HUMAN SERVICES GRANTS PROGRAM (HSGP)

FY 2020-21 PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

Agency: Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Program: Domestic Violence \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

###### FY 2020-21 SUBMISSION CALENDAR

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| **SELECT** |
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**Instructions:**

* This document should be used by HSGP grantees to report on mid-year and year-end outcomes and accomplishments.
* All reports submitted to the City are considered public record. Please note that staff will use the information provided in the mid-year and year-end reports to provide Council and the public with summary reports of agency performance highlighting key outcomes, successes, findings and concerns.
* Some programs or agencies may be subject to additional or different reporting requirements per the program’s Exhibit A, Special Funding Conditions, of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* It is important, when preparing this report, to be familiar with the program’s Exhibit B, Program Plan, of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* Please insert responses in the spaces provided for Sections I-VII for both the Mid-Year and Year-End Program Status Reports.
* A separate Program Status Report must be prepared for each Program Plan specified in your contract.
* To submit your completed report to the City, upload the file to your agency’s SharePoint folder. A link to your agency’s SharePoint folder as well as instructions on how to use the site will be emailed to your staff separately.

###### SECTION I: PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES

**Provide a brief summary of your program accomplishments, challenges, and changes that occurred during the reporting period. Please also provide information or observations related to population or service trends**.

Santa Monica Domestic Violence Clinic (DV Clinic) has adapted and transformed to dynamic challenges posed by COVID-19. For the first time, the physical clinic in the superior courthouse was closed and inaccessible for the *entire reporting period*.

The impact of the closure of the physical clinic cannot be overstated; the single greatest asset of an in-person, walk-up clinic a safe place inside the courthouse for survivors to get the legal help they need. With our physical clinic closed, survivors lost a safe harbor. In our mid-year report, we cited an excerpt from an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that bears repeating. Published on December 20, 2020, “A Pandemic within a Pandemic — Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19” highlights the paramount issue facing Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles’s (LAFLA’s) Santa Monica Domestic Violence clinic as well as clinics across the country:

Stay-at-home orders, intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many IPV [intimate partner violence] victims trapped with their abusers. Domestic-violence hotlines prepared for an increase in demand for services as states enforced these mandates, but many organizations experienced the opposite. In some regions, *the number of calls dropped by more than 50%*. Experts in the field knew that rates of IPV had not decreased, but rather that victims were unable to safely connect with services. [emphasis added]

Indeed, *non-domestic violence family law issues showed increased numbers, reaching 188 percent of grant target levels; as there is far less danger in discussing these issues in front of the other party. In contrast, domestic violence restraining order engagements have been limited.*

At the beginning of the reporting period, our courthouse-based domestic violence clinics provided assistance with restraining orders by phone on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Attorneys continued to prepare pleadings for litigants and to assist with filing of documents. Santa Monica DV attorneys were part of the shared effort.

However, at mid-year, Santa Monica DV Clinic chose to increase access to its services through a twice weekly Zoom clinic on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We hypothesized that increased access would result in an increased number of Santa Monica residents seeking protection through TROs and commencing family law actions. *We were correct*; the number of Santa Monica residents assisted increased by 32 percent over the mid-year total.

We believe that domestic violence has increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we have focused our efforts on adapting our services to reach survivors and utilize our volunteers to help as many as possible. We further believe this expansion of services will benefit Santa Monica residents as well as survivors across Los Angeles County. Barring any changes due to the Delta variant or other variants, the in-person DV Clinic should reopen in Santa Monica Superior Courthouse in the first half of the next reporting period. We hope to reach even more survivors when our physical clinic, our safe harbor for survivors, is restored.

Client Story

LAFLA attorneys utilized L.A. Superior Court’s family law restraining order email filing system in the following case. Established during the COVID-19 pandemic, the email filing system allows victims to electronically file domestic violence restraining order petitions without having to leave the house (which may tip off abusers).

