the majority of these local plans.¹⁰

Access to legal information. Lack of access to legal information for self-represented litigants was the central theme in all the action plans that were submitted. Smaller courts expressed this concern more frequently and also reported a serious shortage of community resources for self-represented litigants, particularly legal aid services. In the large counties, the lack of access to legal information seemed to be attributed more frequently to the enormous numbers of people needing services compared with the extent of the available services and to language barriers.

¹⁰ D. Chase and B. Hough, Judicial Council of California, *A Report and Analysis of Action Plans Throughout California: Integrating Services for Self-Represented Litigants Into the Court System* (June 2003).

Language access. All of the action plans mentioned the need for language access. The non-English language mentioned most frequently was Spanish.

Geographic/distance access. Nearly 60 percent of the local action plans reported that self-represented litigants had serious problems getting to locations where services are available. Most of the large and medium-size courts proposed geographic solutions such as outpost facilities or mobile vans. Smaller courts tended to rely more on technological solutions such as telephone help lines, videoconferencing, and Web sites.

Many of the courts that received grants to implement the five pilot self-help centers had actively participated in this planning process. That work became the basis for thoughtful proposals and implementation efforts, both involving a tremendous amount of collaboration with the community.

These local plans were used to develop the *Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants*, approved by the Judicial Council in February 2004. It was written by the Judicial Council's Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants, appointed by Chief Justice Ronald M. George and chaired by Associate Justice Kathleen O'Leary. The task force was composed of a diverse group of individuals from throughout the state, representing the judiciary, bar, legal services, county government, court-based self-help center staff, law librarians, and the public. In addition to studying the plans developed by the trial courts, the task force consulted with Judicial Council Advisory Committees on specific concerns and with experts in serving self-represented litigants.

The task force identified a unity of interest between the courts and the public with respect to assistance for self-represented litigants. Lack of legal assistance was clearly identified as an enormous barrier for the public, and the task force recognized that it also represents a serious structural gap for the courts. Its report makes it clear that managing cases involving self-represented litigants is routine business at every level of court operations—from filing through calendaring, records management, and courtroom hearings. The report suggests that as courts plan during this period of fiscal austerity, attention to a realistic strategy for handling these cases will be imperative to achieve net savings. To increase access to justice for the public and to enhance the court's ability to efficiently handle cases in which litigants are self-represented, the task force made the following key recommendations.

1. Court-based, staffed self-help centers, supervised by attorneys, are the optimum way for courts to facilitate the timely and cost-effective processing of cases involving self-represented litigants, to increase access to the courts, and to improve delivery of justice to the public.
2. For the efficient operation of today's courts, well-designed strategies to serve self-represented litigants and to effectively manage their cases at all stages must be incorporated and budgeted as core court functions.

3. Partnerships between the courts and other governmental and community-based legal and social service organizations are critical to providing the comprehensive services required for success.

This evaluation supports the recommendations of the task force and suggests ways to effectively respond to the needs of self-represented litigants.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation design was developed collaboratively by the AOC, BPA, NPC, and staff of the self-help pilot projects, with input from members of an Evaluation Advisory Board (see Appendix A for a list of members). The goals of the evaluation included documenting the experiences of self-represented litigants, describing the scope and nature of program services, documenting the startup of the self-help programs as well as their progress, and measuring the effects of these programs on outcomes for self-represented litigants and the courts. The study design uses the following research methods to address these goals.

Site visits. Researchers from BPA and NPC conducted two rounds of site visits to each of the five demonstration projects, which included in-depth interviews with project staff and other stakeholders. Visits were conducted in Spring 2003 and again in Spring 2004. Those interviewed were selected because they were intimately involved in the operation and design of the centers or because they interact personally with self-represented litigants. These interviews provided data on the implementation and operation of the centers, as well as qualitative data on customer barriers, litigant outcomes, and court efficiency outcomes.

Intake data. Customers who visited the centers were asked to complete intake forms that captured customer demographic information, including questions about their experiences with seeking legal representation. Each customer was asked to complete one intake form for a particular case, regardless of the number of times he or she visited the center. According to program staff, some customers of the self-help centers did not complete these forms due to low reading/writing skills, low English or Spanish proficiency, or anxiety about how the data would be used. The bulk of these data were collected between March and December 2003, although intake data also were collected in March 2004 to capture program activities toward the end of the pilot project funding. In Contra Costa County, a “pop-up” form asked Web site users for basic demographic information between February and October 2004.

Service tracking data. Center staff members were asked to complete service tracking forms describing the service provided for each customer they saw. These forms were completed for customers served between March and December 2003 and then again in March 2004 to capture program activities toward the end of the pilot project funding. In addition, center staff completed forms on workshops held at their centers in March 2004 to document the number of workshops, attendance, topic, and service delivery method. In

Contra Costa County, a “pop-up” form asked Web site users for information about their use of the Web site. Along with the intake forms, these data provided information relevant to litigant outcomes, as well as descriptive data on self-help customers and the volume of customers served by each center.

Court file review. AOC staff reviewed court records involving self-represented litigants in May and June 2004 to document the effects of self-help center implementation on court efficiency, including filings of court forms, continuances, and court orders. The reviews were completed for a sample of cases in which at least one party accessed services at the self-help centers and also a sample of cases in which none of the litigants used the pilot self-help centers.

Post-hearing interviews. Researchers from BPA and NPC conducted two rounds of interviews with self-represented litigants: in Spring 2003 and Spring 2004. The purpose of this evaluation component was to describe the experiences and preparation of self-represented litigants and to capture their assessment of their courtroom experience as well as their understanding of the case and the process. Results of this evaluation component are also discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Customer satisfaction surveys. During a two-week snapshot period in May 2004, AOC and program staff distributed customer satisfaction surveys to drop-in and workshop customers to assess the helpfulness of services provided by the programs.

A different research design was employed for the Los Angeles County project because its program design, goals, and activities were different from those at the four other self-help pilot sites. This design consisted of three primary activities: site visits, monthly activity logs, and provider telephone surveys.

Although they were not part of the original evaluation design, several other data sources were consulted to provide background information or complement research findings, including quarterly progress reports submitted to the AOC by center directors, structured writing exercises completed by center directors, project proposals, project invoices, notes from conference calls and meetings of all pilot project staff, review of Web tracking data and user testing for the Contra Costa Web site, other evaluations of self-help programs, U.S. Census data on county population, and Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS) data for background information on court filings.

These components and their limitations are described in more detail in Appendix B. Data were collected between March 2003 and November 2004.

About this Report

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the five pilot projects. Chapters 2 through 6 highlight the accomplishments and challenges of each of the five projects, Chapter 7 explores findings from the post-hearing interviews and detailed analysis of the customer satisfaction data across all sites, and Chapter 8 discusses the lessons learned

across all project sites and offers recommendations for future self-help centers. Chapter 9 describes lessons learned from the evaluation process and directions for future research.

Chapter 2

Butte County: Regional Collaboration Model

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT MODEL TYPE: REGIONAL COLLABORATION MODEL

Hours:	Red Bluff: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (21 hours per week) Willows: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (21 hours per week) Oroville: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. to noon (31 hours per week) Chico: Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. to noon (17 hours per week)
Location:	Red Bluff, Tehama County: Court annex building (same block as courthouse) Willows, Glenn County: At the courthouse Oroville, Butte County: Court annex building (two miles from courthouse) Chico, Butte County: Court annex building (next to courthouse)
Number of Customers Served:	Monthly Average (June 2003 – September 2003): 1,220 (approximately 50% served in person and 50% by telephone)
Number of Staff: (As of May 2004)	Managing attorney (.5 FTE) Paralegal (1.0 FTE) Three Office Assistants (1.25 FTE)
Number of Volunteers:	Average 3 at any time
Case Types Served:	All areas of family law not covered by family law facilitator: dissolution, summary dissolution, motion for non child or spousal support. Guardianships including establishing, opposing, obtaining visitation in and alternatives to probate guardianship. Unlawful detainer (tenant and landlord), civil harassment, domestic violence restraining orders (petitions and responses), name changes, civil complaints and answers, change of venue motions, miscellaneous civil, small claims, collecting a judgment.
Types of services rendered:	Procedural information, assistance filling out forms, explanation of court orders, referrals to additional legal assistance, development of self-help materials, training and assistance for community organizations.
Methods of Service Delivery:	One-on-one assistance by staff over the telephone; service to walk-in customers including forms packets, forms completion, workshop scheduling and providing additional materials; one-on-one assistance by legal staff via teleconferencing equipment; language interpretation via teleconferencing equipment; teleconferenced workshops focused on forms completion.

Background

Butte, Glenn, and Tehama are three contiguous counties in the north-central part of California. Butte County's population of 203,000 ranks near the midpoint among the 58 California counties. Glenn County at 26,000 and Tehama County at 56,000 are much smaller. The majority of residents of Glenn and Tehama counties live in rural areas, as do about 40 percent of Butte County residents. Compared with larger urban areas of the state and with the central valley region, these counties have proportionately more white non-Hispanic residents (78 percent) and fewer Hispanic or Latino residents (13 percent), proportionately fewer people who speak a language other than English at home (14 percent), and proportionately more people older than 65 (15 percent). The three counties' combined poverty rate is 19 percent, putting them in the poorest quartile of California counties.¹¹

The Office of the Family Law Facilitator is one of the few sources on the demographics of the self-represented litigants coming to court. Customers of the family law facilitator in the three-county region are generally similar to the U.S. census population in ethnicity and in the language spoken (94 percent spoke English). Compared with the region's overall population, many more customers of the family law facilitator appear to be living in poverty. About 54 percent of customers report an individual monthly income of less than \$1,000.

Rural and semi-rural northern California are characterized by high unemployment, limited social services, limited public transportation, long distances to population centers, and an aging population. In providing services to residents, rural courts and local governments face the problems of extremely small budgets, a limited pool of attorneys and other professionals, and limited or nonexistent university and community services available to the public.

As of July 2001, Butte County had 10 judges and 2 commissioners; Glenn county had 2 judges and 1 commissioner, and Tehama County had 4 judges and one commissioner. Butte County had 122 court employees, with about 20 in Glenn County and 42 in Tehama County. During the fiscal year 2002–2003, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) reports case filings for the three counties as detailed in figure 2.1.

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census 2000.

Figure 2.1
FY 2002-03 Case Filings for Butte, Glenn and Tehama Counties
Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS)

	Butte	Glenn	Tehama	Total
Family law	3,753	587	1,252	5,592
Probate	613	59	164	836
Small claims	1,498	103	589	2,190
Limited civil	2,868	167	638	3,673

Description of Model

Goals of Program

The Self-Help Assistance Regional Project (SHARP) shows how self-help services can be provided to self-represented litigants in rural areas through the innovative use of technology, program coordination, and staff resources. SHARP's initial goals were:

- To develop a regional program including self-help centers at several court sites in three rural counties, allowing the three superior courts to use the same program design, professional staff, administration, self-help curricula, and development of materials;
- To link the self-help centers through videoconferencing equipment so that workshops, one-on-one assistance, and staff supervision can be conducted by a single managing attorney; and
- To provide self-help services to the range of case types that are needed in areas where very few services are available to self-represented litigants, including family law, guardianship, unlawful detainer, domestic violence restraining orders (DVROs), and civil harassment.

Focus Areas of Law

In 2002, the Butte County Self-Represented Litigants Planning Committee conducted an assessment to determine the greatest needs of self-represented litigants. This needs assessment included an inventory of the few services that were then available to self-represented litigants in the county: the family law facilitator, Legal Services of Northern California, Community Legal Information of California State University, Chico, the local domestic violence advocacy program, the county law library, and the small claims advisor. Very few services were available to self-represented litigants in the other two counties. This limited number of services for self-represented litigants is common in rural areas.

Based on this needs assessment, SHARP anticipated focusing on these case types: family law not addressed by the family law facilitator (i.e., issues other than child support), small claims, unlawful detainers, eviction, fair housing, employment, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), enforcement of judgments, guardianships, name changes,

bankruptcy, criminal appeals, probate, general civil procedures, tax issues, tenant housing, and senior law issues.

When they opened in 2002, the centers focused primarily on all areas of family law not covered by the family law facilitator, including summary dissolution, orders to show cause, and notice of motion for non-child support issues such as custody and visitation of children, other financial matters, and finalization of judgment. The centers also addressed, but not as a primary legal service, guardianships, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, domestic violence restraining orders and responses to them, name changes, civil complaints and answers, change of venue motions, some limited civil matters, mediations, and drafting stipulations.

By the end of 2003, the centers had expanded the primary areas of law served beyond family law to unlawful detainer (landlord and tenant), guardianships, small claims, and limited civil matters. By mid-2004, SHARP added name changes, expungements, money judgment collection, stepparent adoptions, and emancipations. In 2004, of the 119 workshops given by SHARP during a sample reporting month, 52% were on an area of family law, 9% on civil harassment and domestic violence, 10% on unlawful detainer, and 29% on other topics including stepparent adoptions, guardianships, and other civil matters.

Project Planning and Start-up

Prior to receiving the grant for the SHARP project, Butte County received a planning grant from the AOC. A Self-Represented Litigants Planning Committee was formed, including a supervising judge, family law facilitator, small claims advisor, legal services director, and other staff from public and nonprofit agencies. Both the Butte and Glenn County courts and departments were involved in the planning. A summit conference in October 2001 launched a community needs assessment of more than 50 stakeholders, including a survey of those who used community agencies and a resource directory of existing legal services for self-represented litigants. The Planning Committee also formed subcommittees to address funding, training, resources, and data collection/needs assessment. This information-gathering process conducted by the advisory group fed into the planning for the SHARP centers. Members of the bench and the court executive officers from both Butte and Glenn counties were active in planning the project. Because Butte and Glenn counties had a tradition of using a regional model in many service areas (for example, a collaborative mentoring program operated through the family and children services departments), the regional model for the self-help pilot project grant seemed appropriate. The two counties decided to invite Tehama County to join in their collaboration, and the court executive and presiding judge in Tehama were both enthusiastic about participating.

After funding for the model regional self-help centers was received, the managing attorney was hired in August 2002 and located in an office at Butte County's main courthouse in Oroville. Between August and November, the managing attorney held

planning meetings with judges and court staff and asked court clerks to distribute a customer needs survey to self-represented litigants. In November, SHARP opened its first self-help center in the downtown courthouse in Oroville, about two miles from the main courthouse. In January 2003, SHARP opened the self-help center in Red Bluff, Tehama County, across the street from the main Tehama courthouse and began holding workshops in Chico, Butte County, in an annex building directly opposite the Chico courthouse. In April, SHARP opened the Glenn County self-help center in Willows in an office within the courthouse. By then, SHARP was providing teleconferenced workshops at all four sites.

All locations are accessible as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Public transportation to and from outlying areas in these counties is limited, but within the towns themselves, the SHARP locations are easily accessible. Although few signs direct customers to the centers, more than one-half of customers are referred to the centers by court clerks or other court staff, who provide directions.

The original SHARP staff consisted of the managing attorney, a paralegal, a paid assistant, a cadre of student volunteers (four to seven per semester), and two attorneys who conducted some workshops under contract. The roles and responsibilities of the staff members are described in more detail in the staffing section.

Populations Served

Volume

SHARP serves an overall regional population of 285,700 residents. In the last period reported, November 2003 to April 2004, SHARP served an average of 1,208 customers per month, apportioned as follows: Butte County, 723; Glenn County, 182; Tehama County, 298 (see figure 2.2 for details). About 60 percent of SHARP customers are served in Butte County, 25 percent in Tehama County, and 15 percent in Glenn County. The self-help centers experienced a 40 percent increase in customers during their first year of operation. Of SHARP customer contacts, about 51 percent are telephone, 31 percent walk in, and 17 percent workshop. An estimated 27 percent of customers have previously visited SHARP self-help centers. (Data on SHARP attendance are tracked by program staff and taken from the program's quarterly report to the AOC. Data on customer demographics and services received are taken from the intake forms, filled out by a subset of customers, and service tracking forms, filled out by staff on customers. See Appendix B for more information.)

**Figure 2.2
SHARP Volume Data**

Month	Quarterly Report	Intake Forms	Service Tracking Forms
June 2003	1169	161	245
July 2003	1102	162	301
August 2003	1369	187	501
September 2003	1240	163	623
October 2003	1093	193	913
November 2003	844	137	558
March 2004	1150	142	669
Monthly average	1138	164	544

Demographics

SHARP does not target its services to any particular demographic group.

Gender and number of children. About 65 percent of SHARP customers are female, and 64 percent of customers have at least one child (see figure 2.3 for an overview).

Race/ethnicity and language. The race/ethnicity of SHARP customers mirrors the overall race/ethnicity makeup of the region. About 78 percent of customers are white non-Hispanic, 14 percent are Hispanic, and 7 percent are Native American. Most customers (84 percent) do not speak a language other than English in the home; among those who do, Spanish is the most common. Furthermore, almost all customers (93 percent) prefer to receive services in English. Compared with the general population, slightly more SHARP customers speak a language other than English at home, as illustrated in figure 2.4.

**Figure 2.3
Population Served by SHARP: Summary Statistics
Customer Intake Forms**

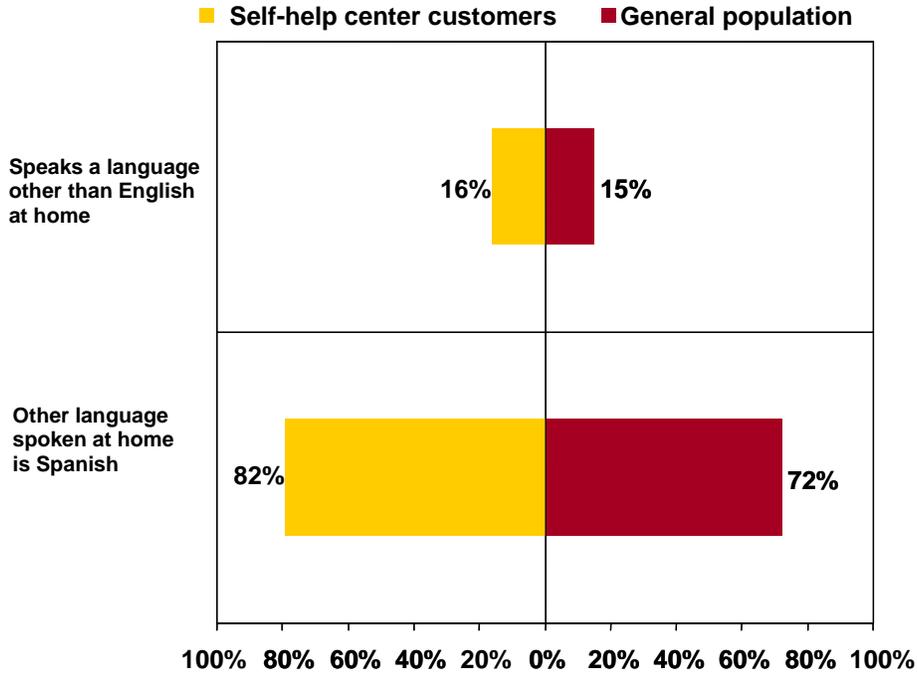
	%	N
Gender		
Female	65%	1,061
Male	35%	569
(missing)		32
Total		1,662
Age		
10-19 years	2%	25
20-29 years	24%	325
30-30 years	25%	332
40-49 years	26%	346
50 or older	24%	321
(missing)		313
Total		1,662

Figure 2.3 (continued)

	%	N
Race/Ethnicity¹		
African American	2%	30
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%	27
Hispanic	14%	218
Native American	7%	115
White non-Hispanic	78%	1,239
Speak a language other than English at home		
Yes	16%	258
No	84%	1,355
(missing)		49
Total		1,662
If yes, which language?		
Spanish	82%	166
Armenian	3%	5
Cantonese	2%	3
(missing)		55
Total		258
Monthly household income		
\$500 or less	16%	225
\$501-\$1000	27%	378
\$1001-\$1500	22%	314
\$1501-\$2000	14%	196
\$2001-\$2500	9%	124
\$2501 or more	13%	180
(missing)		245
Total		1,662
Education		
8th grade or less	5%	72
9th to 11th grade	17%	255
High school diploma or GED	32%	475
Some college	32%	462
Associates degree	6%	92
Bachelors degree	5%	66
Graduate degree	3%	42
(missing)		198
Total		1,662
Number of children		
None	36%	541
One	25%	369
Two	21%	320
Three or more	18%	275
(missing)		157
Total		1,662

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity.

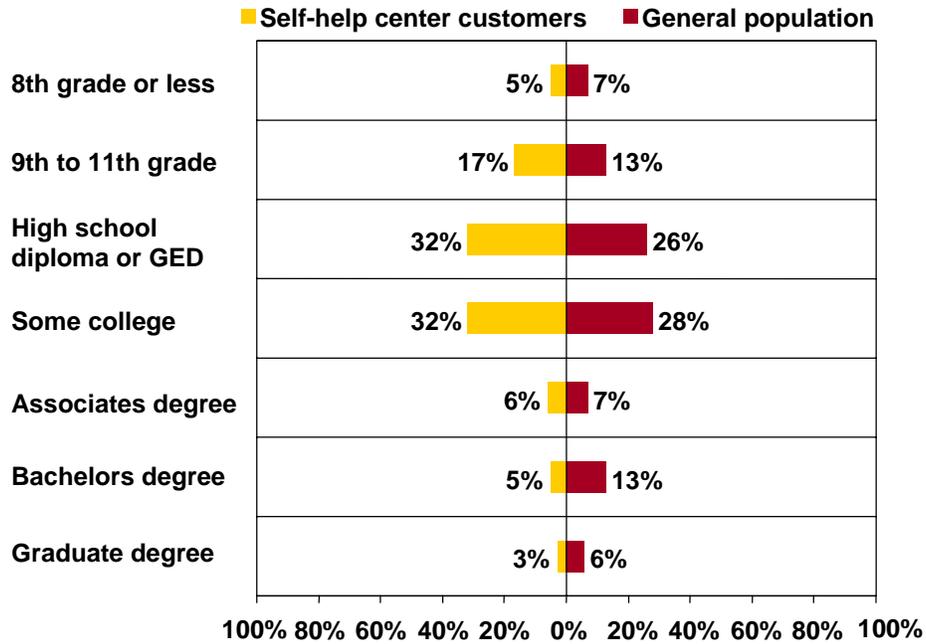
Figure 2.4
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population Averages in
Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties: Speaks a Language Other Than English at Home



U.S. Census Bureau; Butte County, Glenn County, and Tehama County, CA, DP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American Facfinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060071k.html>

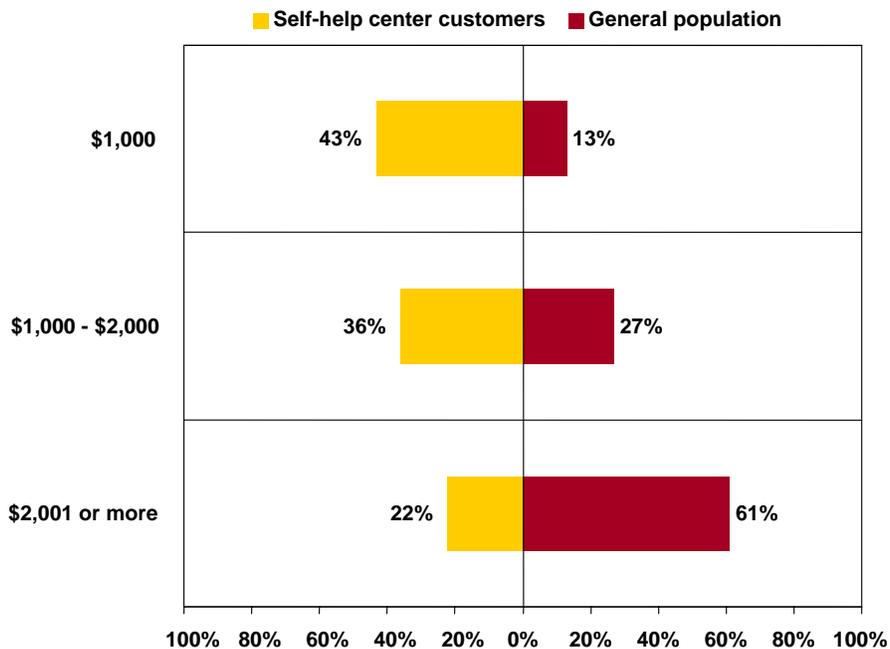
Education, income, and employment. The level of education of SHARP customers is somewhat lower than that of the general population in the region (see figure 2.5). About 55 percent of SHARP customers have a high school education or less, compared with 46 percent of the region’s population. The level of income of SHARP customers is lower than the general population (see figure 2.6). About 43 percent of SHARP customers have an income of \$1,000 per month or less, compared with only 13 percent of the population of the region. About 50 percent of customers are not employed, reflecting in part the high proportion of retired people in the area.

Figure 2.5
Comparing SHARP Customers With the General Population Averages in
Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties: Education



U.S. Census bureau; Butte County, CA, CP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census bureau Web site:
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/gfd/states/06/060071k.html>

Figure 2.6
Comparing SHARP Customers with the General Population Averages in
Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties: Monthly Household Income in Dollars



U.S. Census Bureau; Butte County, CA, DP-3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 200, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census bureau Web site:
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060071k.html>

Notes: The Self-help pilot project data and the census data do not perfectly match. The census data categories are as follows: \$833 or less; \$834 to \$2083; \$2084 and over. Numbers have been rounded and may not sum to exactly 100 percent.

Service Staffing

Paid Personnel

The managing attorney receives grant funding from the regional collaborative under a contract with the courts and is then responsible for employing staff and administering the program. At the time of the second site visit, SHARP staff consisted of the managing attorney (.5 FTE), a paralegal/administrative assistant (1.0 FTE), and three office assistants (1.25 FTE). The managing attorney and the paralegal divide their time among the four self-help centers.

Managing attorney. The managing attorney has been with the program since its inception. She has experience as a family law attorney and as a law professor, as well as previous experience as a high school teacher. She uses skills from these arenas in her current position. Her family law background provides her with the expertise necessary to supervise staff to ensure that customers are receiving quality and accurate assistance. Furthermore, her teaching experience has provided her with the skills necessary to train staff and assist customers. Her responsibilities include managing the program, training and supervising staff, conducting workshops, and helping customers one-on-one. The

managing attorney's SHARP position is half-time. The other half of her time is spent as the Butte County family law facilitator. She is also the Glenn County small claims advisor. (The Oroville SHARP and Butte County Family Law Facilitator offices are combined into one self-help center. The SHARP centers in Tehama and Glenn counties are not combined with the family law facilitator offices in those counties.)

Paralegal. The paralegal assists customers at the centers, particularly in completing forms and reviewing documents; schedules and conducts workshops; develops instructional materials; and trains other staff and volunteers.

Office assistants. The three office assistants perform intake and triage functions. Most callers or walk-in customers at SHARP are first served by an office assistant, who determines the customer's level of need. In some cases, the office assistants help customers directly by giving them the appropriate forms packet, providing information on court calendars and filing procedures, or scheduling a SHARP workshop. Other customers are referred to the SHARP managing attorney or paralegal. Office assistants also perform general office support tasks at the four SHARP locations.

Contract attorneys. SHARP also contracts with attorneys who give workshops for the program. Expenditures on contract attorneys ranged from .5 to 1.0 FTE during the period studied.

Volunteers

At any one time, an average of three interns or volunteers have worked at SHARP during the period studied. SHARP volunteers help with workshops and clerical tasks and also provide one-on-one assistance to customers when staff are busy with other customers or are at another SHARP office. Originally, student volunteers also answered the phones, but they are no longer assigned this task. People who were interviewed by the evaluation team during site visits (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B) explained that substantive knowledge is needed to answer callers' questions effectively, and paid staff now handle the phones. Currently, the project has one part-time bilingual volunteer who can assist customers in Spanish, but respondents noted that it would be beneficial for the centers to have more bilingual staff members and volunteers to ensure the centers will be able to assist Spanish-speaking customers.

Supervision and Training

Both new employees and volunteers receive extensive training from the managing attorney. New volunteers take part in an introductory training, are given written training materials, and take part in regularly scheduled in-service training sessions with the managing attorney. These training sessions cover a variety of topics, including substantive areas of the law, procedural issues, instructions on how to assist customers in filling out forms, and guidance on the difference between providing information and providing legal advice. SHARP has also created for its staff detailed instruction binders on case types and forms.

Supervision and training are important issues for this program for several reasons. Because the program now operates in four different locations, supervision and quality control present challenges. The program also uses paraprofessional staff and volunteers, all of whom need extensive supervision and training. The managing attorney and paralegal/assistant rotate among the four sites to provide on-site supervision and expertise. As a result, the managing attorney is constantly busy, but based on site visit observations, she is able to balance the multiple demands on her time and to assist her staff and volunteers when necessary.

The videoconferencing equipment is used extensively for staff supervision. On days when the managing attorney is not at the remote sites, they stay in touch via videoconferencing with Oroville, so that volunteers and staff can ask questions as they arise. Respondents say that the managing attorney tries to impress on her staff and volunteers that they should always feel free to ask her questions and should never give information to customers if they are unsure about its accuracy. Researchers observed this directly during both site visits: Staff and volunteers felt comfortable asking the attorney legal questions (either in person, on the phone, or via videoconferencing). This is a novel use of the equipment and a way for the managing attorney to have face-to-face contact with staff at multiple sites.

General Staffing Issues

According to respondents, hiring and retaining staff has been SHARP's greatest challenge. All the positions at SHARP except that of managing attorney have turned over more than once. Respondents attributed this to the fact that the grant funds allow for only low-paying positions without benefits and that staff trained at SHARP can find better paying positions elsewhere in the region. Turnover creates particular problems because SHARP invests a great deal of time in training its new employees and volunteers.

Another staffing challenge is the fact that the managing attorney is only half time in this position. While this one-stop model, combining the role of the SHARP managing attorney and the family law facilitator into one position, has coordinated key functions for self-represented litigants, some respondents said that the managing attorney's workload is that of two full-time positions condensed into one.

SHARP had originally planned to provide a number of workshops through attorney volunteers. However, the program has not had much success recruiting attorneys as volunteers.

Despite these challenges, respondents were universally positive about SHARP staff. Many commented on their high level of training, expertise, and knowledge. Respondents said that SHARP staff were better trained than staff at other legal assistance programs.

Analysis of Customers Served

Language of Service Provision

Almost all SHARP customers preferred to receive services in English. However, the project has provided some services in Spanish and Hmong, relying on bilingual volunteers. During one semester, the project had a Hmong-speaking volunteer, and the program has had several Spanish-speaking volunteers. Service tracking data indicate that the services provided in Spanish and Hmong took place mostly during one-on-one, in-person interactions, although some telephone assistance and one workshop were provided in Spanish. Respondents explain that the videoconferencing equipment also is useful for helping Spanish-speaking customers. Occasionally, a Spanish-speaking volunteer at one site has helped a Spanish-speaking customer at another site.

Case Types and Issues

SHARP serves the broadest array of case types of the five model self-help centers (see figure 2.7 for details). About one-half (55 percent) of customers require assistance with family law, 16 percent with civil, 14 percent with unlawful detainer, and 12 percent with probate cases.

Figure 2.7
SHARP: Case Types Served¹
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Family	55%	2,402
Dissolution	63%	1,251
Domestic violence prevention act	21%	415
Paternity	3%	66
Adoption	2%	41
Other family law	11%	217
Unlawful Detainer	14%	594
Civil	16%	689
Small claims	39%	272
Civil harassment	24%	168
Name change	9%	63
Other civil law*	28%	196
Probate	12%	525
Other	3%	150
(missing)		306
Total		4,666

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one case type.

* Other includes bankruptcy, breach of contract, debt collection, elder abuse and personal injury.

Most of the family law cases are dissolutions (63 percent), with an additional 21 percent of customers requiring assistance with domestic violence restraining orders. The most frequently raised issues in family law cases are child custody (40 percent) and visitation (43 percent), which are raised with equal frequency in marital dissolution and domestic

violence cases. (Customers with cases involving child support are assisted by the family law facilitator.) About 80 percent of customers with family law cases or issues were the moving party, and 17 percent were the responding party.

SHARP also assisted in civil cases involving small claims (39 percent), civil harassment (24 percent), and name change (9 percent). Most SHARP customers with civil cases were plaintiffs (78 percent).

Most of the unlawful detainer cases assisted by SHARP were evictions (88 percent). SHARP assisted both landlords (67 percent) and tenants (32 percent).

SHARP is the only model self-help center to assist a high proportion of probate and guardianship cases (12 percent). About 90 percent of the probate cases involved guardianships, and a high proportion (87 percent) of the customers were petitioners.

Types of Services

Most SHARP customers received assistance with information about legal procedures (68 percent). More than one-third of all customers (36 percent) received direct assistance in completing forms, and another 10 percent received assistance reviewing forms they had completed. Ten percent of customers received forms with written instructions. Within case types, civil and unlawful detainer cases were somewhat more likely than family and probate cases to receive procedural assistance and not direct assistance in completing forms.

Description of Service Delivery

As illustrated in figure 2.8 below, SHARP provided extensive telephone, one-on-one, and workshop assistance for its customers. Volume data from the SHARP self-help centers indicate that nearly half of the services were provided over the phone, another one-third through one-on-one, in-person assistance, and 17 percent through workshops.

Figure 2.8
SHARP: Contact Type¹
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Telephone	47%	2,114
One-on-one	41%	1,854
Workshops	14%	623
Other*	1%	62
Total		4,653

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one contact type.

* Other includes staff attempting to return telephone calls and customers who came to the center to use books and resources without speaking to staff.

Workshops

Workshops were the principal component of SHARP's planned regional videoconferencing model (for an overview, see figure 2.9). The primary goal of SHARP workshops is the accurate and informed completion of necessary forms.

Videoconferenced workshops allow the managing attorney or an attorney on contract to SHARP to "conduct the workshop/clinic, provide an orientation, assist in completion of the forms relevant to that particular workshop subject or area of the law, answer questions and communicate with participants or assistants in the other locations" (SHARP Project Proposal).

Figure 2.9
SHARP Workshop Profile
Workshop Tracking Forms

Number of workshops (March 2004)	47
Workshop length	
30 minutes	2%
One hour	46%
One and one half hours	20%
Two hours	13%
Two and one half hours	13%
Three hours	7%
Attendance	
One person	24%
Two people	47%
Three people	16%
Four or more people	12%

Workshops offer other advantages for a regional self-help model. At any one center, professional legal staff are available for drop-in or telephone assistance only a small proportion of the time. With a range of workshops available throughout the month, the SHARP office staff can triage customers' legal concerns and assign them to workshops where they will receive expert assistance with forms and other issues. Finally, the number of drop-in and telephone customers has increased steadily at SHARP since the beginning of the program. Workshops, with their ability to serve many customers at one time, maximize attorney resources and allow SHARP to manage its growth in users without corresponding increases in staff.

SHARP holds multiple workshops during the month at all four of its sites. Workshops are scheduled in advance. Monthly workshop schedules are printed for each SHARP location and are given to the court clerks and faxed to community agencies and other frequent referral sources for the centers. Office staff have a set of intake questions to ask customers who telephone or visit the self-help centers, and they can provide a workshop appointment when appropriate. About 22 percent of all customers at SHARP were given a workshop appointment during the study period.

In the most recent reporting period, August 2004, SHARP held 120 workshops in the areas of family law (52 percent), unlawful detainer (10 percent), civil harassment (9 percent), and other matters, including stepparent adoptions, guardianships, obtaining judgments, and other civil topics (29 percent). Although 52 percent of workshops were in the area of family law, intake data show that the family law workshops served 64 percent of all workshop participants, perhaps indicating higher enrollment for the family law workshops. Although SHARP offers a small number of guardianship workshops, they serve a high proportion of workshop participants (10 percent).

About 14 percent of all SHARP customers were served through workshops, including 16 percent of family law customers, 12 percent of probate customers, 13 percent of unlawful detainer customers, and 13 percent of civil harassment customers (see figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10
SHARP Workshop Topics¹
Workshop Tracking Forms

	%	N
Dissolution	36%	17
Custody	17%	8
Other family law	17%	8
Unlawful detainer	13%	6
Other case type	34%	16
Total		47

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one topic.

The program uses videoconferencing equipment to broadcast workshops to multiple sites. In August 2004, one-third of the workshops (42) were videoconferenced to another site. SHARP has encountered some difficulties in consistently videoconferencing workshops. The centers are not all open on the same days and times, and there may be no one available at the remote sites to operate the videoconferencing equipment and assist workshop attendees.

Respondents explained that over the course of this past year, SHARP has refined the workshops they provide. For example, the project now offers separate dissolution workshops for customers with children and those without children. This way, customers without children do not have to sit through instructions about and explanations of the forms that customers with children must complete. The program also covers separate steps of the process in separate workshops rather than trying to cover all steps of the process at once. Thus, SHARP now offers an order-to-show-cause workshop separate from a motion workshop reflecting the difference in service of process requirements. Respondents explained that SHARP is now focusing on helping customers get through the entire process of their cases rather than just helping them to start their cases.

In March 2004, 47 workshops were examined in detail. As detailed in figure 2.9, the workshops ranged in length from 30 minutes to three hours, with slightly less than half (21) of the workshops lasting one hour. Attendance for the workshops (across all sites) varied from one to seven people, with one or two people participating in 71 percent (32) of the workshops. Data from workshop forms indicate that in March 2004, center staff led all of the workshops, and 16 workshops included the use of assistants.

Customers received a variety of services during the workshops, including information on legal procedures, help preparing forms, help preparing for hearings, and assistance with motions. Figure 2.11 illustrates the services received during the March 2004 workshops.

Figure 2.11
SHARP: Type of Service in Workshops¹
Workshop Tracking Forms

	%	N
Legal/procedural assistance	97%	46
Forms preparation	87%	41
Hearing preparation	19%	9
Motion assistance	10%	5
Referrals	10%	5
Video or other visual presentation	4%	2
Other	4%	2
Total		47

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one type of service.

Workshops used a combination of lectures, question and answer sessions, one-on-one assistance, and small group activities, as illustrated in figure 2.12. The workshops SHARP offers are constantly changing in response to the needs of customers. Brief descriptions of a sample of workshops follow.

Figure 2.12
SHARP Workshop Format¹
Workshop Tracking Forms

	%	N
Small group	49%	23
One-on-one	36%	17
Lecture	26%	12
Question and answer	25%	12
Other	4%	2
Total		47

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one format.

Dissolution Set I (with Children) . This one-hour workshop is offered every other week at each location. It is part of a three-part workshop series designed to assist customers through each stage of the dissolution. This workshop gives an orientation regarding the dissolution process, then provides step-by-step instructions on filling out the following forms: summons, petition, declaration under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA), and proof of service. After forms are completed, customers are instructed on how to make copies, file, serve documents, and file completed proof of service. In all workshops, attendees are encouraged to make their copies at the SHARP centers so that everything is prepared and in order upon leaving the center.

Dissolution Set II. This two-hour workshop is offered every other week at each location. It is a follow-up to the first dissolution workshop, and begins with an orientation to the judgment process. Step-by-step instructions are given on filling out the following forms: declaration of disclosure, schedule of assets and debts, income and expense declaration, declaration regarding service of declaration of disclosure, petitioner’s/respondent’s property declaration.

Dissolution Set III: Default judgment workshop. This is a one- to two-hour workshop offered every other week at each location. Step-by-step instructions are given on filling out the following forms: declaration for default, notice of entry of default, judgment, related attachments, notice of entry of judgment, request for default hearing/request for hearing to establish child support (Butte County only). Default judgments in paternity actions are also covered.

Additional family law workshops. The Notice of Motion workshop, which is given every week, includes instruction on the forms: notice of motion, application for order and supporting declaration, income and expense declaration, and other attachments as required. The Order to Show Cause workshop is given every week and includes instruction on the forms: order to show cause and declarations and attachments as needed. The Paternity—Petition for Custody and Support workshop is given every week and

covers summons, petition, UCCJEA, and proof of service. The Response workshop is given every week and includes responses and the income and expense declaration forms.

Probate guardianship. The guardianship workshop lasts three hours and is offered every other week at each location. The workshop begins with an orientation to the paternity process. The first half of the workshop gives step-by-step instructions on filling out the following forms: petition for appointment of guardian, order appointing guardian, letters of guardianship, petition for appointment of temporary guardian, letters of temporary guardianship, order appointing temporary guardian, notice of hearing, confidential guardian screening form, duties of guardian, order appointing court investigator, consent nomination and waiver of notice, UCCJEA, all attachments as needed, order dispensing with notice as needed, and proof of personal service as needed. After the midway point in the workshop, the following forms are covered: oppositions, terminations, petition to appoint successor guardian, petition for visitation, and related requests. People who need instruction only on the latter forms can join the workshop at the halfway point. Finally, information is given on making copies, filing, serving documents, filing completed proof of service, and the next step in the process.

Civil harassment and domestic violence. This workshop lasts from one to three hours and is given every week at every location. Customers are given step-by-step instructions on filling out either the civil harassment or domestic violence packets, as needed.

Evictions. This workshop lasts one hour and is given every week at every location. Customers are given step-by-step instructions on filling out the unlawful detainer forms packet.

SHARP has evaluated and changed its workshops over time. SHARP identified the importance of helping customers finish their dissolutions and reconfigured the dissolution workshops so that they formed a series covering each part of the process. In guardianship, SHARP has identified that many people return to the centers after taking the guardianship workshop and need help putting forms in proper order and determining which attachments go with which forms. SHARP may offer a second workshop on this topic.

One-on-One Assistance

Many of SHARP's customers come directly to the self-help centers without an appointment. Volume data indicate that 31 percent of all customers are walk-ins. According to interviewees, the type and extent of one-on-one assistance varies depending on the needs and abilities of the customers. The most common form of assistance walk-in customers receive is information on legal procedure, including where to file legal papers, which forms to use, and what the next steps in their case will be. About 39 percent of all walk-in customers receive procedural information from SHARP staff. About 12 percent receive direct assistance in filling out forms and reviewing documents. Each of the SHARP centers has tables at which customers can work, and staff members can help them with questions about what forms they need and how to fill them out. About 6 percent receive forms and written instructions without direct assistance in completing the

forms. About 18 percent are given an appointment to a SHARP workshop, and 6 percent are given a referral to another provider.

The use of the videoconferencing equipment for one-on-one assistance is an unexpected benefit of SHARP's regional model. Individuals interviewed explain that the managing attorney uses the videoconferencing equipment to provide one-on-one assistance both to customers and to office staff and volunteers assisting customers. For example, if a volunteer working at the Red Bluff location cannot answer a customer's question, she can reach the managing attorney, who may be at one of the other center locations. The managing attorney can then use the videoconferencing equipment to help the customer face-to-face.

Phone Assistance

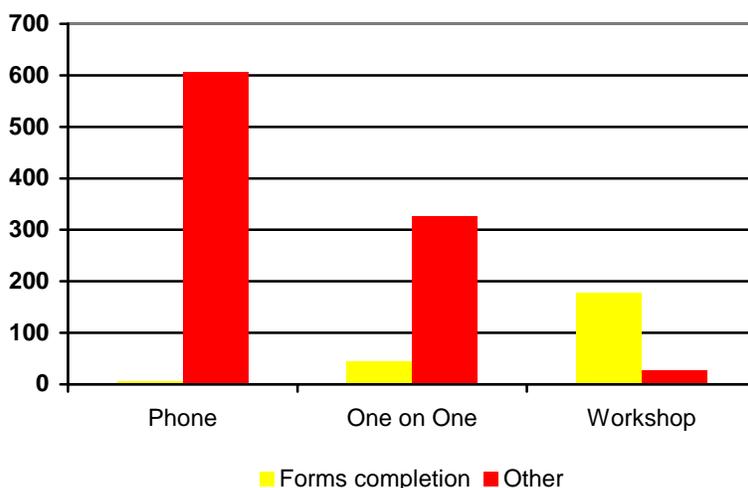
Volume data indicate that 51 percent of SHARP contacts are made over the telephone. Explaining that services provided over the phone are very important, interview respondents noted that self-represented litigants may not take the time to go to a center; they thought many questions could be answered effectively over the phone. Customers phoning SHARP received a variety of different services, including instructions on how to complete forms, explanation of court orders, and general legal and procedural information. SHARP has developed a series of scripts for the staff answering the telephone; the script helps them identify the litigant's problem and direct that person to an appropriate workshop or referral if service cannot be provided by telephone. Customers using the telephone receive information on legal procedures (42 percent), workshop appointments (31 percent), referrals to other providers (11 percent), and occasionally assistance in filling out forms (1 percent).

The SHARP centers are serving customers who live in rural communities with nonexistent public transportation, and these communities are often many miles from the centers. A telephone call is the first and perhaps only contact with SHARP. For this reason, project staff recognized the importance of having knowledgeable individuals answering the phones. During the course of the program, SHARP also found that the volume of phone calls was overwhelming the program and made the decision to stop returning messages left after office hours.

Forms Completion by Service Type

Figure 2.13 estimates the number of customers receiving assistance in filling out forms by type of service. Forms completion is the most time-consuming type of assistance for staff and the one that generally requires an attorney or paralegal. At SHARP, more customers are served by one-on-one, in-person assistance or by telephone; however, the bulk of forms completion assistance takes place in workshops.

Figure 2.13
SHARP: Forms Completion by Contact Type
Service Tracking Forms



Written Materials

SHARP has created a variety of written materials for customers. These include form packets with instructions, pamphlets that explain court processes, and brochures highlighting services available at other agencies. People interviewed for the evaluation explained that many customers use the workspaces provided by the centers along with the written materials to complete their forms while they are at the centers and then have center staff check their work. Thus, the written materials allow those customers who do not need intensive one-on-one assistance to complete their forms with minimal time and involvement from center staff. SHARP also allows litigants to use computers at the centers to complete forms, using programs such as HotDocs, EZLegal File, and fillable PDF forms developed by the AOC.

SHARP staff expressed a need for additional materials for self-represented litigants, including forms packets such as the Judicial Council Domestic Violence forms packets, links at the self-help centers to the Judicial Council Self-Help Web site, forms that can be filled out online, and instructional videos for litigants. The use of standardized Judicial Council forms packets makes it easier to handle forms completion in a workshop setting.

Chronological Description of Service Flow

Referrals to the Centers

According to intake data, almost half of SHARP customers are referred to the program by court clerks, and another quarter are referred by family and friends (see figure 2.14). (SHARP’s proportion of referrals from court clerks, 48 percent, compares with 19 percent from this source in Fresno County and 36 percent in San Francisco).

Figure 2.14
How SHARP Customers Heard of the Self-Help Center¹
Customer Intake Forms

Source	%	N
Clerk’s office	48%	655
Friend or family	22%	305
Family law facilitator	8%	113
Family court services	7%	96
Community service agencies	5%	73
Legal aid	5%	70
Attorney	4%	50
District attorney	3%	45
Pamphlets	3%	40
Judge or Commissioner	1%	17
Newspaper or other advertisement	1%	12
Police	1%	11
Other court personnel	1%	7
Walk-in	0%	3
Bar association	0%	2
Other	4%	55
Total		1,554

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one source.

SHARP posters are posted in the courthouses, and program brochures are provided to court clerks, other court staff, and community-based organizations. The managing attorney has met with numerous groups to inform them of SHARP’s activities, including Legal Services, the domestic violence shelter and advocacy program in the area, senior citizens groups, substance abuse rehabilitation centers, the Head Start annual network meeting, Rotary Clubs, retired public employees, and the community resource fair.

SHARP also sent a letter and book on limited scope representation¹², also known as “unbundling,” to family law attorneys in all three counties to encourage them to provide these services, including representation for a discrete task such as a court hearing. Finally, SHARP staff report that social services agencies in Glenn and Tehama counties are beginning to make calls to the centers on behalf of their clients, as well as referring them to the centers.

The ways that customers learned about SHARP were generally consistent across the demographic categories of gender, race/ethnicity, education, and income. Hispanic customers were more likely to report that they heard of the centers through family and friends (24 percent) than white non-Hispanic customers (19 percent). Very low-income customers (\$500 or less per month of individual income) were also more likely to have heard of SHARP through family and friends (25 percent) than customers with an income of more than \$2,000 per month (16 percent).

Previous Attempts to Get Help

Most customers (69 percent) did not seek help for their cases prior to coming to SHARP. For the minority of customers who had sought help elsewhere, about one-quarter sought help from Legal Aid, one-quarter sought help from a private attorney, and another quarter sought help from families and friends. Only 30 percent of SHARP customers had considered hiring an attorney. Most customers stated they were representing themselves because they could not afford an attorney (69 percent), while 23 percent stated they were unsure if they needed an attorney, and 17 percent stated that they chose to represent themselves. Customers with unlawful detainer issues (about 15 percent) had a strikingly different profile of self-representation, with 54 percent saying that they could not afford a lawyer and 38 percent saying they chose to represent themselves.

Intake Procedure

SHARP has a formal intake and triage procedure. Office staff are trained in a scripted set of questions that help them determine whether a customer, either in person or on the telephone, can be helped through immediate information and provision of materials or requires a workshop appointment, one-on-one assistance with forms completion and review, or a referral to another agency. Customers who come to workshops are also quickly assessed to make sure they are receiving the right assistance. During the course of program operation, the intake procedure has changed so that volunteers and interns are no longer asked to answer phones and provide intake and triage.

Referrals From the Centers

SHARP makes referrals to a variety of legal and community service providers. According to service tracking data, SHARP referred 14 percent of its customers to another agency

¹² Limited scope representation is a relationship between an attorney and a person seeking legal services in which it is agreed that the scope of the legal services will be limited to the defined tasks that the person asks the attorney to perform.

(see figure 2.15). Referrals made by SHARP vary by case type. Customers with family law issues were most likely to be referred to the family law facilitator (37 percent), to other legal providers (22 percent), or to legal services (8 percent). About 32 percent of family law customers were referred to a nonlegal service, such as a domestic violence service and shelter. Customers with unlawful detainer issues were far more likely to be referred to legal services (52 percent of those referred). Customers with civil, probate, and other issues were most likely to be referred to other legal providers.

Figure 2.15
SHARP: Referrals Made to Legal and Community Service Providers¹
Service Tracking Forms

Referral	%	N
<i>Legal Service Providers</i>		
Lawyer referral service	27%	135
Family law facilitator	27%	133
Legal services	15%	75
Law library	11%	56
Small claims advisor	6%	28
Local child support agency	5%	23
Public defender	2%	10
Other legal service ²	17%	81
Total		541
<i>Community Service Providers</i>		
Domestic violence	21%	36
Government services	11%	18
Counseling service	5%	9
Mediation service	4%	6
Substance abuse services	2%	4
Housing service	2%	3
Other community service ²	70%	120
Total		196

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one provider.

² Other Legal services include Web sites, clerks and the child abduction unit. Other community services include Department of Motor Vehicles, mental health, parent education, adult services, Salvation Army, churches and Web sites.

Returning for Service

Service tracking data indicate that customers returned to SHARP for services 27 percent of the time. This is the highest proportion of returns to service across the model self-help centers and is probably due to SHARP's model of providing some assistance to telephone or walk-in customers and then having them return for a workshop. Many customers who returned to SHARP for help were looking for assistance with the next step in the process of their cases (49 percent), as shown in figure 2.16. The second most common reason for

returning was to have additional questions answered (40 percent), to get help with forms (13 percent), and to seek document review (10 percent). Customers with unlawful detainer issues were the most likely to return to a SHARP center (33 percent).

Figure 2.16
SHARP: Reason for Customers' Return Visits¹
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Next step in the process	49%	587
Has additional questions	40%	476
Needs help with forms	13%	160
Document review	10%	123
Responding to new papers	5%	55
Needs help understanding a court order	3%	35
Court appearance preparation workshop	0%	4
Needs access to an interpreter to help translate in court	0%	3
Other	7%	85
Total		1,528

¹Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one reason. About 27 percent of visits to a SHARP center were from customers who returned for additional help.

Budget and Expenditures

All SHARP staff are contract staff. SHARP centers are housed in court facilities and not required to pay rent. The SHARP videoconferencing equipment is maintained by court staff for the SHARP program.

SHARP's regional videoconferencing model required that a major portion of the first year's operating budget be spent on the installation of the videoconferencing equipment. Equipment costs in 2001–2002, largely for videoconferencing equipment and services, were \$42,000, about 52 percent of all operating expenditures. (The cost and time of installing and bringing the videoconferencing equipment online did not exceed the amount estimated in SHARP's original proposal.) Funds spent on personnel accounted for 45 percent of operating expenditures.

In 2002–2003, the first year that SHARP staffed and operated all the self-help centers, the cost for video conferencing and other equipment dropped to 5 percent of total operating expenditures, while personnel accounted for 86 percent. In 2003–2004, personnel costs accounted for 84 percent of total operating expenditures.

Collaboration and Outreach

Collaboration Within the Courts

SHARP is a collaboration among three counties. Respondents said that while an advisory committee was established to write the grant, it did not continue after the program was implemented. As described above, Butte and Glenn counties have a history of participation in regional collaboratives, and the court executive officers from Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties had an existing relationship prior to this grant. The program continues to work closely with the court executive officers and judges in each of the three counties; the managing attorney is accessible to court staff and has established open lines of communication. Respondents said that court clerks, family law facilitators, and other court staff in all three counties have good relationships with SHARP and are eager to provide referrals to the program. Indeed, according to individuals interviewed for the evaluation, some court staff members are champions of the project and regularly tell self-represented litigants about SHARP. For example, at the Oroville courthouse, the family law court attendant gives an introductory speech about SHARP at the beginning of the family law calendar. Respondents report that SHARP also has a collaborative relationship with the Butte County law librarian. The law librarian was involved with the original planning phase of the grant and has worked with the managing attorney on making form and instruction packets.

Because SHARP's managing attorney is also the managing attorney for the Butte County Office of the Family Law Facilitator, there is a close relationship between the two agencies. The distinction between the two is administrative and budgetary, but from an Oroville customer's standpoint, there is just one integrated self-help center that assists with family law and other areas of law. The SHARP centers in Tehama and Glenn counties are not combined with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator in those counties, but those offices do provide referrals to the SHARP centers. The SHARP managing attorney recently became the small claims advisor in Glenn County.

Collaboration and Public Relations Outside the Courts

Individuals interviewed for the evaluation explained that SHARP has not done extensive collaborative work with community agencies. Given the rural nature of the tri-county region, there are not many community-based organizations with which to collaborate. Recently, however, the managing attorney has established a relationship with Catholic social services. SHARP did a presentation at Catholic social services and has entered into a collaboration to provide workshops and services in Catholic social services' teen program. The managing attorney also has engaged in discussions with the Unified Courts for Families Mentor Court Program, which coordinates juvenile and criminal law cases involving the same families. Because customers often have needs and issues in multiple areas, the two programs are exploring the possibility of sharing facilities. Currently, they are exploring the possibility of opening joint centers in Orland and Chico.

In addition, respondents discussed the possibility of building regional collaborations to expand the videoconferencing network. For example, the three-site network could be linked into other videoconferencing networks (run by public or private agencies providing a wide variety of services) to allow SHARP workshops to be broadcast in a wider variety of locations (and other workshops, classes, and trainings—law related or not—could be broadcast at the SHARP centers). Respondents were excited about this idea as a low-cost method for providing self-help services to a wider audience and as a method for providing SHARP customers with services that may address their other needs.

Impact on Litigants

Views of Court Personnel and Other Stakeholders

The SHARP centers serve thousands of customers each month who previously had no court-based self-help assistance available for cases other than those involving child support. SHARP has made the completion of dissolution cases a focus of its efforts, and respondents commented that self-represented litigants are now more likely to finish their cases, rather than starting but never finishing their cases, which was common before SHARP's implementation. Respondents also commented that forms are filled out correctly the first time, and litigants are better prepared for court.

Vignette: Assistance With Visitation Orders in a Guardianship Case

A grandmother came to the SHARP project asking for help with a visitation order in a guardianship case. She had become the legal guardian of her 8-year-old grandson two years ago because his parents were addicted to drugs and unable to care for him. The grandmother was retired and working part-time to help support her grandson, in addition to receiving some public assistance for him. At the time of the guardianship, she did not have legal representation. The mother of the child, however, had an attorney. About six months ago, the mother's attorney crafted a stipulation for visitation by the mother who was supposed to be in drug rehabilitation. Since that time, the mother has not exercised her visitation. Recently, the mother decided she wanted to visit her child. Without notice, she went to the grandmother's house at 8 p.m., accompanied by the police, to take the boy for visitation. The stipulation said she was to pick him up at school. The boy was extremely fearful and upset and did not want to go with his mother. The police said they didn't want to take the child, but felt they had no choice. SHARP was able to help the grandmother prepare a declaration to the court informing the judge of current events and requesting that the visitation order be immediately modified to reduce the distress to the child as much as possible.

Views of Customers

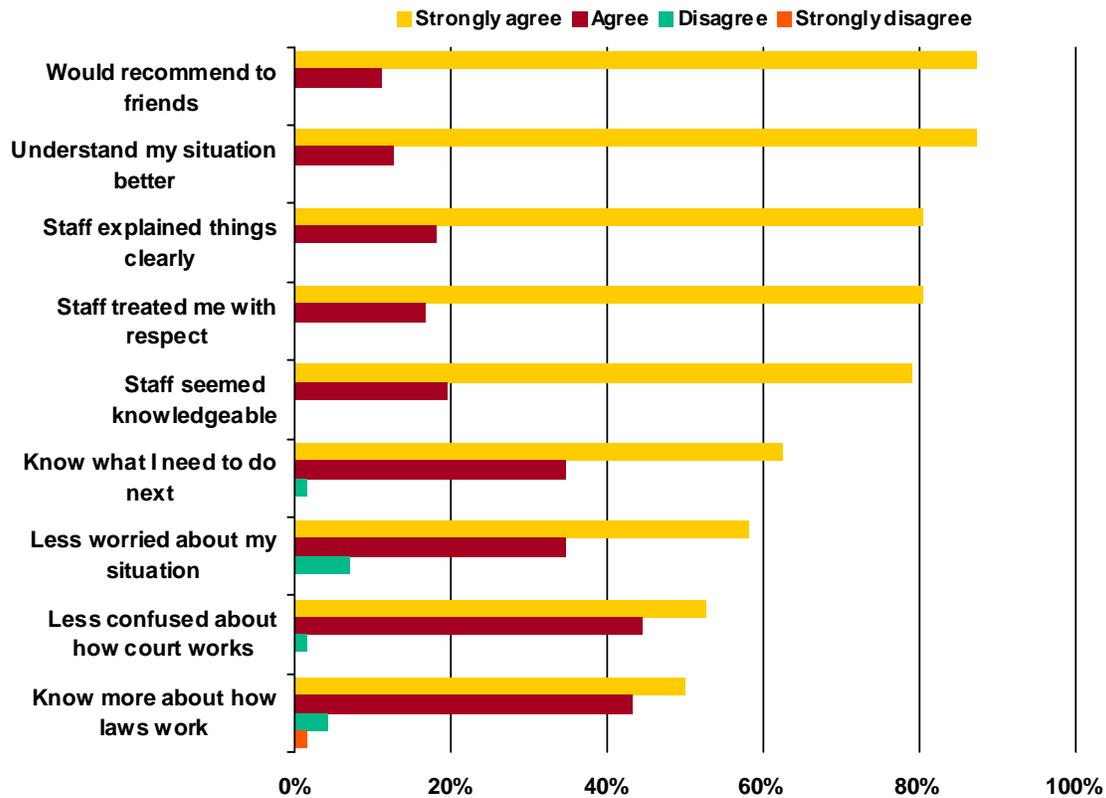
Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed to SHARP drop-in and workshop customers during a two-week period in May 2004. Surveys were received from an estimated 26 percent of those visiting the centers during this period. Although the

response rate is too low to draw many conclusions, SHARP customers consistently rated their satisfaction high (figures 2.17 and 2.18).

While customer feedback was extremely positive overall, the proportion of customers who strongly agreed with the satisfaction statements had some notable variations. Customers were least likely to strongly agree that they knew more about how the laws work (50 percent), that they were less confused about how the court works (53 percent), that they were less worried about their situation (58 percent), and that they knew what they needed to do next (63 percent). On all other items, about 80 percent or more of customers strongly agreed.

“I am extremely grateful for the help I received to get me through this difficult time and situation.”
SHARP customer

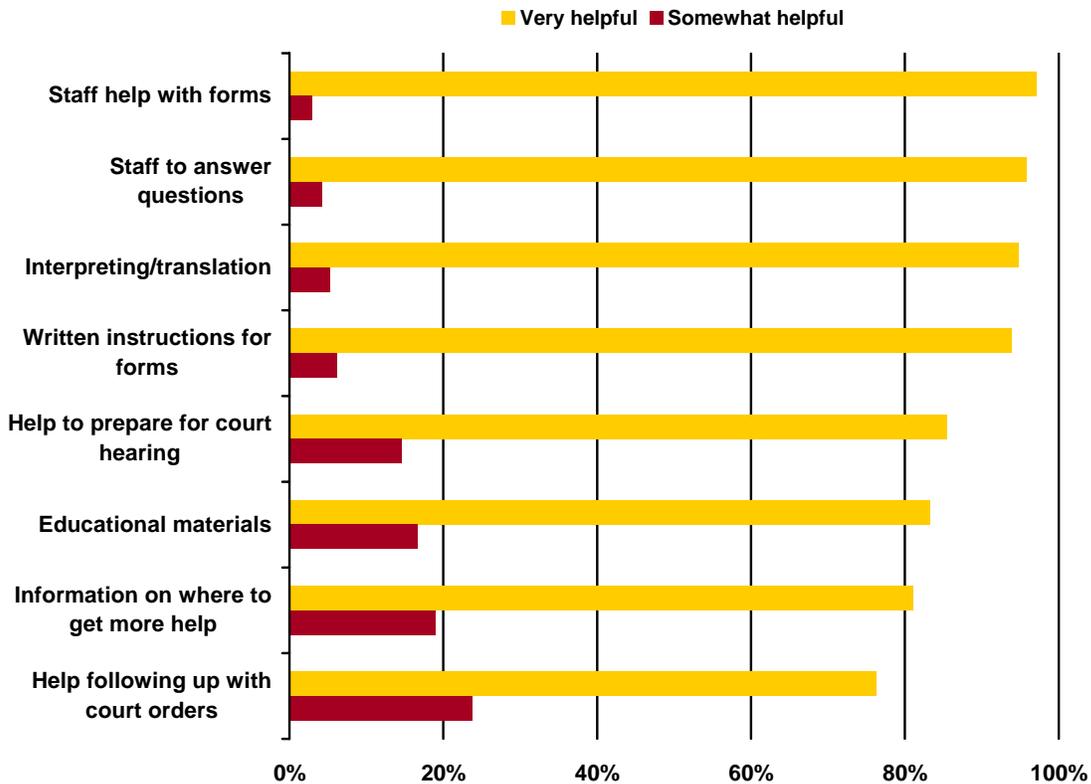
Figure 2.17
Overall Satisfaction
SHARP Customer Survey



SHARP customers overall also provided extremely positive feedback on the service assessment questions: 100 percent rated all of the services as very helpful or somewhat helpful. Customers were least likely to rate the following services as very helpful: help following up with court orders (76 percent), information on where to get more help (81 percent), educational materials (83 percent), and help to prepare for a court hearing (85 percent). For all other services, at least 94 percent of customers provided *very helpful* ratings.

“I feel that the people at SHARP helped me considerably. Otherwise I would need an attorney I can't afford!”
SHARP customer

Figure 2.18
Satisfaction With Specific Services
SHARP Customer Survey



Vignette: Unlawful Detainer Assistance Through a Videoconferenced Workshop

An elderly woman, a landlord, attended the unlawful detainer workshop. She attended the workshop in Oroville, Butte County while the legal assistant providing the workshop was in Red Bluff, Tehama County. Four other litigants with similar unlawful detainer issues were present at the workshop. The elderly woman informed staff that she was hard of hearing and could not understand what the legal assistant was saying to the group. The video conferencing monitor was positioned closer to the group of litigants and the volume was turned up so that the woman could hear. The group was very understanding of the woman's hearing disadvantage and everyone enjoyed the presentation of the new technology. As staff monitored how the workshop progressed, using the videoconferencing equipment, the same personal assistance was able to be offered as if the legal assistant was providing the services in person.

Impact on Court Process

Respondents explained that court staff members have gotten fewer complaints from self-represented litigants since the centers opened. Litigants' paperwork is now more accurate, which leads to fewer upset litigants. Respondents also said that clerks are far less frustrated now that they are able to refer litigants to SHARP. Because clerks can refer litigants to SHARP, clerks spend less time with self-represented litigants, and the lines at the clerks' counters do not get as backed up as they did before. Respondents also commented that they have heard judges compliment the program. In general, respondents asserted that cases now are completed faster and in a more organized fashion. One respondent said that SHARP is "doing something that makes the practice of law look good."

Court File Review

Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) staff abstracted and analyzed family law dissolution and unlawful detainer files in Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties. The purpose of the file review was to identify areas in which the impact of the self-help centers could be quantified through the broad case indicators found in the court file and, more generally, to identify the problems self-represented litigants face in the course of their dissolution cases. (See Appendix E for the complete file review tables.) Cases were taken from the period of January 2003 to March 2004. Cases were chosen at random from (a) a list of litigants who received help from the SHARP centers and (b) a list of all self-represented litigants who were not on record as having received help from SHARP.

Dissolution. After excluding certain cases because the litigants had received help from an attorney, the final dissolution sample included 71 cases in which the petitioner had received help from one of the SHARP centers and 113 cases with no record of the petitioner receiving help from the SHARP centers.

Several caveats to the findings presented below should be noted. One of SHARP's objectives has been to assist customers in proceeding to judgment when their dissolution cases have been unresolved for periods of more than a year. By taking cases filed since January 2003, the sample does not capture those cases. In addition, it is possible that even though there was no record of some litigants' receiving help from the SHARP centers, they actually did receive assistance but did not fill out an intake form. It also appears from the file review data that cases receiving assistance from SHARP in the period sampled were less likely to involve children or property, and as a result, they might be less complex than cases in the comparison group. Finally, a court case file does not by any means capture the full extent of SHARP's assistance to its customers.

Background of cases. SHARP customers were more likely to file dissolution cases one year or more after their date of separation (41 percent of SHARP customers compared to 28 percent of the comparison group). Cases in the comparison group were more likely to involve children (60 percent of the comparison group, and 41 percent of SHARP customers). This may be due to the fact that in Butte County, customers with child support issues are seen at the SHARP center but by the family law facilitator. Cases in the comparison group were also more likely to involve property (56 percent of comparison group, and 46 percent of SHARP customers).

SHARP customers successful at filing paperwork. Customers of the SHARP centers were more successful than the comparison group at including key elements in their filings. SHARP customers were more likely to file UCCJEA declarations when the case involved children (97 percent to 86 percent) and to provide income information with the petition (69% to 53%). SHARP customers were also somewhat less likely to have missing or inconsistent information in their petitions (52 percent of SHARP customers compared to 60 percent of comparison group).

Few differences in service or filing orders to show cause, motions, or response. Litigants in both groups were equally likely to successfully serve the responding party (82 percent of SHARP customers and 81 percent in the comparison group) and provide proof of service for declaration of disclosure (66 percent to 62 percent). Litigants in both groups were equally likely to file orders to show cause or motions (14 percent to 16 percent) or to have a response filed in the case (18 percent to 22 percent).

Proceeding to judgment. A higher proportion of cases from the sample of SHARP customers requested a default judgment (61 percent of SHARP customers to 53 percent in the comparison group). A nearly equivalent proportion of cases in both groups proceeded to judgment (63 percent to 66 percent). A higher proportion of cases from the sample of SHARP customers proceeded to default judgment (87 percent to 70 percent). For the cases that proceeded to default or uncontested judgment, more cases in the comparison sample had a marital settlement agreement or stipulation (31 percent) than in the SHARP sample (12 percent). The mean days between the date the petition was filed and the date that status was terminated were almost identical for the two samples (216 days to 218 days).

Comparison group subsamples. Files in the comparison group were examined for indications that the petitioner had received some assistance with paperwork, even if not from the SHARP centers. Roughly one-half of the cases in the comparison group (54 percent) appeared to have received no assistance with paperwork. When this subgroup is compared to the cases from the SHARP centers, some interesting differences are revealed. A high proportion of the cases that apparently received no assistance had children (63 percent). These cases were substantially more likely to have missing or inconsistent information on the petition (71 percent).

The subgroup of cases apparently receiving no assistance with paperwork also differs from the subgroup of cases that did receive some assistance. A higher proportion of cases in the no-assistance subgroup had children, filed orders to show cause or motions, did not have a response filed, and had missing or inconsistent information on the petition. This seems to indicate a population with family law cases that are unrepresented, complex, more likely to involve children, and not being reached by any form of self-help assistance.

Unlawful detainer. The samples of unlawful detainer files were also drawn from cases taken from the period of January 2003 and March 2004. After excluding certain cases selected because the litigants had received help from an attorney, the final sample included 42 plaintiffs and 41 defendants who had received help from the SHARP centers, and 131 plaintiffs and 75 defendants who had apparently not received any help from the SHARP centers.

Comparison of plaintiffs who received help from SHARP with those who did not revealed few differences. Plaintiffs who received help from the SHARP centers were more likely to reach judgment by default (52 percent of SHARP customers compared to 36 percent of the comparison group). Plaintiffs who did not receive help from SHARP were somewhat more likely to receive a conditional judgment (8 percent of plaintiffs from the comparison group and no plaintiffs from SHARP). Finally, plaintiffs who received help from SHARP appeared somewhat less likely to have long cases (more than two months from filing to judgment).

The comparison of defendants showed more differences. Defendants who received help from the SHARP centers were far more likely to submit handwritten rather than typed or computer-generated forms. Almost all the defendants who received help from the SHARP centers raised an affirmative defense (98 percent), compared with 83 percent of defendants who did not receive help from SHARP. Of those defendants who raised affirmative defenses, 83 percent of those who received help from SHARP provided supporting facts, compared with 68 percent of the comparison group.

Defendants from both groups were equally likely to reach a judgment (85 percent of SHARP customers and 80 percent of the comparison group). Of those that reached judgment, immediate possession to plaintiff was equally likely in both groups (71 percent of SHARP customers and 68 percent of comparison group), but a money judgment for

the plaintiff was less likely among the SHARP customers (60 percent of SHARP customers and 72 percent of the comparison group). SHARP customers were more likely to reach judgment by stipulation (26 percent of SHARP customers and 13 percent of the comparison group). SHARP customers were also more likely to receive a conditional judgment (conditional judgments often require some action from the plaintiff).

