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**Component Assessment: Self-Help Centers**

Key Elements

The responses in this assessment provide a snapshot of Self-Help Centers in your state. All responses are meant solely to inform assessment of this component.

Key elements of **Self-Help Centers** include:

* Provide concierge/non-lawyer navigator services;
* All information should be provided in plain language;
* Prepare instructions and flow charts on legal processes, applicable law and how to prepare for and present a case;
* Provide links to information and forms on other specific subject matters, including out-of-court resolution;
* Ensure materials are optimized for mobile viewing;
* Provide information on which courts hear what kinds of cases as well as court access   
  (e.g., transportation logistics and parking);
* Ensure there are staffed self-help centers in or near the courthouse or otherwise accessible in the community; and
* Ensure there are multiple channels of providing information (e.g., one-on-one, workshops, online).

Need

1. Do Self-Help Centers exist in your state?

Yes  No  Unsure

Additional information:

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. To what degree are Self-Help Centers available at the county level?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include service areas reported by Self-Help Centers.

No counties  Few counties  Half of counties  Most counties  All counties

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. What is your best estimate of known demand for Self-Help Centers?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include the court and Self-Help Centers.

Please provide a brief explanation of the calculation below under "Additional information".

Number:

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Response

1. What is the best estimate of how much of the Self-Help Centers demand is met?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include the court and Self-Help Centers.

Number of individuals receiving Self-Help Center assistance:

To calculate the percentage below =

Number of individuals receiving Self-Help Center assistance *divided by*

Number of individuals in need of Self-Help Center assistance (question 3).

Please provide a brief explanation of your calculation below under “Additional information”.

Percentage:

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. Self-Help Centers provide services for which case types? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information are court statistics, caseloads and enabling rules and statutes. Please indicate any distinctions within contract cases below under “Additional information”.

Contract (includes landlord/tenant, debt collection & mortgage foreclosure)

Small Claims

Tort

Probate

Real Property

Mental Health (includes civil commitment, guardianship)

Family (includes divorce, protection orders)

Other

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. At what stage in the case are Self-Help Center services provided? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include program descriptions and enabling rules and statutes. Please identify any barriers in the notes below.

Pre-filing

Post-filing, uncontested

Post-filing, contested

Through entry of judgment

Post-judgement

Appellate

We collect no case stage data

Other

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Technology Integration

1. Are Self-Help Centers services available remotely (via video or telephone)?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include self-help online tools, Self-Help Center protocols and enabling rules and statutes. Please identify any barriers below under “Additional information”.

No counties  Few counties  Half of counties  Most counties  All counties

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. Is technology being optimized (e.g., technology utilized to the extent possible where practicable and feasible)?

*Tips*: Suggested sources of information include surveys of Self-Help Center staff, legal aid, court staff, judicial officers and user focus groups or interviews. States might also identify additional technology examples. Please discuss any limitations in broadband access and infrastructure challenges below under “Additional information”.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Always** |
| ***Administration*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case management tools |  |  |  |  |  |
| Litigation e-tools (discovery, filing) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work & data sharing tools |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***General Education/Information*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Communication tools (email/text notices) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Information-sharing tools (websites) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Service Delivery*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Remote communication tools (videoconference) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case resolution tools (online dispute resolution) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |  |

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Language

1. Are language access services and supports provided?

*Tips:* Respondent might replicate this question for “in court” and “remote” or discuss any distinctions in the “Additional Information” section below. Suggested sources for “in court” information include language access plan, Self-Help Center policies and protocols, language services available; “remote” include navigator program policies and protocols, language services, state-level language coalitions/access to justice commissions. The Justice Index: Language Access Index might also inform responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Services & Supports*** | **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Always** |
| Interpretation (in-person, certified) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Translated materials (signage, orders, general information) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bilingual employee support |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training |  |  |  |  |  |
| Outreach |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |  |

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. Do Self-Help Centers reflect plain language principles and practices?

*Tips:* Example: Communications are concise.

Visit [plainlanguage.gov](https://plainlanguage.gov/) for additional examples of plain language principles and practices.

Respondent might replicate this question for “in court” and “remote” or discuss any distinctions in the “Additional Information” section below. Suggested sources for “in court” and “remote” information include language access plan, Self-Help Center policies and protocols around plain language, survey on existence and use of plain language tools and resources. The Justice Index: Language Access Index might also inform responses to this question.

