



CREATING RESULTS WITH YOUTH & THEIR FAMILIES

Annual Evaluation

COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES
IN EAST PALO ALTO

San Mateo County
Probation Department

Juvenile Justice
Coordinating Council (JJCC)



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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Community Legal Services (CLSEPA) in East Palo Alto provides transformative legal services that enable diverse communities in East Palo Alto and beyond to achieve a secure and thriving future. Their impact is achieved by coupling direct services with community education, technical assistance, policy advocacy, and impact litigation.

CLSEPA recruits and trains volunteers who donate thousands of hours to local families annually. Their ultimate goal is to support community members in achieving security, stability and a thriving future. In 2015, 705 volunteers donated more than 23,000 hours of legal services (with a market value of \$7.1 million) to local community members.

CLSEPA effects positive change through the following programs:

- **Immigration**—provides legal assistance to immigrants seeking better lives, allowing families and youth to emerge from the shadows and expand their educational and career opportunities
- **Housing**—provides legal assistance to tenants, seeking to improve living conditions, combat unlawful abuses, and prevent homelessness and the dislocation of a diverse low-income community
- **Economic Advancement**—provides a variety of services designed to help residents fight fraudulent, predatory, and unlawful business practices and overcome barriers to economic advancement

Programmatic Challenges in FY 2015-16

CLSEPA has had to revise and create new processes to ensure data collection for JJCC will capture the eligible families and youth they assist through their programs. They revised their intake and re-trained their staff on identifying families that fit the qualifications for the grant. As they continued on with the grant, staff members have become more aware of identifying families with youth between the ages of 10-17.

Another challenge is that CLSEPA does not track referrals from other Probation-funded community-based organizations (CBOs) who may refer clients to their office. Sometimes clients explain that they have been referred by a certain organization, but most times they do not share that information, either because they do not remember or they are too occupied with their current legal issue.

In order to better track referrals, CLSEPA hopes to improve their intake and screening process. Their first step has been to make their initial client contact digital to save time when capturing information.

EVALUATION METHODS

Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (SMCJP) monitor their programs and report client, service and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are described below:

Clients and Services—Grantee programs collected and entered demographic (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity) and service data (e.g., types and hours of service) for individual clients and entered these in their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors—In FY 2015-16, SMCJP implemented two new measures of client risk level, the pre-JAIS and the CANS. Funded programs were asked to complete these measures with existing clients beginning January 2016 and at intake with all new clients subsequently.

- The **Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS)** is a risk, strength and needs assessment designed to assist workers to effectively and efficiently supervise youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. It is reliable and has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment (**pre-JAIS**) in addition to full assessment and reassessment components; SMCJP has elected to administer the pre-JAIS to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The pre-JAIS consists of 8 (girls) or 10 (boys) items and yields an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.
- The **Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)** survey is a multi-purpose tool developed for children’s services to support decision-making including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services. The CANS consists of multiple items scored on a 4-point scale (0 to 3, with a score of 2 or 3 indicating an actionable need) and grouped into stand-alone modules—e.g., Risk Behaviors, Strengths, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, Trauma. Each grantee completed a different set of CANS modules according to the specific fit with their programs and clientele.

Outcomes—In FY 2015-16, SMCJP intended to assess change over time using CANS follow-up data at the conclusion of services. Because the CANS is recommended to be administered at 6-month intervals and with low response rates due to the post-January start, ASR was not able to analyze CANS post-test data for FY 2015-16.

- Additionally, many grantees elected to collect their own program-specific outcome data. Because the nature of the services provided by CLSEPA is primarily focused on the families of at-risk youth rather than the youth themselves, the pre-JAIS and many modules of the CANS would not provide information on the characteristics of clients they serve. Thus, ASR also receives information on the primary benefit of their cases as an indicator of their program’s effectiveness.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

FY 2015-16 Data Highlights

- CLSEPA served 83 clients this year, providing an average of 8.1 hours of service related to housing, immigration and economic advancement over an average of 43 days
- Clients ranged across the risk spectrum, with most Low (40%) or Moderate (50%) on the pre-JAIS, but 56% of those assessed with the CANS having 8 or more actionable needs across multiple domains
- Benefits of CLSEPA's services included: prevention of loss of housing (30%), enforcement of housing rights (24%), and economic benefits such as recovering unpaid wages (19%)

Profile of Clients Served

In their first year of funding, CLSEPA served 83 parents, all of whom had demographic data (see Table 1). A slight majority of participants were female (53%) and identified predominantly as Latino (89%), followed by Other/Unknown (8%). Service data was available for 97 cases¹ who received an average of 8.1 hours of services, which was evenly split between Immigration (8.3 hours) and Housing and Economic Advancement (8.0) services. The types of cases served by CLS included housing issues (35%), visa/deportation (18%), voluntary attorney program (VAP; 18%), Special Immigrant Juveniles (SIJ) status (17%), and deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA; 5%).

Table 1. Client Demographics, FY 2015-16

| Metric | FY 15-16 |
|---|----------|
| Clients & Services | |
| Number of clients served | 83 |
| Average number of hours of service | 8.1 |
| Average time in the program (months) | 1.4 |
| Risk Indicators | |
| Pre-JAIS Risk Level^a | |
| Low | 40% |
| Moderate | 50% |
| High | 10% |
| CANS Items^b | |
| Clients with 3 or more actionable needs | 56% |
| Number of actionable needs per client | 10.3 |
| Percent of items with actionable needs | 22% |
| ^a n = 10 clients with complete pre-JAIS data. ^b n = 18 clients with data on a total of 46 CANS items. | |

¹ Fourteen (14) cases had no client data accounting for the discrepancy with the number of participants.

