Center for Court Innovation

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Can Courts Be More User-Friendly? How Satisfaction Surveys Can Promote Trust and Access to Justice

For many, courts can be intimidating, confusing, and discouraging. But small changes can go a long way to improving litigants' experience. This document explains how satisfaction surveys can help courts identify problems, inefficiencies, and things that visitors to the court might find confusing or unsafe. While we focus on cases involving domestic violence, satisfaction surveys can provide useful information in all kinds of cases and situations.

Research on procedural justice shows that while a case outcome may not always be what the parties want, the way a litigant experiences the process is more important. In domestic violence cases, survivors who feel respected and heard are more likely to view the court as a resource. And abusive partners who understand the terms of the order and feel like they were treated fairly show higher rates of compliance. However, in order for courts to be more responsive to litigant needs they need to hear directly from them. Satisfaction surveys are a great tool to measure and address those experiences without compromising ex parte communication.

What is a satisfaction survey?

A satisfaction survey is a survey distributed to people who have engaged with the court in some form. These surveys are used to ask people about their experience with the court. Surveys are typically simple, available in multiple languages, and shared in paper and online formats.

Why use a satisfaction survey?

Satisfaction surveys can help courts identify problems, unsafe practices, and inefficiencies that needlessly complicate the court process for users. Surveys can also promote trust in the justice system and provide litigants with a voice. While courts may worry that litigant feedback will be negative, the results of a satisfaction survey can also be a morale boost to staff by showcasing strengths and serving as motivation to act in areas that need improvement. Staff may also be concerned about how the results of a survey will be shared or that the issues identified are outside their power to change. Such concerns are valid and should be addressed through careful, collaborative planning with a multi-disciplinary team.

Many courts have successfully used satisfaction surveys to enhance their court processes. Even small changes can make a big impact on litigant experiences. Examples include: making signage clear in a variety of languages about where to file for an order of protection, training court staff, strengthening referral processes so all parties know how to access services, and creating safe waiting areas for petitioners that are separate from where respondents wait.

How to create a satisfaction survey

1. **Make sure that you have the buy-in from the court.** Having the support and leadership from a judge or court administrator is essential to creating a survey that the court will use. It will also encourage the buy-in of other stakeholders.

2. **Invite stakeholders involved in domestic violence cases to participate in a planning committee.** Committee members may include judges, court staff, attorneys, advocates, and community members.

3. **Determine the committee's goals and what the satisfaction survey will measure.** For example, the committee may decide it wants to measure procedural justice and the tenets of voice, respect, understanding, and neutrality in domestic violence cases. Or perhaps, the committee will want to focus on court safety and security or whether respondents know and understand the terms of the order. In selecting the focus, prioritize areas of need and consider what changes might easily be made. Determine who the survey will be given to. Discuss and be clear about how the results of the survey will be shared.

4. **Design questions to promote access.** Some courts have enlisted the help of researchers from local colleges or universities to help create the questions. Care should be taken to write the survey in plain English for a third-grade reading level, as well as translate the questions to the top-spoken languages in the community. Keep the survey simple to encourage responses from a variety of people.

5. **Decide how to share the survey.** Some courts have created online surveys, while others have used hard copies. Either option will require creating a process. Some courts set up a kiosk or table where court users can complete a digital or hard copy survey. Others may designate staff who give out the survey. It is important to clearly communicate the purpose of the survey and explain to anyone filling it out that their feedback will not affect their case and that it is confidential.

6. **Determine who will organize the data.** Decide how responses will be collected and shared with the committee. Task someone with organizing the results.

7. **Share the survey.** You might consider piloting a preliminary version of the survey and disseminating it in different ways to see what methods receive a higher response rate. Reassess and adjust as needed.

What to do with the results from the satisfaction survey

Collecting litigant feedback is merely the first step. Courts build trust with the community by responding to people's concerns and making a commitment to improve the court experience. Work with the committee to review survey responses and decide what changes might be made to respond to people's concerns. Share positive results with others in the court system to highlight strengths. Look for areas of concern that can easily and quickly be addressed. Prioritize areas that represent serious safety concerns and consider setting up subcommittees to address them.

