



SAN MATEO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT



Community Legal Services of
East Palo Alto Annual Evaluation
2019-2020

About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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Program Description

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) provides legal services to enable residents of East Palo Alto and beyond to achieve a secure and thriving future. CLSEPA services include community education, individual legal advice and representation, legal assistance to community groups, policy advocacy, and impact litigation.

CLSEPA receives additional support from law firms, corporations, and law schools throughout the region, who collectively donate millions of dollars in legal services annually to their clients.

CLSEPA focuses on:

- **Immigration**—Providing legal assistance to immigrants seeking better lives, allowing families and youths to emerge from the shadows and expand their educational and career opportunities; helping immigrant survivors of domestic violence and other crimes, refugees and asylum seekers, immigrant youths and young adults, abused, abandoned and neglected child immigrants, and immigrants facing deportation in court.
- **Housing**—Providing legal assistance to tenants to improve living conditions, combat unlawful abuses, and prevent homelessness and the dislocation of a diverse low-income community.
- **Economic Advancement**—Working with low-income community members facing barriers to their economic advancement, such as past criminal justice system involvement, wage theft, discrimination, and harassment. The long-term goal is to increase self-sufficiency and an improved quality of life for the community at large.

Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2019-20

According to CLSEPA management, CLSEPA's main programmatic challenge in fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 involved adjustments to services around changes to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic only magnified and deepened the inequities facing the low-income community members, and almost immediately, CLSEPA had to respond to this crisis. During the pandemic, CLSEPA saw an exponential increase in requests for rental assistance through the Rescue Housing Fund program due to many families experiencing a complete loss of income. Additionally, leading up to the Supreme Court DACA decision in June, 2020, the Immigration team worked tirelessly to process as many DACA renewals as possible for CLSEPA's young clients, with the assistance of *pro bono* law firms who were willing to lend their remote resources to processing these document-heavy applications. Many of CLSEPA's staff attorneys, who usually work in other areas, pivoted to assist the Housing team with meeting the demand, in addition to leveraging volunteer assistance. Through this pandemic, CLSEPA remained open to the community, using technology such as installing a Ring doorbell. This allowed the receptionist to speak with community members who access services in-person because they do not have a phone or internet to call CLSEPA. All their consultation clinics have been remote throughout the pandemic, and they hope to continue providing legal consultations

remotely. Before the pandemic, CLSEPA's social worker and staff would engage in various outreach and know-your-rights activities in partnership with other organizations that serve their client community. In Quarter Two alone, their social worker attended seven events, including a back-to-school health fair, where she provided resources and information for families.

Now, CLSEPA is researching other ways to provide resources and legal services safely and remotely, and it will be looking for strategic partnerships throughout the county so they can have a positive impact on families who are trying make it through this crisis. CLSEPA's workers' rights team will be creating accessible know-your-rights materials on CalOSHA guidelines for all its low-income essential workers, and its reentry team will be providing remote advice and interactive clinics for job seekers who have conviction histories, with the hope that they can also find new jobs in the coming months.

Evaluation Methods

Programs provided by CLSEPA are funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation's (Probation) Juvenile Probation and Camp Funding (JPCF). CLSEPA monitors programs and reports client, service, and outcome data to Probation and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are:

Participants and Services: Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Risk Factors: CLSEPA and other grantee programs used the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment to provide a standard measure of risk, life functioning, and areas of strength and need for youths:

- **CANS**—This is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision-making in determining level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow outcome monitoring. The CANS consists of items scored on a 4-point scale of 0-3, with a score of two or three indicating an actionable need. The assessment groups items into several core modules, including Youth Strengths, Risk Behaviors, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, Life Functioning, Caregiver Strengths and Needs, and Acculturation. Secondary modules that can be triggered by answers to specific core module items include School, Trauma, Substance Use, and Juvenile Justice.

Outcomes CLSEPA also collected three program-specific outcome measures to track progress toward helping its clients gain a secure and thriving future.

Evaluation Findings

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Highlights

- CLSEPA served 45 adult participants in FY 2019-20, providing an average of 4.8 hours of service.
- Due to a small number of youths with a completed CANS assessment (n=2), Caregiver Strengths are not reported this fiscal year.