Paige (pseudonym) came to LAFLA through the Santa Monica Zoom clinic seeking protection from her abusive boyfriend. They had been dating for nearly a year, but Paige learned early in their relationship that he often drank to excess and became verbally and physically abusive while intoxicated. On one occasion, Paige came home late at night from a long shift at work, and he was already drunk. Paige started to make him food at his request, but he became verbally abusive and threatened to assault her. Frightened, Paige retreated to the bathroom and locked herself inside. He punched a hole in the door, opened it, and dragged Paige out by her hair. When he let go, Paige grabbed her car keys and escaped the apartment. While Paige stayed with a friend, He texted her over 100 times seeking to discover her location.

The next day, Paige came to our virtual DV Clinic. LAFLA’s Santa Monica office quickly opened a domestic violence case for Paige and began preparing a domestic violence restraining order application. LAFLA helped Paige draft and file an application for a domestic violence restraining order against him that day. Paige was able to get a temporary restraining order and a move-out order issued against him on the same day that the domestic violence restraining order petition was filed.

###### SECTION II: ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

**Briefly describe or list any program assessment or evaluation efforts during the reporting period and summarize the results achieved. Specifically highlight any program participant involvement in these efforts.**

LAFLA regularly evaluates and measures outcomes for its clients to ensure that they are getting the best legal advice and representation possible. Evaluation efforts begin when clients first approach LAFLA for service, and the team reviews each application for services during the case review process. During representation, managers are available for consultation with staff attorneys and advocates to discuss case strategies and processes.

To ensure that outcome measures are met, staff check court case files online to ascertain the results of court hearings and collect follow-up information directly from clients via phone or in-person interview. Outcome results are tabulated and reviewed against program goals. LAFLA monitors program staff by measuring outcomes and progress toward meeting goals and objectives through case management, statistical reporting, and case review. Clients are tracked through LAFLA's computerized case management system to make sure that cases are resolved in a professional and timely manner. Data is compiled on a quarterly basis to determine that LAFLA is serving the targeted number of clients. Bi-monthly case review meetings serve to monitor the status of open cases, identify problems as they arise, and facilitate interaction to ensure the most effective service to clients. In some instances, staff may collect follow-up information directly from clients by phone or in-person. LAFLA evaluates data and field observations and adjusts outreach and service delivery to improve client access and outcomes accordingly.

**Please highlight any new efforts to collaborate with other service providers and/or leverage services. Please include the agency name(s) and service(s) provided.**

DV Clinic staff members continue to work with Westside Anti-Violence Authority (formerly Westside DV network) and Sojourn to make presentations to St Joseph’s Center about the social service, safety and legal needs of DV survivors. We also continue efforts to educate individuals about the needs of domestic violence survivors seeking to transition out of homelessness related to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s LAHSA’s Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) protections under continuum of care policies.

Finally, we continue to partner with Sojourn (The People Concern) to provide domestic violence-related services to individuals who enter our program, especially now that a former LAFLA attorney is the legal director at the People Concern.

###### SECTION III: BOARD INVOLVEMENT

Please indicate:

* **Number of Board meetings conducted during the reporting period:** Four
* **Average Board member attendance:** Twenty-four
* **Board development activities conducted during the reporting period:** The board continued to implement LAFLA’S 2019 to 2024 strategic plan and the goals identified therein. A thorough report of our progress, which is ahead of schedule, was reviewed at LAFLA’s June board meeting.
* **Significant policy directions or actions taken by the Board during the reporting period:** The board continued to review client data and client demographics throughout LAFLA’s service area.
* **Number of board members who reside and/or work in Santa Monica:** One
* **Board vacancies and plans to fill those vacancies, if applicable:** LAFLA has one vacancy for a client board member. The governance committee of the board is developing a plan to recruit a new board member; diversity will be at the center of the board’s outreach.