- Be transparent about the changes you make with court staff and with the public. Let litigants know that they gave feedback and you listened.
- Set up an ongoing process by which survey results continue to be tracked, monitored, and shared.

Sample Satisfaction Surveys

The following are a selection of satisfaction surveys collected from courts across the country. Special thanks to the following jurisdictions for sharing: Ada County, Idaho; New Jersey; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Minnesota; and Washtenaw County, Michigan.

[1] Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of justice procedures and interpersonal treatment of litigants, victims, and defendants. The central tenets include: voice, respect, neutrality,

understanding, and helpfulness. For more information, see Integrating Procedural Justice in Domestic Violence Cases.

For More Information

E-mail: info@courtinnovation.org

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Appendices

A. This sample is an excerpt of a survey developed by the Center for Court Innovation. While this sample is directed to petitioners, any court wishing to develop their own version should ensure to also develop a survey for respondents.

B. This optional offender survey from Ada County, Idaho is distributed electronically to those who are successful and unsuccessful in probation. The survey questions may be skipped for those who prefer not to answer. Probation officers explain that the answers are not tied to an individual case and thus cannot be tracked. It is intended to improve the justice system. It is reviewed twice a year to look for trends.

C. NEW JERSEY COURTS

D. CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

E. MINNESOTA

F. This is a sample script from Washtenaw County, Michigan for judges to encourage everyone (whether observers, witnesses, jurors, people in custody, police officers, attorneys, etc.) in the courtroom to provide anonymous feedback. It was designed in collaboration with the National Center for State Courts as part of an access to justice project for the American Judges Association.

G. This survey developed by the Center for Court Innovation measured litigant experiences with the Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court. The IDV Court is a specialized domestic violence court model in which one judge hears criminal domestic violence and related family cases.

APPENDIX A

This sample is an excerpt of a survey developed by the Center for Court Innovation. While this sample is directed to petitioners, any court wishing to develop their own version should ensure to also develop a survey for respondents.

Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements about your recent experience in court asking for an Emergency Protective Order.

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
The judge understood my request.					
The judge took my request seriously.					
I believe the court will learn of violations of the protective order.					
I believe the court will respond to violations of the protective order.					
I understand my rights as a petitioner.					
Overall, I got the outcome I wanted in court.					
I was treated with respect in court.					
I was treated fairly in court.					
I would request assistance from the court in the future if needed					
My experience in court will make me more likely to request court assistance again if needed.					
My experience in court will make me less likely to request court assistance again if needed.					

APPENDIX B

This optional offender survey from Ada County, Idaho is distributed electronically to those who are successful and unsuccessful in probation. The survey questions may be skipped for those who prefer not to answer. Probation officers explain that the answers are not tied to an individual case and thus cannot be tracked. It is intended to improve the justice system. It is reviewed twice a year to look for trends.

Q1 What was the severity of your original charge?

Felony
Misdemeanor
I don't know

Q2 How do you feel about these statements? Strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

I understood the orders from the judge.
The judge listened to what I had to say.
The judge recognized my progress in a positive way.
The judge encouraged me to continue making progress.
I understood when I was to attend review hearings.

Q3 Do you have comments about your judge?

Q4 How many review hearings did you attend? Please estimate if you don't remember the exact number.

Q4 How many review hearings did you attend? Please estimate if you don't remember the exact number.

Q5 Were hearings arranged to be convenient for you and your family's schedule?

Q6 Did you receive any sanctions for not complying with court orders? (check all that apply)

Verbal warning
Increased UA testing
Increased reporting
Probation violation
Discretionary jail time
Additional class(es)
Additional counseling
Increased review hearings
None
Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B (continued)

Q7 If you received sanctions, did you feel they were appropriate?