Profile of Clients Served

In FY 2019-20, CLSEPA served 45 adult clients, who received an average of 4.8 hours of services (Table 1). Over one-half of these participants (56%) were male and primarily Hispanic/Latino (86%), while 4% identified as White/Caucasian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Other. The average age of clients served was 36 years. Sixty-five percent (65%) of service hours were rendered for legal and paralegal services, and 35% were for social work.

Table 1. Client Services

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Number of Clients Served	83	98	1	45	45
Average Number of Hours Served	8.1	11.5	43.5	6.8	4.8
Average Time in the Program (Months)	1.4	6.8	12.0	N/A	4.0

Program-Specific Outcomes

CLSEPA tracks its performance on three important outcomes (Table 2):

- The number of youths or families receiving legal or social work consults
- The percentage of youths or families receiving legal representation
- The percentage of youths or families receiving immigration legal representation

Through its work with adult family members, CLSEPA met its performance measure target for the number of at-risk youths and/or families receiving consults, and it exceeded the target percentage of youths and families receiving legal representation who overcame an obstacle. Fifty percent (50%) of youths and families acquired immigration status, which was slightly less than their target in FY 2019-20.

Table 2. Performance Measures

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY 18-19	FY 19-20 TARGET	FY 19-20 RESULTS
Number of at-risk youth and/or youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and/or family members of these youth who received legal or social work consults and/or services	45	45 per year	45
Percent of youth and families of youth receiving legal representation who overcame an obstacle to higher education, gainful employment, or stable housing (e.g., criminal record expunged/cleared, resolved debt issue, avoided eviction judgment)	100%	80%	90%
Percent of youth and families of youth receiving immigration legal representation who acquire immigration status	N/A	80%	50%

Client Story

Each year, staff at CLSEPA provides a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. The following is the client story CLSEPA provided for FY 2019-20 to help illustrate the effects of its services.

Name of Client	Sarah
Age and Gender	49, female
Reason for Referral	Sarah lives in San Mateo with one child who is about 11 years old. Sarah’s goal is to obtain her homecare license through DSS. With CLSEPA’s assistance, she has been able to seal multiple arrests for domestic violence. She was never convicted of domestic violence, but she physically fought with her ex-husband on multiple occasions, often with her son present when he was younger. Her son was even taken away from her when she fled her house and hid with her son at a hotel. Her ex-husband called the police, who then found her and arrested her.
Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program	When Sarah first came to CLSEPA in 2019, she was frustrated because she had tried on her own to apply for a license. She believed that because she was never convicted of domestic violence, only arrested, these arrests would not impact her application. Unfortunately, they did, and her licensing application was denied. Sarah was also emotionally unstable because she had lost her older daughter, and her mother had just recently been diagnosed with a long-term illness. This meant that eventually, she would need to care for her mother as well as her son. Sarah was desperate to obtain CLSEPA’s assistance with cleaning up her arrest record so she could reach her goal of becoming licensed.

<p>Activity Engagement and Consistency</p>	<p>Sarah had arrests in San Mateo County and in other counties, including Sacramento. She filed her petitions on her own and attended all her hearings. When she needed additional support, CLSEPA was able to step in, but she was incredibly determined to seal all her arrests and really put her past behind her.</p>
<p>Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward the End of the Program</p>	<p>In February, after obtaining orders in all her sealing petitions and waiting 90 days for the Department of Justice to process those petitions and change her record, CLSEPA met Sarah in person at a live scan event. There, she could get her fingerprints taken so she could obtain an updated copy of her RAP sheet. She was calm, relaxed, happy to see us again, and let us know how her mother and son were both doing well.</p>
<p>What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program</p>	<p>Sarah learned that, while her journey might be long, she now has a chance to accomplish her goals. CLSEPA will continue to support her through her licensing application process, but she has demonstrated that her perseverance and confidence in herself will get her to where she wants to go.</p>
<p>What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program</p>	<p>Through the pandemic, she has been resourceful and diligent about putting together all the supporting letters and documents she needs for her licensing application. She has continued to care for her parents and has been working with her family to support her children.</p>
<p>The Value of the Program in the Client’s Words</p>	<p>“I couldn’t be any more grateful for finding CLSEPA. It’s been 15 years trying to find somebody to help consolidate my paperwork. They gave me a chance. They listened and they believed in me. Just by accomplishing what I have with them I feel so much better about myself. I’m in the process of looking for full-time employment and I’m not worried ashamed or disappointed when I submit my application or talk to somebody about the type of person that I am. Thank you so much for the help you’ve given me and all the time and people I’ve met through you.”</p>