Bridging the Gap: Connecting with Clients and Consumers

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Civil Justice from the Public’s Perspective

✧ Situations that have civil legal aspects, raise civil legal issues, and have consequences shaped by civil law.
Civil justice problems are common and widespread.

Source: Sandefur, Accessing Justice in the Contemporary USA
Occur in Core Areas of Contemporary Household Life

Source: Sandefur, Accessing Justice in the Contemporary USA
Civil justice problems of the public

What courts and lawyers see
Challenges

- Typically, people do not connect their everyday justice problems to law or legal solutions.

- People prefer to seek help from trusted sources, particularly those that come with a personal warrant.

- People work best with information targeted to their situation, particularly under conditions of uncertainty.
Challenge 1

Connecting people’s real-life problems to legal solutions and legal services
Most justice problems are not understood as legal, so people seldom seek legal help.

❖ “So I got nothing.”
Most justice problems are not understood as legal, so people seldom seek legal help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad luck/Part of God's Plan</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/Family and Community</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Sandefur, Accessing Justice in the Contemporary USA; Sandefur, What We Know and Need to Know About the Legal Needs of the Public
Challenge 2
People prefer help from trusted sources
How People Find Lawyers

- Lawyer referral services
- Personal recommendation from someone they know
- The yellow pages
- The internet
- Advertising
Challenge 3

Uncertainty can discourage action
 Price uncertainty
   How much will this cost?

 Process uncertainty
   What is going to happen?
Bridging the Gap

◊ Timely
  ◇ Appear when the problem is recognized

◊ Targeted
  ◇ With clear solutions to the specific problem

◊ Trustworthy
  ◇ Through trusted channels
  ◇ Transparent about costs, choices, and expectations

Source: Sandefur, “Bridging the Gap.”
Advertising
Embedding

✧ Tennessee Faith and Justice Alliance
  ✧ “The notion is to connect with people in need in a place they already go to seek help with a problem. That place is quite often their place of worship.”

✧ Medical-legal partnerships
  ✧ Nearly 300 hospitals, clinics and medical schools partnered with nearly 250 legal aid offices, law schools, and pro bono projects.
Transparency

“It’s just good client management.”

❖ Fees
❖ Services
❖ Expectations

Source: Clarke and Sandefur, “Preliminary Evaluation of the Washington State Limited License Legal Technician Program”
Real people with real legal problems

Current clients
Sources:


Rebecca L. Sandefur. 2015. “What We Know and Need to Know About the Legal Needs of the Public.” *University of South Carolina Law Review* 67:443-460.