Yes
Somewhat
No
N/A - no sanctions in my case

Q8 During your involvement with Domestic Violence Court, were you or your family involved in other court cases?

Q9 If yes, what type of court cases? (check all that apply)

Child protection
Civil Protection Order
Divorce/custody
Other criminal cases
Other (please specify)

Q10 If yes, did the DV Court judge handle all of your cases (including non-criminal)?

Q11 How long were you on supervised probation?

Less than 1 year
1 year to 18 months
18 months to 2 years
2+ years
Don't know

Q12 How long were you on unsupervised probation?

I was not on unsupervised probation
Less than 1 year
1 year to 18 months
18 months to 2 years
2+ years
Don't know

APPENDIX B (continued)

Q13 How do you feel about these statements? Strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

I understood what I needed to do to complete probation.
I understood what treatments and services I was required to complete.
I understood that there would be consequences for not complying with orders.
My probation officer listened to what I had to say.
My probation officer recognized my progress in a positive way.
My probation officer encouraged me to continue making progress.

Q14 Do you have comments about your probation officer?

Q15 Which evaluations did you have? (select all that apply)

Mental health
Domestic violence
Drug and alcohol (GAIN)
Agreed to go directly into treatment without an evaluation
None
Other (please specify)

Q16 Which treatments and services did you attend? (select all that apply)

Domestic violence treatment (fewer than 52 weeks)
Domestic violence treatment (52 weeks or more)
Drug and/or alcohol treatment
Medication management
Counseling
Accountability group
Cognitive Self Change (CSC)
Parenting education
None
Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B (continued)

Q17 How do you feel about these statements? Strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

My treatment provider listened to what I had to say.
My treatment provider recognized my progress in a positive way.
My treatment provider encouraged me to continue making progress.

Q18 Do you have comments about your treatment providers or counselors?

Q19 What funding assistance did you receive? (select all that apply)

Funding for DV treatment
Funding for substance abuse treatment
Funding for drug treatment
Funding for UAs
Funding for counseling
Waived or reduced probation fees
None
Other (please specify)

Q20 Were there treatments, services or assistance that you felt you needed but did not get?

Q21 Did you have a No Contact Order between you and the victim in your case?

Q22 If yes, was it explained clearly to you what that meant?

Q23 If yes, was your No Contact Order modified?

Q24 How would you describe your current relationship with the victim in this case?

Separated, no contact
Separated, plan to reunite
Divorced/Not together
Together, in a relationship
Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B (continued)

Q25 Do you currently live with the victim in this case?

Q26 Do you have any children with the victim in this case?

Q27 How many children under 18 years of age do you have living with you (part-time or full-time)?

Q28 How do you feel about these statements? Strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Overall, my experience was positive.
Communication has improved within my relationships.
I feel better able to positively handle issues in my relationships.
I feel more hopeful about the future.

Q29 Which classes, treatment, counseling or other offered services were most valuable to your success?

Q30 Do you have any other comments regarding Domestic Violence Court and the services received that you would like to share?

Q31 What is your age?

Q32 What is your gender?

Female
Male
Transgender

Q33 What is your race/ethnicity?

White
Black/African American
American Indian/Alaska Native
Asian
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
Hispanic/Latino
Prefer not to answer
Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B (continued)

Q34 Are you a veteran?

Q35 What is your highest level of education?

Less than 8th grade
8th grade
Some high school
High school graduate or GED
Some college/trade school
Trade school graduate
Associate degree
Bachelor degree
Advanced degree
Prefer not to answer

Q36 What is your employment status? (select any that apply)

Full-time
Part-time
Disabled
Unemployed
Retired
Full-time student
Part-time student
Other (please specify)

Q37 What is your current income?