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Accomplishment of Goals

Regional collaboration. SHARP has successfully implemented its regional collaboration model. The program built on a history of collaboration between Butte and Glenn counties, bringing Tehama County into the regional model. Under the regional model, centers operated in three counties, providing services to customers in a wide geographic area who otherwise might not have been served. The regional model allowed for the pooling of resources, with one managing attorney to serve centers in three counties. This results in cost-efficient service delivery. Without the regional collaboration, the cost of implementing a self-help project in the smaller courts would have been prohibitive. Furthermore, given the distances between the courts and the lack of public transportation, self-represented litigants would have been unlikely to travel to another county for services and instead would have remained unserved.

Use of technology. SHARP has succeeded in operating four self-help centers in three counties with very limited resources by making efficient and effective use of technology and professional staff. By creative use of teleconferencing equipment, which links all four centers, the part-time managing attorney is able to supervise all the centers and, with a full-time paralegal, provide self-help assistance to more than 1,000 customers per month. SHARP has successfully addressed many of the barriers that face rural courts attempting to establish centers for self-represented litigants, including court budgets that are too small to pay all the costs of starting up a self-help center and the lack of qualified attorneys to recruit for jobs at a self-help center.

By videoconferencing workshops and one-on-one assistance across the four self-help centers, SHARP has addressed the problems that many residents of rural areas have in gaining access to legal services. SHARP is able to provide the same workshops and assistance in four locations throughout Butte, Tehama and Glenn counties. SHARP's model has also reduced the time that staff need to travel from location to location. Although videoconferencing technology reduces the need to have an attorney at each site, the SHARP workshop model still requires a person to open the site to customers and operate the videoconferencing equipment.

The time and cost of installing and using new technology is often a stumbling block to programs. In part due to its strong collaborative relationships with the three courts involved, SHARP was able to implement the video technology within the time frame and

the budget specified in its program plan and then to reduce technology costs sharply in subsequent years of operation.

Provision of assistance to self-represented litigants in the community. SHARP has brought help to self-represented litigants in a region where very few resources for self-represented litigants were available. Since the beginning of the project, SHARP has served many thousands of county residents who would otherwise have received no assistance at all. About 69 percent of all customers of the self-help centers had received no previous help on their case. Also, 69 percent of all customers and 75 percent of customers with family law issues said that they were representing themselves because they could not afford an attorney

SHARP has also served a region with very few resources for self-represented litigants by offering help with a range of case types through workshops and individual assistance. About one-half of SHARP customers have family law issues, while the remainder have cases in unlawful detainer (14 percent), probate and guardianship (12 percent), and a range of other case types.

Service Issues

Skills of managing attorney. Respondents explained that a key feature of the managing attorney's role is the ability to work collaboratively with court personnel from the three counties that are involved with the pilot project. Gaining the trust and support of judges and court executive officers in all three counties was crucial to the success of the project, and achieving this goal was facilitated by the managing attorney's effective verbal and written communication skills, flexibility, openness to new ideas and competing viewpoints, and ability to forge relationships and alliances.

Respondents also attribute much of SHARP's success to the skills and experience of the managing attorney. The managing attorney is an experienced litigator and law professor, who is able to draw on her wealth of experience to design services for a range of legal issues to be delivered in a variety of media.

Collaboration with the court. SHARP has strong collaborative relationships with judges and court executive officers in all three counties, and court clerks make numerous referrals to the project. SHARP had a higher proportion of customer referrals from court clerks (48 percent) than any of the other model self-help centers evaluated. The courts in the three SHARP counties have been willing to provide space to the self-help centers and technical support with the videoconferencing equipment. When possible, they have unified the family law facilitator or small claims advisor functions with the SHARP centers.

Intake and triage. SHARP's use of a formalized intake and triage process allows the program to target more extensive assistance, including workshops and one-on-one consultation with the paralegal or managing attorney, to those customers who need it.

(The triage materials developed by SHARP are now available on the AOC's Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess.)

Focus on workshops. SHARP uses workshops to provide in-depth case assistance to customers, particularly in the area of forms completion. More than four times as many customers receive assistance in forms completion through workshops, rather than through drop-in assistance, even though more customers overall are served through drop-in assistance. SHARP has continuously evaluated and modified its workshop offerings, their format, and the curricula to better meet the needs of its customers. SHARP customers rate their satisfaction with workshops as highly or higher than their satisfaction with the one-on-one services they receive.

Staff supervision. The SHARP model consists of a half-time managing attorney supervising staff at four self-help centers. The managing attorney has used several strategies to address this challenge. First, the managing attorney insists on high standards for her staff, and to this end, staff and volunteers receive extensive training, and underperforming team members are replaced. Second, the managing attorney is accessible and available to her staff and volunteers and emphasizes that they should contact her any time they have a question. Third, the project uses the videoconferencing equipment for supervisory purposes; the managing attorney can interact face-to-face with staff at remote locations to answer their questions and to observe activities at the remote center.

Staff retention. Recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers has been a significant problem for SHARP. The program has struggled with a limited pool of qualified applicants and with its inability to pay competitive wages and benefits. The extensive training required by SHARP's intake and triage process has also limited its ability to use interns and volunteers as telephone and counter staff. SHARP was also disappointed by its lack of success in recruiting attorney volunteers to conduct workshops.

Hours at the centers. The varying hours that courts in the three SHARP counties are open has limited SHARP's ability to videoconference workshops across all sites. At present, about one-third of the workshops are being videoconferenced to all sites.

Chapter 3

Fresno County: Spanish-Speaking Model

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

MODEL TYPE: SPANISH-SPEAKING MODEL

Hours:	Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to noon and 1:30 to 4 p.m. (closed Friday for workshops/training)
Location:	City of Fresno, one mile from court; next to Family Law Facilitator's office
Number of Customers Served:	Monthly average (February 2003 – April 2004): 194 Approximately 160 legal assistance and 34 interpretations per month
Number of Staff:	Two full-time staff: the community resource manager and the court examiner
Number of Volunteers:	2 part-time clerical 24 interpreters 2 interns
Types of Services Rendered:	Assistance with completion of forms, procedural information, explanation of court orders, written materials translated into Spanish, document review, case management, referrals to additional legal assistance, and interpretation in court and custody mediation.
Case Types Served:	Family law (dissolution; custody/visitation; grandparent visitation; child support, spousal support, paternity, domestic violence); Probate (guardianship); Landlord/tenant (unlawful detainer); General Civil (civil harassment, elder abuse, name change); Immigration.
Methods of Service Delivery:	Individual assistance and workshops, interpreter services at court

Background

Fresno County is located in central California and is the 10th largest county in the state. It covers about 6,000 square miles, and is the most productive agricultural area in the nation. The population of Fresno County is 799,407. Slightly more than 50 percent of the population resides in the city of Fresno, which is the largest urban area in the county and the location of the main courthouse. The county includes 26 other cities, predominantly small farming communities heavily populated with Hispanic migrant workers. There are nine outlying courts that range from Coalinga (65 miles southwest) to Reedley (20 miles east). In rural areas of Fresno County, the Hispanic population ranges from 65 percent to 98 percent of the total. As of July 2001, Fresno Superior Court had 36 judges, 8 commissioners, and about 461 employees.

Both economic and language barriers have created a critical demand on the court to provide services to a population of self-represented litigants who require legal information and education in Spanish.

Currently, Fresno County is experiencing double-digit unemployment. Whereas the unemployment rate in California is just under 7 percent, Fresno County has peaked at almost 14 percent.¹³ The poverty rate in this county (24 percent) is 13 percentage points higher than the state average and double the national average. About 37 percent of Fresno's children live below the poverty line, compared with the statewide average of 18 percent. The median household income for Fresno County (\$34,735) is less than that for the state of California (\$47,493). Almost one-third of the population lacks a high school degree.

Fresno County has one of the highest concentrations of Latino and Spanish-speaking people in California, with a 44 percent Latino population.¹⁴ About 41 percent speak a language other than English at home, and 77 percent of those speak Spanish. During the last six months of 2001, the Fresno Superior Court provided interpreter services for 19,051 mandated cases; 90 percent involved Spanish-speaking litigants. No interpreter services are mandated for most family law, probate, small claims, or other civil cases. During the fiscal year of 2001–2002, cases filings in these categories were as follows:

- Family law: 4,673
- Probate: 910
- Small claims: 5,051
- Limited civil: 11,275¹⁵

In 2001, about 40 percent of the Spanish-speaking litigants in these cases required language assistance. As they attempt to navigate the process successfully, these individuals face huge challenges, which affect both their ability to seek justice and the court's ability to serve them efficiently. Prior to the establishment of the model self-help project Centro de Recursos Legales, the Fresno court had two assistance programs for self-represented litigants: the family law facilitator and Family Law Information Center. Combined, they provided a wide array of services in the area of family law. However, neither dealt with other civil issues, and neither offered services in Spanish. Furthermore, the Fresno Court responded to budget cuts by withdrawing funds from the Family Law Information Center, and it was closed at about the same time Centro de Recursos Legales was opened. This left the family law facilitator as the only family law self-help program for non-Spanish-speaking litigants, and the facilitator program is basically limited to working on issues of child support.

Some community legal services are available in Fresno County. Central California Legal Services provides assistance to individuals who meet the income guidelines on cases

¹³ California Department of Finance, "California Statistical Abstract 2004. Table c-2 Civilian Unemployment Rate by County (2003)".

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "Fresno County, CA, Table (1), American Community Survey Office," <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/Profiles/Single/2003/ACS/CA.htm> (accessed January 28, 2005).

¹⁵ Administrative Office of the Courts, "2003 Court Statistics Report (2004)".

involving housing and other civil matters as well as domestic violence. Centro La Familia Advocacy provides assistance to income-qualified individuals in the family law area. Neither program is able to meet the demand for representation, particularly in family law. In addition, no services are available for those litigants who fall outside the income restrictions, yet cannot afford counsel.

The goal of the Centro de Recursos Legales was to fill the gap in services to Spanish-speaking litigants and minimize the barriers they face by providing assistance in completing forms, education about the court process, workshops on various case types, and interpreter services at the court.

Description of Model

Goals of Program

Centro de Recursos Legales was designed to provide court-operated, self-help legal assistance to Fresno County's large Spanish-speaking population. The central goals of the project were as follows:

- Increase access to justice and education by establishing a Spanish-language self-help center that would include instructional materials and workshops in Spanish, and Spanish-speaking staff and volunteers. These services should extend to potential litigants in outlying courts as well as in the main court in the city of Fresno;
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the court system by providing Spanish-language document review of *pro per* forms and by building a volunteer interpreters' bureau through extensive community collaborations; and
- Increase user satisfaction with the court process by making assistance available through the self-help center and volunteer interpreters' bureau.

Focus Areas of Law

Originally, the primary focus of Fresno County's pilot program was to help Spanish-speaking self-represented litigants in guardianship, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, and family law cases. The program expected about half of its customers to need assistance with family law; the Office of the Family Law Facilitator and the Family Law Information Center were expected to continue handling the remaining family law issues, particularly for English-speaking litigants. Due to the unexpected closure of the Family Law Information Center (FLIC), however, services for non-Spanish-speaking family law litigants on issues other than child support were virtually eliminated. The FLIC had been serving more than 6,000 self-represented litigants per year, providing assistance in all areas of family law, domestic violence, and guardianship.¹⁶ Its closure left Centro de

¹⁶ Administrative Office of the Courts, "A Report to the California Legislature - Family Law Information Centers: An Evaluation of Three Pilot Programs (2002)".

Recursos Legales as the only court resource available for assistance with family law matters not involving child support. As a result, almost all of the center's customers turned to Centro de Recursos Legales for assistance with family law cases, including divorce, paternity, custody, and visitation, and there is substantial demand for services in English (about 20 percent of customers). In April 2004, the Family Law Information Center was reopened. This has helped to relieve Centro de Recursos Legales of much demand for English-speaking family law assistance.

Project Planning and Start-Up

Two key members of the court staff wrote the grant proposal for Centro de Recursos Legales: a grant writer and the outreach coordinator. The outreach coordinator also organized an advisory committee, which became a critical component during early implementation (see Appendix K for a list of advisory committee members). Involving community members, particularly those in or serving the Spanish-speaking community, was a successful mechanism for establishing trust within that community. It also ensured that the center was not duplicating services available through another community agency.

The advisory committee, formed in July 2002, is composed of nine members, including three court employees. During the planning and early implementation phases, it met monthly to discuss its vision, community needs, and resources available to meet these needs. As the center's operations became more institutionalized, the advisory committee began meeting quarterly.

Also in July 2002, start-up tasks were completed. These included locating space for the center, purchasing furniture and other equipment and supplies, and installing telephone lines. Other start-up tasks completed between July and October of 2002 include:

- A contract with Key Writing to simplify instructions: family law, guardianship, civil harassment, and unlawful detainer cases;
- A contract with Panagraph to develop a poster and brochure as promotional materials for the center;
- Arrangements for the dedication of the center on October 10, 2002; and
- Translation of the first set of simplified instructions (in family law) into Spanish by the Court Interpreter Division.

Centro de Recursos Legales is located in a one-story building about one mile from the Fresno County Superior Courthouse. The self-help center and the Office of the Family Law Facilitator are located across from each other (a small courtyard separates the two offices) in the same building. Litigants can use the clerk's office in the family law facilitator's office to file documents so they do not have to travel to the courthouse. Signage (in either English or Spanish) directing visitors to the center is limited, which may make locating the center more difficult. As the number of customers has increased, the space has become insufficient, particularly in the lobby/waiting area.

People interviewed by the evaluation team (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B) during the first site visit expressed concern about the center's location away from the main court, but during the second site visit, this concern had lessened somewhat. Respondents explained that the center's proximity to the Office of the Family Law Facilitator mitigates the negative aspects of the location for several reasons: (1) individuals can file paperwork with the clerk in the facilitator's office, making a trip to the court unnecessary for most customers; (2) the majority of customers receiving assistance at Centro de Recursos Legales are doing so for a family law case, and many are already familiar with the facilitator's office or may be referred there if the case involves only child support; and (3) the physical location is close to the highway, has ample street parking, and is on a bus route. There is a significant advantage in locating the center near the family law facilitator's office because the two programs can operate a seamless system of referrals. The attorney in the facilitator's office can provide valuable legal expertise to the center's director, and the center can assist monolingual Spanish-speaking customers who come into the facilitator's office. However, respondents continued to express the desire to see the center moved either to the court or to a building within walking distance of the court. A continuing concern expressed by interviewees is security, which is not provided by the court at the center or the Office of the Family Law Facilitator.

The advisory committee encouraged the director of the Fresno Health and Consumer Center, a project of Central California Legal Services, to apply for the position of community resource manager at the center. Hired in September 2002, this individual is bilingual and has strong ties to the Latino community. Although not a licensed attorney, he has a law degree and has gained substantial relevant experience while administering a service that provided legal assistance in matters of health care, information and education on legal issues, and representation at administrative hearings. In addition to his legal experience, he was well-respected and trusted within the Spanish-speaking community. His involvement during the planning and start-up phases was critical to gaining the trust of the community and other service providers. He laid the groundwork for the program by establishing linkages with sources for volunteers (see below for more information about volunteers), setting up the office, obtaining written materials for advertising, facilitating the process for translating forms and instructions, and developing volunteer training.

A series of budget cuts that gave priority to senior court staff caused this individual to leave the position at Centro de Recursos Legales early in 2003. In April 2003, a nonattorney and court employee who is also Spanish speaking replaced him. She had more than 15 years of experience within court operations and brought an important set of skills to the position. Also due to budget cuts, a non-Spanish-speaking document examiner with extensive family law experience was assigned to the center. In 2004, a Spanish-speaking document examiner replaced this person.

Centro de Recursos Legales officially opened its doors in October 2002. By the end of that year, three volunteers had completed legal training and were assisting litigants. Two volunteer clerical workers and four volunteer interpreters had been recruited. The recruiting and training of volunteers has remained a central strategy for this program.

Populations Served

Volume

As illustrated in figure 3.1, according to quarterly reports and service tracking forms, Fresno’s center serves roughly 150 customers per month, and this number appears to be increasing. Both the quarterly report and the service tracking forms report that more than 200 customers were served in the most recent month for which data are available, March 2004.¹⁷

Figure 3.1
Fresno Center Volume Data

Month	Quarterly Reports	Intake Forms	Service Tracking Forms
June 2003	170	13	64
July 2003	163	53	153
August 2003	157	65	156
September 2003	116	63	228
October 2003	156	60	161
November 2003	156	62	151
March 2004	204	64	223
Monthly average	160	54	162

Demographics

Gender. Most customers at Centro de Recursos Legales are female (59 percent), and most cases are in the area of family law. About 63 percent of the customers in cases involving dissolution are female; however, if the case involves paternity, 70 percent of customers are men. In domestic violence cases, 58 percent of customers are female.

Age. More than 60 percent of customers are age 39 or younger. The Fresno program has a larger percentage of customers in this age range than the programs in San Francisco and Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties. In the latter, about half the customers are between the ages of 40 and 60.

Children. Most of the Fresno center’s customers have at least one child (83 percent), and many (38 percent) have three or more children. By comparison, 9 percent of

¹⁷ Data from intake forms suggest much lower customer rates because not every customer may have been willing to fill out an intake form.

customers in San Francisco county and 18 percent in Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties report three or more children.

Race/ethnicity. About 94 percent of the Fresno center’s customers are Latino.

Language. Most of the customers (87 percent) speak a language other than English at home, usually Spanish (99 percent). About one-third of those customers prefer to receive services in English. Overall, almost half (42 percent) of customers reported they prefer to receive services in English.¹⁸

Education. About 44 percent of customers have an 8th-grade education or less, a proportion approximately eight times as high as the similar group in either the San Francisco or Butte/Glenn/Tehama County programs. Another 23 percent of Fresno’s customers have educational levels between 9th and 11th grade; one-third have graduated from high school, but less than 1 percent earned a bachelor’s degree or more. Although the size of this last group is similar in the Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties program, almost one-third of San Francisco’s customers, by contrast, have a bachelor’s degree or more.

Employment. Half of the Fresno center’s customers are employed (13 percent part-time and 36 percent full-time). These percentages are similar to those reported by the other direct services programs. However, among those who are not working, the Fresno center’s customers are about twice as likely attribute their unemployment to reasons other than disability or retirement. (See figure 3.2 for a summary of demographic information.)

Figure 3.2
Population Served by Fresno Center: Summary Statistics
Customer Intake Forms

	%	N
Gender		
Female	59%	279
Male	41%	195
(missing)		5
Total		479
Age		
10-19 years	1%	4
20-29 years	28%	127
30-39 years	36%	162
40-49 years	25%	112
50 or older	11%	51
(missing)		23
Total		479
Race/Ethnicity ¹		
African American	2%	10
Hispanic	94%	439
White/non-Hispanic	3%	16
Other (including Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander)	0%	2

¹⁸ A total of 214 customers completed this question, less than half of those completing intake forms overall. It is not clear why so many customers did not answer this question, but it might have affected the results.

Figure 3.2 (continued)

	%	N
Speak a language other than English at home		
Yes	87%	406
No	13%	61
(missing)		12
Total		479
If yes, which language?		
Spanish	99%	394
Other	1%	3
(missing)		9
Total		406
Preference of Service Provision Language (for only those who speak a foreign language at home)		
English	33%	57
Spanish	67%	116
Other	1%	1
(missing)		82
Total		406
Monthly household income		
\$500 or less	25%	99
\$501-\$1000	40%	157
\$1001-\$1500	23%	91
\$1501-\$2000	8%	31
\$2001 or more	5%	19
(missing)		82
Total		479
Education		
8th grade or less	44%	188
9th to 11th grade	23%	96
High school graduate or GED	22%	94
Some college	7%	28
Associates Degree, Bachelors Degree, Graduate Degree	4%	18
(missing)		55
Total		479
Number of children		
None	17%	71
One	21%	86
Two	25%	102
Three	22%	90
Four or more	16%	67
(missing)		63
Total		479

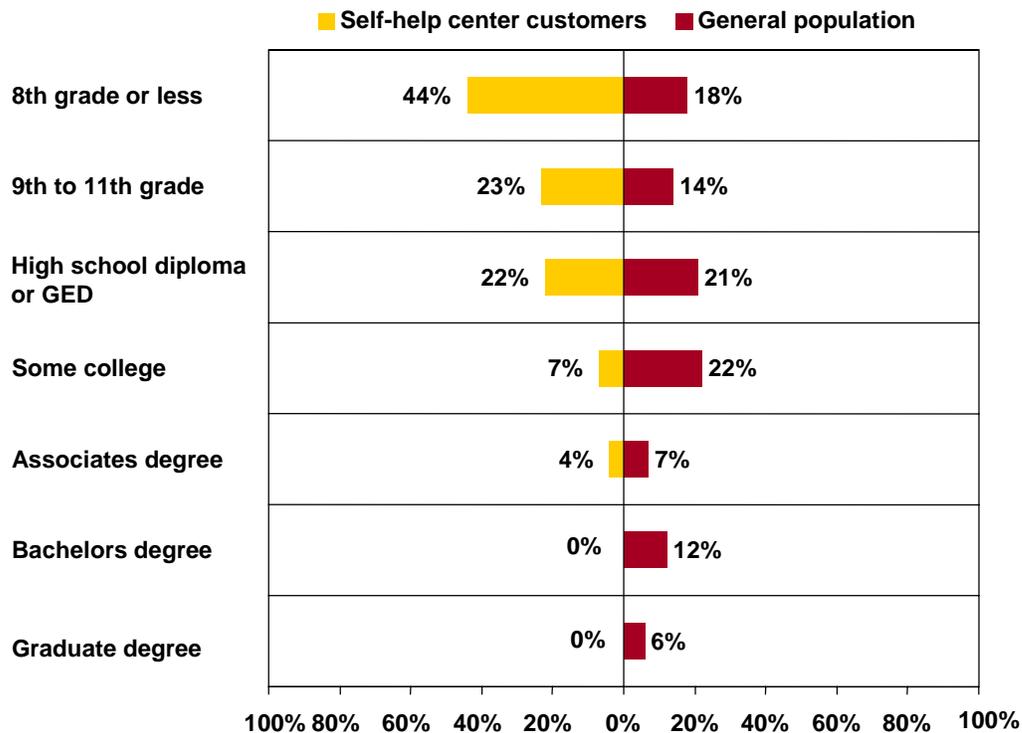
¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity.

Household income. Although the employment rates of customers in the Fresno center are comparable to those at the centers in Butte/Glenn/Tehama and San Francisco counties, the incomes reported are lower. About 64 percent of the Fresno center's customers report a monthly household income of under \$1,000. This group is more than 20 percentage points larger than the same category in either of the other two direct services programs. In the Fresno center, only 13 percent of customers report incomes exceeding \$1,500 per month. In Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties, about one-third of customers report incomes exceeding \$1,500 per month, as do almost half of the San Francisco center's customers. At the Fresno center, most customers (78 percent) say they cannot afford to hire an attorney.

Other demographic comparisons. Aside from the ethnicity and language characteristics that are expected in a Spanish-speaking self-help center model, the customers of Centro de Recursos Legales are differentiated from customers at the two other direct service programs in Butte/Glenn/Tehama and San Francisco counties in several ways. Centro de Recursos Legales customers tend to be younger and have larger families. There is a higher rate of unemployment. As previously discussed, educational and monthly income levels are also lower.

The Fresno center's customers are also different than the general Fresno County population. Although customers have a high school completion rate similar to the county population, the percentage of customers with less than high school completion is greater, and the percentage with some college is lower. (See figure 3.3). The center was designed to serve the Hispanic population in Fresno county, and when center demographics are compared to the census data for the county's Hispanic population, the distribution of education levels is fairly comparable. Centro de Recursos customers reflect higher rates below the high school graduate level lower rates above high school.

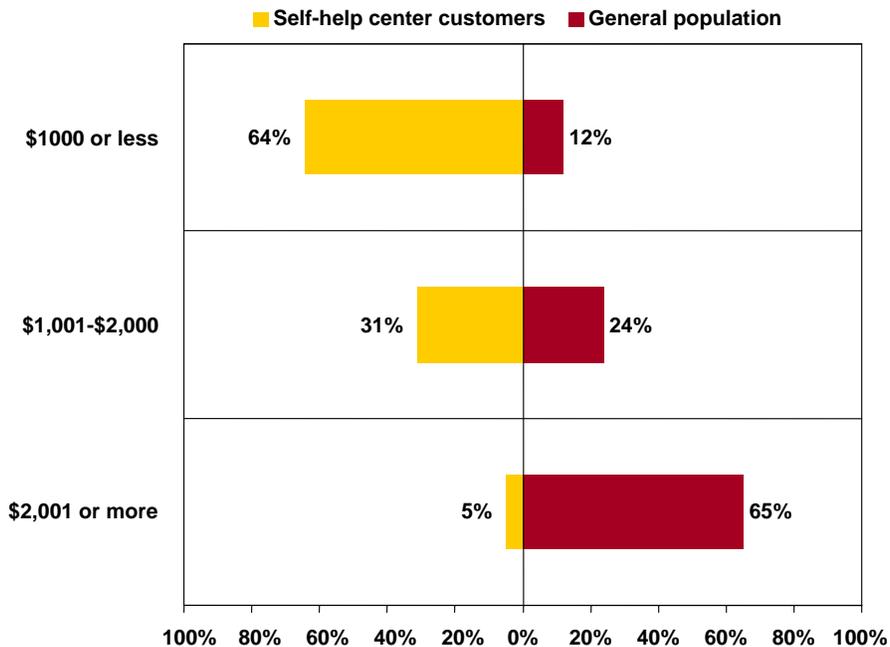
Figure 3.3
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population in
Fresno County: Education



U.S. Census Bureau; Fresno County, CA, DP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060191k.html>
 Note: Numbers have been rounded and may not sum to exactly 100 percent.

With respect to income, Centro de Recursos Legales customers are similar to the county population in the middle income range (\$1,000-\$2,000 per month), a greater percentage make under \$1,000 per month and a lower percentage make more than \$2,000 per month (see figure 3.4). These differences are also found when comparing the Centro de Recursos Legales customers to census data for the Hispanic population of Fresno County.

Figure 3.4
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population in
Fresno County: Household Monthly Income in Dollars

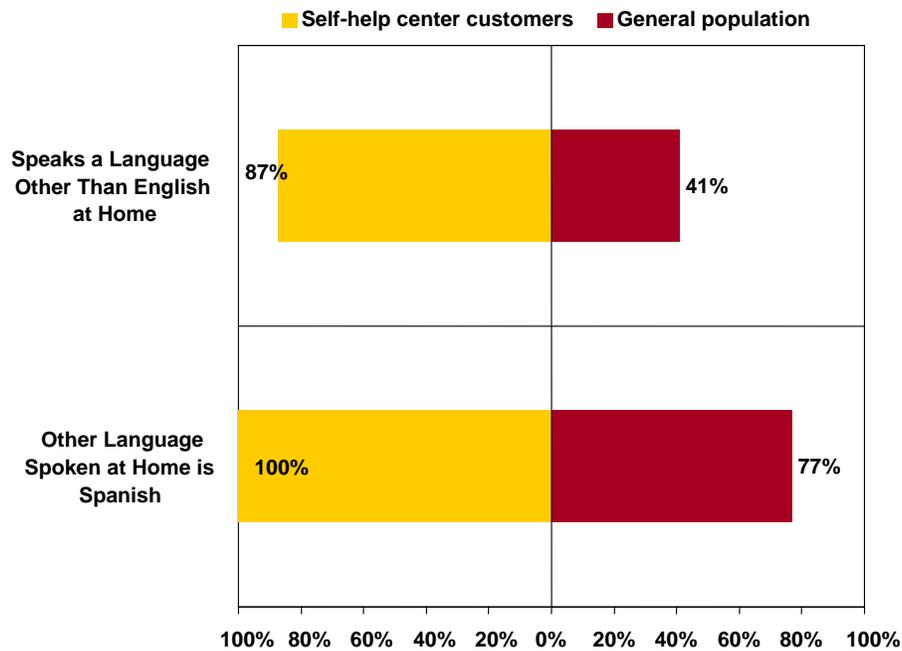


U.S. Census Bureau; Fresno County, CA, DP-3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06019lk.html>

Note: The Self-Help pilot project data and the census data do not perfectly match. The census data categories are as follows: \$833 or less; \$834 to \$2084 and over. Numbers have been rounded and may not sum to exactly 100 percent.

As shown in figure 3.5, the percentage of Centro de Recursos Legales customers who speak a language other than English at home is more than double that of the general Fresno County population. Census data for the Hispanic population of Fresno County indicate that 29 percent speak English at home. Only 13 percent of customers speak English at home.

Figure 3.5
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population in
Fresno County: Speaks a Language Other Than English at Home



U.S. Census Bureau; Fresno County, CA, DP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site:
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060191k.html>

Service Staffing

Paid Personnel

Centro de Recursos Legales employs two full-time staff members. In interviews conducted during site visits, respondents spoke very highly of the two full-time staff members. Specifically, respondents said both are highly skilled in their respective positions, committed to the center’s success, and respectful of the customers being served.

Community resource manager. This individual is responsible for daily operations. Respondents described the contributions of the first community resource manager, focusing on his ability to engage other community service providers and the Spanish-speaking community. Several people interviewed said his contributions were vital during the planning and early implementation of the program, and many individuals were concerned about the center’s viability after he left. However, those interviewed during the second site visit reported that his successor, the current community resource manager, has also made crucial contributions to the project, primarily through her operational and administrative skills as well as her close relationship with other court employees. She has worked for the court in Fresno County for 15 years, has been assigned to almost every task in court operations, and is experienced in all court procedures. Furthermore, she has

a high level of credibility with other court employees and can communicate well with them.

Court examiner. This individual works directly to provide assistance to customers. During the first evaluation site visit, several respondents expressed concern about the court examiner's inability to speak Spanish. However, during the second site visit, most respondents reported that this had proven not to be as large an obstacle as they had thought. This was primarily due to the consistent availability of volunteers to assist the staff person in communicating with customers, as well as the staff person's excellent skills in performing her job duties (especially document review and procedural knowledge). The court examiner worked previously at the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, and respondents said she has a strong understanding of family law issues. However, interviewees reported that this is not the ideal staffing situation for two reasons: (1) her presence does not contribute to building trust between the court and the Spanish-speaking community and (2) using a volunteer's time to interpret for a staff member is inefficient. In April 2004, a bilingual court examiner who previously worked as a clerk in the family law department replaced the previous court examiner.

Volunteers

Fresno County's self-help center relies heavily on volunteers, all of them bilingual, to help customers at the center and to provide courtroom interpreting services.

Direct self-help center service. Since it opened, the Centro de Recursos Legales has recruited 44 volunteers to work in the center itself. Volunteers provide services directly to the public by answering phones, assisting customers at the front desk, completing and entering evaluation forms, interpreting for the staff, and providing one-on-one assistance.

Volunteers who assist at the center are recruited from a variety of sources. Two local senior citizen organizations have placed four volunteers at the center since its inception. All of these have been full-time and, according to respondents, have been important contributors to the success of the program. The partnership is mutually beneficial to both organizations; the self-help center benefits from having no- or low-cost help, and the senior citizen center benefits from having stable and professional placements for its customers.

There have also been five volunteers from the general public, several who have been with the center since before it opened. Individuals interviewed explained that these are very dedicated individuals who care deeply for the population served by the center and want to ensure greater access to the courts.

Interpretation services. Since it opened, the Centro de Recursos Legales has recruited 31 volunteer interpreters. Having interpreters available has cut down substantially on the number of continuances due to language barriers, which allows the court to function more efficiently. The volunteers themselves are gaining valuable real-world experience in court interpretation and, as a result, are passing the written state interpreter test at a much

higher rate than the state average. Litigants are also benefiting by being able to understand court proceedings and communicate with the court, resulting in greater access to justice.

Volunteers are recruited primarily from the Southern California School of Interpreting, which has a branch in Fresno. Interpreters are asked to commit to a minimum of four hours per week of volunteering. The center's community resource manager goes to the school each semester and describes the volunteer opportunity. Some volunteers are recruited through that mechanism, and others hear about the opportunity through classmates. In addition, the center developed a small brochure that advertises the volunteer interpreters' bureau. When a potential volunteer calls the center, he or she speaks with the community resource manager, who describes the self-help center, the interpreter program, the application process and background check, and the standards of the court. The individual then comes into the center and completes a basic application and consents to a background check, which is the standard check used for court employees. The community resource manager converses with the individual in Spanish to ensure fluency. She then sends the person to the court for the background check.

Clerical support. A consistent challenge from the center's beginning had been the lack of paid clerical staff. Volunteers or the two professional paid staff must operate the front desk, answer phones, and perform other clerical duties. Since the second site visit, however, the court has hired two of the clerical volunteers. The center is still only allocated part of their time. Training that these individuals have received from the center has been of significant benefit to their work in other parts of the court. The rotation of staff that has been trained by the center out to work in other parts of the court has not been optimal for the program's operations.

Supervision and Training

Attorney supervision. Attorney supervision is available on call at the Office of the Family Law Facilitator (in the same office complex as the center). Also, a managing attorney is located at the court. Initially, there was no on-site attorney supervision. Due to concerns about the off-site location of the original managing attorney, the family law facilitator was asked to play a supervisory role and make herself available to Centro de Recursos Legales staff when necessary. Neither of these attorneys spends time at the center on a daily basis.

In April 2004, the Family Law Information Center (FLIC) was reopened. There is a good working relationship between the attorney from FLIC and the director of the Centro de Recursos Legales. Beginning in January 2005, staff from the center will be going with the attorney from FLIC to outlying areas of the county in an effort to bring services to a greater portion of the community.

Training of service volunteers. The volunteer training program for individuals who provide direct assistance to customers at the self-help center includes six modules:

- Customer service training (providing quality service for the public);
- Code of ethics for court employees;
- Training on what constitutes legal advice;
- Information about sexual harassment;
- Diversity training; and
- Disability awareness.

The center has prepared training manuals and information packets for all volunteers. In addition, new volunteers observe the triage process, and they are asked to complete packets of forms and instructions for review by staff. The process of filling out the forms not only provides education to new recruits, it also gives them a taste of the experience of self-represented litigants in the court. Training also includes watching a video on family law mediation and observing subject-matter workshops.

In addition, learning occurs on the job as volunteers begin to work with customers. Volunteers are carefully supervised by experienced staff, who are always available for questions. Volunteers learn by repeated use of the forms and instructions. They are not, however, permitted to conduct the document review for customers. The staff document examiner performs this task. The volunteers, however, are located near this person and benefit from her expertise throughout the day.

Training of interpreters. Training for the volunteer interpreters has several phases and is extensive. A 90-minute orientation conducted by the center's community resource manager covers ethics (confidentiality, sexual harassment, improprieties, etc.), security, terminology, logistics, and the activity sheets volunteers must complete to track their activities. The volunteer is given a packet of information that includes center brochures, a glossary of legal terms (in English), a list of commonly used abbreviations and acronyms, and two documents translating common legal terms from English into Spanish. After the orientation is complete, an appointment is scheduled with the coordinator of the court interpreter program¹⁹. She then conducts an additional four-hour orientation for volunteers. The orientation explains the volunteer program, discusses the ethics of court interpreting, and provides a court tour (where volunteers are introduced to several bench officers and other court personnel); then an ID badge is issued. During the orientation, the individual's Spanish-language skills are assessed. After this orientation, the individual (or group) meets with one of the paid court interpreters for an additional four hours of training. This includes observing in court and observing a family court orientation session as well as a mediation session. Volunteers start by using a listening device so they can hear the proceedings being interpreted.

¹⁹ The interpreter coordinator's primary responsibility is to work with paid court-certified interpreters (those appointed in cases in which interpreters are mandated); however, she also works closely with the center's volunteer interpreters.

During site visits, respondents explained that individualized mentoring of volunteers is an important aspect of the volunteer interpreters' bureau. Paid court interpreters, if they express an interest, are paired with a volunteer to "show them the ropes." One staff member has been instrumental in developing the mentor aspect of the program, and respondents said that her contributions have been invaluable. Volunteers are continually assessed to see where they have developed and what areas need further work.

Analysis of Customers Served

Language of Service Provision

According to service tracking data, almost 80 percent of services at the Fresno center are provided in Spanish and the other 20 percent in English. This is interesting, given that only 55 percent of customers completing intake forms say they prefer to receive services in Spanish. An underreporting by Spanish-language customers on the intake forms may cause this. Regardless, the service tracking and intake form data support the feedback given by respondents: Having one of the two primary staff members speak only English did not substantially reduce the center's ability to serve Spanish-speaking customers.

On the intake forms, only a handful of individuals report speaking a language other than English or Spanish at home. However, according to a few respondents, Fresno County has an increasing number of individuals who speak other languages, including Hmong and Laotian. These respondents expressed the hope that the court eventually would assist individuals in these languages as well, in part because so few community resources are available for those populations.

Case Types and Issues

About 90 percent of Centro de Recursos Legales customers seek help with family law matters (see figure 3.6 for an overview). This figure is far higher than the comparable percentage in Butte/Glenn/Tehama or San Francisco counties. The closure of the Fresno Family Law Information Center and the restriction of the Fresno family law facilitator to provide assistance only in child support matters may well have contributed to this high percentage of family law customers. For example, in San Francisco County, the family law facilitator has funding to handle a wide array of family law matters in addition to child support, thereby allowing the model self-help project to focus on other areas of civil litigation. The remaining 10 percent of Centro de Recursos Legales customers bring a mixture of civil/small claims and unlawful detainer cases to the center.

**Figure 3.6
Fresno Center: Case Types Served¹
Service Tracking Forms**

Case Type	%	N
Family*	89%	1,266
Dissolution	74%	729
Adoption	0%	2
DVPA	10%	96
Paternity	12%	115
Other	4%	42
Civil	3%	55
Unlawful detainer	3%	54
Probate	1%	26
Other	1%	14
(missing)		67
Total		1,482

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one case type.

* Many tracking forms indicated a family law case but did not provide further details on type of issue being addressed.

Within the family law area, 74 percent of customers are working with dissolution, 12 percent with paternity, and 10 percent with domestic violence prevention matters. The most frequently raised issue across all family law case types is child visitation (80 percent), followed by child support (12 percent) and custody (8 percent).

Almost all divorce cases (92 percent) involve visitation issues. Domestic violence cases most often involve visitation (44 percent) and child support (38 percent) issues. The vast majority (86 percent) of paternity cases involve visitation issues. Custody is most often an issue in divorce (46 percent) and paternity (30 percent) cases. Visitation is most often an issue in divorce (70 percent) and paternity (24 percent) cases.

Overall, the Fresno program assists moving parties 79 percent of the time. Whether customers are seeking help with family law, civil/small claims, or unlawful detainer, most need assistance to start a case or to make a motion within an existing case.

It is noteworthy that this holds true for unlawful detainer cases in which the moving party is the landlord. About 72 percent of the customers seeking help with unlawful detainer cases were landlords. The Butte/Glenn/Tehama project also assisted landlords more frequently (67 percent of unlawful detainer cases). In both locations, local legal services agencies provide community-based assistance to defendants in public eviction defense matters. In San Francisco County, however, the model self-help program collaborated with a legal services agency to conduct eviction defense clinics at the court as part of its program, and the resulting proportion of landlords to tenants was predictably reversed.

Types of Services

Most of the customers at Centro de Recursos Legales receive either legal procedural information (54 percent) or other general information about the court (37 percent).

Assistance with forms is provided primarily through the use of written instructional materials or through workshops. Forms with instructions are provided to customers 37 percent of the time. Once forms are completed, the court examiner reviews them for accuracy and completeness. Document review is provided to 34 percent of the customers.

The center also provides help to litigants by explaining court orders. Interestingly, 67 percent of customers requesting this service are male.

Interpreter services are provided to 23 percent of Centro de Recursos Legales customers. In addition, in January through August 2004, these interpreter volunteers assisted 194 self-represented litigants in court and 78 in mediation sessions.

Description of Service Delivery

Virtually all services provided by the Fresno self-help center are provided in a one-on-one manner.²⁰ Individual assistance is provided to help customers complete court forms correctly and to understand the court process better. In addition, the Fresno center assists customers individually with court interpretation.

One-on-One Assistance

According to service tracking data, almost all of the Fresno center's services are provided on an individual basis. Intake and service tracking data do not include interpreter services, but those services are provided individually as well.

According to respondents, one-on-one assistance is crucial for most of the Fresno center's customers due to several possible factors. Family law cases, for example, tend to be legally complex. A diagnostic assessment of their case status (triage) is required to identify what options may be available to customers. They may be required to prepare various combinations of forms. Once a customer has completed a set of forms, center staff reviews the documents to make sure they are complete and ready to file and serve. Furthermore, many customers must face the language barrier with very little formal education.

Respondents believe that the need for in-depth assistance may contribute to the lower overall volume of Centro de Recursos Legales when compared to the other direct service programs.

²⁰ The center did not complete service tracking forms on all individuals who came to the center only to buy forms/instruction packets, so those individuals are not accurately represented in administrative data.

Workshops

Centro de Recursos Legales offers dissolution workshops every other Friday at 8:30 a.m. No respondents to petitions for dissolution were scheduled to attend workshops. Presumably, this is because of the time-sensitive nature of the need to prepare and file responsive papers.

The workshops are held at the self-help center, which is closed to the public when the workshops take place. The court examiner and a volunteer who interprets into Spanish facilitate the workshop. Workshops typically last three to four hours and average five attendees. According to administrative data, the workshops help individuals with preparing forms, referrals, and legal/procedural information. Each week, the workshop covers a specific topic. Topics include:

- Starting a divorce/legal separation;
- Notice of motion/order to show cause; or
- Petition to establish parental relationship.

The workshops are conducted in a “small group” style. Respondents explained that this format has been very successful in addressing English language and general literacy barriers. For example, if an attendee is not comfortable writing in English, another attendee might complete the answer to a particular question on the form for herself first and then help the other person fill in the answer on the form (based on what that person asked her to write). Self-help center staff pretype as much personal information as possible on the forms prior to the workshop and give attendees copies of those forms so that they do not have to rewrite the same information on every form.

Through the assistance of an advisory board member, the self-help center was able to obtain space at the adult school to offer a divorce workshop in the evening. However, the first time it was offered, only one person came, and the second time, no one attended. As a result, evening workshops are no longer being offered, at least until there is greater demand.

Beginning in January 2005, the attorney from the Family Law Information Center and staff from Centro de Recursos Legales are traveling to outlying locations in Fresno County to deliver self-help services. The attorney from FLIC does not speak Spanish; therefore, the volunteer interpreters’ bureau is working to recruit interpreters from community centers in the locations where services will be offered. The Centro de Recursos Legales director expects that more workshops will be developed to serve these outlying areas.

Interpreter Services: In-Court and Mediation

Interpretation services are provided at the court during hearings, for child custody mediations at family court, and during orientation to family court services. Those interviewed during site visits report that the volunteer interpreters’ bureau has been an

extremely successful aspect of the self-help center, providing all participants with substantial benefits.

Phone Assistance

Centro de Recursos Legales staff and volunteers answer telephone calls from self-represented litigants. Various kinds of tasks can be accomplished over the telephone. For example, brief case assessment can take place. Identification of issues, determination of whether or not the center can provide the help needed, case status information from the court's registry of actions, and substantial procedural information and education can be provided on a variety of legal topics. In some cases, an unnecessary trip to the center or to the court might be avoided. Access to the Centro de Recursos Legales by telephone facilitates assistance to individuals who cannot get to the center during business hours due to work, lack of child care, or disability. The center receives an average of 25 calls per day.

Written Materials

Centro de Recursos Legales offers many written resources to the public. It has English and Spanish instructions on how to fill out the eight most commonly filed forms in family law, guardianship, civil harassment, and unlawful detainer.

The center was fortunate to have numerous volunteers from the community and the court assist with the process of translating the materials into Spanish. The center hired a consultant to translate the materials into plain English or accessible text.²¹ Once the consultant translates the materials into plain English, they are reviewed and edited by various court divisions and then translated into Spanish with the assistance of center volunteers. A review of the Spanish-language translation revealed that as a result, the instructions were no longer in plain or accessible text. Therefore, the Spanish-language instructions were re-translated into plain or accessible Spanish text. Fortunately, these services were provided on a voluntary basis; otherwise, the costs of re-translating the instructions could have become prohibitive.

Respondents explained that these instructions have been very useful to customers. Although many still need assistance completing the forms correctly, having understandable instructions in Spanish accomplishes two purposes: (1) it gives individuals a place to start in completing forms and (2) it makes the court seem more accessible to the general public (i.e., nonattorneys). Some individuals expressed a hope that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) would take the lead in translating instructions into accessible text in English and other languages, particularly Spanish, so that counties would not have to duplicate efforts but could instead concentrate on creating supplemental county-specific instructions.

²¹ Accessible or plain English text refers to text that is easy to understand and read for individuals with average levels of literacy. For more information, please refer to the Transcend Web site: <http://www.transcend.net/at/index.html>

Internet/E-mail Services

Fresno County's court Web site has a link to the center and includes a description of the center's services and hours of operation. The Web site also includes links to all the instructions and forms packets in both Spanish and English. The court's information technology department maintains the Web site.

The center also has the I-CAN! domestic violence module installed on its computers. I-CAN! is an interactive program designed to help self-represented litigants complete their own pleadings by answering questions in plain English or Spanish. It was purchased by Central California Legal Services (CCLS), the legal aid provider in Fresno County, and was shared with the self-help center. Initially, it was not available in Spanish, but the translated version has subsequently become available. At first, the center staff had to resolve technical problems. Once that had been accomplished and the staff trained, the I-CAN! program was made available to the public. Use of the program, however, has not proven practical for the center. Centro de Recursos Legales customers are not experienced with the use of computers, and the amount of staff time required to help customers use the program has turned out to be prohibitive. As a result, the program is almost never used.

Chronological Description of Service Flow

Referrals to the Center

According to respondents, most customers hear about the self-help center through word of mouth in the community. However, administrative data show a more diverse referral base, as seen in Figure 3.7. About 31 percent of customers hear about the center from friends or family. The court clerks refer customers to the center in 20 percent of the cases. Centro de Recursos Legales has the lowest rate of referrals from the court clerks of all three direct service programs. Family Court Services refers 17 percent of the customers. Customers also heard about the center from a variety of sources, including legal aid, the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, the child support agency, and community organizations.

Figure 3.7
How Customers Heard About the Fresno Center¹
Customer Intake Forms

Source	%	N
Friend or family	31%	120
Clerk's office	20%	76
Family court services	17%	66
Legal aid, legal services	10%	38
Family law facilitator	7%	28
DA, local child support agency	6%	25
Community service agency	6%	25
Pamphlets, written materials, posters	2%	9
Attorney	1%	5
Judge, commissioner	1%	5
Other court personnel	1%	2
Other	2%	6
Total		405

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one source.

Men are somewhat more likely than women to hear about the center through the district attorney or local child support agency (5 percent difference) or family court services (8 percent difference). Women are more likely than men (9% difference) to hear about the center through friends or family.

Only 2 percent of individuals reported learning about the center from written materials/pamphlets, even though the center prioritized print-advertising materials for the public. Most of the posters/brochures are distributed within the court, which might explain this finding. The center distributes its brochures within the Spanish-speaking community via a community newspaper, which may increase the success of print-advertising materials. In addition, a foto-novella has been created and distributed to various locations in the community. The foto-novella, a common medium in the Hispanic community, is a short, eight-page magazine that tells a story with pictures. The foto-novella from Centro de Recursos Legales tells a story about a customer getting help from the center.

Previous Attempts to Get Help

Most of the center's customers (77 percent) had not sought help with their legal problem from any other source prior to coming to Centro de Recursos Legales. Of those that had

sought help, 45 percent went to legal aid. Other common sources of help included family and friends (21 percent), paralegals (12 percent), and private attorneys (8 percent).

Intake Procedure

The Centro de Recursos Legales director reports that initial case assessment (triage) is critical to the program's ability to provide services. When customers first arrive at the center, they sign in at the front desk. They are provided with an intake sheet containing questions designed to guide staff in identifying their particular legal need. Triage is necessary to determine what cases are appropriate for the center to address.

Customers who have already completed forms and simply require a document check are assisted in an expedited manner. Other customers require more in-depth interviews to determine what it is they are trying to accomplish. These customers are taken on a first-come-first-served basis.

The court's computer system must be checked to see if the customer has a case pending and, if so, the status of that case. Other related cases must be identified and the relationship among the cases clarified.

Emergency matters must be identified. Examples are requests for restraining orders, time-sensitive matters such as deadlines for responses in family law or answers in unlawful detainer or other civil litigations.

Possible options must be identified for customers with respect to the problem they brought to the center. Procedural information is provided based on the status of the case. Once customers decide what procedure they want to pursue, forms and instructions packets are provided. If customers are successful in completing the forms, staff check the documents to make sure they have been completed correctly, and procedural information is given about the next steps in the process. If customers are having trouble completing the forms, they are scheduled into a workshop or receive individual assistance.

The process for scheduling an interpreter can happen in two ways. The individual needing assistance can call the self-help center and provide the dates an interpreter is needed, and the community resource manager will then e-mail the request to the coordinator who manages the volunteer interpreters' schedules. Requests can also come directly from the bench. These go straight to the volunteer interpreters' bureau for scheduling.

Referrals From the Center

As seen in figure 3.8, service tracking data show that 11 percent of customers assisted by the center are referred to another provider. The two most frequent referrals are to a lawyer referral service (35 percent) and the Office of the Family Law Facilitator (34 percent). Legal aid is another common referral (18 percent). The Fresno center does not make many referrals to nonlegal community resources (less than 10 during the period under review).

**Figure 3.8
Fresno Center Referrals Made to Legal Service Providers¹
Service Tracking Forms**

Referral	%	N
Lawyer referral service	34%	51
Family law facilitator	34%	50
Legal services	17%	26
Other legal service	9%	14
Local child support agency	4%	6
Small claims advisor	2%	4
Public defender	1%	2
Total		153

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one provider.

Returning for Service

Overall, Centro de Recursos Legales has a high rate of customers returning to the center for additional help (51 percent), compared with the Butte/Glen/Tehama regional project (27 percent) and the San Francisco project (22 percent). Most customers come in initially for assistance with procedural information and the process of filing a case. Both administrative data and reports from respondents indicate that customers take the forms and instructions home to complete, then return to the center for a review of their paperwork (45 percent). They also return for help with the next step in their court procedure (51 percent) or with additional questions (36 percent). (See figure 3.9 for more detail.)

**Figure 3.9
Fresno Center: Reason for Customers' Return Visits¹
Service Tracking Forms**

Reason	%	N
Next step in the process	51%	439
Document review	44%	385
Has additional questions	36%	310
Needs help with forms	10%	86
Filing	5%	51
Needs access to an interpreter to help translate in court	2%	22
Needs help understanding a court order	1%	16
Court appearance preparation workshop	1%	15
Responding to new papers	1%	13
Other	5%	49
Total		1,386

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one reason. About 51 percent of visits were from customers who returned for assistance.

Budget and Expenditures

During the first year of operation, the majority of program expenses were for operations (63 percent). The remaining 37 percent was spent on personnel. That is due in part to staff savings accruing during the period of recruitment. Half of the operational expenditures went for the design of publicity materials and development and translation into Spanish of forms and instructions. An additional 25 percent went to purchase office equipment. The remaining 25 percent was for office supplies, postage, photocopying, rent, and travel for training.

During the second year of operations, as staffing was in place, the distribution between the cost of personnel (67 percent) and operations (33 percent) was reversed. In this year, the bulk of operational costs was for equipment (39 percent). Advertising and development of materials accounted for 28 percent of operating expenses. Photocopying (13 percent), rent (12 percent), and other miscellaneous charges accounted for the rest of operating expenses.

In the third grant year, an even higher percentage (76 percent) of program expenditures were devoted to personnel, with the remaining 24 percent covering operating expenses. The largest proportions of operating expenses were for printing and photocopying (23 percent), including usage of the photocopier at the center and reproduction of publicity materials such as foto-novelas, and office equipment (23 percent). Significant operating expenses also involved professional and specialized services (19 percent), including Web site development and development of forms instructions, and rent (18 percent).

Collaboration and Outreach

The Fresno center has made strides in communicating information about its services within the court and in the community. Court leadership and court resources have been particularly helpful in the outreach efforts of the self-help center.

Collaboration Within the Court

Because of the center's location next to the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, the two offices work together often. The facilitator's staff often send Spanish-speaking people to receive assistance from the center's staff and volunteers. Likewise, the self-help center sends people to the facilitator's office when (1) they have a child support-only case and (2) they are either bilingual or there is a center volunteer available to interpret. In addition, individuals receiving assistance at the center can file papers at the facilitator's office, which eliminates the need to go to the court to file.

At an administrative level, Centro de Recursos Legales works closely with the other divisions of court operations. Relationships between the program and other parts of the court are facilitated by the fact that two primary staff members currently with the center were court employees for several years and are respected by the court leadership. In addition, the proposal for the creation of the center was originally drafted by two court administrative staff members, the grant writer and outreach coordinator. These two individuals were the driving force behind the center's vision and proposal, and they were very involved during the planning phase.

Individuals interviewed during site visits explained that the support and involvement of the court leadership (executive officers, judges) is very important when starting a new center or expanding existing services. For example, the close working relationship between the center and other areas of court operations allowed for a working partnership with court interpreters to jointly refine the volunteer interpreters' bureau process.

Although the court leadership is very supportive of the program, court employees in general do not appear to have a clear understanding of the actual services the center provides. This observation is supported by the low levels of referrals from court clerks reflected in the intake data. Many respondents were not able to accurately describe the assistance that self-represented litigants can receive from the center. However, even without an accurate understanding of services, court staff are able to refer Spanish-speaking customers to the center for assistance or, if necessary, for a referral to another service provider. Before the center opened, clerks were largely unable to refer Spanish-speaking customers to community resources because few were available for individuals who lacked an interpreter. Respondents said that few court clerks are able or willing to assist customers in Spanish, and to address this, the center created written materials that can be handed out to the public explaining in Spanish how the self-help center can help. However, according to individuals interviewed, except for the "post-it" note with the center's address and a map on it, these materials are not routinely distributed.

Collaboration and Public Relations Outside the Courts

Fresno County's self-help center works closely with local community-based legal and social service providers and local colleges and vocational schools to recruit volunteers and assist with outreach. During the early planning and implementation phase, the community resource manager was actively involved in reaching out to these organizations and made presentations to a number of community-based social and legal service providers. Respondents stressed that building relationships was crucial to the success of the program, especially in terms of volunteers, outreach, and the center's development. During the early development stages of the project, legal providers and organizations in the community, along with court personnel, were asked to participate on an advisory committee. This established an early and meaningful collaborative relationship between the center and other organizations. Agencies represented on the advisory committee include Central California Legal Services, Fresno County Bar Association-Pro Bono Section, Fresno-Madera Area Agency on Aging (FMAAA), United Health Center, Centro La Familia, Economic Opportunities Commission, and Cesar Chavez Adult School. Respondents said the advisory board has been a successful vehicle for collaborating with the community to refine the center's strategies and improve awareness of the center.

The first formal advertising of the Fresno County program took place in fall 2002, when the California chief justice dedicated the center. The dedication generated strong publicity, although the timing was not optimal because the center was not yet ready to serve the public (the center was still creating instructions, recruiting volunteers, and hiring staff).

The center developed colorful posters and brochures, which include a map to the center, to be distributed to court and outside community agencies. The Spanish-language newspaper, which reaches about 20,000 readers each month, recently began running advertisements about the center. A foto-novella that explains center services through a story told using words and pictures has recently been distributed at various locations in the community. Respondents expressed the fear that if the center becomes better known, the demand for services will be too high to accommodate.

Impact on Litigants

Views of Court Personnel and Other Stakeholders

People interviewed during site visits reported that the impact of the self-help center on self-represented litigants has been large, primarily due to three basic factors:

- Volunteer interpreters' bureau;
- Assistance with completing forms; and
- Information provided about the court process (steps that must be taken in a case).

Litigants have a more accurate understanding of the steps that must be taken to move a case forward, which has reduced frustration and mistrust of the judicial system. As a result, litigants are more patient and less hostile with court employees, particularly clerks, when submitting paperwork or doing other court business.

According to respondents, self-represented litigants also are experiencing fewer continuances of hearings due to the unavailability of interpreters, which reduces their sense of being kept outside the judicial process.

Last, respondents reported that Spanish-speaking self-represented litigants feel more positive about their access to court, primarily because they can better understand what is happening and can better communicate about their cases.

However, according to respondents, there is still a great level of unmet need. Spanish-speaking individuals still need more help, primarily with name changes, domestic violence restraining orders (other resources often have a long waiting list), unlawful detainer cases, and guardianship. Some respondents noted a growing conflict because of the availability of services for Spanish-speaking litigants but not for English-speaking individuals, primarily as a result of the closure of the Family Law Information Center and cutbacks at the Office of the Family Law Facilitator. Respondents expressed anxiety that this conflict may grow, and they felt that the court should address this issue strategically. With the reopening of the Family Law Information Center in April 2004, however, the problem may recede naturally.

Views of Customers

Customer satisfaction surveys and reports from self-help center staff indicate that Centro de Recursos Legales is meeting an important need in the community and that customers provide extremely positive feedback on their experiences at the center.

Vignette: Forms Assistance, Mediation Assistance, and In-Court Interpreting in a Child Custody Case

Isabel's husband had recently filed for divorce and was seeking custody of their three children. Isabel spoke only Spanish. She had received a letter in English from Family Court Services that included a four-page questionnaire she was required to complete. When she first came to the center, Isabel was visibly upset because she felt she would lose her children due to her lack of understanding of the English language and inability to understand the forms. A bilingual staff member was able to explain the mediation process to her. The court examiner then assisted Isabel by translating the letter and the questionnaire. Together, they were able to complete Isabel's forms. The court examiner further informed Isabel that the center would assign a volunteer interpreter to assist her at the mediation, as well as any court hearings pertaining to her case. Isabel was relieved and grateful for the assistance she received at the center. Isabel indicated that she was delighted to hear that she, too, could have a voice with regard to her children.

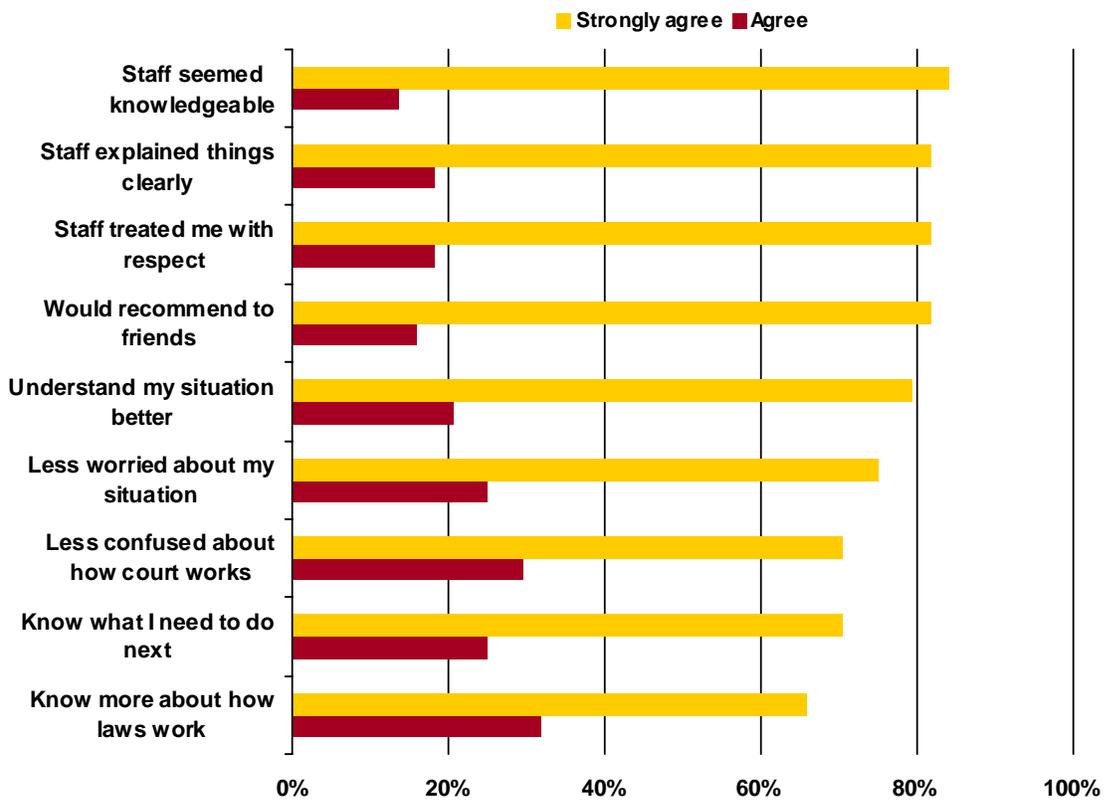
Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed to Centro de Recursos Legales drop-in customers²² during a two-week period in May 2004. Surveys were received from an estimated 58 percent of those visiting the center during this period. Although the response rate is somewhat low in terms of drawing conclusions about customer satisfaction at the center, the ratings of customer satisfaction received from Fresno customers were consistently high.

Customers of Centro de Recursos Legales expressed extremely high levels of satisfaction with the services they received (see figure 3.10). Two-thirds or more of customers strongly agreed with each of the general satisfaction questions, and no customers disagreed or strongly disagreed. Customers were somewhat less likely to strongly agree that they know more about how the laws work (66 percent), that they are less confused about how the court works (71 percent), and that they know what they need to do next (71 percent).

“Me escucharon y me trataron muy bien todo el personal.”
 Translation: All the staff listened to me and treated me very well.
 Centro de Recursos Legales customer

Customers provided especially high ratings on their interactions with center staff and said they would be very likely to recommend the center to friends.

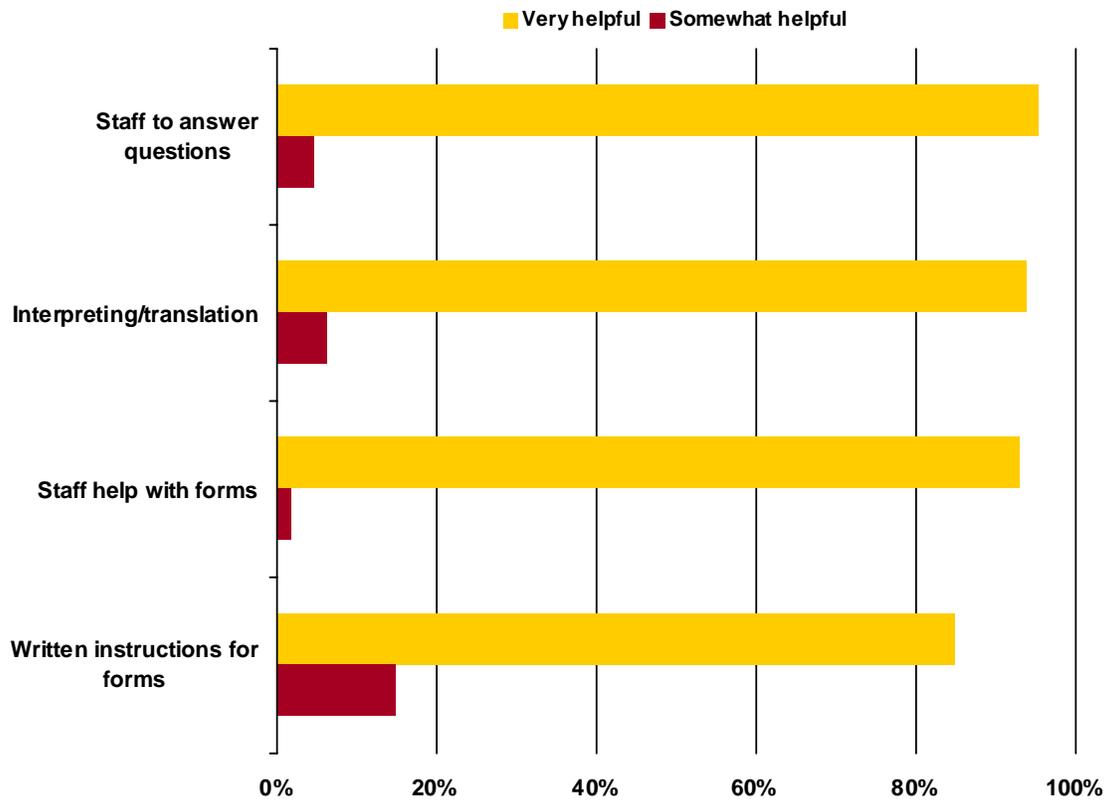
Figure 3.10
Overall Satisfaction
Fresno Center Customer Survey



²² The Fresno program offers workshops, but no workshops were held during the sample period.

Customers rated most of the services they received as very helpful or somewhat helpful (see figure 3.11). They especially valued having staff to answer their questions (97 percent rated them *very helpful*), receiving assistance with interpretation or translation (94 percent *very helpful*), and getting staff help with forms (93 percent *very helpful*). Relatively few customers responding to the survey received assistance through educational materials, referrals, help to prepare for a court hearing, or help following up with court orders.

Figure 3.11
Satisfaction With Specific Services
Fresno Center Customer Survey



Vignette: Forms and Procedural Assistance in Child Custody and Visitation Case

Juan is a divorced father with one child. He came into Centro de Recursos Legales requesting assistance in modifying his child custody and visitation court orders. Because of Juan's limited ability to speak and write English, he was fearful that he would not be able to adequately convey his concerns regarding the welfare of his child to the court. The court examiner helped Juan to complete his declaration, conveying all of his concerns regarding the urgent need to modify the existing court order. The court examiner explained to Juan the additional steps he needed to take before the hearing date. Several months later, Juan returned to the center with his child to express his heartfelt thanks for the assistance he received and to share with the staff the positive outcome of his case. Juan indicated that it would not have been possible without the existence of the center and staff.

Impact on Court Process

Respondents said that judges express extremely high levels of support for the program. The program has had a positive impact on courtroom processes and is viewed as an integral part of the court process as a whole.

Respondents said that self-represented litigants who receive assistance from the center are able to understand the process better and present their cases more clearly than those self-represented litigants who have not received assistance. For example, respondents often mentioned that when litigants receive help from the center, their forms have far fewer mistakes, they present more complete and more relevant information to the court, they include information that is fact based, and they more often have taken the appropriate steps to move the process along (e.g., notice has been served appropriately). The outcome, according to respondents, is a fairer decision, less work for clerks assisting Spanish-speaking self-represented litigants, the perception by litigants of increased access to justice, and a calmer environment in the court.

The majority of respondents stated that the self-help center has had a strong impact during hearings due to the availability of interpreters, which reduces continuances caused by litigants who are not able to present their cases. Interviewees explained that, in some cases, lack of access to court-certified or trained interpreters results in unfair proceedings due to the inadequacy of the interpretation. Prior to the availability of volunteer interpreters, many self-represented litigants had to rely on a friend, family member, or another individual present in the courtroom, and these interpretations were often biased or inaccurate.

Court File Review

AOC staff abstracted and analyzed family law dissolution files in Fresno County. The purpose of the file review was to identify areas in which the Centro de Recursos Legales

provided help that can be quantified through the broad case indicators found in the court file and, more generally, to identify the problems self-represented litigants face in the course of their dissolution cases. (See Appendix E for the complete file review tables.)

Cases, taken from the period between April and December 2003, were chosen at random from (1) a list of litigants who received help from Centro de Recursos Legales and (2) a list of all self-represented litigants who were not on record as having received help from the center. After excluding certain cases because the litigants had received help from an attorney, the final dissolution sample included 69 cases in which the petitioner received help from the center and 119 cases in which there was no record of the petitioner receiving help from the center.

Several caveats to the findings presented below should be noted. Self-help centers may have an important role in assisting customers in proceeding to judgment when their dissolution cases have been unresolved for periods over a year. The sample, by taking cases filed since April 2003, does not capture those cases. In addition, it is possible that the litigants who are not on record as receiving help from the Fresno center actually did receive assistance but did not fill out an intake form. It also appears from the file review data that cases receiving assistance from the Fresno center in the period sampled are more likely to involve children and, as a result, may have been more complex than cases in the comparison group. It was not possible through the court files to identify the language spoken by the litigants, so the comparison group sample could not be limited to Spanish-speaking litigants, the population that the center is targeting. Therefore, the comparison group may have more facility with the English language than those in the group receiving services from the center. Finally, a court case file does not by any means capture the full extent of the center's assistance to its customers.

Background of cases. The Fresno center's customers, on average, filed petitions sooner after their date of separation (601 days) than the comparison group (718 days). Customers' cases were significantly more likely to involve children (96 percent, compared to 75 percent for the comparison group)—and a larger number of children—and less likely to involve property (58 percent, compared to 67 percent for the comparison group). Interestingly, however, among cases that did involve property, customers' cases were more likely to involve some kind of real property (28 percent, compared to 13 percent for the comparison group).

Center customers and comparison group similar in terms of filing paperwork.

Customers of Centro de Recursos Legales were as successful as the comparison group at including key elements in their filings. In both groups, 97 percent of litigants filed a UCCJEA declaration if the case involved children. The groups were also similar in the proportion who provided some kind of income information with the petition (35 percent for the center sample, 33 percent for the comparison group) and filed petitions with missing or inconsistent information (54 percent for the center sample, 58 percent for the comparison group). Petitioners who had been to the center were less likely to fail to ask

for the establishment of paternity for children born before the marriage (8 percent, compared to 14 percent for the comparison group).

Center customers were more likely to effect service, file an order to show cause or motion, and to have a response filed in their case. Petitioners who had been to the center were somewhat more likely to serve the responding party with the petition and summons successfully (68 percent, compared to 62 percent for the comparison group). They were significantly more likely to file an order to show cause or motion (32 percent, compared to 20 percent), which may be an indication that the center is assisting customers in addressing issues such as child custody or visitation prior to the termination of marital status. Center customers were also more likely to have a response filed in their case (32 percent) than the comparison group (24 percent). Some of these findings may indicate greater case complexity and longer time frames for cases in which the petitioner had been to the center.

Proceeding to judgment. Consistent with the finding that petitioners who had been to the center were more likely to have responses filed in their cases, center customers were less likely to request a default judgment (16 percent, compared to 28 percent in the comparison group). Cases of center customers were also less likely to reach judgment (22 percent, compared to 31 percent for the comparison group). Of those cases that did proceed to judgment, default judgments were the most common (due in part to the time frame in which data were collected). The mean number of days between petition filing and termination of marital status was somewhat longer for center customers (253 days) than for the comparison group (225 days), which may be explained in part by center customers' cases being more complex.

