

Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation

Final Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Justice Access Centre (JAC) Background and Objectives

The Justice Access Centre (JAC) vision is to provide a single location, in a given geographic region, where people can obtain assistance with family and civil justice issues. In this capacity it is seen as a “one-stop-shop” where people can benefit from a range of legal information, advice, mediation, and other services and guidance that will help them resolve their justice problems. The concept is to provide clients with “holistic” support via a collaborative approach among service providers who offer different types and levels of service.

The JAC was implemented as a pilot project in Nanaimo on October 30, 2008. Its implementation and immediate outcomes are the subject of this report. The Centre is jointly operated by the Ministry of Attorney General (Family Justice Services Division and Justice Services Branch) and the Legal Services Society. Each organization has an on-site manager. These managers work jointly to ensure that holistic service is provided to clients, and to manage the involvement of in-house service partners and day-to-day operations within the JAC.

Evaluation Objectives

The *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation* was conducted over a nine-month period from September 2008 to June 2009¹. The evaluation was designed to answer several key evaluation questions related to the implementation of, and immediate outcomes associated with, the Nanaimo JAC Pilot Project. Data from each of several lines of evidence was analyzed and findings were integrated to address the evaluation issues identified in the evaluation framework for the project.

Information gathered during the study was used to inform responses to the key research questions identified for the evaluation. Evaluation questions were based on the desired immediate outcomes identified in the evaluation framework and on standard implementation and process evaluation issues. The findings from the evaluation activities demonstrate that the JAC model was implemented as planned in Nanaimo and that to varying degrees, all of the desired immediate outcomes defined in the evaluation framework were achieved.

Highlighted below are key findings from the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre (JAC) Implementation Evaluation*. Findings are based on multiple lines of evidence including a review of program documentation and administrative data, three site visits, 28 key informant interviews with JAC staff and other stakeholders, a survey of more than 270 JAC clients, and two focus groups with 14 JAC clients. It should be emphasized that given the relatively early implementation of the initiative, the evaluation was not

¹ Evaluation findings are based on data reflecting JAC activities from December 1 – May 31, 2009.

designed to provide information as to the achievement of intermediate or longer-term outcomes. Instead, the evaluation addresses the implementation of the JAC initiative and the extent to which some immediate outcomes were achieved.

Summary of Nanaimo JAC Outputs

During the period from December 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009 (hereinafter referred to as 'the pilot period'):

- 1,981 individuals became new clients of the Nanaimo JAC
- 4,742 client justice issues were identified
- almost one-quarter (24%) had civil justice issues, 80% had family justice issues and 3% had CFCSA issues. Overall, 8% had issues in more than one category
- almost two-thirds (62%) of clients served had more than one justice issue²
- 5,860 services were provided to 2,122³ new and existing clients
- 2,122 distinct clients received initial interview services from Civil Family Justice interviewers (CFJI).⁴ Forty-one percent (861) clients received initial interview services only
- 1,261 distinct clients received one or more services beyond the initial interview. After the initial interview:
 - 59% accessed LSS services only
 - 24% accessed MAG services only
 - 17% accessed both MAG and LSS services⁵
 - 91% received in-person services
- 1,865 external referrals⁶ were provided to 1,183 distinct clients
- more than one-half (57%) of clients received two or more services

In addition to providing civil and family justice services, during the six-month period from November 25, 2008 to May 27, 2009, JAC staff arranged and conducted 178 distinct outreach events/meetings/ activities to reach out to 126 different groups/agencies/

² While 1,981 people became clients of the JAC between December 1, 2008 and May 31, 2009, the 2,008 distinct clients with issues identified include those who became clients of the JAC before the pilot period (e.g., before December 1, 2008).

³ Note that a distinction has been made between individuals who became clients of the JAC during the pilot period (1,981) and those who received services during the pilot period (2,122) as some of those who became clients before the pilot period began received services during the pilot period.

⁴ After the evaluation period ended this position was reclassified and the job title changed to Civil/Family Justice Advisor.

⁵ It should be noted that this data excludes clients who received intake service but did not proceed beyond that point to receive other services during the pilot period. Clients excluded are those who had an initial intake interview with reception, a CFJI, the MAG Manager or LSS Administrative support but did not go on to receive other services.

⁶ The term "referral" has a broad meaning within the JAC. For example, an employee who provides a client with a service may also provide that client with a list of suggested places to contact for additional services or information. Each of these suggestions could be entered into JTS as a referral but it is not anticipated that a client would contact all referrals.

programs to provide information about the JAC and the issues addressed and services offered at the Centre.

Demographic Characteristics of JAC Clients

The JAC is accessed by a diverse range of clients. Detailed below are highlights of the socio-demographic characteristics of JAC clients.

- Just over half (56.4%) are female
- 18.6% are Aboriginal
- Almost one-third (31.8%) live in one-person households
- Almost one-third (32.1%) are separated but not divorced
- Almost half (45.2%) are between the ages of 35 and 49
- 77.6% had an income of less than \$30,000 per year
- 78.1% had no trade certification, college or diploma or university degree

Analysis was undertaken to establish the socio-demographic profile of JAC clients relative to the general population in the Nanaimo Regional District (based on the 2006 Census). Key findings are summarized below.

- The proportion of JAC clients who are of Aboriginal descent (18.6%) is more than three times that of the general population (4.9%)
- Not surprisingly, the proportion of separated (32.1%) or divorced (7.9%) clients in the JAC is markedly different from that of the region (3% and 10% respectively)
- While the proportion of JAC clients with less than a grade 12 education (33.3%) is not markedly different from that of the general population (25.3%), the proportion that have completed post-secondary education (21.9%) is much lower relative to the general population (45.1%)
- Consistent with lower levels of educational attainment, JAC clients had much lower income levels – more than three-quarters (77.6%) reported an income of less than \$30,000 per year. In comparison, in 2005, a lower proportion (61.8%) of Nanaimo's population (aged 15 years of age or older) reported earnings of less than \$30,000 per year

Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions were addressed in this report:

1. Are the objectives of the JAC well understood?
2. Is communication and information sharing effective?
3. Is the JAC open to and easily accessed by a range of clients with varying issues?
4. What is the client's level of satisfaction with the JAC?
5. Do assessments identify client needs?

6. Do clients receive appropriate referrals?
7. Has the JAC increased awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services?

Key Evaluation Findings

JAC clients report a high level of satisfaction with all areas of service.

The large majority (93%) of JAC clients surveyed found the integrated approach to service delivery at the JAC helpful. Most clients (80%) were satisfied with the extent to which they were able to resolve their family and/or civil justice issues and concerns at the JAC. Overall, client survey results suggest that the majority of clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the various attributes of the JAC and the ease with which they could access services. For example, 78% of clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of the JAC, 79% with the ease of getting to the JAC, 86% with the hours of operation, 75% with the waiting time to receive service and 84% with the availability of staff to assist them. These findings are further supported by information provided during focus group discussions in which clients expressed a high level of satisfaction with access, hours of operation and helpfulness of JAC staff.

The JAC was implemented with sufficient training and orientation to staff initially involved in the Centre.

The JAC was implemented with sufficient staff training and orientation activities. For example, all of the staff interviewed reported a solid and increasing understanding of the objectives of the JAC and most demonstrated an understanding of how their role contributes to those objectives. JAC staff employed since the opening of the Centre reported that the training that was provided to them just prior to the opening of the JAC and in the weeks following was comprehensive and that during this training the objectives of the JAC were well articulated.

Staff employed at the JAC were satisfied with the training and orientation provided, although it was noted that staff who had since joined the Centre have not benefited from the same level of training and orientation as compared to the initial training provided to JAC staff.

The evaluation also identified other “teething” issues associated with the implementation of the JAC, including challenges using new administrative data systems, and only limited understanding among some outside service providers and clients as to the full complement of services available. However, JAC staff reported that for the most part, service providers were referring appropriate clients to the Centre and external service providers reported a good understanding of JAC services and felt comfortable referring clients.

Communication and information sharing within the JAC is effective but better understanding of the roles within the JAC is needed.

Staff reported facing challenges around information sharing when the JAC first opened but felt that communication and information sharing has steadily improved over time. At the time the key informant interviews were conducted for the current evaluation, staff had noted significant improvements with respect to internal information sharing. Several staff noted, however, that they did not fully understand the roles and responsibilities of other JAC staff. As a result, staff also reported that they did not always know who to approach when faced with certain issues. It may take more time for staff to become accustomed to integrating two workplace cultures and different services within the JAC. Staff reported that some improvements were already evident, although many felt that additional and ongoing training is warranted. Staff also believed that several changes in management during the JAC's short lifespan affected service integration to some degree but anticipated more stability in the future.

Clients are receiving appropriate referrals to external service providers.

The large majority (92%) of clients surveyed reported that the referrals to external service(s) they received were appropriate services for the issues they had. This finding is supported by key informant interview data from interviews conducted with external service providers and staff at the JAC.

Internal referral processes at the JAC are working well but could be improved.

According to JAC staff, most internal referrals are *facilitated* referrals meaning that the referring person offers to assist the client by arranging an appointment with the staff person receiving the referral. Often, the staff person making the referral also provides the staff person receiving the referral with a written summary of the case and/or an oral summary of the client's issues and service needs after gaining client consent to do so. In this way the JAC model is unique as fact-finding about a client's needs and referrals to other services may continue throughout the life of a client's relationship with the JAC. Overall, staff felt that the internal referral process is working well. However, the process was thought to work best among MAG staff and among LSS staff but less well when the MAG/LSS boundary was crossed. This was attributed in part to each agency using a different electronic calendar and to some knowledge gaps with respect to the roles and responsibilities of employees of the other agency.

Extensive outreach activities are well received and effective but external service providers would like to see the JAC seek more feedback from them.

All but one of the external service providers interviewed had participated in JAC initiated outreach activities to some extent and all of these reported that the activity/activities they had participated in had been helpful. External service providers reported feeling more confident about referring clients to the JAC after they had participated in JAC outreach activities.

Overall, while the outreach activities were well regarded, some external service providers suggested that the relationship between the JAC and community service providers would be strengthened if JAC staff more actively sought out feedback and information from service providers. Current activities were thought to reflect a “one-way approach” of disseminating information about the JAC to service providers whereas some service providers advocated for a two-way approach in which information about external service providers was communicated back to the JAC.

The JAC is successfully identifying the civil and family justice needs of clients.

Evaluation findings from multiple lines of evidence suggest that the JAC is successful in identifying most of a client’s civil and family justice needs. In client focus group discussions, most clients reported that they approached the JAC with one main issue, and that several other issues were identified while their needs were being assessed. JAC staff felt that the service delivery model allows staff to effectively tease out most of a client’s justice issues. Administrative data further supports this finding.

Client awareness of dispute resolution and mediation services was enhanced as a result of contact with the JAC and the services are helpful to those who receive them.

Results from stakeholder interviews, the client survey and client focus groups demonstrate that contact with the JAC increased people’s awareness of and knowledge about dispute resolution and mediation services. More than one-half (56%) of clients surveyed said they did not know about dispute resolution services before they contacted the JAC. Two-thirds (66%) reported that at some point during their communication and/or interaction with the JAC they received information about dispute resolution and mediation services. Of those who received information, 83% said this information increased their knowledge about settling family and civil justice problems outside of court. This finding is supported by findings from focus groups in which several participants stated that they were now aware of alternative dispute resolution as a result of their contact with the JAC. More than three-quarters (77%) of clients who participated in the client survey and received mediation services found the services helpful or very helpful.

There are several recommendations that could contribute to improved operation of the JAC thereby contributing to enhanced client service.

The consultant has identified options to improve the operation of the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre and to strengthen future evaluation activities. These recommendations are outlined in Section 5 of the evaluation report.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background to the Project

The concept of the Justice Access Centre (JAC) emerged from the work of the BC Justice Review Task Force in 2005 and 2006, which produced landmark studies in both family⁷ and civil justice⁸. Both studies recommended that information and service centres or “hubs” be established in the Province for the provision of family and civil justice services. Essentially, the JAC vision is to provide a single location, in a given geographic region, where people can obtain assistance with family and civil issues. In this capacity it is seen as a “one-stop-shop” to help people reach early, lasting solutions to family and/or civil justice problems. The concept is to provide clients with “holistic” support via a collaborative approach among service providers offering different types and levels of service.

The JAC model is built upon a concept already piloted in Nanaimo. The Nanaimo Family Justice Services Centre (FJSC) opened in April 2007 based on recommendations made by the Family Justice Reform Working Group in a May 2005 report. The recommendation was to provide “hubs” or entry points for people with family justice issues. The FJSC provided a comprehensive range of family justice services, resources and information, including access to dispute resolution, Legal Aid intake, legal advice, legal information, and resources and information about child support. The FJSC was operated by the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) and the Legal Services Society (LSS) and managed on-site by MAG. An implementation evaluation of this initiative was completed in May 2008.

The JAC model puts the work of the Justice Review Task Force into action through another collaborative undertaking between MAG and LSS. A range of civil and family justice services are provided through the JAC, including assessment, family mediation, client-focused service solutions, legal information, and legal advice and legal representation (Legal Aid intake) services. These core JAC services are complemented by a range of services offered by community partner organizations in the local community.

The JAC was implemented as a pilot project in Nanaimo on October 30, 2008. Its implementation and immediate outcomes are the subject of this report. A workflow diagram for the JAC model is contained in **Appendix A**.

⁷ *A New Justice System for Families and Children*. (May 2005)

⁸ *Effective and Affordable Civil Justice*. (November 2006)

1.2 JAC Objectives

The JAC pilot project was established to explore the effectiveness of an integrated approach to helping clients reach early and affordable solutions to their family and civil justice problems. A key goal of the JAC model is to provide integrated information, advice and services so that clients can avoid going to court.

The JAC provides client-focused services, which divide broadly into four main service streams:

1. Information and Self-Help Services: Clients may access resources and information through a Resource Room. In the Resource Room they may obtain support and assistance with court forms and other documentation; access to LawLINK; access to computers, a fax machine, photocopiers, a private telephone and workspace; and Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) materials.
2. Family and Civil Client Services: These services include needs assessments, legal information, assistance with court forms, letters and other documents, and referrals to advocacy organizations, community agencies and government or government agency services.
3. Family Mediation and Dispute Resolution Services: These services assist clients to resolve issues of parenting plans for children and spousal support following separation.
4. Legal Services: Confidential access to LawLINE, workshops or clinics; legal advice on civil and family matters, and representation on family and Child Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) matters through LSS services⁹.

LSS has financial eligibility requirements for legal advice and legal representation. There is no financial eligibility requirement for legal information. While MAG services are not means tested, the Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) does give priority to low-income families for some of its services.

The overall goal of the JAC is to provide a single location where people can benefit from a range of legal information, advice, mediation, and other services and guidance that will help them resolve their justice problems. Although the focus is on early resolution of legal problems through out-of-court settlements, JAC staff also seek to ensure that those clients who do proceed to court are better prepared because of their involvement with the JAC. The *Justice Access Centre Policy Manual* sets out the specific objectives of the JAC as follows:

1. To help clients reach positive, lasting solutions to their justice problems;
2. To provide a single entry point into the family and civil justice system in the community where the JAC operates;
3. To make the justice system easier for clients to access, understand and navigate;

⁹ Ministry of Attorney General Justice Services Branch, Family Justice Services Division and the Legal Services Society (April 2009). *Justice Access Centre Policy Manual*.

4. To ensure appropriate services are available where and when clients need them;
5. To encourage citizens to participate constructively in solving, or avoiding, justice problems;
6. To coordinate and, where appropriate, integrate existing government and non-government services in the community;
7. To respect the mandates, priorities and management responsibilities of the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) and the Legal Services Society (LSS) and to ensure appropriate value and accountability for public resources; and
8. To work on the basis of a clear understanding of governance and processes, including communication, information sharing, protection of solicitor-client privileges and client referrals for service.

1.3 Nanaimo Justice Access Centre

The Nanaimo JAC is jointly operated by MAG (Family Justice Services Division and Justice Services Branch) and LSS. Each organization has an on-site manager. These managers work jointly to ensure that holistic service is provided to clients, and to manage the involvement of in-house service partners and day-to-day operations within the JAC. The Local Manager is the MAG employee responsible for the provision of JAC services by MAG employees and contractors (reception, screening, assessment, civil services, family dispute resolution, child support negotiation, legal information, draft consent forms, community outreach, etc.). The Managing Lawyer is the LSS employee responsible for the provision of JAC services by LSS employees, agents and contractors (applications for legal representation services, legal information services, self-help Resource Room, legal advice services in civil and family cases, funding of an Aboriginal Community Legal Worker, community outreach and public legal education).

The Nanaimo JAC is open Monday through Friday during regular business hours although staff hours may vary depending on appointments booked and outreach activities scheduled. The Centre is located in an office building in downtown Nanaimo adjacent to the Court House. The Nanaimo JAC is open to anyone requiring civil or family justice services or needing information related to family or civil justice issues.