Less than $11,500
$11,501-$15,000
$15,001-$20,000
$20,001-$25,000
$25,001-$30,000

APPENDIX B (continued)

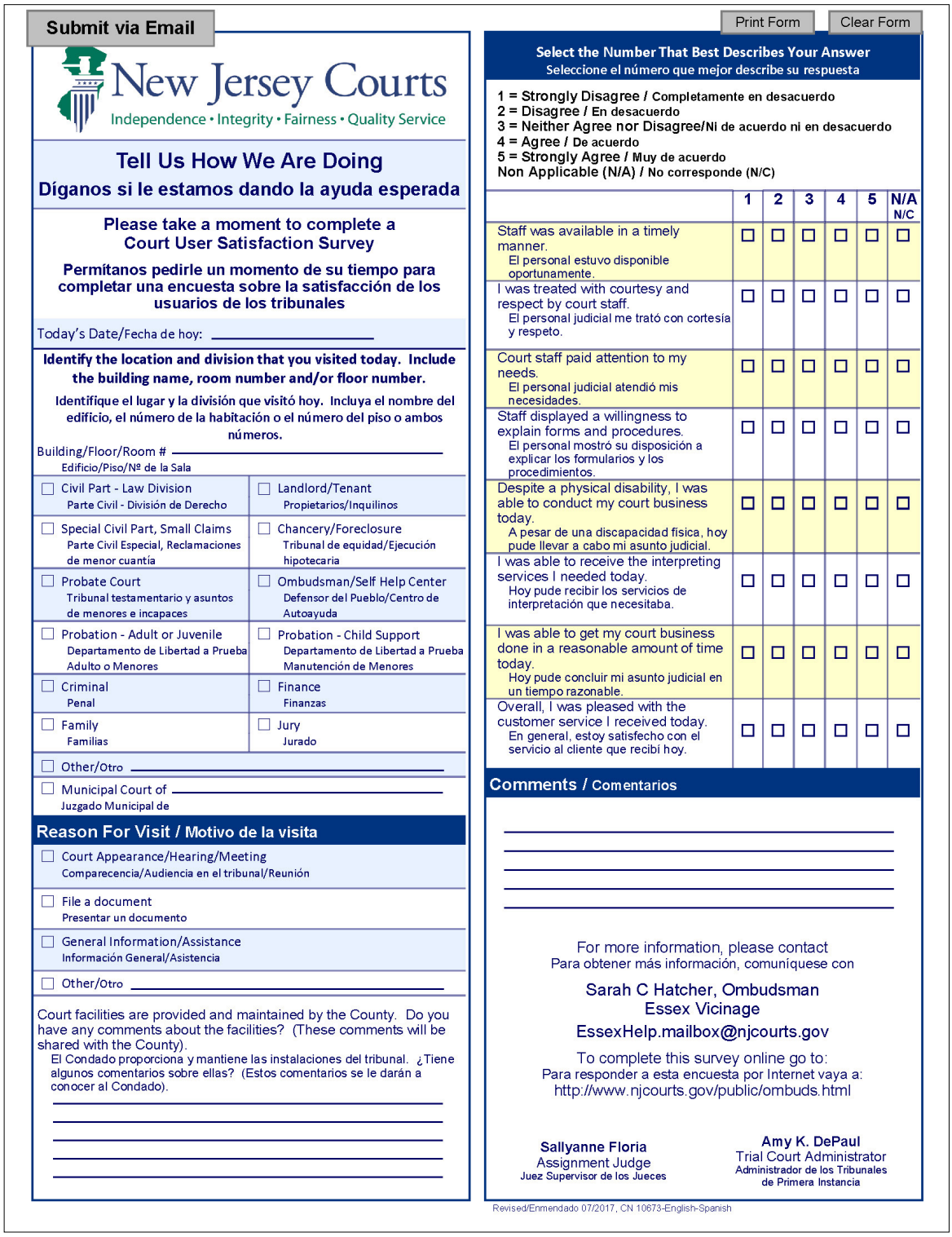
$30,001-$35,000
$35,001-$40,000
$40,001-$45,000
$45,001 and over
Prefer not to answer

Q38 Do you rely on any assistance for income, food or housing?

Q38 Do you rely on any assistance for income, food or housing?