Given the fact that the center group was more seriously challenged by language, cultural, and educational barriers than the non-center group, these findings are an important indication of the efficacy of the Centro de Recursos Legales program.

Comparison group subsamples. Files in the comparison group were examined for indications that the petitioner had received some assistance with paperwork, even if not from Centro de Recursos Legales. In about one-third of the cases in the comparison group (32 percent), litigants appeared to have received no assistance with paperwork. When this subgroup is compared to the cases from the Fresno center, some interesting differences are revealed. Petitions in these cases were substantially more likely to have missing or inconsistent information (66 percent), and litigants were less likely to have successfully served the responding party with the petition and summons (50 percent).

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Accomplishment of Goals

Providing services in Spanish is viable for self-help centers. It is possible to integrate services for Spanish-speaking litigants into a self-help center located in a county with a high proportion of residents who speak Spanish and who have few resources to seek legal assistance. Building relationships with the Spanish-speaking community and organizations that serve that community is crucial.

The Centro de Recursos Legales has made great strides toward accomplishing the goals laid out in the original AOC proposal.

- Centro de Recursos Legales tapped a large and growing unmet need for services for Spanish-speaking self-represented litigants;
- Two successive community resource managers were successful in designing, opening, and developing the center;
- Working with community and court volunteers, the center created more than 90 understandable English and Spanish self-help instructions for completing court forms; and
- The center collaborated with community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other court departments to create a volunteer interpreters' bureau to assist self-represented litigants with interpretation needs in court.

Almost all respondents asserted that the self-help center is providing crucial assistance to a very needy population and is doing so with a limited budget. The assistance provided at the actual center and via the volunteer interpreters' bureau is increasing individuals' ability to seek justice and, as a result, increasing their satisfaction with the court process and its outcomes.

Limiting services to non-English speaking litigants is not practical. While all programs with significant populations of Spanish-speaking litigants should have bilingual staff, limiting services to non-English speakers does not appear to be practical. In response to the AOC's request for a program targeting Spanish-speaking self-represented litigants, Centro de Recursos Legales designed its program to serve this group. Implementation of the design, however, was seriously impacted by the closure of the county's Family Law Information Center. That decision left the English-speaking population without any comparable service. The court also elected to withdraw its additional funding to its family law facilitator, thereby restricting those services to matters of child support and related issues. Furthermore, there was no court-operated service in non-family law matters for English-speaking litigants (or those who spoke other languages). Providing help to some litigants and not others on the basis of language

is not a workable strategy. As a result, services at Centro de Recursos Legales were provided in English a great deal of the time.

Service Issues

Volunteer interpreters' bureau yields numerous committed volunteers. The volunteer interpreters' bureau is providing much needed assistance to Spanish-speaking litigants who need interpretation in family law and other civil law proceedings. It is also providing training opportunities for individuals interested in becoming court-certified interpreters. The institutionalization of this volunteer opportunity has allowed it to be mutually beneficial to litigants, the court, and the volunteers. Ensuring an adequate quantity of committed and well-trained bilingual volunteers has been crucial to success of the interpreters' bureau.

Advisory committee helped ensure a successful center start-up. The center was able to form a strong and active advisory committee, which includes members of the court, community-based social and legal service providers, and representatives of the local educational system. The committee assisted with program development, implementation, recruitment of volunteers, and outreach. Particularly during the planning and early implementation phases, the advisory committee was crucial in helping the center build trust in the Spanish-speaking community.

The extent of legal assistance may be related to the availability of attorney staffing. Although knowledgeable and well-trained nonattorney staff can perform many self-help center functions, the day-to-day availability of attorney staff serves to enhance legal education and assistance techniques and to support other staff. The focus and design of any program will be significantly affected by the training and professional experience of its director. Centro de Recursos Legales is the only direct service program that was not headed by an attorney. Initially, the director was a law school graduate with legal services experience; however, he left within the first year of operation. The current director is an experienced court clerk who is bilingual in Spanish. She has extensive professional experience within the court, a thorough understanding of the difficulties encountered by non-English-speaking litigants trying to use court services, and knows the challenges for court staff trying to provide high-quality justice in civil cases where there is no statutory requirement for interpreters. She is dedicated to improving access to the courts for the Spanish-speaking population through the provision of interpreter services. The volunteer interpreters' bureau in Fresno has been an enormous success and should be regarded as a model for any court facing similar language barriers.

It appears as though the legal services component of the program might benefit from the regular participation of an attorney. The program experiences a significantly lower volume of customers and a higher rate of return customers than the other direct services programs. Furthermore, the variety of services and types of service delivery techniques are more limited than the other direct services programs. Fewer staff and volunteers are allocated to the various forms of legal assistance such as preparation for hearings or

completion of orders and judgments. There appears to be less interaction between the center and the local bar and legal services.

Beginning in January 2005, the attorney from the newly reopened Family Law Information Center will be working directly with staff from Centro de Recursos Legales to provide services in outlying areas of Fresno County. It seems likely that the Centro de Recursos Legales staff will benefit from daily interaction with the attorney from the FLIC and that the attorney will benefit from the interpreter services and cultural expertise of the Centro de Recursos Legales staff.

Developing instructions for forms is time consuming but helpful. Developing instructions for Judicial Council forms was very time consuming during the center's start-up phase. With the assistance of volunteer interpreters and the cooperation of department heads and other court staff, instructions in English and Spanish were developed for 90 forms pertaining to family law, civil harassment, unlawful detainer, and guardianship matters. Respondents reported that these instructions are very helpful to customers seeking assistance.

Program staff suggested that the AOC consider developing basic instructions for all forms in accessible English and Spanish for distribution throughout the state. Counties could add to those instructions or revise them to reflect county practices.

Inadequate staffing affects capacity. Centro de Recursos Legales does not have any paid clerical staff, and this staffing decision negatively impacts the center's ability to serve customers efficiently. Professional staff members are left to handle all clerical responsibilities, including answering the phone or welcoming customers into the center, unless a trained volunteer is available. Furthermore, when volunteers are available, a better user of their time is having them assist customers directly (either by assisting with questions or forms or interpreting for the court examiner).

Court employees should be fully aware of center services. Respondents during both rounds of site visits reported that many court employees, including clerks, were not fully aware of the services Centro de Recursos Legales offers to self-represented litigants. Program staff members periodically meet with managers and supervisors to discuss the center's services, but it appears that these initial efforts may not have been sufficient. After the center decided to do outreach directly with line staff rather than managers and supervisors, awareness of and referrals to the center increased.

Location away from the courthouse may not be optimal. Centro de Recursos Legales is located about one mile from the Fresno County Superior Courthouse. Although the inconvenience to litigants is mitigated by the fact that papers can be filed at the facilitator's office next door, and the center is close to the highway, the location has potential drawbacks. For example, courthouse staff may lack awareness of the services Centro de Recursos Legales offers because there is no day-to-day informal contact with the center. Furthermore, clerks may be less likely to refer non-English-speaking litigants to the center because they would have to explain how to get there. In addition, locating

the center away from the courthouse may have contributed to the relatively low number of customers served by the center compared to the other direct service pilot programs. Outpost locations may be efficacious, but a main center at the courthouse appears to be most efficient for the public and for court operations.

Spanish language capacity is important for program efficiency and building trust in the community. The Fresno center has been fortunate to have a consistent pool of volunteers who speak Spanish. Because the first court examiner did not speak fluent Spanish, there was a risk of alienating the Spanish-speaking community. In addition, using volunteers to interpret for a paid staff member raises questions of efficiency. Yet, according to respondents, the center was able to build trust within the community because of the availability of Spanish-speaking volunteers and the community resource manager's language skills. In addition, the court examiner's other skills were highly valued by respondents. Having bilingual staff creates efficiencies for the program and builds trust with the Spanish-speaking community.

Telephone assistance can facilitate access to services of the self-help center. Various kinds of tasks can be accomplished over the telephone. Identification of issues, determination of whether or not the center can provide the help needed, case status information from the court's registry of actions, and substantial procedural information and education can be provided on a variety of legal topics. Telephone assistance makes it possible to help people who cannot get to the center during business hours due to work, limited transportation, lack of child care, or disability.

Triage is critical to the operation of Centro de Recursos Legales. The center director identified the initial case assessment (triage) function as the critical first step to providing assistance to self-represented litigants. Determining whether or not a case is appropriate for the center, identifying issues, and ascertaining the existence and status of existing cases must all occur before any services are provided. Assistance with forms and information about options and procedures cannot realistically occur prior to a detailed and careful triage procedure.

Chapter 4

San Francisco County: Multilingual Model

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT MODEL TYPE: MULTILINGUAL MODEL

Hours:	Drop-in: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30 to 4 p.m.; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon Civil harassment clinics: Monday through Friday, 1:30 to 4 p.m. Unlawful detainer settlement conferences: Wednesday and Thursday, 12:30 to 1 p.m. Unlawful detainer drop-in: Wednesday and Thursday, 1:30 to 4 p.m.
Location:	San Francisco: Civic Center Courthouse Hall of Justice (2 traffic workshops per month) La Raza (2 workshops per month) Cameron House (4 workshops per year)
Number of Customers Served:	Monthly average 778 customers for direct service Additional customers served through radio and television broadcasts and presentations at community agencies
Number of Staff:	1 full-time attorney (the director), 1 full-time clerk
Number of Volunteers:	73 (at time of second site visit): 53 law students, 18 volunteer interpreters and 2 attorneys Roughly 15 volunteers attend on a consistent basis
Case Types Served:	Civil Harassment, Guardianship, Conservatorship, Unlawful Detainer, Name Change, Step-parent Adoptions, Elder Abuse Restraining Orders, Small Estates, Traffic, Small Claims, Family Law, Other General Civil
Types of Services Rendered:	Assistance with completion of forms, procedural information, preparation of orders after hearings, explanation of orders, referrals to other providers, written materials, document review, interpretation services.
Methods of Service Delivery:	Individual assistance, workshops, written materials, educational broadcasts.

Background

San Francisco County is located on the north-central coast of California, on the tip of a peninsula bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean and on the east by San Francisco Bay. It is an urban county covering about 231 square miles, with a population of 776,733. The population of San Francisco County is similar in size to the population of Fresno County, but its land area is only 1/25 that of Fresno County. San Francisco is part of a cluster of urban counties surrounding San Francisco Bay, with a combined

population of more than 7 million. As of July 2001, the San Francisco Superior Court had 50 judges, 14 commissioners, and 524 employees.

San Francisco County is characterized by its wealth of community service organizations. Community-based organizations provide assistance help in housing (6), eviction defense (3), domestic violence (1), family law (2), and immigration (5); services are also available specifically for seniors (1) and children (1).²³ Examples are the Volunteer Legal Services Program (VLSP) of the Bar Association of San Francisco, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, La Raza, Bay Area Legal Aid, Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic, and Cameron House. The court also has a history of close collaboration with community social service agencies such as Walden House (adolescent drug treatment), Rally (parent visitation service), Kid's Turn (postdivorce counseling), Men Overcoming Violence, and La Casa de Las Madres.

San Francisco has no ethnic majority. The largest ethnic group is white non-Hispanic (49 percent); the remainder includes Asians, 30 percent; Hispanics, 14 percent; and African Americans, 8 percent. Slightly more than 45 percent of San Francisco's citizens speak a language other than English at home. Among Asians, 35 percent do not speak English well or at all. This is also true for 25 percent of Hispanics and 16 percent of Indo-European individuals.²⁴

By 2020, an estimated 36 percent of San Francisco's population will be Asian, and 20 percent will be Hispanic. Surmounting language barriers is thus a critical issue for the San Francisco Court. Without professional guidance, litigants cannot participate appropriately in legal processes conducted in a language that is at best unfamiliar and at worst incomprehensible to them. When judges, clerks, and bailiffs speak of restraining orders on encumbering property, orders after hearing, abatements, proofs of service, and other such terminology, they evoke blank stares and perplexing expressions on the faces of such litigants.

Census data indicate that for both families and individuals, the percentage of San Francisco residents living below the poverty level is significantly lower than the comparable proportion in Fresno or in Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties and in California as a whole. For example, the poverty rate in Fresno county is about twice San Francisco's rate. Nevertheless, the family law facilitator program in San Francisco reports that more than 80 percent of self-represented litigants seeking services have gross yearly incomes under \$24,000. This is substantially under the median household income for San Francisco (\$55,221) and for California as a whole (\$47,493).

About one-third of the facilitator's customers are Hispanic; 30 percent, African American; and 13 percent, Asian. In fiscal year 2003–2004, the Office of the Family Law Facilitator in San Francisco provided services to more than 5,000 litigants who had no

²³ Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of organizations providing that type of assistance.

²⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

attorneys. Although 46 percent of the family law facilitator's customers are either Asian or Hispanic, services are provided in English 78 percent of the time.

In fiscal year 2002-2003, San Francisco's new case filings were as follows:

- Family law: 5,496
- Probate: 2,978
- Small claims: 6,221
- Limited civil: 10,782²⁵

The court has provided funding to the family law facilitator to supplement the funding under Assembly Bill 1058 for child support services. As a result, the facilitator is able to provide services in all areas of family law. Prior to the implementation of the model self-help program, the only court-based assistance to self-represented litigants in non-family law matters was provided by the small claims advisor. Without bilingual legal assistance, non-English-speaking monolingual self-represented litigants were often sent home to get a bilingual family member or friend to help them communicate with court staff. Alternatively, operations staff had to locate an interpreter to communicate with the litigants and to translate documents. The court estimates that locating interpreters, translating documents, ordering ongoing continuances, and providing services that are often misunderstood increase the demand on staff time between 20 percent and 30 percent. Interpretation services are not mandated by statute in most civil matters. The resulting frustration for both staff and litigants can be intense and lead to negative interactions.

Description of Model

Goals of Program

The San Francisco ACCESS project (Assisting Court Customers with Education and Self-Help Services) is designed to provide self-help services to litigants who speak a wide variety of languages and to develop materials and techniques to address the needs of a multilingual, multicultural population. The original goals of the project were as follows:

- Increase access to justice for non- and limited-English-speaking litigants by providing a combination of direct legal information and education at the court, and creating connections to services in the community organized through collaboration with the many existing legal and social services;
- Increase user satisfaction with the court process by increasing non- and limited-English-speaking litigants' ability to exercise a meaningful voice in their proceedings and elevate their perception of procedural justice; and

²⁵ Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS).

- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the court system by reducing the time required to handle the needs of non- and limited-English-speaking self-represented litigants.²⁶

Focus Areas of Law

Because the San Francisco court has funded its family law facilitator to provide services in most all family law matters, the demand on the ACCESS program for family law services has been limited to non- and limited-English-speaking self-represented litigants.

The reduced family law demand has also allowed the center to focus on other areas of civil litigation and provide assistance with civil harassment restraining orders, name changes, small claims, probate, and landlord/tenant cases. Traffic workshops are also available. The center is the only court or community resource, however, that routinely offers assistance in these case types. As a result, it has been required to handle a substantial demand for assistance from English-speaking self-represented litigants.

Project Planning and Start-up

In 2002, San Francisco's Self-Represented Litigant Task Force was established. The task force includes court clerks and bench officers, the leadership of various court divisions, the family law facilitator, a representative from the law library, private attorneys, and representatives from legal agencies, such as Bay Area Legal Aid, Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic, and the Volunteer Legal Services Program of the Bar Association.

The task force decided that the director of the ACCESS project should be a bilingual attorney. In October 2002, after a national hiring process, an attorney with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, who also served on the task force, was hired as the center's director. The task force also determined people who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese had the largest need for self-help legal services.

The next four months were devoted to program design. To determine areas of law on which to focus, the new director spoke with bench officers, court clerks, and directors of various departments in the court, particularly those who had the highest number of self-represented litigants. Questionnaires were provided to all court employees and judicial officers asking for suggestions on matters such as what services were most needed and what service delivery methods were most effective. Also during this period, the ACCESS office was set up, informational materials were drafted and translated, a customer satisfaction survey was developed, and referral protocols were worked out with other court departments and community partners.

The court allocated space for the center on the second floor of the San Francisco Superior Court's main courthouse, and people interviewed by the evaluation team during site visits (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B) agreed that this location has been convenient for

²⁶ San Francisco Superior Court Multi-Lingual Self-Help Model Project. Project proposal (2002).

customers. However, respondents reported that some litigants are not aware of the center because of poor or limited signage within the courthouse. The court has hired a signage consultant who finalized a schedule to redesign courthouse signage; requests for construction proposals will be going out in 2005. Although respondents asserted that the San Francisco County program site is well designed, space is limited.

The ACCESS center opened for business on March 10, 2003. The first clinic was held at La Raza a week later. Over the next three months, the center partnered with the San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program to provide an eviction defense clinic at the court and set up a pilot program to assist with unlawful detainer settlement conferences. The first workshop for Asian litigants at Cameron House also took place during this period. In addition, law students were being supervised to assist with civil harassment, and monthly traffic workshops became available.

Throughout the first year of operation, additional services were added to the ACCESS program. Examples are educational broadcasts on Spanish radio, an all-day family law event of presentations to the Chinese community, implementation of small claims orientation workshops, launching of an e-mail service, and formalization of an internship program. By September 2003, the ACCESS center was handling all small claims, and the small claims advisor was added to the staff. The center was also able to hire a full-time clerk with the use of separate grant funds.

In the second year of operation, the ACCESS center has added a small claims mediation program to the list of its services.

Populations Served

Volume

The center serves a large volume of self-represented litigants. As shown in figure 4.1, intake forms underrepresent the number of customers served by the center. In the latest month for which data are available, the center served more than 1,000 customers.

**Figure 4.1
ACCESS Volume Data**

Month	Quarterly Report	Intake Forms	Service Tracking Forms
June 2003	N/A	87	300
July 2003	N/A	186	463
August 2003	N/A	156	611
September 2003	718	195	728
October 2003	940	324	914
November 2003	750	175	793
March 2004	1,121	363	1,023
Monthly average	882	212	690

The monthly volume at the ACCESS center has continued to grow. Between the months of April 2004 and November 2004, the monthly average was 1,066. From September 2004 on, the center saw more than 1,000 customers per month, and in November, the number exceeded 1,300 customers.

Demographics

Gender. About 52 percent of the ACCESS center customers are male, and 48 percent are female.

Age. ACCESS customers tend to be older than those in the other two direct services programs, particularly the Fresno County program. More than 50 percent of customers are between the ages of 30 and 50 years of age. About 29 percent were 50 or older.

Children. The ACCESS center is far less likely than other direct services programs to serve customers with children. Almost 60 percent of customers reported having no minor children. About one-third of customers had one or two children, and fewer than 10 percent had three or more children. These figures likely reflect the limited amount of family law services provided by the ACCESS center. In the other two direct services programs, family law makes up the largest area of legal services, and most customers had at least one minor child.

Ethnicity. According to intake data from customers who came to the center's drop-in services, 35 percent are white non-Hispanic, 23 percent are Hispanic or Latino, 21 percent are African American, and 19 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Although the percentage of Asian customers at the ACCESS center is predictably higher than in the other two direct services programs, it is lower than the percentage of Asians in the general population of San Francisco. On the other hand, the percentages of Hispanic and African American customers at the ACCESS center substantially exceed the percentage

in the general population. This is also true for customers of the San Francisco family law facilitator.

Language. Slightly more than 46 percent of ACCESS customers speak a language other than English at home. Of those who speak a foreign language at home, the largest group speaks Spanish (43 percent), followed by Cantonese (13 percent). Overall, 65 percent of foreign language-speaking ACCESS customers prefer to receive services in English rather than another language.

Although ACCESS is a multilingual self-help center, the director and members of the task force decided that the center would also serve English-speaking customers because it is logistically and ethically difficult to turn people away whose primary language is English and because equivalent services are not available elsewhere for English-speaking customers. Overall, 54 percent of customers speak English at home, and services are provided in English 80 percent of the time.²⁷

According to interviews, there has been an increase in the proportion of native English-speaking customers since the center opened, which may be linked to adding services for customers with small claims issues. According to service tracking data, 81 percent of customers seeking help with small claims issues were served in English.

Education. Two-thirds of customers have some college education, 19 percent have a bachelor's degree, and 12 percent have graduate degrees. The customers in the Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties regional project, and particularly in the Fresno County program, report lower levels of education, reflecting lower educational levels in the general populations of those counties.

Employment. More than 50 percent of ACCESS customers report being employed (43 percent full-time and 15 percent part-time.) Of those not employed, 34 percent are unemployed, 30 percent are disabled, and 15 percent are retired. (See figure 4.2 for a summary of demographic information.)

²⁷ Customers who do not write or read English or Spanish well may have chosen not to complete an intake form.

Figure 4.2
Population Served by ACCESS: Summary Statistics
Customer Intake Forms

	%	N
Gender		
Female	48%	741
Male	52%	798
(missing)		75
Total		1,614
Age		
10-19 years	2%	18
20-29 years	17%	208
30-39 years	25%	300
40-49 years	27%	325
50 or older	29%	178
(missing)		421
Total		1,614
Race/Ethnicity¹		
African American	21%	300
Asian/Pacific Islander	19%	266
Hispanic	23%	327
White non-Hispanic	35%	500
Other (including Native American)	5%	74
Speak a language other than English at home		
Yes	47%	671
No	54%	772
(missing)		171
Total		1,614
If yes, which language?		
Spanish	43%	253
Armenian	2%	11
Cantonese	13%	74
Mandarin	9%	55
Tagalog	9%	51
Russian	6%	35
Vietnamese	2%	13
Other	16%	93
(missing)		86
Total		671
Preference of Service Provision Language (for only those who speak a foreign language at home)		
English	65%	355
Spanish	14%	78
Cantonese	7%	36
Mandarin	5%	26
Tagalog	2%	13
Russian	4%	21
Vietnamese	1%	5
Other	3%	16
(missing)		121
Total		671

Figure 4.2 (continued)

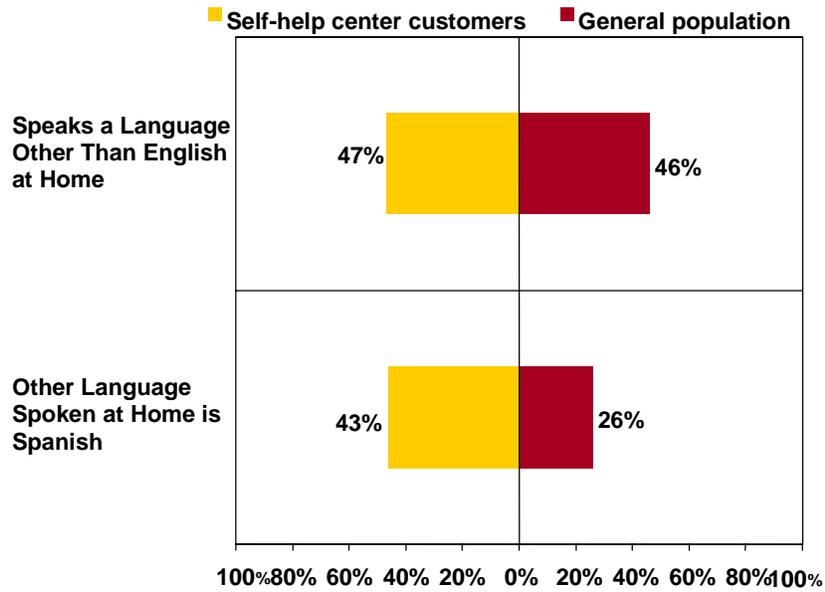
	%	N
Monthly household income		
\$500 or less	16%	171
\$501-\$1000	22%	240
\$1001-\$1500	14%	156
\$1501-\$2000	14%	150
\$2001-\$2500	9%	101
\$2501 or more	25%	266
(missing)		530
Total		1,614
Education		
8th grade or less	4%	50
9th to 11th grade	8%	90
High school diploma or GED	21%	250
Some college	30%	349
Associate or Bachelor's degree	25%	297
Graduate degree	12%	144
(missing)		434
Total		1,614
Number of children		
None	59%	734
One	19%	239
Two	13%	167
Three or more	9%	113
(missing)		361
Total		1,614

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity

Household income. Two-thirds of ACCESS customers report monthly household incomes of less than \$2,000. A quarter of customers, however, said their monthly household income was more than \$2,500. In the other two direct services programs, the percentages of customers having incomes exceeding \$2,500 per month were 13 percent (Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties) and 4 percent (Fresno County).

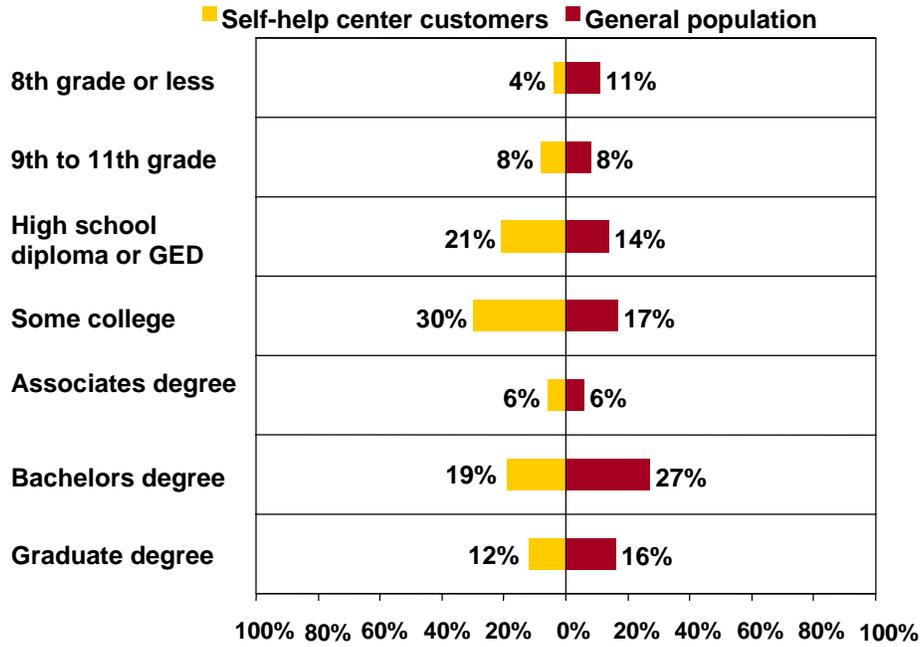
Other demographic characteristics. The percentage of ACCESS customers who speak a language other than English at home is about the same as the comparable percentage in the general population of San Francisco, but the self-help population is more likely to be Spanish speaking (see figure 4.3). Compared with the general population of San Francisco, ACCESS customers tend to have somewhat higher educational attainment at and above the high school level (see figure 4.4). ACCESS customers, however, report lower household incomes than the general population (see figure 4.5).

Figure 4.3
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population in
San Francisco County: Speaks a Language Other Than English at Home



U.S. Census Bureau; San Francisco County, CA, DP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census bureau Web site:
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060751k.html>

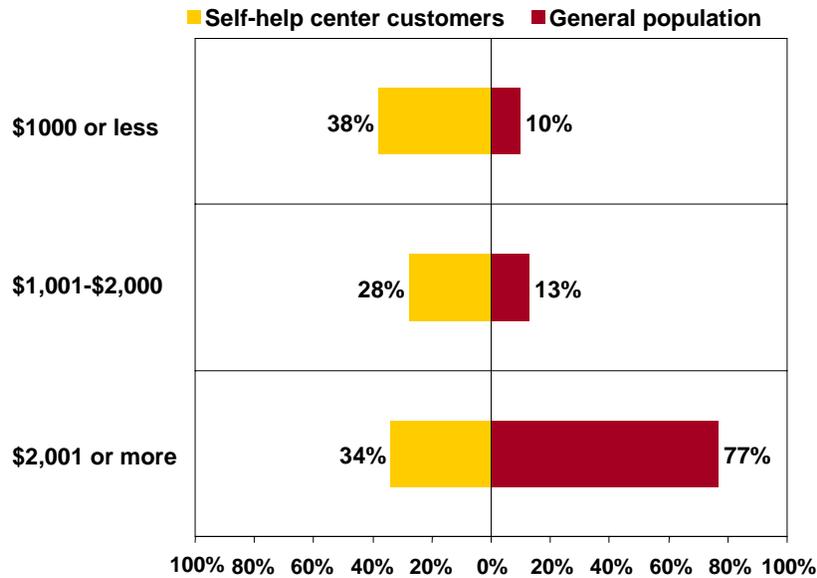
Figure 4.4
Comparing Center Customers With the General Population in
San Francisco County: Education



U.S. Census Bureau; San Francisco County, CA, DP-2 Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census bureau Web site: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060751k.html>

Note: Numbers have been rounded and may not sum to exactly 100 percent.

Figure 4.5
Comparing Center Customers with the General Population in
San Francisco: Monthly Household Income in Dollars



U.S. Census Bureau; San Francisco County, CA, DP-3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, American FactFinder. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the U.S. Census bureau Web site: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/060751k.html>

Note: The Self-Help pilot project data and the census data do not perfectly match. The census data categories are as follows: \$833 or less; \$834 to \$2083; \$2084 and over.

Numbers have been rounded and may not sum to exactly 100 percent.

Service Staffing

Paid Personnel

All paid staff are full-time court employees.

Program director. The program director is an attorney who is bilingual in Spanish. The director assists with one-on-one services, leads workshops both in the center and in community organizations, and leads outreach and collaboration efforts. The director's administrative supervisor is the assistant chief executive officer of the San Francisco Superior Court, whose office is next door to the director's. The director's salary is paid by the AOC Model Self-Help grant.

Small claims advisor. The small claims advisor is an attorney who helps customers on a one-on-one basis (for all case types), leads workshops on small claims matters, and provides assistance at community agencies. The small claims advisor has integrated small claims services with the ACCESS center and works there full-time, but the position is funded by the county's general funds.

Court clerk. The clerk assists with clerical duties and serving customers and is bilingual in Spanish. The clerk's salary is shared between the Model Self-Help AOC grant, another AOC grant and the county general fund.

Attorney supervision. Attorneys from the ACCESS center or the partnering legal services programs supervise all nonattorney staff and volunteers. Volunteers work directly with customers, often going through the forms with them one-on-one. Because the center operates in a small space, the attorneys are always easily accessible to answer volunteer questions and monitor the communication between volunteers and customers. The director or small claims attorney supervises the volunteers. The attorneys review every pleading on which volunteers assist. No one leaves the center without an attorney first looking over his or her paperwork.

Volunteers

In addition to its paid staff, ACCESS uses a large number of volunteers. Students at the University of California Hastings College of Law do internships at the center. ACCESS also has formalized internships with the paralegal studies program at San Francisco State University and the University of San Francisco. Interns get credit/units for their work with the center, so they are reliable and consistent. They are also bilingual.

Volunteers, who are supervised by staff attorneys, conduct the civil harassment clinics that provide individual assistance to litigants who are seeking civil harassment restraining orders. The volunteers also help by staffing the courtrooms to draft orders after hearing and reissuances.

Volunteers have been an important part of the outreach to non-English-speaking populations at the center, given that paid staff have only Spanish and English language capacity. At the time of the second site visit, there was one regular volunteer who speaks Cantonese and Mandarin and one who speaks Russian.

Recruitment. Most volunteers are students at the University of California Hastings College of Law. The director is also working to establish internships with two local university programs. The paralegal studies program at San Francisco State University now offers school credit for internships at the ACCESS center, yielding five interns so far.

In addition, the director has attempted to set up a relationship with the interpretation certificate program at San Francisco State University, although union issues have become a barrier. Court interpreters recently became official employees of the court, and their union opposes bringing in volunteers to do the work of paid employees. Because interpreters are not legally required in civil cases,²⁸ court interpreters are largely used in criminal trials. As a result, there is a large unmet need for interpreters in civil cases.

²⁸ See *Jara v. Municipal Court for San Antonio Judicial Dist.* (1978) 21 Cal.3d 181.

Training. According to individuals interviewed, the center has formal and informal methods of training its volunteers. The director conducts a formal training three times a year for the paralegal interns, undergraduates, law students from all schools, and community volunteers.

As part of their training, volunteers are expected to read and acknowledge reading and understanding a volunteer manual that includes do's and don'ts of working at the court. Topics covered in the manual include working as a neutral person and not giving advice or soliciting business. The manual contains a guide to the San Francisco courts and chapters on each type of case ACCESS covers. At the training sessions, which take place at the court in the evening, the manual is reviewed and role-plays are conducted. Instructional videos are shown, and volunteers practice filling out forms. A minimum commitment of four hours per week for a semester is required of students. For the first two weeks at the center, new volunteers sit with one of the attorneys as they assist customers. For the next two weeks, new volunteers observe more experienced volunteers. After the fifth or sixth week, depending on comfort level, new volunteers work in pairs to assist customers. Only experienced volunteers (those returning for a second semester or more) see customers one-on-one. Working lunches are held to go over certain areas of law such as judgment collection, the overall eviction process, and the various types of small claims cases. Volunteers who are not comfortable performing direct services but want to help at the center are assigned to prepare templates and instructions on different issues that commonly arise. Student supervisors are assigned to each shift. These supervisors are volunteers from prior years and semesters, they get a small payment from Hastings' Civil Justice Clinic. Therefore, the center can always count on at least one volunteer at each shift. The student supervisors provide good mentoring for other volunteers.

All volunteers are encouraged to attend the formal training sessions. For volunteers from the community who are unable to attend, training is more informal. They are encouraged to read the center's volunteer training manual, which is provided to all volunteers, and to ask questions of the director. As part of the informal training, volunteers are asked to review relevant court forms.

According to respondents, most volunteers learn what they need to know on the job and feel that the training efforts are sufficient. The director hopes to start more regular formal training sessions to provide volunteers an initial orientation, but there will always be a need for on-the-job training.

Analysis of Customers Served

Language of Service Provision

Although 47 percent of ACCESS's self-help customers speak a foreign language at home, 80 percent of drop-in services are provided in English, according to service tracking data (see figure 4.6). This is consistent with interviews with staff, who said that

many foreign language-speaking customers have enough English proficiency to talk through their legal issues with an English speaker. Relatively few cases are assisted in Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, or Tagalog, perhaps due to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining volunteers who speak those languages. It is unclear to what degree the relatively low percentage of foreign language service provision is a problem; 83 percent of customers said they prefer to receive services in English.²⁹

Figure 4.6
ACCESS: Language of Service Provision
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
English	80%	4,333
Spanish	16%	878
Chinese	2%	110
Russian	1%	60
Vietnamese	0%	8
Tagalog	0%	10
Other	0%	8
(missing)		113
Total		5,520

Administrative data do not include services provided at local community organizations because service tracking and intake forms were not collected at those locations. Therefore, service tracking data underrepresent the number of Chinese and Vietnamese customers served because the center primarily serves these target populations at the facilities of community organizations.

ACCESS staff emphasize that language preference is a complicated factor that existing demographic data do not address adequately. They have found that it is important not to assume that people who speak a language other than English at home are foreign language-speaking. Many customers, especially Asian/Chinese and Latinos, often speak another language at home because their parents are monolingual foreign-language speakers, but the customers themselves use English as a primary language. In many instances, either the customer is English speaking (and may speak something else at home) or the English-speaking relative is coming to the center on behalf of a monolingual foreign language-speaking parent. The center has also observed that the vast majority of Filipinos in San Francisco are bilingual.

Center staff have also learned that even when customers do not use English as their primary language, they frequently prefer to speak English regarding their business or other dealings outside the home. This may be because their knowledge of California law

²⁹ Intake forms are filled out in English or Spanish by individuals who visit the self-help center, which may bias the data.

or of the United States in general is in English, so they are more familiar using terminology in English. Nevertheless, a lot of materials in other languages are handed out at the center. Even when assistance is provided in English, customers with another primary language are given written materials in English and their primary language. Feedback to the center indicates that this is very helpful; customers can understand the legal paperwork they get by knowing what the terminology means in their primary language.

Case Types and Issues

Most cases brought to the center involve civil issues and unlawful detainer (see figure 4.7). According to service tracking data, slightly more than 50 percent of civil cases served by the center are in the area of small claims, and 38 percent are civil harassment restraining orders (see figure 4.8). In summer 2003, the services of the small claims advisor for San Francisco were integrated with the ACCESS center, allowing ACCESS customers to receive assistance in that area of law as well. The small claims advisor received training in the other areas of law that the ACCESS center addresses, including instruction from various court staff attorneys and clerks and videos produced by the Bar Association. In addition, the ACCESS director has become acquainted with small claims matters through discussion and instruction from the small claims advisor. This partnership allows both programs to serve more customers.

Figure 4.7
ACCESS: Case Types Served
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Civil	75%	3478
Unlawful detainer	16%	748
Family	5%	226
Probate	3%	123
Other	1%	45
(missing)		900
Total		5,520

Figure 4.8
ACCESS: Breakdown of Civil Cases
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Small claims	51%	1,788
Civil harassment	38%	1,313
Name change	8%	263
Other	3%	120
(missing)		2,036
Total		5,520

About 80 percent of ACCESS customers are petitioners, plaintiffs, or moving parties. The exception is in unlawful detainer cases; about two thirds of those customers are defendants. However, the center is seeing increasing numbers of landlords.

Figure 4.9
ACCESS: Type of Service Provided¹
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Procedural information	82%	4,412
Other information	74%	3,997
Assistance completing forms	45%	2,395
Referrals to other providers	14%	754
Forms with instructions	10%	522
Other educational materials	7%	397
Assistance with documents	6%	333
Explanation of court orders	5%	280
Forms only	3%	151
Translation/interpretation	1%	59
Order after hearing/judgment	0%	23
Mediation	0%	5
Filing	0%	1
Other	1%	45
Total		9,043

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one type of service.

Types of Services

Most of the services provided at the San Francisco self-help center are to inform customers of court procedures (82 percent), provide general legal information (74 percent), and help with completing forms (45 percent). Other types of services, such as assisting with forms and their instructions, explaining court orders, translating/interpreting, and mediation, are also provided (see figure 4.9).

Description of Service Delivery

ACCESS primarily serves customers in a one-on-one setting and in workshops. Attendance at workshops may be underestimated in the service tracking data because forms may not have been completed consistently at workshops. The Internet and written materials are other ways center staff and volunteers work with customers (see figure 4.10).³⁰ Services provided at community organizations are not captured in these figures.

Figure 4.10
ACCESS: Contact Type
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
Individual, face-to face	97%	5,318
Workshop/clinic	9%	495
Internet	1%	30
Written correspondence (letters, e-mail)	0%	9
Telephone	0%	6
Other	0%	7
Other computer application/ software	0%	1
Total		5,866

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one contact type.

One-on-One Assistance

Most ACCESS customers are served through one-on-one contact, according to service tracking data. Staff and volunteers meet individually with customers to help them complete paperwork and to answer questions about legal matters. Customers who speak a foreign language write their declarations in their native languages, and the volunteer or staff member who speaks that language translates the declaration into English. If no volunteer is available who speaks the language of the customer, center staff attempt to find another court employee who speaks that language or, as a last resort, ask the person to return when a volunteer is available. The proposal for this project laid out plans to use court staff with proficiency in the various target languages to assist customers with

³⁰ Service tracking data may not adequately capture the extent to which written materials are distributed, however, because customers may pick up materials without a staff person noting that on a service tracking form.

limited or no English-language ability. According to the center's quarterly report, five court personnel are available to provide services in Cantonese. However, according to respondents, this arrangement does not consistently provide a source of interpreters for the center because of the heavy workload of court personnel. This has also been affected by the current budget crisis, which has reduced the number of court staff overall.

Workshops

Workshops are the second most common method of delivering services to the public. According to administrative data, the center held 19 workshops in March 2004: 4 on judgment collections, 5 on small claims, 2 at La Raza, and 8 on settlement conferences. All but those held at La Raza were conducted in English. Subsequently, workshops in Chinese have been held at Cameron House. The topics covered at these workshops ranged from family law (discussed in 2 of the 19 workshops), small claims (discussed in 7), unlawful detainer (discussed in 8), and judgment collections (discussed in 4). Workshops were led by center staff (11), a center volunteer (2), or a staff person from the Eviction Defense Collaborative (6). Most of the workshops lasted 90 minutes, and audiences tended to be small.³¹ The largest workshops drew groups of seven customers. The workshops helped with form preparation (9) and provided referrals (3). Most workshops were in a lecture or question-and-answer format. Workshop descriptions are set out below.

Prepare for your settlement conference (UD). This workshop addresses the unlawful detainer settlement process. It lasts about 90 minutes with the first hour as a class and the remaining half hour intended to answer individual questions for those litigants with settlement conferences on that particular day. Litigants learn about the workshop through flyers that the court sends out along with notice of the settlement conference date. The workshop is offered twice per week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, right before the *pro per* settlement conferences. The court rearranged its calendar to consolidate all *pro per* cases on those two days to allow for the workshop to take place right before the settlement conference. Instruction is primarily verbal; however, litigants also receive a comprehensive package with information on the settlement process, describing options, explaining what to do with jury instructions, and reinforcing the need to go to trial if no settlement is reached. Stipulation for judgment forms and jury instructions are discussed. This is a stand-alone workshop. Follow-up assistance is provided if litigants do not settle their cases and must proceed to trial. The Eviction Defense Collaborative makes an appointment at its office to prepare litigants for trial. In addition, ACCESS assists with enforcement of the stipulations, completion of paperwork to obtain judgment if stipulation is broken, and stays of eviction. A landlord attorney is on call for those two days in the rare instances of *pro per* landlords.

³¹ Workshop tracking data do not cover the traffic workshops at the Hall of Justice, which have much larger attendance.

Introduction to family law. This workshop, led by the ACCESS director, is offered at La Raza every other Tuesday in Spanish. It consists of one hour of class plus a half hour of individual consultations. Instruction is verbal and written materials from the Office of the Family Law Facilitator are distributed. This is a stand-alone workshop, with no follow-up assistance by ACCESS. The customers assisted are then offered further assistance by the Office of the Family Law Facilitator. At the time of the second site visit, this workshop had been conducted at Cameron House at least six times, four times in Cantonese and two in Vietnamese.

Orientation to small claims. This workshop takes place every Thursday and lasts 90 minutes. Led by the small claims advisor, the program consists of an overview of the small claims process, including ascertaining jurisdiction and venue, naming the defendant, filing, preparing for court, and attending the court hearing. Usually, the plaintiff's claim is completed in the workshop unless participants have already completed it. Instruction is verbal, with written materials distributed. In addition, a short video provided by Legal Aid of Orange County is shown. The ACCESS director has also offered this workshop in Chinese at Cameron House on two occasions, with the assistance of an interpreter on the Cameron House staff.

How to collect your judgment. This workshop led by the small claims advisor takes place every Thursday and lasts 90 minutes. Small claims workshops are also offered at La Raza. An overview of the enforcement process is provided, with detailed discussions of methods of collecting judgments such as bank levies, liens, wage garnishments, till taps, and keepers. Discussion also extends to filing orders of examination, questioning parties, issuing subpoenas, and renewing judgments. Instruction is verbal, and a packet of information and forms covering most enforcement options are distributed.

How to fight your traffic ticket. This workshop takes place once per month from 5:30 to 8 p.m. (or 8:30 p.m. if volume is high). It is taught by a pro bono attorney expert in the area of traffic law, assisted by the Traffic Division chief, and it takes place at the Hall of Justice, where the Traffic Division is located. The workshop goes through the traffic citation process from the moment a driver is cited through arraignment and trial. Participants have 30 to 45 minutes to ask questions. Attendance has been averaging about 60. ACCESS is considering adding another workshop and limiting assistance to 30 to 40 people to allow for a shorter workshop.

Educational Outreach

The ACCESS director makes a monthly appearance on a Chinese radio program to answer legal questions. Questions and answers are translated into Chinese as the interview proceeds. Every two months, the Chinese radio program is followed by a workshop in Chinese or Vietnamese. Using Cameron House as the intermediary has allowed the program to provide education on many different legal issues. Although these numbers are not captured in terms of people coming into the ACCESS center, contacts in the community report that the value of this education is significant.

Appearances are also made on Spanish radio and television. Educational materials have been distributed to community-based service providers to help them inform their clients. The center is told that these materials are widely used and viewed as very helpful and informative, given the misconceptions and myths existent in the different immigrant communities about the legal system.

Written Materials

The ACCESS center provides written materials in all of its five target languages. Printed materials include:

- A guide to the San Francisco Superior Court (where to get court forms and file papers, general information about the departments that handle various case types, and court-based self-help services);
- Information on self-representation (services provided at the self-help center, tips for self-represented litigants, and tips on how to find a lawyer);
- Tips on how to use an interpreter in court; and
- Information regarding particular case types with which the center provides assistance (including information for both landlords and tenants).

Most instructions on how to fill out court forms have not been translated, however. In addition, the center provides written materials on areas of law that it does not help customers with individually or in workshops.

The center pays an outside provider to translate its materials into plain English or accessible text³² and into four of the five non-English languages the program serves. Program staff can translate materials into Spanish but must use a translator for the other languages. Center staff must be sure that a document is accurate and complete before sending it to the translator because no one is able to make changes to the documents once they have been translated. Although other court employees are proficient in some of these languages, most are not experienced enough to translate materials, especially those with legal terminology. These translations have been costly: According to interviews, an average trifold brochure costs between \$2,200 and \$3,100 to translate.

In addition, the center has developed tools for use by court staff to facilitate referrals and inform court staff about available services. One is a referral slip designed to be completed by judges and commissioners when a self-represented litigant has appeared in their court and does not have correct paperwork or needs additional information. The form allows judges or commissioners to fill out the name and case number, checking problems the case has (see Appendix H). Staff at the ACCESS center have found that customers have a hard time remembering or understanding judges' instructions about what paperwork is

³² Accessible or plain English text refers to text that is easy to understand and read for individuals with average levels of literacy. For more information, please refer to the Transcend Web site: <http://www.transcend.net/at/index.html>

necessary to successfully complete their case. Because customers take the form directly to the ACCESS center, they no longer have to remember complicated instructions or legal jargon.

The center developed a similar tool for court clerks. This referral card provides information on the location of court-based self-help service providers, such as the Office of the Family Law Facilitator and the self-help center, and it delineates the services they provide. Finally, the center distributes laminated cards to clerks that outline the services provided by the court-based self-help services and by outside legal service agencies. According to respondents, clerks use these materials to refer customers to the center.

Internet/E-mail Services

The center has a Web site that provides information about its hours and the areas of law that it serves. A volunteer is in the process of developing the site to provide more comprehensive information on the center's services, translated into the five target languages. Currently, the Web site does not identify the languages in which the center provides help, and it is entirely in English. The center also set up an e-mail account to which customers can send questions, although the address is only publicized within the center itself, on its Web site, and through affiliated community agencies. The center director responds to e-mail inquiries in either English or Spanish. According to interviews, although there have been few e-mail inquiries until recently, these seem to be increasing and are now coming in at a rate of about 70 per month. The center director believes that e-mail is an efficient way to respond to easy questions and allows litigants to avoid repeated trips to the courthouse.

Interpreters

When called by a judge or court clerk, and when not assisting customers, the director, clerk, or an interpreter volunteer will appear in court to provide Spanish and Cantonese interpretation services for self-represented litigants in civil matters. Center staff act as court interpreters to assist litigants in civil harassment or small claims cases. The director and clerk spend about 10 percent of their time providing these services. Many respondents described this as a particularly helpful service the center staff can provide and noted a great need for interpreting services. Even with center staff's assistance, there remains a large unmet need for interpreters in civil cases.

Chronological Description of Service Flow

Referrals to the Center

Currently, most customers hear about the self-help center either through a court clerk or through a friend or family member (see figure 4.11). Clerks refer customers to a range of legal resources in San Francisco. ACCESS has been instrumental in educating clerks about available resources in the community. Clerks commonly distribute a list of community legal resources to customers at the clerk's window, including where to go for attorney assistance. If the legal issue is something the ACCESS center handles, however,

clerks are likely to refer customers there first, according to interviews. This indicates that the referral slips and outreach the director has done with court staff is working; however, according to some site visit interviews, clerks do not consistently provide accurate information about the ACCESS center’s hours of operation or its ability to serve customers in languages other than English and Spanish. Center staff members conduct regular training for clerk supervisors, but the information does not get to the clerk staff consistently. Furthermore, the frequent rotation of clerk staff makes it hard for the center to keep up with training.

ACCESS customers who have monthly household incomes of more than \$2,000 are more likely to hear about the center from court clerks. The likelihood of hearing about the center from a community agency declines as income increases. If income is more than \$2,500 per month, information about the ACCESS center is less likely to come from family and friends. This is also true for those reporting higher educational levels. Income exceeding \$2,500 per month also increases the likelihood of hearing about the center through the Internet.

Figure 4.11
How Customers Heard About ACCESS¹
Customer Intake Forms

Source	%	N
Clerk’s office	36%	369
Friend or family	18%	182
Community service agency	8%	82
Legal Aid, Legal Services	7%	72
Attorney	5%	56
Web site	5%	50
Other	5%	47
Bar association	4%	46
Pamphlets, written materials, posters	4%	38
Police	3%	33
Judge, commissioner	3%	30
Other court personnel	3%	27
Family court services	3%	26
Walk-in	2%	24
Newspaper, TV, radio advertisement	2%	16
Family law facilitator	1%	9
DA, local child support agency	1%	9
Total		1,116

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one source.

About 62 percent of ACCESS customers report that they did not seek help from another source prior to coming to the center. Within that group, 46 percent report that they cannot afford an attorney. This proportion is noticeably lower than programs report in both Fresno County and Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties. This difference may be partially related to the fact that the cases handled in San Francisco are somewhat less complicated (i.e. name change). Another 48 percent of ACCESS customers don't know if they need an attorney or choose to self-represent.

Intake Procedures

Customers who drop by the ACCESS center sign in at the front desk. Staff and volunteers meet individually with customers on a first-come, first-served basis. Respondents said that at times, there are long lines of waiting customers. Center workers report that no more than five people are usually waiting in line at one time and that wait times are usually not longer than half an hour. The staff begin triage so that those who are waiting can get started on some paperwork or reading. Triage of cases is a critical function of the program.

An attorney or clerk usually staffs the reception desk. If a volunteer is staffing the reception desk, it is only until an attorney or clerk can return. Once reception concludes that the customer can be assisted by ACCESS, a volunteer gives the customer an intake form to complete, takes the customer to the table, and begins assistance. Usually, the forms are highlighted, and customers fill in personal information (such as name, address) and, depending on level of comfort, may complete a declaration with the volunteer on hand. If a customer is not comfortable writing or has limited English, the volunteer takes a more active role. This varies a lot depending on type of case and comfort level of the customer. Some customers can go forward if they get the right paperwork with sections that need particular attention highlighted and can ask questions as they complete the forms. Others need a little more assistance.

During intake, customers are asked to sign the disclosure statement informing them that the center does not provide legal advice and that the center and its attorneys are not representing them. Next, customers are asked what help they need and whether or not they currently have counsel.

If customers are self-represented, case assessment continues. For example, if customers request assistance with a restraining order, questions about their relationship to the perpetrator are asked. Customers involved in a domestic violence relationship are referred to the facilitator. If customers appear to be older than 50, they are asked about age to ascertain whether an elder abuse restraining order and referral to Legal Assistance to the Elderly is appropriate. Volunteers also assist customers responding to a restraining order.

For customers with an eviction issue, the first step is to ascertain whether they are the tenant or landlord. For tenants, staff reviews the summons to ascertain when it was served. If fewer than five days have passed, customers are referred to the Eviction Defense Collaborative. Volunteers assist customers who arrive on the fifth day. When

the situation is unclear, staff check the register of actions to make sure no default has been filed. Depending on the Eviction Defense Collaborative's telephone advice, customers are either referred to that program or helped at the ACCESS center. If a default has been entered, information and assistance are provided about motions to vacate. Similarly, information and assistance can be provided about stays. The Eviction Defense Collaborative can help with rental assistance and relocation, so a referral to them, if there is time, is usually preferable. These cases often include related social services issues, so ACCESS refers customers to the appropriate community agency.

For customers who are landlords, all commercial evictions are referred to the private bar. If a commercial eviction is not involved, staff inquire about notice to the tenant. If no notice has been given, information and education about notice requirements are provided. If the customer indicates that notice has been given, ACCESS reviews the notice with the litigant and, when appropriate, assists with the unlawful detainer paperwork. All landlords are provided with an article discussing liability for wrongful eviction.

The first step in triage of a small claims case is to determine if it is a new case. If so, staff ascertain who is the defendant, where the defendant is located, what happened, and where it happened. Education is provided about issues of venue and about claim splitting, and appropriate referrals are made to the bar for litigants who wish to proceed with cases exceeding the jurisdictional limits of the small claims court. Customers who want to continue in small claims court are referred to the center's workshop on small claims orientation. For customers who have already filed a small claims court case, center staff provide a document review service and answer questions. For customers who want to enforce judgments, the triage person ascertains how much is known about the defendant's assets. If the defendant's bank is known, for example, immediate assistance can be provided. Often, however, a wide range of enforcement mechanisms must be reviewed. In those cases, customers are referred to the judgment collection workshop. A substantial number of small claims customers are courtroom referrals. The triage person takes the referral from the commissioner, figures out what customer needs, and provides appropriate assistance.

When customers ask for help with a name change, their county of residence must first be ascertained. Customers who live in San Francisco are assisted with forms; others are referred to the proper location. Customers seeking gender change are asked if they have the required affidavit from a physician. If not, they are provided with a template to take to their doctor. In the rare cases when gender change issues are complicated, referrals are often made to the Transgender Law Center.

Critical to triage is determining what cases the center can and cannot handle. For example, customers who are suing or being sued in civil court are referred to the bar. ACCESS provides plaintiffs who need to serve a defendant with an informational packet on service of process. Staff can check to see if defendant customers have been defaulted by checking the register of actions. If no default has been entered and there is sufficient time to respond, customers are referred to the bar for legal advice about filing an answer.

If time is insufficient for referral, ACCESS staff provide information about the possible types of responses and inform customers that they will need to make this complicated decision themselves. Customers who choose to file an answer receive help with the basics of general denials or answers. Customers are then referred to the Volunteer Legal Services Program, for help from an attorney with a possible amended answer. If a default has been entered against the customer, information about the consequences is provided as well as education about various options.

Referrals From the Center

About 16 percent of ACCESS customers are referred to other service providers, most commonly to a lawyer referral service, legal aid office, or to the Office of the Family Law Facilitator. Referrals to community service providers are less common.

Figure 4.12
ACCESS Referrals Made to Legal and Community Service Providers¹
Service Tracking Forms

	%	N
<i>Legal Service Providers</i>		
Legal services	46%	395
Lawyer referral service	24%	206
Family law facilitator	23%	195
Small claims advisor	4%	38
Local child support agency	0%	2
Public defender	0%	1
Other legal service ²	6%	50
Total		887
<i>Community Service Providers</i>		
Domestic violence shelter/advocate	9%	5
Housing service	9%	5
Mediation service	9%	5
Government service (e.g. FCS, CPS)	7%	4
Counseling service	2%	1
Other community service ²	66%	36
Total		56

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one provider.

² Examples of other legal service providers include the probate clinic, the employment law center, the rent board. Examples of other community service providers include adult protective services, the health department, the public library, and medical clinics.

Almost all family law cases are referred to the family law facilitator (91 percent), and unlawful detainer cases are usually referred to legal services (87 percent). Other civil and probate cases are most often sent to lawyer referral office, private attorneys, or legal services. Examples of other legal service providers include the probate clinic, the employment law center, and the rent board. Examples of other community service providers include adult protective services, the health department, the public library, and medical clinics. (See figure 4.12 for an overview.)

Returning for Service

Most ACCESS customers do not return to the center for additional help, according to service tracking data.³³ Among the 23 percent who return, the most common reason is to get clarification on the next step in their legal process, as shown in figure 4.13. Because ACCESS does not assist with many of the particularly complicated case types that involve many steps in the court process (e.g., family law), it is not surprising that customers do not return to the center after their initial visit.

Figure 4.13
ACCESS: Reason for Customers' Return Visits¹

	%	N
Next step in the process	53 %	581
Has additional questions	33%	358
Needs help with forms	9%	102
Document review	7%	79
Needs access to an interpreter to help translate in court	2%	24
Needs help understanding a court order	2%	19
Responding to new papers	1%	7
Court appearance preparation workshop	1%	5
Filing	0%	1
Other	5%	50
Total		1,226

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one reason. About 23 percent of visits were from customers who returned for assistance.

Budget and Expenditures

During the first year of operation, the ACCESS program spent 58 percent of its budget on operating expenses and 42 percent on personnel. Most operating expenses were divided evenly between equipment/furniture expenses and translation of materials.

³³ These numbers may be low because service tracking forms were not filled out for people returning to pick up their temporary order or order to show cause.

During the second year of operation, 75 percent of the ACCESS budget was for staffing and 25 percent for operating expenses. Of the operating expenses, 71 percent was for costs of translation and interpretation services.

In the third grant year, nearly all (more than 99 percent) of program expenditures were for staffing. This seems to indicate that program is becoming increasingly institutionalized into the operational structure of the court.

Collaboration and Outreach

Collaboration efforts were a major part of the plans for this center, and they have been a major focus of its ongoing operations. The center has established relationships both inside and outside the court, and respondents reported that these have led to fruitful collaborations and efficient work patterns.

Collaboration Within the Court

Collaboration between the ACCESS center and other court divisions has made the schedule more convenient for self-represented litigants. When the center opened, the director developed an assessment of each civil department to determine current needs. She also met with all the court clerks hoping to learn from them and other court staff where the ACCESS center could be helpful. The director was familiar with these individuals because she had been an attorney with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator prior to becoming director of the center.

The center also has a strong relationship with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, and the two offices work together to provide language services to customers (e.g., the ACCESS center will send its Russian-speaking volunteer to the Office of the Family Law Facilitator if assistance is needed to communicate with a Russian-speaking customer). ACCESS has enhanced existing services at the Office of the Family Law Facilitator by providing limited assistance in family law on Fridays when the Office of the Family Law Facilitator is not open and by providing family law assistance outside the court at community-based organizations.

The court's probate division was experiencing a significant demand for help from self-represented litigants with small estate issues. In response, ACCESS developed a small-estates affidavit procedure for self-represented litigants. Similarly, in response to a request from pretrial services in the civil division, ACCESS developed a service of process packet to distribute at hearings involving orders to show cause, which described sanctions on self-represented plaintiffs for failure to serve the defendant.

Collaboration between the ACCESS center, courtroom clerks, commissioners, and the pro tem coordinator was critical as the court redesigned the unlawful detainer settlement conference calendar to facilitate assistance to self-represented litigants.

Collaboration and Public Relations Outside the Court

The ACCESS center has established many useful relationships in the community. The director had contacts with community-based organizations as a result of her previous position in the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, she used these contacts during planning for the center. After taking the job with the center, she wrote letters to most of the legal and social services providers in San Francisco, then followed up with phone calls and set up meetings.

The center has also set up a system of referrals with legal services to facilitate efficient service to the public. For example, ACCESS helps customers prepare and file a request for an elder abuse restraining order, then sends them to Legal Assistance to the Elderly for follow-up.

A similar arrangement exists with the Volunteer Legal Services Program (VLSP). ACCESS helps litigants in collection defense to prepare and file answers, then refers the customers to VLSP for additional assistance. The center also works with the VLSP's Eviction Defense Collaborative to bring workshops into the center for litigants involved in unlawful detainer cases. The Eviction Defense Collaborative is a partnership of major tenants' rights groups in San Francisco and the main community resource for people facing evictions. E-mail and telephone communications systems have been established with legal services for quick answers to referral questions among the programs.

To reach non-English-speaking communities, the center has established ties with two social services centers in San Francisco: one that reaches out to the Hispanic population and one that serves the Chinese and Vietnamese communities. The director has regular contact with these two organizations and is able to reach a large number of their constituencies through the services she provides. For example, the director conducts monthly 30-minute radio interviews on a local Chinese cable radio station; these interviews are translated into Cantonese by a representative from Cameron House, a faith-based community organization serving Asian and Asian-American San Francisco residents. The director is interviewed on the air on a particular topic (the first on-air interview covered the services provided by the self-help center and how to get legal name changes). The radio show reaches an estimated 2,000 listeners.

The director also holds a Spanish-language workshop every other Tuesday at La Raza, a community organization focused on the Hispanic population. Through these forums, she is able to assist the Spanish-speaking population of San Francisco with various legal issues. The director also regularly appears on a variety of Spanish-language radio shows. The center is working toward collaborative relationships with a variety of other community organizations, either to set up additional community-based workshops about legal issues (e.g., the Chinese Community Development Center and the local YMCA) or to recruit volunteers (e.g., the San Francisco Bar Association). According to interviews, community partners are enthusiastic about the ACCESS program, and the communities served by these organizations are grateful for the help ACCESS provides and have had few or no complaints.

The center has engaged in several outreach actions during the past year, including direct contact with certain communities through its ties to the community-based organizations mentioned above, through its Web site, and through interviews on local TV and radio. Respondents acknowledged the center has not yet found an effective way to advertise its services to San Francisco's Russian or Filipino communities, and there is no concerted outreach to the county at large. Respondents expressed concern that an overall outreach effort would bring in more customers than the staff could handle. With even these few outreach efforts, the staff is often overburdened with the current customer demand.

Impact on Litigants

The impact of the ACCESS program was described in interviews with court personnel and other stakeholders as well as by the self-represented litigants themselves.

Views of Court Personnel and Other Stakeholders

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the self-help center on the court. One respondent we spoke with talked about the "huge intangible" service provided by the center: Self-represented litigants who are better informed are more at ease when appearing at court. Uninformed self-represented litigants often have to repeat steps in the process because of errors. Because they do not fully understand what has happened, they may become belligerent and hostile. By educating litigants about the basic processes of the court, the center helps courtrooms to run more efficiently and pleasantly.

According to interviews with court staff, litigants come to court better prepared and organized as a result of the self-help center. Respondents said it is often obvious to bench officers when a self-represented litigant has been to the ACCESS center, based on the completeness of the forms they offer and the level of organization. Respondents reported that ACCESS services help members of the Chinese- and Spanish-speaking communities.

Views of Customers

Customer satisfaction surveys and reports from self-help center staff indicate that ACCESS is meeting an important need in the community and that customers provide positive feedback on their experiences at the center.

Vignette: Civil Harassment and Eviction Assistance and Community Agency Referral for a Spanish-Speaking Customer

Guadalupe is a hotel cleaner who speaks only Spanish and reads only a little in any language. She is raising two children alone without help. To pay her rent, she sublets one of the rooms in her small apartment. For the past two months, the tenant has refused to pay any rent and has been increasingly violent and abusive. Guadalupe was concerned for the safety of her children. Because she is a master tenant, she does not qualify to receive legal assistance from the tenant advocacy groups in her eviction case against the subtenant. She was concerned that on being served with a three-day Notice for Nonpayment of rent, her tenant would get more violent. ACCESS was able to help her complete a three-day notice and the initial petition for a civil harassment restraining order, which was granted. Within a month, Guadalupe was able to have her tenant evicted. In addition, through the collaboration with La Raza, ACCESS helped her get rental assistance money to pay overdue rent. Following an ACCESS referral, Guadalupe is currently in the process of working with the family law facilitator to obtain child support. Guadalupe told ACCESS that without its help, she would have lost her housing, and she and her children would have been homeless.

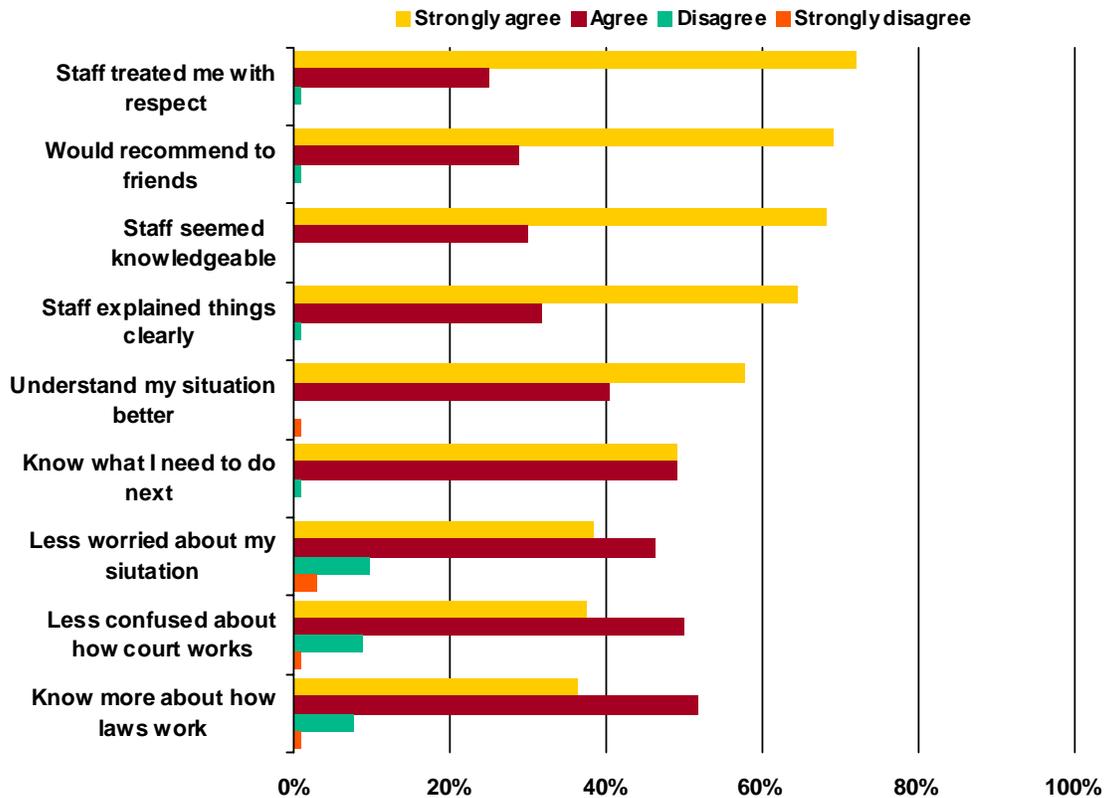
Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed to drop-in and workshop customers during a two-week period in May 2004. Surveys were received from an estimated 29 percent of those visiting the ACCESS center during this period. Although the response rate is too low to draw many conclusions about customer satisfaction, ACCESS customers consistently gave relatively high ratings to the services they received (see figure 4.14), although satisfaction levels were lower than those reported by the programs in Fresno and Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties.

Two characteristics of the San Francisco program may contribute to this result. First, the San Francisco program handles primarily non-family law civil cases. Other studies have reported lower satisfaction levels for these types of cases.³⁴ Second, the ACCESS customers have higher education levels than customers of the other two programs. Satisfaction surveys involving family court services have shown that higher education is related to lower satisfaction among mediation litigants.³⁵

³⁴ A. Bailey and R. Zorza (Trial Court Research and Improvement Consortium), *Report on the Self Help Centers of the Fourth Judicial District Court of the State of Minnesota* (2004).

³⁵ D. Piazza (AOC, Center for Families, Children, and the Courts), *Client Feedback in California Court-Based Child Custody Mediation* (2004).

Figure 4.14
Overall Satisfaction
ACCESS Customer Survey

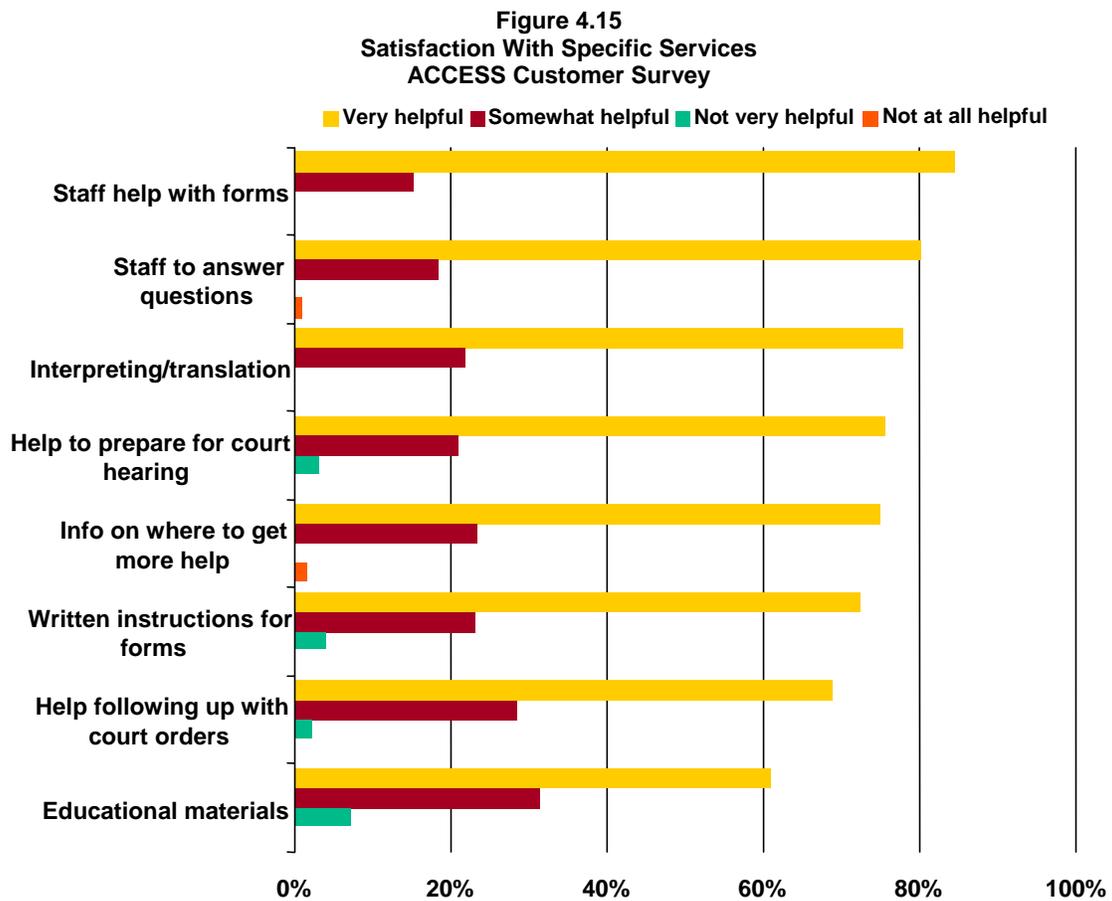


Overall, ACCESS customers provided very positive ratings on the general satisfaction questions, with at least 80 percent either strongly agreeing or agreeing with each of the statements. However, less than half of customers strongly agreed that they knew more about how the laws work in their situation (37 percent), that they were less confused about how the court works (38 percent), that they were less worried about their situation (39 percent), and that they knew what they needed to do next (49 percent). ACCESS customers were most likely to provide very favorable ratings on the knowledge of the staff and their interactions with staff, as well as on whether they would recommend the center to friends.