SECTION 2: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Implementation Evaluation

Implementation evaluations are typically completed within 6 to 12 months of implementing a pilot initiative. Implementation evaluations generally focus on program design and delivery, and on immediate outcomes. Implementation research is often a key component of interim or formative evaluations in that it focuses on the design, implementation, administration and operation of an initiative, and seeks to describe, assess, and explain "what is happening and why".¹⁰ Implementation research is critical to ensuring that the initiative being evaluated is the initiative that was intended, and it helps to establish the fidelity of the initiative being implemented to the underlying program theory. Deviations from the original program design and the implementation plan can result in unintended program variations, thereby introducing potential confounds into the measurement of outcomes and net impacts in later research activities.¹¹ In addition to program fidelity, research that focuses specifically on implementation is a useful method for improving program delivery for the current initiative as well as potential future Centres.

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

The *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation* was conducted over a nine-month period from September 2008 to June 2009¹². The main objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Analyze JAC outputs for a six-month period;
- Determine the extent to which immediate outcomes are being achieved by JAC activities; and
- Make recommendations for improving the delivery of services defined as being within the scope of the JAC in order to better achieve desired outcomes.

The evaluation was designed to answer several key evaluation questions related to the implementation of, and immediate outcomes associated with, the Nanaimo JAC Pilot Project. Evaluation questions were based on standard implementation issues, and the service outputs and immediate outcomes identified in the *Request for Proposals (RFP)*¹³ for the evaluation.

Expected service outputs and immediate outcomes were contained in the evaluation framework and are addressed in this report.

¹⁰ Werner, Alan (2004). *A Guide to Implementation Research*.

¹¹ Summerfelt, W. T. (2003). *Program strength and fidelity in evaluation*. *Applied Developmental Science*, vol 7(2), pp 55 – 61.

¹² Evaluation findings are based on data reflecting JAC activities from December 1 – May 31, 2009.

¹³ Legal Services Society (2008). *Nanaimo and Vancouver Justice Access Centres Implementation Evaluations, Request for Proposals* – 2008-POL-001.

The extent to which clients were provided with the following outputs was analyzed for a six-month period:

- Information resources and self-help material;
- Resource Room services;
- Assessments to determine broad range of client's needs;
- Internal and external referrals;
- Dispute resolution and mediation services;
- Legal information, advice and referrals to representation services; and

In addition, the creation of community partners linkages, referrals protocols, community events, etc. was analyzed.

The extent to which the following immediate outcomes were achieved during the evaluation period was explored.

- The JAC is open to and accessed by a range of clients with varying issues;
- Clients can easily access a range of services at the JAC;
- Clients access self-help resources;
- Assessments identify needs of clients;
- Clients obtain legal information, advice and legal referrals;
- Improved awareness of and use of dispute resolution and mediation services; and
- Clients receive appropriate referrals to resolve their civil and/or family matters.

The results for service outputs are outlined in detail in Section 3 of the report while findings for specific evaluation questions pertaining to implementation and achievement of immediate outcomes are presented in Section 4. The specific evaluation questions addressed are as follows:

1. Are the objectives of the JAC well understood?
2. Is communication and information sharing effective?
3. Is the JAC open to and easily accessed by a range of clients with varying issues?
4. What is the client's level of satisfaction with the JAC?
5. Do assessments identify client needs?
6. Do clients receive appropriate referrals?
7. Has the JAC increased awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services?

2.3 Overview of Evaluation Activities

To prepare for the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation* project the consultant completed the following activities:

- Review of the evaluation framework contained in the Request for Proposals;
- Review of LSS, MAG and JAC documentation;
- Consultations with representatives from LSS and MAG; and
- Development of a comprehensive *Nanaimo JAC Evaluation Plan*.

A range of research activities were undertaken as part of the implementation evaluation. These activities included:

- Monitoring of JAC Tracking System (JTS) data and reports;
- Site visits;
- Interviews with JAC staff, contractors and community service providers;
- Telephone surveys with JAC clients; and
- Client focus groups.

Data from each of these lines of evidence was analyzed and findings were integrated to address the evaluation issues identified in the evaluation framework.

The full scope of work that was completed to fulfill the objectives of the implementation evaluation is described in greater detail in the remainder of this section of the report.

2.4 Evaluation Activities

2.4.1 Document Review

Key documents were reviewed to set out the context of the JAC concept, model and overall design for the purposes of this evaluation. This review informed the development of the evaluation work plan and provided a basis for the interpretation of results from multiple lines of evidence. Specifically, the document review allowed the evaluation team to assess the clarity of the goals and objectives of the Nanaimo JAC; the extent to which the Nanaimo JAC is being implemented as intended; the extent to which the performance indicators accurately reflect outputs and outcomes; and the extent and nature of outreach activities completed by JAC staff during the pilot project.

The following documents were reviewed:

- Justice Access Centres - Project Overview
- Justice Access Centre Evaluation Framework
- Justice Access Centres – Frequently Asked Questions
- Model and Process Overview Diagram and supporting Memorandum
- Legal Services Society Project Charter – Justice Services Centres

- Justice Access Centre Model – Business Backgrounder (Nanaimo Focus)
- Justice Access Centre Job Descriptions
- Preliminary Triage Protocols
- Justice Access Centre Policy Manual
- Community Outreach/Training Report
- Justice Access Centre Client Information Sheet
- Acceptance of Justice Access Centre Services Form
- Justice Access Centre Family Client Form
- Referral Form for Family Advice Lawyer
- Referral for Civil Services Form
- Referral to Child Support Officer Form
- Family Assessment Tool
- Civil Resource Counsellor (CRC) Assessment

2.4.2 Data Monitoring

Early in the implementation evaluation project the consultant monitored preliminary Justice Access Centre Tracking System¹⁴ (JTS) data for the four-week period from October 30, 2008 to November 28, 2008. An Excel spreadsheet containing raw client/service data contained in the JTS was provided by LSS to enable the consultant to examine the data that had been collected and entered during that period. The data was reviewed to identify fields that might require clarification (i.e., incomplete fields, possible data inaccuracies, possible misinterpretation of field definitions/categories, etc.) to ensure that data was being entered correctly and consistently. Reviewing the data also provided the consultant with the opportunity to pose questions to the JTS system developer about the way administrative data was being recorded and the capabilities of the JTS. This information was then used to inform the development of a data analysis plan. Following this initial JTS data monitoring, the consultant submitted a brief report on the findings to LSS and MAG. The JTS system developer at LSS reviewed the report and responded to all questions posed.

Communication was maintained with LSS and MAG throughout the project to increase the likelihood that early corrective action (i.e., additional training, database modifications, etc.) could be taken if data collection and reporting problems were encountered. JAC usage statistics were tracked and discussed with LSS and MAG during monthly Evaluation Committee meetings¹⁵. During the two months following the opening of the Nanaimo JAC, the reports generated from JTS were limited to client demographics, use of services and referral counts. These reports were examined to ensure that they would meet the minimum needs for tracking the JAC performance indicators identified for the evaluation. The usefulness of each performance indicator contained in the evaluation framework was dependent on the availability and quality of the data used to measure it. Therefore, this initial review to assess the quality (e.g., completeness, outlier analysis,

¹⁴ The Justice Access Centre Tracking System (JTS) is a web-based application developed specifically for use in the JAC. The application captures client information, issues, and services provided.

¹⁵ Regular informal contact was also maintained throughout the project.

identification of anomalies, etc.) of the performance and operational data was key to successful completion of the evaluation. Following the initial two months, a full set of detailed reports was provided monthly for analysis. These reports were generated from the JTS based on a list of reports agreed upon by the consultant, LSS and MAG.

2.4.3 Site Visits

The consultant conducted four visits¹⁶ to meet with the LSS and MAG managers, to contribute to staff training around data collection for the evaluation, explain the importance of the information being collected, to conduct in-depth interviews with staff and community partners and to conduct client focus groups.

A critical line of evidence for the implementation evaluation was the information captured in the JTS making an initial early visit to the JAC important. The purpose of this first visit was to establish contact between the evaluation consultant and the managers and staff at the JAC. This visit served to familiarize the consultant with the JAC and help the staff to more fully understand the importance of the information that was to be collected in the JTS for the evaluation. The second visit was to meet with all JAC staff and representatives from LSS and MAG to discuss issues that had arisen around JTS data collection. During the third visit, over a three-day period, the consultant conducted observational research and in-depth key informant interviews with Nanaimo JAC staff and external service providers in the community¹⁷. A final visit was made at the end of the evaluation period to conduct two focus groups with JAC clients.

2.4.4 Key Informant Interviews

MAG, LSS and the Nanaimo JAC managers worked together to provide the consultant with a list of potential key informants for the evaluation project. The key informant interviews were conducted with internal (JAC staff and contracted advice lawyers) and external stakeholders (service providers in the community) and were focused on their perceptions, opinions and knowledge of project design and delivery and immediate outcomes¹⁸. Findings from the key informant interviews were integrated with other lines of evidence to address a number of performance indicators including:

- the extent to which the initiative is being implemented as intended;
- the extent to which services are integrated within the JAC;
- views on potential improvements to program delivery;
- early outcomes of work that is done to advise and support community agencies, build capacity and provide education and training about JAC services;
- views of JAC staff on the effectiveness of communications with external stakeholders;
- views of JAC staff on the effectiveness of communications within the JAC;

¹⁶ October 24, 2008, February 27, 2009, April 1-3, 2009 and May 25, 2009.

¹⁷ The majority of the key informant interviews for the project were conducted during the third site visit with some remaining interviews conducted by telephone in the week following.

¹⁸ The Key Informant Interview Guides used to guide the interviews are contained in **Appendix B**. These interview guides were developed by the consultant in close consultation with LSS and MAG.

- the extent to which assessments identify needs other than initial client identified needs;
- partner and external agency satisfaction with service and referrals; and
- the extent to which clients follow through on referrals.

The consultant conducted 28 semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with Nanaimo JAC staff and other stakeholders. Detailed in Exhibit 1 is a breakdown of the interviews completed.

Exhibit 1
Key Informant Interviews

| Informant Group | Count |
|--|--------------|
| JAC Staff and Contractors | |
| LSS Manager | 1 |
| MAG Manager | 1 |
| Receptionist/Admin Assistant | 2 |
| Civil/Family Justice Interviewer | 3 |
| Legal Intake Assistant | 1 |
| Office Manager | 1 |
| Aboriginal Community Legal Worker | 1 |
| Civil Paralegal | 1 |
| Civil Resource Counsellor | 1 |
| Family Justice Counsellor | 3 |
| Legal Information Outreach Worker | 2 |
| Family Advice Lawyer ¹⁹ | 1 |
| Civil Advice Lawyer ²⁰ | 1 |
| Subtotal – JAC Staff | 19 |
| External Stakeholders | |
| New Haven Society – Program Manager & Program Staff Person | 2 |
| Ministry of Children and Family Development – Child Protection Team Lead | 1 |
| Ministry of Housing and Social Development - Supervisor | 1 |
| Provincial Court Registry - Manager | 1 |
| Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre | 2 |
| Native Courtworkers – Native Criminal Court Worker & Client Advocate | 2 |
| Subtotal - External (Community Service Providers) | 9 |
| Total | 28 |

¹⁹ Family Advice Lawyers are not staff but are contracted lawyers from the private bar funded by LSS.

²⁰ Civil Advice Lawyers are not staff but are contracted lawyers from the private bar funded by LSS.

2.4.5 Client Survey

In March and April 2009, a telephone survey was completed with 278 individuals who became clients of the Nanaimo JAC and accessed services between October 30, 2008 and March 5, 2009. The client survey served to explore client expectations, perceptions and experiences at the JAC and the services available/accessed there. The information collected through the survey was used to provide insight into program design and delivery and the achievement of the immediate outcomes identified in the evaluation framework. The following areas were explored through the survey:

- accessibility of services at the JAC;
- availability and use of a range of services;
- availability and use of self-help resources;
- awareness of dispute resolution and mediation services;
- use of dispute resolution and mediation services;
- the extent to which client needs are addressed;
- perceived usefulness of having a range of co-located and integrated services to address multiple issue;
- the extent to which clients followed through on referrals; and
- the appropriateness of referrals made for the resolution of civil and/family justice matters.

The survey was also a vehicle through which possible areas for improvement were explored, such as the coordination of services and how well the Nanaimo JAC addresses clients' needs. The client survey instrument can be found in **Appendix C**.

The consultant obtained 278 survey completions from a sample of 551 JAC clients to yield a sampling error of $\pm 5.9\%$ (at the 95% confidence level). The sample was comprised of all clients who, during intake at the JAC, agreed to be contacted for the evaluation and provided contact information. A gross response rate of 50.5% was obtained despite a high proportion of cases (30%) with missing or incorrect contact information. Almost all (99%) of the survey participants indicated receiving in-person services at the JAC²¹.

When data collection was complete, survey data was thoroughly reviewed. This review included a check of marginal counts²² by question to ensure no data was missing on a systematic basis, as well as other data cleaning and data coding activities.

²¹ Administrative data indicates that 50.8% of JAC clients received some in-person service; therefore clients who received in-person services are over-represented in the survey sample. Many of the clients who were contacted but declined to participate in the survey cited limited exposure to, or involvement with, the JAC as the reason. While these clients were advised that they were eligible to participate and were encouraged to do so, many still declined to participate.

²² Marginal counts were checked periodically during pilot testing, throughout data collection, and after data collection was complete.

2.4.6 Focus Groups

Upon completion of the document review, site visits, key informant interviews and client survey, the consultant developed a focus group moderator's guide (See **Appendix D**). The content of this guide was informed by preliminary findings from the other lines of evidence. The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain additional information/insight that could not be obtained through the use of other methods. The following issues were explored in the focus groups:

- ease of access of JAC services;
- extent to which clients received appropriate referrals to resolve their civil and/or family matters;
- areas for improvement;
- gaps in services;
- levels of awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services; and
- the extent to which clients found self-help resources to be useful.

The consultant conducted qualitative thematic analysis to address indicators contained in the evaluation framework. Emergent themes from each of the focus groups was identified and systematically sorted. A total of 14 clients²³ participated in two focus groups.

2.4.7 Administrative Data Review/Analysis

The purpose of the administrative data review was threefold. Administrative data was provided in the form of reports generated from JTS. These reports were analyzed to determine whether the Nanaimo JAC is delivering the intended services, the extent to which these services are being accessed, and the extent to which immediate outcomes are being achieved by the JAC activities. In addition to assessing the extent to which immediate outcomes are being achieved, analysis of administrative data helped to identify areas where service delivery could be improved in order to better achieve immediate, intermediate and longer-term outcomes.

The following indicators were addressed, in part, utilizing administrative data:

- the extent to which the JAC is accessed by a range of clients with varying issues;
- the rate of referral to other services at the JAC;
- awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services;
- the rate of referral to other service providers in the community;
- integration of services;
- client justice issues; and
- the number and types of services used by clients.

²³ Eleven women and three men participated in the client focus groups.

2.5 **Research Considerations**

Data from multiple lines of evidence was analyzed and integrated to produce this comprehensive report. In reviewing this report, the reader should note that the information presented is qualified by the following factors:

- This report reflects the findings at the point in time that the research was undertaken;
- The opinions included in this report are those of individuals consulted during the research process and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of all individuals within each group;
- While key informants were asked to comment on the JAC, it is possible that some were also providing information about the former FJSC that previously operated at the same location;
- Ability to assess the co-management model in the analysis of communication and information sharing was limited to a degree by changes in local JAC management throughout the pilot period;²⁴
- Limitations in client survey data did not allow for assessment of client satisfaction with most specific services. However, overall levels of satisfaction with the JAC and the services available/accessed were assessed;
- Survey respondents were self-selected in that only those who had consented to be contacted for the evaluation were part of the sample and contacted to complete the survey. People who have strong opinions may be more willing to spend time answering a survey than those who do not.
- Although the JAC opened on October 30, 2008 and remains in operation, the administrative data from JTS reported on throughout this report represents client data from December 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009.
- Key informant interviewing and focus group interviewing are qualitative methodologies that generate a wide range of anecdotal information based on participants' knowledge, experience and opinions. As qualitative research does not seek to quantify the results of the information collected and results do not project statistically to the attitudes and opinions of the population, qualitative analytic techniques (e.g., inductive content analysis) are applied.

Although reporting of qualitative results typically does not involve quantitative measures such as proportions/percentages or respondents, it is good practice to provide an indication of the relative weight of the findings. This is reflected in the language used to report the findings. For example, when most of the interview participants agree on a topic, the results are reported as "the majority of participants". Alternatively, if only two of three mentioned similar points, then the results would be reported as "a few of the participants".

²⁴ From the JAC's opening until the end of the evaluation period, the MAG manager retired and was replaced and LSS had three different managers.

In general, when reporting key themes and/or perceptions, the following descriptions have been used:

No/None: refers to instances where no individual identifies the particular issue.

