



Breaking Barriers to Justice

Community Needs Assessment

November 2019

Prepared for:

Land of Lincoln Legal Aid

Prepared by:

Brown School Evaluation Center

Washington University in St. Louis

Community Needs Assessment 2019

Land of Lincoln Legal Aid commissioned a community needs assessment to determine whether the current services match the needs of their target population in civil legal matters. Results of the needs assessment are intended to inform Land of Lincoln's decision making process for service delivery and organizational resource allocation. The last needs assessment took place in 2011. For this needs assessment, Land of Lincoln partnered with **Brown School Evaluation Center** to lead the effort between January and August, 2019. This report provides details of the needs assessment approach, findings, and implications.

Survey Findings

Survey Participants

A total of 499 survey participants completed the survey at various sites. The survey collected various demographic information from the participants:

- Gender
- Age
- Race and Ethnicity
- Employment Status

With the exception of gender, clients and community members had very similar demographic characteristics.

499 Survey Participants

400 Community Members

*(non-clients;
live in the service area;
income and asset eligible)*

99 Clients

Gender

Figure 2. More than two-thirds of survey participants were female.

More female clients (81%) completed the survey, compared to community members (65%).

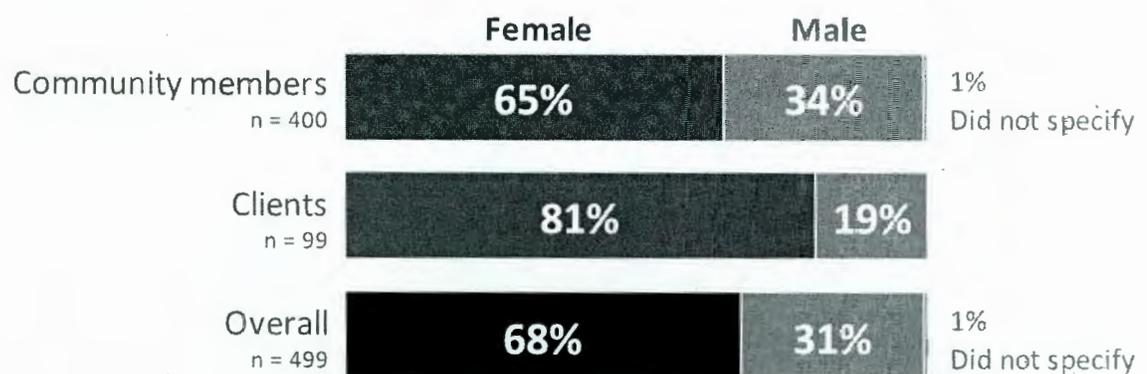
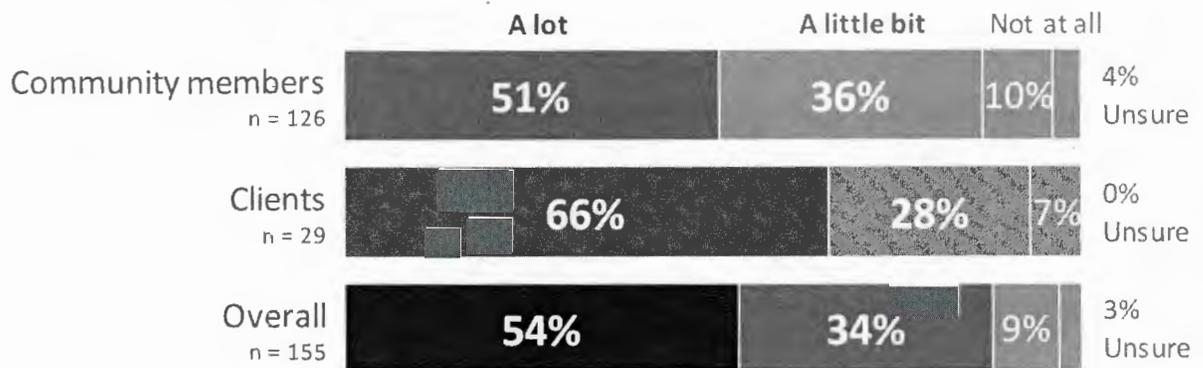