###### SECTION IV: STAFFING PATTERN

**Have there been any staffing changes during the reporting period (i.e., staff vacancies, staff recruitment, changes in FTE)? Please describe. If staff vacancies exist, please provide an anticipated hiring date and explain how caseloads and work have been distributed to ensure service levels are maintained.**

Staffing at LAFLA’s Santa Monica office has expanded by one position. We are pleased to report the addition of a staff attorney who started at LAFLA at the end of the reporting period. They have a background in domestic violence work and will join existing staff at the Santa Monica DV Clinic. The Managing Attorney will continue to supervise all cases and carry some DV and family law cases.

**Please indicate how volunteers or paid or unpaid interns were used during the reporting period. Provide the total number of volunteers or interns and hours provided. If interns were used, please indicate their program level (e.g. undergraduate, masters).**

When LAFLA Santa Monica began offering a twice weekly Zoom-based clinic on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the office was able to re-engage a number of long-time attorney volunteers to assist survivors. We made use of LAFLA Santa Monica’s summer law clerks as well as Pepperdine law students during the spring semester.

LAFLA used ten attorneys, two law clerks, and sever Pepperdine law students who contributed 240 volunteer hours during the reporting period.

**SECTION V: SPECIAL FUNDING CONDITIONS**

**Provide a status report on how the agency is meeting its funding conditions listed in Exhibit A of your Grant Agreement, clearly addressing each individual funding condition in bullet point format.**

*Standard Funding Conditions*

*1) Participate in the City’s efforts to develop an outcomes measurement system to better track human services program demographics and outcomes. Participation may include, but is not limited to: meeting with City staff, consultants, and; providing information regarding current data systems, technology infrastructure, policies and procedures, needs, opportunities, and concerns; incorporating the City into existing consent for release of information forms; signing and adhering to the City’s data management Agency Agreement; and contributing data to a centralized data management system. Aggregated or de-identified information may be requested for the purposes of analyzing data being collected.*

LAFLA has provided its raw data for the city’s data research initiative. In 2020, Managing Attorney Kevin Mitchell, on behalf of LAFLA, participated in the City of Santa Monica’s Canavan townhall meetings for the Human Services Project. Canavan townhalls allowed providers and community partners to discuss the nature of their work, consider the criteria used to measure outputs, and identify areas of potential improvement for data tracking and application. LAFLA has also attended Santa Monica Cradle to Career meetings. LAFLA reports bi-annually on its client demographics and deliverables. As operations have migrated to remote services, LAFLA has continued to meet virtually with the city to discuss program outcomes.

*2) Detail steps taken to provide services in adherence to the safety protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including modifications to service delivery, physical infrastructure and safety equipment and protocols to protect participants and staff.*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LAFLA has implemented preventative measures to protect the health of our clients, visitors, and staff. In response to recommendations of local government officials, LAFLA’s physical offices closed in March 2020 and remained closed through the reporting period. After a brief transition period while we adopted a remote model for work and client intake, LAFLA quickly mobilized to make ourselves available to clients and potential clients. In order to ensure that we were reaching local residents, including individuals who made their way to our 5th Street office, we posted large signs in the office windows listing our intake phone number and website address.

In response to the closure of our offices, we have extended call center hours to accommodate increased streams of calls. Our courthouse-based domestic violence clinics have transitioned seamlessly to provide assistance with restraining orders by phone on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Attorneys continue to prepare pleadings for litigants and to assist with the filing of documents. In addition, we have transitioned many of our outreach activities to online platforms such as Facebook Live and YouTube. Use of online platforms has allowed us to reach a wide audience; we plan to continue online outreach even after in-person services resume.

*3) Describe how your organization operationalizes racial equity, diversity, and cultural competency. Discuss how your City-funded program may be reflecting these values through personnel practices, staff and board training, program design and/or outreach and engagement strategies. Provide aggregate demographics of*

*board members (agency-wide), executive management (agency-wide), and supervisory staff (City-funded programs) including race, ethnicity and gender.*

LAFLA has a highly developed cultural sensitivity to serve clients from the many different populations represented in Los Angeles. LAFLA has in-house capacity to tailor and translate presentations and written materials into the languages of target audiences. LAFLA devotes significant resources to working with non-English speaking clients. Over 50 percent of LAFLA staff members speak Spanish; staff members also speak Farsi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Persian, Japanese, Khmer, Gujarati, Bengali, French, and German.

