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**Component Assessment: Courtroom Assistance**

Key Elements

The responses in this assessment provide a snapshot of Courtroom Assistance in your state. All responses are meant solely to inform assessment of this component.

Key elements of **Courtroom Assistance** include:

* Adopt attorney-for-the-day services;
* Ensure there are in-person assistants, facilitators or navigators to help with the preparation of necessary documentation or information;
* Develop technology tools to support the work of assistants, such as automated forms and triage tools;
* Develop technology tools for the judges to prepare and explain final orders in the courtroom;
* Provide information and resources to explain next steps in the case and answer questions about orders entered; and
* Ensure there are referrals to additional help or services, including limited-scope legal services and social services.

Need

1. Is Courtroom Assistance available in your state?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Unsure

Additional information:

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

1. To what degree is Courtroom Assistance available at the county level?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include state court data, self-help center, navigator and judicial surveys.

[ ]  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 Courtroom Assistance?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include court staff and self-help center staff.

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. How much of the Courtroom Assistance demand is met?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include court and self-help center staff and court caseloads.

Number of individuals receiving Courtroom Assistance:

To calculate the percentage below =

Number of individuals receiving Courtroom Assistance *divided by*

Number of individuals in need of Courtroom 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. What case types use Courtroom Assistance? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information are court statistics and 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 is Courtroom Assistance provided? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include online materials, enabling rules and statutes and stakeholder surveys.

[ ]  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. Is Courtroom Assistance available remotely (via video or telephone)?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include websites, online tools 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 opinion surveys from those providing courtroom assistance, 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:* Suggested sources include Courtroom Assistance policies and protocols, language access plan and language services available, online assistance tools and 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. Does Courtroom Assistance 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.

Suggested sources for information include Courtroom Assistance policies and protocols, language access plan, online assistance tools, language services available and language coalitions/access to justice commissions.

[ ]  Never [ ]  Rarely [ ]  Sometimes [ ]  Often [ ]  Always

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Special Populations

1. Does Courtroom Assistance comply with disability access requirements?

*Tips:* Suggested sources for information include state accommodations compliance and rules, 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 opinion surveys from self-help center staff, legal aid, 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 Courtroom Assistance practices reflect cultural sensitivity? Is language gender-neutral? Is the impact of bias being considered?)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include opinion surveys from civil legal aid, pro bono coordinators, court staff and self-help center staff, 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 Courtroom Assistance? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include interviews with court leadership and Courtroom Assistance service leaders.

[ ]  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 Courtroom Assistance sustainable (able to be maintained at a certain level)?

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include interviews with state court leadership and surveys of judges, court staff, self-help center staff and other relevant 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 Courtroom Assistance? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include opinion surveys from access to justice commissioners, legal aid, court staff, judges and access to justice strategic plans.

[ ]  Promoting Courtroom Assistance programs

[ ]  Funding

[ ]  Marketing

[ ]  Support complementary initiatives

Additional information (such as country/region distinctions):

Remarks on strengths and gaps:

Measurement

1. What data do you collect on Courtroom Assistance? (select all that apply)

*Tips:* Suggested sources of information include Courtroom Assistance programs and services, self-help center reports and court case management data.

[ ]  Number of judges and/or courts utilizing Courtroom Assistance

[ ]  Number of cases with Courtroom Assistance

[ ]  Courtroom Assistance use by case type

[ ]  Outcomes in cases with Courtroom Assistance

[ ]  Case length for cases with Courtroom Assistance

[ ]  Post-judgement motions for cases with and without Courtroom Assistance

[ ]  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 Courtroom Assistance?

*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 Courtroom Assistance 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 Courtroom Assistance:*

[ ]  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)