Employment
Transportation
Childcare
Housing
Education
Food stamps
Social Security/Disability
Medicaid
Veterans Affairs (VA)
Church or religious group
Prefer not to answer
Other (please specify)

APPENDIX C: NEW JERSEY COURTS



Submit via Email

Print Form Clear Form

New Jersey Courts

Independence • Integrity • Fairness • Quality Service

Tell Us How We Are Doing

Díganos si le estamos dando la ayuda esperada

Please take a moment to complete a Court User Satisfaction Survey

Permítanos pedirle un momento de su tiempo para completar una encuesta sobre la satisfacción de los usuarios de los tribunales

Today's Date/Fecha de hoy: _____

Identify the location and division that you visited today. Include the building name, room number and/or floor number.

Identifique el lugar y la división que visitó hoy. Incluya el nombre del edificio, el número de la habitación o el número del piso o ambos números.

Building/Floor/Room # _____
Edificio/Piso/Nº de la Sala

☐ Civil Part - Law Division Parte Civil - División de Derecho	☐ Landlord/Tenant Propietarios/Inquilinos
☐ Special Civil Part, Small Claims Parte Civil Especial, Reclamaciones de menor cuantía	☐ Chancery/Foreclosure Tribunal de equidad/Ejecución hipotecaria
☐ Probate Court Tribunal testamentario y asuntos de menores e incapaces	☐ Ombudsman/Self Help Center Defensor del Pueblo/Centro de Autoayuda
☐ Probation - Adult or Juvenile Departamento de Libertad a Prueba Adulto o Menores	☐ Probation - Child Support Departamento de Libertad a Prueba Manutención de Menores
☐ Criminal Penal	☐ Finance Finanzas
☐ Family Familias	☐ Jury Jurado

☐ Other/Otro _____

☐ Municipal Court of _____
Juzgado Municipal de

Reason For Visit / Motivo de la visita

☐ Court Appearance/Hearing/Meeting
Comparecencia/Audiencia en el tribunal/Reunión

☐ File a document
Presentar un documento

☐ General Information/Assistance
Información General/Asistencia

☐ Other/Otro _____

Court facilities are provided and maintained by the County. Do you have any comments about the facilities? (These comments will be shared with the County).
El Condado proporciona y mantiene las instalaciones del tribunal. ¿Tiene algunos comentarios sobre ellas? (Estos comentarios se le darán a conocer al Condado).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Select the Number That Best Describes Your Answer
Seleccione el número que mejor describe su respuesta

1 = Strongly Disagree / Completamente en desacuerdo
2 = Disagree / En desacuerdo
3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree/Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4 = Agree / De acuerdo
5 = Strongly Agree / Muy de acuerdo
Non Applicable (N/A) / No corresponde (N/C)

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A N/C
Staff was available in a timely manner. El personal estuvo disponible oportunamente.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was treated with courtesy and respect by court staff. El personal judicial me trató con cortesía y respeto.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Court staff paid attention to my needs. El personal judicial atendió mis necesidades.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff displayed a willingness to explain forms and procedures. El personal mostró su disposición a explicar los formularios y los procedimientos.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Despite a physical disability, I was able to conduct my court business today. A pesar de una discapacidad física, hoy pude llevar a cabo mi asunto judicial.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to receive the interpreting services I needed today. Hoy pude recibir los servicios de interpretación que necesitaba.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time today. Hoy pude concluir mi asunto judicial en un tiempo razonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I was pleased with the customer service I received today. En general, estoy satisfecho con el servicio al cliente que recibí hoy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments / Comentarios

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

For more information, please contact
Para obtener más información, comuníquese con

Sarah C Hatcher, Ombudsman
Essex Vicinage
EssexHelp.mailbox@njcourts.gov

To complete this survey online go to:
Para responder a esta encuesta por Internet vaya a:
http://www.njcourts.gov/public/ombuds.html