One: refers to instances where one individual expressed a particular opinion.

Very Few/Few: refers to instances where only two or three individuals may have expressed a particular opinion.

Some: refers to instances where between ten percent to one third of the individuals interviewed expressed a particular opinion.

Several: refers to instances where between one-third to one-half of individuals interviewed expressed a particular opinion.

Many/Most: refers to instances where between one half to three quarters of individuals interviewed expressed a particular opinion.

Majority: refers to instances where more than three quarters, but not all, interviewees were of the same opinion and/or held similar perceptions regarding an issue or topic.

Almost All: refers to instances where all but one or two individuals may have expressed a particular opinion.

All: reflects consensus across all stakeholder groups. All interviewees questioned on the topic expressed the same view or held the same/similar opinion.

SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF JAC OUTPUTS

During the period from December 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009 (hereinafter referred to as 'the pilot period'), 1,981 individuals became new clients of the Nanaimo JAC. During that time, 4,742 justice issues were identified and 5,860 services were provided to 2,122²⁵ new and existing clients.

An overview of these and other JAC outputs, including the demographic characteristics of JAC clients, their justice/legal issues, services received, referral and assessment processes, and outreach activities undertaken by JAC staff is provided in this section of the report. Following the overview of key JAC outputs, an integrated analysis from multiple lines of evidence is used to address the key evaluation questions.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of JAC Clients

Analysis was undertaken to establish the socio-demographic profile of individuals who became clients of the Nanaimo JAC during the pilot period. As demographic information was available for only a portion of clients, the data presented below utilizes "valid percent", which is calculated excluding those for whom no data was provided.

While it was not expected that Nanaimo JAC clients would necessarily be representative of the population of Nanaimo, for comparison purposes, the demographic characteristics of Nanaimo JAC clients have been contrasted with the demographic characteristics of Nanaimo's population (Nanaimo Regional District) based on the 2006 census.

Key differences of JAC clients relative to the general population are summarized below.

- The proportion of JAC clients who are of Aboriginal descent (18.6%) is more than three times that of the general population (4.9%)
- Not surprisingly, the proportion of separated (32.1%) or divorced (7.9%) clients in the JAC is markedly different from that of the region (3% and 10% respectively)
- While the proportion of JAC clients with less than a grade 12 education (33.3%) is not markedly different from that of the general population (25.3%), the proportion that have completed post-secondary education (21.9%) is much lower relative to the general population (45.1%)
- Consistent with lower levels of educational attainment, JAC clients had much lower income levels – more than three-quarters (77.6%) reported an income of less than \$30,000 per year. In comparison, in 2005, a lower proportion (61.8%) of Nanaimo's population (aged 15 years of age or older) reported earnings of less than \$30,000 per year

²⁵ Note that a distinction has been made between clients who became clients of the JAC during the pilot period (1,981) and those who received services during the pilot period (2,122) as some of those who became clients before the pilot period began received services during the pilot period.

Exhibit 2
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Nanaimo JAC Clients²⁶
Relative to City of Nanaimo Population Characteristics

| Characteristic | Nanaimo JAC | Nanaimo Regional District (2006 Census) |
|---------------------------|-------------|--|
| Population | 1,981 | 138,631 |
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 43.6% | 48.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| Female | 56.4% | 52.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| (% missing) | (0.0%) | n/a |
| Aboriginal Status: | | |
| Aboriginal | 18.6% | 4.9% |
| Non- Aboriginal | 81.4% | 95.1% |
| (% missing) | (38.0%) | n/a |
| Marital Status: | | |
| Married/Common Law | 27.4% | 52.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| Separated | 32.1% | 3.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| Divorced | 7.9% | 10.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| Widowed | 1.8% | 7.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| Single | 30.8% | 27.0% ⁽¹⁾ |
| (% missing) | (29.8%) | n/a |
| Household Size: | | |
| 1 person | 31.8% | 27.5% |
| 2 persons | 23.7% | 42.7% |
| 3 persons | 23.4% | 13.3% |
| 4 to 5 persons | 18.1% | 15.0% |
| 6+ persons | 2.9% | 1.6% |
| (% missing) | (29.6%) | n/a |
| Age: | | (Pop. 20+ years) |
| < 25 years | 8.6% | 7.0% |
| 25-34 | 27.4% | 11.0% |
| 35-49 | 45.2% | 25.8% |
| 50-59 | 13.2% | 20.8% |
| 60+ | 5.7% | 35.4% |
| (% missing) | (27.7%) | n/a |

²⁶ New clients during the six month pilot period.

| Characteristic | Nanaimo JAC | Nanaimo Regional District (2006 Census) |
|--|-------------|--|
| Education: | | (Pop. 25 to 65 years, 2001 Census) |
| < Grade 9 | 5.4% | 5.2% |
| Grade 10-12 without graduation | 27.9% | 20.1% |
| High School Graduate | 24.0% | 11.9% |
| Other Post Secondary Education – no certification (College/University) | 20.7% | 17.2% |
| Trade Certification/College Diploma | 13.3% | 32.3% |
| University Degree(s) | 8.6% | 12.8% |
| (% missing) | (38.7%) | n/a |
| Annual Income: | | 2005 Income of Pop. 15+ years |
| \$0 | 14.4% | 4.2% |
| <10,000 | 12.8% | 18.8% |
| 10,000-19,999 | 34.3% | 22.9% |
| 20,000-29,999 | 16.1% | 15.9% |
| 30,000-39,999 | 12.9% | 12.5% |
| 40,000-49,999 | 4.8% | 8.9% |
| 50,000+ | 4.8% | 16.9% |
| (% missing) | (39.5%) | n/a |

⁽¹⁾ Population aged 15 years of age or older, Nanaimo Regional District – Data Source – BC STATS, 2006 Census Profile, Nanaimo Regional District, March 2009

Analysis was also undertaken to compare some of the demographic characteristics of the JAC clients who participated in the client survey with the JAC clients overall. As detailed in Exhibit 3, the profile of clients who participated in the survey was generally representative of the clients who accessed services from the JAC during the evaluation period.

Exhibit 3
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Nanaimo JAC Clients²⁷
Relative to Survey Respondent Socio-Demographic Characteristics

| Characteristic | Nanaimo JAC | Client Survey Respondents |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|
| Population | 1,981 | 278 |
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 43.6% | 38.8% |
| Female | 56.4% | 61.2% |
| (% missing) | (0.0%) | (0.0%) |
| Aboriginal Status: | | |
| Aboriginal | 18.6% | 15.7% |
| Non- Aboriginal | 81.4% | 84.3% |
| (% missing) | (38.0%) | (1.5%) |
| Marital Status: | | |
| Married/Common Law | 27.4% | 11.3% |
| Separated | 32.1% | 32.0% |
| Divorced | 7.9% | 15.3% |
| Widowed | 1.8% | 1.5% |
| Single | 30.8% | 32.4% |
| (% missing) | (29.8%) | (1.1%) |
| Age: | | |
| < 25 years | 8.6% | 9.0% |
| 25-34 | 27.4% | 30.3% |
| 35-49 | 45.2% | 43.3% |
| 50-59 | 13.2% | 12.3% |
| 60+ | 5.7% | 5.1% |
| (% missing) | (27.7%) | (0.4%) |
| Education: | | |
| < Grade 9 | 5.4% | 3.3% |
| Grade 10-12 without graduation | 27.9% | 16.5% |
| High School Graduate | 24.0% | 16.8% |
| Other Post Secondary Education – no certification (College/University) | 20.7% | 25.3% |
| Trade Certification/College Diploma | 13.3% | 25.0% |
| University Degree(s) | 8.6% | 13.2% |

²⁷ New clients during the six-month pilot period.

3.2 Client Justice Issues

The Nanaimo JAC serves clients with both civil and family justice issues. The majority (72%) of the 2,008 clients who had issues identified at the JAC during the pilot period had family justice issues only, 18% had civil justice issues only, and 6% had both civil and family justice issues (See Exhibit 4). While a larger proportion of the JAC's clients have family justice issues, almost one-quarter (24%) of JAC clients had civil justice issues.

Exhibit 4
Justice Issue Type

| Issue type | Distinct Clients | Percent |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Family Issues only | 1,454 | 72% |
| Civil Issues Only | 354 | 18% |
| CFCSA Issues Only | 27 | 1% |
| Civil & Family Issues | 116 | 6% |
| Civil & CFCSA Issues | 3 | 0.1% |
| Family & CFCSA Issues | 50 | 2% |
| Civil, Family & CFCSA Issues | 4 | 0.2% |

n=2,008²⁸, Source: JTS

As illustrated below in Exhibit 5, almost two-thirds (62%) of JAC clients have more than one justice issue²⁹.

Exhibit 5
Number of Issues

| # of Issues | Distinct Clients | Percent |
|-------------|------------------|---------|
| 1 | 766 | 38% |
| 2 | 549 | 27% |
| 3 | 302 | 15% |
| 4 | 180 | 9% |
| 5 | 98 | 5% |
| 6 | 60 | 3% |
| 7 | 34 | 2% |
| 8+ | 19 | 1% |

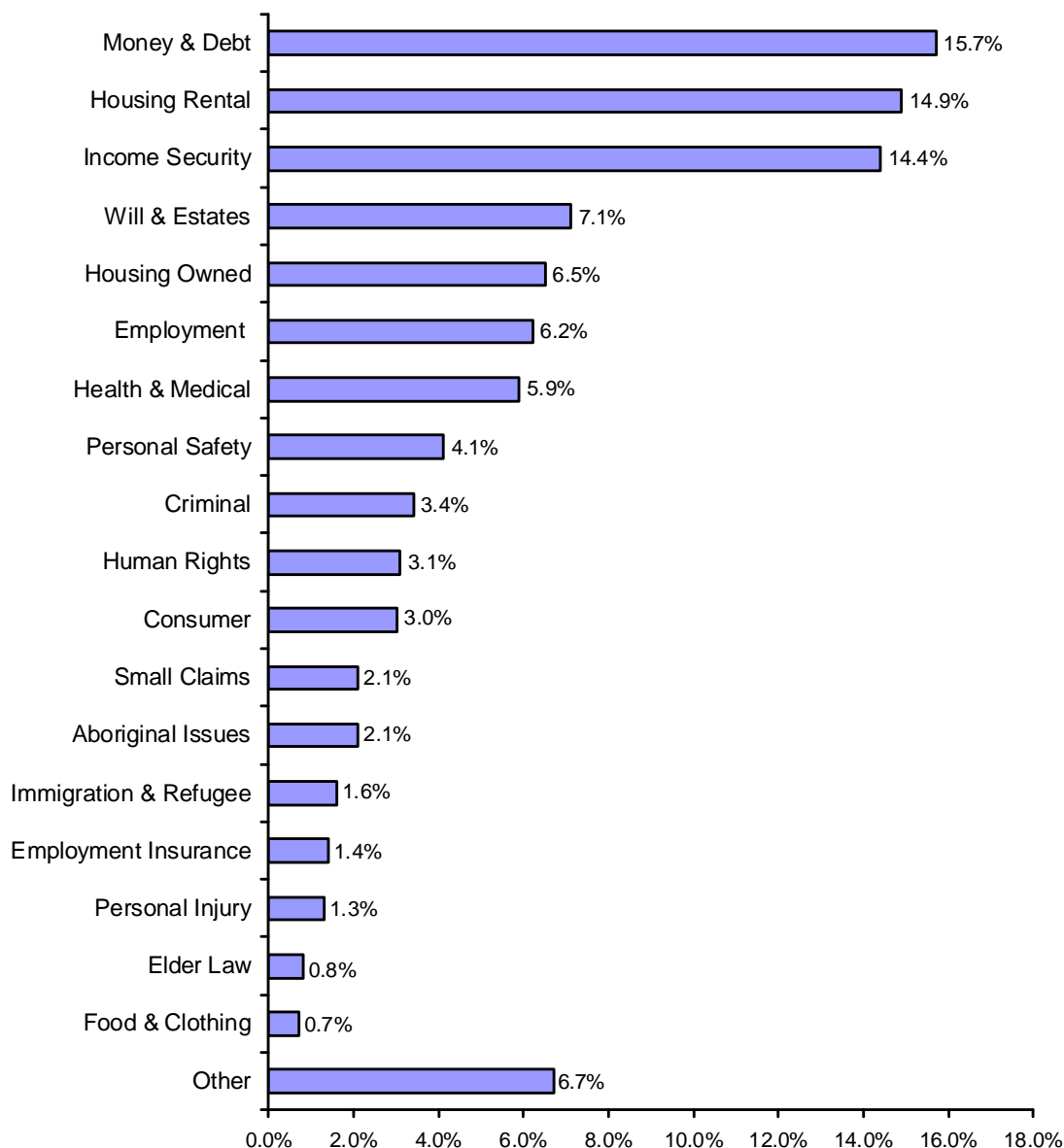
n=2,008, Source: JTS

²⁸ While 1,981 people became clients of the JAC between December 1, 2008 and May 31, 2009, the 2,008 distinct clients with issues identified include those who became clients of the JAC before the pilot period (e.g., before December 1, 2008).

²⁹ Civil justice issues are categorized into 19 issue types and family justice issues fall into 16 issue types.

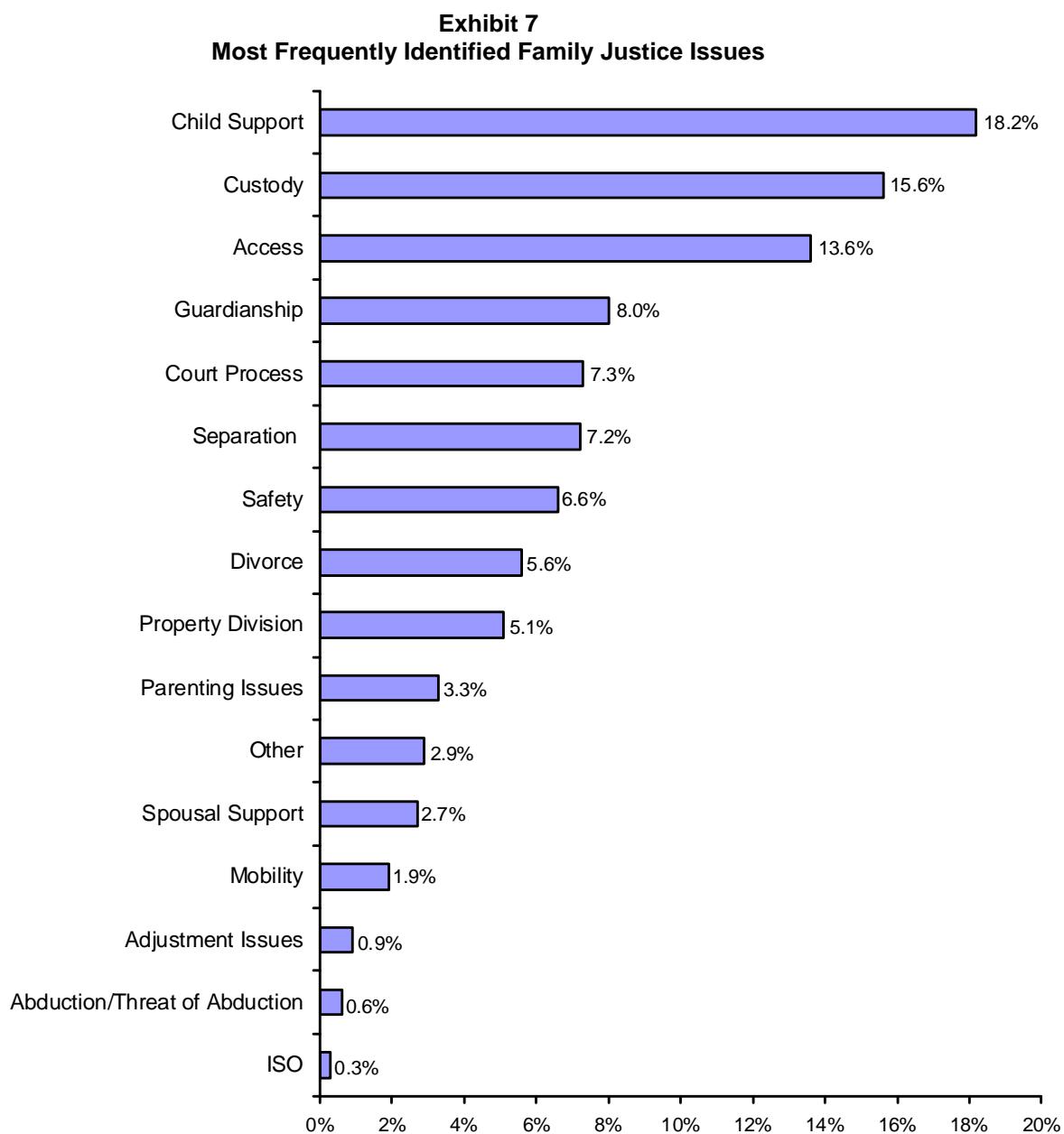
Client issues include a wide range of distinct civil and family justice issues. As illustrated in Exhibit 6, as a percentage of total civil justice issues identified among clients, Money & Debt (15.7%), Housing Rental (14.9%), and Income Security (14.4%) are the three most frequently identified issues. While “other issues” represent 6.7% of total issues, on an individual basis, no single “other” issue comprised more than 0.4% of total civil justice issues identified.