All of LAFLA’s offices are staffed with bilingual Spanish speaking receptionists and intake screeners. LAFLA operates Asian language hotlines in Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Khmer. Bilingual staff are formally tested and receive supplements for their oral or written language skills. When other language skills are needed, LAFLA staff members are mandated by internal protocols to obtain comprehensive translation and interpretative services immediately. We strive to provide the same level of quality services to every client regardless of language. If language needs cannot be met within LAFLA, LAFLA will contract with outside interpreters to provide appropriate language services to limited English proficiency (LEP), deaf, and hard of hearing individuals. Assistive technology and accommodations are made for individuals with disabilities. We also utilize language lines when necessary. To bolster our commitment to the LEP population, LAFLA employs special counsel to address language access.

LAFLA's commitment to diversity is reflected in its board and staff. LAFLA’s board of directors includes female and minority attorneys as well as community members representative of the geographic, racial, ethnic, age and gender diversity of the low-income and minority communities LAFLA serves. Our board governance committee is examining board composition together with the executive committee to ensure that the board reflects the demographics of our service area. Likewise, LAFLA’s recruitment and hiring procedures have been developed to recruit and retain a diverse staff.

LAFLA’s board of directors is composed of forty-three members, eighteen female and twenty-five male. The board is 5 percent Asian-American, 19 percent Black/African American, 16 percent White/Latinx, and 56 percent White/Caucasian.

LAFLA’e executive management team is composed of eleven staff members, seven female and four male. The team is made up of four Asian-American staff members, one Black/Caribbean-American staff member, two White/Latinx staff members, one White/Middle Eastern staff member, and three White/Caucasian staff members.

LAFLA’s supervisory staff is composed of one managing attorney, a White male.

In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, LAFLA’s board president and a cohort of community board members created an African-American, ad hoc committee.

*4) Agency will assist eligible participants in submitting applications to applicable Santa Monica Housing programs, including but not limited to: Section 8 and Below Market Housing (BMH) Waitlists, Preserving Our Diversity (POD), and Continuum of Care (CoC) programs.*

LAFLA staff have been assisting residents in need of additional housing assistance with applications to appropriate Santa Monica housing programs and other services.

*Youth and Family Agencies*

*1) Actively participate in appropriate Santa Monica Cradle To Career (smC2C) collective impact meetings and initiatives, which may include but are not limited to: smC2C work groups, Child and Youth Resource Teams (CYRT), Early Childhood Task Force, and Education Collaborative.*

The Santa Monica LAFLA office participated in smC2C workgroup meetings and other initiatives to benefit clients and the Santa Monica community.

*2) Work with the City and the youth and families network of care to provide coordinated support to individuals and families that might require agency expertise in the aftermath of a serious community crisis. A community crisis may include a traumatic event or emergency condition that creates distress, hardship, fear or grief and has a special significance to the community.*

LAFLA is committed to working with the city to provided coordinated support to individuals and families in the aftermath of a community crisis.

**SECTION VI: DEMOGRAPHICS**

**The following tables track data on program participant needs and the inter-agency relationships utilized to address them. Please provide this information as completely and accurately as possible for participants entering your program.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL SERVICE NEEDS**  **(Santa Monica Participants)** | **FY 20-21**  **Number Responding “Yes”**  **at Mid-year** | **FY 20-21**  **Number Responding “Yes”**  **at Year-end** |
| 1. “Do you or anyone in your household have unmet employment needs?” | N/A\* | N/A\* |
| 1. ”Have you missed or been late on a home rental or mortgage payment within the last 12 months?” | N/A\* | N/A\* |
| 1. “Do you or anyone in your household have an unmet childcare/afterschool need?” | N/A\* | N/A\* |

\*Data is not available due to confidentiality.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **INCOMING PARTICIPANT REFERRALS**  **(Santa Monica Participants)** | **FY 20-21**  **Number**  **at Mid-year** | **FY 20-21**  **Number**  **at Year-end** |
| Participants referred by another agency | 5 | 15 |
| **Please list the top 3 referring agencies** |  |  |
| * 1. Sojourn | 3 | 7 |
| * 1. SMPD/LAPD | 2\* | 3\* |
|  |  |  |

\*Based on client report, the actual numbers may differ.