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Often  Always

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Special Populations

1. Do Self-Help Centers comply with disability access requirements?

*Tips:* Respondent might replicate this question for “in court” and “remote” or discuss any distinctions below under “Additional information”. Suggested sources for information include state accommodations rules and compliance, Self-Help Center policies and protocols, evaluations and reports on compliance status. The Justice Index: Disability Access Index might also inform responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Access Requirements*** | **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Always** |
| ADA[[1]](#footnote-1) Title 1: Employment |  |  |  |  |  |
| ADA Title 2: State and Local Government Services |  |  |  |  |  |
| ADA Title 3: Public Accommodations |  |  |  |  |  |
| ADA Title 4: Telecommunications |  |  |  |  |  |
| ADA Title 5: Miscellaneous |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 |  |  |  |  |  |

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. Are safeguards in place for vulnerable populations? (For example, individuals with trauma, cognitive impairment, learning disabilities, homebound, etc.)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include surveys of Self-Help Center staff, court staff, judicial officers, user focus groups and interviews and community and social service provider interviews or focus groups.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Safeguard*** | **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Always** |
| Trauma-informed responses |  |  |  |  |  |
| Accommodations for remote appearances |  |  |  |  |  |
| Appropriate modalities to support user comprehension and participation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Additional time for client review |  |  |  |  |  |
| Confidentiality practices |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |  |

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Ecosystem Ties & Voice

1. Are principles of diversity, equity and inclusion being applied to content development and/or service delivery? (e.g., Do Self-Help Centers reflect cultural sensitivity? Is language gender-neutral? Is the impact of bias being considered?)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include surveys of Self-Help Center staff, court staff, judicial officers, user focus groups and interviews and community and social service provider interviews or focus groups. Respondents may discuss content development and service delivery separately.

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. What financing structures are in place to support Self-Help Centers? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include interviews with Self-Help Center, court and provider leadership.

Budget line items

Fees

Private funding

Grants

Endowment

None

Other

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. Is financing for Self-Help Centers sustainable (able to be maintained at a certain level)?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include interviews with court and Self-Help Center representatives.

Yes  No  Unsure

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. How does the access to justice governance/leadership support Self-Help Centers? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include opinion surveys from mediators, private attorneys, legal aid, court staff, judicial officers, Self-Help Center leaders and access to justice strategic plans.

Promoting Self-Help Centers and programs

Funding

Marketing

Support complementary initiatives

Other

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Measurement

1. What data do you collect on Self-Help Centers? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include Self-Help Centers reports and court case management data.

Self-Help Center patronage (service numbers)

Number of cases with Self-Help Center assistance

Self-help Center affiliation

Self-Help Center use by case type

Outcomes in cases with Self-Help Center assistance

Case length for cases using Self-Help Centers

No data is collected

Other (can add multiple options):

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

17.i. How is the data used to inform access to justice strategy/policy?

17.ii. Who sees the data?

1. Are there accepted practices around documenting Self-Help Center data?

*Tips:* Examples of accepted practices include uniform data definitions, collection techniques and collection frequency.

If yes, please explain practices below under “Additional information”.

Yes  No  Unsure

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Cumulative Component Assessment

Please score your overall progress on Self-Help Centers based on the compiled information and additional data used to inform this assessment. The scoring should use the following scale:

**None:** In this category, component key elements, content or services are not available; no data is being collected; there is no sustained funding and there are many gaps to providing this service or content.

**Minimal levels:** In this category, very little demand for component key elements, content, or services is estimated to be met, potentially only in a few counties. There may be only a few (1-2) case types or litigation stages in which component key elements, content, or services are available. The majority of responses focusing on technology, language supports, access requirements, and safeguards, are ‘Rarely’ with a few ‘Sometimes’ selections. There are limited examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as weak, unsustainable financing structures and data collection practices.

**Partial:** In this category, it is estimated that between a quarter and half of the demand for component key elements, content, or services is estimated to be met. Component key elements, content or services may not be statewide and in less than half of all counties. There may be only three to four case types and few litigation stages in which component key elements, content or services are available. The majority of responses focusing on technology, language services, access requirements and safeguards are ‘Sometimes’ with a few ‘Rarely’ or ‘Often’ selections. Additionally, only a few examples of diversity, equity and inclusion are present. Financing structures are somewhat stable while data collection is sporadic and rarely informs strategy or policy.

**Sufficient:** In this category, it is estimated that more than half of the demand for component key elements, content or services is being met. The component key elements, content or services may exist statewide and if not statewide, in many of the counties. Component key elements, content or services are provided to most case types and at multiple stages in the case. The majority of responses focusing on technology, language supports, access requirements, and safeguards are ‘Often’ with a few ‘Always’ or ‘Sometimes’ selections. Additionally, there are more than 2-3 examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion present. Stable and sustainable financing structures are listed; data collection may be established and occurring but there is room for advancement in how it informs the design, delivery and sustainability of the component.

**Advanced:** In this category, greater than 75% of the demand for component key elements, content or services is being met. The component key elements, content or services are statewide and are provided to almost all cases and at every feasible stage in the case. The majority of responses focusing on technology, language services, access requirements and safeguards are ‘Always’ with a few ‘Often’ or ‘Sometimes’ selections. Additionally, there are numerous examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Financing structures are described as robust and sustainable. Data collection and sharing occur regularly to inform component design and delivery with strong feedback loops in place to guide future development.

*Overall progress on Self-Help Centers:*

None  Minimal levels  Partial  Sufficient  Advanced

1. Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information on ADA access requirements see, <https://www.ada.gov/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)