Exhibit 6
Most Frequently Identified Civil Justice Issues



Source: JTS
n = 707

As illustrated in Exhibit 7, as a total of all family justice issues identified during the pilot period, Child Support (18.2%), Custody (15.6%), and Access (13.6%) are the three most frequently identified family justice issues.



Source: JTS
n=3,951

3.3 Services Provided/Received

Staff at the JAC provided a wide range of services to family and civil justice clients during the pilot period. In total, services were provided to 2,122 distinct clients. These clients received a total of 5,860 services. As highlighted in Exhibit 8, 59% of these clients received two or more services.

Exhibit 8
Number of Services Received

| # of Services | Distinct Clients | Percent |
|---------------|------------------|---------|
| 1 | 879 | 41% |
| 2 | 504 | 24% |
| 3 | 247 | 12% |
| 4 | 149 | 7% |
| 5 | 98 | 5% |
| 6 | 72 | 3% |
| 7 | 46 | 2% |
| 8+ | 127 | 6% |

n=2,122, Source: JTS

Clients can receive service at the JAC by telephone or in-person. Of the 5,860 services provided at the JAC, just over one-half (50.8%) were provided in person.

Exhibit 9
Mode of Service Delivery

| Mode of Service Provision | Number of Services Provided | % of Total Services Provided |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Telephone | 2,783 | 47.5% |
| In-Person | 2,979 | 50.8% |
| E-mail | 5 | 0.09% |
| Through a 3 rd party | 93 | 1.6% |

n=5,860, Source: JTS

Out of a total of 2,122 clients, 1,261 clients received services beyond the initial interview³⁰. This represents 59% of clients. Of the clients who received services beyond the initial interview, 91% received all or part of the services in-person.

Exhibit 10
Mode of Service Delivery – Services Beyond Initial Interview

| Mode of Service Provision | Number of Clients | Percentage of Total Clients |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| In person and by telephone | 436 | 35% |
| In person only | 708 | 56% |
| By phone only | 117 | 9% |

n=1,261, Source: JTS

³⁰ See Section 3.3.1 for a description of the initial client flow followed by new JAC clients.

Both MAG and LSS employees provide services at the JAC. As shown in Exhibit 11, 59% of all JAC clients who received services after the initial interview accessed LSS services only, 24% accessed MAG services only and 17% accessed both MAG and LSS services. It should be noted that this service data excludes clients who had an initial intake interview to review their needs but during the pilot period did not proceed beyond that point to receive other services³¹. While fewer clients used MAG services, the initial reviews of client circumstances are most often conducted by MAG staff. In addition, MAG services that are provided beyond this initial review are often lengthy.

Exhibit 11
Use of MAG and LSS Service

| Services Access by Clients | Distinct Clients | % of Clients |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| LSS Services Only | 749 | 59% |
| MAG Services Only | 297 | 24% |
| Both LSS and MAG Services | 215 | 17% |

n=1,261, Source: JTS

Clients access a wide range of MAG and LSS services at the JAC. As demonstrated in Exhibit 12, MAG Family Brief Service³² (894 clients), MAG Family Counseling³³ (801 clients), and LSS Legal Advice³⁴ (602 clients) were the services accessed by the largest number of clients during the pilot period.

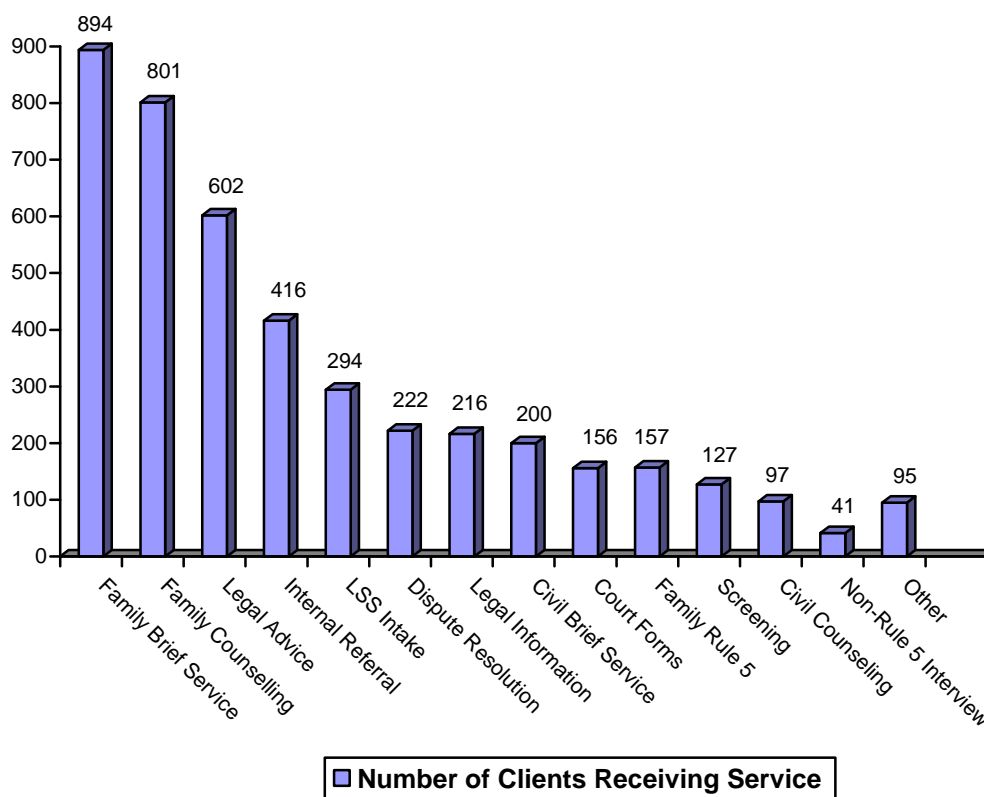
³¹ Clients excluded are those whose circumstances were reviewed by the Receptionist, a Civil Family Justice Interviewer (now called the Civil/Family Justice Advisor), the Office Manager or LSS Administrative support but did not proceed to receive other services at the JAC.

³² Family services that support clients in resolving issues and are delivered in 15 minutes or less. This may include activities such as gathering information, providing information about services, explanation of options, and facilitating referrals, etc.

³³ More extensive family services that take longer than 15 minutes to deliver. This may include activities such as counseling clients to resolve issues, completion of forms, planning, prioritizing, and educating clients to prevent future problems, negotiating other support services, discussing parenting strategies and arrangements, etc.

³⁴ Applying the law to a particular situation and providing a legal opinion and specific advice about the best course of action for that situation. Helping someone formulate options or choose among options when a problem has a substantial legal component.

Exhibit 12
Most Frequently Used Services



Source: JTS
n=4,383

3.3.1 Reviewing Client Needs

Prior to receiving services at the JAC, a client's circumstances are reviewed by various staff. Most commonly, the Receptionist or Office Manager is the first point of contact for clients³⁵ and will first ask if the legal or justice matter is civil or family to determine which intake forms are to be completed. The Receptionist or Office Manager will then direct clients to a Civil Family Justice Interviewer (CFJI)³⁶ or the Aboriginal Community Legal Worker (ACLW) if the client is Aboriginal and asks to see the ACLW. If the client has a CFCSA³⁷ matter and is seeking Legal Aid, is at the JAC to fulfill a Rule 5 requirement³⁸

³⁵ The initial point of contact may also be LSS Administrative Support although originally, this early intake service was to be performed by MAG Receptionist or Office Manager only. LSS Administrative Support got involved only by default.

³⁶ After the evaluation period ended this position was reclassified and the job title changed to Civil/Family Justice Advisor.

³⁷ The Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA). A CFCSA matter is one where there is a child protection or apprehension issue that involves the Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) and/or another child protection agency and issue is between the MCFD and/or the other child protection agency and the parent or guardian. (Source: Justice Access Centre Policy Manual, April 2009).

or wishes to sign up for a Parenting After Separation (PAS) workshop, direct referrals will be made to the Intake Legal Assistant, Family Justice Counsellor or PAS provider respectively.

Most clients, however, are referred to the CFJI for an initial interview. This initial interview is aimed at eliciting the range of issues that the client is facing. The CFJI probes for civil and/or family issues in addition to the issues initially presented by the client, assesses the urgency of issues, and provides information to the client about JAC services. The CFJI may satisfy all of the client's service needs or may refer the client to the most appropriate staff member(s) at the JAC and/or to external service providers for additional services.

The process is somewhat different for Aboriginal clients who specifically request the services of the ACLW. The ACLW performs a function similar to that of the CFJI but also provides direct service in the form of paralegal services. The ACLW may also see new clients at locations away from the JAC to conduct the initial interview or provide paralegal services. Clients who receive service from the ACLW may never see the JAC Receptionist, Office Manager or a CFJI.

Assessment is a specific service conducted by the Civil Resource Counsellor (CRC) and Family Justice Counsellors (FJC). Following contact with the JAC receptionist and then an initial interview with a CFJI or ACLW, clients may be referred to a Family Justice Counsellor (FJC) or a Civil Resource Counsellor (CRC) for assessment or to other services provided by a LIOW, LSS intake legal assistant, child support officer or ACLW.

Family Justice Counsellors see clients referred by CFJIs and the ACLW as well as Rule 5 clients who are referred directly from reception. The FJCs conduct in-depth assessments using the Family Assessment Tool³⁹ and may review dispute resolution options with the client following this assessment. The FJCs also provide direct services and make referrals. The Civil Resource Counsellor conducts assessment interviews with clients to determine the nature, extent and urgency of their issues. The CRC also provides direct service and makes referrals.

During the pilot period, 513 distinct clients were seen by a CRC or FJC. Therefore, we can deduce that *at least* 513 clients received an assessment service. Of these, 457 saw a Family Justice Counselor and would therefore have received an in-depth assessment while the remaining 57 clients saw a Civil Resource Counselor. Based on this it is estimated that almost one-quarter of the 2,122 clients who received services during the pilot period received the assessment service.

³⁸ "Rule 5 of the Provincial Court (Family) Rules requires parties to a contested court application made under the *Family Relations Act* to report at designated court registries to meet with a Family Justice Counsellor prior to a first court appearance. Some exceptions apply."

³⁹ The FJC is the only position in the JAC that performs in-depth assessment with a tested assessment tool.

3.3.2 Resource Room

The Resource Room at the JAC is open to all individuals, regardless of income, who seek information or self-help on a legal topic that is within the scope of JAC services. Of the 2,122 clients who received services at the JAC during the pilot period, 11% were referred to the Resource Room by JAC staff⁴⁰. Clients who access the Resource Room on their own are not captured in the Justice Tracking System so actual rate of usage of the Resource Room is not known.

Thirty-percent of clients who participated in the survey indicated that they had used the Resource Room. Of these, 61% used the Resource Room more than one time, almost three-quarters (73%) read or picked up publications, 40% asked a staff person for assistance, 23% used the computer and 16% used the printer⁴¹.

Exhibit 13
Services Used in the Resource Room

| Service | Number of Clients | % of Clients who Used Resource Room |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Read or picked up publications | 60 | 73% |
| Asked staff person to help me | 33 | 40% |
| Computer | 19 | 23% |
| Used printer | 13 | 16% |
| LawLINE | 9 | 11% |
| Used photocopier | 7 | 9% |
| Other | 4 | 5% |

n=82, Source: Client Survey

3.3.3 Dispute Resolution

During the pilot period, family dispute resolution services were provided 527 times to a total of 220 distinct clients. As dispute resolution is a service that can be provided over several appointments, some clients would have received one dispute resolution service while others would have received multiple services.

As shown in Exhibit 14, dispute resolution services were provided in-person, by telephone and in rare instances, through a 3rd party with just over one-half (52%) of all dispute resolution services provided in person.

⁴⁰ It is important to note that the JTS only provides data pertaining to internal referrals to the Resource Room. Clients who chose to use the Resource Room on their own are not captured in this data. Drop-ins to the Resource Room are not recorded. As a result, Resource Room use data is incomplete and the data that is available is thought to under-represent the extent to which this service is used.

⁴¹ Multiple responses were possible.

Exhibit 14
Mode of Dispute Resolution Service Delivery

| Mode of Service Delivery | Number | % of Total Dispute Resolution Services |
|---------------------------------|--------|--|
| In Person | 275 | 52.2% |
| By Phone | 249 | 47.2% |
| Through a 3 rd Party | 3 | 0.6% |

n=527, Source: JTS

The JAC offers both traditional mediation services and shuttle mediation services. In traditional mediation, each session (with both parties present) is recorded in the database as one service while in shuttle mediation, there would be at minimum, two services (one contact with each party, often by phone) recorded. Therefore, shuttle mediation services increase in the JTS, data the proportion of dispute resolution services that are provided by telephone.

3.4 Referrals

JAC staff refer clients to appropriate services for resolving their civil and family justice issues. Some services are available within the JAC while others are provided by community service providers. Referrals can be made at any point during a client's contact with the JAC although several staff indicated that most referrals are made following an initial interview with a CFJI or an assessment with a FJC or CRC.

3.4.1 Internal Referrals

Staff interviewed indicated that the majority of JAC clients receive internal referrals. While the JTS does not accurately track internal referral activity specifically, it is reasonable to assume that of the services received at the JAC after the initial interview, most were the result of an internal referral. Client survey results show that 45% of clients recalled being referred to other services or staff within the JAC after having already received service. However, administrative data does not indicate how many of these referrals were made after the initial interview service, or how many were made after receiving a more substantive service. The percentage of clients who received an internal referral was likely higher than the data suggests, as some clients may not have considered the referrals made at intake as a "referral".

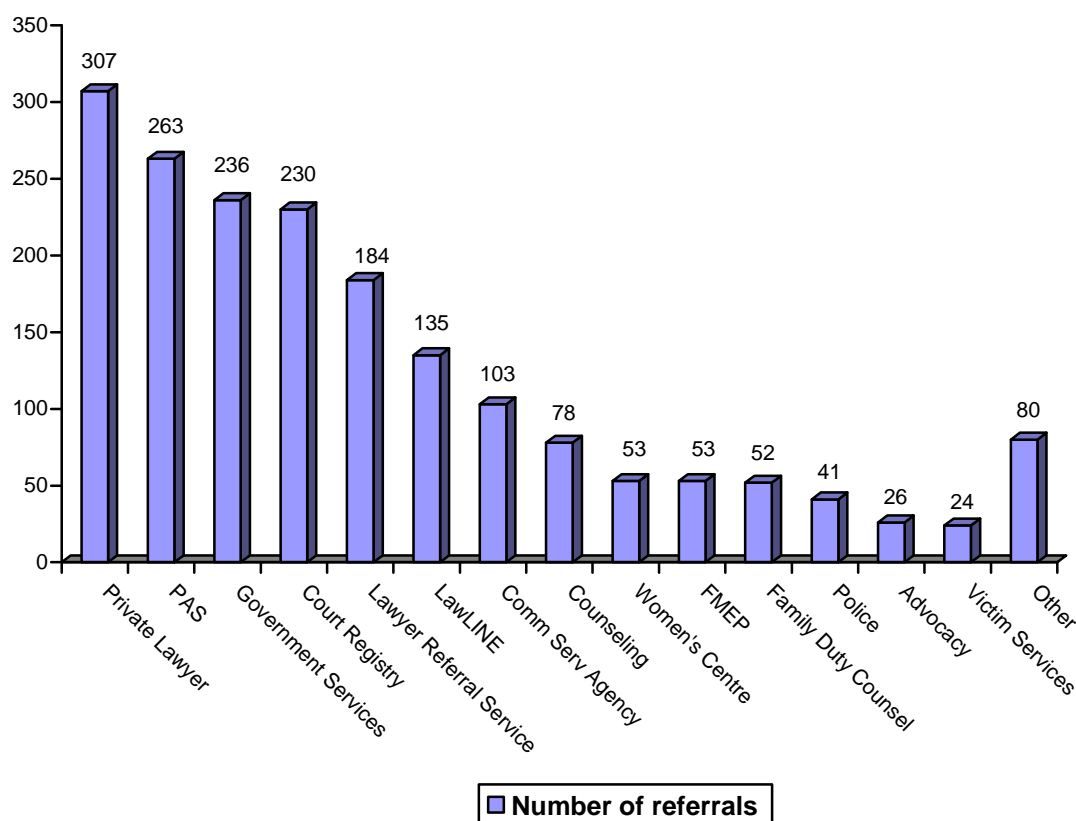
3.4.2 External Referrals

A total of 1,865 external referrals were provided to 1,183 distinct clients during the pilot period. The largest numbers of external referrals were made to private lawyers (307), MAG's Parenting After Separation (PAS) course (263), various government agencies (236), the Court Registry (230), Lawyer Referral Service (184)⁴², and LSS LawLINE service (135). The high number of referrals to private lawyers can be attributed in part to referrals made to the private bar when someone has been approved for legal aid.