**SECTION VII: PROGRAM SERVICES AND OUTCOMES**

**Provide a status report on the program activity levels and outcomes for Santa Monica program participants as indicated in Section III of your Program Plan. Examples have been provided for your reference; please insert rows as needed to align with your Program Plan. For outcome achievement not documented in a report, please provide narrative explanation and/or documentation of how outcome data is captured.**

| **OUTPUTS AS SHOWN IN PROGRAM PLAN** | **OUTPUT STATUS REPORT**  (Actual number of unduplicated persons who received/participated in the output during the reporting period) | **OUTCOMES AS SHOWN IN PROGRAM PLAN** | **OUTCOME STATUS REPORT**  (Actual number and percentage of unduplicated participants who achieved the outcome during the reporting period) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 140 persons will contact the clinic seeking legal advice | We served 77 unduplicated Santa Monica residents and 197 unduplicated overall participants.  Further, there are 11 cases opened in reporting period that remain active and are not reflected in the above reporting total. | 120 of 140 clients (86%) will complete an assessment of needs and be delivered legal advice. | At year end, 66 of 77 Santa Monica residents (86%) completed an assessment and were offered legal advice. |
| 40 persons will contact the clinic seeking to file an application for a temporary restraining order | At year end, 22 Santa Monica residents contacted the clinic seeking to file an application for a temporary restraining order.  (There were 71 unduplicated overall participants seeking a TRO.) | 36 of 40 (90%) Santa Monica participants will successfully file a pro per application for a temporary restraining order. | At year end, 14 of 22 Santa Monica participants (64%) successfully filed a pro per application for a temporary restraining order. The other 8 did not meet income eligibility requirements and were provided legal information with warm hand-off referrals to outside services. |
| 25 persons will contact the clinic seeking a court order which resolves a family law dispute. | At year end, 47 Santa Monica participants (188% of goal) contacted the clinic regarding a family law dispute.    (There were 73 unduplicated overall participants seeking help with a family law dispute.) | 20 of 25 persons (80%) will file either a new case or a Request for Order for a court order which resolves a family law dispute. | At year end, 24 of the 47 Santa Monica participants (57%) either filed a new case or a Request for Order for a family law dispute. Further, 19 of the 47 received advice regarding whether to file based on the particulars of their case. 4 of the clients withdrew. |
| 2-3 trainings will be conducted training a total of 40 social  service agency staff at Santa Monica social service agencies to  assist their staffs in identifying and referring Santa Monica clients for legal assistance | At year end, we have conducted 1 training to 8 social service agency staff. | 30 of 40 (75%) persons who attend a training will report improved understanding of DV and legal remedies through a post-training  questionnaire. | 8 of 8 persons who attended the training reported an improved understanding of DV and legal remedies. Improvement was confirmed through post-training questions. |
| 50 persons will be referred by LAFLA to Sojourn, of which 12  will be provided counseling and/or  mental health services. | At year end, 77 Santa Monica participants were referred by LAFLA to Sojourn. | The Sojourn therapist will serve 12 clients who were referred by LAFLA.  Of those 12, 10 clients (83%) of the LAFLA referred clients who are receiving therapy services from the Sojourn therapist will  complete a minimum of 4 sessions.  100% of the LAFLA-referred clients who are receiving therapy services from the Sojourn  therapist will receive referrals to  appropriate services including but not limited to: DV shelters, victims resources, medical services, Safe At Home, immigration resources, children’s counseling, batterers  programs, employment assistance programs, obtaining benefits, support groups.  100% of the LAFLA-referred clients who are receiving therapy services from the Sojourn therapist will be offered assistance in developing a safety plan, with a goal of 90%  completion rate.  100% of the LAFLA-referred clients who are receiving therapy services from the Sojourn  therapist will receive education including but not limited to: DV 101, red flags, empowerment, the effects of DV on self and  family, the effects of sexual abuse on self and family, awareness of personal skills and resources, awareness of community  resources.  15% of the LAFLA-referred clients who are receiving therapy service will decide to go into a shelter or will find alternative  safe places to live. | At year end, 8 Santa Monica participants were served by the Sojourn therapist.7 of the 8 (86%) Santa Monica participants have completed a minimum of 4 sessions. 8/8 (100%) received referrals to appropriate services.  8/8 (100%) offered assistance in developing a safety plan.  8/8 (100%) received relevant educaiton.  0 of 8 decided to go into a shelter. |