“Es muy importante que esten abiertos estos centros para que le ayuden a la comunidad latina es muy importante. Para la gente que busca asesoria estamos muy contentos con el servicio que los brindan.
Translation: It is very important that these centers are open in order to help the Latino community. It is very important for those people who are looking for help. We are happy with the service that is offered.
ACCESS customer

All services were viewed by the vast majority of customers (90 percent or more) to be very helpful or somewhat helpful (see figure 4.15). Staff assistance with forms was rated as the most helpful service, followed closely by answers to questions and interpretation or translation assistance. Educational materials and help following up with court orders were viewed as somewhat less helpful than the other services.

This is a fantastic service. Surprisingly easy considering the usual confusion non-lawyers experience with the court system.
ACCESS customer



Vignette: Name Change Assistance for a Chinese Customer

Yao needed to travel back to China because her mother was very sick and probably going to die. Her son had never been to China and had never met his grandmother. Yao tried to get a passport for her son, but his birth certificate contained two errors, one involving Yao's name and another involving her son's name. The passport office required an amended birth certificate or a court order. The Office of Vital Records will not amend a birth certificate without a court order changing name, even though Yao and her son were not technically changing their name, just correcting it on the birth record. Even if a request to amend the birth certificate is acceptable, the process can take up to 9 months. Yao came to ACCESS, desperate to get help in time to fly back home. An ACCESS volunteer who was fluent in Cantonese assisted Yao to complete name change forms and to obtain a court date. ACCESS also assisted Yao to do a search for her son's father, who had been out of contact for years. Yao was then able to obtain an order dispensing with notice to the father. At the court hearing a month later, the ACCESS volunteer interpreted for Yao. Another volunteer helped Yao to prepare the decrees changing name. Yao was able to obtain a passport for her son, and they both flew to China to visit Yao's mother for the last time.

Vignette: Guardianship Assistance for Spanish-Speaking Grandparent Caregivers

Abelardo and Maria are the grandparents of Estefani. Their son, Mario, had been incarcerated for domestic violence against Estefani's mother. Estefani and her mother had been living with Abelardo and Maria, who often took care of Estefani. After Mario was incarcerated, Estefani's mother moved out to live with a new boyfriend, who turned out to be violently abusive. Because of the danger in her new situation, Estefani's mother left the child with her grandparents. Abelardo and Maria needed to enroll Estefani in school, put her on their health care plan, and take her to the doctor. Child Protective Services said they should pursue a guardianship to avoid having the child placed into the foster care system. ACCESS helped Abelardo and Maria to complete a caregiver's affidavit to address the immediate needs and subsequently assisted them with a petition for guardianship. Abelardo and Maria were eventually able to obtain a guardianship over Estefani, who is now living safely and happily with them and visiting her mother in a safe environment.

Impact on Court Process

The impact of the ACCESS program on the court's ability to effectively handle cases involving self-represented litigants was expressed in interviews with court personnel and other stakeholders.

The merger of the ACCESS center with the small claims advisor has been successful in leveraging court resources to increase capacity. Because the small claims advisor shares

space and office hours with the ACCESS center, both programs have been able to expand their scope of services, serve a wider audience, and reduce staff stress. The small claims advisor's program is now able to serve a wider range of customers because of the additional staff in the ACCESS center. The center is also now able to stay open when one of the attorneys needs to take a day off.

The court has rearranged calendars to schedule unlawful detainer settlement conferences that involve self-represented litigants on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The self-help center, in partnership with the Eviction Defense Collaborative and the Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program, conducts workshops on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the ACCESS center immediately before settlement conference hearings are scheduled. By providing assistance to self-represented litigants before their hearings and settlement conferences, the self-help center educates these litigants about court proceedings and assists them in navigating the process. Clustering the pro per cases in this manner, combined with the available educational services, has expedited the process sufficiently to reduce the need to recruit pro tem judges to hear the cases and has saved costs in terms of courtroom and bailiff staffing.

Referrals by bench officers serve to cut down the amount of judicial time previously needed to answer questions. Clerks report that time is saved by having a place to send people to get questions answered or to get additional help with forms. Courtroom efficiency is enhanced by the availability of Spanish interpreters for small claims, civil harassment, and name change cases. Interpreters in the courtroom reduce the number of continuances. Orders after hearing are prepared and entered into the court files.

Referral slips created by the ACCESS center have been an effective way of communicating with court personnel about the kinds of services the center provides, and they serve as a constant reminder of available services. The center provides assistance to other court divisions, which further expands the resources available for self-represented litigants.

Court File Review

The positive impact of the ACCESS program is also shown in the results of a review of case files that compared civil harassment cases filed before and after the opening of the center. AOC staff abstracted and analyzed civil harassment files in San Francisco County. The purpose of the file review was to identify the impact of the self-help center on the cases of clients, as quantified through the broad case indicators, and more generally to identify the problems self-represented litigants face in the course of their civil harassment cases.

About 100 civil harassment cases filed prior to the opening of the self-help center in which at least one party was self-represented were compared with about 100 civil harassment cases filed after the opening of the self-help center in which at least one party had been to the ACCESS center. The cases were filed between April and May 2002 and

between April and December 2003. See Appendix B for a fuller description of the case file review methodology.

Some caveats to the findings presented below should be noted. Although the ACCESS center was not in operation in 2002, some assistance was available to litigants involved in civil harassment cases: the restraining order clinic staffed by students from Hastings Law School. Therefore, differences between 2002 and 2003 might not be as large as they would have been if no civil harassment assistance was available. In addition, there was a change in the commissioner who hears civil harassment cases between the two time periods, and the new commissioner is viewed as being somewhat more strict than the previous one.

Background of cases. The relationships of the parties involved in civil harassment cases were very similar in 2002 and 2003. The 2003 sample had slightly fewer neighbors involved in civil harassment cases (21 percent, compared to 26 percent in 2002), which may be due to the center's referring neighbor disputes to community boards. The 2003 sample was somewhat more likely to have cases involving landlords and tenants (8 percent compared with 4 percent in 2002). Program staff mentioned that they often explain the option of filing a civil harassment petition to master tenants who need to do a nuisance eviction (because a valid meritorious restraining order may strengthen the nuisance case), which may result in a greater number of landlord/tenant cases in civil harassment.

In both years, the vast majority of petitioners received a fee waiver, but they were more likely to receive a fee waiver in 2003 (93 percent, compared to 87 percent in 2002).

In 2003, the file was more likely to indicate that the petitioner needed language assistance (8 percent compared with 2 percent in 2002). (Most spoke Spanish.) This may be because ACCESS is bringing in a more diverse population of litigants, but this finding should be interpreted with caution due to the inconsistent availability of information related to language needs in the court files.

Paperwork, temporary orders, and service. Litigants in the two samples were equally likely to have add-ons to their declarations, but the 2003 group was significantly less likely to file a supplemental declaration (9 percent compared with 23 percent in 2002). Supplemental declarations are primarily used when the original declarations are insufficient for some reason, so this may represent an important improvement.

The 2003 sample was somewhat less likely to have a temporary order issued (75 percent compared to 80 percent in 2002). Program staff explain that this decrease may be due to the change in commissioners: The commissioner in 2003 was less likely to issue temporary orders. However, those who did not have a temporary order issued in 2003 were more likely than those in the 2002 sample to have an order to show cause issued and therefore more likely to reach the hearing stage (12 percent of cases in 2003 had an order to show cause issued compared with 3 percent of cases in 2002). Program staff also explain that there could have been more cases with no temporary order and no order to

show cause issued in 2002 (17 percent compared to 23 percent in 2003) because litigants were not returning to pick up their orders to show cause, so the orders were never filed. This may be an indication that ACCESS customers return to pick up their orders to show cause on a more consistent basis.

Among litigants who received a temporary order, the 2003 sample was more likely to have a stay-away order granted (80 percent compared with 71 percent in 2002). Program staff explain that a common mistake they see is for petitioners to check the personal conduct box only, forgetting or not knowing that they should complete the stay-away section as well. It may be that more stay-away orders are being granted because, due to the help of the ACCESS center, they are more often being requested. In addition, the prior commissioner was said to be less likely to issue stay-away orders in cases involving roommates or neighbors.

Petitioners were equally likely to successfully serve the responding party with the order to show cause or temporary order in 2002 and 2003. However, it took longer for the 2003 sample to effect service (22 days compared with 11 days in 2002). This may be due to the fact that ACCESS refers most of its customers to the sheriff for service, which often takes longer but is a reliable way of effecting service.

Hearings, permanent orders, and final status of case. Of those cases that proceeded to the hearing stage, 2003 cases were less likely to have only one hearing (59 percent compared with 69 percent in 2002) and, on average, had a slightly higher number of total hearings for the case (1.7 compared with 1.5 in 2002). Correspondingly, the 2003 sample also had a higher number of continuances per case (0.40, compared to 0.22 in 2002). Most continuances were due to a lack of proof of service, although notably some were at the request of the court or due to changing circumstances in the case. In spite of the differences in number of hearings, petitioners in the 2003 sample were more likely to appear at their hearings (58 percent compared with 50 percent in 2002).

In cases where an order to show cause or temporary order was issued, the 2002 and 2003 samples were equally likely to have a permanent order issued. Looking at the final status of all cases, the 2003 sample showed slightly more dismissals or denials of permanent order (22 percent compared with 16 percent in 2002), but this may be a result of more cases getting to the hearing stage in the first place. Cases in the two samples were about equally likely to be dropped (mostly for failure to appear) or result in a permanent order.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Accomplishment of Goals

Multilingual services remain challenging. In response to the request from the AOC for a program targeting non-English-speaking multilingual populations, the ACCESS center set out to address this population of San Francisco, specifically targeting self-represented litigants who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Tagalog, Russian, and Vietnamese. The

challenge of providing a service in a variety of languages is perhaps the most difficult to reasonably resolve, at least within existing resources. Nevertheless, the ACCESS program has gained access to two of its target populations (Spanish and Cantonese) through its collaborations with community-based organizations. These collaborations have allowed the staff to reach a broader scope of customers than it could on a one-on-one basis. Moreover, center staff have the capacity to assist Spanish-speaking customers on a daily basis.

Providing services in the other target languages, however, has been more difficult. The center relies on volunteers or borrowed time from other court staff to provide services in any languages other than Spanish. It has not found an effective method to reach out to the two other target populations. According to service tracking data, less than 5 percent of the center's drop-in services are provided in a language other than English or Spanish.

The experience of the ACCESS center highlights some of the challenges of the multilingual model. Providing self-help services in a variety of languages requires either a large or skilled staff or a coordination of an array of differing self-help resources. To implement a traditional self-help center, one or multiple staff members would have to be proficient in all of the target languages, which would be difficult or prohibitively expensive to achieve. Relying on other court staff with language skills, although helpful at times, may not be a feasible long-term strategy given the heavy workload of many court employees. Almost by definition, then, the center must rely on volunteers for any one-on-one or workshop services provided to non-English-proficient customers at the center. This reliance on volunteers puts consistent provision of services at risk and necessitates building relationships with organizations that can provide volunteers. An internship program with the local interpreter school, such as that established in Fresno County is ideal for this sort of model. However, as the San Francisco self-help center found, such relationships may be difficult to build because of outside political factors (in this case, the existence of a strong employee union has so far prevented the establishment of this sort of program).

Rather than focus on individual services, a multilingual model could also be organized more in the mold of the Los Angeles program, coordinating the efforts of any existing legal and community organizations with the goal of expanding self-help legal services to a multicultural community. This requires the existence of such organizations, which may be lacking in many communities. Overall, it is difficult to design a self-help center with the capacity to serve multiple language populations equally well.

Limiting services to non-English-speaking litigants is not practical. The issue of primary language assessment is complex and not always addressed well by existing demographic data. For example, many litigants who report speaking another language at home prefer to receive self-help services in English.

The ACCESS center found that targeting non- and limited-English-speaking litigants is also problematic when there are no comparable services for English-speaking litigants. It

is not a workable strategy for the court to provide help to some litigants and not to others on the basis of language.

Service Issues

Director's experience promoted development of comprehensive legal information and education services. Implementation and operation of self-help centers are enhanced by having a licensed attorney serve as director and supervisor of nonattorney staff and volunteers. An attorney with substantial experience in a field related to the needs of self-represented litigants has been very beneficial to ACCESS.

The San Francisco Self-Represented Litigant Task Force, which defined the qualifications and experience requirements for the program's director, decided that the director should be a licensed attorney. The attorney who was selected had professional experience in domestic violence legal services and with the San Francisco family law facilitator. Her professional qualifications and experience were invaluable in helping her to develop and operate a court-based legal information and education program. She was able to ascertain the needs of both public and court. She also gained the respect of judges, court staff, and attorneys in the legal community in ways that benefited the ACCESS program. The center works successfully with large numbers of appropriately supervised law student volunteers and in collaboration with community-based legal services organizations.

Collaboration and integration of court resources creates efficiencies. One major lesson that emerges from the experience of the ACCESS center is that collaborating with existing resources is critical to creating a successful program. The center has made great strides in serving a large number of customers with a small number of staff by leveraging court-based resources (e.g., the small claims advisor). The Self-Represented Litigant Task Force has helped the center to coordinate efforts with other court-based programs, and respondents recommended that other self-help centers seek the involvement of such an advisory council throughout the life of the program.

Collaboration with community resources increases the diversity of populations served. The ACCESS center has been successful in establishing relationships with certain community organizations (e.g., La Raza, the Cameron House, and the Eviction Defense Collaborative), which has increased the population the center is able to serve. The success of the multilingual model may depend on the ability of the self-help center to create these kinds of ties to leverage resources, build trust, and help with outreach efforts. Given the difficulty the ACCESS center has encountered in consistently providing language-appropriate services to some of its target populations (e.g., Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Russian), it should continue its efforts to build bridges with community organizations. Perhaps setting up a separate advisory council of individuals from these populations, or adding them to the existing task force, would increase the center's contacts among these communities, increase trust in the center, and generate more customers and volunteers.

Scheduling of multilingual services is a serious challenge. From the customer's perspective, the major limitation of the ACCESS center may be its confusing schedule. Originally, the center was open every day of the week but for different hours each day. According to interviews, court staff are confused about the times of the week when the center is open, and several respondents said that clerks refer customers to the center at all times of the day, not knowing it may be closed. Recently, the center has established regular hours.

The more challenging issues relate to providing services in a variety of languages. Because the availability of language volunteers changes so often, it is impossible for ACCESS to publish any schedule designating when speakers of various languages will be available. The director believes that a constantly changing schedule would create more confusion than no published schedule. Instead, when customers arrive for whom no language service is immediately available, they are given literature they can read in their primary language, and staff schedule an appointment for their return. A short interview is conducted with the interpretation help of court personnel to determine what their case involves and why they need to return. The scheduling control helps center staff. Having volunteers available by telephone helps alleviate the problem of litigants coming to the self-help center at times when no services are available in their language.

Referral tools facilitate customers' flow through the system. ACCESS created very practical and useful referral slips used by bench officers and clerks. Respondents unanimously found these slips helpful to direct customers to the right place. The slips used by bench officers spell out problems or issues with a self-represented customers' case, allowing self-help center staff to assist customers efficiently without even if the customers are unable to remember unfamiliar and complicated legal jargon.

Workshops to prepare for unlawful detainer settlement conferences and other courtroom services enhance courtroom efficiency. Preparations for settlement conferences have reduced the extent to which the court must schedule *pro per* cases. By clustering these cases on specific days and providing presettlement conference education, the resolution process is expedited. Furthermore, mediation services in small claims matters tend to further reduce the load on the *pro per* courtrooms. Preparation of orders after hearings completes court files. Self-help services such as these provided throughout the entire court process can help expedite cases and produce time savings for judicial and other court staff.

Triage of cases is a critical function of self-help service. When customers first enter the self-help center, assessment of their legal needs (triage) is critical to the operation of the program. Initial determination must be made about what cases the center can and cannot handle and appropriate referrals made for legal representation. The specific services that the center will provide depends largely on a variety of factors that are particular to different case types and issues. Because part of the role of a self-help center is to help litigants sort through the plethora of information available, individual case status must be ascertained so that the procedural information and education provided by the program is

relevant to the customer. Case complexity depends not only on the legal issues involved, but also on the ability of the litigants to benefit from certain types of assistance. For example, ACCESS staff emphasize that language preference is a complicated factor. Issues of literacy and ability to understand instructions are also matters that must be assessed initially.

The self-help center contributes to the overall functioning of the court with respect to the management of cases involving self-represented litigants. The presence of the ACCESS center has had an effect on the way in which the court handles a variety of matters involving self-represented litigants. The following are examples of contributions to the court system as a whole:

- Time savings for bench officers as the result of referrals to the ACCESS center for answers to procedural questions;
- Time savings for clerks as the result of referrals to the center for assistance with forms and procedural information;
- Contribution to the redesign of the unlawful detainer settlement conference calendar to facilitate assistance to self-represented litigants;
- Development of a small-estates affidavit procedure for self-represented litigants in response to a request from the probate division; and
- Development of a service-of-process packet to hand out at order-to-show-cause hearings for service failure sanctions in response to a request from civil pretrial services.

Chapter 5

Contra Costa County: Technology Model

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT MODEL TYPE: TECHNOLOGY MODEL

Hours:	Web site: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Workshop: Wednesdays, 2 to 4:30 p.m. Mediation: as needed Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Location:	Administrative office: Martinez Workshop: Broadcast to Walnut Creek courthouse from Martinez Mediation: Martinez Family Law Center
Number of Customers Served:	Web site: Average of over 2,000 visits per month Workshops: 17 between April 21 and June 30, 2004 Mediation: 50 from November 2003 to May 2004
Number of Staff:	One full-time project coordinator One project manager at 20 percent Program utilizes various contractors to complete tasks
Number of Volunteers:	Approximately 14 attorneys, judicial officers, and other court staff review content on a volunteer basis
Case Types Served:	Web site: Guardianship, domestic violence, unlawful detainer Workshops: Dissolution, Custody and visitation Mediation: Custody and visitation
Methods of Service Delivery:	Web site Videoconferencing: Workshops and distance mediation

Background

Contra Costa County, with more than 948,000 residents, is the ninth most populous county in California. One of the nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area, it covers 720 square miles. The county has a relatively low poverty rate of 8 percent and one of the fastest-growing workforces of all Bay Area counties.^{36,37} Contra Costa County has six court locations in five cities. As of July 2001, the Contra Costa Superior Court had 33 judges, 12 commissioners, and about 389 employees. Contra Costa County ranks in the top quarter of all California counties in terms of total filings.³⁸ In fiscal year 2002-2003, there were:

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Contra Costa County, California QuickFacts," <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06013.html> (accessed November 18, 2004).

³⁷ Contra Costa County, "About the County," <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/main.htm> (accessed November 18, 2004).

³⁸ Judicial Council of California, *2004 Court Statistics Report, Statewide Caseload Trends, 1993-1994 Through 2002-2003* (2004).

- more than 9,000 new family law filings (e.g., divorce, custody and visitation, domestic violence);
- nearly 1,500 new probate filings (e.g., guardianships, conservatorships);
- more than 10,000 new limited civil filings (e.g., landlord/tenant and small claims); and
- close to 7,000 new small claims filings.³⁹

As indicated in its extensive legal services directory, Contra Costa County has a wealth of resources both inside and outside the court for individuals seeking legal assistance, the most extensive of which appear to be in the areas of consumer matters, disability, health care, family law, and domestic violence. The major court-based sources of assistance for self-represented litigants are the family law facilitator (which also hosts divorce workshops conducted by pro bono lawyers from the county bar association), the small claims advisor, domestic violence clinics, and court-employed legal technicians who conduct document review for both domestic violence and probate cases. The county bar association is also very active in providing pro bono services, which include in-court assistance with guardianship cases, guardianship workshops, and attorney counseling evenings on a variety of case types. However, the county still faces unmet and underserved legal needs, largely in the areas of family law and probate guardianship.

Litigants may not be able to access the services they need for a variety of reasons. People interviewed during the two site visits to Contra Costa County (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B) were asked about barriers faced by self-represented litigants, and the same barriers were often cited: literacy/education levels, limited English proficiency, transportation and time barriers, and unfamiliarity with legal terms and procedures. Many services are offered for a limited number of hours each week or month or are offered only during daytime hours when individuals may have trouble taking time off of work. Some services are offered only in one court location, and litigants may lack adequate transportation to travel to locations distant from their homes. (Although public transit in many parts of the Bay Area is extensive, the distance between the major cities in Contra Costa County makes travel difficult—even for litigants with private transportation—and public transit options are limited outside of several major transit corridors.) Family law facilitator services are limited to child and spousal support issues, and many other services have income qualifications that are difficult to meet.

Contra Costa's program employs two main strategies to address these needs: the Virtual Self-Help Law Center Web site and videoconferencing. The Web site allows litigants to access information at a time and location most convenient to them. Videoconferencing helps litigants attend legal information workshops at locations more convenient to home or work. It also allows parents to appear for mediation of their child custody and

³⁹ Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS).

visitation disputes at the same time but in different locations, due to domestic violence issues or other concerns.

Description of Model

The Contra Costa County program is substantially different from a traditional self-help center. This pilot project explores how technology—in this case, the Internet and videoconferencing equipment—can be used to meet the needs of self-represented litigants. The Virtual Self-Help Law Center’s Web site provides information in multiple media formats (written, voice only, and video) pertaining to guardianship, domestic violence, and unlawful detainer cases, and it plans to offer information on dissolution and family law orders to show cause, civil, small claims, and traffic cases. It uses videoconferencing equipment to expand the availability of family law workshops and to facilitate child custody mediations between two parents in separate locations when domestic violence issues are a factor.

As the number of people without legal representation has grown, other ways of providing service have been developed such as workshops, which allow one lawyer to provide information to 10 or 20 people at a time. By adding videoconferencing technology, this project enables one lawyer’s workshop to reach beyond the 10 or 20 people on site to participants at remote locations. By recording the workshops and making copies of the tape in several formats (videocassettes, CD-ROMs, DVDs) and giving those copies to public libraries, schools, community centers, one lawyer can now provide information to people in many locations over an extended period of time. When a digital copy of the workshop video is posted on the Web site, one lawyer now provides information to countless people anywhere in the world at any time.

The Web site also displays the lawyer’s core information in text format; provides many tools, such as glossaries, to help people understand their case; answers frequently asked questions; helps self-represented litigants navigate the court process, file and serve court forms, and understand and comply with court orders; and links to numerous other sites with supplemental information. Now, all of the Judicial Council of California’s forms can be filled out online. The Web also makes the translation of information into different languages much easier.

Goals of Program

According to the grant proposal, the goal of the center is to “combine and deliver expert information and assistance via the Internet, computer applications, and real-time videoconference workshops to create a Virtual Self-Help Law Center for self-represented litigants with dissolution, child custody and visitation, domestic violence, civil, and guardianship cases.” The proposal outlined the following mechanisms for implementing the center:

- Develop at least six separate workshop programs;

- Acquire and place portable videoconferencing equipment endpoints in Martinez and two branch courts;
- Hire one lawyer and two paralegal assistants to co-facilitate each of the videoconference workshops;
- Write and deliver at least six multimedia training modules that provide instruction about preparing, filing, and serving forms via the Internet and CD-ROM in various public terminals;
- Hold videoconference mediation sessions for self-represented litigants in custody and visitation cases, so that they can meet simultaneously with the mediator but in different locations; and
- Publicize the center through a direct link from the main Contra Costa County court's Web site, public service announcements in local media, and flyers distributed throughout the courts and community-based organizations.

Focus Areas of Law

At the end of the evaluation period, the center's Web site included information for guardianship, domestic violence, and unlawful detainer cases. The program focused first on the guardianship content, which was deployed in September 2003, then moved on to domestic violence in November 2003 and unlawful detainer in April 2004 (see figure 5.1 for more details). Project staff reported that the first content area took somewhat longer to develop because they were simultaneously creating a template that would serve as a model for future sections of the Web site. Once that template was created, the development of other content areas went much more quickly. Content for dissolution will be added in early 2005, and additional sections are planned on family law orders to show cause, civil, small claims, and traffic cases. In addition to these efforts, the center created another program component by filming an instructional workshop for librarians that will be distributed to more than 900 public and law libraries via CD-ROM in early 2005. This material is designed to help libraries with a librarian and a modem learn how to provide information and assistance to self-represented litigants.

Figure 5.1
Timeline for Deployment of Web Content

Content Description	Developed	Deployed
Guardianship text	April '03	Sept. '03
Guardianship video	Sept. '03 (Contra Costa Co.)	Sept. '03
Guardianship video	'03 (Solano Co.)	Sept. '03
Welcome videos	Oct. '03	Nov. '03
DV Restraining Orders – text	Sept. '03	Nov. '03
DVRO videos	'02 (AOC)	Sept. '04
Users questionnaires	Jan. '04	Feb. '04
Training Librarians	Jan. '04	Sept. '04
Unlawful Detainer – text	Feb. '04	Apr. '04
Show Me/Tell Me links for guardian...	Feb. '04	Feb. '04
Family Law videos	'03 (Contra Costa Co. DCSS)	Sept. '04
Divorce	Oct. '04	Jan. '05 (est.)
Divorce videos	Nov. '04	Jan. '05 (est.)
Family Law OSC	Nov. '04	Jan. '05 (est.)
Court Procedures	Dec. '04	Feb. '05 (est.)

Divorce, custody, visitation, and child support are discussed at videoconference workshops conducted in Martinez and broadcast to Walnut Creek. The videoconference mediation option is for parents who have disputes about child custody and visitation and concerns about being in the same room because of domestic violence issues.

Project Planning and Start-up

The Virtual Self-Help Law Center experienced a slower start-up than expected. Respondents said the primary barrier to implementing the project more quickly was difficulty in hiring a project coordinator who would be responsible for the center's daily operations. Most of the planning for the center was done by the program manager with some support from a task force set up to address uses of technology for self-represented litigants. The task force was composed of 15 to 20 individuals, including bench officers, representatives from community organizations, the law librarian, the family law facilitator, clerks, court executives, and pro bono attorneys. An attorney who was initially hired to be the project coordinator left the position within a few weeks. The program had difficulty finding an attorney to fill the project coordinator position and had to expand its recruitment to nonattorneys with project management experience. The current project coordinator began work in early February 2003. The program manager oversees the center and supervises the project coordinator.

Respondents also explained that coordinating the purchase and installment of videoconferencing equipment, as well as securing the services of necessary contractors, took longer than originally expected. According to respondents, a pilot project of this scope—one that required the coordination of various court personnel/departments in different cities (e.g., information technology department, Family Court Services, Office of the Family Law Facilitator) as well as outside service providers (e.g., bar association's pro bono unit, law library)—takes a substantial amount of planning and discussion before

tangible services can be provided to the public. Difficulty in finding an appropriate project coordinator slowed the planning, thus delaying implementation. Individuals interviewed for the evaluation explained that the technical issues (e.g., wiring for videoconferencing equipment, Web site maintenance) that had to be resolved were not in themselves barriers to implementation, but the amount of time and coordination spent planning for the use of the technologies was a challenge, particularly until a full-time project coordinator was hired.

The Virtual Self-Help Law Center's administrative office is located in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Department in a building next to the main courthouse in Martinez. The office space, however, is not critical to the center's service delivery model because it serves the public in other venues (Internet, Walnut Creek courthouse, Family Court Services office).

Population Served

Contra Costa County's Virtual Self-Help Law Center serves customers primarily through a carefully designed Web site. Users view the site from locations all over the world, come to the site for a very wide range of information (whether or not they have a court case), and may be at any stage of exploring or resolving their concerns. Survey data show the site is used not only by parties directly involved in a particular legal matter but also by those who are gathering information on behalf of a friend or relative who may not be comfortable using computers or who has literacy, language, or other access problems. The population served also appears to be well-educated and comfortable using computer resources. The center's services, staffing, and populations served are described in more detail below.

Method of Obtaining Information from Web Site Visitors

Trying to determine who is being served, and how, is one of the most challenging aspects of evaluating the Virtual Self-Help Law Center, and the research in this area, especially related specifically to Web sites providing legal information, is somewhat limited.

Whereas visitors to a traditional, walk-in self-help center are asked to fill out an intake form, Web site users get a "pop-up" request for basic information about their issues and demographics. Because users can get the information they need whether or not they fill out the forms, only a fraction of the Web site's visitors responded to the survey.⁴⁰

Initial questions about collecting data from Web site users appeared simple to answer. With further exploration, however, it became clear that the most common strategy for

⁴⁰ The Virtual Self-Help Law Center Web site provided an opportunity for each user to complete an intake form that collected demographic data, computer use information, and reasons for accessing the site. During the evaluation's timeframe, 353 individuals chose to complete this form (compared with an average of more than 2,000 visits to the site per month). As a result, the responses described here may not reflect all Web site users. Data are not representative of individuals participating in the Walnut Creek videoconferenced workshops or the individuals participating in distance mediation.

tracking Web site activity—placing “cookies” on the user’s computer—might present serious safety issues for victims of domestic violence because they provide evidence of the sites users have visited. Victims of domestic violence are often at greatest risk if the perpetrator believes that the victim is planning to leave the relationship or is seeking legal protection. For this reason, the Virtual Self-Help Law Center and AOC staff agreed to use cookies sparingly (they are only placed when someone agrees to fill out and return the site’s questionnaire) and anonymously (the cookie refers to a non-court- and non-subject-related entity). To provide an additional measure of protection, the center worked with its Web site developer to create detailed information about how site visitors might erase evidence of the Web sites they visit.

Demographics

Education and income. Individuals who completed pop-up intake forms on Contra Costa’s Web site are more educated and have higher incomes than the individuals being served in the three other direct service pilot projects. Almost all users (95 percent) completing an intake form said they have at least a high school diploma or GED, and 40 percent have at least a college degree (see figure 5.2 for more information). These figures are remarkably similar to the general population of Internet users in the United States.⁴¹ About 59 percent of users have household incomes exceeding \$2,000 per month, somewhat lower than the national figures, which indicate that 67 percent of Internet users have household incomes of \$30,000 a year or more.

Gender and number of children. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Web site users completing intake forms are female, and 70 percent have children under 19 in their households, the majority having one or two children. The general population of Internet users is more likely to be male (50 percent), but users of any particular Web site may vary by the type of information provided on the site (e.g., domestic violence content may be more widely viewed by women than by men).

Ethnicity. About 64 percent of users are white non-Hispanic, with substantial proportions of African American (12 percent) and Hispanic (11 percent) users. The proportion of white non-Hispanics is larger among the general population of Internet users, likely because survey respondents are drawn from a national sample that may not reflect the greater diversity of California, which is the residence of the vast majority of Virtual Self-Help Law Center users. A relatively small proportion (16 percent) of survey respondents speak a language other than English at home, and the majority of these speak Spanish. Accordingly, nearly all customers (98 percent) said they prefer to receive services in English.

⁴¹ A. Lenhart et al. *The Ever-Shifting Internet Population: A New Look at Internet Access and the Digital Divide* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2003).

Figure 5.2
Web Site User Summary Statistics
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys

	%	N
Gender		
Female	66%	207
Male	34%	109
(missing)		37
Total		353
Race/ethnicity		
African American	12%	40
Asian	6%	19
Hispanic	11%	35
Native American	1%	3
White	64%	206
Other	4%	14
More than one ethnicity	2%	7
(missing)		29
Total		353
Speak a language other than English at home		
Yes	16%	53
No	84%	272
(missing)		28
Total		353
Monthly household income		
\$500 or less	11%	34
\$501-\$1000	8%	23
\$1001-\$1500	11%	33
\$1501-\$2000	12%	36
\$2001-\$2500	10%	31
\$2501 or more	49%	149
(missing)		47
Total		353
Education		
8th grade or less	1%	3
9th to 11th grade	4%	12
High school diploma or GED	17%	53
Some college	38%	119
Associates degree	12%	39
Bachelors degree	18%	55
Graduate degree	11%	33
(missing)		39
Total		353
Number of children*		
None	30%	79
One	27%	69
Two	27%	71
Three or more	16%	41
(missing)		93
Total		353

* Results should be interpreted with caution due to the high number of missing responses. The proportion of Web site users without children may be underestimated because respondents without children may have chosen not to respond to the question.

Other Web Site User Characteristics

Residence. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of survey respondents are from California, and the remaining quarter are from 28 other states (see figure 5.3). Contra Costa County residents account for more than 40 percent of all users and more than half (55 percent) of California users (latter not shown).

Figure 5.3
Residence of Web Site Users
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys

	%	N
Contra Costa County	41%	122
Other California county	33%	98
Outside of California	27%	81
(missing or invalid)		52
Total		353

Computer usage. About 77 percent of individuals reported that the computer they were using was at work or home (figure 5.4). Relatively few survey respondents (5 percent) accessed the site from public terminals such as those at libraries, schools, and courts. Largely due to the consistent availability of computers at work and at home, almost all survey respondents (91 percent) reported using the Internet at least a few times a week (figure 5.5). The majority of users reported being *very comfortable* with computers, although notably 13 percent said they were somewhat or not at all comfortable (figure 5.6).

Figure 5.4
Computer Location
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys

	%	N
Work	27%	85
Home	50%	156
Friend	14%	43
Public library	4%	14
School	1%	3
Courthouse public terminal	0%	1
Other	4%	11
(missing)		40
Total		353

**Figure 5.5
Frequency of Internet Use
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys**

	%	N
Every day	72%	224
A few times a week	19%	59
Once a week	5%	15
Once a month	3%	10
Other	1%	4
(missing)		41
Total		353

**Figure 5.6
Level of Comfort with Computers
Pop-Up Web Site Surveys**

	%	N
Very comfortable	59%	186
Comfortable	27%	84
Somewhat comfortable	12%	39
Not at all comfortable	1%	4
(missing)		40
Total		353

The hypothesis of some individuals interviewed for the evaluation that only computer-savvy individuals would seek assistance from the Web site appears to be confirmed by responses to the online survey (although it is interesting to note that a lack of comfort and proficiency did not discourage 13 percent of site visitors). It is possible, however, that users with lower levels of Internet proficiency may have been less likely to complete the form, which would tend to bias the data toward more experienced users. Some individuals interviewed during site visits consistently expressed concern about the whether the “typical” self-represented litigant could access information via the Web site due to low literacy levels, lack of access to computers, or low levels of comfort with using computers. No systematic study of self-represented litigants and computer usage has been conducted, so it is not possible to assess the extent to which these concerns are valid.

In light of the purported barriers to Internet access, communities across the country are developing programs to increase use of and access to technology among their residents. The Community Technology Centers Program is a federally funded program established

to provide residents of disadvantaged communities access to information technology and training.⁴² This program and others like it have opened up the Internet to new audiences, who previously thought they did not have the need or the ability to go online.⁴³ As the Virtual Self-Help Law Center continues to develop, it may wish to consider similar strategies to expand the reach of its online services. This is consistent with the vision of the Judicial Council’s Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants, whose statewide recommendations for serving self-represented litigants include encouraging community groups to assist litigants in using self-help Web sites and other technological resources.

Case types of interest. Individuals who accessed the Contra Costa Web site sought information about a variety of case types: 30 percent guardianship, 21 percent family law (other than divorce), 11 percent domestic violence, 9 percent divorce, and 9 percent unlawful detainer (figure 5.7). The remaining 21 percent reported “other” as the case type and specified a variety of issues including general civil, civil harassment, criminal, contract disputes, probate and estate issues, and small claims. The high level of interest in divorce and other family law matters supports the program’s current efforts to develop content on those issues.

Figure 5.7
Case Types of Interest to Web Site Users
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys

	%	N
Divorce	9%	31
Domestic violence	11%	39
Unlawful detainer	9%	33
Guardianship	30%	107
Other family law	21%	74
Other	21%	74
Total		353

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents could select more than one case type. Case type was not reported by 31 respondents.

Reason for visiting site. Although the target audience for the Web site is self-represented litigants, a large proportion of users do not fall into this category. More than half (58 percent) of users completing intake forms reported they were representing themselves in a legal matter. Another 14 percent were researching general legal issues, perhaps indicating an expectation that they may become involved in a court case (for example, a landlord or tenant may be researching what happens if rent remains unpaid, or a victim of

⁴² United States Department of Education, Community Technology Centers program description, <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/AdultEd/CTC/index.html> (accessed November 18, 2004).

⁴³ R. Pinkett, Nonprofit Technology Assistance Project, *Trends in Internet use: Online Engagement of Underserved Communities* (November 4, 2004).

domestic violence may be learning about how to get protection from further abuse, or a spouse may be researching the process of getting a divorce). About 11 percent of the Web site’s survey respondents reported being a friend or relative of someone who has legal questions, perhaps indicating efforts to overcome unfamiliarity with computer usage, low literacy, or a lack of proficiency in English (figure 5.8). Those users who were visiting the site on someone else’s behalf probably completed the intake survey about themselves, not the people they were helping, so intake survey data may not be capturing the characteristics of people who are not directly using but nevertheless benefiting from the site and who may not have the profile of the typical Internet user.

Figure 5.8
Reason for Visiting Web Site
Pop-Up Web Site User Surveys

	%	N
Representing yourself in a legal matter	58%	203
Friend or relative of someone who has legal questions	11%	40
Lawyer or work for a lawyer	5%	16
Researching general legal issues	14%	50
Self-help center staff	3%	10
Library staff	0%	1
Other	5%	18
Total		353

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer. Information was not reported by 30 respondents.

Service Staffing

Paid Personnel

The Virtual Self-Help Law Center employs one full-time project coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the program. The project manager, who oversees the project, works on the project about one day a week and does not charge a significant percentage of her time to this grant.

Respondents interviewed during site visits spoke highly of the project coordinator and project manager. The project manager was instrumental in writing the grant proposal and getting the project started. Several individuals interviewed explained that she is skilled at negotiating with the court leadership to move the program forward; that she was instrumental in hiring consultants to supplement knowledge and skills available within the court; and that, along with a consistent vision of the project, she has an understanding of the practical tasks required to bring it to fruition. The project manager supervises the project coordinator, and both are located in the same office.

According to respondents, finding an appropriate person for the project coordinator position was difficult, which delayed project implementation for several months. An attorney was hired but remained in the position for only three weeks. Because the program was having difficulty recruiting attorney candidates for the position, it expanded its recruitment to nonattorneys. The current project coordinator began work in February 2003, and respondents spoke highly of her skills, particularly her ability to coordinate numerous project components effectively. She is not an attorney, and respondents asserted that this is often an asset, particularly when she is editing the expert legal content for the Web site to make sure it uses plain English. Her background as an author and editor is a very good fit for this component of the project, and her experience in public relations should make a significant contribution to advertising and other means of raising awareness of the program. She is also skilled at communicating with the various contractors and court employees involved with the project.

Contractors

The project uses several contractors for work on the Web site, as seen in figure 5.9. Respondents asserted that the extensive use of contractors, a new experience for this court, has been a resounding success. It was important for the court to recognize the skills and knowledge it possessed internally, they said, and the skills and knowledge that needed to come from an outside source. Respondents reported that using consultants was an efficient way to ensure that the project has the most appropriate and qualified people to implement its vision.

**Figure 5.9
Contractors Used for Virtual Self-Help Law Center**

Contribution	Dates
Content designer (attorney)	February, May 2003
Web developer	July 2003 to present
Web designer	July to August 2003
Web host provider	September 2003 to present
Digitalizing Guardianship tapes	September 2003
Promotional material	October to November 2003
Taping and production welcome videos	October to November 2003
Spanish translation of welcome video	October 2003
Digitalizing DV tapes	October to December 2003
Digital graphics	December 2003 to January 2004
Taping and production of librarian training	January to February 2004
Streaming video Web host	April 2004 to present
Digitalizing Family Law videos	August 2004
Promotional ball point pens	September 2004
Content editing	September to December 2004
Writing scripts for Family Law videos	September to December 2004
Tape and produce Family Law videos	November to December 2004
Animate forms instruction videos	December 2004
Digital photographs for virtual tour	November 2004

The Web site developer has worked closely with the project coordinator and has been involved continuously since the early design phase. Her company focuses on nonprofits' information technology needs, and individuals interviewed during site visits said she has been a crucial member of the team, in part because of her understanding of the center's vision and goals, as well as her technological skills and appreciation of the need to ensure the site meets the requirements of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1973 to assist vision-impaired visitors.

Volunteers

Contra Costa's project uses volunteer experts to review content for its Web site, including judicial officers, family law facilitator staff, clerks, and other court employees, as well as attorneys from the bar association's pro bono unit. Program staff estimate that between October 2003 and November 2004, 14 people were asked to review content on a volunteer basis, and at least 75 hours of time were donated.

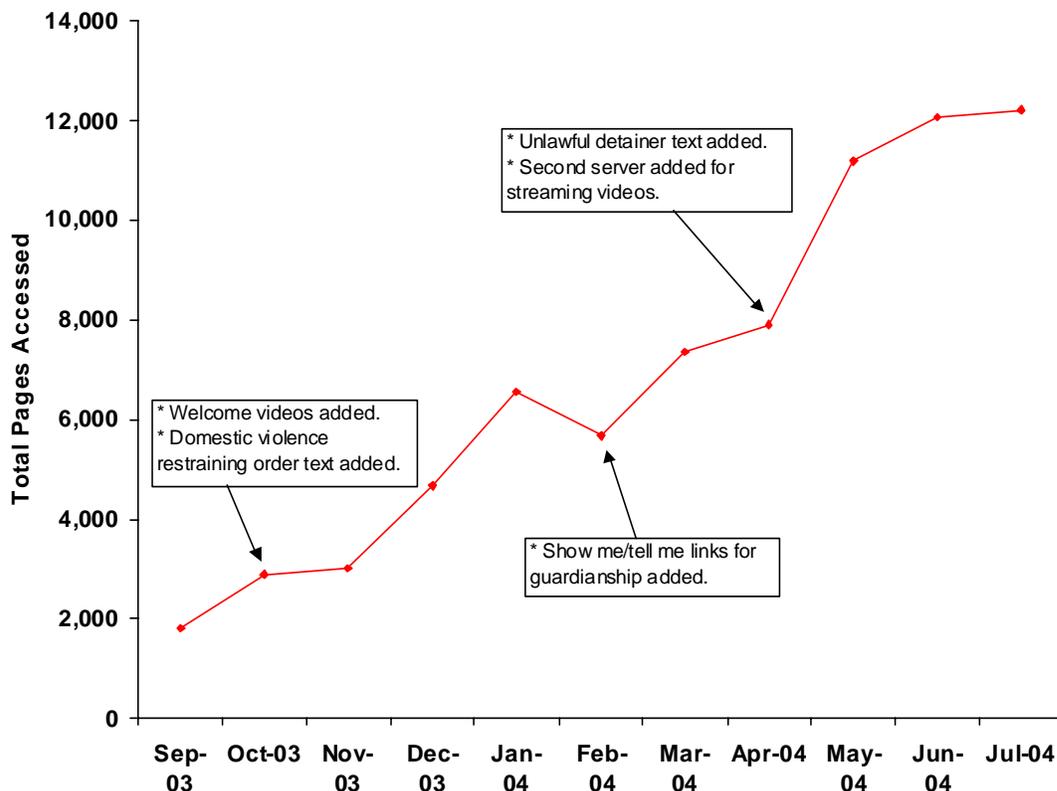
The county bar association's pro bono unit is very active in providing information and assistance to self-represented litigants, primarily via workshops (discussed in more detail

in a later section). Volunteer attorneys conduct dissolution workshops each Wednesday in Martinez, and the self-help center began to videoconference these to Walnut Creek in April 2004. In addition, films of pro bono attorneys explaining instructions or court procedures will be included on the Web site. As time goes on, the center will rely on volunteers to assist remote workshop attendees in Walnut Creek and other branch court locations.

Analysis of Web Site Usage

Usage of the Virtual Self-Help Law Center has more or less steadily increased since the site was launched, with a noticeable jump in the number of pages accessed after the addition of the unlawful detainer content and a second server for streaming video (see figure 5.10). The site is much more commonly accessed on weekdays than on weekends (about 17 percent of visits occurred on Saturday or Sunday). Peak usage tends to be during business hours (57 percent of visits are between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.), when users who work outside of the home might not otherwise be able to travel to the court for services. However, there are a considerable number of visits during the evening hours as well.

Figure 5.10
Usage of Virtual Self-Help Law Center
Dream Host Web Site Usage Statistics



Intensity of Web Site Usage

The average length of a visit to the Web site is about three minutes, with a great majority of users (70 percent) staying on the site for a minute or less. This finding is consistent with some indications that the site does not yet have the information for which many people are looking. However, if information is available on the specific area of law the user is interested in, the user tended to stay on the site longer than average, with the longest visits regarding domestic violence and unlawful detainer content (see figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11
Length of Web Site Visits
NetTracker Web Site Usage Statistics

Content Area	Average Length of Visit	Percentage Staying One Minute or Less
All	3 minutes, 7 seconds	70%
Guardianship	4 minutes, 34 seconds	58%
Domestic violence	5 minutes, 1 second	57%
Unlawful detainer	4 minutes, 59 seconds	55%

Nearly three-quarters of visitors to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center (73 percent) viewed one or two pages during their visit, and only about 5 percent viewed 10 or more pages (see figure 5.12). Consistent with the findings regarding visit duration, users who visited specific content areas visited a larger number of pages than average, with 10 percent of visitors to the guardianship section viewing 10 or more pages and 12 percent of visitors to the domestic violence and unlawful detainer sections viewing 10 or more pages. Roughly 15 percent of visits were from repeat visitors.

Figure 5.12
Number of Pages Viewed
NetTracker Web Site Usage Statistics

Content Area	Average Number of Page Views	Percentage Viewing Two Pages or Less Per Visit
All	2.8	73%
Guardianship	4.0	60%
Domestic violence	4.3	58%
Unlawful detainer	4.3	56%

Analysis of Pages and File Types Accessed

The most commonly visited pages were the home page (29 percent of visits), glossary (14 percent), and list of forms and instructions for guardianship (7 percent). In terms of specific legal content areas, guardianship pages were the most frequently viewed (24 percent of visits), followed by domestic violence and unlawful detainer (both 14 percent).

It is noteworthy that the content area that has been on the site the longest is that which is most viewed by visitors.

Among the more intense users of the site—those who stayed on the site for more than 15 minutes and repeat visitors—the most commonly viewed pages were largely the same as for all users, with the home page and the glossary being the most commonly viewed pages, followed by the guardianship index and list of guardianship forms and instructions, then by the unlawful detainer index and help with unlawful detainer forms.

PDF files were accessed in nearly one-third (30 percent) of visits. The most commonly accessed PDF files were related to court forms and included the consent of proposed guardian/nomination of guardian/consent to appointment of guardian/waiver of notice forms; help files for domestic violence custody, visitation, and support requests; the confidential guardian screening form; and the civil case cover sheet.

Video files were viewed in 8 percent of visits and audio files in 2 percent. Most video files accessed were RealMedia Player files, and most audio files were .wav files. The most commonly viewed video files were the welcome messages from the presiding judge and clerk, followed by guardianship information. These videos have been on the site longest. Audio files accessed were mainly information about the guardianship process.

Entry and exit pages. The largest proportion of visitors (26 percent) entered the site from the home page, followed by the glossary (10 percent) (see figure 5.13). In terms of the specific legal content areas, guardianship content was the most common entry point, accounting for 5 of 15 of the top entry pages (a page accounting for at least 1 percent of all visits).

Figure 5.13
Common Entry Pages
NetTracker Web Site Usage Statistics

Entry Page	Percentage of Visits
Home page	26%
Glossary	10%
Guardianship FAQs: Becoming a guardian	4%
Guardianship FAQs: Going to court	3%
Guardianship: Help with forms	3%

The home page (17 percent of visits) was also the most common exit page, which may in part be explained by the large proportion of visitors who did not stay on the site or stayed for only a short amount of time (see figure 5.14). The glossary was the next most common exit page, accounting for 10 percent of visits. Because this is also one of the major entry pages, it may be that people spend a short amount of time on the site to get definitions of legal terminology, but have no need for further information or cannot find the additional information they need. Of the top 18 exit pages (pages accounting for at

least 1 percent of all visits), subject matter was fairly evenly spread among guardianship, domestic violence, general information, and unlawful detainer. The only non-HTML file among the top exit pages was the help file for domestic violence custody, visitation, and support requests.

Figure 5.14
Common Exit Pages
NetTracker Web Site Usage Statistics

Exit Page	Percentage of Visits
Home page	17%
Glossary	10%
Guardianship: Help with forms	3%
Guardianship FAQs: Becoming a guardian	3%
Guardianship FAQs: Going to court	2%

Pages viewed by intake survey respondents. Users who responded to the pop-up intake survey had the same general profile as all users in terms of the content they viewed. The pages receiving the largest number of views by survey respondents were the home page, glossary, list of guardianship forms and instructions, and guardianship index. Notably, however, users who completed surveys were more likely than average users to view the welcome video from the presiding judge, largely due to the fact that the survey popped up only when specific sections of the site were accessed, such as the videos and the glossary.

Keyword searches. According to analysis of the top 10 keyword searches per week for a period of 41 weeks, visitors to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center were seeking information on a variety of issues ranging from family law to probate to criminal and other civil matters (see figure 5.15). (Individual keyword entries varied greatly but were categorized into several major topic areas.) Users most often sought information on divorce and related issues such as child custody and visitation, child support, and spousal support, followed by criminal and traffic matters and issues related to probate, estates, and wills. It is notable that the Web site currently offers information on only one of these topics. However, the high level of interest in divorce and related issues supports the program’s decision to roll out divorce content as its next subject area.

**Figure 5.15
Common Keyword Searches Used
Atomz Keyword Search Reports**

Topic	Percentage of Appearances in Top 10 Searches
Divorce	9%
Criminal/traffic	9%
Child custody and visitation, child support, and spousal support	8%
Probate/estates/wills	8%
Name change	5%
Landlord/tenant	5%

Language of Service Provision

The Web site is in English, although it does have a welcome message from a clerk in Spanish and links to the AOC’s self-help Web site for self-help information in Spanish. It also will link to the information on the Web site of the Centro de Recursos Legales in Fresno County when that becomes available.

Description of Service Delivery

The Contra Costa center provides services through its Web site, workshops, videoconferenced mediation, and public librarian training. Each is described in more detail below.

Internet/E-mail Services

The Contra Costa program’s primary focus has been the development of a user-friendly and informative self-help Web site (www.cc-courthelp.org). It has information on guardianship, domestic violence, dissolution, and landlord/tenant cases, using text, video, and audio to convey information. The site was designed with input from numerous individuals, including court staff, a content designer, a Web site designer, and a Web site development contractor. The site went live on September 30, 2003, and had a million hits in its first year.

Providing information on the Internet is very different from providing information at a physical self-help center. When visitors walk into a physical center, service providers can work with them to understand their needs and to assess their capacity to take in information. More important, service providers can reasonably expect that the customer is currently in that jurisdiction, has some type of legal problem, and has decided to do something about it. When a person links onto an Internet site, these assumptions become less relevant, as anyone can access the information from any Internet-ready computer.

Accordingly, the center hired a content designer to assist with developing a look, feel, and functionality that would meet the needs of adult learners, many of whom may be

challenged by literacy or other issues. Respondents interviewed during site visits explained that the hiring of this content designer was a critical component of the process. Recognizing that a significant percentage of site visitors would come from elsewhere in the state and country, program staff and their consultants realized that the information posted to the site must be written for a diverse audience. To address these realities, jurisdictional information is repeated clearly and often, there is an extensive glossary, and considerable attention is paid to generating and maintaining a “frequently asked questions” section. Because site visitors might be at any stage of their case (or not yet have a court case), each section needs to be presented in manageable chunks so that visitors can get just the information they need. Because many with legal needs have related concerns, the site provides an extensive array of information about allied agencies, organizations, and resources. To accommodate the wide range of learning styles, the site makes extensive use of graphics, photographs, and videos to supplement the written text.

Besides the content designer, the center hired a Web site developer, who was critical to the project’s success. In consultation with the content designer, the Web site developer created an architecture that would facilitate access to the extensive information available while accommodating those who may browse the site with or without a mouse or require other accommodations to meet vision or physical challenges (the site meets the requirements of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1973). To ensure the site’s durability, the Web designer hand-coded all pages to be viewed by all major Web browsers⁴⁴ and worked with content developers to ensure each video or audio element was available in several media formats and could be accessed at varying connection speeds. Perhaps her most significant contribution, however, was her ability to develop ways to collect site statistics without compromising the safety of any visitor.

As the general layout and structure of the site were being decided, the project worked on developing the expert legal content required. The content for the site was developed through a time-consuming process that involved several individuals, both paid and volunteer. The goal was to develop content that was in accessible English⁴⁵ and to structure the site in a way that would allow users to find information quickly. Licensed attorneys in the Office of the Family Law Facilitator wrote the first draft of each content package.⁴⁶ This content includes explanations of the court process for different case types

⁴⁴ The Web developer did not use one of the off-the-shelf Web publishing packages, known to contain bugs. Hand-coding allowed her to develop an architecture customized to the site’s content, which has an internal logic that matches the structure of the site and facilitates making changes to the site and updating content.

⁴⁵ Accessible or plain English text refers to text that is easy to understand and read for individuals with average levels of literacy; for the average native-English-speaking American, this is the fifth-grade level. For more information please refer to the Transcend Web site: <http://www.transcend.net/at/index.html>.

⁴⁶ Attorneys from the Office of the Family Law Facilitator were among the attorneys on contract, separate from AB 1058 funding and outside of the scope of their roles as facilitators, to develop content for the Web site. The advantage of using facilitators rather than other contract attorneys is that they are familiar with the needs of the local population and the types of issues they present.

and instructions for completing forms. Once the initial drafts of each component were written, they were edited into more understandable English by the project coordinator. The project manager, bench officers, court clerks, and independent attorneys then reviewed these documents to make sure the content was accurate and understandable. Separate line-by-line instructions for each of the Judicial Council's forms are written typically to a sixth to eighth grade reading level.

A growing number of videos available on the site offer information on family law, guardianships, and domestic violence. The site's home page contains welcome messages from the presiding judge and the court executive officer and brief introductions to the court by a clerk (in English and Spanish) (see figure 5.16). Some of the videos are stories, with people acting out case situations, while others are tapes or workshops on form preparation. The "show me/tell me" feature links video and audio clips with specific written information. In addition to accommodating various learning styles, these materials provide concrete help for those with lower literacy levels. Respondents asserted that the availability of these audio/video links is very innovative and has the potential to further increase a user's understanding of the concepts, particularly for those users who may not effectively process information via written text or those struggling with literacy issues. In fact, one of the user test-subjects noted that the videos were very helpful because they provided the kind of information she needed and walked her through the process.

One initial obstacle in fully using these components was the extremely large size of the video and audio files, which take a prohibitively long time to download and view. This problem was solved by moving the videos to a streaming video Web host. In addition, the center is experimenting with other ways to offer legal information effectively on the Web site, such as PowerPoint presentations and Flash technology.

Figure 5.16
Virtual Self-Help Law Center Home Page

Superior Court of California
County of Contra Costa

HOME | ABOUT THIS SITE | VIDEO ROOM | GLOSSARY | MORE INFO | CONTACT US 12/22/2004

CASE INFORMATION

- Guardianship
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Welcome to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center

Our goal is to provide information that will make it easier for you to handle your court case, whether you have a lawyer or not.

This site can help you understand what happens at court. You can learn about court procedures, find forms, and links to other important resources.

This site does not give legal advice.
If you believe you need a lawyer, or legal help, go to: [California Court's Self-Help Center](#).

Please Note: People can tell what Internet sites you've visited on your computer. Be safe! If the information you need is sensitive to your situation, use the Internet at a local library, a friend's house, or at work. If you do use your own computer, you can [clear it after your visit following our directions](#).

Guardianship

Domestic Violence

Landlord/Tenant

Last updated: 09/25/2004
You are here: VSHLC Home

Our Mission: To provide justice under the law, equally, impartially and expeditiously, with dignity and respect for all.

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Many similar Web sites provide legal information (at greater and lesser degrees of detail) about different types of court cases and how to follow particular court procedures. According to respondents, this Web site is unique in providing information that could be useful to users before they decide to start a legal proceeding, as well as information that could help users know how to implement court orders they receive and how to make changes if their situation changes. The site is also unusual in providing steps to follow during a legal proceeding for all of the parties involved in a case type. For example, the guardianship content package includes information written especially for parents whose children are the subject of the guardianship proceeding and for the children about whom

the proceedings are convened. The domestic violence content package provides comprehensive information about the more commonly associated actions in these cases, as well as information geared specifically to address the unique needs and perspectives of each of the parties and protected persons in these proceedings. A few respondents felt it was crucial that users not get lost on the site, and to this end, the center's content developers have striven to ensure the user is never more than "two clicks away" from any piece of information. Although most respondents who saw the Web site said it provided useful information, many also expressed concern that self-represented litigants with very low literacy, English language, or computer skills would have limited access to this information.

The Contra Costa Superior Court's main Web site provides a link to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center, and the California Courts Web site links to its videos. This has the dual benefit of expanding access to the Contra Costa Web site for individuals who otherwise might not seek it out and broadening the information that can be provided from other Web sites anywhere in California without having to develop new content. In addition, staff of the other pilot programs mentioned that they regularly refer litigants to the instructions for clearing the history of sites they visited from the computer, information that is especially helpful for victims of domestic violence, who might not want to leave evidence of the Web sites they visited. Probono.net, a nonprofit organization that explores the use of technology and volunteer lawyer participation to increase access to justice, also links to this information.

Workshops

The original goal (as outlined in the proposal) was for the self-help center to develop at least six workshop programs to help self-represented litigants complete, file, and serve court forms; understand how to handle cases; and implement court orders. Each workshop was to have interactive access to the instructor (via videoconferencing equipment) and to a co-facilitator on site. Videoconference workshops attempt to address transportation barriers faced by Contra Costa residents. Respondents explained that people often have a difficult time attending workshops in Martinez if they live or work in another part of the county because of inadequate public transportation in many areas and the high level of traffic between the main county population centers.

To implement the workshop goals, Contra Costa County used the AOC grant to help the court purchase videoconferencing equipment to expand the capacity of workshops already being provided by the local bar association. In April 2004, the center began videoconferencing the dissolution workshops offered in Martinez by the bar association. The new endpoint was in the Walnut Creek branch court.

Data from respondents and workshop forms completed by the project coordinator indicate that 15 to 25 people usually attend the workshop in Martinez. Workshop forms completed by the project coordinator (10 between April and June 2004) showed one or two attendees each week in Walnut Creek. Many of those attending in Walnut Creek told

the project coordinator they would have been unable to attend the workshop in Martinez due to work or family schedules. The workshops are offered Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 4:30 p.m., and the topic alternates among three topics in the workshop series: The first week is finishing a divorce, the second and fourth weeks cover order to show cause (custody, visitation, child/spousal support, etc.), and the third week is starting a divorce.

Instruction at the workshops is provided verbally, using forms projected onto large screens as visual aids. It focuses on filling out forms as well as providing procedural information. Workshops are structured around three forms packets provided at the clerk's office: initial dissolution, order to show cause, and final judgment. In addition to the forms themselves, the packets contain detailed instructions on how to complete, file, and serve the forms, as well as information on other resources available to litigants. Participants do not actually fill out forms during the workshop;⁴⁷ they learn how to fill out each form and why, but they are told to take the forms home and fill them out there. The workshop leader usually asks participants a few questions about their cases and then spends time on the forms the group is most likely to need. Not all forms are covered in all workshops. The workshop leaders encourage questions throughout the presentation and are sometimes available to meet with participants one-on-one at the end of the workshop. Follow-up assistance is offered through the family law facilitator (for visitation and child support issues) and through the county bar association's program of attorney counseling evenings. Participants are also provided with a packet of *pro per* resources containing referrals to books, Web sites, and other resources.

The center partnered with other court programs to purchase the full complement of videoconference equipment envisioned by the original grant proposal. By leveraging the resources allocated under this grant with those available through the complex litigation program, the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, and the video arraignment project, the center was able to gain access to high-quality equipment in five court locations. Because this partnership required extensive coordination and encountered several technical difficulties (installation of cabling, securing the equipment in public locations, and assuring high-quality transmission), use of the videoconferencing equipment was delayed for several months.

The center's original plan was to hire one lawyer and two paralegal assistants to co-facilitate each of the workshops. Because the costs of developing the Web site and preparing content were larger than originally anticipated, the center decided to rely on volunteers to co-facilitate workshops that were already ongoing in the court. (Court clerks were also considered as workshop assistants, but due to budget constraints and increasing workloads, they could not be made available.) Unfortunately, establishing a volunteer corps also proved more challenging than originally anticipated. To make the workshops available in at least one remote location, the project coordinator took on the co-facilitator role. The self-help center and court have hired a contractor to help them

⁴⁷ This is an important feature that distinguishes the Contra Costa County workshops from those in the other programs.

develop a volunteer program that will enable litigants to attend workshops in multiple remote locations. Beginning in early 2005, volunteers are expected to be available to co-facilitate workshops in these other locations.

Child Custody Distance Mediation

The Virtual Self-Help Law Center contributed grant money toward the purchase of videoconferencing equipment to help Family Court Services conduct mediations simultaneously with two parents in different locations. Equipment is installed in Martinez, Richmond, Pittsburg, and Walnut Creek. Individuals interviewed for the evaluation explain that the original plan was to allow mediators to work simultaneously with parents who are in different cities, but because the pilot grant did not provide money to pay for extra staff, this service was offered only in the Martinez Family Law Center. Each parent is situated in a separate room, and the mediator spends half of his or her time with one party and the other half with the second parent. Respondents said this arrangement helps protect the safety and well-being of parents and saves valuable staff time that would be spent meeting at different times with each parent.

According to quarterly reports, 50 mediations were conducted via videoconference between November 2003 and May 2004. This far exceeds the program's initial goal of holding 25 videoconference mediation sessions per year. About 37 percent of mediations conducted at separate times led to agreement during that period, compared with 59 percent of mediations by videoconference. Prior to the availability of videoconferenced mediation, the agreement rate for separate mediations was about 24 percent.

Public Librarian Training

The Contra Costa County program coordinated the taping and production of a video in which a law librarian explains how colleagues can help the public find legal information on the Internet. The video was put onto the Contra Costa Web site under a special section for librarians, and the center has distributed more than 100 CD ROMs with the video nationwide. According to respondents, more copies are being made, and the goal is to offer training to every public librarian in California on how to help people find legal information online.

Program Developments Since Last Site Visit

The center has completed a major restructuring of the Web site that includes new navigational tools and graphics. According to program staff, the original site went up with an architectural flaw due to problems communicating with the Web designer, a lesson that was learned in the context of different languages used by technical and nontechnical professions. The main Contra Costa Superior Court Web site is also being redesigned based on what program staff have learned from the design of the Virtual Self-Help Law Center.

Based in part on requests from the site users as expressed through the search function and in part on needs identified by court personnel, plans are being made to add content

sections for traffic and small claims in the coming months, in addition to the family law content that is currently being developed and reviewed. More videos are being digitized so they can be added to the site, and a forms instruction animation project is well under way. Program staff are planning to add photographs to the site that will illustrate each step in the court process, along with a virtual tour of the courthouse, which should help to address the needs of visual learners.

There are plans to set up work stations for litigants at the Martinez Family Law Center. These work stations will include computers with access to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center. As the subject matter offerings of the site expand and as access to the site increases through such public terminals, it is expected that the number of visits to the site will increase, the duration of visits will increase, and the profile of individuals accessing the site will change.

A large media campaign will be launched to promote the Web site as soon as the divorce and related content are up. Posters publicizing the Web site are being placed in additional court facilities, flyers and bookmarks are being handed out, and the ballpoint pens are being given away. In addition, program staff developed a brochure that lists libraries where the public can access the Internet and specific Web sites where legal information can be found. All of these efforts should help to increase awareness of and referrals to the site.

While the advantages of expanding the reach of existing services through videoconferencing are clear, program staff expressed concern about the inconsistency in the nature and quality of the workshops across presenters. In an effort to address this concern, program staff are partnering with Contra Costa TV to film the workshops. That way, the approved content can be presented, and then the facilitator can stop the video after each segment to address questions from participants.

There are plans to expand the videoconferencing of workshops to other locations, as well as to develop other workshop programs that can be broadcast to remote locations, making them accessible to more self-represented litigants. The program is considering partnerships with noncourt entities (such as the Department of Child Support Services), but these partnerships may be more difficult to establish because of different technology infrastructures. In addition, the program is actively seeking opportunities to get volunteers to staff the videoconference workshops and has made a recent contract with the Contra Costa sheriff's volunteer program.

Budget and Expenditures

In the first grant year (fiscal year 2001-2002), almost all of the program's budget went to operating expenditures, primarily for equipment and labor related to the initial setup of the videoconferencing equipment, at a cost of around \$79,000. The program's proposal notes that because the court was already in the initial stages of establishing the infrastructure for this technology, incremental costs for additional endpoints would be

greatly reduced. Personnel accounted for only 5 percent of the first year's expenditures, in part due to the technology-heavy start-up costs for a program such as this and in part due to the difficulties in hiring the project coordinator.

In the second and third grant years, about half of the funds were spent on personnel and half on operating expenses. By the second year, the project coordinator had been hired and was becoming much more involved in developing content for the site and working with volunteers and contractors. In Year 2, about two-thirds (65 percent) of the operating expenses were related to videoconferencing equipment and other technology, with the remaining third going to the contractors and consultants who worked on Web design and development as well as content for the site. In Year 3, the vast majority (80 percent) of operating expenses went to contractors and consultants, mostly for Web development, video production, and photography for the Web site.

Collaboration and Outreach

Collaboration Within the Courts

The Contra Costa County program has worked closely with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, the information technology department, and family court services staff (who conduct the distance mediation sessions), as well as other individuals in various departments across the court. Collaborators have been involved with the design and review of Web site content, the technological infrastructure for the Web site, and the purchase and use of videoconferencing equipment.

To develop the Web site content, the program contracted with three attorneys from the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, each of whom worked part-time to help develop related family law content.⁴⁸ Respondents explained that it is crucial to have people creating content who understand both the legal concepts and the barriers faced by many self-represented litigants, including literacy, education, time, and the level of crisis many face. Attorneys from the Office of the Family Law Facilitator work daily with this population and brought that experience to the content development. This arrangement highlights another aspect of the center that respondents often mentioned, which is the leveraging of funding and expertise.

The information technology department contributed staff time and expertise to the pilot project. There was collaboration and coordination between the self-help center staff and the information technology department to plan for the site's launch in September 2003. Individuals interviewed said that the current director of information technology was instrumental in this collaboration because she was supportive of the goals of the center and prioritized its needs. Her department has been involved in several aspects of the pilot project, including taping and digitizing the guardian workshop for use on the Web site, researching and contracting with Web hosts for the Web site and its videos, and installing

⁴⁸ As previously mentioned, attorneys from the family law facilitator did this work under separate contract from their AB 1058 responsibilities.

and maintaining the videoconferencing equipment. The grant does not contribute money toward salaries in the information technology department, which has faced a challenge due to the staff's increased workload.

Some respondents noted that due to constraints on the way in which the court could spend the grant money, the court has had to absorb some of the infrastructure and implementation costs (e.g., information technology staff time). In addition, a few respondents noted some resentment from court staff about the center's ability to hire a new full-time employee when there is a 20 percent vacancy rate in the court, and employees trying to provide core services are stretched.

Although the development of the Web site was a collaborative process with some court departments, respondents some court staff lack information about the Web site and its services. Several respondents asserted that most court clerks, bench officers, and other employees working directly with the public either are not aware of the Web site at all or are unaware of what it makes available. As a result, most respondents asserted that court employees are not routinely referring self-represented litigants to the Web site, despite the distribution of posters, flyers and bookmarks throughout the court system. The fact that court clerks do not have Internet access may have affected awareness of the site, in that the clerks could not see for themselves what the site offered and how it might be useful to the public they serve. Later, the clerks were given ballpoint pens with the Web site address, which they could hand out to the public. This solves one of the clerks' biggest frustrations—being asked for a pen—and at the same time gets the Virtual Self-Help Law Center's Web site address to the people who need it most.

Collaboration and Public Relations Outside the Courts

The Pro Bono Committee of the Contra Costa County Bar Association has been a major collaborator on this project. Attorneys have volunteered time to review legal content and explain procedures and instructions on videotape for use on the Web site, and they also agreed to videoconferencing the regular family law workshops to increase capacity. According to those interviewed during site visits, the pro bono committee is very active in Contra Costa County and assists self-represented litigants in a variety of ways. These include guardianship workshops once a month, attorney counseling evenings twice a month on different topics, family law workshops every Wednesday afternoon, and workshops on unlawful detainer and consumer law at the community college's self-help center. The pro bono committee also sends attorneys to the guardianship calendars every Wednesday and Friday to help self-represented litigants with their cases. In addition, the bar association provided a one-time grant for the development of a self-reliant agency of pro bono coordinators who refer customers to the available self-help resources.

Respondents reported that center staff members also have worked with the law librarian to compile materials for self-represented litigants, develop written standards for materials linked to the Web site, and facilitate the taping of training for public librarians regarding ways to help people access legal information online, as described above.

To educate the county at large about its services, the program developed posters, bookmarks, and flyers. These are available in the Family Law Center (where family law cases are heard and where court services targeted to families are located), the law library, branch court facilities, and the probate examiner's office. The Web site address is also listed on several packets of forms available at the court and on the ballpoint pens the court clerks give out to the public. The workshops are publicized by the pro bono committee via flyers distributed at the Family Law Center, clerks' offices, law library, and other community service providers. However, most respondents expressed concern over program awareness within and outside of the court. Several individuals asserted that improving public and court employee awareness of the Web site and videoconferencing workshops is the biggest challenge facing the self-help center. A large publicity campaign, coordinated with the county's Department of Child Support Services, is planned as soon as the divorce section and related content are up on the Web site. A few respondents suggested additional populations to target with publicity: (1) police, who give out domestic violence packets and frequently come in contact with individuals who need assistance with forms or court procedure, and (2) the Department of Social Services, which often refers individuals to the probate court to seek guardianship.