⁴² Service coordinated by the Canadian Bar Association BC Branch where clients can receive a half hour of a lawyer's time for a nominal fee.

Advice lawyers also report using this category to refer people to lawyers who practice in a particular area of law.

Exhibit 15
Frequency of Referrals to External Services



Source: JTS
n=1,865

When examining the external referrals data, it is important to note that although the administrative data shows that during the pilot period 1,865 external referrals were made, the number of true referrals may be lower than this. The external referrals data contains many “referrals” that might better be classified as suggestions made as to where a client can go for additional services or information. It is not anticipated that a client will contact all “referrals” provided to them. Clients are often given general information that may be useful to them in terms of increasing their awareness of the services that are available in the community. As a result, the proportion of clients who follow-up on referrals may appear low because of the inclusion of multiple suggestions in the referrals data along with the more substantive referrals. More detail about referral follow-up is contained in Section 6.2 of this report.

Results from the client survey show that 42% of clients recalled being referred to one or more services and resources outside the JAC. Indicated in Exhibit 16 are the referrals

that clients recalled receiving. The services clients most frequently recalled being referred to were Parenting After Separation (44.1%) and Lawyer Referral (28.8%).

Exhibit 16
External Service Referrals – Client Survey

| Service Referred To | Number Referred | % of Referred Survey Respondents |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Parenting After Separation | 52 | 44.1% |
| Lawyer Referral | 34 | 28.8% |
| Counselling | 15 | 12.7% |
| Community Services Agency | 10 | 8.5% |
| Government Services | 9 | 7.6% |
| Pro Bono or Free Lawyer Clinic | 9 | 7.6% |
| Court Registry | 9 | 7.6% |
| Private Lawyer | 5 | 4.2% |
| Women's Centre/Transition House | 4 | 3.4% |
| LawLINE | 3 | 2.5% |
| Aboriginal Services | 3 | 2.5% |
| Men's Services | 2 | 1.7% |
| Mental Health Services | 2 | 1.7% |
| Private Mediator | 2 | 1.7% |
| Public Legal Education Session | 1 | 0.8% |
| Victim Services | 1 | 0.8% |

n=118, Source: Client Survey

While administrative data probably over represents the number of external referrals made, it is possible that survey data under represents the true extent to which external referrals are made due to clients and staff interpreting "external service" differently. For example, clients may not regard LawLINE as an external service and many may make the call from a telephone at the JAC and thus, still regard this as an internal service. Clients referred to the police or a government agency may also not regard this as a "referral". Client recall issues might also be a factor as referrals might have been made but forgotten about by clients.

3.5 Outreach Activities

Employees of the JAC are actively engaged in outreach activities aimed at building community linkages. Outreach activities are undertaken by both MAG and LSS employees and overseen by the MAG Local Manager and the LSS Managing Lawyer. These activities are a key focus for the Civil Resource Counsellor (CRC), Legal Information Outreach Worker (LIOW) and Aboriginal Community Legal Worker (ACLW) but may also be conducted by Family Justice Counsellors (FJC) or the Child Support Officer (CSO). To-date, all recorded outreach activities were undertaken by the CRC, the LIOW and the ACLW and on occasion by the LSS Managing Lawyer and MAG Local Manager.

Building and maintaining relationships with service providers in the local community is a key aspect of the JAC model. The key objective of these outreach activities is to develop appropriate relationships within the community to support client services through referrals and to make educational and informational resources available in the community. An additional outreach goal includes identifying service gaps in the community and working to proactively to address these gaps. Outreach activities are also aimed at developing facilitated referral relationships. In the future it is possible that some of the service providers with whom relationships are built might provide in-house services at the JAC.

The outreach activities undertaken include tours of the JAC accompanied by a presentation about JAC services, the JAC grand opening, a community forum, and extensive off-site visits to community and governmental agencies to educate service providers in the community about JAC services and to learn about complementary services available in the community.

Although JAC outreach activities began before the JAC opened on October 30, 2008, outreach activities were not initially tracked. The data presented in this report represents JAC outreach activities between November 25, 2008 and May 27, 2009⁴³ and, therefore, reflects only a portion of the outreach activities undertaken. To determine the extent and nature of outreach activities, the evaluation team manually reviewed outreach forms and tracking sheets completed by JAC staff.

In the six months from November 25, 2008 to May 27, 2009, JAC staff arranged and conducted 178 distinct outreach activities to reach out to 126 different groups/agencies/programs to provide information about the JAC and the issues addressed and services offered there. These activities ranged in size from one-on-one meetings with a representative from a community agency to a presentation made to a group of 103 delegates. The majority of the presentations, however, had audiences of between 11 and 22 people and most meetings were comprised of groups of 3 to 10 people.

As highlighted in Exhibit 17, JAC outreach activities intensified throughout the pilot period as the staff continued to build linkages within the community. In addition to extensive activity undertaken around the time of the JAC's opening for which there is no data, the JAC staff reached out to an increasing number of community agencies/groups each month between November 2008 and May 2009.

⁴³ The data from outreach reports does not align precisely with the pilot period (December 1-May 31, 2009), as the consultant opted to report on all outreach data that was available. The first outreach activity conducted (for which data was available) was undertaken on November 25, 2008, and the last activity was on May 27, 2009.

Exhibit 17
Number of JAC Outreach Activities Each Month

| Month | # of Activities | % of Activities |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| November | 2 | 1.1% |
| December | 5 | 2.8% |
| January | 22 | 12.4% |
| February | 26 | 14.6% |
| March | 32 | 18.0% |
| April | 43 | 24.2% |
| May | 44 | 24.7% |
| Date Unknown | 4 | 2.2% |
| Total | 178 | 100% |

n=178, Source: JAC Staff Activity Reports

SECTION 4: KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

The overview of JAC outputs presented in the previous section profiles the socio-demographic characteristics of the clients served by the JAC, the kinds of civil and family justice issues these clients are facing and the services they received. In addition, referral and assessments processes were outlined and commented on and the nature and volume of outreach activities were examined. In addition to the successful achievement of these key objectives, a number of key evaluation findings emerged from the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation* and are presented in this section. Each of the key findings is highlighted and supported by integrated analysis based on lines of evidence identified for each evaluation question⁴⁴.

The following evaluation questions are addressed in this section.

1. Are the objectives of the JAC well understood?
2. Is communication and information sharing effective?
3. Is the JAC open to and easily accessed by a range of clients with varying issues?
4. What is the client's level of satisfaction with the JAC?
5. Do assessments identify client needs?
6. Do clients receive appropriate referrals?
7. Has the JAC increased awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services?

The evaluation findings presented below are based on information obtained through analysis of administrative data, results from the client survey, key information interviews, client focus groups, site visits and a review of documentation. Each section below is headed by one of the seven evaluation questions identified for this implementation evaluation. Each question is answered based on integrated analysis of data gathered from multiple lines of evidence.

4.1 Are the objectives of the JAC well understood?

The objectives of the JAC are well understood by staff.

All of the staff interviewed reported a solid and increasing understanding of the objectives of the JAC. In addition, most of the staff understood how their role contributes to those objectives. Staff attributed this knowledge to extensive training they received prior to the JAC's opening and in its early stages of operations.

JAC staff reported that the training provided to them just prior to the Centre's opening and in the weeks following was comprehensive and that during this training the objectives of the JAC were well articulated. Some staff reported, however, that only limited training has been provided since the initial round of training. These staff

⁴⁴ Findings from multiple lines of evidence are integrated and will not be presented separately for each data source.

suggested that periodic training be provided to ensure that all new staff members have the same level of training/knowledge as staff who were employed at the Centre from the outset and received more comprehensive training. In addition, some staff suggested that refreshers be provided periodically as the JAC is an evolving model that may incorporate changes over time. Ongoing training would help ensure that all staff are kept abreast of any changes and the implications of these changes for policies, procedures and the services provided.

The need for ongoing training was most strongly emphasized in relation to newer staff. Newer staff reported that they had received limited training and the onus was placed on them to seek out information pertaining to the objectives of the JAC. Most emphasized, however, that this information is readily available, especially given the recent completion of the *Justice Access Centre Policy Manual* that was distributed to staff days before the key informant interviews were completed. Several staff mentioned the manual during interviews and said it was an excellent and comprehensive resource.

While staff reported good understanding of the JAC objectives overall, information about the individual roles and responsibilities of other staff at the JAC and where a particular position fits in terms of meeting overall objectives was not, according to several, as fully understood.

External service providers understand the purpose of the JAC.

Most of the external service providers interviewed for the evaluation felt they had a good grasp of the objectives of the JAC model. These service providers all reported sufficient knowledge of the JAC to make informed referrals to the services available at the Centre.

This finding is supported by data from the staff interviews which shows that staff see very few inappropriate referrals coming from external service providers suggesting that external service providers are knowledgeable about JAC services. Staff reported that out-of-scope clients tend to be self-referred.

Some JAC staff also recalled that external service providers are proactively seeking additional information to enhance their understanding of the JAC and its services. Some of these staff regularly receive phone calls from service providers in the community who are looking for information for their clients. Overall, both the JAC staff and the external service providers interviewed for the evaluation felt that awareness of the JAC, its objectives and the full complement of family and civil justice services available was good and continues to improve.

Clients have limited knowledge of the full range of JAC services but good understanding of the specific services they received.

Evidence from the client survey, client focus groups and internal and external stakeholder interviews suggests that many clients are not aware of the full complement of services available at the JAC. For example, comments made during focus groups suggest that many focus group participants view the JAC primarily as the point of access to legal aid or a means of getting advice from a lawyer. Many focus group participants,

after hearing about services other clients had received, stated that they had not been aware that the JAC also offers these other services. In fact, at the end of the focus groups, almost all participants mentioned that as a result of attending the focus group, they were now much more aware of the range of services available at the JAC.

Although awareness and understanding of other services that might potentially have benefited them was limited, clients displayed good understanding of the specific services they received.

4.2 Is communication and information sharing effective?

Communication and information sharing within the JAC is effective and improving with time but staff would like to see better understanding of each of the roles within the JAC.

Staff reported facing challenges around information sharing early in the initiative but felt that information sharing had steadily improved over time. At the time the staff interviews were conducted for the evaluation, staff had noted significant improvements with respect to internal information sharing. Several staff members noted, however, that they do not fully understand the roles and responsibilities of some of the other JAC staff while others felt that the role they play is not always well understood by others. As a result, some staff did not always know who to approach when presented with client issues they were not personally equipped to address.

Some staff suggested that early challenges around communication and information sharing were to be expected given the merging of two workplace cultures (LSS and MAG) within one initiative. These staff anticipated that with time their understanding of all the roles and responsibilities would increase and noted that improvements were already evident. Other staff felt that learning to work together had been hampered somewhat by unavoidable changes in management during the JAC's short lifespan. These staff members were looking forward to more stability in the future. Other staff expressed the desire for more training with respect to the various roles within the JAC.

Some staff members perceive Section 23⁴⁵ to be a barrier to effective communication and information sharing.

Some staff suggested that restrictions in information sharing exist due to Section 23 of the *Legal Services Act*. Staff members subject to Section 23 cannot share information about a client's situation unless the client consents to disclosure. Some staff noted that having different confidentiality requirements for different staff at the JAC causes some uncertainty with respect to sharing information. One staff member noted that Section 23

⁴⁵ Section 23 of the *Legal Services Society Act* includes specific obligations concerning privilege and confidentiality of information disclosed to employees, agents and contractors of LSS and requires such information be kept confidential in the same manner and to the same extent as if disclosed to a solicitor under a solicitor and client relationship. At the JAC, Section 23 applies to all LSS employees and some MAG employees.

presents barriers to integration of services while another stated that staff need clear guidelines as to how Section 23 and non-Section 23 staff are to share information.

Overall, staff members who identified Section 23 as a barrier to communication and information sharing noted that the issue of information sharing in general is somewhat unclear. As one staff person put it, “there is a fine line to keep the client solicitor privilege but also serve the client well.” Another staff member said that Section 23 “gives pause all the time” when explaining that staff are often unsure of how to proceed with respect to information sharing. Concerns around how to apply Section 23 came from both Section 23 and non-Section 23 staff. Overall, results from staff interviews suggest that the application of Section 23 may not be fully understood by some staff at the JAC.

Many staff members feel a shared electronic calendar for MAG and LSS staff would enhance communication and information sharing.

Several staff noted that not having an electronic JAC calendar that is accessible to both MAG and LSS employees impedes communication and information sharing at the Centre. Some staff suggested that it limits their ability to properly facilitate referrals if the staff person they are referring a client to works for the other employer. MAG employees have the ability to go into the calendars of other MAG employees and can book referral appointments directly. LSS employees can do the same with other LSS employees. Although both groups used MS Outlook for scheduling purposes there is no crossover between the two systems because separate servers are used to house the data. As a result, a referral made by a MAG employee to an LSS employee must, if facilitated, be done by telephone or in-person. Some staff recalled instances in which messages got missed, or another client arrived, the staff member was interrupted, resulting in a referral call not being placed.

JAC staff are effectively building relationships in the community through outreach activities.

As outlined in the previous section, JAC staff are actively engaged in comprehensive community outreach activities and intensified their outreach efforts each month during the pilot period. All but one of the nine external stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation were aware that the JAC is engaged in extensive and active outreach in the community and noted that the information sessions/meetings/forums hosted by the JAC when the Centre first opened were useful to them. Most of these service providers had been involved in a JAC outreach activity and all represented an organization that staff at the JAC had presented to at some point during the pilot period. External service providers reported feeling more confident about referring clients to the JAC after they had met with JAC staff or participated in JAC outreach activities.

Overall, while the outreach activities were well regarded, some external service providers suggested that it would be beneficial for the relationship between the JAC and community service providers if JAC staff became more active in seeking out feedback and information from service providers. A few of the respondents felt that while current outreach activities undertaken by the JAC were good, they represent a “one-way

approach” of disseminating information about the JAC to service providers. A process for relaying information and community requirements from external service providers back to the JAC was recommended.

A solid foundation has been built to support continued productive communication between the JAC and external service providers.

External service providers who were interviewed as part of the evaluation were satisfied with the level and quality of communication they have with the JAC. Service providers speak highly of the staff at the JAC and feel that overall, collaboration between JAC staff and service providers in the community is good. All external service providers interviewed feel there is room for improvement in this area but recognize that the JAC model is new and that establishing relationships takes time.

Despite the extensive community outreach efforts of JAC staff, some of the external service providers noted that they would like more information about the services available to their clients from the JAC. A few noted that they do not refer many clients to the JAC but might refer more if they had more detailed information about what the JAC could do for their clients. One external service provider noted that written information in the form of a pamphlet or FAQ sheet would be very useful.

Some external stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation reported that they had not received as many client referrals from the JAC as they had expected to. These respondents noted that it was unclear whether the lower than expected number of referrals was due to hesitation and/or unwillingness on the part of JAC staff to make referrals to their service/agency or whether clients received the referrals from the JAC staff but did not follow-up on them. It is also possible that referrals are being made and clients are accessing services but not always telling the service provider they were referred by JAC staff.

4.3 Is the JAC open to and easily accessed by a range of clients with varying issues?

Clients are highly satisfied with the ease with which they access the JAC and its services.

JAC clients reported that the Centre is an easy place to access services. As outlined in Exhibit 18, 78% of clients who participated in the client survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of the JAC, 79% with the ease of getting to the JAC, 86% with the hours of operation and 75% with the waiting time to receive service. These findings are consistent with information provided by some clients during focus group discussions and are further supported by findings from some of the external service provider interviews.

Exhibit 18
Client Satisfaction with the Accessibility of the JAC

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | % Satisfied or Very Satisfied |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Availability of Staff (n=275) | 59% | 25% | 10% | 3% | 3% | 84% |
| Hours of Operation (n=265) | 57% | 29% | 12% | 2% | 0% | 86% |
| Waiting Time for Service (n=274) | 47% | 28% | 17% | 4% | 4% | 75% |
| Location of the JAC (n=276) | 54% | 24% | 12% | 8% | 2% | 78% |
| Location of the JAC Relative to Courthouse (n=227) | 86% | 10% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 96% |
| Ease of Getting to JAC (n=274) | 53% | 26% | 11% | 8% | 2% | 79% |

Source: Client Survey

Some staff and external service providers feel that barriers to accessing JAC services may exist for some potential clients.