###### VARIANCE REPORT:

###### Year-end: Please provide an explanation for each output or outcome for which achievement is above or below 10% of the projected target.

The most significant and continuing variance factor to outputs and outcomes continues to be COVID-19. First, the Santa Monica DV Clinic location in the Superior Courthouse has been closed the *entire reporting period* due to restricted access to the courthouse and social distancing requirements as a result of COVID-19. The loss of our physical location, typically open four days every week, cannot be overstated. Further, COVID-19-influenced service trends that were identified in the mid-year report continued through the reporting period and are evidenced in the year-end numbers.

In our mid-year report, we noted an increased number of participants seeking family law assistance (situations exacerbated by COVID-19 but without the element of in-home control and violence) but decreased numbers seeking applications for temporary restraining orders. This trend continued, with family law cases at 188 percent, nearly double the grant target. Domestic violence restraining order cases rose slightly in the second half of the reporting period, but still finished at 55 percent of the grant target for Santa Monica residents.

The lower numbers of Santa Monica residents can be further attributed to a number of other factors as well, all related to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected our DV Clinic services in the following ways:

* For almost the entire reporting period, access to Santa Monica Superior Court was restricted to individuals with active cases on the docket. Restricted access to the court, along with the court’s social distancing guidelines, kept the DV Clinic’s physical location closed, significantly affecting Santa Monica residents.
* During 2020, LAFLA had to transition from an in-person model that made significant use of volunteer attorneys to a consolidated phone intake system without volunteers. As such, the Santa Monica DV Clinic lost many of its overall participants to other programs in LAFLA, as staffing of the hotline is shared.
* Survivors who have immigration issues continue to be afraid to access the court system, or lawyers in general, for fears they may be arrested or removed from the United States, and as such do not seek assistance.
* The expanded off-site DV Clinic at VAP, revamped pre-COVID-19 in early 2020 to reach more Santa Monica survivors, especially those in the Pico neighborhood, has remained suspended.

###### To address the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, in the first week of January 2021, Santa Monica Domestic Violence Clinic staff started a twice weekly Zoom-based clinic on Tuesdays and Thursday that allowed us to utilize our greatest resource, private attorney volunteers. At mid-year, we hypothesized that increased access would result in an increased number of Santa Monica residents seeking protection through TROs and commencing family law actions. We were correct; the number of Santa Monica residents assisted in the second half increased by 32 percent over the mid-year total.

###### In light of recent relaxation of courthouse restrictions, we hope that the DV clinic will reopen for walk-ins in the first half of the next reporting period, barring changes due to COVID-19 variants. As such, the numbers should continue to increase.

**SECTION VII: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**If this program has entered into a lease agreement with the City of Santa Monica, please provide a status report of facility improvements and routine maintenance performed during the reporting period.**

LAFLA has not entered into a lease agreement with the City of Santa Monica.

**By submitting this report to the Housing and Human Services Division, I certify that this report is true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that all disbursements have been made in compliance with the conditions of the Grantee Agreement and for the purposes indicated.**