Impact on Litigants

Views of Court Personnel and Other Stakeholders

The impact of the Web site on litigants remains unclear and may be difficult to assess, given the other services available to Contra Costa County litigants, as well as the anonymous nature of Web site usage. Of those interviewed for this evaluation, many who are familiar with the Web site asserted that it will be beneficial for individuals because of the completeness, accessibility, and organization of the information. Respondents pointed out that no single model can be the mechanism for meeting every self-represented litigant's needs but that the Web site is an avenue for sharing information that is cost-efficient and always available. Another positive impact mentioned is that the Web site helps make the legal world "more open and less mystifying" for those who are comfortable with written materials. On the other hand, many respondents expressed concern about the Web site's ability to help self-represented litigants who have issues with literacy and computer expertise.

Several individuals interviewed suggested that the Web site would be more useful if computer terminals were available in the court or close to it (e.g., in the law library), where visitors in court to attend a proceeding or to pick up forms could use them. Respondents also recommended that volunteers or other staff be available to assist people with getting online and finding information. The center hopes to implement this component, once the court's volunteer program is functional.

The availability of family law workshops in Walnut Creek is a positive development for self-represented litigants, and respondents expected that the numbers served will increase as more people learn about the workshops.

Views of Customers

User testing for the guardianship content was done on the first version of the Web site, before its basic architecture was restructured. Not surprisingly, results revealed that the site had some potential to assist litigants but needed refinement in terms of both content and the way it was used to assist people. Overall, people who were more experienced Internet users seemed to have an easier time navigating the site, but they still faced some challenges. Due to difficulties in navigation, lack of understanding of terminology, and lack of awareness about the kind of information they should be seeking, users sometimes could not find the information they required. Many were simply seeking forms and were not interested in the other content offered on the site, even though it may have been an advantage for them to review it, especially for assessing the status of their cases. This may be the outcome of soliciting test-users from the clerk's window, where they presumably went primarily to pick up forms.

User testing indicated that litigants would benefit from personal assistance to complement their use of the site. Users commonly needed assistance triaging their cases—something that trained staff assist with in other direct service centers—and AOC technology staff suggested that the site would benefit from a more carefully designed triage function. Users themselves may not know what questions to ask and complex or unique case circumstances may not be addressed by the site. Also, they may not be able to access the court's case management system to get information about the status of their case. In addition, some users simply needed reassurance that they were going to the right places and getting the right information for their situation.

AOC technology staff who conducted the user testing noted that people often failed to find the forms they needed, or had trouble doing so. Staff suggested including local forms on the site so that users can have a one-stop shop for all of the forms that they need. Specific information to help litigants prepare declaration and other attachments would also be useful. AOC staff also recommended incorporating more step-by-step instructions for the entire guardianship process. All of these recommendations are being addressed by the center's staff.

Vignette: Web Site Visitor Assisting a Friend With Domestic Violence Issues

An e-mail message from one Web site user to program staff said, "I ran across your site through a link when I was looking for help for a friend whose ex-husband was terrorizing her. I am so impressed." The user went on to explain that "nice girls" don't know about domestic violence restraining orders and that it was a huge relief to learn that it was possible to get help from the law before actual violence took place.

As discussed in more detail in Appendix B, a pop-up survey was developed to solicit users' feedback on the Web site. Less than 40 users responded to the survey between

February and October 2004. Due to the extremely low response, results are not presented in this report.

The Contra Costa County program's videoconferenced workshops had just begun when the customer satisfaction survey were distributed. Due to the newness of the workshops, attendance was low, so only nine surveys were collected. Results of these surveys are presented for descriptive purposes only, but they may provide some useful insight into customer perspectives on the early workshops.

All customers either strongly agreed or agreed with the general satisfaction questions. In Contra Costa County as in other sites, levels of satisfaction vary from one area to another. More than half of customers (five) strongly agreed that staff explained things clearly and treated them with respect and that they would recommend the workshop to friends, whereas almost no customers (one) strongly agreed that they were less confused about how the court works and knew more about how the laws work. One respondent also reported that being able to have open discussion with others in the workshop format was helpful.

All of the services were rated as either *very helpful* or *somewhat helpful*. Written instructions for forms, staff to answer questions, and staff help with forms seemed to be the most helpful services whereas information on where to get more help was rated as somewhat less helpful. Two of the nine customers received help somewhere other than the workshop.

Customers were also asked to rate the features of the videoconference equipment and facilities on a scale from one (*poor*) to five (*excellent*). Most customers gave the features average or better ratings. Although ratings for sound quality, technical assistance by on-site staff, and picture quality were fairly consistent at around four, room size and seating received average ratings closer to three. Picture quality was the only feature rated lower than three by any workshop participant (two participants rated picture quality as two).

Vignette: Videoconferenced Divorce Workshop Participant

A mother of two was ending her 20-year marriage and attended a workshop hosted by the Office of the Family Law Facilitator: “How to Start Your Dissolution (Divorce) Case.” She was notably comfortable with the fact that the workshop was being videoconferenced: that the attorney was in Martinez, and she was in Walnut Creek. She was able to ask a lot of questions, and the attorney was happy to answer them.

The mother had been verbally and emotionally abused during her marriage, and she came away from the workshop with a much clearer sense of how the divorce process works. She said she was deeply relieved to realize that she didn’t have to know how everything would work out to get things started; that she could fill out the forms in a way that would allow her and her spouse to negotiate some agreements; and that the process could be taken in bite-sized pieces. Interestingly, she said she was happy to know that her divorce could not be finalized without her knowing it.

She was very grateful to get the court’s help and to learn about other resources. She had felt that her world was falling apart and that she had to put it back together again all alone. As she left the court facility, she said, “I guess I can really do this.”

Workshop participants provided helpful suggestions for improving the workshops, including creating an index of forms and breaking up the workshop into smaller steps. Participants also mentioned a couple of minor difficulties with the videoconferencing format, noting that it would be helpful for the presenter to repeat questions asked by participants in Martinez and for the camera to point to the overhead projection as well as to the presenter. Notably, one respondent stated that she “appreciated not having to drive to [Martinez],” which suggests that videoconferencing has been effective in reducing geographic/transportation barriers.

Impact on Court Process

According to respondents, the Virtual Self-Help Law Center has not yet had a noticeable impact on the court, other than in the agreement rates of child custody mediation. As reported earlier, the agreement rate for mediations conducted at separate times was 37 percent and the agreement rate for mediations by videoconference was 59 percent. Prior to the availability of videoconferencing, agreement rates were even lower, at 24 percent. Family court services staff report a savings in mediator time as a result of the videoconference mediation, as the alternative—separate sessions at separate times—would have required two mediation appointments. Respondents asserted that the Virtual Self-Help Law Center will ultimately have an overall impact as litigants are better prepared and more knowledgeable about court processes.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Accomplishment of Goals

The Virtual Self-Help Law Center has successfully implemented components of a model that uses technology to meet some needs of self-represented litigants. The pilot project has an informative and innovative Web site that delivers information about guardianship, unlawful detainer, and domestic violence, with plans to add divorce, family law orders to show cause, general court procedures, traffic, and small claims. Training CD-ROMs that show public librarians how to help the public access legal information online have been posted on the Web site and continue to be distributed in California and nationwide. In April 2004, the project began broadcasting weekly videoconferenced family law workshops to the Walnut Creek branch court, and it has plans to broaden the availability of videoconferenced workshops throughout the county. Videoconferenced mediations are occurring in Martinez for parents with domestic violence issues who want to meet simultaneously with a mediator but prefer to be in separate locations. Agreement rates for these mediations are much higher than for separate mediations. All of these components improve individuals' capacity to begin and complete cases, which increases their access to justice.

Providing services to the public took longer than respondents expected, primarily because of a delay in hiring appropriate staff and the large amount of time required to plan and coordinate the various components of this model, especially developing, reviewing, and updating Web site content. At the end of the evaluation, videoconferenced workshops were not occurring in as many locations as originally planned. The equipment is available, and center staff are working with the court to develop a volunteer program, which they hope will provide staff for the workshops in early 2005.

Surveys of Web site users and usage tracking software provide a wealth of information about visitors to the site, but more research is needed to understand how the Web site is being used, the characteristics of Web site users relative to those of nonusers, and the effectiveness of various mechanisms to present information (e.g., text, videos, audio). Further usability testing might determine how the site helps users and identify needs for additional content.

Service Issues

Project coordinator has critical skills necessary for this project. Respondents reported that the project coordinator's organization, communication, editing, and writing skills are highly valued and critical to the project's progress. During the first site visit, some respondents were concerned about her lack of legal background, but by the second visit, respondents said that this was often an asset rather than a problem, particularly in revising content to make it more accessible to nonattorneys.

The center strategically used consultants. Individuals interviewed asserted that using outside experts is an innovative strategy to ensure that the project develops appropriately

and professionally. The individuals involved in the center's development identified skills and knowledge the court possessed internally and sought outside assistance to fill in gaps. This has been worked well, according to those interviewed.

The center should continue to expand outreach and publicity efforts for the Web site. According to respondents, the site is still not well-known, either in the legal community or among the general public, in spite of the availability of posters and other print materials publicizing the site. This may be due to the fact that program staff decided to hold off on launching a full publicity campaign until the most frequently requested content (divorce and other family law) is made available. Another reason that awareness may be low is that until recently, court clerks did not have Internet access at work and therefore were unable to visit the site to see what it offered. With clerk access and continuing outreach and publicity efforts—including the distribution of ballpoint pens with the Virtual Self-Help Law Center's Web site address and the distribution of materials to key partner agencies—awareness of and referrals to the Web site are expected to increase.

Collaboration with the bar association's pro bono unit has been critical. The Contra Costa County Bar Association has been a major collaborator on this project. Bar association members have also been involved in reviewing content for the Web site, writing scripts for the videos, and giving workshops that have been taped and posted on the site. The bar's pro bono committee has agreed to have its weekly workshops videoconferenced to various locations. This partnership has been a crucial resource in expanding the number of people reached by existing services and allows the center to draw on expertise not available within the program.

The center provides opportunities to leverage resources and share information. Although self-represented litigants are the primary audience for the Virtual Self-Help Law Center, other courts, agencies, and practitioners such as attorneys and self-help center staff have benefited from the site's content as well. Several sites, including the main Contra Costa County court Web site, the California Courts Web site, and probono.net, provide links to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center's content. These efforts to share information and find opportunities to cross-link between sites help to ensure that content does not need to be duplicated and provide the additional benefit of allowing counties to focus on local rules and procedures. Program staff encourage other counties to copy content to their own Web sites or to develop content that can be added to the existing Web site. In addition, videoconferencing expands existing services with minimal additional staff time and no duplication of effort.

Chapter 6

Los Angeles County: Urban Coordination Model

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT MODEL TYPE: URBAN COORDINATION MODEL

Location:	Office in Central courthouse, but services provided to organizations countywide
Staffing:	Managing attorney: 1.0 FTE Assistant attorney: .5 FTE
Target Population:	Self-help service providers in Los Angeles County
Services Provided:	Coordination of activities among providers Communication and information sharing among providers Dissemination of best practices Support in the development of new self-help centers Resource development

Background

Los Angeles County has 9.5 million residents, and it is one of the nation's largest counties with 4,084 square miles, an area some 800 square miles larger than the combined area of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island. There are 58 court locations in Los Angeles County; 429 judicial officers, 160 commissioners, and 5,566 court employees⁴⁹; and hundreds of thousands of self-represented litigants. More than 40 agencies provide some sort of services for self-represented litigants, but there is little or no coordination among them. As a result, customers often are not referred to appropriate services. Thousands of self-represented litigants receive assistance from these programs every month, but the need for services continues to be far greater than the programs can provide. Furthermore, many self-represented litigants speak limited English, making access to appropriate services and the court system that much more difficult. Self-represented litigants face a number of barriers. Navigating the court system can be difficult for highly educated individuals with ample resources, and it is all the more difficult for those with limited literacy and a host of poverty-related difficulties.

Description of Model

Unlike the four other self-help pilot projects, the Los Angeles Self-Help Management Project is not a direct service model. Whereas self-represented litigants are themselves the customers of the other projects, customers of the Los Angeles Self-Help Management Project are self-help service providers. The goals of the project are:

⁴⁹ Numbers of judicial officers and court staff are reported as of July 2001.

- To increase access to justice through the development of partnerships with various legal services providers, bar groups, and schools;
- To leverage resources to expand and enhance self-help and low-cost legal services; and
- To decrease the number of cases involving self-represented litigants that impede court efficiency due to improperly prepared pleadings, lack of preparation for hearings, or failure to complete judgments and written orders after hearing.

The Self-Help Management Project was developed to assist with the establishment of new self-help centers as well as to support and coordinate existing self-help services across multiple agencies in the county. The goals and focus areas of the Los Angeles project stem from the county's size.

The Self-Help Management Project has several focus areas for reaching the goals outlined above. First, the management project is to serve as a vehicle for gathering information on all the providers in the county to document what agencies exist, to determine what services are being provided, to identify duplication in services, and to uncover discrepancies in the content and quality of services provided. In addition, the management project focuses on identifying helpful materials and best practices, so they can be disseminated among providers with the goal of ensuring the consistency and quality of services and referrals. Another key component to the management project is to foster communication and collaboration among providers and to facilitate service provision both within individual agencies and across agencies.

Project Planning and Start-Up

Los Angeles is an urban county with a diverse population, both ethnically and economically. The county is home to a large and complex web of public and private service providers. Many agencies provide some services for self-represented litigants, including several court-based self-help centers. These centers vary in the type and extent of services they offer, from those that give referrals only to those that provide consultations with attorneys, workshops, or other hands-on assistance. Many of these providers focus on family law and domestic violence, but some focus on other areas of law, including unlawful detainers and guardianships. Two large nonprofits run many of the self-help centers located in the courts and in the community: Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA). In addition to the programs run by these agencies, there are a variety of independent nonprofit service providers that offer self-help services. The county also has the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, which is located in 12 sites, and Family Law Information Centers located in two sites. The Department of Consumer Affairs provides small claims assistance by phone and at seven locations.

Despite the many agencies providing some services for self-represented litigants, judges and court staff were concerned about the lack of coordination among the agencies. Often,

customers are not referred to appropriate services and the huge needs in Los Angeles County remain unmet by existing services. The Office of the Family Law Facilitator reports that people line up for services as early as 5:30 a.m.; other programs consistently have to turn needy litigants away. Due to lack of coordination, duplicate materials describing the same process have been created so that, for instance, there are multiple versions of guides on how to get a divorce in Los Angeles, all of them written, updated, and maintained by different programs. In 2002-2003, 122,700 new family law cases were filed in Los Angeles, many of which will require multiple hearings. Also filed were 182,367 limited civil cases involving matters under \$25,000 per year, which cover landlord-tenant disputes and small contract matters. Limited civil cases generally are handled without attorneys because litigants cannot afford professional assistance. In addition, 112,379 small claims matters were filed.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) grant amount, \$166,400 per year, can make a significant impact in many jurisdictions throughout the state, but it clearly could not meet the needs of a large portion of Los Angeles residents needing assistance. What the grant could do was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing services, make the court system easier to navigate for self-represented litigants, and increase the resources of existing services while leveraging them to be as effective as possible. By identifying existing resources, the project could help to prevent duplication of efforts and support the excellent work that programs currently provide.

Representatives of the Los Angeles court became interested in the idea of a self-help management center. The court conducted a strategic planning process several years ago that included a needs assessment and a vision and mission statement. This process highlighted the fact that there are multiple self-help providers but little knowledge about the type, quality, and extent of services provided. The urban collaboration model of the self-help pilot project was appealing to the Los Angeles planners because it addressed an identified need in the county and responded to the growing momentum to provide court-based self-help centers. Two new programs had just been established, and plans were in the works to create others. Coordination of those efforts was timely. Once funded, office space for the Self-Help Management Project was secured in the central courthouse, and the court hired a managing attorney to implement the project. The managing attorney then hired a part-time assistant attorney.

Court Environment Surrounding Self-Help Services

The Los Angeles court has a long history of working with legal services programs to provide resources for self-represented litigants. Starting with the Maynard Toll advice program offered by the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles in 1988, the court has allowed a variety of self-help programs to use courthouse facilities. Most court facilities have domestic violence projects aimed at serving victims.

In 1999, the Self-Help Legal Access Center was opened as a pilot project at the Van Nuys courthouse, with funding provided by the Los Angeles County Board of

Supervisors and administered by the county Department of Consumer Affairs. The project provides self-help assistance with family law, landlord-tenant issues, and simple civil matters by helping litigants complete forms and learn about the court process. This service, provided by Neighborhood Legal Services, has proved to be extremely successful. In 2003, the Self-Help Legal Access Center received an award from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Commission for Productivity and Quality. The program was expanded to the Pomona and Inglewood courthouses on a full-time basis in January 2003 and to Antelope Valley on a part-time basis in 2003 and full-time in 2004.

The numbers of litigants served at these court-based projects is detailed in figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1
Customers Served by Self-Help Legal Access Centers**

	1/1/03 – 12/31/03	1/1/04 – 6/30/04	Anticipated total 2004
Van Nuys	18,300	7,372	14,744
Pomona	7,945	6,129	12,258
Inglewood	5,201	3,092	6,184
Antelope Valley	3,838	2,827	5,654
Total	35,284	19,420	38,840

Given the large number of court locations, the Superior Court’s action plan for serving self-represented litigants, *Pointing Self-Represented Litigants in the Right Direction*, envisions a core of self-help offices working in partnership with a legal services agency such as Neighborhood Legal Services, along with minimally staffed centers in other locations where litigants can obtain brochures and use computer resources to obtain information and complete common forms. The first of these self-help offices was established in the law library of the Long Beach courthouse in April 2003. The site provided equipment, public access computers programmed with a portal page to I-CAN! software, and Web links including the Judicial Council’s self-help site.

In September 2004, a self-help center opened at the Compton courthouse with funding from a state bar grant obtained by Community Legal Services (a branch of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County.) Public access computers with I-CAN! software supplement direct services by legal aid staff. This combined use of in-person assistance and technology is designed to serve litigants as efficiently as possible.

In addition, the court has used grant funds to expand self-help activities by court staff. The Office of the Family Law Facilitator served 9,636 people with child support problems during the first three quarters in 2004, for a projected total of 12,848 for the year.

The Family Law Information Center was founded in 2000 and provides services at the Central and Norwalk courthouses. Through telephone and walk-in services, along with workshops and correspondence, it served 14,672 people in the first six months of 2004, for a projected total of 29,344 for the year.

Service Staffing

The Self-Help Management Project has two staff members: a full-time managing attorney and a part-time assistant attorney. The managing attorney’s skills and qualifications closely match the project’s requirements. The managing attorney is an experienced family law attorney who founded a nonprofit legal aid center. In addition, she has a variety of other relevant experience and skills. For example, as founder of a parents group that is active with the Los Angeles Unified School District, the managing attorney learned how to navigate political arenas, forge collaborations, and get diverse groups of people to work together. The managing attorney is responsible for grant management, supervising the assistant attorney, creating a presence for the management project among local providers, setting goals for the project, and conducting all project activities (as described below) with the help of the assistant attorney.

The assistant attorney works half-time for the management project, and her duties have included conducting dissolution workshops, training JusticeCorps volunteers, visiting self-help centers to gather information about the services they provide, and creating visibility for the management project. No clerical staff are employed, although people interviewed by the evaluation team during site visits (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B) indicated that administrative support would be welcome.

Analysis of Agencies Served

The Self-Help Management Project has engaged in a wide variety of activities, including communication and collaboration, dissemination of best practices, support for new self-help centers, and resource development (see figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2
Activities of the Los Angeles Self Help Management Project

Collaboration	Hosts monthly meetings with centers Attends pro per meetings
Communication	Manages listserv Phone assistance Site visits
Dissemination	Model dissolution workshops Forms packets Form development
Support to new centers	Assists in center startups I-CAN! project Co-locating Central self-help projects Pro per day in Antelope Valley
Resource development	JusticeCorps–100 paid internships Grant funds from AOC

Targeted Agencies

The management project was established to facilitate collaboration and communication among Los Angeles County's disparate self-help providers. To this end, as documented in the monthly activity logs, project staff have established some degree of communication or shared activities with more than 20 nonprofit agencies, multiple judges and bench officers, staff in the Office of the Family Law Facilitator and Family Law Information Center, other court departments (including court administrators, court counsel, contracts officers, and technology support staff), county departments (including the Department of Consumer Affairs), and bar associations and law schools.

Many of the management project's activities focus on a core group of agencies and court-based services. Establishing strong working relationships within the courts and with court-based self-help providers was a logical first step. As documented in the monthly activity logs, the agencies most involved with the management project's work include NLS and LAFLA, the two major agencies that operate court-based self-help centers; Community Legal Services (CLS), which also operates court-based self-help centers; the Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law; the Levitt and Quinn Family Law Center; the Office of the Family Law Facilitator, the Family Law Information Center, judges and bench officers, and other court and county departments.

Telephone interviews conducted by the evaluation team with Los Angeles area self-help agencies in Spring 2003 and Spring 2004 provided information about the training and technical assistance needs of these providers. (See Appendix I for a list of agencies participating in the evaluation telephone survey.) Although some telephone respondents indicated they were familiar with other agencies' policies and procedures, half were not. Most respondents expressed strong interest in a wide variety of training and technical assistance. Telephone respondents provided a long list of topic areas for which they would appreciate technical assistance, as described below.

Improved communication with the court. Several respondents indicated they would like help forging relationships with judges and other court personnel, including the Family Law Information Centers and family law facilitators. These respondents said they would welcome the opportunity to speak with judges and other court staff about issues surrounding self-represented litigants, but they were unsure how to initiate such meetings. Respondents also expressed interest in help to navigate the different procedures used in different courts or perhaps to attempt to standardize procedures across courts.

Networking opportunities. Respondents indicated they would appreciate more opportunities to meet with and learn from other self-help providers, as well as more communication with other community groups.

Staff training. Self-help centers are staffed by individuals with varying backgrounds and skill levels, including attorneys, paralegals, students, and volunteers. Some respondents expressed a desire for staff training provided by an outside agency instead of in-house.

Training in substantive areas of the law. Although staff at self-help centers are knowledgeable about areas of law their centers cover, respondents indicated that staff could benefit from additional training. Furthermore, some agencies have plans to expand the areas of law that they cover. Respondents expressed a desire for training in eight areas of the law:

- General family law;
- Dissolutions, especially contested dissolutions;
- Conservatorships;
- Bankruptcies;
- Immigration law;
- Housing law;
- Education law; and
- Health care law.

Other needs. Respondents also expressed the need for assistance in several other areas, including information technology, staff and volunteer recruitment, and updates on new developments in government regulations and benefits. Respondents also expressed the desire to have a “point person” they could contact with questions and needs and another who could discuss available resources and court processes.

Description of Service Delivery

Many of the management project’s activities described below address the technical assistance needs identified by the telephone respondents.

Collaboration

The Self-Help Management Project is involved with numerous collaborative efforts, as documented on the monthly activity logs. Indeed, according to these logs, between May 2003 and April 2004, the management project hosted 64 meetings, and its staff attended 84 meetings put on by other agencies. The management project’s activities are described below, and include *pro per* provider meetings and networking lunches, collaborations with the Office of the Family Law Facilitator and the Family Law Information Center, and information dissemination and outreach. These efforts all link to the communication, networking, and staff training needs identified by the telephone respondents.

Within the court system, the Self-Help Management Project staff take part in *pro per* provider meetings chaired by the presiding family court judge. These meetings bring together court personnel and staff of various self-help centers, allowing court-based agencies to communicate with each other and with nonprofits and to clarify rules and procedures. For example, these meetings provide a forum for self-help center staff to

discuss inefficiencies and confusion in their dealings with the courts. The Self-Help Management Project's managing attorney can bring issues to the presiding judge that she hears from the providers who work in the various Los Angeles courts, and in turn, the judge can make decisions about how things should be standardized and then communicate this to the judges at the outlying courts. One respondent found that these meetings have become more fruitful as the management project's managing attorney has altered their focus; as relationships solidify, people share knowledge and information more freely. These meetings typically include representatives from a dozen or so organizations, and those who attend now represent more than just the central court. Staff of the self-help centers at the Pomona, Van Nuys, and Inglewood courts and of the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice are new additions to the meetings as a result of to the managing attorney's suggestions.

In addition to attending the *pro per* provider meetings, the Self-Help Management Project's managing attorney instituted monthly lunches for central courthouse program staff. These lunch meetings allow staff of the various projects working in the courthouse to get to know one another, to learn about the services each project offers, and to share ideas. The resulting familiarity has improved the seamlessness of referrals among the numerous programs operating within this single large courthouse.

One of the Self-Help Management Project's main collaborative partners is the Family Law Information Center (FLIC). The project's managing attorney has used a number of strategies to improve this collaboration and to build relationships between the FLIC and self-help providers. For example, the managing attorney was involved with fostering a new collaboration, called the Family Law Self-Help Center, which brings together FLIC, the family law facilitator, Infoline (an organization located in the central court that provides referrals and information to a broad array of services), and other providers within the central courthouse. These agencies now operate out of one location and also share a designated workshop space. The Office of the Family Law Facilitator provided the financial resources for the location, and the management project coordinated purchase of workshop equipment and organized an open house to announce the creation of the Family Law Self-Help Center and the Family Law Workshop space.

In addition to court staff and bench officers, staff from multiple self-help centers and nonprofits around Los Angeles County were invited to this open house, which provided opportunities for mingling and networking. The event included poster presentations on the services offered by each central courthouse program. The central court administrator attended this event and spoke for the first time with representatives of many community-based legal services providers. He is now an advocate of self-help activities and collaborations, and his recognition of their efforts was encouraging to the community agency staff, who enjoyed this opportunity to meet him and others among the court's leadership. In addition, this open house was the first time many of the county's service program operators met each other.

The court's commitment to support self-help programs was demonstrated by dedicating space for workshops in this overcrowded courthouse, and service providers recognized the significance. Previously, workshop providers had to use a courtroom that happened to be empty on the day of the workshop, making advanced planning difficult and causing confusion and delays at the start of every workshop. The consistent availability of the new workshop room encourages community agencies to partner with the court to present services within the courthouse. The management project is now organizing workshops by outside agencies to be held at the courthouse in collaboration with the Family Law Information Center.

The managing attorney has also participated on committees and task forces, including the committee that helped plan an annual conference on family law sponsored by the Legal Aid Association of California and the AOC. In this role, she solicited feedback from regional service providers and court staff and took their ideas back to the committee. In the second year of the conference, she organized a half-day training on issues specific to self-help programs, including intake, workshops, and new ways to provide services. The managing attorney also takes part in a relatively new task force formed to address the issue of *notario* fraud. This is a rapidly growing problem in Los Angeles: Many self-represented litigants pay large sums of money to individuals who then fraudulently or incorrectly complete their paperwork. The managing attorney has taken information and ideas from this task force out to the self-help centers in other courts.

Communication and Information Distribution

Communicating within and outside of the courts has been an area of importance for the management project, and the managing attorney uses an e-mail distribution list to pass along information and materials to a wide variety of court-based and independent, nonprofit self-help service providers. The managing attorney has generated the distribution list through informal contacts and sign-in sheets from meetings, among other sources. She uses the distribution list to disseminate information from the Judicial Council, announce upcoming events, and share any other information that would be pertinent to self-help providers. The original proposal for this grant called for the creation of a Web site, but site visit respondents believe that the distribution list is a significantly more successful and cost-effective way of disseminating information. People may be more likely to read messages in their e-mail inbox than they are to check a Web site regularly for updates.

The distribution list is just one way that the management project provides information to self-help providers. In addition, the managing attorney serves as a resource to self-help providers, acting as the "point person" whose usefulness respondents to the phone survey described. One site visit respondent described the managing attorney as a "one-stop source where I can find out about everyone else." Another site visit respondent agreed, stating, "It is nice to call [the managing attorney] rather than having to hunt someone else down." Other respondents described the managing attorney as a "service provider for the service providers" and as "a member of our team." Site visit respondents explained that

the managing attorney can take things from the self-help centers to the central court for approval, something the centers could not do themselves. Similarly, according to site visit respondents, the managing attorney also is a central point of contact for people to provide feedback about Judicial Council forms. She compiles this feedback and provides it in an organized fashion to the AOC.

In addition to e-mail distribution of information, staff of the management project visit the court-based self-help centers regularly to meet with their staff and observe their operations. These visits provide an opportunity for self-help center staff to share needs and areas of concern; in addition, management project staff can provide ideas, resources, and information. For example, in the course of attending meetings with providers, the managing attorney learned that the self-help staff in one of the district courts had misunderstandings about what another court department provided. The managing attorney arranged a meeting between the two agencies and facilitated a discussion between them. The agencies were able to learn about the services each offered and the resource constraints faced by each. In addition, the managing attorney helped develop a cross-referral form that both agencies now use. The form refers customers from one agency to the other and explains why the referral was made and what services the customer needs.

Dissemination of Best Practices

To reach the goal of increasing the number of cases in which self-represented litigants prepare their documents correctly, the management project has compiled and disseminated best practices, including model workshops that self-help centers can use. To this end, the management project, according to the monthly activity logs, has conducted 74 dissolution workshops to create a model workshop plan for centers to use.

This project is particularly critical because it appears that in Los Angeles, as in most counties throughout California, many more dissolution cases are filed than result in judgment. Since 1997, dissolution, legal separation, and annulment cases have been concluded only about 65 percent of the time. In 2003-2004, this figure increased to 77 percent (see figure 6.3).

**Figure 6.3
Los Angeles: Historical Review of Dissolution Cases
Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS)**

Year	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04
Cases disposed	37,178	33,363	33,032	22,364	25,367	24,878	24,912	25,895	25,053	28,750
Cases filed	37,107	38,026	37,501	35,706	36,738	38,551	38,850	40,468	38,811	37,307
Percent disposed	100%	88%	88%	63%	68%	65%	64%	64%	65%	77%

It is unclear why such a large percentage of cases are unresolved. Among self-represented litigants, a major reason may be that they do not know the multiple steps required to obtain a dissolution in California.⁵⁰ Most programs use three separate workshops to help litigants comply with the required steps, and few programs have found a way to assist litigants with the final stage of the divorce (preparing a judgment) in a group setting. By developing this full slate of workshops, the Self-Help Management Project enabled programs throughout the county to help litigants complete their dissolutions in a timely and effective manner.

Management project staff have conducted dissolution workshops for self-represented litigants and training sessions for self-help center staff in the use of the model workshop. The assistant attorney conducts dissolution workshops (an area of need identified by telephone respondents) at court-based self-help centers and at the Family Law Information Center. She also works collaboratively with other staff professionals to develop ways to present legal forms, language, courtroom etiquette, and other topics. Prior to conducting these workshops, the assistant attorney shared outlines and materials with self-help center staff to get feedback and buy-in regarding the way she structured the workshops. The management project has also secured permission from the Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law to use its dissolution manual as a model. Conducting workshops has enabled the assistant attorney to hear questions and concerns directly from self-represented litigants, allowing her to fine-tune the workshop model. In addition, the assistant attorney follows the cases of the people who take her workshops to track their progress and outcome. In this way, she is able to find out why judgments are rejected. In some cases, she has discovered errors on the clerks' part rather than on the litigants' part, and other cases have prompted her to modify her workshop content and format to ensure that other litigants do not make the same mistakes. The finished product of this work is a model consisting of three workshops that assist self-represented litigants from the beginning of the process, through discovery and request for default, all the way to judgment and declarations. Management project staff members have trained staff of the court-based self-help centers so that the latter can conduct the model workshops themselves.

The Divorce Workshop Series consists of three separate workshops, each lasting about four to five hours, covering all pleadings required to start and complete a dissolution of marriage. The series has been presented in four different courthouses, with one workshop at two different courthouses each week. From January 1, 2004, through October 31, 2004, the management project offered 74 workshops serving 590 litigants (see figure 6.4).

⁵⁰ The San Diego Superior Court instituted a program in 2003 that required most people who had filed for divorce but had not completed their case within four months to participate in a status conference. Those litigants (the great majority of all people who had filed for divorce) were asked to complete an intake form, which asked among other things why their case wasn't completed. A common belief (24 percent) was that all a petitioner had to do to be divorced was to file a petition and summons, serve the other party, and wait six months. Another large group (19 percent) was waiting to hear something from the court.

Figure 6.4
Los Angeles Dissolution Workshops

Location	Number of Workshops	Number of Litigants
Torrance	20	191
Long Beach*	13	78
Central	20	134
Norwalk	21	187
Total	74	590

* The Long Beach location stopped providing workshops in August 2004.

The instructions are currently provided verbally with flipcharts as visual aids. Overhead projectors were used in the beginning but discarded. Plans for the future include use of videos, CDs, and computer software for portions of the workshop. Procedural information is covered extensively, and written instructions are also provided for some. Individual assistance is provided as needed by the attorney presenter at the workshop's conclusion.

Informal follow-up is conducted by the attorney presenter to determine any problems that come up as pleadings are processed, so workshop practices can be adjusted and the quality of the pleadings improved. Workshop participants return to their scheduled second and third workshops in the series and are able to get assistance regarding any interim problems with their pleadings. They are given the office number to call if they have problems getting the judgment processed. The staff attorney follows up with court clerks to determine solutions for any consistent problems.

The self-help legal access centers have all had staff trained to present the divorce workshop series, and the management project continues to work with them to support their delivery of this model. The management center is also working to recruit other workshop presenters and assistants from local bar associations and agencies. The assistant attorney will maintain oversight of the ongoing presentation of the divorce workshop series, but she plans to move on to develop other types of best-practices workshops.

Assistance With Forms

Staff of the Self-Help Management Project also worked with the court to develop a checklist that all courts can use to give reasons for rejecting forms submitted in dissolution actions. This checklist was reviewed by lead clerks and approved as an official form of the Los Angeles court. It has been placed online so that it is available to the public and the bar.⁵¹ The supervising judge of the Family Law Department also held a

⁵¹ Los Angeles County Superior Court, *Manual of Procedure for Processing Default and Uncontested Judgments Pursuant to Family Code Section 2336*, <http://www.lasuperiorcourt.org/familylaw/pdfs/judgmentmanual.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2004).

meeting of more than 400 attorneys and self-help providers to review the new form because a review of case files showed that private attorneys often had their filings rejected as well. In addition, the managing attorney is working with clerks to revise the rejection form into a checklist that can be used to ensure that self-represented litigants have done everything necessary for the clerk to approve their filings.

A related goal of the management project has been to create uniform packets, forms, and procedures for use across the county. The management project has put together a judgment packet that contains all appropriate Judicial Council forms, along with instructions and simplified worksheets to use as attachments. Management project staff asked court-based self-help center staff and family law clerks to review the packet and provide feedback. This strategy has been extremely successful: The clerks have endorsed the packet, and self-help centers are confident and motivated to use it.

Putting together such packets is a major step for the court. Previously, when litigants requested forms, clerks in many locations have simply given them the list of 580 Judicial Council forms in alphabetical order and asked them to identify which ones they need.

The managing attorney facilitates the distribution of forms and materials to assist self-represented litigants. One self-help center created a new form to help self-represented litigants with declarations. The managing attorney suggested sharing this form with others, including the family law administrator, to create a form that has buy-in from multiple parties and that could be used at multiple self-help centers and courts. The management project has also worked on packets and handouts for spousal support, proof of service by publication, and orders to show cause in family law cases.

Support to New Self-Help Centers

According to site visit respondents and monthly activity logs, the management project provides support to new court-based self-help centers in several ways. First, the managing attorney has provided help with securing concrete items, such as office space, materials, and Internet access. In addition, throughout the implementation of the management project, the managing attorney has helped connect new centers with those that are established so that new staff can learn from experienced workers. The managing attorney arranges for the staff of new centers to spend time shadowing staff at the established centers, and she facilitates the sharing of materials and packets so that new centers do not have to reinvent the wheel. This facilitation role, both for concrete items and for information sharing, is described by respondents as one of the most important accomplishments of the management project.

The management project also has played an integral role in getting I-CAN! stations established at courthouses in Los Angeles County. I-CAN! is a software program that helps self-represented litigants complete their paperwork for cases involving domestic violence, small claims, landlord/tenant issues, governmental child support, and some family law matters. The questions are simple, and they are read aloud on the video component so that people with limited reading and computer skills can make good use of

the program. All modules are available in English and Spanish, and some are also available in Vietnamese. Placing I-CAN! stations in courthouses without self-help centers allows additional litigants to access some form of self-help assistance. The management project worked closely with the Legal Aid Society of Orange County to customize this software for use in Los Angeles County. This involved extensive legal review of the modules for accuracy of law and procedures within Los Angeles. Management project staff members worked with the Long Beach courthouse and information technology staff to facilitate the placement of I-CAN! terminals in the law library and to troubleshoot as problems arose. The management project also provided training on the software for law library staff, clerks, and bench officers. The project's collaboration with Legal Aid Society of Orange County, begun in May 2003, is ongoing.

In an evaluation of the Long Beach program,⁵² litigants who used the center were generally pleased with the services. About 85 percent said they got all the information they needed to pursue their case. Although 44 out of 50 respondents noted that they needed someone to personally help them, the law librarian can provide only limited support. In addition, the law library's staff and hours are being reduced 50 percent. As a result, the managing attorney is working to establish an alternative self-help center in the Long Beach courthouse outside of the law library. The I-CAN! computers will be moved to this new location, other terminals will be added, and the center will have full-time staff and sufficient technical support to keep the computers functioning during all court working hours.

The Self-Help Management Project is also helping to develop a new self-help center in the Compton courthouse to be staffed by the Legal Aid Society of Orange County's Community Legal Services office (CLS). The project is using the relationships built with other service providers to provide training and materials for the new staff. The court's Information Services division provided nine computers, which were reconfigured for self-help use under the supervision of the CLS staff. The opening portal page for those computers has links to I-CAN!, the California Courts Self-help Center Web site, and the Los Angeles Superior Court site, with room for future links to other document assembly programs. The management project's ability to gain collaboration from the court and community agencies has provided tremendous resources without cost to CLS, allowing the latter to stretch grant resources to fund more staff hours. As a result of monitoring the Long Beach I-CAN! pilot project, the management project encouraged CLS to develop a model that will supplement I-CAN! computer stations with legal aid staff and trained interns to provide the personal assistance desired by Long Beach program users and to determine best practices for effective use of the self-help computer programs.

One of the collaborative efforts that the project is working on is a way to manage family law cases involving self-represented litigants. Two highly innovative judicial officers at the Antelope Valley court, working with NLS, the family law facilitator, and family court

⁵² K. Lane, Institute for Court Management, *Is the Long Beach Self-Help Center Meeting the Family Law Needs of the Court?* (May 2004).

services, have created a special *pro per* day each Monday at the court. On that day, court files are reviewed prior to hearings to determine what help litigants may need, and self-help center staff assist litigants with paperwork and procedural problems. This pilot project is designed to improve the court's response to self-represented litigants by coordinating needed resources at one time, by streamlining calendars by having litigants with and without attorneys appear on different days and by analyzing what services self-represented litigants need to successfully complete their cases.⁵³

Resource Development

As documented on the monthly activity logs and through site visit interviews, the managing attorney has been involved with several grant-writing endeavors aimed at providing funds to self-help centers and other services for self-represented litigants. One example is an AmeriCorps-funded project called JusticeCorps that will provide 100 paid internships for 10 court-based self-help projects (two Family Law Information Centers, the small claims advisor program, and self-help legal access centers). Each of the interns, recruited from three California State universities and UCLA, will provide 300 hours of service at the self-help projects. This grant directly addresses the telephone respondents' request for help with staff and volunteer recruitment. The managing attorney worked with AOC staff to write this grant proposal.

The managing attorney will supervise this project and the three staff people directly responsible for administering the JusticeCorps program.⁵⁴ She coordinated the initial two-day training of 100 volunteers, using staff from the AOC, small claims advisor program, and legal services agencies; the assistant attorney provided training in substantive law. The managing attorney coordinated the initial swearing-in ceremony for JusticeCorps members at which Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court Ming Chin, Los Angeles Superior Court Presiding Judge Dukes, and California Administrative Director of the Courts William Vickrey welcomed the new volunteers.

Another grant the managing attorney worked on was an AOC grant for development and implementation of a community-focused action plan for serving self-represented litigants. This implementation grant allows the director of the Family Law Information Center to work two days per month with the managing attorney to develop workshops and other collaborative activities with self-help providers.

The managing attorney also worked with each of the legal services programs applying for Equal Access Partnership Grant funds to obtain the required letter of support from the presiding judge for the application. She also worked with the programs to try to identify and avoid collaboration challenges with the court and to develop proposals to meet needs identified by court staff and judges. She coordinated a meeting of various court staff,

⁵³ "New Program to Help Lighten Legal Paperwork," *Antelope Valley Press* (Oct. 2, 2004).

⁵⁴ For more information on the JusticeCorps program, see <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/justicecorps/>.

self-help providers, and county counsel to develop terms for a boilerplate agreement for agencies providing legal services in the court to address concerns regarding space usage.

According to site visit respondents, in addition to grant writing, the management project's activities promote the leveraging of scarce resources. Encouraging agencies to share information and materials reduces the time spent re-creating materials available elsewhere.

Budget and Expenditures

In the first year, 67 percent of the Self-Help Management Project's expenditures were for personnel. This increased to 80 percent in the second year, once both staff members had been hired. In the first year, 33 percent of expenses were for I-CAN! and other costs associated with the start of the Long Beach self-help center. In the second year, 16 percent of the costs again went to costs of self-help center programs, including I-CAN!, and furniture for the centers. About 3 percent of the costs in the second year were for conference and travel, and 1 percent went to materials for workshops. By the third year, 92 percent of the expenditures were for personnel, with 5 percent for supplies and materials and 1 percent each for conference and travel, equipment and furniture, and printing and copying.

Impact on Providers

Respondents indicated that the management project has resulted in more efficient self-help programs. Self-help center staff members have a one-stop resource to help them with multiple needs, including provision of workshops, forms packets, volunteers, I-CAN! technology, and startup assistance. In addition, respondents explain that self-help centers now provide more consistent information, and the quality of services is more consistent.

Respondents also discussed impacts the management project has had on the level of communication and collaboration among providers. At the first site visit, respondents expressed hope that the management project would create systems allowing various services to share information and best practices and would build the relationships and linkages that make joint projects a possibility. At the second site visit, respondents said that these changes had taken place; the management project had fostered linkages and built trust between providers.

By assisting self-help centers to gain critical resources and employ them as efficiently as possible, the management project helps to maximize the reach of the court-based self-help programs. The managing attorney was instrumental in obtaining an AmeriCorps grant of \$250,000 per year for the next three years, which has been matched with \$125,000 from the AOC, for 100 paid internships per year. Each of these JusticeCorps volunteers will provide 300 hours of volunteer service to self-help centers: a total of 30,000 additional hours of service. These volunteers have been trained in finishing divorces using the workshop methodology developed by the Self-Help Management

Project in conjunction with the self-help centers; this will foster a consistent, efficient system for helping litigants complete their cases. The JusticeCorps program has been the impetus for increased attention to self-represented litigants from other parts of the court, allowing for expansion of computer-based resources and other support for the management project.

By working with the courts to encourage Internet and forms assistance—and now supporting that with JusticeCorps volunteers who have facility and comfort in using computers—the program allows many more people to complete necessary court papers with less need for staff resources. As the Self-Help Management Project works with the new Compton self-help center, which is providing a combination of services based on helping people use computers, this change in the way of providing services can be implemented in a thoughtful and coordinated manner.

Impact on Litigants

The Los Angeles model is not a direct service model, and therefore, the management project was not expected to have a direct impact on self-represented litigants at this point. However, over the long term, the impact of the project on self-help providers should, in turn, lead to impacts on the judicial process for self-represented litigants. Respondents explained that they anticipate a more litigant-friendly process and, ultimately, a fairer application of justice for self-represented litigants. Better prepared litigants, in turn, can ease the workload for court staff and judges. One respondent stated that improved quality and consistency of services among providers and the resultant improvements in the court system would increase the legitimacy of self-help services and improve the reputation of self-represented litigants.

Vignette: Assistance from a JusticeCorps Volunteer

One of the college students participating in the JusticeCorps project is a political science student considering continuing on to law school after graduation. She is interested in helping people and learning about the court at the same time. She works under attorney supervision at a district court self-help center. While working at the center, a monolingual Spanish-speaking woman came in for help with legal papers she had received, as her husband had filed for dissolution and wanted to take custody of their children. Her husband claimed that she was spending too much time at her job and neglecting the children. The student verbally translated the papers into Spanish and read them to this woman. She then provided the proper responsive forms to complete, and translated the declaration from Spanish into English so that the judge could understand this woman's side of the situation.

Impact on Court Process

The management project's staff have focused attention on linking court personnel and court-based services with self-help providers in Los Angeles County. As a result of these efforts, the managing attorney can take questions or concerns from providers to the court and can share with providers information and decisions made by the court. In addition, the management project's emphasis on developing model workshops impacts the court. The goal for litigants who participate in these workshops is that they will be better prepared for court, resulting in a more efficient and streamlined court process.

Vignette: Divorce Workshop Participant

Carrie, a mother of three, came to a workshop for help ending her 15-year marriage. Her husband had escalating drug and alcohol problems and frequently slapped and threatened Carrie in front of the children. Two years ago, when Carrie told her husband that she wanted to get a divorce, he moved out of the family home and into a small trailer on the property. Since then, he has slept in the trailer but enters the family home whenever he pleases and repeatedly tells Carrie that he would never give her a divorce and that he would kill her first. After moving into the trailer he intentionally quit his job and stopped providing any financial support the family. Over the past year, Carrie has been trying to get help to get a divorce. She tried non-profit legal agencies but was always told that she earned a little too much money to qualify for services. Finally, she came to the divorce workshop offered at her neighborhood courthouse.

On the same day Carrie prepared and filed her divorce case and, in collaboration with the court-based domestic violence clinic, filed and obtained emergency temporary restraining orders. At the next two workshops, she completed all of the required court forms to complete her case. Carrie made one last trip to the workshop to finalize her proposed judgment based on the court's orders at the default hearing, and to express her gratitude to the court's self-help system for helping her take back her life.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Accomplishment of Goals

The Los Angeles Self-Help Management Project is successfully implementing the urban collaboration model. The project has developed partnerships between the court and legal service organizations; has assisted with the development of new self-help centers; has worked toward securing additional funding sources for self-help services; and has developed tools for the self-help centers, including workshops, standardized forms, packets, and procedures.

The purpose of this project was to encourage the coordination and expansion of resources for existing and new projects. The management project has assisted new projects in

securing space, materials, and Internet resources. It has also connected staff of the new centers with those of existing centers so that they can share resources and learn from experienced providers. Management project staff have worked with existing programs to help them redesign some delivery systems to allow for more efficient delivery of services and reduced burnout. Project staff were instrumental in obtaining a \$250,000 per year grant from AmeriCorps to provide 100 paid internships for 10 court-based self-help projects and the county's small claims advisor.

Management project activities have resulted in more efficient self-help programs. Self-help center staff members have a one-stop resource to help them with multiple needs, resulting in more efficient and seamless service delivery. The management project has fostered linkages and has built trust between providers.

The Self-Help Management Project has delivered valuable tools to the Los Angeles self-help centers; developing them separately would have been a strain on the resources of any individual center. In the first two years of operation, the management project has provided a family dissolution workshop curriculum and workshops, forms packets, a revision of the I-CAN! software, start-up assistance to new centers, and information and referral tools. Once the Self-Help Management Project was in place, the staff were able to provide unexpected benefits including a program to supervise the JusticeCorps volunteers countywide.

The management project has played a role in the education and encouragement of court staff and leaders to appreciate the benefits of supporting self-help programs and in collaborating with community legal service providers. This has been most effective following an administrative change that placed the management project under the supervision of the Family Law Administrator, which links the project more closely linked to core operations than when it was supervised by the Strategic Planning Unit.

Service Issues

Staff chosen to implement the project are critical. Respondents explained that the managing attorney must be skilled at navigating in the political arena and dealing with people and agencies with conflicting agendas. Furthermore, site visit respondents explained that the managing attorney must be able to gain the respect of others within and outside the court for her or his legal expertise, so being an attorney is an advantage. Both of the management project's staff members are seen as a reliable resource for family law questions.

Selecting an appropriate starting point facilitated the program's development.

Given the number, geographic spread, and diversity of agencies providing self-help services in Los Angeles County, it was necessary for the Self-Help Management Project to find a focus for its efforts. That focus has been court-based services (in addition to several large, independent self-help nonprofits). Focusing on court-based services was logical for several reasons. First, self-help providers list increasing coordination and

communication between court-based self-help centers and other court entities as an important goal. Second, the management project is located within the central court, thus providing a natural link between court-based self-help centers and court personnel and agencies. Third, at the time the management project began, there was momentum in the Los Angeles County courts for court-based self-help centers: Several new court-based self-help centers had been established, and others were planned. Supporting newly established centers, as well as aiding in the establishment of additional centers, was a natural direction for the management project.

Program staff acted strategically in order to create an attitude change among providers. According to respondents, some of the most important and intangible work that the management project has done is to change attitudes among self-help providers and court-based services. Agencies are now sharing information with each other and are eager to learn from each other. The management project's approach has been a combination of respect and humility. For example, the managing attorney is sure to tell providers when she thinks that their materials or procedures are top quality, then will ask whether she can share those materials with others so that other agencies can benefit from their expertise. Similarly, when management project staff want to institute a change, they first approach key constituent groups (such as NLS or LAFLA) to present ideas and get feedback; management project staff do not assume they have all the correct answers and instead are careful to solicit information from others. As a result of this combination of respect and humility, self-help centers and court-based services are eager to collaborate with the management project and, by extension, with each other. Agencies appreciate the opportunity to participate meaningfully in plans to change or modify their service delivery.

Chapter 7

Experiences of Self-Represented Litigants Across Pilot Projects

This chapter presents findings from data collected through post-hearing interviews over the course of the two-year study, as well as an in-depth analysis of customer satisfaction survey data by case type and by primary method of service delivery (drop-in or workshop). In both of these data collection efforts, the number of cases from individual programs was too small to allow separate analyses.

Post-Hearing Interview Results

Interviews with self-represented litigants immediately following their hearings were conducted in Spring 2003 and 2004 in the courthouses of Butte, Contra Costa, Fresno, and San Francisco counties. (Interviews were not conducted in Los Angeles because the project primarily serves self-help providers.) These data provide information on the characteristics of study participants, their experiences as self-represented litigants within the judicial process, and the role of pilot self-help centers in their court experience.

During data collection, the researchers observed 302 self-represented litigants in 231 cases, 154 litigants during Year 1 and 148 litigants during Year 2. Follow-up interviews with self-represented litigants were conducted with a total of 135 individuals; 57 respondents in Year 1 and 78 respondents in Year 2. For both waves of data collection, Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA) and Northwest Professional Consortium (NPC) researchers worked closely with self-help center staff to select days to observe when the courtroom calendar would ensure a large number of self-represented cases and focus on the areas of law the centers were targeting.

As described in Appendix B, a team of two researchers observed court proceedings involving self-represented litigants. At the close of each hearing, one researcher left the courtroom to request and conduct interviews with the self-represented litigant(s) who had just completed their hearing. The follow-up interviews were voluntary and selective, so the number of hearings observed is greater than the number of interviews. In addition, because the researchers did not seek interviews with litigants who were visibly upset or angry, the sample of litigants interviewed might be biased toward those who had a more favorable reaction to the hearing. The case composition of the interviews differed slightly from the cases that were observed in the courtrooms; however, family law cases were the most common case type in both categories. Hearings regarding domestic violence allegations were a significant proportion of those observed, but litigants in these cases were usually not interviewed to protect their safety and respect their privacy. Figure 7.1 presents information on the types of self-represented litigants observed in court and the types of cases for which litigants were interviewed.

**Figure 7.1
Post-Hearing Interviews by Case Type**

	Observed Self-Represented Litigants		Post-Hearing Interview Respondents	
	%	N	%	N
Family law	26%	78	39%	53
Domestic violence	22%	65	N/A*	N/A *
Small claims	15%	44	21%	28
Civil harassment	19%	57	18%	24
Unlawful detainer	9%	26	13%	18
Other	9%	26	9%	12
(missing)		6		0
Total		302		135

* Because domestic violence cases were not a significant number of post-hearing interviews, these cases were combined with family law cases for analysis of the interview data.

Characteristics of Self-Represented Litigants

Slightly more than half of the self-represented litigants observed had initiated the legal action as plaintiff or petitioner, and half of those observed and interviewed were female. The majority of litigants interviewed spoke English as their primary language; however, 33 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Among those who spoke a language other than English, Spanish predominated.⁵⁵ Interviewees also reported speaking a variety of other languages, including French, Korean, Thai, and Burmese.

The self-represented litigants interviewed represented a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. About 42 percent were white non-Hispanic, 27 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 17 percent were African-American, 6 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4 percent were Native American/Eskimo/Aleut, and 4 percent identified with an “other” racial or ethnic group. Most litigants had at least one child living at home, except for those individuals involved in a civil harassment or unlawful detainer case, the majority of whom had no children living at home. Most litigants had at least a high school diploma or GED, and 20 percent had attained a bachelor’s degree or higher. There were no statistically significant demographic differences between the interview respondents who had received assistance from the self-help center and those who had not. (Please refer to Appendix F for more complete demographic information on post-hearing interview respondents.)

⁵⁵ About 5 percent of the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

Prior Experience With the Courts

Most individuals interviewed reported that they had been to court on at least one other occasion for another case, as illustrated in figure 7.2. However, the majority had never previously represented themselves in court. This was particularly true for individuals involved in unlawful detainer and other civil cases, such as those petitioning for a name change. In contrast, a little more than half of individuals interviewed in family law cases/issues, including child custody and divorce, had previously represented themselves in court.

A majority of individuals reported that they had prior experience in court for the specific case being observed. However, whether the self-represented litigant was attending court for the first time for the case we observed also depended on the type of case. For example, most self-represented litigants involved in civil harassment and unlawful detainer cases had not previously been to court for this particular case. However, 85 percent of family law respondents had previously been to court for the case. In fact, 26 percent of these individuals reported that they had been to court for the same case on four or more other occasions. A majority of self-represented litigants involved in small claims or other civil cases had not previously been to court for the case or, if they had, only once.

The majority of individuals reported that they had never had legal representation for this or any other case. About 42 percent of the self-represented litigants interviewed were representing themselves because they could not afford a lawyer, and almost one-quarter of those interviewed were representing themselves by choice. Regarding prior experience in the courts and legal representation, there were no statistically significant differences between those who accessed self-help center services and those who did not.

Figure 7.2
Litigants' Prior Experience in Court and Previous Legal Assistance
Post-Hearing Interviews

	%	N
First Time as a Self-Represented Litigant		
Yes	57%	76
No	43%	58
(missing)		1
Total		135
Number of Times Litigant Has Been to Court Before for This Case		
None	35%	47
One	27%	37
Two	12%	16
Three	13%	17
Four or more	13%	18
Total		135
Number of Times Litigant Has Been to Court for Other Cases		
None	43%	58
One	16%	22
Two	9%	12
Three	5%	7
Four or more	27%	36
Total		135
Litigant Has Had Legal Representation		
Yes	39%	52
No	62%	83
Total		135
Why Litigant Decided to Represent Self		
I cannot afford a lawyer	42%	57
I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	6%	8
Legal Aid cannot help me	1%	1
I do not know if I need a lawyer	5%	7
I choose to represent myself	24%	33
Other	22%	29
Total		135

Preparation for Court

About 60 percent of self-represented litigants interviewed sought and received help before going to court. Figure 7.3 provides information about the help self-represented litigants received before going to court. Among those individuals who received help, more than half of them sought help from the self-help center pilot program. In addition, self-represented litigants sought assistance from a variety of sources, including legal aid,

private attorneys, paralegals, and friends or relatives. It is important to note that the number of interviewees receiving services from the self-help centers may be underestimated due to a lack of name recognition or difficulty remembering services, especially when time had elapsed between the person’s visit to the self-help center and the hearing date.

Figure 7.3
Help Received Before the Hearing
Post-Hearing Interviews

	N	%
Did Litigant Receive Help Before Going to Court		
Yes	59%	80
No	41%	55
Total		135
Has Litigant Heard of Self-Help Center?		
Yes	44%	48
No	56%	60
(missing)		27
Total		135
Has Litigant Received Help From Self-Help Center?		
Yes*	87%	40
No	13%	6
(missing)		2
Total		48

* Four individuals reported that they had not heard of the self-help center but also reported receiving help from the self-help center. This happened when the respondents did not recognize the center’s name when first asked, but then described where they received help, which was in actuality the self-help center.

The majority of those self-represented litigants who used the self-help centers spoke English at home, had no children under the age of 19 in the home, and had at least some college education. About 45 percent were white non-Hispanic, 23 percent Hispanic/Latino, 20 percent African American, 5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 percent Native American/Eskimo/Aleut, and 5 percent other. Men and women were equally represented among pilot self-help center users. About 40 percent of center users were involved in civil harassment cases, 30 percent in family law, 15 percent in unlawful detainer, and 15 percent in other civil cases. None of the individuals who had used a local pilot self-help center were involved in a small claims case.

Self-represented litigants accessed a variety of services from the pilot self-help center programs (see figure 7.4). The majority of interviewees reported that they received assistance completing forms. However, the centers also assisted litigants by reviewing documents, explaining court orders, organizing workshops, offering procedural information and other educational materials, and making referrals to other providers.

Respondents also went to the centers to pick up court forms and, in some cases, written instructions for completing them. Respondents reported that the most helpful aspects of the services they received included assistance with completing and filing paperwork, information about the court process and what to expect, reassurance that they were adequately prepared and going to the right courtroom, and access to forms, the Internet, advice, and instructions.

Figure 7.4

**Services Received at Self-Help Center*
Post-Hearing Interviews**

Services Received	%	N
Assistance completing forms	65%	26
Document review	28%	11
Received forms and written instructions	13%	5
Explanation of court orders	10%	4
Procedural information	5%	2
Forms only	3%	1
Mediation	3%	1
Order after hearing/judgment	3%	1
Other educational materials	3%	1
Referrals to other providers	3%	1
Other	18%	7
Total		40

*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one service.

The majority of respondents did not offer any suggestions about how to improve services in the pilot self-help centers. However, a few offered suggestions such as having attorneys available to give legal advice, offering assistance with attorney payment, establishing a video lending library, disseminating more information about services,⁵⁶ and developing checklists and flowcharts detailing the court process and paperwork requirements. In addition, at least one respondent noted that asking questions was sometimes difficult because he or she did not have enough knowledge to know what questions to ask.

When the name of the pilot program was mentioned, the majority of litigants had not heard of the self-help center, even though some had received help from it. This may be due to the fact that services and workshops sponsored by the self-help center pilot programs are not yet known by name in the court communities in which they operate.

⁵⁶ Specific suggestions for more publicity included printing center information on court forms, listing center information with court information on the Internet, and making pamphlets available in clerks' offices.

Also, services and workshops may not be explicitly linked with the center name. Interview data show that most self-represented litigants who did not use their local pilot self-help center were not aware of its existence. More than two-thirds of these respondents had never heard of their local center. There were some significant differences in whether or not a respondent had heard of the self-help center based on education level and which court the person was using (see figures 7.5 and 7.6 below). Customers who did not have a high school diploma were much less likely than other customers to have heard of the centers. San Francisco was the only county where more than half of self-represented litigants interviewed had heard of the self-help center.

**Figure 7.5
Center Awareness and Education Levels
Post-Hearing Interviews**

Heard of center	Less than HS diploma		HS diploma or GED		Some college		College degree		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	25%	3	70%	16	38%	16	45%	13	45%	48
No	75%	9	30%	7	62%	26	55%	16	55%	58
Total	100%	12	100%	23	100%	42	100%	29	100%	106

**Figure 7.6
Center Awareness and County/Service Area
Post-Hearing Interviews**

Heard of center	Butte		Contra Costa		Fresno		San Francisco		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	47%	15	38%	8	8%	1	57%	24	44%	48
No	53%	17	62%	13	92%	12	43%	18	56%	60
Total	100%	32	100%	21	100%	13	100%	42	100%	108

Despite the fact that many did not access the self-help centers, most self-represented litigants we interviewed reported that they felt either *extremely* or *mostly* prepared for their hearing (as seen in figure 7.7). These results should be viewed with some caution, however, because the litigants willing to be interviewed may have been those who understood the court process well enough to make it to the hearing phase. Therefore, the sample may not be representative of the overall population of self-represented litigants. Analysis suggests that there were no substantial differences in litigants' perceived levels of preparedness between those who had visited the self-help centers and those who had not.

Figure 7.7
Self-Represented Litigants' Experience in the Courtroom
Post-Hearing Interviews

	%	N
Litigant Felt Prepared for Hearing		
Extremely	42%	57
Mostly	22%	29
Neutral	25%	34
Not very	4%	5
Not at all	7%	10
Total		135
Court Clerk and Staff Treated Litigant With Respect		
Extremely	69%	92
Mostly	23%	30
Neutral	4%	5
Not very	3%	4
Not at all	2%	2
(missing)		2
Total		135
Litigant Understood Court's Terminology		
Extremely	73%	98
Mostly	16%	22
Neutral	7%	10
Not very	2%	3
Not at all	2%	2
Total		135
Litigant Satisfied With Hearing		
Extremely	50%	54
Mostly	16%	17
Neutral	12%	13
Not very	3%	3
Not at all	20%	22
(missing)		26
Total		135

Figure 7.7 (continued)

	%	N
Litigant Surprised by Hearing		
Extremely	22%	24
Mostly	11%	12
Neutral	11%	12
Not very	12%	13
Not at all	44%	47
(missing)		27
Total		135
Litigant Able to Tell Judge Everything Needed to Make Decision		
Extremely	53%	57
Mostly	22%	24
Neutral	6%	6
Not very	6%	6
Not at all	13%	14
(missing)		28
Total		135
Litigant Felt Judge's Decision Was Fair		
Extremely	67%	65
Mostly	13%	13
Neutral	5%	5
Not very	5%	5
Not at all	9%	9
(missing)		38
Total		135
Litigant Believed Judge Would Have Ruled Differently Had Litigant Been Represented		
Yes	28%	28
No	72%	73
Missing		34
Total		135

Need for In-Court Interpreting

As described in figure 7.8, only 12 of the observed self-represented litigants needed interpretation services. Nevertheless, researchers observed that when litigants needed such assistance and it was unavailable, their hearings did not progress smoothly. For example, when an interpreter was lacking, one case was continued, one hearing was chaotic and considerably longer than comparable hearings observed, and one inaccurate

order was made. Most individuals needing interpreter services spoke Spanish as their native language; however, two self-represented litigants spoke Russian.

Figure 7.8
Interpretation Needs of Self-Represented Litigants
Post-Hearing Interviews

Interpretation Needs	%	N
Did not need one	96%	279
Litigant brought own interpreter	2%	5
Litigant had a court appointed certified interpreter	1%	3
Litigant needed interpreter but did not bring one to court	1%	4
(missing)		11
Total		302

Experience in the Courtroom

Generally, self-represented litigants felt that judges and other court staff treated them with respect. More than two-thirds of self-represented litigants reported agreeing strongly that the judge and other court staff treated them with respect, and another 22 percent reported that this was mostly the case.

The majority of litigants reported that they understood the words and phrases used in the court by the judge and other court staff. Interviews with self-represented litigants suggested that the majority were satisfied with the hearing outcome; however, a substantial minority reported that they were *not at all* satisfied.

Figure 7.9
Center Use and Reaction to Hearing
Post-Hearing Interviews

Surprised by What Happened	Received Help from Center		Did Not Receive Help from Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	47%	15	47%	27	47%	42
Not very	16%	5	7%	4	10%	9
Neutral	13%	4	12%	7	12%	11
Mostly	3%	1	12%	7	9%	8
Extremely	22%	7	22%	13	22%	20
Total		32		58		90

Note: None of these differences is statistically significant.

Figure 7.10
Center Use and Ability to Communicate With Judge
Post-Hearing Interviews

Able to Tell Judge Everything Needed to Make Decision	Received Help from Center		Did Not Receive Help from Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	10%	3	17%	10	15%	13
Not very	0%	0	9%	5	6%	5
Neutral	3%	1	5%	3	5%	4
Mostly	23%	7	19%	11	20%	18
Extremely	63%	19	50%	29	55%	48
Total		30		58		88

Note: None of these differences is statistically significant.

Figure 7.11
Center Use and Perceptions of Need for Lawyer
Post-Hearing Interviews

Judge Rule Differently If Had Lawyer	Received Help from Center		Did Not Receive Help from Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	20%	6	36%	20	31%	26
No	80%	24	64%	35	69%	59
Total		30		55		85

Note: None of these differences is statistically significant.

Findings from the post-hearing interviews also suggest that center usage has some effect on self-represented litigants' level of surprise with hearing outcomes, ability to communicate the facts of the case with the judge, and confidence in self-representation. Litigants who received help from the center were somewhat less likely to have been surprised at the outcome of the hearing (63 percent were *not very* or *not at all* surprised, compared with 52 percent of those who did not receive help from the center) (see figure 7.9). About 63 percent of center customers also reported that they were *extremely* able to communicate the facts of their case to the judge (figure 7.10), compared with only 28 percent of noncustomers. Finally, 80 percent of self-represented litigants who had gone to the pilot self-help centers indicated that the judge would not have ruled any differently had they enlisted professional legal representation, compared with less than two-thirds of noncustomers (figure 7.11). However, none of these differences were found to be statistically significant.

Detailed Customer Satisfaction Analysis

Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed to drop-in and workshop customers in the Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno, and San Francisco centers during a two-week period in May 2004. The surveys were designed to elicit customers' overall levels of satisfaction with self-help center services, as well as their assessments of specific types of services. Surveys were received from about one-third (31 percent) of customers across the three centers.

The following analyses explore customer satisfaction more in-depth in an effort to determine whether levels of satisfaction vary for different segments of the customer population. Because a relatively large number of cases are required for these analyses, they are presented across programs and, for the analysis by major case type, across versions of the survey (i.e., for drop-in and workshop surveys combined). See Appendix G for further details from the analysis.

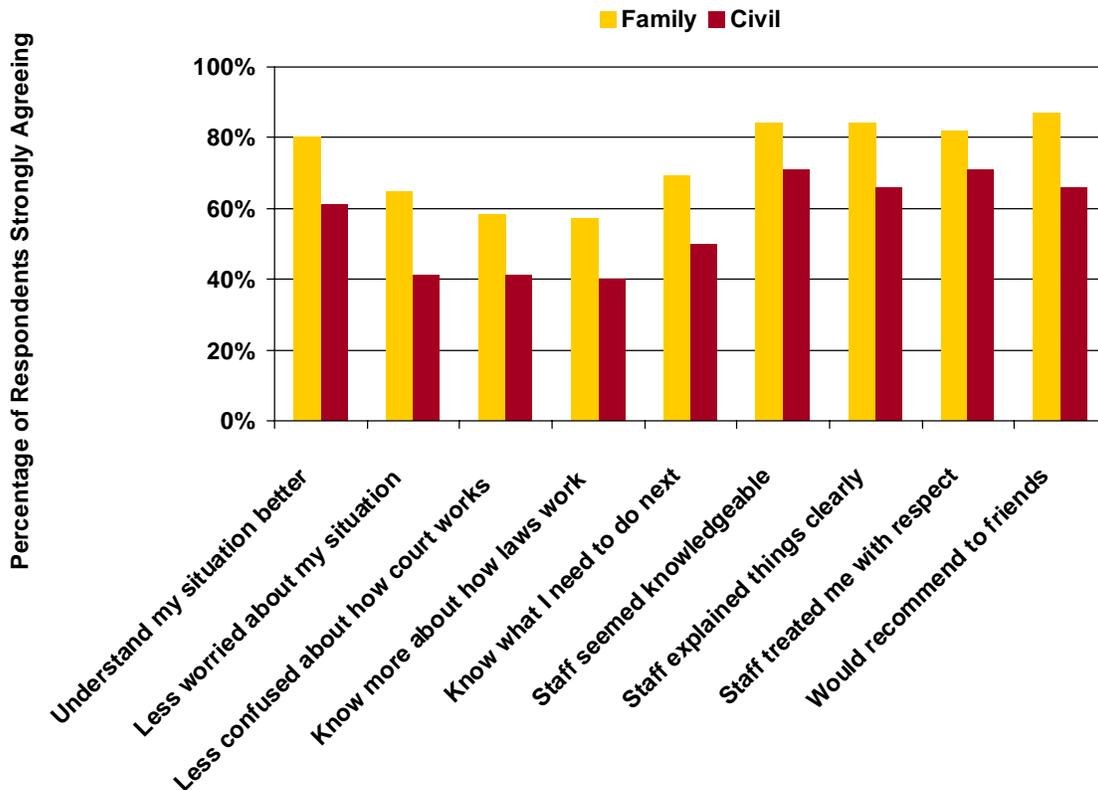
Customer Satisfaction by Case Type

Overall, satisfaction seemed to be higher among customers seeking assistance with family law matters than among those seeking help with other civil matters (figure 7.12). Looking at *strongly agree* responses on the general satisfaction questions, the proportion of customers with family law cases ranged from 10 to 20 points higher than the proportion with other civil cases. Differences in satisfaction between family law and other customers were especially pronounced in terms of whether they felt less worried about their situation (17 percent of customers with other civil cases either disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas no family law customers disagreed or strongly disagreed); whether they knew more about how the laws work; and whether they felt less confused about how the court works. Family law customers were also more likely to report that they would recommend the self-help center to friends and that they understand their situation better.

Responses to questions about customer interactions with center staff showed fewer variations than responses to the other general satisfaction questions discussed above.

Family law and other civil customers varied much less in their assessments of specific services offered at the self-help centers. Differences between the two groups were generally smaller (the differences in the percentage who *strongly agree* ranged from 1 to 21 percentage points) and less likely to be statistically significant. None of the family law or other civil customers found that staff answers to questions were not helpful; almost all (95 percent) family law customers rated staff answers *very helpful*, in contrast with 80 percent of other civil customers. Family law customers were also somewhat more likely to find written instructions for filling out forms to be helpful.