Some staff and external service providers felt that a limited number of potential clients might not be accessing services at the JAC due to perceived barriers. Whether external service providers feel that the JAC is easily accessible to clients appears to depend somewhat on the client population the provider serves. The government service providers (i.e., Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Court Registry and Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD)) interviewed recalled that they had received positive client feedback about the hands-on, holistic, user-friendly and accessible approach to service provision at the JAC. Representatives of some community agencies, on the other hand, reported that some of their clients who received services at the JAC were initially reluctant to seek services there and that other potential clients would likely decline to seek services. Examples included clients from marginalized populations or individuals experiencing highly stressful and sometimes traumatic situations who external service providers felt may not feel welcome or safe at the JAC would therefore be unlikely to access JAC services⁴⁶. These respondents based their assertions on their close knowledge of these clients.

Several staff and some of the external service providers interviewed suggested that the JAC consider adopting a more flexible approach to service delivery that would allow the provision of some delivery of services off-site. It is noted the ACLW operates differently from other staff at the JAC and already meets clients off-site and that this approach has been successful in reaching out to Aboriginal clients that might otherwise not have

⁴⁶ It is important to note that the recruitment of survey and focus group participants was based on registered JAC clients. As such, individuals who did not feel welcome or safe enough to access JAC services could not be contacted to provide feedback via the survey and/or focus groups. Therefore, perspectives from individuals who may have experienced barriers to accessing JAC services and did not access services as a result are not captured in the client-driven data that was collected for the evaluation.

accessed services at the JAC. Recent efforts by the JAC to provide these clients with off-site access to services demonstrates a flexible approach to service provision that appears to be successful given the high proportion of JAC clients who are Aboriginal relative to the Aboriginal population in the Nanaimo area. Aboriginal people comprise only 4.9% of the population of the Nanaimo Regional District⁴⁷, yet 18.6% of JAC clients are Aboriginal. In addition, administrative data shows that the JAC is serving clients who are facing traumatic situations.

Simplifying processes for clients could facilitate better client service.

Most of the staff interviewed suggested that streamlining the client intake process would facilitate better client service. Suggestions for simplifying intake included collecting less client information at first contact, combining forms to reduce the total number of forms clients are required to complete, and providing a more relaxing environment for clients when they are completing these forms (e.g., light music, coffee, etc.).

According to staff, the challenges associated with what is regarded as a cumbersome process, are two-fold. Many staff felt that the intake process is intimidating and/or overwhelming to clients and may result in clients leaving before they receive service or not following through on referrals. A further concern is the time it takes staff to process all required forms and data-enter the information into two distinct databases, which might aggravate wait times for services, particularly for family justice services. Staff felt their time would be better spent doing less paperwork and serving more clients. It is important to note that staff were asked to collect additional information in order to provide data for the evaluation. The amount of data collected and data entry processes will be reviewed after the completion of the evaluation.

Client wait times for some services appear to be increasing.

As outlined in Exhibit 18, three-quarters (75%) of the clients surveyed reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the waiting time to receive service. Although wait times do not appear to have been an issue during the evaluation period, information from interviews with JAC staff and results from client focus groups suggest that wait times for family justice services appear to be increasing. Some staff reported that their workloads are increasing and wait times are commensurately increasing while other staff reported that advice lawyers who would usually provide civil justice services are also providing family justice services to ease some of the wait times.

In focus groups, some clients expressed frustration with the wait times for family justice services. One participant stated, "I just wanted to get things over with. It was agonizing to go through the end of the relationship, and I was anxious to go on with my life. It was frustrating that I had to wait weeks between my initial appointment and the follow-up appointments at the JAC." While many participants mentioned that they were aware that wait times were probably due to the high demand for JAC services and increased workload for JAC staff, clients stated that they would like to see more resources and support for the JAC to reduce wait times. This finding was supported by findings from the client survey.

⁴⁷ Canadian Census, 2006.

More flexible service delivery options would broaden access to JAC services.

Clients, staff and external service providers made suggestions around more flexible service delivery options to increase access to JAC services. While clients were not specifically asked about flexible service delivery options, when asked to make recommendations for improving the services at the JAC, several suggested lengthening JAC hours to include evenings and/or weekends. Some clients also noted that the operating hours of the JAC is a barrier to working people. In total, fourteen clients suggested that the JAC should be open later in the day and/or on weekends. While this is not a large number and should be taken within the context of the 86% of clients who were satisfied or very satisfied with the hours the JAC is open it is worthy of note as there may be potential clients who do not access the JAC for this reason. Further research may be warranted to determine how large this potential client base is.

4.4 What is the client's level of satisfaction with the JAC?

Most clients feel that staff at the JAC are knowledgeable and very helpful.

As outlined in Exhibit 19, a large majority of JAC clients who participated in the client survey reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the knowledge of staff (85%), the helpfulness of staff (90%) and the helpfulness of JAC services (79%). Similarly, the majority of clients who participated in focus group discussions reported that JAC staff had been helpful and knowledgeable in providing assistance and services. As one focus group participant put it, "I think it's awesome, even if they are not always able to help with the things I come in for, but the fact that they are there, it's awesome having them there. I can't imagine going through this process without them."

Exhibit 19
Client Satisfaction with JAC Staff

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | % Satisfied or Very Satisfied |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Helpfulness of Staff (n=276) | 72% | 18% | 7% | 2% | 1% | 90% |
| Knowledge of Staff (n=269) | 60% | 25% | 11% | 3% | 1% | 85% |
| Helpfulness of Service (n=266) | 53% | 26% | 11% | 4% | 4% | 79% |

Source: Client Survey

A large majority of clients reported a high level of satisfaction with the knowledge of JAC staff, although some clients did highlight areas where they felt that the knowledge of JAC staff could be improved. For example, one focus group participant expressed concerns that JAC staff are knowledgeable and helpful in legal matters that could be taken to the Provincial Court, but were less helpful and knowledgeable in assisting clients with Supreme Court matters. This comment was in keeping with comments made by some clients on the client survey.

Most clients easily find what they are looking for in the Resource Room.

Clients who used the Resource Room at the JAC reported a high level of satisfaction in terms of being able to find the information that they required. As illustrated in Exhibit 20, almost three-quarters of the survey respondents who used the Resource Room reported finding all or most of the information they required. Only 7% of clients found none of the information they needed.

Exhibit 20
Extent to Which Information Needed
was in Resource Room

| | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Found all the information needed | 32% |
| Found most of the information needed | 42% |
| Found some of the information needed | 20% |
| Found none of the information needed | 7% |

n=82, Source: Client Survey

As indicated in Exhibit 21, clients who did not use the Resource Room had various reasons for not using this service. While it is worthwhile to note that more than one-half of clients who did not use the service did not require any information, 41% of clients surveyed who did not use the Resource Room recalled that they did not know the Resource Room was there.

Exhibit 21
Reasons for Not Using Resource Room

| Reason | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Didn't require information | 52% |
| Didn't know the Resource Room was there | 41% |
| Had no time | 9% |
| Didn't know public could use the room | 1% |
| Didn't know how to use the Resource Room | 1% |
| There was no staff there to help me | 1% |

n=196, Source: Client Survey

Lack of awareness of the Resource Room was reflected in participant feedback during focus group discussions, in which the majority of participants reported that they did not know about or use the Resource Room.

The Resource Room at the JAC is centrally located behind the reception area where clients wait to see JAC staff, complete intake paperwork and make enquiries at the reception desk. It would be reasonable to assume that given its close proximity to the waiting area and given the open access to the area, clients would be aware of it.

However, survey data suggest that many clients are not aware of the Resource Room and administrative data shows that only 11% of clients were referred to the Resource Room by a staff person at the JAC. This might suggest that staff are making the assumption that JAC clients know about the Resource Room when in fact, they may not.

JAC clients find the integrated approach to service provision at the JAC helpful.

A large majority (85%) of client survey respondents found having a range of civil and family justice services available to them in one place very helpful or quite helpful. An additional 8% found this approach to service delivery somewhat helpful.

Exhibit 22
Level of Helpfulness of Having a
Range of Services Available in One Place

| Level of Helpfulness | Number | Percent |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| Very Helpful | 198 | 71% |
| Quite Helpful | 39 | 14% |
| Somewhat Helpful | 21 | 8% |
| Not Very Helpful | 8 | 3% |
| Not Helpful at All | 12 | 4% |

n=278, Source: Client Survey

In addition, some focus group participants reported that they had received numerous services at the JAC and found this integrated service delivery very helpful.

Just as a large majority of JAC clients found the integrated approach to service delivery helpful, Exhibit 23 shows that the majority of clients (80%) who participated in the survey were able to resolve some, most or all of the issues and concerns that initially brought them to the JAC.

Exhibit 23
Extent of Issue Resolution

| Degree of Issue Resolution | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------|------------|
| All Issues Resolved | 86 | 31% |
| Most Issues Resolved | 86 | 31% |
| Some Issues Resolved | 50 | 18% |
| No Issues Resolved | 56 | 20% |

n=278, Source: Client Survey

Clients were asked to recall the most helpful and least helpful service(s) received. Of the 278 clients who participated in the client survey, 52 identified a “most useful service”. The two services the survey respondents most frequently classified as “most useful” service were Legal Advice (45%) and Mediation (20%).

Exhibit 24
Most Helpful Service

| Most Helpful Service | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Legal Advice | 114 | 45% |
| Mediation | 50 | 20% |
| Legal Aid/LSS Intake | 28 | 11% |
| JAC Intake | 15 | 6% |
| Forms Completion | 13 | 5% |
| Self-Help Resource Room | 8 | 3% |
| Short-Term Counseling | 6 | 2% |
| Other | 18 | 7% |

n=252, Source: Client Survey

While client satisfaction with the JAC is high, client survey participants were asked to make recommendations for improving the services at the Centre. Forty-percent of those surveyed, made suggestions for improvement. Exhibit 25 demonstrates that those who completed the survey most frequently recommended better customer service/more knowledgeable staff (7.9%), shorter wait times for service (6.1%), and longer hours (5.0%). As illustrated in Exhibit 25, there was no single service area that generated feedback from a significant proportion of clients with respect to improvements. This suggests that overall, there are no pressing service delivery issues that need improvement from the clients' perspective.

Exhibit 25
Client Recommendations for Improvements

| Recommendation | Number of Clients Who Recommended | Percentage of All Clients Who Completed the Survey |
|--|--|---|
| Better Customer Service/More Knowledgeable Staff | 22 | 7.9% |
| Shorter Wait Times For Service | 17 | 6.1% |
| Longer Operating Hours | 14 | 5.0% |
| More Client Follow-Up By Staff | 9 | 3.2% |
| Improved Parking Situation | 8 | 2.9% |
| Better Access to Legal Aid | 5 | 1.8% |
| Other | 36 | 12.9% |
| No Recommendations Made | 167 | 60.1% |

n=278, Source: Client Survey

4.5 Do assessments identify client needs?

Due to the integrated service delivery model in place at the JAC, civil and/or family justice issues/service needs may be identified at any point during a client's contact with the JAC. Evaluation findings from multiple lines of evidence suggest that the JAC is

successful in identifying most of a client's civil and family justice needs. In client focus group discussions, most clients reported that they approached the JAC with one main issue, and that several other issues were identified while their needs were being assessed. JAC staff also felt that the service delivery model is effective in terms of teasing out most of a client's issues.

Administrative data lends further support for this finding. As outlined in Exhibit 26, the majority of JAC clients have two or more justice issues. While some clients may have identified more than one of their issues at intake, given that almost two-thirds (62%) of clients have multiple issues, it is reasonable to assume that many of these clients had issues that were identified after their initial contact with the JAC.

Exhibit 26
Number of Issues

| # of Issues | Distinct Clients | Percent |
|-------------|------------------|---------|
| 1 | 766 | 38% |
| 2 | 549 | 27% |
| 3 | 302 | 15% |
| 4 | 180 | 9% |
| 5 | 98 | 5% |
| 6 | 60 | 3% |
| 7 | 34 | 2% |
| 8+ | 19 | 1% |

n=2,008, Source: JTS

At any given time, the JAC has clients who are at varying stages in terms of resolving their justice issues. Some of the clients who had only one identified issue during the pilot period will have additional issues identified after the evaluation period ended. Because data presented is a snapshot of one point in time, it is not possible to know how many clients ultimately have more than one issue identified but we can reasonably assume it will be more than the 62% identified by the data.

A total of 1,939 JAC clients had their first justice issues identified during the pilot period. Of these, 369 (19%) had issues entered into the JTS after their first issue creation date. This does not suggest, however, that 81% of clients have no issues identified other than their initial self-identified need. Rather, it suggests that the initial interview is successfully identifying client needs upon first contact. That almost one-fifth of clients have additional issues identified after the initial issue identification date suggests that the JAC's unique service delivery model is successfully identifying the service needs of its clients. In client focus group discussions, most clients reported that they approached the JAC with one main issue, and that several other issues were identified while their needs were being assessed.

All staff responsible for conducting initial client interviews reported probing with questions and listening for particular key words but that the amount of probing done depends on each individual case and the client's appetite for fact-finding. It also appears that there is variation in the degree to which staff feel they should be probing for

information beyond what the client presents. Some staff were of the opinion that staff should focus on issues that the client presents whereas other staff suggested that as much information as possible should be gathered at the initial interview so that all appropriate referrals can be made. Many staff noted that they do try to identify additional issues, most particularly looking for issues that are often closely related (i.e., custody and access, or child support and debt issues).

Staff who felt that the current process to assess client needs is less effective than it could be, tended to present the relatively low proportion of JAC clients who are identified as having civil justice issues as evidence to support this assertion. However, the JAC is seeing a significant number of civil clients. Despite this, there tended to be an overall feeling among most staff interviewed that more civil issues exist among clients than are being identified. As one JAC employee put it, “civil issues slip through the cracks.” Managers interviewed also highlighted the issue around the identification of civil justice issues with one reporting that the civil justice staff tend to feel that the family justice staff does not do enough probing around civil issues and another manager suggesting that the proportion of clients who present with civil justice issues is “worth exploring.”

4.6 Do clients receive appropriate referrals?

More than one-third of JAC clients learned about the JAC at court or through another service provider.

JAC clients learned about the Centre and the services offered there in a number of ways. As illustrated in Exhibit 28, clients who indicated how they heard about the JAC, most often identified Court (17%), a government service (16%), a family or friend (16%) and a community social service agency or social worker (14%) as the information source. Very few clients learned about the JAC through the Internet, *Parenting After Separation*, or through other sources. Previous research that looked at referral sources to Family Justice Centres showed that 55% of referrals came from “informal sources”, such as friends or family while 17% came from specific legal sources. Relatively few referrals to Family Justice Centres came from other government agencies, ministries or community services⁴⁸. The large proportion of referrals to the JAC from these sources speaks to the success of the JAC’s outreach activities and is strong indicator for awareness of the JAC among service providers in the community.

⁴⁸ Focus Consultants. Dispute Resolution Longitudinal Study – Phase 3, Final Report. March 2008.

Exhibit 28
Heard of JAC

| Source of Information | Number | Valid Percent |
|---|--------|---------------|
| Court | 261 | 17% |
| Government Service | 247 | 16% |
| Family or Friend | 242 | 16% |
| Community Social Service Agency/Social Worker | 219 | 14% |
| Legal Services Society - Legal Aid | 141 | 9% |
| Lawyer | 129 | 8% |
| Other Party | 80 | 5% |
| Internet | 61 | 4% |
| Phone Book | 47 | 3% |
| Aboriginal Group or Agency | 33 | 2% |
| Parenting After Separation | 30 | 2% |
| Advocacy Group | 30 | 2% |

n=1,520, Source: JTS

The internal referral function at the JAC is working well but there is room for improvement.

As part of the integrated service delivery model at the JAC, staff and contractors of LSS working onsite at the JAC (i.e., advice lawyers) refer clients to one another. JAC staff who were interviewed as part of this implementation evaluation explained that when made, these referrals are generally *facilitated* referrals meaning that the referring person offers to assist the client by arranging an appointment with the staff person receiving the referral. In some cases the person making the referral also provides the staff person receiving the referral with a written summary of the case and/or an oral summary of the client's issues and service needs after gaining client consent to do so. In this way the JAC model is unique as fact-finding about a client's needs and referrals to other services may continue throughout the life of a client's relationship with the JAC. More commonly, centres such as this have one point of assessment and referral.

While the referrals process within the JAC works well, staff felt it was limited in some respects by some degree of confusion around roles and responsibilities and client confidentiality.

Most external referrals are not facilitated referrals.

When a community service provider is identified to assist a client of the JAC, staff make a referral. During interviews, most staff reported that the referrals they make to external service providers are cold hand-off referrals meaning that they provide the client with information about the organization or individual that he or she is being referred to and contact information but the onus is on the client to make the contact. Some staff suggested that a more "warm hand-off" approach whereby JAC staff phones the external

service provider to make the referral, would both increase the likelihood that clients would follow-up on their referrals and provide additional opportunity to educate external service providers about the JAC and the services offered. If adopted, this approach would be consistent with JAC policy on referrals to community agency services which states that “where a closer relationship would benefit mutual clients and would be a good fit for the JAC and the agency, employees, agents and contractors of LSS and MAG may make facilitated referrals to that organization.”⁴⁹

Some staff also emphasized the importance of providing clients with as much information as possible about referrals being made. As one staff member put it, “clients are more likely to follow-up if they know a lot before they go, like the name, what the building looks like, what will happen, etc.”. However, it should also be noted that client feedback to LSS and MAG staff suggests that many clients prefer to make their own choices about which referrals to follow-up on. Staff may choose not to make a facilitated referral if they feel this would disempower the client or they believe the client would not welcome it.