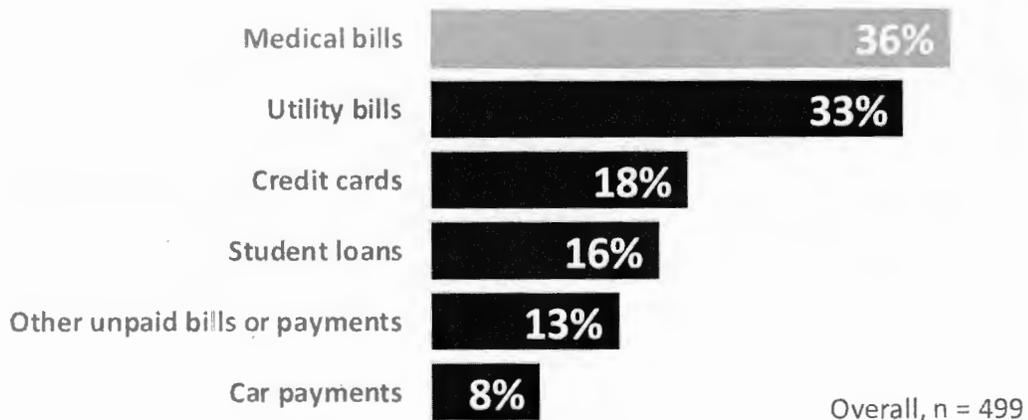
Figure 11. Although the majority (54%) of survey participants said that losing Medicaid or Medicare was very disruptive, the proportion was higher for clients (66%), compared to community members (51%).



Consumer Protection

Figure 12. More than one third (36%) of survey participants had unpaid medical bills.

It was closely followed by 33% who reported inability to pay their utility bills on time. Considering the challenges with access to Medicaid or Medicare, having unpaid medical bills makes sense. This trend was very similar among community members and clients. Other unpaid bills or payments included: payday loans, court fines, mortgage or rent, and personal loans.



Most survey respondents (59%) shared that they were unable to pay their bills due to loss of a job or source of income. Having a family health emergency (22%) and low income (14%) were the second and third most common reasons. These trends were seen among community members as well as clients. However, there were more clients whose reason was loss of a job, compared to the community members.

As shown in Figure 13 below, a small proportion (5%) of community members and clients had unpaid bills or loans due to unexpected property damage or loss (e.g., fire, tornado, or basement flooding). Other reasons included: limited income, divorce or separation, loss of a partner, health issues, medical debt, and automotive expenses.

Figure 13. More clients (69%) had unpaid bills or loans due to loss of job or source of income, compared to the community members (57%).

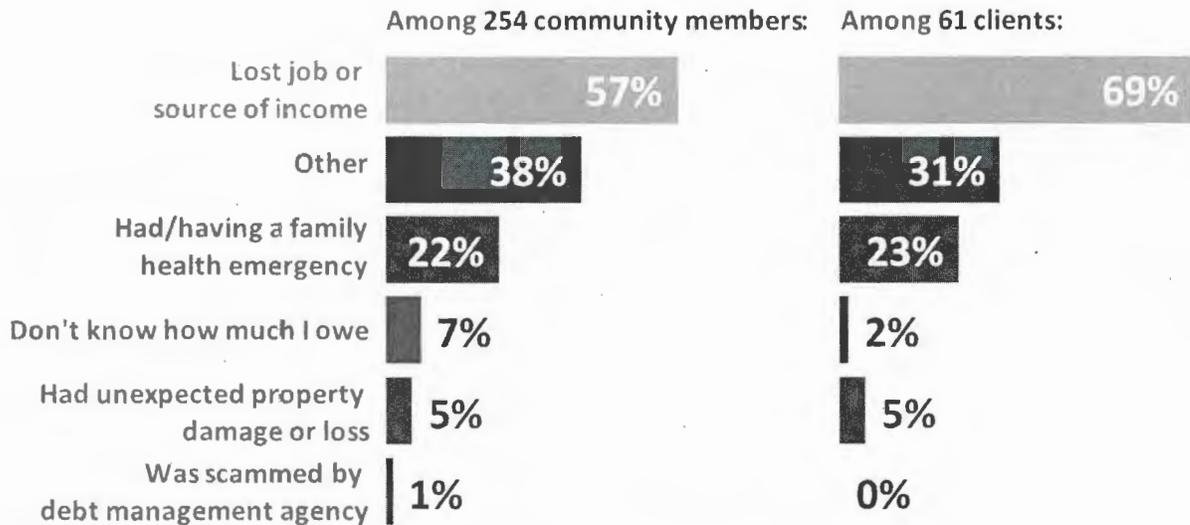


Figure 14. Utility shut off for non-payment was the most reported collection activity by survey participants (19%), followed by court ordered payments (12%).