Risk Indicators

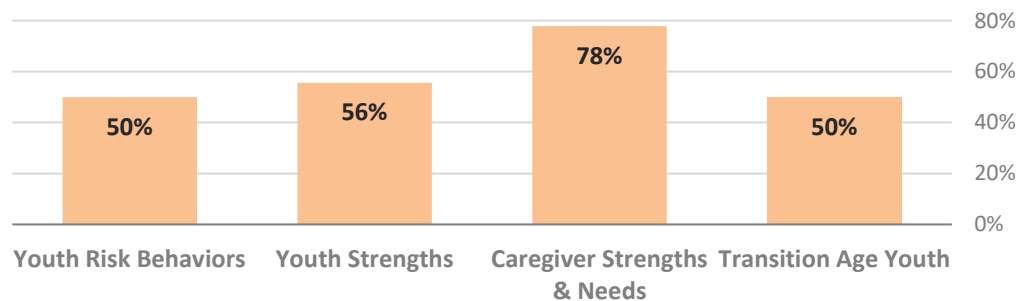
In FY 2015-16, CLSEPA assessed 10 participants with the pre-JAIS and they were predominantly Low (40%) and Moderate risk (50%). CLSEPA also provided the following narrative of the risk factors facing their clientele:

Our program areas reflect the biggest risk factors we see in the families and youth in our community that may contribute to delinquency: stable and secure housing, immigration services, and economic security. With housing, we have seen an increasing number of rent increases and evictions due to the highly competitive housing market. In terms of economic security, we have seen difficulties in securing employment due to background check and credit reporting issues for low-income families who are still recovering from the recession.

For immigration, we have seen youth discouraged by the doors that are closed to them because of their lack of immigration status. We have also seen an increase in the numbers of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children released to San Mateo County: since October 2013, 582 children have been released to sponsors residing in this county.² Many of these youth have experienced significant trauma in their lives and need supportive services to assist their transition to life in the United States. Immigrant communities typically face risk factors such as limited access to housing, healthcare, financial security, and may fall victim to wage theft, scams, and crime.

On the CANS assessment, 56% of respondents had actionable needs on 3 or more items and the average number of actionable needs per clients was 10.3, slightly higher than the average across all JJCPA programs (9.5). Figure 1 presents the percentage of clients with at least one actionable need on each of the 4 CANS modules CLS administered.

Figure 1. Percent of clients with at Least 1 Moderate or Significant Need by CANS Module



Note: n = 10 clients who completed a total of 46 items

The Caregiver Strengths & Needs module had the highest percentage of participants with actionable needs (78%); this module assesses the caregivers' potential areas of need while simultaneously highlighting the areas in which the caregiver can be a resource for the youth. Participants also had high rates of needs across the other 3 modules assessed. Interesting, there was a dichotomy in the pattern of participants' scores, with 8 respondents (44%) having 2 or fewer needs across all items, and the remaining 10 respondents (56%) each having 8 or more needs. The percentage of items assessed with actionable needs (22%) was the highest across all funded CBOs.

² Office of Refugee Resettlement, Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by County, available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/unaccompanied-children-released-to-sponsors-by-county>.

Program-specific Outcomes

CLSEPA documented the main benefits of their services to clients for Housing and Economic Advancement cases that had closed during the fiscal year (n = 37). The most frequently cited benefits included the following:

- Prevented loss of housing — 30%
- Enforced housing rights — 24%
- Economic advancement (e.g., obtained unpaid wages, remove barriers to self-sufficiency) — 19%
- Other housing-related benefits (e.g., soft landing move out, safe housing) — 16%
- Helped client find an attorney — 5%

Client Vignette

As a way to illustrate the effort of the CLSEPA program and the benefits to its participants, staff provided the following client vignette:

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of focus client: | “Josue” |
| Age and sex of client: | 18 years old, male |
| Reason for referral: | While he was at Camp Glenwood, Josue was referred to our program by his defense attorney. He had expressed to her that he had concerns about his immigration status. We met with Josue at Camp Glenwood for a consultation. Josue needed urgent assistance with his immigration case so that he would be able to start working after he was released from Camp Glenwood. His case was particularly complex because he had been ordered deported when he was a young child. |
| Client’s behavior, affect and appearance when they first started your program: | When we first started working with Josue, he was interested in learning about the options for his immigration case. He wanted to be able to work once he was released from Camp Glenwood. He was enthusiastic about gaining immigration status and wanted to move forward with the process as quickly as possible. |
| What activities did your client engage in and was their engagement consistent? | We worked with Josue to put together two different applications for immigration relief. He submitted two applications so that he could get a work permit as soon as possible. Josue worked hard to get all of the documentation needed for the applications quickly. He cooperated fully and did not miss any appointments after he was released from Camp Glenwood. |
| Describe client’s affect, behavior or appearance toward the end of your program, noting any ways in which they changed. | Josue is much more hopeful about his future now that he has a path to a work permit and legal permanent residency. He graduated from high school and has started his first year of college. His family has reported that he has made major positive changes in his behavior. We have observed loving and respectful interactions between Josue and his mother. His mother has supported Josue through the process. |
| What did your client learn as a result of this program? | Josue learned about the options available to him for his immigration case. He learned that he had a deportation order, but that he still qualified for legal relief and could get a work permit. |
| What is your client doing differently in their life as a result of the program? | Josue has graduated from high school and is going to college. He has not yet received his work permit. However, once he does, he plans to start working lawfully so that he can be more self-sufficient. |