Clients are receiving appropriate internal and external referrals at the JAC.

Key to the integrated approach to service delivery modeled at the JAC is the referral function. The referral process is of key importance to the JAC model. Staff within the JAC refer clients to outside providers for assistance and those outside providers refer clients to the JAC. The referral process is also important within the JAC since different employees refer clients to other employees for service.

External Referrals

The large majority (92%) of clients surveyed felt that they had been referred to appropriate services for the issues they have. This finding is supported by findings from external service providers and staff interviews. Findings from these interviews suggest that the two-way referral process that has developed between the JAC and service providers in the community is resulting in appropriate client referrals. During interviews, external service providers recalled that the clients they have received through referrals from the JAC present with issues that they are equipped to help address. Similarly, all of the JAC staff interviewed for the evaluation said that they see very few out of scope clients and that almost all of those they do see are self-referred.

Of the 118 clients who completed the survey and reported having been referred to external services, 64% had followed up on their referral(s). An additional 8% had not yet followed up but planned to. Some of those who did not intend to follow through on the referrals stated that they no longer needed the service to which they had been referred and some stated that they did not have time to follow-up. A few clients reported that while the service they were referred to was appropriate for addressing their needs, it was not affordable for them.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Attorney General and Legal Services Society (April 2009). Justice Access Centre Policy Manual.

Internal Referrals

Limited information is available with respect to client perceptions of the appropriateness of the referrals they receive *within* the JAC. Feedback from clients suggests that they tend to think of their contact with the JAC as total experience rather than several individual services and referrals. This is positive finding in that it is in keeping with the JAC principles to “provide an integrated and holistic approach to service delivery”. However, because clients had difficulty separating out different elements of their experience at the JAC, findings with respect to *specific* services are limited.

All of the staff interviewed reported that the referrals they receive from other staff at the JAC are appropriate. No staff indicated any instances in which they were unable to serve clients who had been referred to them internally. Suggestion of questionable referrals emerged during the client survey and client focus group in one area only. Overall the ratings for mediation services were very positive with more than three-quarters (76%) of survey participants who used this service reporting that the service was helpful or very helpful. However, a very small number of focus group participants raised concerns that mediation had been suggested to them as an option to resolve their disputes even though they had disclosed that there was abuse in their relationship. Two client survey participants indicated that they had been referred to mediation inappropriately given the dynamics of their relationship. One client indicated that there had been abuse in their relationship, while another indicated that her spouse was an addict. These concerns were also echoed during key informant interviews with two staff members from one external organization. These staff noted that they were aware of instances where clients reported to them that they were referred by the JAC to face-to-face mediation with ex-partners when there had been incidents of abuse in their relationship. It is important to note that the clients being referred may have been the same clients who participated in the client survey and/or focus groups as they noted similar concerns. As such, the actual number of clients who expressed such concerns is not known, but the number is low.

Before mediation is suggested to a client as a possible option, the client is first subject to an in-depth assessment process. FJCs use a comprehensive assessment tool to establish a client’s situation and justice needs and decide an appropriate course of action given those needs. The Family Assessment Tool is a detailed, multi-page form that explores many facets of family violence and abuse in relationships. A series of 22 questions are posed in order to determine the appropriateness of mediation or other services. A formula is provided to assist the staff to calculate each client’s risk score and actions are recommended based on that score. Affirmative responses to four particular questions automatically rule out mediation, except in very extenuating circumstances⁵⁰.

For cases where mediation is suggested as a possibility, it is still up to each party to decide whether or not they wish to participate, as mediation is offered on a voluntary

⁵⁰ “Extenuating circumstances may be that both parties wish to proceed and the abused participant will be accompanied by a support person such as a lawyer. Mediation will never be appropriate when the assessor determines that safety is a concern.” User’s Guide: Family Justice Services Centre Assessment Tool, p. 34.

basis only. In fact, some client survey respondents noted their inability to participate in mediation because the other party in their dispute had chosen not to participate.

While the JAC has a clear policy with respect to whether or not to refer a client to mediation services, there may be instances when a staff person's assessment of what is appropriate differs from a client's assessment. Also, clients who had been referred to mediation but subsequently report it was an inappropriate referral may also feel that they disclosed fully the circumstances of their relationship to the FJC but may have, in fact, shared limited information only. The FJC can only make an assessment about the appropriateness of a particular course of action based on the information provided by clients. Clients who attempted mediation and had difficult relationship dynamics emerge during mediation sessions may have a tendency to feel, in retrospect, that they should not have taken this course.

It should be noted that client recollection of referrals versus the provision of information may also contribute to this perception. For example, clients may misinterpret information about mediation as referral to mediation.

4.7 Has the JAC increased awareness and use of dispute resolution and mediation services?

Client awareness of dispute resolution and mediation services is enhanced as a result of contact with the JAC.

While it is unclear as to whether the use of dispute resolution services in the Nanaimo area has increased as a result of the Justice Access Centre and if cases are subsequently being diverted away from the courts, results from key informant interviews, the client survey and client focus groups demonstrate that contact with the JAC increased people's awareness of and knowledge about dispute resolution and mediation services. More than one-half (56%) of clients surveyed said they did not know about dispute resolution services prior to their contact with the JAC. Two-thirds (66%) reported that somewhere along the line during their communication with the JAC they received information about dispute resolution and mediation services. Of those who received information, 83% said this information increased their knowledge about settling justice problems outside of court. This finding was supported by focus group discussions in which several participants stated that as a result of contact with the JAC they were now aware of alternative dispute resolution services.

Most JAC clients found mediation services helpful.

A total of 198 clients received dispute resolution services during the pilot period. Seventy-seven of the clients who received these services participated in the client survey. As highlighted in Exhibit 27, more than three-quarters (77%) of clients who participated in the client survey and received mediation services from a FJC found the services helpful or very helpful.

Exhibit 27
Client Perception of Helpfulness of
JAC Mediation Service

| | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Very Helpful | 36 | 47% |
| Helpful | 23 | 30% |
| Neutral | 10 | 13% |
| Somewhat Helpful | 3 | 4% |
| Not at all Helpful | 5 | 6% |

n=77, Source: Client Survey

SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

Results from the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation* demonstrate that the JAC model has been implemented as planned in Nanaimo and that to varying degrees, all of the immediate outcomes defined in the evaluation framework for the JAC have been achieved.

The JAC is serving a range of clients with varying civil and family justice issues. In addition to the direct services provided by JAC staff, some clients are accessing the self-help resources and these clients report a high level of satisfaction in terms of finding the information they are looking for. Many clients are obtaining legal information and advice and many legal referrals are being made. In addition, clients report increased awareness of the purpose and availability of dispute resolution and mediation services because of their contact with the JAC. Clients, are, for the most part receiving appropriate referrals to services with many reporting that with help from the JAC they were able to resolve all or most of their civil and /or family justice issues. Overall, clients reported a very high level of satisfaction with the ease with which they could access services at the JAC and with the services themselves.

Based on the key evaluation findings identified in detail throughout the report, a number of recommendations have been made to assist LSS and MAG to build on the successes that have been achieved to-date and help ensure that the JAC will be similarly successful in achieving the intermediate and longer-term outcomes defined in the evaluation framework. In making these recommendations, consideration was also given to steps that could be taken to strengthen any further evaluation of the Nanaimo JAC or the JAC model were it to be implemented in other locations.

5.2 Recommendations for Continued Achievement of JAC Objectives

1. Consider more flexible service delivery options to broaden access to JAC services. More flexible service delivery could include lengthening JAC hours to include evenings and weekends and providing more off-site service.
2. Streamline paperwork and data-entry processes. Reducing the amount of information collected from clients at intake by combining forms and possibly reducing the scope of the information collected would provide a less intimidating process for clients. Simplifying staff paperwork and data entry processes could reduce some wait times for service. As some of the paperwork and data-entry was for evaluation purposes, consideration could be given to reducing the amount of information collected from clients early in their relationship with the JAC.
3. Introduce a shared electronic calendar for both MAG and LSS JAC staff. A shared calendar could improve the facilitated referral process and improve communication and information sharing among staff.

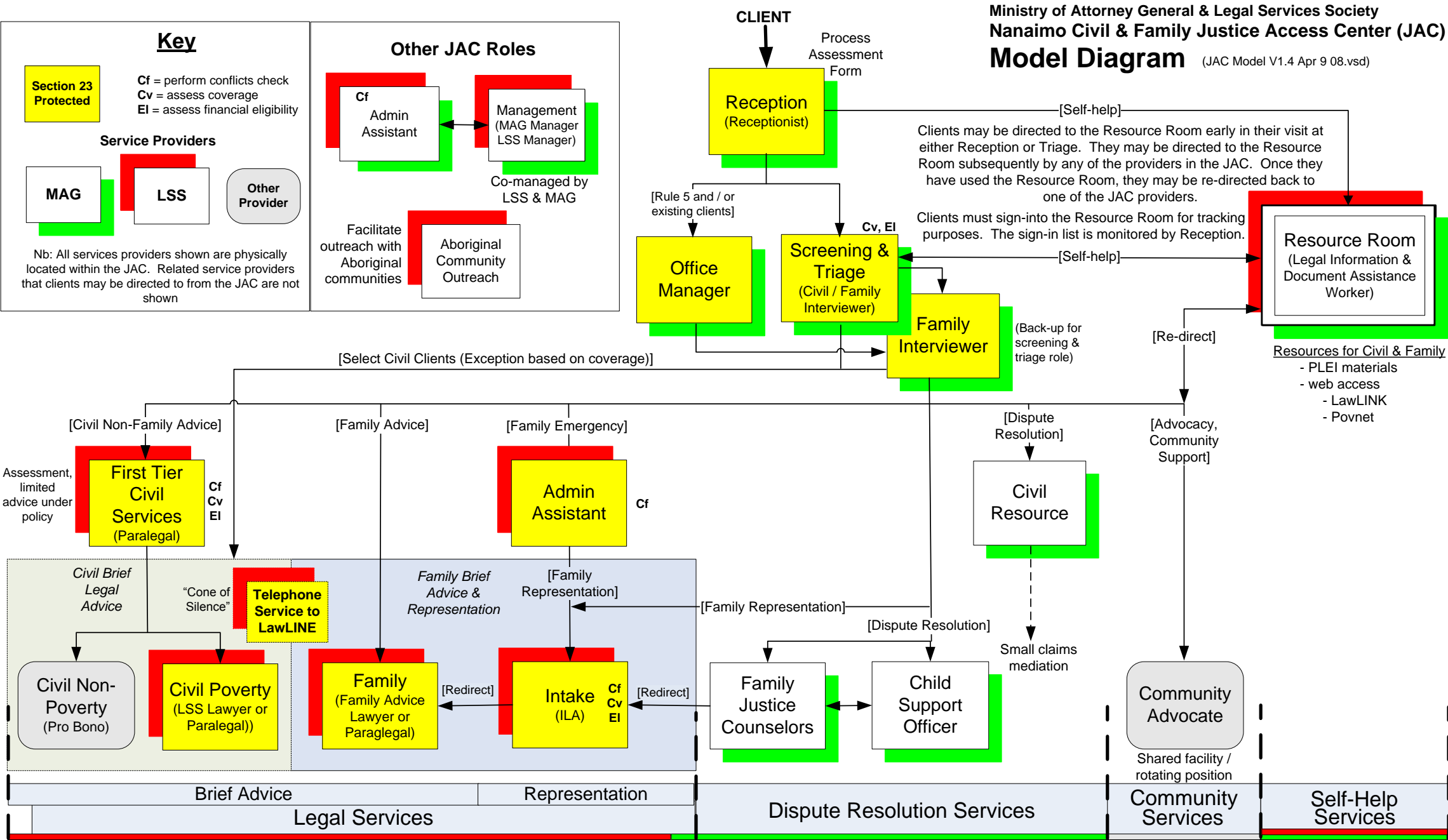
4. Target more outreach activities directly to potential clients. Clients demonstrated limited knowledge of the full scope of services available at the JAC. Outreach to potential clients could include community information sessions, distribution of pamphlets, etc.
5. Provide information about the Resource Room to all clients. The level of awareness about the Resource Room was low among clients and only limited referrals to this service were made by staff. Increased use of the Resource Room might be accomplished by providing clients with information regarding the Resource Room as part of the initial interview. Thought should also be given to improvements in signage at the JAC.
6. Maintain continuing education training around use of mediation in cases of abuse.
7. Provide additional training for JAC staff in three specific areas:
 - Supreme court processes;
 - Roles and responsibilities within the JAC; and
 - Client confidentiality, particularly with respect to Section 23, LSSA.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Evaluation Activities

1. Consider tracking Resource Room activity. As the Resource Room is a relatively low-cost way to provide client service and a high proportion of those who use the service report that it is useful, it would be valuable to know the extent to which the Resource Room is used.
2. Conduct exit surveys with clients to collect satisfaction data. The “helpfulness of service” data generated from the client survey is not reliable for most services because clients had difficulty accurately identifying the services they received. Client exit surveys could provide useful data for future evaluation activities. If utilized, exit surveys should be structured to collect client feedback 30 or 60 days following receipt of services.
3. Consider changing the process for requesting client consent to participate in the evaluation. The percentage of JAC clients who consented to participate in the evaluation during the pilot period was lower than anticipated by the consultant, MAG and LSS. Changes to the wording of the consent statement, additional training for staff who are requesting consent, and changing the point in the processes in which this consent is sought are recommended.
4. Consider modifications to the JTS and changes to JTS data entry processes including:
 - External and internal referrals should be deleted as services but recorded in the referral section of JTS.
 - Add FJC Assessments and CRC Assessments as service categories.

APPENDIX A: WORKFLOW DIAGRAM

Proposed Workflow



APPENDIX B: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDES

Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation **Interview Guide –Internal Stakeholders**

Name: _____ Title/Position: _____

Phone: _____ Location: _____

Interview Date _____ Interview Time _____

Introduction

As you are aware, the Legal Services Society (LSS) and the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) are undertaking an implementation evaluation of the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre*. The purpose of the evaluation is to make recommendations for improving the delivery of services at the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre and to determine the extent to which immediate outcomes are being achieved.

The independent research firm, Malatest & Associates Ltd., has been contracted to conduct the evaluation project on behalf of LSS and MAG. The research activities being undertaken for the project include key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders from a variety of groups, including JAC staff, representatives from LSS and MAG, and community service providers. The key informant interviews will focus on your perceptions, opinions and knowledge of program design and delivery and immediate outcomes.

Your participation is voluntary. The information you provide is for evaluation purposes only. The identity of interviewees in relation to these comments will not be shared. No comments will be attributed to any individual in any reports resulting from this study.

May we begin with the interview? Do you have any questions before we begin?

Part A. Implementation

The first set of interview questions relate to the implementation of the Nanaimo JAC and are focused on program design and delivery.

A1a. Are the objectives of the JAC clear to you? If not, what is unclear?

A1b. Do you have any suggestions for how to clarify the objectives of the JAC so they are better understood?

A2. Now that the JAC has been open for five months, have you identified things that could be approached differently to better achieve the objectives?

- A3. How does communication between the JAC and external service providers occur? (Probe: Referrals of clients by phone including facilitated referrals, information sessions, outreach by JAC staff to other agencies, attendance at joint seminars or workshops etc.?)

- A4. In your opinion, is the mandate of the JAC well understood by external service providers? Are their referrals to the JAC appropriate? How commonly do referred clients present with **non-civil** or family justice issues?

Part B. Service Delivery and Immediate Outcomes

The remaining interview questions are focused on service delivery and immediate outcomes associated with the services provided at the Justice Access Centre.

[ASSESSORS ONLY]

- B1. Is the current process to assess client needs effective in terms of identifying all of a client's civil and family justice needs? (Probe: If the client presents with a particular issue, will the assessment process typically draw out other issues?)

[ASK ALL]

- B2. If a client requires both civil and family justice services, or both MAG and LSS services, are internal communication processes adequate to ensure that the services provided/received are integrated, recognizing the limitations imposed by client-solicitor privilege?

- B3. Are the referrals you receive from other staff at the Justice Access Centre appropriate? Why or why not?

- B4. We are interested in the relationship between the services you provide at the Justice Access Centre and the services provided by external services providers in the community

Do you feel that the services the Justice Access Centre provides complement the services provided in the community? Please explain.

- B5. Are you satisfied with the referral process to external stakeholders? Why or why not?