Figure 7.12
Overall Satisfaction by Major Case Type
Customer Satisfaction Surveys

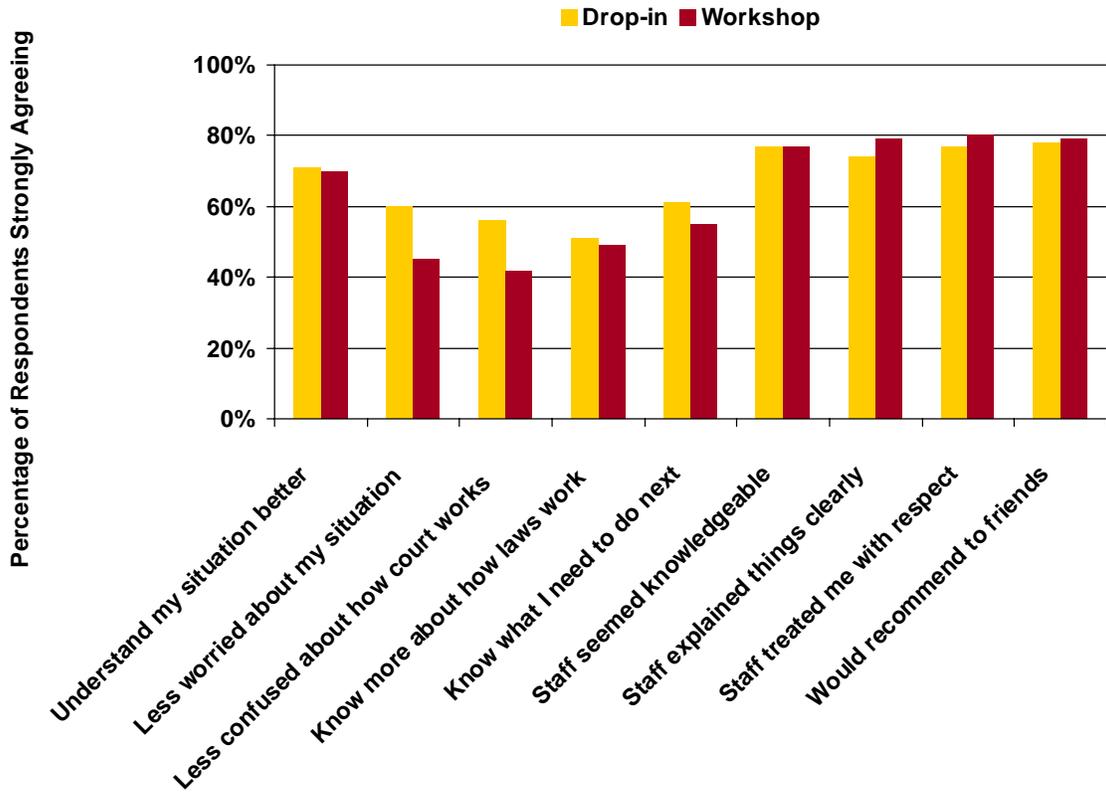


Customer Satisfaction by Service Delivery Method

Drop-in customers were similar to workshop participants in their level of satisfaction (figure 7.13). For the general satisfaction questions, differences in the proportion of *strongly agree* responses between the two groups ranged from less than 1 to 16 percentage points, with most differences 5 percentage points or less. Drop-in customers were more likely to *strongly agree* that they were less confused about how the court works and that they were less worried about their situation, but they were also somewhat more likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

For the service assessment questions, differences in the proportion of *very helpful* responses between drop-in and workshop customers ranged from 2 to 11 percentage points, and differences were not in a consistent direction. Workshop customers seemed somewhat more likely to rate interpretation or translation as *very helpful*, although sample sizes were somewhat lower for this comparison because a smaller percentage of customers needed these services.

Figure 7.13
 Overall Satisfaction by Service Delivery Method
 Customer Satisfaction Surveys



Chapter 8

Programmatic Summary and Recommendations

The five model self-help centers were asked to demonstrate innovative approaches to issues that are faced by all those who provide court-based services to self-represented litigants. Those issues were:

- Providing comprehensive self-help services in small rural courts;
- Providing services to a Spanish-speaking population;
- Providing services to a population speaking a range of languages;
- Developing and implementing technology for self-represented litigants; and
- Coordinating and supporting an array of services in a large urban community.

The staff of the self-help centers, the staff of the courts, and the customers of the centers gave the evaluation team extraordinary access to the centers' development, operations, and problem solving over the two years of the project. Each program served customers in different ways, targeted different populations, and had different goals. As a result, the centers experienced different challenges and successes, and courts interested in developing their own self-help centers will need to identify the components in each model that best suit the needs of their community. However, many lessons learned from this evaluation span all the model self-help centers, and these are summarized in this chapter. These lessons should provide valuable guidance for the planning and implementation of future self-help centers around the state. The outcomes of these projects should also be considered by those drafting statewide recommendations for funding.

The projects also yielded a great deal of information on evaluation and techniques for measuring progress and outcomes in self-help centers. These are discussed in Chapter 9, along with possible directions for future research.

Key Findings

Self-help centers are a valuable method for providing services to people who need access to legal education and information and for improving the quality of justice for litigants.

People who were interviewed during the evaluation, including judicial officers, court staff, members of the bar, and representatives of community agencies, overwhelmingly agreed that self-help services help self-represented litigants navigate the justice system effectively. Most judicial officers and court staff interviewed for the evaluation asserted that they can usually identify which self-represented litigants have received assistance from the self-help centers because they have a better understanding of the process, their

paperwork is more accurate, and they are better prepared for court. Judicial officers reported that when self-represented litigants are able to present their cases more effectively (in writing and verbally), the court has more complete information on which to base its decision.

Self-help centers facilitate a litigant’s ability to participate effectively in the legal process.

Data from a preliminary case file review suggest that receiving assistance from a self-help center not only increases initial access to the justice system, it also facilitates a litigant’s ability to participate more effectively in the court process in those matters in which they are able to represent themselves. For example, with self-help center assistance, plaintiffs in civil harassment cases were able to prepare declarations containing enough specificity to greatly reduce the need for filing supplemental declarations. In unlawful detainer cases, self-help center assistance appears to contribute to the ability of defendants to raise affirmative defenses and to encourage landlords and tenants to reach settlements in such cases. Data also suggest that when dissolution petitioners receive assistance, they are more likely to raise all relevant issues correctly in their initial pleadings, to file proper accompanying paperwork, and to accomplish service of process. Improvements such as these are likely to contribute to a higher quality of justice for self-represented litigants.

Self-help centers improve court efficiency.

According to people who were interviewed during site visits by the evaluation team (hereafter respondents; see Appendix B for details), when a large number of previously unassisted self-represented litigants began receiving assistance from a self-help center, the court began to process cases more efficiently. The following are examples:

- Cases that had been delayed in the court process due to a procedural problem were corrected and completed;
- Paperwork presented to filing clerks was correct the first time, eliminating repeated trips to the clerks’ window;
- Litigants appeared for hearing with papers properly served so cases could proceed the first time, and many continuances were eliminated;
- Courtroom staff was interrupted less often by litigants asking for help;
- More responsive declarations were filed, giving the judicial officer more information on which to base an order; and
- Litigants tended to understand the proceedings and ask appropriate questions so that hearings could proceed more smoothly.

According to court employees and judicial officers interviewed for the evaluation, when self-represented litigants are better prepared for court, have accurate paperwork and supporting documents, and have a better understanding of the court process, the court is

less likely to have to continue a case or to make a decision based on incomplete information. Less courtroom time was spent responding to requests for help from self-represented litigants; several judicial officers also reported that having a place to send litigants to get their questions answered helps them to maintain their appearance of neutrality on the bench.

Self-help centers help the court design systems to serve self-represented litigants more effectively.

The programs also worked with the court to facilitate operational systems designed to serve self-represented litigants more effectively. By identifying issues that self-represented litigants face in trying to navigate the court system, the programs helped the courts develop creative ways to process these cases more efficiently, saving time and reducing frustration for both the litigants and the court staff. The following are some examples of actions taken at various centers:

- Facilitating the implementation of *pro per* calendars (exclusively for hearings involving self-represented litigants) so that in-court assistance can be provided;
- Redesigning the unlawful detainer settlement conference calendar to facilitate assistance to self-represented litigants;
- Standardizing procedures throughout multiple courthouses for processing default divorce judgments;
- Developing a small-estates affidavit procedure for self-represented litigants;
- Preparing a packet to explain service of process for self-represented litigants, which can be distributed at hearings regarding sanctions for failure to complete service in civil cases; and
- Implementing a small claims mediation program.

Self-help centers promote public trust and confidence in the court system; litigants were highly satisfied with the services they received from the self-help centers.

More than 80 percent of litigants surveyed at the self-help centers report that as a result of assistance from the center they:

- Understood their situations better;
- Knew more about how laws work;
- Knew what they needed to do next;
- Were less worried about their situation; and
- Were less confused about how the court works.

They also reported that center staff seemed knowledgeable, explained things clearly, and treated them with respect. As the most helpful services, they ranked having staff to help them with their forms and getting answers to their questions.

Post-hearing interviews indicated that, compared with litigants who had not been to the self-help centers, litigants who had used such services were:

- Less likely to be surprised by the outcome of the hearing;
- Less likely to feel that the judge would have ruled differently if they had a lawyer; and
- More likely to report that they were *extremely* able to communicate with the judge.

Self-help centers meet a great need for service in their communities.

Given the volume of services provided by the direct service programs and the high proportion of customers who did not receive assistance from other resources, it is clear that the pilot programs are meeting a huge need in their communities. More than 60 percent of the customers in each program reported that they did not seek help before coming to the self-help center, and 70 percent or more had not considered hiring a lawyer. The most common reason for representing themselves was that customers could not afford a lawyer. The vast majority of customers had monthly household incomes of \$2,000 or less.

The ability to provide self-help services to Spanish-speaking litigants is critical.

Intake data show that Spanish is the language most commonly spoken by litigants who do not speak English. This was true in all programs, including San Francisco County's multilingual project. The census, interpreter needs surveys, family court services, court-based custody mediation data, and other data sources provide similar evidence. For example, in fiscal year 2002–2003, 84 percent of interpreting expenditures went to Spanish language interpretation.

Directions for the Future

The Judicial Council should continue to implement the statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants approved by the Judicial Council in February 2004. The key component of that plan is that court-based, attorney-staffed self-help centers should be developed throughout the state. This evaluation points out major attributes that should be considered in these self-help centers.

Videoconferencing and coordination between courts is an effective way to help address issues of limited funding.

California has more than 25 rural counties with relatively small populations who have little access to self-help services, combined with courts lacking the resources to provide those services. The Self-Help Assistance Regional Project (SHARP) in

Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties implemented a regional model of service that allowed a single managing attorney and her small staff to provide assistance in a range of case types to thousands of self-represented litigants in four locations. SHARP used videoconferencing, workshops, and the collaboration of other court programs to make the regional model effective. Contra Costa County used a volunteer attorney to provide workshops in one location that were broadcast to other court facilities, overcoming geographic and transportation barriers. Having an attorney in one location who is able to provide workshops, supervise staff, answer questions, and support paraprofessional staff in other locations—all through videoconferencing—is a model that can be implemented throughout the state to address geographic and transportation barriers.

Although knowledgeable and well-trained nonattorney staff can perform many self-help center functions, the day-to-day availability of a managing attorney is critical.

The presence of highly qualified managing attorneys to direct, train, supervise, and manage nonattorney staff in a self-help center is critical. Some of the pilot programs required that their directors be licensed attorneys, whereas others did not. Programs headed by attorneys had several advantages. First, day-to-day availability of the attorneys' legal expertise was invaluable to the nonattorney staff. The level of information and education given by self-help centers distinguishes them from other areas of court operations. Staff must be able to understand the procedural complexities of a case from beginning to end. Familiarity with legal terminology and professional ethics, along with ability to find the relevant law, are required. Furthermore, attorneys are trained to spot problems such as improper *ex parte* communications, improper legal advice, or court operations that impose unequal burdens on self-represented litigants. Attorney supervision also assures that information given by the court to the public will be reliable and accurate. When the managing attorney is partnered with staff that are highly experienced in court operations, the combination of professional expertise can contribute greatly to the ability of the self-help center to serve the public as well as the court.

Volunteers can be used effectively to provide assistance; however, they should not be relied on to perform core daily operations of a self-help center.

The pilot projects developed extremely promising models for recruiting and training. Volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including providing assistance in languages other than English and helping with workshops. Programs also found, however, that extensive reliance on volunteer help to perform core center functions can make consistent quality and availability of service extremely difficult. Furthermore, volunteer turnover is often high, resulting in an increased and recurring need for training.

Workshops are a valuable part of self-help center assistance.

The pilot projects found that workshops allowed a large number of litigants to be served at one time. Videoconferencing workshops provided effective delivery of legal and procedural information over physical distances. All of the direct service programs

experienced a steady monthly growth in customers, and all of the programs explored ways of providing workshops. Workshops make efficient use of attorney time and allow the centers to manage increasing demand. Workshops can effectively include preparation for hearings and settlement conferences.

Self-help centers should be designed to provide services to litigants at all stages of case processing.

Data from case file reviews indicate that self-represented litigants need assistance beyond the point of entry into the legal system. Particularly in family law cases, assistance is required to ensure that, once started, cases are actually completed, court orders written, and judgments entered. The multipart workshops designed by the pilot programs to help litigants complete their family law cases are a valuable model.

Self-help centers should be located at the courthouse.

Providing services at the courthouse is more efficient for both self-represented litigants and court staff. Although a variety of services can be provided at outlying locations, separating self-help centers from the core of court operations limits the day-to-day contact between center staff and other court staff. Court staff members are often not fully aware of the program and may not make referrals as easily. Having to make a second trip to the center is a burden on customers who have gone to the courthouse for help—or who have to go back and forth from the courthouse to the center if problems arise. Although outposts are helpful for access to services, the main center should be at the courthouse.

The materials developed by the programs were helpful not only to provide instruction in English and other languages but also to help the court serve self-represented litigants more effectively; they should be disseminated statewide.

Each of the programs developed helpful instructions, translations, Web site content, and materials to help the court meet the needs of self-represented litigants. These are posted at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/evaluation/5pilots. The materials cover a broad range of topics and include:

- Step-by-step instructional sheets;
- Scripts for handling telephone calls regarding different legal issues;
- Guidance in five languages on how to be an effective witness; and
- Referral slips that judges can use to inform self-help staff of the assistance that a litigant needs.

In urban areas with a range of services, a coordinating function such as the Self-Help Management Project can reduce duplication of services and provide materials, curricula, and volunteer resources to all services in the area.

In Los Angeles, where coordination of existing providers was an issue, the Self-Help Management Project coordinated key functions of these services and provided resources to them. The management project helped the court plan new self-help services, served as

a clearinghouse for materials, developed standardized workshop curricula, found new funding, and identified sources of volunteers and interns. The management project helped improve communication among agencies and the court so that problems could be identified and solved, new methods of service provision could be developed, and self-represented litigants got better services.

Telephone assistance should be offered to help address geographic and transportation barriers and enhance self-help center efficiency and effectiveness.

Some pilot projects were able to provide some assistance over the telephone. This included identification of issues, determination of whether or not the center could provide the help needed, case status information from the court's registry of actions, and substantial procedural information and education on a variety of legal topics. Telephone contact facilitates assistance to individuals who cannot get to the self-help center during business hours due to work, lack of child care, or disability.

Triage of cases is a critical function in the operation of self-help centers.

When customers first enter the self-help center, assessment of their legal needs (triage) is critical to the operation of the program. Initial determinations must be made about what cases the center can and cannot handle, and appropriate referrals should be made for legal representation. The pilot programs developed methods to help assess what type of services a litigant needs, including identifying the legal issue and its complexity, the status of the case, and the litigants' ability to understand the proceedings. To do triage, staff need a thorough knowledge of relevant court procedures, as well as possible referrals and resources for self-represented litigants.

Self-help centers have the capacity to meet the needs of many non-English speakers.

Data from interviews and case file review demonstrate that customers who got help in centers providing services in languages other than English were able to do at least as well as a randomly selected group of self-represented litigants who were not specifically targeted as non-English speaking.

Bilingual/bicultural staff are required to provide efficient services in counties where a significant proportion of the population speak a language other than English.

The self-help centers found that the use of volunteers to interpret for paid staff was not an effective substitute for bilingual center staff. Non-English-speaking litigants come from cultures with different legal systems. They require staff not only to translate words, but also to help them understand the basic concepts and differences from their system. Staff must be sensitive to differences in interpersonal dynamics and orientations to authority based on a customer's native culture, and they need to interact with customers accordingly. Recruiting bilingual and bicultural staff should be a priority to provide efficient service and build trust in the community.

Interpreters are needed in family law and other civil hearings.

Both centers whose services focused on non-English speakers found that besides providing interpreters at the centers, they needed to send interpreters into the courtroom for people whose cases required hearings. Each of the language programs developed a system to provide volunteer interpreter services for those cases in which court-supplied interpreters are not mandated. (Funding is currently not available for interpreters in family law and other civil hearings.) Judicial officers and court staff explained that when self-represented litigants were accompanied by interpreters, fewer cases were continued or cases heard and decided with questionable information provided by informal interpreters.

Limiting self-help center services to non-English-speaking litigants is not practical when comparable English-language services are not available.

Both language access projects found that providing services only to non-English-speaking litigants when no comparable services were available for English speakers resulted in a high demand for services provided in English. The programs found that it was not feasible to deny services to English-speaking litigants. In addition, a notably large number of those who spoke a language other than English at home nevertheless wanted to receive services in English.

Given limited funding, providing self-help assistance in a variety of languages remains significantly challenging and requires strong volunteer support.

Although it is preferable to have bilingual and bicultural staff, providing services in a variety of languages potentially means that one or more staff members must be proficient in each of the target languages, a goal that would be difficult or prohibitively expensive to achieve. Relying on other court staff with language skills, although helpful at times, proved difficult given the significant cutbacks in court staffing during the study period. Volunteers were used effectively at San Francisco's multilingual center, allowing it to provide one-on-one or workshop services to non-English-proficient customers in languages other than Spanish. Having volunteers available by telephone helps to alleviate the problem of litigants coming to the self-help center at times when no services are available in their language.

Coordination with existing community programs is one way to serve multilingual populations.

Another effective way to serve communities that speak a variety of languages is to develop relationships with community resources that serve those populations to help with outreach, establish trust, and provide translation of information. Providing workshops at those agencies and being available for referral support for their staff are efficient ways to reach out to broader communities.

Court-based self-help programs should be integrated as much as possible to increase efficiency and quality of service.

Collaborating with existing resources is critical to creating a successful program. Given the limited resources provided, the opportunity to work with the small claims advisor, family law facilitator, public law libraries, legal services self-help providers, and clerk staff were critical for effective functioning of the programs. Sharing of expertise, space, volunteers, and professional and support staff can increase efficiency and the ability of programs to serve more litigants.

Web sites with self-help information are effective in responding to geographic and transportation problems.

Providing information using self-help Web sites is another strategy to address geographic and transportation difficulties. Using the Web overcomes problems associated with the schedules of both litigants and self-help services (for example, courthouses are open during the hours when most people are at work). Web sites can also help people who are exploring their options, are finding information for family and friends, or may not want or need to take a trip to the courthouse at that stage in their case.

In-person support appears to be needed to assist people who are not traditional computer users.

Self-help Web site content currently appears to be used by people who are regular users of the Internet. Reports from interviews and usage testing, however, indicate the potential usefulness of providing Web-based assistance in a courthouse setting—where litigants may not fit the typical Web site user profile—in coordination with in-person staff assistance. Programs should also consider strategies for expanding the access to Web site content by people who are not typical Internet users, for example, by partnering with community agencies that serve these populations and integrating content into services provided at physical locations. Contra Costa County is in the process of implementing these strategies now, and the results should be shared with other programs.

Chapter 9

Lessons Learned From Evaluation and Directions for Future Research

A wealth of information has been gathered about the planning and implementation of the centers, the populations being served and their satisfaction with services, the range of services being provided at the centers, and the views of court and program staff and other stakeholders regarding the need for and benefits of the centers. Although there is still much to learn, especially in terms of the impacts of self-help centers on litigants and on the court, this research will mark a significant contribution to the somewhat limited body of research and evaluation on self-represented litigants and self-help services.

Evaluation for Self-Assessment

One important benefit of evaluation is that it allows programs to monitor their progress and assess whether any changes or improvements need to be made. Below are some examples of how pilot self-help center staff have used the evaluation results to make adjustments to their programs.

The director of the Fresno County program started out disseminating information about the center and its services to managers and supervisors, who she assumed would then pass on the information to their staff. However, she learned through site visit interviews that court staff had limited awareness of the center and could not accurately describe its services. Therefore, she decided to do outreach directly to line staff to ensure that they were receiving the correct information. As a result, referrals from clerks and other court staff are on the rise.

Through the process of user testing of the Virtual Self-Help Law Center Web site at the Contra Costa law library, the Administrative Office of the Court's (AOC's) technology attorney identified a need to include a local guardianship form on the site. The form was added to the site within a week.

The director of SHARP is planning to use the results of the court file review to reassess and retool the program's workshops.

Court File Review

As noted in the methodology section and throughout the chapters, the court file review results provide a limited view of the impact of the programs. However, with some adjustments to the methodology, the review can still be an important tool for assessing the effectiveness of the centers' services, as well as for gaining a baseline understanding of the difficulties faced by self-represented litigants.

Because orders to show cause were filed in a small percentage of cases, it was not possible to examine in detail family law hearings related to those orders or other matters. Similarly, it was not possible to take an in-depth look at judgments because so few cases reached judgment. (This is due in part to the fact that cases being reviewed were filed fairly recently and in part to the fact that litigants were having problems completing their cases.) Because these are areas in which the centers could have an important impact, sample sizes of at least 200 to 300 per group are required to facilitate in-depth analysis.

The court file review focused on cases filed during the time the self-help centers were in operation; cases that had been open for more than a year or two were not captured. Self-help centers can be particularly helpful in moving older, unresolved cases to judgment. Therefore, rather than matching cases filed during a particular time period to a list of self-help center customers, the sample should be drawn from a list of self-help center customers whose cases were filed during a more extended time frame; then, a matched sample should be identified from court records. This would be a more labor-intensive process, but it would allow for a more appropriate comparison of cases.

Descriptive information indicates that litigants assisted by the self-help centers may have different individual and case characteristics than those who are not assisted. Cases should be matched on key characteristics so that comparisons can be made across similar categories of cases.

To the extent possible, court file review should be combined with other research methods (for the same cases) to provide more context for the results.

Litigant-Focused Research

Customer satisfaction surveys provided a somewhat limited view of litigants' perspectives on the services provided at the centers. More in-depth research, such as focus groups or structured interviews with self-help center customers, is needed to more fully understand how the information and services litigants receive affect their decisions and the actions they take. Follow-up with litigants throughout various stages in the process is needed to assess the longer term benefits of the assistance the centers provide.

The evaluation has also not been able to explore the extent to which cases are being kept out of court or filings are being reduced as a result of the self-help centers. As a result of the education that centers provide, litigants may realize that their cases do not have merit or that they have other options, such as alternative dispute resolution, to resolve their issues.

Increased Compliance With Court Orders

Self-help providers report that they believe the assistance that they provide increases the compliance with court orders. They identify a number of factors that would appear to improve compliance.

- They assist the litigant in providing information to the court that allows the court to create an order that is more reflective of the facts and law in the case;
- They increase the litigants' trust and confidence in the court system by listening to them, letting them know the factors that will be considered in a court decision, and assuring them that the system will work for them; and
- They encourage parties to comply with orders.

Little information is available about compliance with court orders and the factors that enhance compliance. Particularly key in child support and domestic violence cases, this is a critical area for the court system as a whole and merits further investigation.

Evaluating Particular Strategies and Service Delivery Modes

Although some information is available from customer satisfaction surveys on the perceived helpfulness of particular services, more focused work should be done to understand the relative effectiveness of various modes of service delivery (e.g., forms instructions, pamphlets, videos, and other educational materials). In particular, it is important to understand how the broad range of new technologies—both stand-alone services and those integrated into self-help center operations—can be used to assist litigants and self-help center staff.

Interplay Between Self-Help Centers and the Court

Some of the more intangible work of the self-help centers has been to identify problems or issues in the processing of cases and to open up lines of communication with judicial officers, clerks, and other court staff. Some of the changes may, in turn, result in overall benefits to litigants and to court operations that extend beyond the self-help centers and their customers. Systems changes such as these deserve closer examination.

More work is needed to understand the interaction between the self-help center and judicial officers. Different judicial officers have different standards and requirements, which may affect the way self-help centers develop their services and even their potential impacts.

Other Recommendations for Future Research

To identify the problems self-represented litigants face in the courtroom, as well as to better understand the dynamics of the interactions between litigants and judicial officers, structured courtroom observation should be considered.

Results of court file review suggest that self-represented litigants who seek assistance from self-help centers may be materially different than those who do not. Further research should be done in this area to identify to what extent customers self-select and whether comparisons to other groups of self-represented litigants are valid.

Evaluations should extend beyond pilot programs. Pilot programs are by definition relatively new and still in the process of developing and refining their programs, so it is in a sense unfair to expect large impacts. More established programs, and a range of programs throughout the state, should be evaluated to gain a deeper understanding of the overall impact of self-help centers.

Similarly, much remains unknown about the population of self-represented litigants and the issues they face. A statewide baseline study of self-represented litigants would assist self-help centers in setting priorities for their programs and may provide some more direction for future research efforts.

Appendix A

Advisory Board Members

Advisory Board Members

Joseph W. Doherty
Associate Director
Empirical Research Group
UCLA School of Law

Frances Harrison
Family Law Facilitator
San Diego County

Jane Kaplan
Attorney at Law, Family Law
Berkeley, CA

M. Carmen Ramirez
Coordinator, Self-Help Legal Access Center
Superior Court of California, County of Ventura

Dr. Robert Rossi
CEO
iBuildCommunity.com

Richard Zorza
Private Consultant, focus on technology, non-profits and justice
Washington, D.C.

Appendix B
Methodology

Methodology

The evaluation of the self-help pilot projects included several different components. Evaluation data collection took place between March 2003 and May 2004 for evaluation components undertaken by BPA and NPC, and through November for additional components undertaken by the AOC.¹ The evaluation design for the Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Contra Costa, Fresno, and San Francisco county sites shared a core set of data collection strategies, while the evaluation design for the Los Angeles program was based on its unique program model. Below we describe the methodologies used for Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Contra Costa, Fresno, and San Francisco counties, including site visits, intake data, service tracking data, court file review, and courtroom observation and post-hearing interviews, customer satisfaction surveys, Web site user testing, and Web site usage analysis. The second section of this appendix describes the Los Angeles evaluation design, and the final section outlines supplemental data sources consulted for the evaluation.

Site Visits

To study program implementation, researchers from BPA and NPC conducted two- to three-day site visits to each site at two points in time. During these visits, in-depth interviews were conducted with self-help center staff, bench officers, attorneys, clerks, court administrators, and court executive officers. As appropriate, the evaluation team also interviewed with outside partners and stakeholders, such as representatives of the local bar associations, local adult schools, and community-based social service organizations. In cases where there were multiple informants in a particular category (e.g., court clerks or attorneys), focus groups were conducted. AOC staff accompanied the researchers on two of the site visits during the first round. The number of respondents interviewed at each site is detailed in Figure B.1.

¹ BPA and NPC took primary responsibility for site visit interviews, intake and service tracking data, post-hearing interviews, and the Los Angeles program's evaluation. AOC staff took primary responsibility for developing and analyzing customer satisfaction surveys, analyzing Web site usage statistics for the Contra Costa program, and integrating information from supplemental data sources into the report. For court file reviews, BPA designed the sample and entered the data, while AOC staff designed the instruments and collected and analyzed the data.

**Figure B.1
Number of Site Visit Respondents**

Category	Butte	Contra Costa	Fresno	San Francisco	Los Angeles
Court administrator	3	4	1	2	6
Judicial officer	4	5	4	3	2
Clerk	10	2	8	6	0
Other court staff member	3	5	3	3	2
Managing attorney/ supervising attorney	0*	1	1	0*	0*
Community partner	0	1	9	3	4
County employee	0	1	0	0	0
Pilot self-help project staff	5	2	3	3	2
Pilot self-help project volunteer	0	0	4	4	0
Local Los Angeles provider	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Local family law attorneys	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	30	21	33	24	23

*The Project Director also serves as the Managing Attorney.

N/A: Not applicable. Local providers were interviewed only in Los Angeles and local family law attorneys were interviewed only for the Butte/Glenn/Tehama project.

The first round of site visits, conducted in the Spring 2003, was timed to coincide with the early implementation of the self-help programs; the second round was conducted one year later. The two rounds of site visits had similar structures and included many of the same respondents so that they could provide assessments of the projects' accomplishments and challenges over time. During these visits information was gathered about the following:

- The court process for self-represented litigants before the newly formed self-help centers were operational;
- Barriers self-represented litigants face in obtaining access to justice;
- Start-up and early implementation activities of the self-help programs;
- Program services and operations and any changes over time; and
- Assessments of the programs' successes, challenges, and impact on self-represented litigants and the courts.

Site visits provided researchers with qualitative information about service delivery methods, the challenges the centers face and their innovations, and key stakeholder impressions of the impact of the centers. Site visit data do not, however, provide quantitative data about effects of the centers.

Intake Data

BPA and NPC, in close collaboration with the AOC and pilot program staff, designed intake forms for the pilot projects in Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno and San Francisco counties. Individuals seeking assistance from the pilot self-help projects were asked to complete intake forms in either English or Spanish, providing basic demographic and background information. This instrument can be found in Appendix J.

Pilot versions of the forms were collected from March to May 2003, after which center directors were asked to complete a brief survey to give their feedback on the forms. After the forms were revised, the centers were asked to continue to collect them from June to December 2003. An additional month of data collection took place in March 2004 to capture data from the later implementation stages of the projects. To facilitate data entry, the forms were made available on the Internet, allowing authorized center staff to enter forms directly into a central database maintained by BPA, to which center staff also had access.

The data from the intake forms are used to describe the demographic characteristics of center customers, the reasons customers sought help, and how they heard of the self-help center. Some customers who visited the centers did not complete an intake form; as a result, our findings under-represent the number of customers served and this may generalizability to the whole customer population . Figure B.2 shows the number of intake and service tracking forms for Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno, and San Francisco counties.

**Figure B.2
Number of Intake and Service Tracking Forms Completed**

Month	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	Intake Forms	Service Forms	Intake Forms	Service Forms	Intake Forms	Service Forms
Date missing	66	520	8	29	44	70
January 2003	6	1	0	0	0	4
February 2003	1	0	0	1	0	1
March 2003	1	2	0	0	3	6
April 2003	3	2	0	1	3	0
May 2003	22	29	0	3	1	25
June 2003	161	245	13	63	87	300
July 2003	162	301	53	153	186	463
August 2003	187	501	65	156	156	611
September 2003	163	623	63	227	195	728
October 2003	193	913	60	161	323	913
November 2003	137	558	62	151	175	793
December 2003	126	297	29	73	76	514
January 2004	157	2	0	0	0	36
February 2004	133	1	0	0	0	29
March 2004	142	669	64	223	362	1,020
Total	1,662	4,665	479	1,480	1,612	5,514

Service Tracking Data

The evaluation team also created service tracking forms for the pilot projects in Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno and San Francisco counties. Staff members completed a service tracking form each time a customer received assistance, and several service tracking forms were completed for one person. To aid data entry, authorized center staff entered forms through a secure Internet site directly into a central database maintained by BPA. A copy of the service tracking form can be found in Appendix J.

The service tracking form provided data on the types of cases the center served, the assistance self-represented litigants needed, the services they received, and the referrals made by center staff. Due to a high volume of customers, centers were not able to complete service tracking forms for all services provided. As a result, the data underrepresent the services provided. Figure B.2 above shows the number of intake and service tracking forms for Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno and San Francisco counties.

Because the Contra Costa County project uses the Internet to provide the bulk of its services, service tracking forms were not applicable for this site. Instead, Web site usage statistics were gathered. See the “Web Site Usage Tracking” section below

In addition to the service tracking forms, center staff collected data on center-administered workshops in March 2004. These workshop data include information about

attendance, location, language, workshop length, format, case types, and characteristics of workshop leaders. The workshop form can be found in Appendix J.

Court File Review

AOC staff conducted a review of court files in Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Fresno, and San Francisco counties because at these three sites, center users could be identified through the intake forms. Court files contribute important independent information about the experiences of self-represented litigants and the impact of self-help services on the courts. Instruments for these court file reviews were developed by AOC staff, including attorneys, with input from BPA, NPC, and the evaluation advisory board. AOC staff, along with an experienced self-help center attorney, reviewed unlawful detainer cases and dissolution cases in Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties, dissolution cases in Fresno County, and civil harassment cases in San Francisco County. These case types were chosen, with input from center directors, because they accounted for a large proportion of the centers' services and because they were the case types most likely show the impact of the centers via the court files.

Court file review data elements include:

- Applications for a fee waiver;
- Litigant requests, including custody, visitation, and property information for dissolution cases and damages for unlawful detainer;
- Whether and how service was effected;
- Procedural defects and paperwork problems;
- Details regarding default declarations, orders to show cause (OSCs), and motions;
- Details of responses and answers
- Key dates, including when petition or complaint was filed, when service was effected, when hearings were set, and when the case was disposed;
- Numbers of hearings and continuances;
- Reasons for continuances (including improperly filed forms, missing paperwork, and proof of service problems);
- Which parties appeared at hearing, hearing results, judgments, and orders issued;
- Changes in representation status;
- Indication of assistance with the case including using the self-help center; and
- Indications that litigants needed language assistance.

Copies of the court file review instruments can be found in Appendix J.

AOC reviewers entered the court file review data directly into a database developed by BPA in San Francisco. Due to the complexity of the protocols, the reviewers used paper forms in Butte and Fresno counties that were subsequently entered at BPA.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling methodology varied slightly for each county. In all counties, a group of self-represented litigants who visited the self-help center and filed a specified case type during a particular time period were compared to self-represented litigants who did not visit the self-help center but filed a case of that same type during the specified time period. Contemporaneous comparison groups were used in Butte and Fresno counties to reduce the interference of external factors, such as the economy or court budget constraints, on comparing indicators before and after the centers were in operation. However, a pre/post design was used in San Francisco, due to a structural change in the court that accompanied the centers' development, wherein all self-represented litigants dropped off their civil harassment forms and picked up OSCs or temporary restraining orders at the self-help center. This interaction between the center and all self-represented litigants may have led to contamination of a contemporaneous sample, in that there were few if any litigants who did not come into contact with the self-help center in some way.

The court file reviews were conducted on a sample of cases in which at least one of the self-represented litigants had received help from the self-help pilot project and on a sample of cases for which self-represented litigants did not access the pilot self help project. Court clerks provided the research team with lists of cases that involved at least one self-represented litigant and that were filed during particular time frames. The list of names was then cross-referenced against the intake and service tracking data collected by the sites.² A file was selected for the self-help project sample if one of the litigants was self-represented and (1) had received help at the center for the same case type as the case presented in court during the time period for which intake and service tracking data were collected and (2) had been to the center but no case type was identified. Comparison cases, those in which a litigant had not been to the center, were randomly chosen from the list of cases with self-represented litigants. During the actual file review, some cases were determined ineligible for review because the litigants were identified as having been represented by an attorney at the time of filing or because they were particular subcategories of cases deemed unsuitable for review (e.g., workplace violence cases in civil harassment, nullity in dissolution). Because not all information used to match litigants from court-provided case lists to intake and service tracking databases was available, another round of matching was conducted after data collection, which resulted in some cases being moved from the self-help center group to the comparison group, and vice versa (most in the former direction).

²The lists of cases filed in Tehama County only provided the last names of litigants. After the AOC's review of cases, a second cross-listing based on both first names and last names was performed, which led to the elimination of some of the cases from the analysis.

Sample Size and Comparison Groups

Cases were reviewed in each of the three counties served by the Butte regional self-help pilot project (Butte, Tehama, and Glenn). About 100 dissolution cases in which at least one of the parties received assistance from the self-help center were compared to 100 dissolution cases in which neither party used the center. The same comparison was made for unlawful detainer cases. Sample sizes for each county were determined based on their estimated proportions of the overall SHARP customer volume. All of the cases in Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties were filed between January 2003 and March 2004. These dates were chosen to coincide with the center's dates of operation and to meet the sample size goal.

In Fresno County, about 100 dissolution cases in which at least one of the parties received assistance at the self-help center were compared with about 100 dissolution cases in which neither party used the center. All of the Fresno County cases were filed between April and December 2003 (except cases from August, when intake and service tracking data were not entered due to time constraints). These dates were selected to coincide with the center's dates of operation and to meet the sample size goal.

In San Francisco, about 100 civil harassment cases filed *prior* to the opening of the self-help center were compared with about 100 civil harassment cases filed *after* the opening of the self-help center in which at least one party had been to the self-help center. In both instances, the cases included at least one self-represented party. The San Francisco cases were filed between April and December 2002 and between April and December 2003. The 2003 dates were selected to coincide with the center's dates of operation and to meet the sample size goal and the 2002 dates were selected to ensure a comparable time period before the center's implementation. Case information from the court's case management system was also used to complete the forms when information from the court files was missing or incomplete.

See Figure B.3 for a breakdown of the actual numbers of cases reviewed in each of the counties.

Figure B.3
Number of Court Files Reviewed by Case Type and Program

	Been to self-help center	Not been to self-help center	Total
Dissolution			
Fresno	96	93	189
SHARP Total	106	87	193
Butte	46	33	79
Glenn	16	17	33
Tehama	44	37	81
Civil Harassment			
San Francisco	101	98	199
Unlawful Detainer			
SHARP Total	78	97	175
Butte	20	34	54
Glenn	22	31	53
Tehama	36	32	68

Limitations

In both the Fresno and San Francisco centers, the original goal was to compare non-English-speaking litigants who had or had not received pilot self-help center services. Unfortunately, non-English-speaking litigants could not be confidently identified from the case files. Therefore, it is not possible to know if the comparison group litigants faced the same language barriers as the center users. Both the Fresno and San Francisco programs, however, ended up serving a higher number of English-speaking customers than anticipated.

The samples are drawn from cases filed during the time the self-help centers were in operation, which limits the ability to analyze the centers’ impact on the length of time from filing to disposition. To stay within the dates of center operation, time from filing to disposition must be relatively short—and bounded—and the amount of potential variation among cases is reduced. In addition, this methodology does not capture cases that were active or unresolved for an extended period of time, an area where self-help center directors feel they have an important impact.

The fact that a party’s name did not appear in the intake or service tracking data does not necessarily mean that he or she did not receive assistance at the self-help center. Many customers chose not to complete an intake form, and some may have visited the centers outside the time frame during which intake and service tracking data were collected. In addition, many parties appear to have received some other type of assistance preparing their forms, even though the help didn’t come from the centers. These factors limit the kinds of conclusions that can be drawn from the comparison group analysis.

The samples were not restricted to cases in which the center was involved from the time of filing. Some litigants may have sought help very early in the process, and other litigants much later. For example, litigants could have made errors on forms or

procedural errors prior to seeking assistance from the centers. Therefore, the extent to which certain indicators should be attributed to the work of the centers is limited. Also, samples were not restricted to customers who received specific types of services. Litigants could have received a range of services at the centers—as little as obtaining forms with written instructions and as much as attending a three-part series of workshops. Impacts of the self-help centers would be expected to vary with the level of assistance provided.

Post-Hearing Interviews

Over the course of the study, two rounds (Spring 2003 and 2004) of post-hearing interviews were conducted with self-represented litigants in Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Contra Costa, Fresno, and San Francisco counties.

Post-hearing interviews were conducted with self-represented litigants as they left the courtroom after a hearing. When the litigants did not have time to speak at that time, they were asked whether they would be willing to be interviewed by telephone; two interviews were conducted this way. These ad hoc interviews were similar to those used by the Empirical Research Group at UCLA,³ and yielded a much more detailed perspective key attitudes and characteristics of self-represented litigants:

- Understanding of details of the legal process;
- Understanding of terms of court orders;
- Ability to comply with terms of court orders;
- Sense that they received a fair and just hearing;
- Past experiences seeking assistance on their case; and
- Overall satisfaction with the court process.

The interviews were conducted in teams of two to three researchers. During the first round, a researcher fluent in Spanish as well as English was present during the interviews in San Francisco and Fresno counties. During the second round, a bilingual researcher was present in Fresno, Butte, and Contra Costa counties. During both rounds, researchers were on site for two to five days to collect these data.

Figure B.4 provides greater detail on the courts and calendars observed as well as sample sizes.

³ The Empirical Research Group, UCLA School of Law, 2001, “Evaluation of the Van Nuys Legal Self-Help Center Final Report.”

Figure B.4
Post-Hearing Interview Data for Year 1 (2003) and Year 2 (2004)

County	Year 1	Year 2
<i>Butte/Glenn/Tehama</i>		
Dates of Observation	June 2, 5–6	April 19–20, 22
Number of Cases Fully Observed	43	46
Number of Self Represented Litigants Interviewed	19	16
Calendars Observed	3 Family Law	1 Family Law and Domestic Violence, 1 Family Law, Domestic Violence and Small Claims, 1 Small Claims
Courthouse Locations	Butte, Glenn, and Tehama County Superior Courthouse	Butte, Glenn, and Tehama County Superior Courthouse
<i>Contra Costa</i>		
Dates of Observation	June 30–July 2	April 27–28
Number of Cases Fully Observed	26	12
Number of Self Represented Litigants Interviewed	12	20
Calendars Observed	1 Family Law, 1 Small Claims, 1 Guardianship	4 Family Law, 2 Small Claims, 1 Unlawful Detainer
Courthouse Locations	Contra Costa County Superior Courthouse in Martinez and Pittsburg	Contra Costa County Superior Courthouse in Martinez and Pittsburg
<i>Fresno</i>		
Dates of Observation	April 30–May 1	April 27–28
Number of Cases Fully Observed	24	27
Number of Self Represented Litigants Interviewed	13	13
Calendars Observed	2 Family Law, 1 Small Claims, 1 Unlawful Detainer	1 Unlawful Detainer, 3 Family Law
Courthouse Locations	Fresno County Superior Courthouse	Fresno County Superior Courthouse
<i>San Francisco</i>		
Dates of Observation	July 7-11	May 5–7
Number of Cases Fully Observed	29	24*
Number of Self Represented Litigants Interviewed	13	29
Calendars Observed	2 Name Change, 2 Civil Harassment	1 Name Change, 2 Unlawful Detainer, 2 Civil Harassment
Courthouse Locations	San Francisco County Superior Courthouse	San Francisco County Superior Courthouse

* Two calendars were unlawful detainer settlement conferences and therefore could not be observed.
 Note: The numbers in this figure report the number of cases and the number of self-represented litigants observed. Most cases involved more than one self-represented litigant.

While the researchers worked with self-help center directors to select court calendars that would maximize the number of self-represented litigants observed, the results were unpredictable. The number of self-represented litigants in court dictated the sample sizes obtained on the observation days. Furthermore, the researchers had no control over the proportion of self-represented litigants who had used the self-help centers. Also, many litigants were unwilling to speak to researchers after their cases. Researchers did not approach litigants who were visibly upset or angry. As a result of all these factors, the sample sizes across all sites—and particularly the sample sizes of self-represented litigants who used the centers—were small.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

In collaboration with staff of the self-help pilot programs, AOC staff developed self-administered customer satisfaction surveys to solicit customers' feedback on the services they received. There were two versions of the survey: one that targeted drop-in customers and one that targeted workshop participants. The majority of the questions on the two surveys overlapped, with a small number of questions being specific to either drop-in or workshop services.

Survey Content

Topics addressed on the surveys included whether customers had a better understanding of their case, the laws that apply to their case, and the court process; whether customers felt more prepared to proceed with the next steps in their case; how customers perceived their interactions with center staff; and whether customers would recommend the self-help centers to others. (These questions are referred to as “general satisfaction questions” in this report.) In addition, customers were asked to rate the helpfulness of specific types of services they received. (These questions are referred to as “service assessment questions” in this report.) The survey also included a space for customers to provide general comments or suggestions about the services they received. Customers who participated in workshops were asked whether they received assistance anywhere other than the workshop, and if they participated in the workshop via videoconferencing, they were asked to rate the features of the equipment and facilities. See Appendix J for the survey instruments.

Other items included on the surveys were self-reported customer demographics (language, race/ethnicity, income, and education), as well as the case types with which customers sought assistance and the services they received, both of which were completed by self-help center staff prior to distributing the surveys. This additional information was collected to investigate whether levels of satisfaction varied by demographics, case types, or services received.

Survey Administration

Customer satisfaction surveys were distributed in each of the programs providing direct

services to litigants—in Butte/Glenn/Tehama, Contra Costa, Fresno, and San Francisco counties—during a two-week sample period, May 17 through May 28, 2004. Due to the extremely high customer volume in San Francisco County’s program, AOC staff assisted with administering the surveys; otherwise, program staff were responsible for distributing the surveys. Drop-in surveys were not distributed in Contra Costa County because workshops were the only direct services the program provided. Workshop surveys in Contra Costa County were distributed only in the remote location for the videoconferenced workshop because the Contra Costa County program brought the videoconferencing component to an already existing set of workshops. Table B.5 provides a summary of the number of surveys completed in each program.

**Table B.5
Number of Customer Satisfaction Surveys Completed**

	Drop-In	Workshop	Total
Butte	23	49	72
Contra Costa	N/A*	9	9
Fresno	44	N/A**	44
San Francisco	75	29	104
Total	142	87	229

* The Contra Costa program does not provide drop-in services

** The Fresno program offers workshops, but no workshops were held during the sample period.

For the drop-in customer survey, program staff were instructed to complete a “staff use only” section, noting the case types and services provided after the customer received service. For the workshop participant survey, customers were instructed to write the name of the workshop and workshop date at the top of the form. Customers were then asked to complete the survey and place it in a drop box in the center or, in the case of workshops, return to the survey to the workshop facilitator. Surveys were available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

Program staff were directed not to give surveys to customers who were only picking up forms, making appointments, or checking times and locations of court dates or workshops. This was done because such services are less substantive than other services that the self-help centers provide, and it would be difficult for customers to provide meaningful feedback on such limited contact. Furthermore, these customers would have likely spent more time filling out the survey than actually receiving assistance.

Response Rates and Representativeness

Response rates on the surveys were estimated, based on the self-help centers’ average monthly volumes from Fall 2003 through Spring 2004 (actual months varied slightly by

program)⁴. Response rates for the drop-in survey were relatively low, ranging from 14 percent to 58 percent (26 percent for all programs combined), but somewhat higher for workshop surveys, ranging from 47 percent to 60 percent (51 percent for all programs combined). See Table B.6 below for response rate information by site and by survey version.

Table B.6
Estimated Response Rates for Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Program	Drop-In	Workshop	Drop-In and Workshop Combined
Butte	14%	47%	26%
Fresno	58%	N/A*	58%
San Francisco	24%	60%	29%
Total	26%	51%	31%

* No workshops were held in Fresno during the sample period.

Customers who responded to the surveys were more or less representative of the overall customer populations (as determined by the intake and service tracking data) in terms of demographics and case types, with some exceptions. Significant differences between customer satisfaction survey respondents and the overall customer population are noted below.

- Survey respondents in Butte/Glenn/Tehama counties were significantly more likely to be male (47 percent, compared with 35 percent of all customers); more likely not to have completed high school (35 percent versus 22 percent), but otherwise not very different in terms of educational attainment; less likely to be involved in dissolution (15 percent versus 29 percent) and civil harassment cases (5 percent versus 14 percent); and more likely to be involved in other family law cases (17percent versus 7 percent) than the overall customer population.
- In Fresno County, survey respondents were more likely than the general customer population to be female (74 percent, compared with 59 percent of all customers). They were also more likely to be seeking assistance with custody issues (34 percent versus 4 percent) and less likely to be seeking assistance with visitation (34 percent versus 43 percent), although almost equally likely to be involved in a dissolution case.
- In San Francisco County, survey respondents were more likely to have an associates degree or higher (52 percent, compared with 37 percent of all customers) and less likely to be involved a civil harassment case (28 percent versus 10 percent).

⁴ Response rates were not calculated for the workshop surveys in Contra Costa County due to the fact that the videoconferencing component was new and the volume in the early workshops was relatively low, so no reliable volume estimates could be produced. Therefore, customer satisfaction data from Contra Costa County are provided for descriptive purposes only.

Results should be interpreted with caution due to both the low response rates and possible non-response bias.⁵ Some types of customers may have been more likely than others to complete the survey—including, in addition to those with different demographics characteristics or different case types—those who were more satisfied with the services they received. As a result, the generalizability of findings to all self-help center customers is limited. Nonetheless, the survey results can provide important descriptive information about customers’ perspectives on the services they received at the self-help centers. Results are presented across all programs and for each individual program, as well across survey versions and for drop-in and workshop services separately.

Virtual Self-Help Law Center Data Collection

User Intake Survey

The Contra Costa County self-help pilot project serves customers primarily through the Internet, and therefore, a separate plan for collecting data was developed. BPA, in collaboration with the AOC, Contra Costa center staff, and the Web developer, designed an intake form that “popped up” on screen when customers accessed the Web site. These forms were put online in February 2004, and 353 users completed the online intake form between February 20, 2004, and October 31, 2004.

In designing this survey, the need for information on the characteristics of people using the Web site had to be balanced against the safety and privacy concerns of users. Therefore, the Web developer and AOC technology attorney did extensive research to come up with the safest solution possible for litigants while maintaining the need to collect data. Web-based surveys and Web site usage tracking software use cookies, which are mini-files placed in the “temp” directory of users’ computers. A session cookie erases itself as soon as the user closes out of the browser, whereas a persistent cookie stays in the directory until it expires, the expiration date determined by the programmer who creates the script that makes the cookie. Cookies may only be accessed by the domain that creates them, and the domain name is part of the cookie’s name. As a result, a computer-savvy person could go into a user’s “temp” directory and identify that he or she had been on the Virtual Self-Help Law Center site. In the case of guardianship or domestic violence issues, this could put the user at risk.

An additional concern was to ensure that users saw the intake forms only once, so they would not feel bothered by continual requests for data and potentially driven away from using the site. However, accomplishing this would involve tracking a single user over multiple visits, which would require a persistent cookie. Therefore, the Web developer used a generic domain to collect the user data. That way, a cookie could be dropped without connecting the user to the cc-couthelp.org Web site. Using the generic domain

⁵ In spite of the fact that response rates were low, survey results were very consistent with those from similar studies.

also allowed for the collection of IP addresses that would allow intake survey data to be linked to feedback survey data and/or to NetTracker Web site usage statistics. (See below for further discussion of NetTracker.)

User Feedback Survey

For visitors to the Virtual Self-Help Law Center, a different type of customer satisfaction survey was used. Researchers worked with Contra Costa County program staff and the Web developer to create a “pop-up” survey that would appear when users visited certain more helpful sections of the Web site, such as videos or the glossary. Questions on the survey included case type, types of help received (e.g., forms, instructions, procedural information, referrals), overall goal for visiting the site, whether users found the information they wanted, whether users understood the information they received, and how easy or difficult it was to navigate the Web site. Space was also provided for users to give suggestions for improving the site. From February 2004 through October 2004, fewer than 40 visitors chose to respond to the survey. Due to the extremely small sample size and concerns about how representative those responses were, the results are not presented in this report.

Web Site Usage Tracking Data

Monthly reports on usage of the Contra Costa Web site, including number of visits, number and type of pages accessed, and days and times of peak usage were provided by DreamHost and analyzed to better understand how the Virtual Self-Help Law Center was being used. Because the DreamHost statistics provided only very basic information, the Web developer and AOC technology attorney worked with program staff to locate and install more sophisticated Web tracking software. This software, NetTracker, was installed in July 2004 and provides the same types of information as Dream Host, but it also allows users to examine in detail the length of time spent on the site, at what points users entered and exited the site, and what paths users took through the site. NetTracker generates a wide array of both standard and customized reports, which could be filtered for different segments of the user population. DreamHost data are analyzed for October 2003 through July 2004, and NetTracker data are analyzed for July through November 2004.

Weekly Atomz reports provide information on the top keywords searched by Web site users. Atomz data are analyzed for October 2003 through July 2004.

Web Site User Testing

To better understand how helpful the Virtual Self-Help Law Center Web site is for litigants, a clinic was set up in the Contra Costa County law library to observe litigants using the Web site and to gather their feedback. Because the guardianship content was the best developed of all of the content areas, this clinic focused on the guardianship section of the site.

The procedure for testing is as follows. Litigants would go to the forms window for the guardianship packet. Rather than giving out the packet, at a cost to the litigant, the forms staff would tell litigants about the program (providing them with a flyer) and direct them to the law library where the AOC technology attorney or his assistant would be located. The clerks explained that the court was offering the free use of guardianship forms on a computer, free information, and help with the computer.

When they reached the law library, customers were asked to sign in and give consent to be observed using the site, and to have someone follow up in the court files to track the process and outcome of their case. Subjects were set up on the Web site and AOC staff took detailed notes on how customers used the site and what problems they encountered. AOC staff tried as much as possible to let customers use the site on their own, but they offered assistance when customers could not find the information that applied to their case or otherwise got stuck. After using the site, customers were asked to fill out customer satisfaction surveys, but only six were completed, a number inadequate for analysis.

At the end of the session, litigants were sent back to the probate legal technicians for processing or referred to other resources.

The clinic was in operation every Friday from mid-August through October 2004. On some days, no customers were seen, so analysis is based on data collected on 6 Fridays from 12 subjects, three of whom did not actually use the site because AOC staff felt the site would not be useful for their particular situation.

Self-Help Management Project Evaluation Design

Because the program design, goals, and activities of the Los Angeles County program differ markedly from the four other self-help pilot projects, the research team developed a unique evaluation design for Los Angeles County. This design consisted of three activities: site visits, monthly activity logs, and provider telephone surveys.

The evaluation design called for two site visits. The first visit was conducted in April 2003, and the second visit was conducted a year later. The first visit consisted of a series of interviews with key personnel involved in the design of the Self-Help Management Project. In addition, the research team met with a selection of self-help providers to gain a baseline understanding of the state of self-help services and interagency collaboration. The second site visit focused on understanding the implementation of the Self-Help Management Project, including the types of collaborative activities the project has facilitated, the challenges it has faced, how the project helped new self-help centers develop services, and the strategies it developed for engaging providers. This visit included interviews with Self-Help Management Project staff and key partners, as well as observation of management center activities, including collaborative meetings.

The second component of the Los Angeles County program evaluation was monthly

activity logs, which were completed by the program's managing attorney. The purpose of these activity logs was to systematically document the major activities of the project, including collaborative meetings; trainings for providers; creation and dissemination of forms, packets, policies, and protocols; and facilitation of collaborative funding and projects. This system allowed the evaluation team to analyze not only what activities the Self-Help Management Project had completed, but also which providers and partners the project had the most success in engaging. The monthly activity log was designed by NPC in collaboration with the managing attorney. The logs were completed from May 2003 to April 2004.

The final component of the Los Angeles County program evaluation was a telephone survey conducted by NPC with self-help service providers in Los Angeles County. The telephone survey consisted of a baseline wave conducted in May and June 2003 and a follow-up wave in May 2004. The purpose of the interviews was to document the following:

- The state of collaborative relations among providers and between providers and law schools, bar associations, and the courts;
- The organizations and individuals with whom the centers collaborated;
- The type of technical support and training self-help service providers welcomed; and
- The type of collaborative opportunities the centers welcomed.

The information from the telephone surveys was compared with the activities recorded in the monthly activity logs to identify areas in which the Self-Help Management Project was addressing needs identified by the telephone respondents.

During the baseline wave conducted in May and June 2003, the research team used a list of 40 self-help agencies compiled by the Central court and provided by the managing attorney of the Self-Help Management Project.⁶ The evaluation telephone interviewer determined that many of the agencies on the list either were no longer in operation or did not actually provide self-help services, and therefore, telephone interviews were conducted with 19 of the original 40 agencies on the list. For the second wave of interviews, the researchers provided the Self-Help Management Project with the list of agencies interviewed in the first wave. Self-Help Management Project staff were asked to update contact information for any of these individuals as necessary and to suggest additional agencies with whom they had worked during the past year. Appendix I contains a list of the agencies represented by the interview respondents. Appendix J contains a sample of the survey instrument.

⁶ This was not a list created by the managing attorney but rather the most recently compiled list of self-help providers used by the central court.

Supplemental Data Sources

Several other data sources that were not a part of the original evaluation design were consulted to provide background information or complement research findings.

Quarterly reports. Every quarter, the center director submitted reports to the AOC, and these included a discussion of the project's development, such as changes in staffing, services offered, and collaborations developed. The reports also included data on the number of customers served, as well as the director's evaluation of the project's progress and goals for the future. The quarterly reports provided the research team with more frequent snapshots of the project's development than the two rounds of site visits.

Writing exercises. After the data collection was completed, AOC project staff identified a need for additional information and developed a structured writing exercise for self-help center directors to complete, including a project timeline marking major milestones, information about other forms of assistance available to litigants in their counties, and detailed workshop descriptions.

Project proposals. Proposals were consulted to fill in additional background information on identified needs or gaps in the county, as well as the rationale for the program.

Other data included:

- Project invoices for information on operational expenses;
- Notes from conference calls and meetings with pilot project staff;
- Census data for background information on county population;
- Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS) data for background information on court filings; and
- Evaluations of other self-help centers and services.

Appendix C

Self-Help Intake Data

**Exhibit C.1
Demographic Characteristics of Self-Help Center Customers**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco		Contra Costa ¹	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Gender								
Male	35%	569	41%	195	52%	798	35%	109
Female	65%	1,061	59%	279	48%	741	66%	207
(missing)		32		5		75		37
Total		1,662		479		1,614		353
Age								
10 through 19	2%	25	1%	4	2%	18	N.A.	N.A.
20 through 29	24%	325	28%	127	17%	208	N.A.	N.A.
30 through 39	25%	332	36%	162	25%	300	N.A.	N.A.
40 through 49	26%	346	25%	112	27%	325	N.A.	N.A.
50 through 59	13%	181	8%	34	15%	178	N.A.	N.A.
60 or older	10%	140	4%	17	14%	164	N.A.	N.A.
(missing)		313		23		421		N.A.
Total		1,662		479		1,614		N.A.
Number of Children								
None	36%	541	17%	71	59%	734	30%	79
One	25%	369	21%	86	19%	239	27%	69
Two	21%	320	25%	102	13%	167	27%	71
Three	11%	164	22%	90	6%	70	11%	28
Four	5%	69	8%	35	2%	27	3%	8
Five or more	3%	42	8%	32	1%	16	2%	5
(missing)		157		63		361		93
Total		1,662		479		1,614		353

Exhibit C.1 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco		Contra Costa ¹	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Ethnicity ²								
White non-Hispanic	78%	1,239	3%	16	35%	500	64%	206
Hispanic or Latino	14%	218	94%	439	23%	327	11%	35
Native American, Eskimo, or Aleut	7%	115	0%	1	2%	25	1%	3
African American	2%	30	2%	10	21%	300	12%	40
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%	27	0%	0	19%	266	6%	19
Other	1%	22	0%	1	3%	49	2%	7
(missing)		N.A.		N.A.		N.A.		29
Total		1,591		467		1,427		353
Speak a Language Other Than English at Home								
No	84%	1,355	13%	61	54%	772	84%	272
Yes	16%	258	87%	406	47%	671	16%	53
(missing)		49		12		171		28
Total		1,662		479		1,614		353
Language Spoken (for those who said they speak a language other than English at home)								
Spanish	82%	166	99%	394	43%	253	N.A.	N.A.
Armenian	3%	5	0%	0	2%	11	N.A.	N.A.
Cantonese	2%	3	0%	1	13%	74	N.A.	N.A.
Russian	1%	1	0%	0	6%	35	N.A.	N.A.
Tagalog	1%	1	0%	0	9%	51	N.A.	N.A.
Vietnamese	0%	0	0%	0	2%	13	N.A.	N.A.
Mandarin	0%	0	0%	0	9%	55	N.A.	N.A.
Other	13%	27	1%	2	16%	93	N.A.	N.A.
(missing)		55		9		86		N.A.
Total		244		430		671		N.A.

Exhibit C.1 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco		Contra Costa ²	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Preferred Language for Services (for only those who speak a language other than English at home)								
English	78%	151	33%	57	65%	355	98%	298
Spanish	21%	40	67%	116	14%	78	N.A.	N.A.
Cantonese	0%	0	0%	0	7%	36	N.A.	N.A.
Mandarin	0%	0	0%	0	5%	26	N.A.	N.A.
Russian	0%	0	0%	0	4%	21	N.A.	N.A.
Tagalog	0%	0	0%	0	2%	13	N.A.	N.A.
Vietnamese	0%	0	0%	0	1%	5	N.A.	N.A.
Other	2%	3	1%	1	3%	16	N.A.	N.A.
(missing)		64		232		121		49
Total		258		406		671		353

¹ The abbreviation N.A., or Not applicable, is used for individual measures where the sample size is less than 30. Not all questions asked on the intake survey were asked on the Web-based survey for the Contra Costa County project.

² Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity.

Exhibit C.2
Social and Economic Characteristics of Self Help Center Customers

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco		Contra Costa ¹	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Education (population 25 and over)								
8 th grade or less	5%	72	44%	188	4%	50	1%	3
9 th to 11 th grade	17%	255	23%	96	8%	90	4%	11
High school diploma or GED	32%	475	22%	94	21%	250	17%	53
Some college	32%	462	7%	28	30%	349	38%	119
Associate degree	6%	92	4%	16	6%	74	12%	39
Bachelor's degree	5%	66	0%	1	19%	223	18%	55
Graduate degree	3%	42	0%	1	12%	144	11%	33
(missing)		198		55		434		39
Total		1,662		479		1,614		353
Employed								
No	50%	729	50%	215	43%	488	N.A.	N.A.
Yes, full time	36%	519	36%	156	43%	484	N.A.	N.A.
Yes, part time	14%	197	13%	57	15%	166	N.A.	N.A.
(missing)		217		51		476		N.A.
Total		1,662		479		1,614		N.A.
Status If Not Employed								
Unemployed	32%	222	59%	104	34%	151	N.A.	N.A.
Disabled and unable to work	31%	213	18%	31	30%	131	N.A.	N.A.
Retired	16%	108	9%	15	15%	65	N.A.	N.A.
Not looking for work	14%	95	9%	15	14%	62	N.A.	N.A.
Other	7%	50	7%	12	8%	34	N.A.	N.A.
(missing)		974		302		1,171		N.A.
Total		1,662		479		1,614		N.A.

Exhibit C.2 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco		Contra Costa ¹	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Monthly Household Income								
\$500 or less	16%	225	25%	99	16%	171	11%	34
\$501–\$1,000	27%	378	40%	157	22%	240	8%	23
\$1,001–\$1,500	22%	314	23%	91	14%	156	11%	33
\$1,501–\$2,000	14%	196	8%	31	14%	150	12%	36
\$2,001–\$2,500	9%	124	1%	5	9%	101	10%	31
\$2,501 or more	13%	180	4%	14	25%	266	49%	149
(missing)		245		82		530		47
Total		1,662		479		1,614		353

¹ The abbreviation N.A., or Not applicable, is used for individual measures where the sample size is less than 30. Not all questions asked on the intake survey were asked on the Web-based survey for the Contra Costa County project.

**Exhibit C.3
Access to Other Sources of Assistance**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Sought Help Before Coming to the Self-Help Center						
No	69%	999	77%	330	62%	678
Yes	31%	445	23%	97	38%	416
(missing)		218		52		520
Total		1,662		479		1,614
Where Help Was Sought ¹						
Legal Aid	22%	101	45%	50	26%	108
Private attorney	26%	116	8%	9	23%	94
Friend or relative	27%	120	21%	23	20%	85
Paralegal	11%	48	12%	13	3%	14
Library	10%	43	2%	2	6%	25
Self-help books	12%	52	2%	2	10%	41
Internet	14%	62	1%	1	15%	61
Police	2%	11	1%	1	6%	25
Other	23%	104	18%	20	25%	103
Total		657		121		556

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one source of help.

**Exhibit C.4
Self-Representation Status**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Considered hiring a lawyer						
No	70%	1,001	82%	341	73%	778
Yes	30%	438	18%	74	27%	286
Missing		223		64		550
Total		1,662		479		1,614
Why decided to represent self ¹						
I cannot afford a lawyer	69%	982	78%	327	46%	475
I do not know if I need a lawyer	23%	324	10%	43	28%	287
I choose to represent myself	11%	237	4%	16	20%	202
Other	5%	65	0%	1	7%	72
I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	3%	38	3%	14	5%	54
Legal Aid told me they could not help me	3%	39	5%	19	4%	38
Small claims case	1%	7	0%	0	7%	70
Case or issue is straightforward	1%	19	0%	0	1%	6
Dollar amount does not necessitate lawyer	0%	4	0%	0	1%	11
Total		1,715		420		1,215

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one reason.

**Exhibit C.5
How Individual Heard of the Self-Help Center¹**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Clerk's office	48%	655	20%	76	36%	369
Friend or family	22%	305	31%	120	18%	182
Family law facilitator	8%	113	7%	28	1%	9
Family court services	7%	96	17%	66	3%	26
Community service agency	5%	73	7%	25	8%	82
Legal Aid, Legal Services	5%	70	10%	38	7%	72
Attorney	4%	50	1%	5	5%	56
District attorney, local child support agency	3%	45	7%	25	1%	9
Pamphlets, written materials, posters	3%	40	2%	9	4%	38
Judge, commissioner	1%	17	1%	5	3%	30
Newspaper, TV, radio advertisement	1%	12	0%	0	2%	16
Police	1%	11	0%	0	3%	33
Other court personnel	1%	7	1%	2	3%	27
Walk-in	0%	3	0%	0	2%	24
Bar association	0%	2	0%	0	4%	46
Web site	0%	0	0%	0	5%	50
Other	4%	55	2%	6	5%	47
Total		1,554		405		1,116

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one source.

Appendix D

Self-Help Service Tracking Data

**Exhibit D.1
Case Types of Self-Help Center Customers**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Major Case Types						
Family	55%	2,402	90%	1,266	5%	226
Civil	16%	689	4%	55	75%	3,478
Unlawful detainer	14%	594	4%	54	16%	748
Probate	12%	525	2%	26	3%	123
Other	3%	150	1%	14	1%	45
(missing)		306		67		900
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Family Law Cases						
Dissolution	63%	1251	74%	729	57%	101
Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA)	21%	415	10%	96	31%	54
Paternity	3%	66	12%	115	5%	9
Adoption	2%	41	0%	2	2%	3
Other	11%	217	4%	42	6%	10
(missing)		2,676		498		5,343
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Family Law Issues¹						
Custody	40%	307	8%	62	33%	29
Child support	17%	132	12%	92	61%	54
Visitation	43%	328	80%	605	6%	5
Total		767		759		88
Unlawful Detainer Cases						
Eviction	88%	554	96%	53	98%	751
Other	12%	76	4%	2	2%	18
(missing)		4,036		1,427		4,751
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520

Exhibit D.1 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno²		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Civil Cases						
Civil harassment	24%	168	66%	37	38%	1313
Name change	9%	63	14%	8	8%	263
Small claims	39%	272	9%	5	51%	1788
Other	28%	196	11%	6	3%	120
(missing)		3,967		1,426		2,036
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Probate Cases						
Conservatorship	4%	20	N.A.	N.A.	18%	22
Guardianship	90%	477	N.A.	N.A.	61%	75
Other	6%	31	N.A.	N.A.	21%	26
(missing)		4,138		N.A.		5,397
Total		4,666		N.A.		5,520

¹ Respondents could select more than one issue. The denominator is the total number of responses, not respondents.

² The abbreviation N.A., or Not applicable, is used for individual measures where the sample size is less than 30.

Exhibit D.2
Party Types of Self-Help Center Customers

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
All Cases						
Moving	80%	3,277	79%	1,086	82%	3,532
Responding	20%	804	22%	298	18%	784
Missing		585		98		1,204
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Family Law						
Petitioner	80%	1,951	77%	997	87%	184
Respondent	17%	425	21%	275	11%	23
Other	3%	63	2%	29	2%	5
Missing		2,227		181		5,308
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Unlawful Detainer						
Landlord	67%	423	72%	39	31%	240
Tenant	32%	200	26%	14	66%	510
Other	1%	7	2%	1	3%	21
Missing		4,036		1,428		4,749
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Civil						
Plaintiff	78%	549	79%	46	92%	3,030
Defendant	20%	143	19%	11	8%	251
Other	2%	15	2%	1	0%	4
Missing		3,959		1,424		2,235
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520

Exhibit D.2 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno¹		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Probate						
Petitioner	87%	429	N.A.	N.A.	88%	104
Objector	9%	43	N.A.	N.A.	5%	6
Other	5%	23	N.A.	N.A.	7%	8
(missing)		4,171		N.A.		5,402
Total		4,666		N.A.		5,520

¹ The abbreviation N.A., or Not applicable, is used for individual measures where the sample size is less than 30.

**Exhibit D.3
Services Provided to Self-Help Center Customers**

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Contact Type¹						
Telephone	47%	2,114	0%	5	0%	6
Individual, face-to-face	41%	1,854	100%	1,467	97%	5,318
Workshop/clinic	14%	623	2%	36	9%	495
Other computer application/software	1%	26	0%	0	0%	1
Written correspondence (letters, e-mail)	0%	17	0%	1	0%	9
Internet	0%	10	0%	0	1%	30
Other	0%	7	1%	9	0%	7
Videoconferencing	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0
Total		4,653		1,518		5,866
Language of Service Provision						
English	99%	4,388	20%	291	80%	4,333
Spanish	1%	28	80%	1,161	16%	878
Russian	0%	0	0%	0	1%	60
Chinese	0%	0	0%	2	2%	110
Vietnamese	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Tagalog	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other	0%	3	0%	0	0%	8
(missing)		247		28		113
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Services Received¹						
Assistance completing forms	36%	1,305	7%	92	45%	2,395
Procedural information	69%	2,502	54%	762	82%	4,412
Forms with instructions	10%	368	37%	517	10%	522
Explanation of court orders	4%	141	5%	76	5%	280
Forms only	4%	152	2%	26	3%	151
Referrals to other providers	11%	395	4%	61	14%	754

Exhibit D.3 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Services Received (continued)						
Order after hearing/judgment	1%	36	0%	2	0%	23
Mediation	0%	9	0%	1	0%	5
Other	6%	238	3%	46	1%	45
Other educational materials	2%	76	0%	3	7%	397
Translation/interpretation	0%	9	23%	325	1%	59
Filing	0%	0	4%	61	0%	1
Assistance with documents	11%	383	34%	483	6%	333
Information	15%	533	37%	523	74%	3,997
Total		5,231		1,911		9,043
Returned for Help						
No	73%	3,131	49%	700	77%	3665
Yes	27%	1,174	51%	716	23%	1081
(missing)		361		66		774
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520
Reason for Return¹						
Next step in the process	49%	587	51%	439	53%	581
Has additional questions	40%	476	36%	310	33%	358
Document review	10%	123	45%	385	7%	79
Needs help understanding a court order	3%	35	2%	16	2%	19
Court appearance preparation workshop	0%	4	2%	15	1%	5
Responding to new papers	5%	55	2%	13	1%	7
Needs help with forms	13%	160	10%	86	9%	102
Filing	0%	0	6%	51	0%	1
Other	7%	85	6%	49	5%	50
Needs access to an interpreter to help translate in court	0%	3	3%	22	2%	24
Total		1,528		1,386		1,226
Referrals Made						
No	86%	4,026	89%	1,323	84%	4,615
Yes	14%	640	11%	159	16%	905
Total		4,666		1,482		5,520

Exhibit D.3 (continued)

	Butte		Fresno ²		San Francisco	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Referrals to Legal Service Providers¹						
Family law facilitator	27%	133	34%	50	23%	195
Other legal service	17%	81	10%	14	6%	50
Local child support agency	5%	23	4%	6	0%	2
Legal Services	15%	75	18%	26	46%	395
Lawyer referral service	28%	135	35%	51	24%	206
Law library	11%	56	0%	0	0%	0
Public defender	2%	10	1%	2	0%	1
Small claims advisor	6%	28	3%	4	4%	38
Total		541		153		887
Referrals to Community Service Providers¹						
Counseling service	5%	9	N.A.	N.A.	2%	1
Domestic violence shelter/advocate	21%	36	N.A.	N.A.	9%	5
Government service (e.g. FCS, CPS)	11%	18	N.A.	N.A.	7%	4
Housing service	2%	3	N.A.	N.A.	9%	5
Mediation service	4%	6	N.A.	N.A.	9%	5
Substance abuse service	2%	4	N.A.	N.A.	0%	0
Other community service	70%	120	N.A.	N.A.	66%	36
Total		196		N.A.		56

¹ Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one answer.