Sallyanne Floria
Assignment Judge
Juez Supervisor de los Jueces

Amy K. DePaul
Trial Court Administrator
Administrador de los Tribunales de Primera Instancia

Revised/Enmendado 07/2017, CN 10673-English-Spanish

APPENDIX D: CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
1 W. LAKESIDE AVENUE
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113-1023
216.443.8529
HTTP://WWW.DOMESTIC.CUYAHOGACOUNTY.US

You are receiving this survey based on your recent experience at Domestic Relations Court in Cuyahoga County. This survey is confidential and will not affect any past, present, or future court cases you may have in Domestic Relations Court in Cuyahoga County. You do NOT need to put your name on the return envelope. If you have received this survey in error, please return the form with the term "wrong address" on the top.

1.	I was assisted in meeting my immediate needs.	YES	NO	N/A
2.	I felt safer or more comfortable filing my petition because I had an advocate with me.	YES	NO	N/A
3.	I felt safe waiting for my full hearing while in the courthouse.	YES	NO	N/A
4.	I felt safe meeting with the Domestic Violence Case Manager to work on a Consent Agreement.	YES	NO	N/A
5.	I felt comfortable voicing my safety concerns to the court staff and/or the Domestic Violence Advocate.	YES	NO	N/A
6.	I received information on all the resources that I identified to the advocate/case manager (except for a private attorney).	YES	NO	N/A
7.	Did you have a positive experience with the Domestic violence Advocates, add advocate's name	YES	NO	N/A
8.	Did you have a positive experience with the Domestic Violence Case Manager, add case manager's name	YES	NO	N/A

*Continued on the next page

APPENDIX D (continued)

1. Were there remedies in you Civil Protection Order that you did not know you could request but would have wanted explained to you (ex. child support, counseling, spousal support, etc.)?

2. Besides from the length of the process, were there any other issues you experienced while filing for a Civil Protection Order that the Domestic Violence Advocate or Case Manager could have assisted you with?

3. If you received a Civil Protection Order, has the Respondent violated that Order?

4. If so, what has the police response been to this violation?

5. If you worked with the Domestic Violence Case Manager to reach a consent order, where you satisfied with your experience? What would you have liked to be done differently?

6. Did the Domestic Violence Advocate administer a Danger Assessment or Lethality Assessment with you? If yes, did it help with your safety planning or understanding of the dangerousness of your situation?

7. If you were not satisfied with your experience with the Domestic Violence Case Manager or the Domestic Violence Advocate, please indicate why below.

APPENDIX E: MINNESOTA

Access and Fairness Survey

Thank you for taking this survey today.

Please complete both sides of the survey.

Please answer each question by filling in the appropriate circle.

MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Section 1: Access	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Finding the courthouse was easy.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The forms I needed were clear and understandable.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt safe in the courthouse.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The court tries to get rid of barriers to service, such as physical and language barriers.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Court staff paid attention to my needs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was treated with courtesy and respect.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It was easy to find the courtroom or office I needed.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The court's hours made it easy for me to do my business.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Did you appear in front of a judge today? ❍ Yes ❍ No (If no, please skip Section 2 and go to the bottom of the page)

Section 2: Fairness	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The way my case was handled was fair.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The judge listened to my side of the story before making a decision.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The judge had the information needed to make good decisions about my case.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was treated the same as everyone else.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I know what to do next about my case.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

What three (3) changes would most improve your experience with the courts?

- ❍ Longer hours of courthouse operation (evenings and/or weekends)
- ❍ Better signs (or directions) in the courthouse
- ❍ Better access to community services from within the courthouse (such as housing assistance, domestic violence shelter, or legal advice)
- ❍ Less of a wait at the courthouse
- ❍ More knowledgeable staff available to answer questions
- ❍ More user friendly forms in plain language
- ❍ More options to fill out forms online
- ❍ More business available to conduct online
- ❍ Longer hours of phone support (evenings and/or weekends)
- ❍ Other _____

№ 0711

APPENDIX F:

This is a sample script from Washtenaw County, Michigan for judges to encourage everyone (whether observers, witnesses, jurors, people in custody, police officers, attorneys, etc.) in the courtroom to provide anonymous feedback. It was designed in collaboration with the National Center for State Courts as part of an access to justice project for the American Judges Association.