B6. In your experience, are services at the Justice Access Centre easily accessible to clients or potential clients in-person or by telephone? Are you aware of any barriers facing clients? If yes, are there ways that access could be improved?

B7. Do you have any suggestions for making the service delivery more effective for clients?

Those are all the formal questions I have. Do you have any additional comments you'd like to make?

Thank you very much for your time!

Nanaimo Justice Access Centre Implementation Evaluation **Interview Guide –External Stakeholders**

Name: _____ Title/Position: _____

Phone: _____ Location: _____

Interview Date _____ Interview Time _____

Introduction

As you are probably aware, the Legal Services Society (LSS) and the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) are undertaking an implementation evaluation of the *Nanaimo Justice Access Centre*, which opened in November 2008. The purpose of the evaluation is to make recommendations for improving the delivery of services at the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre and to determine the extent to which immediate outcomes are being achieved.

The independent research firm, Malatest & Associates Ltd., has been contracted to conduct the evaluation project on behalf of LSS and MAG. The research activities being undertaken for the project include key informant interviews with stakeholders from a variety of groups, including JAC staff, representatives from LSS and MAG, and community service providers. This interview will focus on your perceptions, opinions and knowledge of JAC objectives, services, referrals and outreach activities.

Your participation is voluntary. The information you provide is for evaluation purposes only and your responses are confidential. No comments will be attributed to any individual in any reports resulting from this study.

May we begin with the interview? Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. In your opinion is the purpose of the JAC clear? How did you learn about the JAC?

2. Do you feel that you have sufficient information about the services available at the Justice Access Centre? Please explain (Probe: Is there more specific information about the services available at the Justice Access Centre that you feel you need?)

3. To your knowledge, are the services provided at the Justice Access Centre well known among your clients or your potential clients?

4. If you were to summarize feedback from your clients who have used services at the JAC, did they find the services easily accessible? Did they make suggestions for how access could be improved?

- 5a. Have you participated in any events hosted by the Justice Access Centre? (Prompts: JAC open house, training events, symposia, and visits by staff to your office, invitations to explain the JAC mandate and services?) If so, what did you gain as a result of your participation? Please be specific about the events you have participated in.

- b. If yes, did the knowledge that you gained as a result of participating in these events affect how you provide service or the kind of referrals that you make?

6. We are interested in the relationship between the services you provide and the services provided by the Justice Access Centre. Do the services the Justice Access Centre provides complement your services? Please explain.

7. Are you satisfied with your working relationship with the Justice Access Centre? Are there ways you feel your working relationship could be improved?

8. Are the referrals made by the Justice Access Centre to your agency or service appropriate? If referrals are not appropriate, why are they not appropriate?

9. Do you ever refer clients to the Justice Access Centre? If not, why not? If yes, to your knowledge, were the services they received at the Centre helpful to them in terms of addressing their family and/or civil justice needs?

10. The Justice Access Centre provides a range of services to people with civil and family law issues. Please indicate if you are aware of and have referred clients to the following services at the Centre..

| Service | Aware | Not Aware | Referred Clients |
|---|-------|--------------|---------------------|
| Information and/or short-term counselling on the phone or in person | | | |
| Mediation with a Family Justice Counsellor | | | |
| Information or assistance from a Civil Resource Counsellor | | | |
| Information and assistance from a Aboriginal Community Legal Worker | | | |
| Information and assistance from a Legal Information Outreach Worker | | | |
| Processing of legal aid applications | | | |
| Legal advice provided by paralegal, Aboriginal Community Legal Worker or lawyer | | | |
| Legal information in the Resource Room | | | |
| Assistance with child support issues | | | |
| Help with completing court forms or documents | | | |
| Assistance at the courthouse | | | |

Those are all the formal questions I have. Do you have any additional comments you'd like to make?

Thank you very much for your time!

APPENDIX C: CLIENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**NANAIMO JUSTICE ACCESS CENTRE
CLIENT SURVEY
FINAL**

INTRODUCTION

Hello, may I please speak with _____ (name on list).

<If not available, arrange callback> This is _____ and I am calling on behalf of an evaluation and research company. Is there a better time to reach him/her? **<If you are asked for details, decline and do not share details of where you are calling from>** I'm sorry but I don't have those details. We are calling about a survey.

<Once speaking to correct person> Hello, my name is _____ and I am contacting you on behalf of the Justice Access Centre in Nanaimo. I work for Malatest & Associates Ltd., an independent research firm that has been contracted to conduct an evaluation of the Justice Access Centre in Nanaimo.

One component of the evaluation is a survey with clients who have requested and/or received services from the Justice Access Centre and have agreed to be contacted for this research.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. Choosing not to participate in the survey will not affect your eligibility for services through the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre. All information you provide will be treated in accordance with provincial privacy laws regarding the protection of personal information and will be used for research purposes only. Our researcher will ensure that all individual responses are held in confidence and that participants are not identified. You are not obligated to answer any question that you do not wish to answer.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. May I complete the survey with you now?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION A: Client Characteristics

The first set of questions is designed to gather some general information about you. This information is being collected for analysis purposes only and will not be used to identify you in any way.

A1. **<Do not ask this question>** Is the client male or female?

_____ male _____ female

A2. What is your approximate age?

- ☐ Under 19
- ☐ 19-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60+
- ☐ No response

A3. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Common-Law
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ No response

A4. What is your approximate current monthly income (after deductions)?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Less than \$10,000 (but more than none)
- ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 or more
- ☐ No response

A5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Grade 9 or less
- ☐ Grades 10 to 12 (without graduation)
- ☐ High School graduation
- ☐ Some college/university
- ☐ College Diploma
- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Graduate Degree
- ☐ No response

A6. Do you have Aboriginal Ancestry?

- ☐ No
- ☐ First-Nations
- ☐ Metis
- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ No response

A7. Were you born in Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No - If no, what year did you immigrate to Canada? _____
- ☐ No response

SECTION B: Services Received

As a client of the Justice Access Centre, we are interested in the services you received and your overall level of satisfaction with these services.

B1. How did you receive services through the Justice Access Centre?

- ☐ In-person
- ☐ By telephone
- ☐ Both in-person and by telephone

B2. What services did you use at the Justice Access Centre? <Check as many as apply>

- ☐ Reviewed my situation and issues with an Interviewer or Family Justice Counsellor
- ☐ Received information and/or short term counselling (up to one hour) on the phone or in person
- ☐ Was involved with mediation with the Family Justice Counsellor
- ☐ Received information or assistance from the Civil Resource Counsellor
- ☐ Received information and assistance from the Aboriginal Community Legal Worker
- ☐ Met with the Intake Legal Assistant to apply for Legal Aid
- ☐ Had an appointment with an Advice Lawyer to get legal advice
- ☐ Used the Resource Room at the Centre
- ☐ Saw the Child Support Officer to get assistance with child support issues
- ☐ Had help with completing court forms or documents
- ☐ Received assistance at the Courthouse
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

B3. We are interested in how helpful you found the services you received at the JAC. On a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being Not at all helpful and 5 being very helpful, please indicate how helpful you found each of the services you have identified in terms of helping you to address your issues.

| | Not at all helpful | Somewhat helpful | Neutral | Helpful | Very helpful | No Response |
|----|--------------------|------------------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|
| a) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| b) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| c) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |

B4. Using a 5-point scale where 1 is “Very Dissatisfied” and 5 is “Very Satisfied”, please indicate how satisfied you were with different aspects of the overall services you received at the Justice Access Centre.

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Not Relevant |
|--|----------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| a) Availability of staff to assist me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| b) Hours of operation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| c) Waiting time to receive service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| d) Helpfulness of the staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| e) Knowledge of the staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| f) Helpfulness of services received within the JAC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| g) Location of the JAC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| h) Ease of getting to the JAC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| i) Distance from the Courthouse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |

I'd now like to ask you some questions about information you've received at the JAC and any services you might have been referred to.

B5. Did you receive information about dispute resolution and mediation services when you visited/called the Justice Access Centre?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

<If yes> B6. To what extent did your knowledge about dispute resolution and mediation services increase as a result of your contact with the Justice Access Centre?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ A lot

B7. Did you know about dispute resolution or mediation services before you contacted the Justice Access Centre?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

B8. Did staff at the Justice Access Centre refer you to any services and resources outside the Justice Access Centre?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

<If no, skip to Section C >

B9. What services were you referred to outside the Justice Access Centre? Please list each of the referrals you received for your problems.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Court registry | <input type="radio"/> Community services agency |
| <input type="radio"/> Parenting after separation | <input type="radio"/> Counseling |
| <input type="radio"/> Finances after separation | <input type="radio"/> Debt counselling |
| <input type="radio"/> Public Legal Education session | <input type="radio"/> Government services |
| <input type="radio"/> Private Mediator | <input type="radio"/> Mental health services |
| <input type="radio"/> Victim's services | <input type="radio"/> Counselling |
| <input type="radio"/> Police | <input type="radio"/> Pro bono or free lawyer/ clinic |
| <input type="radio"/> Men's services | <input type="radio"/> A & D counselling |
| <input type="radio"/> Aboriginal services | <input type="radio"/> Lawyer referral |
| <input type="radio"/> Women's centre or transition house | <input type="radio"/> Private lawyer |
| <input type="radio"/> LawLINE | <input type="radio"/> Duty counsel |

B10. Did you follow-up on this referral/these referrals to services/resources outside the JAC?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Yet

If no, why not? Please be as specific as possible: _____

B11. Do you feel the services you were referred to were appropriate services for the issues you have?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, why not? Please be as specific as possible: _____

SECTION C: Self-Help Resources

C1. At the Justice Access Centre there is a Resource Room that contains free publications, a computer, and a staff person. Have you visited or picked up information at the Resource Room at any time?

☐ Yes

☐ No

<If no, skip to C3>

C2. How many times did you visit the resource room?

☐ One time

☐ Twice

☐ Three times

☐ Four times

☐ Five times

☐ More than five times

<Skip to C4>

C3. Why didn't you use the services and information in the Resource Room? (check all that apply).

☐ Didn't realize the Resource Room was there

☐ Didn't know the public could use the Resource Room

☐ Didn't require information

☐ Didn't know what was available in the Resource Room

☐ Didn't know how to use the Resource Room

☐ Had no time to visit the Resource Room

☐ There was no staff person there to help me

☐ Other _____

<Skip to Section D>

C4. What kind of information or services did you use in the Resource Room? (check all that apply)

☐ Computer

☐ Lawline – to get specific legal information by telephone

☐ Read or picked up publications

☐ Used printer (to print legal documents or information from computer)

☐ Used photocopier (to copy legal documents or information)

☐ Asked a staff person to help me

☐ Other _____

C6. To what degree were you successful in finding the information that you needed at the Resource Room?

- a. ☐ I found all of the information I needed
- b. ☐ I found most of the information I needed
- c. ☐ I found some of the information I needed
- d. ☐ I found none of the information I needed

If C6c or C6d are checked, ask question C7. If C6a or C6b are checked, skip to Section D.

C7b. What kind of information were you looking for that you couldn't find? Please be specific _____

SECTION D: Comprehensiveness of Services

I just have a few more questions and we'll be finished the survey.

D1a. Did staff at the JAC refer you to other services or staff at the JAC?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

b. To what degree were you able to resolve all of the issues and concerns that brought you to the JAC?

- ☐ I was able to address ALL my issues through services provided at the centre
- ☐ I was able to address MOST of my issues through services provided at the centre
- ☐ I was able to address SOME of my issues through services provided at the centre
- ☐ I was not able to address ANY of my issues through services provided at the centre

<If able to address ALL or MOST issues, skip to D3. If able to address SOME or not able to address ANY issues, ask D2>

D2. If you were not able to address all or most of your problems through the services you received as a result of contacting the Justice Access Centre, what problems were you not able to address? Please be specific

D3. How helpful was it for you to have a range of services (e.g. Legal Aid, legal advice, Mediation, Child Support Officer) all together in one place?

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Quite helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not very helpful
- ☐ Not helpful at all

D4. What were the most helpful services you received at the Centre?

D5. What were the least helpful services?

D6. Do you have any recommendations for improving the services at the Centre?
<Please ask respondent to make one or two major recommendations for improving services. (e.g. organization of services, comprehensiveness or responsiveness of services, timelines)>

☐ Unable to make any recommendations.

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Implementation Evaluation of the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre (JAC)

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Introduction

10 min

Welcome! I'd like to thank you all very much for coming to this discussion group today.

My name is _____. I am a researcher with R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., a research and evaluation company.

The purpose of this discussion group is to get your opinions and perspectives on the Nanaimo Justice Access Centre, which I'll refer to as the JAC today.

First of all, I would like to take a minute to explain how we will proceed with this discussion:

- The focus group should take approximately two hours.
- The session will be audio taped. The recording equipment is [identify equipment location]. We tape focus groups to make sure the results we present are accurate.
- In the reporting, your name will not be associated with anything you say
- I'd like to point out that there are no right or wrong answers and that I am not looking for group agreement on each topic. We would like to hear a diversity of answers and perspectives.
- I'd like everyone to have a chance to talk and make any comments that you think are relevant to the discussion at hand. I'd just like to ask that you talk one at a time - try not to interrupt another person when they are talking. This will make it easier for me to hear what everyone has to say and will also make the recording more useful.

My main role is to make sure the discussion stays on track and that everyone has a fair chance to contribute.

I would like to take this time to stress that you do not have to share anything here that you do not feel comfortable sharing. The purpose of this discussion is to get your perspectives on the JAC. For example, we'd like to know whether you thought the services were helpful to you. You do not have to share any information about your personal legal concerns or justice issues that you are not comfortable sharing in this group.

Are there any questions about this discussion and the next 2 hours that you would like to ask before we get started?

Self-Intro

1 min

Let's start the discussion by going around the table and having everybody introduce themselves if they wish to do so (just first names).

A. Accessibility**45 min**

The first part of the discussion is about how you learned about the JAC and the services that are offered there.

1. Where did you first hear about the JAC and the services they offer?

Probe: Were you referred to the JAC? Did you hear about the JAC through any of the communication materials (brochures, posters, etc.)? Did you hear about it from a friend/relative/someone you know?

2. How many of you have been to the JAC in person? *(If at least half of the participants have been to the JAC in person, pose this question).*

When you first came to the JAC, what did you think of the location and the building?

Probe: Did you have difficulty finding the JAC? Did you feel comfortable/welcome/safe in the building/office?

3. How accessible did you find the services at the JAC (in-person and by phone)?

Probe: Were you able to see someone/speak to someone right away? Was your (next) appointment scheduled within a reasonable amount of time? Did you have any difficulties accessing the services of the JAC?

B. Service delivery and potential improvements**45 min**

The next part of the discussion is about what you think about the services.

1. For those of you who were referred to the JAC by another organization: would you say that referring you to the JAC was helpful?

Probe: Were you referred to the JAC in general or to a specific service (including resource room)? Do you think you received services at the JAC that you would not have been able to receive at the organization that referred you? Were you satisfied with the referral to the JAC?

2. What was your impression of your first contact with the JAC?

Probe: Did you find the assessment helpful? In your opinion, did the assessment get at all the issues/concerns you came to the JAC for? Did the assessment turn up other issues in addition to the ones you came to the JAC for? Did you come to the JAC with family justice or civil justice issues or both (provide examples - i.e., family justice issues such as custody, access, child support, or civil justice issues such as housing, wills and estates etc)? (Probe about possibly feeling overwhelmed during assessment). Once you were receiving services at the JAC were you referred on to other services?

3. What happened after you had your initial assessment?

Probe: Were you referred to someone within the JAC who was then able to help you? Were you referred to an organization outside of the JAC? Did things proceed smoothly after you received the referral?

4. Was the JAC able to help you with your justice issues/concerns?

Probe: Did you receive one or several services? Which services were most helpful to you? Which were least helpful? Would you recommend the JAC to others? Were there services you would have liked to see that were not available?

5. Did coming to the JAC make you more aware of options to resolve justice issues outside of court? (e.g., mediation, alternative dispute resolution)

Probe: Has anyone used/entered mediation or other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as a result of coming to the JAC? If yes, how helpful would you say this was for your particular set of justice issues/concerns?

C. Overall experience with the JAC

15 min

1. Overall, what did coming to the JAC do for you?

Probe: in terms of specific help with justice issues; in terms of experiences outside the initial issues that you came to the JAC for.

2. Is there anything about the JAC that you would like to see done differently?

Probe: If you were in a decision-making position, what, if anything, would you change about the JAC?

3. Do you have any specific comments or concerns about the JAC that we haven't covered in the discussion so far that you would like to share?

D. Wrap Up

5 min

- Before we finish I just have one last question for you – what is the lasting impression that you are going to take away from the discussion today, or what is the most interesting thing you learned here today?
- That wraps up our time together this afternoon/ evening. Thank you very much for your participation and ideas. Please come and see me before you leave to get your honorarium as a token of our appreciation for your time.