² The abbreviation N.A., or not applicable, is used for individual measures where the sample size is less than 30.

Appendix E

Court File Review Data

Exhibit E.1
Dissolution Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
All Cases				
Length of Time Between Date of Separation and Date Petition Filed				
One month or less	23%	16	24%	28
One to three months	11%	8	15%	18
Three to six months	18%	13	15%	18
Six months to one year	6%	4	14%	16
One to two years	10%	7	8%	9
Two to five years	15%	11	7%	8
More than five years	15%	11	14%	16
Missing	1%	7	3%	4
Total	100%	71	100%	117
<i>Average</i>	<i>854 days</i>	<i>70 (1 missing)</i>	<i>660 days</i>	<i>113 (4 missing)</i>
Case Involved Children*				
Yes	41%	29	60%	70
No	59%	42	40%	47
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Number of Children*				
One	55%	16	53%	37
Two	34%	10	31%	22
Three	7%	2	10%	7
Four or more	3%	1	6%	4
Total	100%	29	100%	70
UCCJEA Declaration Filed (if case involved children)				
Yes	97%	28	86%	60
No	3%	1	10%	7
Missing	0%	0	4%	3
Total	100%	29	100%	70
Case Involved Property				
Yes	46%	33	56%	65
No	54%	38	44%	51
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	71	100%	117

Exhibit E.1 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Type of Property				
Real property	9%	3 of 33 cases	22%	14 of 65 cases
Pensions	0%	0 of 33 cases	2%	1 of 65 cases
Cars	36%	12 of 33 cases	40%	26 of 65 cases
Household items	18%	6 of 33 cases	15%	10 of 65 cases
Investments	0%	0 of 33 cases	2%	1 of 65 cases
Bank accounts	3%	1 of 33 cases	0%	0 of 65 cases
Credit cards	9%	3 of 33 cases	3%	2 of 65 cases
Boilerplate	58%	19 of 33 cases	54%	35 of 65 cases
Other property	12%	4 of 33 cases	5%	3 of 65 cases
Other debt	9%	3 of 33 cases	8%	5 of 65 cases
Income Information Provided With Petition ^{1*}				
Yes	69%	49	53%	62
No	31%	22	47%	55
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition				
Yes	52%	37	60%	70
No	45%	32	39%	46
Missing	3%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Nature of Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition				
No request to terminate spousal support to respondent	46%	17 of 37 cases	43%	30 of 70 cases
Property listed but no request to determine property rights	35%	13 of 37 cases	27%	19 of 70 cases
Children born before marriage but no request to determine parentage (if case involved children) ²	19%	3 of 16 cases	27%	12 of 45 cases
Petitioner Successfully Served Respondent With Petition and Summons				
Yes	82%	58	81%	95
No	18%	13	19%	22
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Proof of Service for Declaration of Disclosure				
Yes	66%	47	62%	73
No	34%	24	38%	44
Total	100%	71	100%	117

Exhibit E.1 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Petitioner Filed Order to Show Cause or motion				
Yes	14%	10	16%	19
No	86%	61	84%	98
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Response Filed				
Yes	18%	13	22%	26
No	82%	58	78%	91
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Request to Enter Default				
Not requested	39%	28	47%	55
Requested and entered	61%	43	51%	60
Requested and denied	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Status of Judgment				
Judgment reached	63%	45	66%	77
No judgment reached	27%	19	29%	34
Case dismissed	10%	7	5%	6
Total	100%	71	100%	117
Cases With an Order to Show Cause (OSC) or Motion Filed by the Petitioner				
Number of Hearings Per OSC				
One hearing	---	6	---	18
Two or more hearings	---	5	---	9
Total OSCs	---	11	---	27
Average	---	1.64	---	1.37
Number of Hearings Per Case				
One hearing	---	3	---	8
Two or more hearings	---	7	---	11
Total cases with OSCs	---	10	---	19
Average	---	2.40	---	2.11
Cases That Proceeded to Judgment				
Nature of Judgment ³				
Contested	4%	2	5%	4
Uncontested	9%	4	23%	18
Default	87%	39	70%	54
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	45	100%	77
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Status Terminated	216 days	45	218 days	75 (2 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date of Service of Petition and Summons and Date Status Terminated	201 days	44 (1 missing)	211 days	71 (6 missing)

Exhibit E.1 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Cases With a Default or Uncontested Judgment				
Marital Settlement Agreement or Stipulation*				
Yes	12%	5	31%	22
No	88%	38	69%	50
Total	100%	43	100%	72
Judgment Paperwork Sent Back ⁴				
Yes	23%	10	15%	11
No	65%	28	71%	51
Unable to determine	9%	4	0%	0
Missing	2%	1	14%	10
Total	100%	43	100%	72
Cases with a Default Judgment				
Property Declaration				
Yes	14%	6	18%	11
No	67%	29	68%	41
N/A	14%	6	7%	4
Missing	5%	2	5%	4
Total	100%	43	100%	60
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Default Entered*	125 days	42 (1 missing)	89 days	56 (4 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date of Service of Petition and Summons and Date Default Entered*	108 days	42 (1 missing)	76 days	53 (7 missing)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ Income information includes an Income and Expense Declaration or a Simplified Financial Statement.

² Sample sizes are smaller for this measure because not all cases with missing or inconsistent information on the petition involved children.

³ Some cases were recorded as both default and uncontested. In order to create mutually exclusive categories, cases were categorized as default if there was no response and no marital settlement agreement or stipulation. Some cases were recorded as both uncontested and status only, or both default and status only. All of those cases were categorized as status only.

⁴ Results should be interpreted with caution due to high percentage of missing cases for individuals who did not receive help from the center.

**Exhibit E.2
Dissolution Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties
Comparison Group Subsamples**

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Length of Time Between Date of Separation and Date Petition Filed						
One month or less	23%	16	33%	18	16%	10
One to three months	11%	8	11%	6	19%	12
Three to six months	18%	13	15%	8	16%	10
Six months to one year	6%	4	13%	7	14%	9
One to two years	10%	7	11%	6	5%	3
Two to five years	15%	11	4%	2	10%	6
More than five years	15%	11	13%	7	14%	9
Missing	1%	1	0%	0	6%	4
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
<i>Average</i>	<i>854 days</i>	<i>70 (1 missing)</i>	<i>664 days</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>657 days</i>	<i>59 (4 missing)</i>
Case Involved Children						
Yes	41%	29	44%	30	63%	40
No	59%	42	56%	24	37%	23
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Number of Children						
One	55%	16	60%	18	48%	19
Two	34%	10	30%	9	33%	13
Three	7%	2	3%	1	15%	6
Four or more	3%	1	7%	2	5%	2
Total	100%	29	100%	30	100%	40
UCCJEA Declaration Filed (if case involved children)						
Yes	97%	28	87%	26	85%	34
No	3%	1	13%	4	8%	3
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	8%	3
Total	100%	29	100%	30	100%	40
Case Involved Property						
Yes	46%	33	56%	30	56%	35
No	54%	38	44%	24	43%	27
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63

Exhibit E.2 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Type of Property						
Real property	9%	3 of 33 cases	37%	11 of 30 cases	9%	3 of 35 cases
Pensions	0%	0 of 33 cases	3%	1 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 35 cases
Cars	36%	12 of 33 cases	37%	11 of 30 cases	43%	15 of 35 cases
Household items	18%	6 of 33 cases	20%	6 of 30 cases	11%	4 of 35 cases
Investments	0%	0 of 33 cases	3%	1 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 35 cases
Bank accounts	3%	1 of 33 cases	0%	0 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 35 cases
Credit cards	9%	3 of 33 cases	7%	2 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 35 cases
Boilerplate	58%	19 of 33 cases	47%	14 of 30 cases	60%	21 of 35 cases
Other property	12%	4 of 33 cases	3%	1 of 30 cases	6%	2 of 35 cases
Other debt	9%	3 of 33 cases	7%	2 of 30 cases	9%	3 of 35 cases
Income Information Provided With Petition¹						
Yes	69%	49	50%	27	56%	35
No	31%	22	50%	27	44%	28
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition²						
Yes	52%	37	46%	25	71%	45
No	45%	32	54%	29	27%	17
Missing	3%	2	0%	0	2%	1
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63

Exhibit E.2 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Nature of Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition						
No request to terminate spousal support to respondent	46%	17 of 37 cases	44%	11 of 25 cases	42%	19 of 45 cases
Property listed but no request for to determine property rights	35%	13 of 37 cases	32%	8 of 25 cases	27%	12 of 45 cases
Children born before marriage but no request to determine parentage (if case involved children) ³	---	3 of 16 cases	---	2 of 13 cases	---	10 of 22 cases
Petitioner Successfully Served Respondent With Petition and Summons						
Yes	82%	58	85%	46	78%	49
No	18%	13	15%	8	22%	14
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Petitioner Filed Order to Show Cause or Motion						
Yes	14%	10	11%	6	21%	13
No	86%	61	89%	48	79%	50
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Response Filed						
Yes	18%	58	30%	16	16%	10
No	82%	13	70%	38	84%	53
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Request to Enter Default						
Not requested	39%	28	48%	26	46%	29
Requested and entered	61%	43	50%	27	52%	33
Requested and denied	0%	0	2%	1	2%	1
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63

Exhibit E.2 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Status of Judgment						
Judgment reached	63%	45	70%	38	62%	39
No judgment reached	27%	19	22%	12	35%	22
Case dismissed	10%	7	7%	4	3%	2
Total	100%	71	100%	54	100%	63
Cases That Proceeded to Judgment						
Nature of Judgment						
Contested	4%	2	8%	3	3%	1
Uncontested	9%	4	26%	10	21%	8
Default	87%	39	63%	24	76%	30
Missing	0%	0	3%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	45	100%	38	100%	38
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Status Terminated	216 days	45	212 days	37 (1 missing)	223 days	38 (1 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date of Service of Petition and Summons and Date Status Terminated	201 days	44 (1 missing)	218 days	35 (3 missing)	205 days	36 (3 missing)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.
 Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.
 About 46% of petitioners who did not get help from the center appear to have gotten some other kind of help.
 * Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.
¹ Income information includes an Income and Expense Declaration or a Simplified Financial Statement.
² Sample sizes are smaller for this measure because not all cases with missing or inconsistent information on the petition involved children.
³ Some cases were recorded as both default and uncontested. In order to create mutually exclusive categories, cases were categorized as default if there was no response and no marital settlement agreement or stipulation. Some cases were recorded as both uncontested and status only, or both default and status only. All of those cases were categorized as status only.

Exhibit E.3
Dissolution Court File Review Results for Fresno County

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
All Cases				
Length of Time Between Date of Separation and Date Petition Filed				
One month or less	25%	17	24%	29
One to three months	12%	8	13%	15
Three to six months	19%	13	14%	17
Six months to one year	7%	5	17%	20
One to two years	16%	11	14%	17
Two to five years	7%	5	7%	8
More than five years	12%	8	10%	12
Missing	3%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Average	601 days	67 (2 missing)	718 days	118 (1 missing)
Case Involved Children*				
Yes	96%	66	75%	89
No	4%	3	25%	30
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Number of Children*				
One	32%	21	37%	33
Two	36%	24	37%	33
Three	29%	19	15%	13
Four or more	3%	2	9%	8
Missing	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	66	100%	89
UCCJEA Declaration Filed (if case involved children)				
Yes	97%	64	97%	86
No	3%	2	2%	2
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	66	100%	89
Case Involved Property*				
Yes	58%	40	67%	80
No	42%	29	31%	37
Missing	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Type of Property				
Real property*	28%	11 of 40 cases	13%	10 of 80 cases
Pensions	5%	2 of 40 cases	4%	3 of 80 cases
Business	10%	4 of 40 cases	0%	0 of 80 cases
Cars	50%	20 of 40 cases	19%	15 of 80 cases
Household items	20%	8 of 40 cases	11%	9 of 80 cases
Credit cards	5%	2 of 40 cases	5%	4 of 80 cases
School loans	0%	0 of 40 cases	1%	1 of 80 cases
Boilerplate *	55%	22 of 40 cases	73%	58 of 80 cases
Other property	10%	4 of 40 cases	5%	4 of 80 cases
Other debt	8%	3 of 40 cases	8%	6 of 80 cases

Exhibit E.3 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Income Information Provided With Petition¹				
Yes	35%	24	33%	39
No	65%	45	67%	80
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition²				
Yes	54%	37	58%	69
No	35%	24	40%	47
Missing	11%	8	3%	3
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Nature of Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition				
No request to terminate spousal support to respondent	41%	15 of 37 cases	29%	20 of 69 cases
Property listed but no request for to determine property rights	51%	19 of 37 cases	49%	34 of 69 cases
Children born before marriage but no request to determine parentage (if case involved children) ³	8%	3 of 36 cases	14%	13 of 49 cases
Petitioner Successfully Served Respondent With Petition and Summons				
Yes	68%	47	62%	74
No	32%	22	38%	45
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Petitioner Filed Order to Show Cause or Motion*				
Yes	32%	22	20%	24
No	68%	47	80%	95
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Response Filed				
Yes	32%	22	24%	28
No	68%	47	76%	91
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Request to Enter Default				
Not requested	81%	56	71%	85
Requested and entered	16%	11	28%	33
Requested and denied	3%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	119
Status of Judgment				
Judgment reached	22%	15	31%	37
No judgment reached	75%	52	68%	81
Case dismissed	3%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	119

Exhibit E.3 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Cases With Orders to Show Cause (OSCs) or Motions Filed by the Petitioner				
Number of Hearings Per OSC				
One hearing	---	23	---	24
Two or more hearings	---	5	---	4
Total OSCs	---	28	---	28
Average	---	1.18	---	1.21
Number of Hearings Per Case				
One hearing	---	15	---	16
Two or more hearings	---	7	---	7
Total cases with OSCs	---	22	---	23
Average	---	1.50	---	1.43
Cases That Proceeded to Judgment				
Nature of Judgment*				
Contested	20%	3	5%	2
Uncontested	20%	3	16%	6
Default	40%	6	76%	28
Status only	20%	3	3%	1
Total	100%	15	100%	37
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Status Terminated	253 days	15	225 days	36 (1 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Judgment Entered*	232 days	15	184 days	36 (1 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date of Service of Petition and Summons and Date Status Terminated*	243 days	15	208 days	36 (1 missing)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ Income information includes an Income and Expense Declaration or a Simplified Financial Statement.

² Results should be interpreted with caution due to the high percentage of missing cases among individuals who received help from the center. Due to the high proportion of missing, missing cases were excluded from the statistical test for the difference between the two groups.

³ Sample sizes are smaller for this measure because not all cases with missing or inconsistent information on the petition involved children.

Exhibit E.4
Dissolution Court File Review Results for Fresno County
Comparison Group Subsamples

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Length of Time Between Date of Separation and Date Petition Filed						
One month or less	25%	17	25%	20	24%	9
One to three months	12%	8	11%	9	16%	6
Three to six months	19%	13	15%	12	13%	5
Six months to one year	7%	5	19%	15	13%	5
One to two years	16%	11	15%	12	13%	5
Two to five years	7%	5	4%	3	13%	5
More than five years	12%	8	12%	10	5%	2
Missing	3%	2	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Average	601 days	67 (2 missing)	776 days	81	592 days	37 (1 missing)
Case Involved Children						
Yes	96%	66	74%	60	76%	29
No	4%	3	26%	21	24%	9
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Number of Children						
One	32%	21	32%	19	48%	14
Two	36%	24	38%	23	34%	10
Three	29%	19	18%	11	7%	2
Four or more	3%	2	8%	5	10%	3
Missing	0%	0	3%	2	0%	0
Total	100%	66	100%	60	100%	29
UCCJEA Declaration Filed (if case involved children)						
Yes	97%	64	98%	59	93%	27
No	3%	2	2%	1	3%	1
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	66	100%	60	100%	29
Case Involved Property						
Yes	58%	40	72%	58	58%	22
No	42%	29	27%	22	39%	15
Missing	0%	0	1%	1	3%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38

Exhibit E.4 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	%	N	%
Type of Property						
Real property	28%	11 of 40 cases	14%	8 of 58 cases	9%	2 of 22 cases
Pensions	5%	2 of 40 cases	2%	1 of 58 cases	9%	2 of 22 cases
Business	10%	4 of 40 cases	0%	0 of 58 cases	0%	0 of 22 cases
Cars	50%	20 of 40 cases	17%	10 of 58 cases	23%	5 of 22 cases
Household items	20%	8 of 40 cases	10%	6 of 58 cases	14%	3 of 22 cases
Credit cards	5%	2 of 40 cases	3%	2 of 58 cases	9%	2 of 22 cases
School loans	0%	0 of 40 cases	2%	1 of 58 cases	0%	0 of 22 cases
Boilerplate	55%	22 of 40 cases	76%	44 of 58 cases	64%	14 of 22 cases
Other property	10%	4 of 40 cases	3%	2 of 58 cases	9%	2 of 22 cases
Other debt	8%	3 of 40 cases	7%	4 of 58 cases	9%	2 of 22 cases
Income Information Provided With Petition¹						
Yes	35%	24	31%	25	37%	14
No	65%	45	69%	56	63%	24
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition²						
Yes	54%	37	54%	44	66%	25
No	35%	24	43%	35	32%	12
Missing	11%	8	2%	2	3%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Nature of Missing or Inconsistent Information on Petition						
No request to terminate spousal support to respondent	41%	15 of 37 cases	18%	8 of 44 cases	48%	12 of 25 cases
Property listed but no request for to determine property rights	51%	19 of 37 cases	54%	24 of 44 cases	40%	10 of 25 cases
Children born before marriage but no request to determine parentage (if case involved children) ³	8%	3 of 36 cases	14%	4 of 29 cases	15%	3 of 20 cases

Exhibit E.4 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Petitioner Successfully Served Respondent With Petition and Summons						
Yes	68%	47	68%	55	50%	19
No	32%	22	32%	26	50%	19
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Petitioner Filed Order to Show Cause or Motion						
Yes	32%	22	14%	11	32%	12
No	68%	47	86%	70	68%	26
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Response Filed						
Yes	32%	22	21%	17	29%	11
No	68%	47	79%	64	71%	27
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Request to Enter Default						
Not requested	81%	56	67%	54	82%	31
Requested and entered	16%	11	32%	26	18%	7
Requested and denied	3%	2	1%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Status of Judgment						
Judgment reached	22%	15	33%	27	26%	10
No judgment reached	75%	52	67%	54	71%	27
Case dismissed	3%	2	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	69	100%	81	100%	38
Cases That Proceeded to Judgment						
Nature of Judgment						
Contested	---	3	---	1	---	1
Uncontested	---	3	---	4	---	2
Default	---	6	---	22	---	6
Status only	---	3	---	0	---	1
Total	---	15	---	27	---	10

Exhibit E.4 (continued)

	Petitioner Received Help From Center		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Petitioner Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	%	N	%
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Status Terminated	253 days	15	226 days	27	221 days	9 (1 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Judgment Entered	232 days	15	184 days	27	184 days	9 (1 missing)
Average Length of Time Between Date of Service of Petition and Summons and Date Status Terminated	243 days	15	209 days	27	204 days	9 (1 missing)

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.
 Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.
 About 68% of petitioners who did not get help from the center appear to have gotten some other kind of help.
 * Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.
¹ Income information includes an Income and Expense Declaration or a Simplified Financial Statement.
² Results should be interpreted with caution due to the high percentage of missing cases among individuals who received help from the center.
³ Sample sizes are smaller for this measure because not all cases with missing or inconsistent information on the petition involved children.

Exhibit E.5
Unlawful Detainer Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties
Plaintiff Comparisons

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
All Cases				
Fee Waiver				
Yes	10%	4	2%	3
No	88%	37	95%	125
Missing	2%	1	2%	3
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Format of Complaint*				
Typed	26%	11	40%	52
Handwritten	57%	24	11%	15
Paralegal	0%	0	1%	1
Computer forms	17%	7	45%	59
Missing	0%	0	3%	4
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Type of Notice				
3-day pay or quit	71%	30	66%	86
3-day perform or quit	2%	1	4%	5
3-day quit	5%	2	5%	6
30-day quit	12%	5	15%	20
60-day	7%	3	7%	9
Other	2%	1	2%	3
Missing	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Defective Notice				
Yes	48%	20	36%	47
No	52%	22	64%	84
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Declaration for Default Filed				
Yes	38%	16	40%	53
No	60%	25	59%	77
Missing	2%	1	1%	1
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Answer Filed				
Yes	57%	24	54%	71
No	43%	18	46%	60
Total	100%	42	100%	131
Judgment Reached				
Yes	76%	32	73%	95
No	10%	4	21%	27
Case dismissed	14%	6	7%	9
Total	100%	42	100%	131

Exhibit E.5 (continued)

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Cases That Reached Judgment				
Type of Judgment ¹ *				
Default	52%	17	36%	37
Trial	48%	16	49%	50
Stipulation	0%	0	15%	15
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	33	100%	103
Immediate Possession to Plaintiff				
Yes	81%	26	68%	65
No	19%	6	32%	30
Total	100%	32	100%	95
Money Judgment to Plaintiff				
Yes	56%	18	53%	50
No	44%	14	47%	45
Total	100%	32	100%	95
Conditional Judgment*				
Yes	0%	0	8%	8
No	100%	32	92%	87
Total	100%	32	100%	95
Length of Time Between Date Complaint Filed and Date of Judgment				
Two weeks or less	31%	10	21%	20
Two weeks to a month	13%	4	22%	21
One to two months	44%	14	36%	34
More than two months	6%	2	12%	11
Missing	6%	2	9%	9
Total	100%	32	100%	95
Average	30 days	30 (2 missing)	36 days	86 (9 missing)
Cases With a Declaration for Default Filed				
Notice to Quit Matches Complaint				
Yes	---	7	60%	32
No	---	6	25%	13
Missing	---	3	15%	8
Total	---	16	100%	53
Missing Exhibits*				
Yes	---	7	13%	7
No	---	8	77%	41
Missing	---	1	9%	5
Total	---	16	100%	53
Missing Notice to Quit*				
Yes	---	3	6%	3
No	---	13	94%	50
Total	---	16	100%	53
Missing Proof of Service				
Yes	---	3	9%	5
No	---	13	91%	48
Total	---	16	100%	53

Exhibit E.5 (continued)

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Cases That Reached Judgment by Default				
Type of Default Judgment Entered				
Clerk	---	15	51%	27
Court	---	2	11%	7
Clerk and court	---	0	4%	2
Total	---	17	100%	33
Cases That Went to Trial				
Defendant(s) Properly Served With Trial Notice				
Yes	---	14	84%	42
No	---	0	6%	3
Missing	---	2	10%	5
Total	---	16	100%	50
Plaintiff Appeared at Trial				
Yes	---	16	98%	49
No	---	0	0%	0
Missing	---	0	2%	1
Total	---	16	100%	50
Defendant(s) Appeared at Trial				
All defendants	---	10	54%	27
Some defendants	---	2	20%	10
No defendants	---	4	24%	12
Missing	---	0	2%	1
Total	---	16	100%	50
Judgment for:				
Plaintiff	---	14	80%	40
Defendant	---	1	16%	8
Missing	---	1	4%	2
Total	---	16	100%	50

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ For some cases there was more than one type of judgment. Therefore, the total exceeds the number of cases in which a judgment was reached.

Exhibit E.6
Unlawful Detainer Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties
Defendant Comparisons

	Defendant Received Help From Center		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
All Cases				
Length of Time Between Date Complaint Filed and Date Answer Filed				
One week or less	63%	26	59%	44
One to two weeks	27%	11	23%	17
More than two weeks	7%	3	11%	8
Missing	2%	1	8%	6
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Average	12 days	40 (1 missing)	9 days	69 (6 missing)
Median	6 days	40 (1 missing)	6 days	69 (6 missing)
Fee Waiver				
Yes	85%	35	87%	65
No	10%	4	9%	7
Missing	5%	2	4%	3
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Format of Answer*				
Typed	7%	3	23%	17
Handwritten	85%	35	49%	37
Computer forms	7%	3	23%	17
Missing	0%	0	5%	4
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Defective Notice				
Yes	34%	14	37%	28
No	66%	27	63%	47
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Any Affirmative Defenses Raised*				
Yes	98%	40	83%	62
No	2%	1	13%	10
Missing	0%	0	4%	3
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Which Affirmative Defenses Raised				
Habitability	48%	19 of 40 cases	42%	26 of 62 cases
Timely tender refused	23%	9 of 40 cases	15%	9 of 62 cases
Retaliatory eviction	10%	4 of 40 cases	18%	11 of 62 cases
Plaintiff accepted rent	15%	6 of 40 cases	10%	6 of 62 cases
Made repairs	5%	2 of 40 cases	8%	5 of 62 cases
Plaintiff cancelled notice*	10%	4 of 40 cases	0%	0 of 62 cases
Rent control violation	0%	0 of 40 cases	3%	2 of 62 cases
Other	73%	29 of 40 cases	66%	41 of 62 cases
Supporting Facts Provided for Affirmative Defenses				
Yes	83%	33	68%	42
No	13%	5	19%	12
Missing	5%	2	13%	8
Total	100%	40	100%	62

Exhibit E.6 (continued)

	Defendant Received Help From Center		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center	
	%	N	%	N
Judgment Reached*				
Yes	85%	35	80%	60
No	0%	0	15%	11
Case dismissed	15%	6	5%	4
Total	100%	41	100%	75
Cases That Reached Judgment				
Type of Judgment ¹				
Default	5%	2	6%	4
Trial	68%	26	79%	53
Stipulation	26%	10	13%	9
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	38	100%	67
Immediate Possession to Plaintiff				
Yes	71%	25	68%	41
No	29%	10	32%	19
Total	100%	35	100%	60
Money Judgment to Plaintiff				
Yes	60%	21	72%	43
No	40%	14	28%	17
Total	100%	35	100%	60
Conditional Judgment*				
Yes	20%	7	7%	4
No	80%	28	93%	56
Total	100%	35	100%	60
Cases That Went to Trial				
Plaintiff Appeared at Trial				
Yes	---	26	96%	51
No	---	0	4%	2
Total	---	26	100%	53
Defendant(s) Appeared at Trial				
All defendants	---	17	47%	25
Some defendants	---	6	21%	11
No defendants	---	3	30%	16
Missing	---	0	2%	1
Total	---	26	100%	53
Judgment for:				
Plaintiff	---	20	83%	44
Defendant	---	4	13%	7
Missing	---	2	4%	2
Total	---	26	100%	53

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ For some cases there was more than one type of judgment. Therefore, the total exceeds the number of cases in which a judgment was reached.

Exhibit E.7
Unlawful Detainer Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties
Plaintiff Comparison Group Subsamples

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
All Cases						
Fee Waiver						
Yes	10%	4	5%	2	1%	1
No	88%	37	89%	33	98%	92
Missing	2%	1	5%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	42	200%	37	100%	94
Format of Complaint						
Typed	26%	11	54%	20	34%	32
Handwritten	57%	24	11%	4	12%	11
Paralegal	0%	0	0%	0	1%	1
Computer forms	17%	7	35%	13	49%	46
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	4%	4
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94
Type of Notice						
3-day pay or quit	71%	30	76%	28	62%	58
3-day perform or quit	2%	1	0%	0	5%	5
3-day quit	5%	2	8%	3	6%	6
30-day quit	12%	5	3%	1	5%	5
60-day	7%	3	14%	5	16%	15
Other	2%	1	0%	0	3%	3
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94
Defective Notice						
Yes	48%	20	35%	13	36%	34
No	52%	22	65%	24	64%	60
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94
Declaration for Default Filed						
Yes	38%	16	57%	21	34%	32
No	60%	25	43%	16	65%	61
Missing	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94
Answer Filed						
Yes	57%	24	27%	10	65%	61
No	43%	18	73%	27	35%	33
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94
Judgment Reached						
Yes	76%	32	68%	25	75%	70
No	10%	4	27%	10	18%	17
Case dismissed	14%	6	5%	2	7%	7
Total	100%	42	100%	37	100%	94

Exhibit E.7 (continued)

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Cases That Reached Judgment						
Type of Judgment ¹						
Default	52%	17	---	17	26%	20
Trial	48%	16	---	7	55%	43
Stipulation	0%	0	---	1	18%	14
Missing	0%	0	---	0	1%	1
Total	100%	33	---	25	100%	78
Immediate Possession to Plaintiff						
Yes	81%	26	---	15	71%	50
No	19%	6	---	10	29%	20
Total	100%	32	---	25	100%	70
Money Judgment to Plaintiff						
Yes	56%	18	---	10	57%	40
No	44%	14	---	15	43%	30
Total	100%	32	---	25	100%	70
Conditional Judgment						
Yes	0%	0	---	3	7%	5
No	100%	32	---	22	93%	65
Total	100%	32	---	25	100%	70
Length of Time Between Date Complaint Filed and Date of Judgment						
Two weeks or less	31%	10	---	9	16%	11
Two weeks to a month	13%	4	---	7	20%	14
One to two months	44%	14	---	3	44%	31
More than two months	6%	2	---	3	11%	8
Missing	6%	2	---	3	9%	6
Total	100%	32	---	25	100%	70
Average	30 days	30 (2 missing)	27 days	22 (3 missing)	39 days	64 (6 missing)
Cases With a Declaration for Default Filed						
Notice to Quit Matches Complaint						
Yes	---	7	---	13	59%	19
No	---	6	---	5	25%	8
Missing	---	3	---	3	16%	5
Total	---	16	---	21	100%	32
Missing Exhibits						
Yes	---	7	---	3	13%	4
No	---	8	---	17	75%	24
Missing	---	1	---	1	13%	4
Total	---	16	---	21	100%	32
Missing Notice to Quit						
Yes	---	3	---	2	3%	1
No	---	13	---	19	97%	31
Total	---	16	---	21	100%	32

Exhibit E.7 (continued)

	Plaintiff Received Help From Center		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Plaintiff Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Missing Proof of Service						
Yes	---	3	---	1	13%	4
No	---	13	---	20	88%	28
Total	---	16	---	21	100%	32
Cases That Reached Judgment by Default						
Type of Default Judgment Entered						
Clerk	---	15	---	13	---	14
Court	---	2	---	3	---	4
Clerk and court	---	0	---	0	---	2
Missing	---	0	---	1	---	0
Total	---	17	---	17	---	20

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

About 28% of plaintiffs who did not get help from the center appear to have gotten some other kind of help.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ For some cases there was more than one type of judgment. Therefore, the total exceeds the number of cases in which a judgment was reached.

Exhibit E.8
Unlawful Detainer Court File Review Results for Butte/Glenn/Tehama Counties
Defendant Comparison Group Subsamples

	Defendant Received Help From Center		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
All Cases						
Length of Time Between Date Complaint Filed and Date Answer Filed						
One week or less	63%	26	46%	17	71%	27
One to two weeks	27%	11	32%	12	13%	5
More than two weeks	7%	3	8%	3	13%	5
Missing	2%	1	14%	5	3%	1
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38
Average	12 days	40 (1 missing)	8 days	32 (5 missing)	9 days	37 (1 missing)
Median	6 days	40 (1 missing)	7 days	32 (5 missing)	6 days	37 (1 missing)
Fee Waiver						
Yes	85%	35	89%	33	84%	32
No	10%	4	5%	2	13%	5
Missing	5%	2	5%	2	3%	1
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38
Format of Answer						
Typed	7%	3	19%	7	26%	10
Handwritten	85%	35	35%	13	63%	24
Computer forms	7%	3	41%	15	5%	2
Missing	0%	0	5%	2	5%	2
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38
Defective Notice						
Yes	34%	14	35%	13	39%	15
No	66%	27	65%	24	61%	23
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38
Any Affirmative Defenses Raised						
Yes	98%	40	81%	30	84%	32
No	2%	1	11%	4	16%	6
Missing	0%	0	8%	3	0%	0
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38

Exhibit E.8 (continued)

	Defendant Received Help From Center		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Which Affirmative Defenses Raised						
Habitability	48%	19 of 40 cases	43%	13 of 30 cases	41%	13 of 32 cases
Timely tender refused	23%	9 of 40 cases	10%	3 of 30 cases	19%	6 of 32 cases
Retaliatory eviction	10%	4 of 40 cases	27%	8 of 30 cases	9%	3 of 32 cases
Plaintiff accepted rent	15%	6 of 40 cases	10%	3 of 30 cases	9%	3 of 32 cases
Made repairs	5%	2 of 40 cases	7%	2 of 30 cases	9%	3 of 32 cases
Plaintiff cancelled notice	10%	4 of 40 cases	0%	0 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 32 cases
Rent control violation	0%	0 of 40 cases	7%	2 of 30 cases	0%	0 of 32 cases
Other	73%	29 of 40 cases	67%	20 of 30 cases	66%	21 of 32 cases
Supporting Facts Provided for Affirmative Defenses						
Yes	83%	33	63%	19	72%	23
No	13%	5	13%	4	25%	8
Missing	5%	2	23%	7	3%	1
Total	100%	40	100%	30	100%	32
Judgment Reached						
Yes	85%	35	81%	30	79%	30
No	0%	0	14%	5	16%	6
Case dismissed	15%	6	5%	2	5%	2
Total	100%	41	100%	37	100%	38
Cases That Reached Judgment						
Type of Judgment ¹						
Default	5%	2	9%	3	3%	1
Trial	68%	26	77%	27	81%	26
Stipulation	26%	10	14%	5	13%	4
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	38	100%	35	100%	32
Immediate Possession to Plaintiff						
Yes	71%	25	60%	18	77%	23
No	29%	10	40%	12	23%	7
Total	100%	35	100%	30	100%	30
Money Judgment to Plaintiff						
Yes	60%	21	77%	23	67%	20
No	40%	14	23%	7	33%	10
Total	100%	35	100%	30	100%	30
Conditional Judgment						
Yes	20%	7	10%	3	3%	1
No	80%	28	90%	27	97%	29
Total	100%	35	100%	30	100%	30

Exhibit E.8 (continued)

	Defendant Received Help From Center		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Appeared to Receive Other Help		Defendant Did Not Receive Help From Center and Did Not Appear to Receive Other Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Cases That Went to Trial						
Plaintiff Appeared at Trial						
Yes	---	26	---	27	---	24
No	---	0	---	0	---	2
Total	---	26	---	27	---	26
Defendant(s) Appeared at Trial						
All defendants	---	17	---	12	---	13
Some defendants	---	6	---	6	---	5
No defendants	---	3	---	8	---	8
Missing	---	0	---	1	---	0
Total	---	26	---	27	---	26
Judgment for:						
Plaintiff	---	20	---	21	---	23
Defendant	---	4	---	4	---	3
Missing	---	2	---	2	---	0
Total	---	26	---	27	---	26

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

About 49% of defendants who did not get help from the center appear to have gotten some other kind of help.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ For some cases there was more than one type of judgment. Therefore, the total exceeds the number of cases in which a judgment was reached.

**Exhibit E.9
Civil Harassment Court File Review Results for San Francisco County**

	2002: Pre-ACCESS		2003: Post-ACCESS	
	%	N	%	N
All Cases				
Relationship of Parties				
Co-workers	3%	3	4%	4
Neighbors	26%	25	21%	21
Former date	1%	1	0%	0
Landlord/tenant	4%	4	8%	8
Extended family	6%	6	1%	1
Roommates	7%	7	9%	9
Other	51%	50	57%	58
Missing	2%	2	0%	0
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Fee Waiver for Petitioner				
Yes	87%	85	93%	94
No	13%	13	7%	7
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Add-Ons to Declaration				
Yes	35%	34	38%	38
No	64%	63	62%	63
Missing	1%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Supplemental Declaration*				
Yes	23%	23	9%	9
No	77%	75	89%	90
Missing	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Temporary Order Issued*				
Yes	80%	78	75%	76
No, but order to show cause issued	3%	3	12%	12
No	17%	17	13%	13
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Final Status of Case				
Permanent order granted	28%	27	25%	25
Dismissed/permanent order denied	16%	16	22%	22
Dropped	37%	36	37%	37
Did not reach hearing stage (no action after petition filed or no order to show cause issued)	17%	17	13%	13
Unknown	2%	2	4%	4
Total	100%	98	100%	101
Indication That Petitioner Needs Language Assistance				
Yes	2%	2	8%	8
No	96%	94	91%	92
Missing	2%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	98	100%	101

Exhibit E.9 (continued)

	2002: Pre-ACCESS		2003: Post-ACCESS	
	%	N	%	N
Language Spoken				
Spanish	----	1	----	5
Chinese	----	0	----	1
American sign language	----	0	----	1
Unknown	----	1	----	0
Missing	----	0	----	1
Total	----	2	----	8
Cases in Which Temporary Order Was Issued				
Average Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Temporary Order Issued*	1.1 days	78	1.9 days	76
Stay-Away Order Granted				
Yes	71%	55	80%	61
No	29%	23	18%	14
Missing	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	78	100%	76
Cases in Which Order to Show Cause (OSC) Was Issued				
Petitioner Successfully Served Respondent With OSC or Temporary Order				
Yes	63%	51	63%	55
No	37%	30	38%	33
Total	100%	81	100%	88
Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date of Service of OSC				
Average ¹	11.0 days	34 (17 missing)	21.5 days	40 (15 missing)
Median	6.5 days	34 (17 missing)	8 days	40 (15 missing)
Permanent Order Issued ²				
Yes	35%	28	32%	28
No	65%	53	68%	60
Total	100%	81	100%	88
Stay-Away Order Granted				
Yes	----	26	----	28
No	----	2	----	0
Total	----	28	----	28
Length of Time Between Date Petition Filed and Date Permanent Order Issued				
Average ³	28 days	28	41 days	27 (1 missing)
Median	20 days	28	19 days	27 (1 missing)
Number of Hearings Per Case				
One	69%	56	59%	52
Two	19%	15	25%	22
Three	10%	8	11%	10
Four or more	2%	2	5%	4
Total	100%	81	100%	88
Average	1.5	81	1.7	88

Exhibit E.9 (continued)

	2002: Pre-ACCESS		2003: Post-ACCESS	
	%	N	%	N
Number of Continuances Per Case				
None	83%	67	70%	62
One	12%	10	19%	17
Two	5%	4	6%	5
Three or more	0%	0	5%	4
Total	100%	81	100%	88
Average *	0.22	81	0.49	88
Details of Hearings (denominator is number of hearings, not number of cases)				
Petitioner Appeared				
Yes	52%	62	58%	88
No	45%	54	36%	55
Unable to determine	2%	2	5%	8
Missing	1%	1	1%	1
Total	100%	119	100%	152
Respondent Appeared				
Yes	33%	39	33%	50
No	63%	75	61%	92
Unable to determine	3%	4	5%	8
Missing	1%	1	1%	2
Total	100%	119	100%	152
Hearing Was Continued*				
Yes	14%	17	30%	45
No	86%	101	70%	107
Total	100%	119	100%	152
Reason for Continuance				
No proof of service	----	9	62%	28
Other ⁴	----	5	22%	10
Unable to determine	----	1	9%	4
Missing	----	2	7%	3
Total	----	17	100%	45

Notes: Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Unless otherwise specified, differences between groups are not statistically significant.

* Difference between groups is statistically significant at the .10 level.

¹ The mean of the 2003 group is skewed by three cases for which the length of time between the date the petition was filed and the date of service of the OSC is in excess of 100 days. Therefore, the median is presented as well.

² Analysis is limited to cases in which an OSC and/or temporary order was issued.

³ The mean of the 2003 group is skewed by two cases for which the length of time between the date the petition was filed and the date the temporary order was issued is in excess of 200 days. Therefore, the median is presented as well.

⁴ Other reasons for continuances were primarily at the request of the court or related to changing circumstances in the case.

Appendix F

Post-Hearing Interview Data

**Exhibit F.1
Interview Responses by Time of Site Visit**

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Center						
Butte/Glenn/Tehama	33%	19	21%	16	26%	35
Contra Costa	21%	12	26%	20	24%	32
Fresno	23%	13	17%	13	19%	26
San Francisco	23%	13	37%	29	31%	42
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Language						
English	90%	51	99%	77	95%	128
Spanish	11%	6	1%	1	5%	7
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Case Type						
Child custody	12%	7	4%	3	7%	10
Child support	2%	1	14%	11	9%	12
Divorce	18%	10	4%	3	10%	13
Domestic violence/ restraining order	23%	13	6%	5	13%	18
Unlawful detainer	7%	4	18%	14	13%	18
Small claims	18%	10	23%	18	21%	28
Guardianship	4%	2	1%	1	2%	3
Civil harassment	12%	7	22%	17	18%	24
Name change	5%	3	6%	5	6%	8
Other	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Party						
Plaintiff or petitioner	63%	36	49%	38	55%	74
Defendant or respondent	37%	21	51%	40	45%	61
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
First Time Representing Yourself in Court						
Yes	56%	32	56%	44	56%	76
No	44%	25	42%	33	43%	58
Missing	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Ever Have a Lawyer Represent You in Court						
Yes	39%	22	39%	30	39%	52
No	61%	35	62%	48	62%	83
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Why Did You Decide to Represent Yourself?						
I cannot afford a lawyer	49%	28	37%	29	42%	57
I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	2%	1	9%	7	6%	8
Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1
I do not know if I need a lawyer	5%	3	5%	4	5%	7
I choose to represent myself	32%	18	19%	15	24%	33
Other	12%	7	28%	22	22%	29
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Prepared for Hearing						
Not at all	9%	5	6%	5	7%	10
Not very	5%	3	3%	2	4%	5
Neutral	21%	12	28%	22	25%	34
Mostly	28%	16	17%	13	22%	29
Extremely	37%	21	46%	36	42%	57
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Judge Treated You With Respect						
Not at all	5%	3	3%	2	4%	5
Not very	0%	0	3%	2	2%	2
Neutral	4%	2	4%	3	4%	5
Mostly	35%	20	8%	6	19%	26
Extremely	54%	31	83%	65	71%	96
Missing	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Court Clerk and Staff Treated You With Respect						
Not at all	4%	2	0%	0	2%	2
Not very	2%	1	4%	3	3%	4
Neutral	2%	1	5%	4	4%	5
Mostly	37%	21	12%	9	22%	30
Extremely	54%	31	78%	61	68%	92
Missing	2%	1	1%	1	2%	2
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Understand Words Used by Judge and Other Persons						
Not at all	4%	2	0%	0	2%	2
Not very	5%	3	0%	0	2%	3
Neutral	7%	4	8%	6	7%	10
Mostly	28%	16	8%	6	16%	22
Extremely	56%	32	85%	66	73%	98
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100.0	135
Satisfied With Hearing						
Not at all	16%	9	17%	13	16%	22
Not very	2%	1	3%	2	2%	3
Neutral	9%	5	10%	8	10%	13
Mostly	14%	8	12%	9	13%	17
Extremely	30%	17	47%	37	40%	54
Missing	30%	17	12%	9	19%	26
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Surprised by What Happened						
Not at all	26%	15	41%	32	35%	47
Not very	14%	8	6%	5	10%	13
Neutral	5%	3	12%	9	9%	12
Mostly	11%	6	8%	6	9%	12
Extremely	12%	7	22%	17	18%	24
Missing	32%	18	12%	9	20%	27
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Able to Tell Judge Everything Needed to Make a Decision						
Not at all	9%	5	12%	9	10%	14
Not very	4%	2	5%	4	4%	6
Neutral	4%	2	5%	4	4%	6
Mostly	25%	14	13%	10	18%	24
Extremely	28%	16	53%	41	42%	57
Missing	32%	18	13%	10	21%	28
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Judge's Decision Was Fair						
Not at all	7%	4	6%	5	7%	9
Not very	4%	2	4%	3	4%	5
Neutral	5%	3	3%	2	4%	5
Mostly	14%	8	6%	5	10%	13
Extremely	33%	19	59%	46	48%	65
Missing	37%	21	22%	17	28%	38
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Judge Would Rule Differently If Had a Lawyer						
Yes	19%	11	22%	17	21%	28
No	44%	25	62%	48	54%	73
Missing	37%	21	17%	13	25%	34
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Receive a Court Order						
Yes	51%	29	49%	38	50%	67
No	39%	22	47%	37	44%	59
Missing	11%	6	4%	3	7%	9
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Understand the Order						
Yes	51%	29	42%	33	46%	62
No	0%	0	4%	3	2%	3
Missing	49%	28	54%	42	52%	70
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Speak a Language Other Than English at Home						
Yes	37%	21	30%	23	33%	44
No	61%	35	71%	55	67%	90
Missing	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Language Spoken						
Not specified	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
French	0%	0	3%	2	2%	2
French and Spanish	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Hmong	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1
Irish	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Italian	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Korean	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Laotian	0%	0	2%	1	1%	1
Punjabi	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Sign	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Spanish	25%	14	21%	16	22%	30
Spanish and Japanese	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1
Tagalog	0%	0	3%	2	2%	2
Thai and Burmese	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Missing	61%	35	71%	55	67%	90
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Race/Ethnicity						
African American	9%	5	23%	18	17%	23
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	3	6%	5	6%	8
Hispanic/Latino	32%	18	23%	18	27%	36
Native American/ Eskimo/Aleut	7%	4	1%	1	4%	5
White, non-Hispanic	44%	25	41%	32	42%	57
Other	4%	2	5%	4	4%	6
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Gender						
Male	33%	19	54%	42	45%	61
Female	65%	37	45%	35	53%	72
Missing	2%	1	1%	1	2%	2
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Number of Children Under 19 in Household						
None	30%	17	54%	42	44%	59
One	19%	11	17%	13	18%	24
Two	26%	15	14%	11	19%	26
Three	14%	8	9%	7	11%	15
Four or more	11%	6	6%	5	8%	11
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Highest Level of School Completed						
4th grade or less	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
5th to 8th grade	0%	0	4%	3	2%	3
9th to 11th grade	7%	4	9%	7	8%	11
High school diploma or GED	25%	14	21%	16	22%	30
Some college	28%	16	40%	31	35%	47
Associate degree	14%	8	4%	3	8%	11
Bachelor's degree	14%	8	12%	9	13%	17
Graduate degree	7%	4	6%	5	7%	9
Missing	4%	2	5%	4	4%	6
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Heard of Center						
Yes	26%	15	42%	33	36%	48
No	32%	18	54%	42	44%	60
Missing	42%	24	4%	3	20%	27
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Received Help From Center						
Yes	25%	14	33%	26	30%	40
No	18%	10	27%	21	23%	31
Missing	58%	33	40%	31	47%	64
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Case Type						
Family law	54%	31	28%	22	39%	53
Civil harassment	12%	7	22%	17	18%	24
Small claims	18%	10	23%	18	21%	28
Unlawful detainer	7%	4	18%	14	13%	18
Other	9%	5	9%	7	9%	12
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135
Number of Times Been to Court Before for This Case						
None	23%	13	44%	34	35%	47
One	33%	19	23%	18	27%	37
Two	16%	9	9%	7	12%	16
Three	12%	7	13%	10	13%	17
Four or more	16%	9	12%	9	13%	18
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

Exhibit F.1 (continued)

	Year One		Year Two		Merged	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Number of Times Been to Court Before for Any Other Case						
None	53%	30	36%	28	43%	58
One	11%	6	21%	16	16%	22
Two	9%	5	9%	7	9%	12
Three	2%	1	8%	6	5%	7
Four or more	26%	15	27%	21	27%	36
Total	100%	57	100%	78	100%	135

**Exhibit F.2
Center by Case Type**

Case Type	Center	%	N
Family law	Butte/Glenn/Tehama	43%	23
	Contra Costa	28%	15
	Fresno	28%	15
	San Francisco	0%	0
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Butte/Glenn/Tehama	0%	0
	Contra Costa	0%	0
	Fresno	0%	0
	San Francisco	100%	24
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Butte/Glenn/Tehama	39%	11
	Contra Costa	50%	14
	Fresno	11%	3
	San Francisco	0%	0
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Butte/Glenn/Tehama	0%	0
	Contra Costa	0%	0
	Fresno	44%	8
	San Francisco	56%	10
	Total	100%	18
Other	Butte/Glenn/Tehama	8%	1
	Contra Costa	25%	3
	Fresno	0%	0
	San Francisco	67%	8
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.3
Language in Which Interview Was Conducted by Case Type

Case Type	Language	%	N
Family law	English	94%	50
	Spanish	6%	3
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	English	92%	22
	Spanish	8%	2
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	English	93%	26
	Spanish	7%	2
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	English	100%	18
	Spanish	0%	0
	Total	100%	18
Other	English	100%	12
	Spanish	0%	0
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.4
Case Subtype by Case Type**

Case Type	Case Subtype	%	N
Family law	Child custody	19%	10
	Child support	23%	12
	Divorce	25%	13
	Domestic violence/restraining order	34%	18
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Civil harassment	100%	24
Small claims	Small claims	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Unlawful detainer	100%	18
Other	Guardianship	25%	3
	Name change	67%	8
	Other	8%	1
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.5
Party by Case Type**

Case Type	Party	%	N
Family law	Plaintiff or petitioner	59%	31
	Defendant or respondent	42%	22
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Plaintiff or petitioner	75%	18
	Defendant or respondent	25%	6
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Plaintiff or petitioner	46%	13
	Defendant or respondent	54%	15
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Plaintiff or petitioner	17%	3
	Defendant or respondent	83%	15
	Total	100%	18
Other	Plaintiff or petitioner	75%	9
	Defendant or respondent	25%	3
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.6
First Time Representing Self by Case Type**

Case Type	First Time Representing Yourself in Court	%	N
Family law	Yes	45%	24
	No	55%	29
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	58%	14
	No	42%	10
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	59%	16
	No	41%	11
	Total	100%	27
Unlawful detainer	Yes	78%	14
	No	22%	4
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	67%	8
	No	33%	4
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.7
Ever Had Legal Representation by Case Type**

Case Type	Ever Have a Lawyer Represent You in Court	%	N
Family law	Yes	42%	22
	No	59%	31
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	29%	7
	No	71%	17
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	32%	9
	No	68%	19
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	44%	8
	No	56%	10
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	50%	6
	No	50%	6
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.8
Reason for Representing Self by Case Type

Case Type	Why Did You Decide to Represent Yourself?	%	N
Family law	I cannot afford a lawyer	60%	32
	I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	2%	1
	I do not know if I need a lawyer	4%	2
	Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0
	I choose to represent myself	26%	14
	Other	8%	4
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	I cannot afford a lawyer	38%	9
	I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	17%	4
	I do not know if I need a lawyer	13%	3
	Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0
	I choose to represent myself	13%	3
	Other	21%	5
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	I cannot afford a lawyer	29%	8
	I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	4%	1
	I do not know if I need a lawyer	4%	1
	Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0
	I choose to represent myself	14%	4
	Other	50%	14
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	I cannot afford a lawyer	33%	6
	I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	11%	2
	I do not know if I need a lawyer	0%	0
	Legal Aid cannot help me	6%	1
	I choose to represent myself	28%	5
	Other	22%	4
	Total	100%	18
Other	I cannot afford a lawyer	17%	2
	I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	0%	0
	I do not know if I need a lawyer	8%	1
	Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0
	I choose to represent myself	58%	7
	Other	17%	2
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.9
Perception of Preparedness for Hearing by Case Type**

Case Type	How Prepared Did You Feel for Hearing?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	9%	5
	Not very	6%	3
	Neutral	26%	14
	Mostly	21%	11
	Extremely	38%	20
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	29%	7
	Mostly	25%	6
	Extremely	46%	11
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	11%	3
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	21%	6
	Mostly	25%	7
	Extremely	43%	12
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	6%	1
	Not very	11%	2
	Neutral	22%	4
	Mostly	22%	4
	Extremely	39%	7
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	8%	1
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	25%	3
	Mostly	8%	1
	Extremely	58%	7
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.10
Perception of Treatment by Judge by Case Type**

Case Type	Did Judge Treat You With Respect?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	6%	3
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	6%	3
	Mostly	21%	11
	Extremely	68%	36
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	4%	1
	Mostly	21%	5
	Extremely	75%	18
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	18%	5
	Extremely	79%	22
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	6%	1
	Not very	6%	1
	Neutral	6%	1
	Mostly	22%	4
	Extremely	56%	10
	Missing	6%	1
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	8%	1
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	8%	1
	Extremely	83%	10
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.11
Perception of Treatment by Court Clerk and Staff by Case Type

Case Type	Did Court Clerk and Staff Treat You With Respect?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	4%	2
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	4%	2
	Mostly	26%	14
	Extremely	66%	35
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	8%	2
	Neutral	4%	1
	Mostly	17%	4
	Extremely	71%	17
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	18%	5
	Extremely	75%	21
	Missing	4%	1
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	6%	1
	Mostly	33%	6
	Extremely	61%	11
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	8%	1
	Neutral	8%	1
	Mostly	8%	1
	Extremely	67%	8
	Missing	8%	1
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.12
Understanding of Words by Judge and Other Persons by Case Type

Case Type	Did You Understand Words Used by Judge and Other Persons?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	2%	1
	Not very	2%	1
	Neutral	11%	6
	Mostly	23%	12
	Extremely	62%	33
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	8%	2
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	4%	1
	Extremely	88%	21
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	4%	1
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	7%	2
	Mostly	11%	3
	Extremely	79%	22
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	11%	2
	Mostly	28%	5
	Extremely	61%	11
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	8%	1
	Extremely	92%	11
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.13
Satisfaction With Hearing by Case Type**

Case Type	Were You Satisfied With Hearing?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	23%	12
	Not very	4%	2
	Neutral	13%	7
	Mostly	15%	8
	Extremely	28%	15
	Missing	17%	9
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	25%	6
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	4%	1
	Extremely	54%	13
	Missing	17%	4
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	7%	2
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	14%	4
	Mostly	7%	2
	Extremely	36%	10
	Missing	32%	9
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	11%	2
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	11%	2
	Mostly	33%	6
	Extremely	39%	7
	Missing	6%	1
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	75%	9
	Missing	25%	3
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.14
Level of Surprise With Hearing by Case Type**

Case Type	Were You Surprised by What Happened?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	28%	15
	Not very	13%	7
	Neutral	9%	5
	Mostly	17%	9
	Extremely	13%	7
	Missing	19%	10
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	33%	8
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	17%	4
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	29%	7
	Missing	17%	4
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	25%	7
	Not very	7%	2
	Neutral	7%	2
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	29%	8
	Missing	32%	9
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	44%	8
	Not very	17%	3
	Neutral	6%	1
	Mostly	17%	3
	Extremely	11%	2
	Missing	6%	1
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	75%	9
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	25%	3
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.15
Ability to Communicate With Judge by Case Type**

Case Type	Were You Able to Tell Judge Everything Needed to Make a Decision?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	17%	9
	Not very	8%	4
	Neutral	4%	2
	Mostly	23%	12
	Extremely	32%	17
	Missing	17%	9
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	8%	2
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	13%	3
	Mostly	21%	5
	Extremely	42%	10
	Missing	13%	3
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	4%	1
	Not very	4%	1
	Neutral	4%	1
	Mostly	7%	2
	Extremely	50%	14
	Missing	32%	9
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	11%	2
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	28%	5
	Mostly	44%	8
	Extremely	17%	3
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	67%	8
	Missing	33%	4
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.16
Fairness of Judge's Decision by Case Type**

Case Type	Was Judge's Decision Fair?	%	N
Family law	Not at all	8%	4
	Not very	6%	3
	Neutral	9%	5
	Mostly	19%	10
	Extremely	34%	18
	Missing	25%	13
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Not at all	13%	3
	Not very	8%	2
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	63%	15
	Missing	17%	4
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Not at all	4%	1
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	7%	2
	Extremely	36%	10
	Missing	54%	15
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Not at all	6%	1
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	6%	1
	Extremely	72%	13
	Missing	17%	3
	Total	100%	18
Other	Not at all	0%	0
	Not very	0%	0
	Neutral	0%	0
	Mostly	0%	0
	Extremely	75%	9
	Missing	25%	3
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.17
Perception of Need for Lawyer by Case Type

Case Type	Would Judge Have Ruled Differently If You Had a Lawyer?	%	N
Family law	Yes	30%	16
	No	47%	25
	Missing	23%	12
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	8%	2
	No	71%	17
	Missing	21%	5
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	11%	3
	No	50%	14
	Missing	39%	11
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	39%	7
	No	50%	9
	Missing	11%	2
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	0%	0
	No	67%	8
	Missing	33%	4
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.18
Received a Court Order by Case Type

Case Type	Received a Court Order	%	N
Family law	Yes	60%	32
	No	38%	20
	Missing	2%	1
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	50%	12
	No	46%	11
	Missing	4%	1
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	21%	6
	No	71%	20
	Missing	7%	2
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	39%	7
	No	33%	6
	Missing	28%	5
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	83%	10
	No	17%	2
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.19
Understanding of Court Order by Case Type

Case Type	Did You Understand the Court Order?	%	N
Family law	Yes	57%	30
	No	2%	1
	Missing	42%	22
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	46%	11
	No	4%	1
	Missing	50%	12
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	21%	6
	No	0%	0
	Missing	79%	22
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	28%	5
	No	6%	1
	Missing	67%	12
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	83%	10
	No	0%	0
	Missing	17%	2
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.20
Language Other Than English Spoken at Home by Case Type

Case Type	Do You Speak a Language Other Than English at Home?	%	N
Family law	Yes	40%	21
	No	59%	31
	Missing	2%	1
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	38%	9
	No	63%	15
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	14%	4
	No	86%	24
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	17%	3
	No	83%	15
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	58%	7
	No	42%	5
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.21
Race/Ethnicity by Case Type

Case Type	Race/Ethnicity	%	N
Family law	African American	9%	5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	2
	Hispanic/Latino	36%	19
	Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	8%	4
	White non-Hispanic	43%	23
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	African American	21%	5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	2
	Hispanic/Latino	25%	6
	Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	4%	1
	White non-Hispanic	38%	9
	Other	4%	1
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	African American	25%	7
	Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	1
	Hispanic/Latino	14%	4
	Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	0%	0
	White non-Hispanic	50%	14
	Other	7%	2
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	African American	28%	5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	1
	Hispanic/Latino	17%	3
	Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	0%	0
	White non-Hispanic	33%	6
	Other	17%	3
	Total	100%	18
Other	African American	8%	1
	Asian/Pacific Islander	17%	2
	Hispanic/Latino	33%	4
	Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	0%	0
	White non-Hispanic	42%	5
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.22
Gender by Case Type**

Case Type	Gender	%	N
Family law	Male	32%	17
	Female	66%	35
	Missing	2%	1
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Male	50%	12
	Female	50%	12
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Male	50%	14
	Female	50%	14
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Male	67%	12
	Female	33%	6
	Total	100%	18
Other	Male	50%	6
	Female	42%	5
	Missing	8%	1
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.23
Number of Children by Case Type

Case Type	Number of Children Under 19 in Household	%	N
Family law	None	25%	13
	One	21%	11
	Two	25%	13
	Three	17%	9
	Four	8%	4
	Five	2%	1
	Seven	2%	1
	Nine	2%	1
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	None	83%	20
	One	4%	1
	Two	8%	2
	Nine	4%	1
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	None	36%	10
	One	29%	8
	Two	18%	5
	Three	11%	3
	Four	7%	2
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	None	67%	12
	One	6%	1
	Two	17%	3
	Three	6%	1
	Nine	6%	1
	Total	100%	18
Other	None	33%	4
	One	25%	3
	Two	25%	3
	Three	17%	2
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.24
Education by Case Type**

Case Type	Highest Level of School Completed	%	N
Family law	4th grade or less	0%	0
	5th to 8th grade	2%	1
	9th to 11th grade	6%	3
	High school diploma or GED	36%	19
	Some college	34%	18
	Associate degree	9%	5
	Bachelor's degree	8%	4
	Graduate degree	2%	1
	Missing	4%	2
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	4th grade or less	0%	0
	5th to 8th grade	4%	1
	9th to 11th grade	8%	2
	High school diploma or GED	8%	2
	Some college	38%	9
	Associate degree	0%	0
	Bachelor's degree	21%	5
	Graduate degree	17%	4
	Missing	4%	1
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	4th grade or less	4%	1
	5th to 8th grade	4%	1
	9th to 11th grade	11%	3
	High school diploma or GED	11%	3
	Some college	32%	9
	Associate degree	18%	5
	Bachelor's degree	11%	3
	Graduate degree	0%	0
	Missing	11%	3
	Total	100%	28

Exhibit F.24 (continued)

Case Type	Highest Level of School Completed	%	N
Unlawful detainee	4th grade or less	0%	0
	5th to 8th grade	0%	0
	9th to 11th grade	6%	1
	High school diploma or GED	28%	5
	Some college	33%	6
	Associate degree	6%	1
	Bachelor's degree	22%	4
	Graduate degree	6%	1
	Total	100%	18
Other	4th grade or less	0%	0
	5th to 8 th grade	0%	0
	9th to 11th grade	17%	2
	High school diploma or GED	8%	1
	Some college	42%	5
	Associate degree	0%	0
	Bachelor's degree	8%	1
	Graduate degree	25%	3
	Total	100%	12

Exhibit F.25
Self-Help Center Assistance by Case Type

Case Type	Received Help From Center?	%	N
Family law	Yes	23%	12
	No	25%	13
	Missing	53%	28
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	Yes	67%	16
	No	25%	6
	Missing	8%	2
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	Yes	0%	0
	No	18%	5
	Missing	82%	23
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	Yes	33%	6
	No	33%	6
	Missing	33%	6
	Total	100%	18
Other	Yes	50%	6
	No	8%	1
	Missing	42%	5
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.26
Prior Court Appearances for This Case by Case Type**

Case Type	Number of Times in Court Before for This Case	%	N
Family law	None	15%	8
	One	19%	10
	Two	21%	11
	Three	19%	10
	Four or more	26%	14
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	None	54%	13
	One	29%	7
	Two	4%	1
	Three	13%	3
	Four or more	0%	0
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	None	29%	8
	One	46%	13
	Two	14%	4
	Three	4%	1
	Four or more	7%	2
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	None	72%	13
	One	22%	4
	Two	0%	0
	Three	6%	1
	Four or more	0%	0
	Total	100%	18
Other	None	42%	5
	One	25%	3
	Two	0%	0
	Three	17%	2
	Four or more	17%	2
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.27
Other Prior Court Appearances by Case Type**

Case Type	Number of Times in Court Before for Any Other Case	%	N
Family law	None	49%	26
	One	13%	7
	Two	11%	6
	Three	4%	2
	Four or more	23%	12
	Total	100%	53
Civil harassment	None	38%	9
	One	21%	5
	Two	8%	2
	Three	13%	3
	Four or more	21%	5
	Total	100%	24
Small claims	None	32%	9
	One	18%	5
	Two	11%	3
	Three	4%	1
	Four or more	36%	10
	Total	100%	28
Unlawful detainer	None	50%	9
	One	11%	2
	Two	6%	1
	Three	6%	1
	Four or more	28%	5
	Total	100%	18
Other	None	42%	5
	One	25%	3
	Two	0%	0
	Three	0%	0
	Four or more	33%	4
	Total	100%	12

**Exhibit F.28
Case Type by Center Assistance**

Case Type	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Family law	30%	12	42%	28	37%	40
Civil harassment	40%	16	12%	8	22%	24
Small claims	0%	0	22%	15	14%	15
Unlawful detainer	15%	6	18%	12	17%	18
Other	15%	6	6%	4	9%	10
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.29
Party by Center Assistance**

Party	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Plaintiff or petitioner	63%	25	48%	32	53%	57
Defendant or respondent	38%	15	52%	35	47%	50
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.30
First Time Representing Self by Center Assistance**

First Time Representing Yourself in Court	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	50%	20	62%	41	58%	61
No	50%	20	38%	25	42%	45
Total	100%	40	100%	66	100%	106

Exhibit F.31
Prior Court Appearances for This Case by Center Assistance

Number of Times in Court Before for This Case	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
None	43%	17	33%	22	36%	39
One	20%	8	27%	18	24%	26
Two	13%	5	9%	6	10%	11
Three	10%	4	18%	12	15%	16
Four or more	15%	6	13%	9	14%	15
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

Exhibit F.32
Other Prior Court Appearances by Center Assistance

Number of Times in Court Before for Any Other Case	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
None	40%	16	46%	31	44%	47
One	20%	8	15%	10	17%	18
Two	8%	3	8%	5	8%	8
Three	10%	4	3%	2	3%	6
Four or more	23%	9	28%	19	28%	28
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

Exhibit F.33
Ever Had Legal Representation by Center Assistance

Ever Have a Lawyer Represent You in Court	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	43%	17	39%	26	40%	43
No	58%	23	61%	41	60%	64
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.34
Reason for Representing Self by Center Assistance**

Why Did You Decide to Represent Yourself?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
I cannot afford a lawyer	50%	20	36%	24	41%	44
I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer	10%	4	5%	3	7%	7
Legal Aid cannot help me	0%	0	2%	1	1%	1
I do not know if I need a lawyer	8%	3	5%	3	6%	6
I choose to represent myself	15%	6	28%	19	23%	25
Other	18%	7	25%	17	22%	24
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.35
Perception of Preparedness for Hearing by Center Assistance**

How Prepared Did You Feel for Hearing?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	3%	1	9%	6	7%	7
Not very	8%	3	2%	1	4%	4
Neutral	25%	10	28%	19	27%	29
Mostly	23%	9	16%	11	19%	20
Extremely	43%	17	45%	30	44%	47
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.36
Perception of Treatment by Judge by Center Assistance**

Did Judge Treat You With Respect?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	5%	2	5%	3	5%	5
Not very	0%	0	2%	1	1%	1
Neutral	3%	1	5%	3	4%	4
Mostly	10%	4	15%	10	13%	14
Extremely	82%	32	75%	50	77%	82
Total	100%	39	100%	67	100%	106

Exhibit F.37
Perception of Treatment by Court Clerk and Staff by Center Assistance

Did Court Clerk and Staff Treat You With Respect?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	0%	0	2%	1	1%	1
Not very	8%	3	2%	1	4%	4
Neutral	5%	2	3%	2	4%	4
Mostly	21%	8	15%	10	17%	18
Extremely	67%	26	79%	53	75%	79
Total	100%	39	100%	67	100%	106

Exhibit F.38
Understanding of Words Used by Judge and Other Persons by Center Assistance

Did You Understand Words Used by Judge and Other Persons?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	0%	0	2%	1	1%	1
Not very	5%	2	2%	1	3%	3
Neutral	8%	3	6%	4	7%	7
Mostly	10%	4	9%	6	9%	10
Extremely	78%	31	82%	55	80%	86
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

Exhibit F.39
Satisfaction With Hearing by Center Assistance

Were You Satisfied With Hearing?	Received Help from Center		Did Not Receive Help from Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	28%	9	19%	11	22%	20
Not very	0%	0	3%	2	2%	2
Neutral	9%	3	12%	7	11%	10
Mostly	6%	2	17%	10	13%	12
Extremely	56%	18	48%	28	51%	46
Total	100%	32	100%	58	100%	90

**Exhibit F.40
Level of Surprise With Hearing by Center Assistance**

Were You Surprised by What Happened?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	47%	15	47%	27	47%	42
Not very	16%	5	7%	4	10%	9
Neutral	13%	4	12%	7	12%	11
Mostly	3%	1	12%	7	9%	8
Extremely	22%	7	22%	13	22%	20
Total	100%	32	100%	58	100%	90

**Exhibit F.41
Ability to Communicate With Judge by Center Assistance**

Were You Able to Tell Judge Everything Needed to Make a Decision?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	10%	3	17%	10	15%	13
Not very	0%	0	9%	5	6%	5
Neutral	3%	1	5%	3	5%	4
Mostly	23%	7	19%	11	20%	18
Extremely	63%	19	50%	29	55%	48
Total	100%	30	100%	58	100%	88

**Exhibit F.42
Fairness of Judge's Decision by Center Assistance**

Was Judge's Decision Fair?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not at all	10%	3	10%	5	10%	8
Not very	3%	1	6%	3	5%	4
Neutral	3%	1	6%	3	5%	4
Mostly	3%	1	12%	6	9%	7
Extremely	79%	23	67%	35	72%	58
Total	100%	29	100%	52	100%	81

Exhibit F.43
Perception of Need for Lawyer by Center Assistance

Would Judge Have Ruled Differently If You Had a Lawyer?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	20%	6	36%	20	31%	26
No	80%	24	64%	35	69%	59
Total	100%	30	100%	55	100%	85

Exhibit F.44
Received a Court Order by Center Assistance

Received a Court Order	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	56%	20	55%	35	55%	55
No	44%	16	45%	29	45%	45
Total	100%	36	100%	64	100%	100

Exhibit F.45
Understanding of Court Order by Center Assistance

Did You Understand the Court Order? (if order received)	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	----	16	100%	34	94%	50
No	----	3	0%	0	6%	3
Total	----	19	100%	34	100%	53

Exhibit F.46
Language Other Than English Spoken at Home by Center Assistance

Do You Speak a Language Other Than English at Home?	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	28%	11	36%	24	33%	35
No	72%	28	64%	43	67%	71
Total	100%	39	100%	67	100%	106

**Exhibit F.47
Race/Ethnicity by Center Assistance**

Race/Ethnicity	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
African-American	20%	8	18%	12	19%	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	2	8%	5	7%	7
Hispanic/Latino	23%	9	21%	14	22%	23
Native American/Eskimo/Aleut	3%	1	5%	3	4%	4
White non-Hispanic	45%	18	45%	30	45%	48
Other	5%	2	5%	3	5%	5
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

**Exhibit F.48
Gender by Center Assistance**

Gender	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Male	50%	19	46%	31	48%	50
Female	50%	19	54%	36	52%	55
Total	100%	38	100%	67	100%	105

**Exhibit F.49
Number of Children by Center Assistance**

Number of Children Under 19 in Household	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
None	63%	25	42%	28	50%	53
One	15%	6	18%	12	17%	18
Two	10%	4	19%	13	16%	17
Three	10%	4	10%	7	10%	11
Four or more	3%	1	10%	7	8%	8
Total	100%	40	100%	67	100%	107

Exhibit F.50
Education by Center Assistance

Highest Level of School Completed	Received Help From Center		Did Not Receive Help From Center		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
No high school diploma	8%	3	14%	9	11%	12
High school diploma or GED	28%	11	17%	11	21%	22
Some college	30%	12	45%	29	39%	41
College degree	35%	14	25%	16	29%	30
Total	100%	40	100%	65	100%	105

Appendix G

Customer Satisfaction Data

**Exhibit G.1
Butte/Glenn/Tehama County Customer Survey: Overall Satisfaction**

	Understand My Situation Better		Less Worried About My Situation		Less Confused About How Court Works		Know More About How Laws Work		Know What I Need to Do Next	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	88%	63	58%	42	53%	38	50%	36	63%	45
Agree	13%	9	35%	25	44%	32	43%	31	35%	25
Disagree	0%	0	7%	5	1%	1	4%	3	1%	1
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	1%	1	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1
Total	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72

	Staff Seemed Knowledgeable		Staff Explained Things Clearly		Staff Treated Me With Respect		Would Recommend to Friends	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	79%	57	81%	58	81%	58	88%	63
Agree	19%	14	18%	13	17%	12	11%	8
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	1%	1	1%	1	3%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72

**Exhibit G.2
Butte/Glenn/Tehama County Customer Survey: Satisfaction With Specific Services**

	Help With forms		Written Instructions for Forms		Staff to Answer Questions		Interpretation/ Translation Assistance		Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	94%	68	64%	46	94%	68	50%	36	49%	35
Somewhat helpful	3%	2	4%	3	4%	3	3%	2	8%	6
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	17%	12	0%	0	33%	24	29%	21
Missing	3%	2	15%	11	1%	1	14%	10	14%	10
Total	100%	72	100.0%	72	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72

	Help Following Up With Court Orders		Educational Materials		Information on Where to Get More Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	40%	29	35%	25	47%	34
Somewhat helpful	13%	9	7%	5	11%	8
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	32%	23	43%	31	26%	19
Missing	15%	11	15%	11	15%	11
Total	100%	72	100%	72	100%	72

**Exhibit G.3
Contra Costa County Customer Survey: Overall Satisfaction**

	Understand My Situation Better		Less Worried About My Situation		Less Confused About How Court Works		Know More About How Laws Work		Know What I Need to Do Next	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	2
Agree	N/A	6	N/A	6	N/A	7	N/A	7	N/A	6
Disagree	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Strongly disagree	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not applicable	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1
Missing	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Total	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9

	Helpful to Talk to Others		Staff Seemed Knowledgeable		Staff Explained Things Clearly		Staff Treated Me With Respect		Got Into Workshop in Timely Manner	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	N/A	3	N/A	4	N/A	5	N/A	5	N/A	3
Agree	N/A	5	N/A	4	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	5
Disagree	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Strongly disagree	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not applicable	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1
Missing	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Total	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9

Exhibit G.3 (continued)

	Would Recommend to Friends	
	%	N
Strongly agree	N/A	5
Agree	N/A	3
Disagree	N/A	0
Strongly disagree	N/A	0
Not applicable	N/A	1
Missing	N/A	0
Total	N/A	9

Exhibit G.4
 Contra Costa County Customer Survey: Ratings of Videoconferencing Equipment and Facilities

	Sound Quality		Picture Quality		Room Size		Seating		Technical Assistance	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
1 (poor)	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
2	N/A	0	N/A	2	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
3	N/A	3	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A	4	N/A	0
4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	1	N/A	6
5 (excellent)	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	3
Missing	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Total	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9
Average	3.9		3.7		3.0		2.9		3.8	

**Exhibit G.5
Contra Costa County Customer Survey: Satisfaction With Specific Services**

	Help With Forms		Written Instructions for Forms		Staff to Answer Questions		Interpretation/ Translation Assistance	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	N/A	5	N/A	6	N/A	6	N/A	1
Somewhat helpful	N/A	3	N/A	0	N/A	2	N/A	0
Not very helpful	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not at all helpful	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not applicable	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A	1	N/A	7
Missing	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	1
Total	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9

	Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing		Help Following Up With Court Orders		Educational Materials		Information on Where to Get More Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A	1
Somewhat helpful	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	2	N/A	7
Not very helpful	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not at all helpful	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
Not applicable	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	3	N/A	1
Missing	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	0
Total	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	9

**Exhibit G.6
Fresno County Customer Survey: Overall Satisfaction**

	Understand My Situation Better		Less Worried About My Situation		Less Confused About How Court Works		Know More About How Laws Work		Know What I Need to Do Next	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	80%	35	75%	33	71%	31	66%	29	71%	31
Agree	21%	9	25%	11	30%	13	32%	14	25%	11
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1	5%	2
Total	100%	44	100.0%	44	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44

	Staff Seemed Knowledgeable		Staff Explained Things Clearly		Staff Treated Me With Respect		Would Recommend to Friends	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	84%	37	82%	36	82%	36	82%	36
Agree	14%	6	18%	8	18%	8	16%	7
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	2%	1	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1
Total	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44

**Exhibit G.7
Fresno County Customer Survey: Satisfaction With Specific Services**

	Help With Forms		Written Instructions for Forms		Staff to Answer Questions		Interpretation/ Translation Assistance		Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	89%	39	77%	34	93%	41	68%	30	32%	14
Somewhat helpful	7%	3	14%	6	5%	2	5%	2	9%	4
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1
Not applicable	2%	1	7%	3	0%	0	21%	9	41%	18
Missing	2%	1	2%	1	2%	1	7%	3	16%	7
Total	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44	100.0%	44

	Help Following Up With Court Orders		Educational Materials		Information on Where to Get More Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	34%	15	16%	7	43%	19
Somewhat helpful	9%	4	7%	3	14%	6
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	48%	21	61%	27	30%	13
Missing	9%	4	16%	7	14%	6
Total	100%	44	100%	44	100%	44

**Exhibit G.8
San Francisco County Customer Survey: Overall Satisfaction**

	Understand My Situation Better		Less Worried About My Situation		Less Confused About How Court Works		Know More About How Laws Work		Know What I Need to Do Next	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	58%	60	39%	40	38%	39	37%	38	49%	51
Agree	40%	42	46%	48	50%	52	52%	54	49%	51
Disagree	0%	0	10%	10	9%	9	8%	8	1%	1
Strongly disagree	1%	1	3%	3	1%	1	1%	1	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	1%	1	3%	3	3%	3	3%	3	1%	1
Total	100%	104	100%	104	100%	104	100%	104	100%	104

	Staff Seemed Knowledgeable		Staff Explained Things Clearly		Staff Treated Me With Respect		Would Recommend to Friends	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Strongly agree	68%	71	64%	67	72%	75	69%	72
Agree	30%	31	32%	33	25%	26	29%	30
Disagree	0%	0	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Missing	2%	2	3%	3	2%	2	1%	1
Total	100%	104	100%	104	100%	104	100%	104

**Exhibit G.9
San Francisco County Customer Survey: Satisfaction With Specific Services**

	Help With Forms		Written Instructions for Forms		Staff to Answer Questions		Interpretation/ Translation Assistance		Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	64.4%	67	51.0%	53	71.2%	74	30.8%	32	45.2%	47
Somewhat helpful	11.5%	12	16.3%	17	16.3%	17	8.7%	9	12.5%	13
Not very helpful	0.0%	0	2.9%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	1.9%	2
Not at all helpful	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	1.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Not applicable	18.3%	19	22.1%	23	6.7%	7	48.1%	50	27.9%	29
Missing	5.8%	6	7.7%	8	4.8%	5	12.5%	13	12.5%	13
Total	100.0%	104	100.0%	104	100.0%	104	100.0%	104	100.0%	104

	Help Following Up With Court Orders		Educational Materials		Information on Where to Get More Help	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Very helpful	27.9%	29	31.7%	33	46.2%	48
Somewhat helpful	11.5%	12	16.3%	17	14.4%	15
Not very helpful	1.0%	1	3.8%	4	0.0%	0
Not at all helpful	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	1.0%	1
Not applicable	44.2%	46	30.8%	32	24.0%	25
Missing	15.4%	16	17.3%	18	14.4%	15
Total	100.0%	104	100.0%	104	100.0%	104

**Exhibit G.10
Overall Satisfaction by Major Case Type**

	Family Law		Other Civil Law	
	%	N	%	N
Understand My Situation Better				
Strongly agree	80%	59	61%	51
Agree	20%	15	39%	33
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	74	100%	84
Less Worried About My Situation				
Strongly agree	65%%	48	41%	34
Agree	35%	26	43%	36
Disagree	0%	0	14%	12
Strongly disagree	0%	0	2%	2
Total	100%	74	100%	84
Less Confused About How Court Works				
Strongly agree	58%	43	41%	34
Agree	42%	31	48%	40
Disagree	0%	0	11%	9
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	74	100%	83
Know More About How Laws Work				
Strongly agree	57%	41	40%	33
Agree	43%	31	49%	41
Disagree	0%	0	10%	8
Strongly disagree	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	72	100%	83
Know What I Need to Do Next				
Strongly agree	69%	50	50%	42
Agree	32%	23	49%	41
Disagree	0%	0	1%	1
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	73	100%	84
Staff Seemed Knowledgeable				
Strongly agree	84%	61	71%	60
Agree	16%	12	29%	24
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	73	100%	84

Exhibit G.10 (continued)

	Family Law		Other Civil Law	
	%	N	%	N
Staff Explained Things Clearly				
Strongly agree	84%	62	66%	55
Agree	16%	12	33%	27
Disagree	0%	0	1%	1
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	74	100%	83
Staff treated me with respect				
Strongly Agree	82%	60	71%	60
Agree	18%	13	27%	23
Disagree	0%	0	1%	1
Strongly Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	73	100%	84
Would recommend to friends				
Strongly Agree	87%	64	66%	55
Agree	14%	10	33%	27
Disagree	0%	0	1%	1
Strongly Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	74	100%	83

**Exhibit G.11
Satisfaction With Specific Services by Major Case Type**

	Family Law		Other Civil Law	
	%	N	%	N
Help With Forms				
Very helpful	93%	67	86%	59
Somewhat helpful	7%	5	15%	10
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	72	100%	69
Written Instructions for Forms				
Very helpful	90%	55	72%	42
Somewhat helpful	10%	6	22%	13
Not very helpful	0%	0	5 %	3
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	61	100%	58
Staff to Answer Questions				
Very helpful	95%	69	80%	61
Somewhat helpful	6%	4	20%	15
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	73	100%	76
Interpretation or Translation Assistance				
Very helpful	95%	38	85%	29
Somewhat helpful	5%	2	15%	5
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	40	100%	34
Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing				
Very helpful	72%	26	71%	35
Somewhat helpful	25%	9	25%	12
Not very helpful	0%	0	4%	2
Not at all helpful	3%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	36	100%	49
Help Following Up on Court Orders				
Very helpful	78%	28	57%	20
Somewhat helpful	22%	8	40%	14
Not very helpful	0%	0	3%	1
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	36	100%	35

Exhibit G.11 (continued)

	Family Law		Other Civil Law	
	%	N	%	N
Educational Materials				
Very helpful	77%	20	56%	23
Somewhat helpful	23%	6	37%	15
Not very helpful	0%	0	7%	3
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	26	100%	41
Information on Where to Get More Help				
Very helpful	67%	33	71%	31
Somewhat helpful	33%	16	27%	12
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	2%	1
Total	100%	49	100%	44

Exhibit G.12
Overall Satisfaction by Service Delivery Method

	Drop-In		Workshop	
	%	N	%	N
Understand My Situation Better				
Strongly agree	71%	58	70%	60
Agree	29%	24	30%	26
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	82	100%	86
Less Worried About My Situation				
Strongly agree	60%	50	45%	38
Agree	30%	25	47%	40
Disagree	8%	7	7%	6
Strongly disagree	1%	1	1 %	1
Total	100%	83	100%	85
Less Confused About How Court Works				
Strongly agree	56%	45	42%	35
Agree	36%	29	55%	46
Disagree	9%	7	2%	2
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	81	100%	83
Know More About How Laws Work				
Strongly agree	51%	41	49%	42
Agree	40%	32	47%	40
Disagree	8%	6	4%	3
Strongly disagree	1%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	80	100%	85
Know What I Need to Do Next				
Strongly agree	61%	49	55%	47
Agree	38%	31	45%	38
Disagree	1%	1	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	81	100%	85
Staff Seemed Knowledgeable				
Strongly agree	77%	63	77%	65
Agree	23%	19	23%	19
Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	82	100%	84

Exhibit G.12 (continued)

	Drop-In		Workshop	
	%	N	%	N
Staff Explained Things Clearly				
Strongly agree	74%	61	79%	66
Agree	2%	21	21%	18
Disagree	1%	1	0%	0
Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	83	100%	84
Staff treated me with respect				
Strongly Agree	77%	64	80%	67
Agree	22%	18	20%	17
Disagree	1%	1	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	83	100%	84
Would recommend to friends				
Strongly Agree	78%	64	79%	67
Agree	21%	17	21%	18
Disagree	1%	1	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	82	100%	85

Exhibit G.13
Satisfaction With Specific Services by Service Delivery Method

	Drop-In		Workshop	
	%	N	%	N
Help With Forms				
Very helpful	95%	70	92%	65
Somewhat helpful	5%	4	9%	6
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	74	100%	71
Written Instructions for Forms				
Very helpful	84%	56	89%	48
Somewhat helpful	13%	9	11%	6
Not very helpful	3%	2	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	67	100%	54
Staff to Answer Questions				
Very helpful	90%	71	90%	73
Somewhat helpful	10%	8	10%	8
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	79	100%	81
Interpretation or Translation Assistance				
Very helpful	89%	41	100%	28
Somewhat helpful	11%	5	0%	0
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	46	100%	28
Help to Prepare for a Court Hearing				
Very helpful	78%	32	77%	39
Somewhat helpful	15%	6	24%	12
Not very helpful	5%	2	0%	0
Not at all helpful	2%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	41	100%	51
Help Following Up on Court Orders				
Very helpful	75%	30	66%	21
Somewhat helpful	23%	9	34%	11
Not very helpful	3%	1	0%	0
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	40	100%	32

Exhibit G.13 (continued)

	Family Law		Other Civil Law	
	%	N	%	N
Educational Materials				
Very helpful	70%	19	76%	34
Somewhat helpful	30%	8	22%	10
Not very helpful	0%	0	2%	1
Not at all helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	27	100%	45
Information on Where to Get More Help				
Very helpful	77%	34	70%	39
Somewhat helpful	21%	9	30%	17
Not very helpful	0%	0	0%	0
Not at all helpful	2%	1	0%	0
Total	100%	44	100%	56

Appendix H

San Francisco ACCESS Courtroom Referral

ACCESS Courtroom Referral

PLEASE TAKE THIS SLIP TO ROOM 208 AND SIGN IN TO GET HELP.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DEPT #: _____ CASE #: _____ PRIMARY LANGUAGE: _____

TYPE OF CASE: Small Claims Civil Harass. Name Change Eviction

ISSUE:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Improper naming of party |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs reissuance of OSC | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Order After Hearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not understand order | <input type="checkbox"/> Information on enforcing order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to republish OSC |

RESULT:

- MUST RETURN to Courtroom by _____
- Matter continued/reissued to _____
- Matter taken off calendar

Appendix I

**Los Angeles Telephone Interview
Respondent Agency Affiliations**

Los Angeles Telephone Interview Respondent Agency Affiliations

All About Family Law

Alliance for Children's Rights

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

Community Legal Services (three interview respondents from different offices)

El Rescate Legal

Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law

Inner City Law Center

Jackie Robinson Community Center

Jenesse Center, Inc.

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (two interview respondents from different offices)

Legal Aid Society of Orange County (oversight agency for Community Service in Southeast Los Angeles County)

Levitt and Quinn Family Law Center

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

Los Angeles Free Clinic

Los Angeles Housing Law Project

Public Counsel

Single Parents United n' Kids

Appendix J

**Fresno County Spanish Self-Help Center
Advisory Committee**

Fresno County Spanish Self-Help Center Advisory Committee

Honorary Gary Hoff
Superior Court of California
County of Fresno

Honorary Gary Orozco
Superior Court of California
County of Fresno

Chris Schneider
Central California Legal Services
Fresno, CA

Roger Palomino
Economic Opportunities Commission
Fresno, CA

Richard Duran
Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Fresno, CA

Paul Lerandean
Fresno County Bar Association
Fresno, CA

Jo Johnson
Fresno Madera Agency on Aging (Senior Research Center)
Fresno, CA

Dr. Mark Wilson
Cesar Chavez Vocational School
Fresno, CA

Victor Salazar
Registrar of Voters
County of Fresno

Appendix K

Data Collection Instruments

Self-Help Center Intake Form
Self-Help Center Service Tracking Form
Workshop Tracking Form
Self Represented Litigant in Court Observer Form
Post Hearing Interview Instrument
Los Angeles Baseline Telephone Interview Instrument for Providers
Los Angeles Follow-Up Telephone Interview Instrument for Providers
Customer Satisfaction Surveys
Court File Review Instruments
Pop-Up Web Site Intake Survey
Pop-Up Web Site Feedback Survey
Web Site User Testing Survey

SELF-HELP CENTER INTAKE FORM

We would like you to fill out this form for a research study that will provide the self-help center with information on how to improve services. For more information about the study please contact Berkeley Policy Associates at 510-465-7884.

Your personal identification information will remain confidential and will not be used in any data analysis or report. Your answers will not affect the services you receive from the self-help center or your case.

You may refuse to answer any or all of the questions.

Signature: _____

CUSTOMER INTAKE FORM

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Zip Code: _____

month / year

(1) Do you speak a language other than English at home?

No Yes

If yes, which language (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

Spanish

Tagalog

Cantonese

Vietnamese

Mandarin

Armenian

Russian

Other: _____

(2) What language would you prefer to receive self-help services in?

English

Russian

Spanish

Tagalog

Cantonese

Vietnamese

Mandarin

Other: _____

(3) You are:

Male Female

(4) How old are you? _____

(5) Your race/ethnic group is (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

African-American

Native American/Eskimo/Aleut

Asian/Pacific Islander

White, non-Hispanic

Hispanic/Latino

Other: _____

(6) How many children under 19 live in your household? _____

(7) Are you currently employed?

- No Yes, full time Yes, part time

If not, are you:

- Unemployed
 Retired
 Disabled, unable to work
 Not looking for work
 Other: _____

(8) Your total monthly household income (this includes all income sources), before taxes is:

- \$500 or less \$1,501-\$2,000
 \$501-\$1,000 \$2,001-\$2,500
 \$1,001-\$1,500 Over \$2,500

(9) The highest level of school you completed:

- 4th grade or less Some college
 5th to 8th grade Associates degree
 9th to 11th grade Bachelors degree
 High school graduate/GED Graduate degree

(10) You heard about the self-help center from (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Attorney Friend or family
 Bar association Judge/Commissioner
 Clerk's office Legal Aid/Legal Services
 Community Service Agency Newspaper/television/radio advertisement
 D.A./Local Child Support Agency Pamphlets/Written materials/Posters
 Family Court Services Other (please explain) _____
 Family Law Facilitator _____

(11) Have you tried to get help with this case before coming to the self-help center?

- No Yes

If yes, where did you try to get help? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Legal Aid Self-help books
 Private attorney The Internet
 Friend or relative Other (please explain): _____
 Paralegal _____
 Library

(12) Have you considered hiring a lawyer for this case?

- No Yes

(13) Why did you decide to represent yourself in this case? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- I cannot afford a lawyer I do not know if I need a lawyer
 I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer I choose to represent myself
 Legal Aid told me they could not help me Other (please explain): _____

SELF-HELP CENTER SERVICE TRACKING FORM

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Today's Date: _____ Date of Birth: _____ / _____

Case Number: _____ month / year

(1) TYPE OF CASE

• Family Law Matter

- Petitioner
- Respondent
- Other: _____

- Adoption
- Child Custody
- Child Support
- Divorce
- Domestic Violence/
Restraining Order
- Establishing Paternity
- Visitation
- Other: _____

• Landlord/Tenant Issues

- Landlord
- Tenant
- Other: _____

- Unlawful Detainer/Eviction
- Other: _____

• Probate

- Petitioner
- Objector
- Other: _____

- Conservatorship
- Guardianship
- Other: _____

• Civil

- Plaintiff
- Defendant
- Other: _____

- Civil Harassment
- Name Change
- Small Claims
- Other: _____

• Criminal

- Traffic
- Other _____

• Other: _____

SERVICE INFORMATION

(2) Contact Type (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual, Face-to Face | <input type="checkbox"/> Videoconferencing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop/Clinic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Computer Application/Software | <input type="checkbox"/> Written Correspondence (letters, email) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

(3) Services received (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance Completing Forms | <input type="checkbox"/> Order After Hearing/Judgment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of Court Orders | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Educational Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Document Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Procedural Information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forms Only | <input type="checkbox"/> Referrals to Other Providers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forms with Instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule Workshop Appointment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Translation/Interpretation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

(4) Has the user come to the self-help center to receive help for this case before?

- No Yes

If yes, why has she/he returned? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court appearance preparation workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs help understanding court order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Document review | <input type="checkbox"/> Next step in the process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs help with forms | <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to new papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has additional questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs access to an interpreter to help translate in court | |

(5) Referrals made (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

Legal Services

- Family Law Facilitator
 Lawyer Referral Service/ Private Attorney
 Legal Services
 Local Child Support Agency
 Public Defender
 Small Claims Advisor
 Other Legal Service: _____

Community Social Services

- Counseling Service
 DV Shelter/Advocate
 Government Service (e.g. FCS, CPS)
 Housing Services
 Mediation Service
 Substance Abuse Services
 Other Community Social Service: _____

NO REFERRALS MADE

(7) Service provided in:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog | _____ |

Staff Member's Initials: _____

Workshop Tracking Form

March 2004

County: _____

Title/Subject of Workshop: _____

Date of Workshop: _____

Location of Workshop

- Self-help center
- Courthouse
- Offsite (specify) _____

Type of Case being Discussed (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Family Law
 - Custody/visitation
 - Dissolution
 - Other family law (specify) _____
- Traffic
- Small claims
- Unlawful detainer
- Other (specify) _____

If this workshop addressed family law cases, please indicate which forms were covered during the workshop (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Petition, summons, UCCJEA
- Declaration of disclosure
- Request to enter default
- Income and expense declaration/supplemental financial declaration
- Declaration for default
- Notice of entry of judgment
- Attachment to judgment
- Other (specify) _____

Language Workshop *primarily* conducted in (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- English
- Spanish
- English presenter/Spanish interpreter
- English presenter/Other language interpreter (specify language)
- Other (specify) _____

Length of Workshop (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 30 minutes
- 1 hour
- 1.5 hours
- 2 hours
- 2.5 hours
- 3 hours
- More than 3 hours

Questions continue on the back →

Number of Attendees

Total Number of People Present: _____

For videoconference workshops:

Total number of attendees present at main site: _____

Total number of attendees at each satellite site (please specify each satellite site and the number at each) _____

Workshop Facilitation

Name of Person Leading Workshop: _____

Is this person:

- Center staff
- Center volunteer
- Other (specify) _____

Were other staff or volunteers available to assist during the workshop?

- Yes
- No

Were the assistant(s) any of the following (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)?

- Attorney
- Paralegal
- Interpreter
- Other (specify) _____
- Paid
- Volunteer

Services Received (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Legal and procedural information
- Hearing preparation
- Forms preparation
- Assistance with motions
- Video or other visual presentation
- Referrals/Where to go for more help
- Other (specify) _____

Workshop Format (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Lecture
- Question and answer
- One-on-one assistance
- Small group discussion/instruction
- Other (specify) _____

Was this a videoconferenced workshop?

- Yes
- No

Additional Comments:

Post Hearing Interview Instrument

A team of researchers from Berkeley Policy Associates/ NPC Research would like to ask you some questions about your experiences in court today to find out about ways to improve legal self-help services for people like you. The interview will take approximately 15 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary and will in no way affect your case. You may refuse to answer any or all questions. The researchers do not work for the court and the answers you provide will not be shared with the court. The information you provide during the interview, including your personal identification information, will remain confidential. This research is funded by the Judicial Council of California. If you have any questions about the research study please call Lee Ann Huang at 510-465-7884.

Please sign here if you have read the information above and agree to participate in the interview: _____

Post Hearing Interview Instrument

Self-represented litigant

Name: _____ Language Interview Conducted In: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Case Type: _____

Telephone number(s) (in case cannot complete interview at this time):

Plaintiff/Petitioner Case Number: _____

Defendant/Respondent

1. Is this the first time you represented yourself in court?

Yes

No

2. How many times have you been to court before for this case? _____

3. How many times have you been to court for any other case(s)? _____

4. Have you ever had a lawyer represent you in court?

Yes

No

5. Why did you decide to represent yourself in this case?

I cannot afford a lawyer

I do not know how to find or hire a lawyer

Legal Aid told me they could not help me

There are no legal services organizations to help me

I do not know if I need a lawyer

I choose to represent myself

Other (please explain): _____

6. Did you feel prepared for your hearing today? (prompts...whether they completed proof of service, brought correct, completed, forms, and had necessary evidence, witnesses)

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

7. Did the judge treat you with respect?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

Post Hearing Interview Instrument

8. Did the court clerk and other courtroom staff treat you with respect?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

9. Did you understand the words used by the judge and other persons in court?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

10. Can you explain what was the outcome of your hearing today?

11. What did you expect would be the outcome of your hearing today?

If the case was continued, skip to question 17.

12. Are you satisfied with what happened during your hearing today?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

13. Are you surprised by what happened during your hearing today?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

14. Did you feel you were able to tell the judge everything you thought he/she should know in order to make a decision?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

15. Do you think the judge's decision was fair?

1 2 3 4 5
(not at all)-----(extremely)

16. Do you think the judge would have ruled differently if you had a lawyer?

Yes (please explain)

No

Post Hearing Interview Instrument

17. Did the judge give you a court order?

- Yes
- No [**Skip to Question 19**]

18. If yes, did you understand the order?

- Yes
- No

19. Do you know what you need to do next for this court case? (please explain)

20. Did you receive help from anyone before going to court? (prompts: lawyer, paralegal, family or friend, internet, self help books, legal aid, library, self-help center, etc)

- Yes
- No

Demographic Information

21a. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- Yes
- No [**Skip to Question 22**]

21b. Which language:_____

22. You are:

- Male
- Female

23. Your race/ethnic group is (**check all that apply**):

- African-American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/Eskimo/Aleut
- White, non-Hispanic
- Other:_____

24. How many children under 19 living in the household?_____

Post Hearing Interview Instrument

25. What is the highest level of school you completed?

- 4th grade or less
- 5th to 8th grade
- 9th to 11th grade
- High school graduate/GED
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelors degree
- Graduate degree

26. Have you heard of the _____ center?

- Yes
- No

Self-Help Center Information

27. Did you receive help from the _____ center?

- Yes
- No (please explain: _____) **[end interview]**

28. What services did you use at the center?

- Assistance Completing Forms
- Document Review
- Explanation of Court Orders
- Received Forms AND written instructions
- Received Forms, but did NOT receive instructions on how to complete the forms
- Mediation
- Order After Hearing/Judgment
- Other Educational Materials
- Procedural Information
- Referrals to Other Providers
- Translation/Interpretation
- Other: _____

29. Which services did you find most helpful in helping you prepare for your hearing today?

30. Was there anything the center could have done to help you better prepare for today? (please explain)

31. Are there any additional assistance/services you would have liked to receive that the center does not currently provide?

Los Angeles Self-Help Management Center Evaluation
Baseline Telephone Interview Instrument for Providers

Date: _____

Name of interviewee: _____

Title/position of interviewee: _____

Name of agency: _____

Name of pro-se project (if different from agency name): _____

City/Zip Code: _____

Hello. My name is _____, and I am calling from NPC Research in Portland Oregon. We are conducting a study for the California Judicial Council of a new management center for self-represented litigants' services in Los Angeles County. As part of this study we are calling a large number of agencies in Los Angeles County who provide some sort of assistance to self-represented litigants. We are gathering information about the nature and extent of collaboration, communication, and joint activities among providers in the Los Angeles area. I would love to speak with you about your agency, any collaborative activities you participate in, and any training or technical assistance needs your agency may have. I expect our conversation will take approximately 45 minutes. May I schedule a time to conduct this interview with you?

First I have some questions about your self-help services.

1) Could you tell me a bit about your agency?

2) Is your agency a nonprofit or is it run by a public agency (e.g. the court)?

3) Are any of the following entities involved with the operation, oversight or management of your self-help services?

_____ Local trial court

_____ Bar

_____ Family Law Facilitator's Office

_____ Family Law Information Center (FLIC)

_____ Other: _____

4) Is the self-help program the sole activity of your agency, or does your agency offer other services as well?

_____ Sole service

_____ Multiple services

5) If the agency offers multiple services, please indicate the other services:

_____ Other legal/legal aid/attorney referral services

_____ Food, shelter or housing services

_____ Domestic violence services

_____ Services for children, including child care, assessments, or Head Start

_____ Mental health services

_____ Alcohol and drug treatment

_____ Medical services

_____ Vocational training/job training/job search services

_____ Other (specify) _____

6) Is your program part of a statewide pro-se assistance effort sponsored by the state supreme court or state judicial council?

_____ Yes

_____ No

7) How long has the self-help center been in operation?

8) Is the program located in a courthouse, or at some other location?

9) Are the self-represented litigants who use your services primarily

_____ Involved with the courts/judicial process for the first time

_____ Occasionally have been involved with the courts/judicial process

_____ Regularly have been involved with the courts/judicial process

_____ Don't know

10) What is the education level of your clients (estimated guesses are fine):

_____ % Less than high school diploma

_____ % High school diploma

_____ % Some college

_____ % College degree

_____ % Post-graduate

_____ Don't know

11) What is the primary language of your clients (estimated guesses are fine):

_____ % English

_____ % Spanish

_____ % Other: _____

_____ Don't know

12) If you can, please estimate how many people use your program each year.

Next I have some questions about collaborative activities you may participate in, and any needs your agency may have regarding training and technical assistance.

13) Which of the following groups have you had collaborative relationships with in the past year

(please list names of agencies when possible):

a) Other self-help project(s): _____

b) Legal services group(s): _____

c) Law school(s): _____

d) Bar association(s): _____

e) Other nonprofit group(s): _____

f) Other(s): _____

14a) In the past year, have you participated in any of the following types of collaborative activities?

- Policy groups/boards
- Jointly funded projects
- Jointly administered projects
- Networking activities with other self-help centers
- Other collaborative activities

14b) For any items checked in 14a, please give a brief description of the activity, including the name of the board/project (if applicable), description of the purpose of the activity, what other agencies were involved, what was accomplished):

15) With which of the following types of collaborative activities would you be interested in participating in the future?

- _____ Policy groups/boards
- _____ Jointly funded projects
- _____ Jointly administered projects
- _____ Trainings organized by other agencies
- _____ Trainings organized by your agency
- _____ Networking activities with other self-help providers
- _____ Other (describe): _____

16) Do you have any plans to expand the program in terms of substantive areas, geographical reach, or types of litigants?

17a) Do your self-help center staff participate in any training programs?

Yes

No (**Skip to 18a**)

17b) What kind of training is provided? Is this training provided in-house? If other agencies provide the training, please list those agencies.

18a) Does your program receive any technical assistance?

Yes

No (**Skip to 19a**)

18b) What kind of assistance and from whom?

19a) Do you feel that your agency's needs for training and technical assistance are adequately addressed?

Yes (**Skip to 20**)

No

19b) What are your unmet needs?

20) How are you and your project staff made aware of any changes in laws or regulations that effect self-help centers, pro se litigants and/or the types of cases in which pro se litigants are most likely to be involved?

21a) Have there been any recent changes in local, state, or federal laws or regulations that have affected the way you provide self-help services?

Yes

No (**Skip to 22a**)

21b) What are these changes and how have they affected your service delivery?

22a) Are you and your project staff aware of the policies and procedures of other self-help organizations?

Yes

No (**Skip to 20c**)

22b) If so, how?

22c) If not, do you wish to be made aware of other self-help centers' protocols?

Yes

No

Why or why not?

23a) Are you and your project staff knowledgeable about other service organizations in the community that help individuals with needs such as housing, domestic violence, and public assistance?

Yes

No (**Skip to 24**)

23b) How are you made aware of their services? If no, would you be interested in receiving more information about such services?

24) Does your center refer clients to other service organizations for such issues as housing, domestic violence, and public assistance?

_____ Yes

_____ No

That's all the questions I have for you today. Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you have provided to me will help us make recommendations to the new management center about the types of activities that are most important and useful to Los Angeles area self-help providers. We would like to call you again in about a year to update our data.

Los Angeles Self-Help Management Center Evaluation
Follow-Up Telephone Interview Instrument for Providers

Date: _____

Name of interviewee: _____

Title/position of interviewee: _____

Name of agency: _____

Name of pro-se project (if different from agency name): _____

City/Zip Code: _____

Hello. My name is _____, and I am calling from NPC Research in Portland Oregon. We are conducting a study for the California Judicial Council of a new management center for self-represented litigants' services in Los Angeles County. As part of this study we are calling a large number of agencies in Los Angeles County who provide some sort of assistance to self-represented litigants. We are gathering information about the nature and extent of collaboration, communication, and joint activities among providers in the Los Angeles area. I would love to speak with you about your agency, any collaborative activities you participate in, and any training or technical assistance needs your agency may have. I expect our conversation will take approximately 45 minutes. May I schedule a time to conduct this interview with you?

Some agencies operate multiple projects and provide many services. All of the survey questions pertain specifically to your agency's self-help services.

1) Have there been any major changes to self-help center operations over the past year (such as covering additional substantive areas, types of litigants, or geographical reach)? If yes, please describe.

2) Do you have any plans to expand the program in terms of substantive areas, geographical reach, or types of litigants?

3) Which of the following groups have you had collaborative relationships with in the past year:
[Please get names if possible; if not, total number in each category.]

Other self-help project(s): _____

Legal services group(s): _____

Law school(s): _____

Bar association(s): _____

Nonprofit group(s): _____

Other(s): _____

4) In the past year, has your organization participated in the following types of collaborative activities?

Policy groups/boards (provide name of the policy group, its purpose, its members, how often it meets): _____

Jointly funded projects (provide name of project, a description, and your partners): _____

Jointly administered projects (provide name of project, a description, and your partners):

Trainings organized by other agencies (provide name, description, and organizing agency):

Trainings organized by your agency (provide name, description, and attendees): _____

Networking activities with other self-help providers (please describe the activities, frequency, and participants): _____

Other (describe activity, partners, and frequency): _____

5) With which of the following types of collaborative activities would you be interested in participating in the future?

- Policy groups/boards
- Jointly funded projects
- Jointly administered projects
- Trainings organized by other agencies
- Trainings organized by your agency
- Networking activities with other self-help providers
- Other (describe): _____

6) Does your self-help center staff participate in any training programs?

Yes No **[Skip to #7]**

If yes, what kind of training is provided? Is this training provided in-house? Have any of these trainings been organized by the Self-Help Management Center? If other agencies provide the training, please list those agencies.

7) Does your program receive any technical assistance?

Yes No **[Skip to #8]**

If yes, what kind of assistance and from whom? Was any of this technical assistance provided by the Self-Help Management Center?

8) Do you feel that your needs for training and technical assistance are adequately addressed?

Yes **[Skip to #9]** No

If not, what are your unmet needs?

9) How are you and your project staff made aware of any changes in laws or regulations that effect self-help centers, pro se litigants and/or the types of cases in which pro se litigants are most likely to be involved? Has the Self-Help Management Center provided you with any of this information?

10) Have there been any recent changes in local, state, or federal laws or regulations that have effected self-help center service provision?

_____Yes _____No **[Skip to #11]**

If so, what?

11) Are you and your project staff aware of the policies and procedures of other self-help organizations?

_____Yes **[Complete 11a & Skip 11b]** _____No **[Skip to 11b]**

11a) If so, how? Has the Self-Help Management Center provided you with this information?

11b) If not, do you wish to be made aware of other self-help centers' protocols?

_____Yes _____No

Why or why not?

12a) Are you and your project staff knowledgeable about other service organizations in the community that help individuals with needs such as housing, domestic violence, and public assistance?

_____Yes _____No **[Skip to #13]**

12b) Has the Self-Help Management Center provided you with this information?

_____Yes _____No

13) Are you familiar with the Self-Help Management Center?

_____Yes _____No

[If yes, continue the interview. If no, skip to the closing statement.]

14a) Have you participated in any Self-Help Management Center activities (including any already discussed above) or worked with Self-Help Management Center staff in any way?

_____Yes _____No **[Skip to #15]**

14b) If yes, please describe your involvement with their activities.

14c) How useful was each of the activities, using a scale of 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (very useful)?

- 15) How could the Self-Help Management Center be most helpful for your agency? Can you think of other things you wish that the Self-Help Management Center would do?

That's all the questions I have for you today. Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you have provided to me will help us make recommendations to the new management center about the types of activities that are most important and useful to Los Angeles area self-help providers. We would like to call you again in about a year to update our data.

Customer Survey

Self-Help Center

The Self-Help Center wants to learn more about your needs and improve our services. Please take about 5 minutes to fill out this survey. Filling out this survey will not affect the services you get at the Self-Help Center. And your answers and personal information will be kept confidential.

For questions or more information, call:
Deana Piazza, Administrative Office of the Courts
415-865-4225

1. After each statement, please check the box that comes closest to how you feel about your visit to the Self-Help Center today.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The information I received today helped me to understand my situation better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less worried about my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less confused about how the court works.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know more about how the laws work in my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what I need to do next.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff seemed knowledgeable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff listened to what I had to say.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff explained things to me clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff treated me with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was served in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend the self-help center to a friend with a legal problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please indicate how helpful you found the services listed below. If you did not receive the service, please check "Not Applicable."

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Not At All Helpful	Not Applicable
Staff help with forms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Written instructions for filling out forms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Staff to answer my questions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Interpretation or translation assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Help to prepare for a court hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Help following up with court orders	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational materials (pamphlets, books, videos)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Information on where to get more help	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. Please share any other comments or suggestions about the services you received at the Self-Help Center today.

4. You are: Male Female

5. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

No Yes*

* If "Yes," which language? (Check all that apply.)

Spanish Mandarin Vietnamese Armenian
 Cantonese Tagalog Russian Other: _____

6. Your race/ethnic group is: (Check all that apply.)

Hispanic/Latino African-American White, non-Hispanic
 Asian/Pacific Islander Native American/Eskimo/Aleut Other: _____

7. Your total monthly household income (this includes all income sources), before taxes is:

\$500 or less \$1,001-\$1,500 \$2,001-\$2,500
 \$501-\$1,000 \$1,501-\$2,000 Over \$2,500

8. The highest level of school you completed:

4th grade or less High school graduate/GED Bachelors degree
 5th to 8th grade Some college Graduate degree
 9th to 11th grade Associates degree

Stop!

Please drop the form off in the box.

(The Self-Help Center will fill out the area below.)

FOR STAFF USE ONLY

Case type/issue. Check all that apply.	Services provided. Check all that apply.
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance completing forms
<input type="checkbox"/> Child custody	<input type="checkbox"/> Forms with instructions
<input type="checkbox"/> Visitation	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of court orders
<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedural information
<input type="checkbox"/> Other family law	<input type="checkbox"/> Other educational materials
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Referrals to other providers
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Translation/interpretation
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Workshop Participant Survey

The Self-Help Center wants to learn more about your needs and improve our services. Please take about 5 minutes to fill out this survey. Filling out this survey will not affect the services you get at the Self-Help Center. And your answers and personal information will be kept confidential.

Self-Help Center

For questions or more information, call:
Deana Piazza, Administrative Office of the Courts
415-865-4225

1. What is the name of the workshop you attended today? _____
2. Today's date: ___ / ___ / ___
3. After each statement, please check the box that comes closest to how you feel about your experience in the workshop today.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The information I received today helped me to understand my situation better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less worried about my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less confused about how the court works.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know more about how the laws work in my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what I need to do next.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was helpful to have other people to talk to in the workshop.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff seemed knowledgeable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff explained things to me clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The staff treated me with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was able to get into the workshop in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend the workshop to a friend with a legal problem like mine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please indicate how helpful you found the services listed below. If you did not receive the service in the workshop today, check "Not Applicable."

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	Not At All Helpful	Not Applicable
Staff help with forms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Written instructions for filling out forms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Staff to answer my questions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Interpretation or translation assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Help to prepare for a court hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Help following up with court orders	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational materials (pamphlets, books, videos)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Information on where to get more help	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

5. Did you get help with your legal problem anywhere other than this workshop? No Yes
If "Yes," where did you get help? (Check all that apply.)

- Court's self-help center Friend or relative Self-Help books
 Legal Aid Paralegal Internet
 Private attorney Library Other: _____

6. How did you participate in today's workshop?

- In person → SKIP TO QUESTION 8 By videoconferencing

7. Please rate the following features of the videoconferencing equipment and facilities on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. (Circle one number for each feature.)

	(Poor)	→	→	→	(Excellent)
Sound quality	1	2	3	4	5
Picture quality	1	2	3	4	5
Room size	1	2	3	4	5
Seating	1	2	3	4	5
Technical assistance by on-site staff	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please share any other comments or suggestions about the services you received in the workshop today.

9. You are: Male Female

10. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- No Yes*

* If "Yes," which language? (Check all that apply.)

- Spanish Mandarin Vietnamese Armenian
 Cantonese Tagalog Russian Other: _____

11. Your race/ethnic group is: (Check all that apply.)

- Hispanic/Latino African-American White, non-Hispanic
 Asian/Pacific Islander Native American/Eskimo/Aleut Other: _____

12. Your total monthly household income (this includes all income sources), before taxes is:

- \$500 or less \$1,001-\$1,500 \$2,001-\$2,500
 \$501-\$1,000 \$1,501-\$2,000 Over \$2,500

13. The highest level of school you completed:

- 4th grade or less High school graduate/GED Bachelors degree
 5th to 8th grade Some college Graduate degree
 9th to 11th grade Associates degree

Dissolution Case File Review

Date of Review: ___/___/_____ County: _____

Case number: _____

Petitioner name: _____

Respondent name: _____

Petition

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date petition filed: ___/___/_____

Date of marriage: ___/___/_____ Date of separation: ___/___/_____

Children Yes No

If yes, number of Children: _____

Property Yes No

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Accounts | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> School Loans | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cars | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilerplate | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Property | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Investments | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |

REQUESTS:

Custody Requested? Yes No N/A

If yes, details: Legal: Pet Resp. JT Other
Physical: Pet Resp. JT Other

Visitation Requested? Yes No N/A
 None Supervised

Property Rights be Determined? Yes No N/A

Establish spousal support? Yes No Reserved
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Terminate spousal support? Yes No
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Parentage Determination Yes No N/A

Anything Missing - Petition? Yes (explain below) No

UCCJEA Declaration? Yes No N/A

If yes, does it match proposed custody? Yes No Can't tell

(Does the request for custody ask that custody be given to a person with whom the child is currently living?)

Income & Expense Declaration (PET)? Yes No

Simplified Financial? Yes No

Employed? Yes No

If yes, type of job: _____

Educational Level

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th grade or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 th to 8 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th to 11 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | |

Gross monthly income of petitioner: _____

Estimated monthly income of respondent: _____

Proof of Service – Summons? Yes No

Notice & Acknowledgement? Yes No

Proof of Service – Preliminary DOD? Yes No

Date of service of summons: ___/___/_____ Not in File

Type of service: Personal Mail Publication Posting

What was served? Petition & Summons Preliminary DOD
 Initial OSC Other

Request To Enter Default? Yes No N/A

If yes, date entered: ___/___/_____

Property Declaration (PET)? Yes No N/A

Response Filed? Yes No

*If yes, complete and attach response form.

Judgment

CASE DISMISSED: Yes No

If yes, date dismissed: ___/___/_____

DEFAULT/UNCONTESTED:

Default Uncontested filed by: Petitioner Respondent

Declaration for Default of Uncontested Judgment Date Filed: ___/___/_____

Proof of Service/Waiver DOD – Final

Marital Settlement Agreement/Stipulation

Appearance, Stipulation & Waivers

Proposed Judgment

Includes enforceable orders for CC/CV/CS/SS

Other supporting paperwork included

I & E Simplified Financial

Schedule of Assets and Debts

Property Declaration

Proof of Service/Preliminary DOD

Judgment Paperwork Sent Back? Yes No Can't tell

If yes, reasons: _____ Can't tell

No. of times Returned _____ Can't tell

Uncontested Hearing? Yes No

If yes, hearing date: ___/___/_____

CONTESTED:

At-Issue Memo Date Filed: ___/___/_____

Settlement Statement: (Issues, Contentions Proposed Disposition) Pet. Resp.

1st Settlement/Status Conference Date: ___/___/_____

Continued Set new TD

Settled Vacate TD

Maintain Trial Date (TD) Dropped*

*If dropped, why?

FTA

Request of parties/Counsel

Other: _____

Trial: Date: ___/___/___ Petitioner present Respondent present

Dropped – FTA

Dropped – Other: _____

Judgment Made

Continued

If continued, why?

Go to Family Court Services

Custody Evaluation

Get attorney

Request of party

Review of issues

Need more information

Can't tell

Other: _____

JUDGMENT DETAILS:

Date Status Terminated: ___/___/___

Written Judgment in File

Status Only

Judgment of Reserved Issues

Yes

No

If yes, date entered: ___/___/___

ORDERS:

Custody

Legal:

Pet

Resp.

JT

Other

Physical:

Pet

Resp.

JT

Other

Visitation:

Reasonable

Specific

None

Supervised

Spousal support for:

Pet Amount: _____

Resp

Amount: _____

Terminated for:

Pet

Resp

Reserved for:

Pet

Resp

Child support for:

Pet Amount: _____

Resp

Amount: _____

Parentage Determination

Property Determination

Real SP CP

Bank Accounts SP CP

Pensions SP CP

Credit Cards SP CP

Business SP CP

School Loans SP CP

Cars SP CP

Boilerplate SP CP

Household SP CP

Other Property SP CP

Investments SP CP

Other Debt SP CP

Other Orders:

TOTALS:

Total number of settlement conferences: _____

Total number of trial dates: _____

Total number of OSC/motions filed: _____ Within the last year: _____

Total number of court appearances set: _____ Within the last year: _____

Total number in which orders were made: _____ Within the last year: _____

Total number of continuances _____ Within the last year: _____

MULTIPLE CASES

Evidence of other cases involving the same parties? Yes No Can't tell

If yes, what other cases? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Other dissolution
- Title IV-D
- Juvenile 300
- Criminal DV
- Can't tell
- Uniform Parentage Act
- DVPA
- Probate Guardianship
- Other: _____

Other Information About the Parties

Petitioner	Respondent																																																
<p>➡ Did petitioner hire an attorney? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>➡ Was there a change in representation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what was the change? <input type="checkbox"/> Hired different attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started pro per, later hired attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started with attorney, later went pro per <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Date of change: ___/___/_____</p>	<p>➡ Did respondent hire an attorney? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>➡ Was there a change in representation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>If yes, what was the change? <input type="checkbox"/> Hired different attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started pro per, later hired attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started with attorney, later went pro per <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Date of change: ___/___/_____</p>																																																
<p>➡ Did petitioner hire a paralegal? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>➡ Did respondent hire a paralegal? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>																																																
<p>➡ Is there an indication that the petitioner received help with his/her forms, from the self-help center or elsewhere? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is that indication? <u>Attributable to center?</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Typed forms</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Typed forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<p>➡ Is there an indication that the respondent received help with his/her forms, from the self-help center or elsewhere? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no response</p> <p>If yes, what is that indication? <u>Attributable to center?</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Typed forms</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Typed forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK
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<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK																																														
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<input type="checkbox"/> Typed forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK																																														
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> UNK																																														

Petitioner	Respondent
<p>☛ Is there an indication that the petitioner needs language assistance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is the indication?</p> <p>What is the petitioner's primary language?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Russian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	<p>☛ Is there an indication that the respondent needs language assistance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is the indication?</p> <p>What is the respondent's primary language?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Russian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>

Dissolution: Hearings

Case number: _____ OSC/NOM number this hearing is connected to: _____

Hearing number (for this OSC/motion): _____

Hearing date: ___/___/_____

Was petitioner present? Yes No Atty. Can't tell
Was respondent present? Yes No Atty. Can't tell

Hearing status:

- Dropped – FTA
- Dropped – no service
- Dropped – NOS
- Dropped – other: _____
- Continued*
- Orders Made**

*If continued, why?

- No proof of service
- Go to Family Court Services
- Request of party
- Review of issues
- Improper paperwork
- Other: _____
- Proof of service not properly filed
- Get attorney
- Long cause
- Need more information
- Can't tell

**If orders made:

- All issues raised in OSC/Motion
- Some issues raised in OSC/Motion
- Issues not raised in OSC/Motion

- Custody/visitation
- Spousal support
- Temporary use of property/payment of debt
- Child support
- DV restraining orders
- Joinder
- Other: _____

Written orders in file? Yes No

COMMENTS

Dissolution: Response

Case number: _____

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date Response filed: ___/___/_____

Date of marriage: ___/___/_____ Date of separation: ___/___/_____

Children Yes No

If yes, number of Children: _____

Property Yes No

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Accounts | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> School Loans | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cars | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilerplate | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Property | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Investments | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |

REQUESTS:

Custody Requested? Yes No N/A

If yes, details: Legal: Pet Resp. JT Other
 Physical: Pet Resp. JT Other

Visitation Requested? Yes No N/A
 None Supervised

Property Rights be Determined? Yes No N/A

Establish spousal support? Yes No Reserved
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Terminate spousal support? Yes No
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Parentage Determination Yes No N/A

Anything Missing - Response? Yes (explain below) No

UCCJEA Declaration? Yes No N/A

If yes, does it match proposed custody? Yes No Can't tell

(Does the request for custody ask that custody be given to a person with whom the child is currently living?)

Income & Expense Declaration (Resp.)? Yes No

Simplified Financial? Yes No

Employed? Yes No

If yes, type of job: _____

Educational Level

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th grade or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 th to 8 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th to 11 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | |

Gross monthly income of respondent: _____

Estimated monthly income of petitioner: _____ Blank Unknown

Proof of service – response? Yes No

Type of service: Personal Mail Publication Posting

Preliminary DOD – respondent? Yes No

Dissolution: Amended Petition

Case number: _____ Amended petition number: _____

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date amended petition filed: ___/___/___ Legal Sep. to Disso? Yes No

Date of marriage: ___/___/___ Date of separation: ___/___/___

Children Yes No

If yes, number of Children: _____

Property Yes No

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Accounts | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> School Loans | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cars | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Boilerplate | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Property | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Investments | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | <input type="checkbox"/> CP |

REQUESTS:

Custody Requested? Yes No N/A

If yes, details: Legal: Pet Resp. JT Other
Physical: Pet Resp. JT Other

Visitation Requested? Yes No N/A
 None Supervised

Property Rights be Determined? Yes No N/A

Establish spousal support? Yes No Reserved
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Terminate spousal support? Yes No
If yes, for whom? Petitioner Respondent

Parentage Determination Yes No N/A

Anything Missing - Petition? Yes (explain below) No

Proof of Service – amended Summons? Yes No

Type of service: Personal Mail Publication Posting

Notice & Acknowledgement? Yes No

Date of service Amended pleadings: ___/___/___ POS Not in File

Civil Harassment Case File Review

NOTE: ➡ indicates that question must be answered

General information on the case

Date of review: ___/___/___

➡ County: _____

➡ Case number: _____

➡ Petitioner name: _____ Date of Birth: ___/___/___

➡ Respondent name: _____ Date of Birth: ___/___/___

➡ Date initial petition (CH-100) filed: ___/___/___

Date amended petition filed: ___/___/___ N/A

Date amended petition filed: ___/___/___ N/A

➡ Relationship of parties:

Co-workers

Extended family

Neighbors

Roommates

Former date

Domestic partners

Landlord/tenant

Other: _____

➡ Does it appear that there have been other cases between these litigants? (Is 16a or 16b checked on the petition? Are there multiple cases on the same calendar?)

Yes

No

Can't tell

➡ What was the last document in the file?

Petition (CH-100)

OSC/TRO (CH-120)

Proof of service of OSC

Response (CH-110)

Proof of service of response

Order after hearing (CH-140)

Other: _____

Filings and Service - Petitioner

➤ Were there add-ons to the declaration? Yes No

If yes, what were they?

Attachments

Other: _____

➤ Was there a supplemental declaration? Yes No

If yes, date filed: ___/___/_____

➤ Date of service of OSC: ___/___/_____ Not in file

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Date of service of other document: ___/___/_____ N/A

Document served: _____

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Date of service of other document: ___/___/_____ N/A

Document served: _____

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Filings and Service - Respondent

➤ Was a response filed? Yes No Can't tell

If yes, was affirmative relief requested? Yes No Can't tell

Did respondent agree to terms of order? Yes No Can't tell

Were there add-ons to the declaration? Yes No

If yes, what were they?

Attachments

Other: _____

Was there a supplemental declaration? Yes No

If yes, date filed: ___/___/_____

Date of service: ___/___/_____ Not in file

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Date of service of other document: ___/___/_____ N/A

Document served: _____

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Date of service of other document: ___/___/_____ N/A

Document served: _____

How was service effected?

Sheriff/police

Friend/neighbor

Attorney's office

Unidentified party

Other: _____

Temporary Order

➤ Was a temporary order (CH-120) issued? Yes No Can't tell

If no, why?

If yes, date issued: ___/___/_____

Was the stay-away order granted? Yes No

Were all the requests granted? Yes No

If no, what was not granted?

- Stay-away distance
- Persons requested vs. included in order
- Places requested vs. included in order
- Other: _____

Was a temporary order (CH-120) issued? Yes No Can't tell N/A

If no, why?

If yes, date issued: ___/___/_____

Was the stay-away order granted? Yes No

Were all the requests granted? Yes No

If no, what was not granted?

- Stay-away distance
- Persons requested vs. included in order
- Places requested vs. included in order
- Other: _____

Hearings

➤ Date hearing set: ___/___/_____ Dept: _____ Time: _____

- Was petitioner present? Yes No Can't tell
➤ Was respondent present? Yes No Can't tell

➤ Hearing status:

- Proceeded – permanent order Continued
 Proceeded – dismissed/denied Dropped
 Reset due to reissuance before hearing

If continued, why?

- No proof of service
 Proof of service not properly filed
 Other: _____
 Can't tell

Date hearing set: ___/___/_____ Dept: _____ Time: _____ N/A

- Was petitioner present? Yes No Can't tell
Was respondent present? Yes No Can't tell

Hearing status:

- Proceeded – permanent order Continued
 Proceeded – dismissed/denied Dropped
 Reset due to reissuance before hearing

If continued, why?

- No proof of service
 Proof of service not properly filed
 Other: _____
 Can't tell

Date hearing set: ___/___/_____ Dept: _____ Time: _____ N/A

- Was petitioner present? Yes No Can't tell
Was respondent present? Yes No Can't tell

Hearing status:

- Proceeded – permanent order Continued
 Proceeded – dismissed/denied Dropped
 Reset due to reissuance before hearing

If continued, why?

- No proof of service
 Proof of service not properly filed
 Other: _____
 Can't tell

Permanent Order

➤ Was a permanent order (CH-140) issued? Yes No Can't tell

If no, why?

Off calendar, no appearances

Other: _____

If yes, date issued: ___/___/_____

Was the stay-away order granted? Yes No

Were all the requests granted? Yes No

If no, what was not granted?

Stay-away distance

Persons requested vs. included in order

Places requested vs. included in order

Other: _____

When does the order expire? ___/___/_____

Other Information About the Parties

Petitioner	Respondent																				
<p>☛ Was there an indication of a fee waiver in the file? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>☛ Was there an indication of a fee waiver in the file? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no response</p>																				
<p>☛ Did petitioner hire an attorney? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>☛ Was there a change in representation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what was the change? <input type="checkbox"/> Hired different attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started pro per, later hired attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started with attorney, later went pro per <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Date of change: ___/___/_____</p>	<p>☛ Did respondent hire an attorney? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>☛ Was there a change in representation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>If yes, what was the change? <input type="checkbox"/> Hired different attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started pro per, later hired attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Started with attorney, later went pro per <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p>Date of change: ___/___/_____</p>																				
<p>☛ Is there an indication that the petitioner received help with his/her forms, from the ACCESS Center or elsewhere? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is that indication? <u>Attributable to ACCESS?</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<p>☛ Is there an indication that the respondent received help with his/her forms, from the ACCESS Center or elsewhere? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, no response</p> <p>If yes, what is that indication? <u>Attributable to ACCESS?</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> UNK																				

Petitioner	Respondent
<p>☛ Is there an indication that the petitioner needs language assistance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is the indication?</p> <p>What is the petitioner's primary language?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Russian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	<p>☛ Is there an indication that the petitioner needs language assistance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what is the indication?</p> <p>What is the respondent's primary language?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Russian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>

Unlawful Detainer Case File Review

General information on the case

Date of Review: ___/___/___

County: _____

Case number: _____

Plaintiff name: _____

Attorney at filing? Yes No

Defendant name: _____

Complaint

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date Complaints filed: ___/___/___

Limited Unlimited (over \$25K)

Rental Agreement: Written Oral

Monthly Rental Amount \$ _____

Type of Notice:

- 3-day – pay or quit
- 3-day – perform or quit
- 60-day notice
- 3-day – quit
- 30-day – quit
- Other _____

Election of forfeiture included? Yes No

Date notice period expired: ___/___/___

Service of Notice:

Date of Service: ___/___/___ Not in file

How was service effected?

- Personal
- Substituted
- Posting
- Can't tell

Requests:

- Possession
- Attorneys Fees
- Past Due Rent Amount: _____
- Damages Amount: _____
- Forfeiture
- Late Fees
- Other: _____

UD Assistant: None Paralegal Attorney Legal Aid

Is there an indication that the plaintiff received help with his/her forms, from SHARP or elsewhere? Yes No

If yes, what is that indication?

Attributable to SHARP?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special whiteout | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Different handwriting | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental declaration | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unk |

Is there an indication that the plaintiff needs language assistance? Yes No

If yes, what is the indication? _____

What is the plaintiff's primary language?

- Spanish
- Russian
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog
- Other: _____
- Don't know

RESPONSIVE PLEADINGS:

Motion to Quash: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Granted: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Motion to Strike: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Granted: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Demurrer: Yes No
Leave to Amend: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Sustained: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Answer filed? Yes No

*If yes, complete and attach answer form.

Default Declaration

Declaration for Default filed? Yes No

If yes, date filed: ___/___/_____

Application for Immediate Possession included? Yes No

Does notice to quit information match Complaint? Yes No

Amount of rent requested: _____

Same fair rental value as in Complaint? Yes No

Notice was served - same as in Complaint? Yes No

Proof of Service of Summons and Complaint attached? Yes No

Pre-judgment claim of right to possession served on other occupants? Yes No

Was a Money Judgment Requested? Yes No

If yes, in what amount? _____

Were there missing Exhibits? Yes No

If yes, what was missing?

Original Rental Agreement

Original Modification of Agreement

Notice to Quit

Copy with declaration & order

Copy with declaration & order

Proof of Service

Judgment

At- Issue filed? Yes No

Notice of Trial to Defendants? Yes No

Case Dismissed? Yes No

If yes, why? _____

Date of Judgment: ___/___/_____ Not applicable

How was judgment reached?

- By default
- After trial
- By stipulation

If By Default:

- Clerk Court

If After Trial:

Did plaintiff appear? Yes No

Did defendant(s) appear?

- Yes, all defendants
- Yes, some defendants
- No, none of the defendants

If some or none, number of Defendants not appearing: _____

Defendant(s) properly served with trial notice? Yes No

Judgment for: Plaintiff Defendant

Statement of Decision Requested – Reasons for Judgment:

Immediate possession to Plaintiff

Money Judgment to Plaintiff - Amount \$ _____

Conditional Judgment

Plaintiff to make repairs Defendant to pay reduced rent until repairs made

New court date set for compliance of parties – Date: ___/___/_____

If By Stipulation:

Terms of Stipulation Included? Yes No

Plaintiff to return deposit

Plaintiff to get possession

Lockout date: ___/___/_____

Attorneys Fees

Costs

Back Rent

Holdover

Other

Defendant to pay money judgment in installments? Yes No N/A

Post Judgment Relief from Forfeiture Yes No

If yes, granted? Yes No

Application for stay of execution? Yes No

If yes, granted? Yes No

Motion to set aside default judgment? Yes No

If yes, granted? Yes No

Writ of Execution? Yes No

Procedural Defects? Yes No

Notice: (specify)

Pleadings: (specify)

Other: (specify)

Unlawful Detainer: Answer

Case number: _____

Defendant number: _____

Attorney at filing? Yes No

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date Answer filed: ___/___/_____

General denial required? Yes No

If yes, general denial included? Yes No

Specific denials? Yes No

If yes, what? _____

Did respondent raise any affirmative defenses? Yes No

If yes, what were they?

Habitability

Made repairs

Timely tender refused

Plaintiff cancelled notice

Retaliatory eviction

Rent control violation

Plaintiff accepted rent

Other: _____

Supporting facts provided? Yes No

Premises vacated? Yes No

Counter At-Issue Memo Filed? Yes No

Fair rental value excessive (habitability claims)? Yes No

Requests:

Attorneys Fees

Plaintiff to make repairs

Other: _____

UD Assistant None Paralegal Attorney Legal Aid

Is there an indication that the defendant received help with his/her forms, from SHARP or elsewhere? Yes No

If yes, what is that indication?

Attributable to SHARP?

Special whiteout

Yes No Unk

Different handwriting

Yes No Unk

Supplemental declaration

Yes No Unk

Highlighting

Yes No Unk

Other: _____

Yes No Unk

Is there an indication that the defendant needs language assistance? Yes No

If yes, what is the indication? _____

What is the defendant's primary language?

Spanish

Tagalog

Russian

Other: _____

Chinese

Don't know

Vietnamese

Unlawful Detainer: Amended Complaint

Case number: _____ Amended complaint number: _____

Plaintiff name: _____ Attorney at filing? Yes No

Defendant name: _____

Fee waiver? Yes No

Format: Typed Handwritten Paralegal (CDA) Computer forms

Date Amended Complaint filed: ___/___/_____

Limited Unlimited (over \$25K)

Rental Agreement: Written Oral

Monthly Rental Amount \$ _____

Type of Notice:

- 3-day – pay or quit 3-day – quit
- 3-day – perform or quit 30-day – quit
- 60-day notice
- Other _____

Election of forfeiture included? Yes No

Date notice period expired: ___/___/_____

Service of Notice:

Date of Service: ___/___/_____ Not in file

How was service effected?

- Personal Substituted
- Posting Can't tell

Requests:

- Possession
- Attorneys Fees
- Past Due Rent Amount: _____
- Damages Amount: _____
- Forfeiture
- Late Fees
- Other: _____

UD Assistant: None Paralegal Attorney Legal Aid

Is there an indication that the plaintiff received help with his/her forms, from SHARP or elsewhere? Yes No

If yes, what is that indication?

- Special whiteout
- Different handwriting
- Supplemental declaration
- Highlighting
- Other: _____

Attributable to SHARP?

- Yes No Unk

Is there an indication that the plaintiff needs language assistance? Yes No

If yes, what is the indication? _____

What is the plaintiff's primary language?

- Spanish
- Russian
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog
- Other: _____
- Don't know

Responsive Pleadings:

Motion to Quash: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Granted: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Motion to Strike: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Granted: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Demurrer: Yes No
Leave to Amend: Yes No
Defendant: _____

Sustained: Yes No
Attorney: Yes No

Answer filed? Yes No

*If yes, complete and attach answer form.

Intake Survey: Virtual Self-Help Center

Introduction

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey for a research study that will provide the Virtual Self-Help Center with information on how to improve services.

The information that might tell us who you are will remain confidential and will not be used in any data analysis or report. Your answers will not affect the services you receive from the self-help center or your case.

You may refuse to answer any or all of the questions.

For more information about the study please contact Berkeley Policy Associates at 510-465-7884.

You are:

- Representing yourself in a legal matter
- Friend or relative of someone who has legal questions
- Lawyer or work for a lawyer
- Researching general legal issues
- Self-help center staff
- Library staff
- Other: _____

Case Type:

- Guardianship
- Divorce
- Domestic Violence
- Family Law (child custody, child visitation, child support, or spousal support issues)
- Landlord/Tenant Issues
- Other: _____

Zip Code: _____

Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- No Yes

If yes, which language (*choose all that apply*)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin | <input type="checkbox"/> Armenian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

What language would you prefer to receive self-help services in?

- English Other: _____
- Spanish

You are:

- Male Female

Your race/ethnic group is (*choose all that apply*):

- African-American White, non-Hispanic
 Asian/Pacific Islander Other: _____
 Hispanic/Latino
 Native
 American/Eskimo/Aleut

How many children under 19 live in your household? _____

The highest level of school you completed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th grade or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Some college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 th to 8 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th to 11 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree |

Your total monthly household income (this includes all income sources), before taxes is:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,501-\$2,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$501-\$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,001-\$2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,001-\$1,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$2,500 |

Whose computer are you using?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Courthouse public terminal |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

How comfortable are you with computers?

- Very Comfortable
 Comfortable
 Somewhat Comfortable
 Not at all Comfortable

How often do you use the Internet?

- Every day
 A few times a week
 Once a week
 Once a month
 Other: _____

You use the Internet for (choose all that apply):

- E-mail.
- School research or courses
- News, weather, sports
- Information search
- Job search
- Job-related tasks
- Shopping or paying bills
- Playing games, entertainment, fun
- Other: _____

Exit Survey Virtual Self-Help Center

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey for a research study that will provide the Virtual Self-Help Center with information on how to improve services.

(1) Which legal issue did you need help with? *(choose all that apply)*

- Guardianship
- Domestic Violence
- Divorce
- Family Law (child custody, child visitation, child support, or spousal support issues)
- Landlord/Tenant
- Court Procedures
- Other: _____

(2) What type of help did you receive today? *(choose all that apply)*

- Forms Only
- Forms with instructions
- Videos with information
- Explanation of how the legal system might work in my case
- Explanation of steps I need to take to solve my legal problem
- Where else to get help with my legal problem
- Other: _____

(3) What was the overall goal of your visit to the website?

(4) We want to know about your experience using the website. Please look at the sentences below and put a **checkmark to show if you *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly agree*:**

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

I found the information I wanted

I understood the information

The information helped me understand my situation better

The information helped me understand what to do next to resolve my situation

It was easy to get around the website

Overall I am happy with the information I received today

(5) Were you looking for anything you could not find? Please explain: _____

(6) Do you have any ideas for improving the website? Please explain: _____

Virtual Self-Help Law Center User Study Sign-in Sheet

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is conducting a research study on the Contra Costa Superior Court's Virtual Self-Help Law Center Web site.

As part of the study, we would like to invite you to use the Web site to get your paperwork started and to obtain information on how to proceed with your case. An AOC staff member will observe you while you use the Web site and make note of any questions or problems you have. AOC staff will also follow up with the court to see if using the Web site had any impact on the paperwork you file.

By participating, you will have the opportunity to provide us with important information about the effectiveness of the Web site in helping individuals with guardianship cases, which will allow us to give feedback to the court about how to improve the Web site. All the information you provide will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to the study. In reports, the information you give us will be combined with what we get from everyone who participates in the study. Your participation in the research study is completely voluntary. It will not affect your case in any way.

If you have any questions about the study, you may call or write Deana Piazza, Senior Research Analyst at 415-865-4225 or 455 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102. Thank you for your participation!

Please sign in below if you agree to participate in the study.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 24. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 25. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 26. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 27. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 28. _____ |
| 14. _____ | 29. _____ |
| 15. _____ | 30. _____ |

Web Site User Survey

Virtual Self-Help Law Center

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey for a research study that will provide the Virtual Self-Help Law Center with information on how to improve services. Filling out this survey will not affect your case. And your answers and personal information will be kept confidential.

For questions or more information, call:
Deana Piazza, Administrative Office of the Courts
415-865-4225

2. We want to know about your experience using the Web site. Please review the statements below and put a checkmark to show if you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found the information I wanted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information helped me to understand my situation better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less worried about my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel less confused about how the court works.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know more about how the laws work in my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information helped me understand what to do next to resolve my situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was easy to get around the Web site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would feel comfortable using the Web site on my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall I am happy with the information I received today.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would use the Web site again if I needed help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend the Web site to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Were you looking for anything you could not find? Please explain: _____

3. Do you have any ideas for improving the Web site? Please explain: _____

4. How comfortable are you with computers?

- Very Comfortable
- Comfortable
- Somewhat Comfortable
- Not At All Comfortable

5. How often do you use the Internet?

- Every day
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Other: _____

6. You are: Male Female

7. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- No Yes*

* If "Yes," which language? (Check all that apply.)

- Spanish Tagalog
- Cantonese Vietnamese
- Mandarin Other: _____

8. Your race/ethnic group is: (Check all that apply.)

- Hispanic/Latino Native American/Eskimo/Aleut
- Asian/Pacific Islander White, non-Hispanic
- African-American Other: _____

9. Your total monthly *household* income (this includes all income sources), *before* taxes is:

- \$500 or less \$1,501-\$2,000
- \$501-\$1,000 \$2,001-\$2,500
- \$1,001-\$1,500 Over \$2,500

10. The highest level of school you completed:

- 4th grade or less Some college
- 5th to 8th grade Associates degree
- 9th to 11th grade Bachelors degree
- High school graduate/GED Graduate degree