Script for judges to use at the beginning of every court session:

The (name your particular court—e.g., 15th District) Court is conducting a survey about access to and fairness in the courts. We would greatly appreciate having ***everyone*** *in the courtroom for any reason today take a few moments on your way out of the courtroom to complete a very short survey. It should only take a minute of your time. We value your opinions about how the court is providing services to you.*

All responses will be anonymous. They will not affect your particular case in any way. There will be no names on the surveys. The survey responses will assist us in making improvements to court services.

There will be people at the table (specify where in relation to the courtroom—e.g., in the hallway as you leave) handing out the one-page survey. They can answer any questions you may have about the survey. Thank you in advance for your help.

Periodic reminder for judges to give as cases are done and people are leaving the courtroom:

This is just a reminder that we really want to know your opinions about how the court is serving you. Please take a moment after you leave the courtroom to complete the short survey. We are asking ***everyone*** *who has been in court today for any reason to complete it. Your answers will be anonymous. Thank you for your help.*

APPENDIX G:

This survey developed by the Center for Court Innovation measured litigant experiences with the Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court. The IDV Court is a specialized domestic violence court model in which one judge hears criminal domestic violence and related family cases.

LITIGANT SURVEY

CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION
YONKERS INTEGRATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT
LITIGANT SURVEY

Hello, I am a researcher with the Center for Court Innovation and we are doing a study to understand the experiences of people with cases in the Yonkers Integrated Domestic Violence Court. We would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences in this court. This survey is completely anonymous. No one, including the judge, your attorney, or the police, will know your answers. The survey will not affect your court cases.

Please do not put your name on this survey.

The survey is voluntary. You do not have to take the survey.

Feel free to ask the researcher any questions you have while you are completing the survey. If you have questions later (after you have left the court), you can call Sarah Bradley at the Center for Court Innovation: 212-716-1369.

Instructions: Read each question carefully and place a check (√) in the box next to your answer(s).

1. **Have you completed this survey at a previous court date?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

2. **Were you recently arrested for domestic violence and became a defendant in a criminal court case?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

3. **Are you in court because someone else was recently arrested for committing domestic violence against you?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

4. **Is this your first time at this court?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

YOUR REASONS FOR COMING TO THIS COURT

5. **Think about all the times you have been to this court. Have you ever been to this court in order to… (please check all that apply)**
   - ☐ Get visits with your children
   - ☐ Get custody of your children
   - ☐ Stop the other parent or guardian in your case from having visits with your children
   - ☐ Stop the other parent or guardian in your case from getting custody of your children
   - ☐ Ask for an Order of Protection against the other person in your case *(an Order of Protection tells the other person in this case not to come in contact with you or to have less contact with you)*
   - ☐ Ask for a change in an Order of Protection

APPENDIX G (continued)

- ☐ **(VICTIMS ONLY)**Testify against the person who was arrested in your case
- ☐ **(DEFENDANTS ONLY)** Report to the judge about a program your attending
- ☐ Other_____

YOUR CRIMINAL CASE

Everyone who comes to Yonkers IDV court has at least two cases, one criminal case and one family case. The next questions ask you about your criminal case, or the one related to the arrest of you or the other person in this case for domestic violence. Please check (√) the box next to the answer that best describes your situation.

1. **(VICTIMS ONLY) Do you currently have an Order of Protection against the person arrested in this case?** *(Is the person who was arrested in this case not allowed to contact you or required to have less contact with you?)*
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

6. **(VICTIMS ONLY) If you have an Order of Protection, how likely do you think it is that a violation of the Order of Protection would be discovered by the Court?**
   - ☐ Very Likely
   - ☐ Somewhat Likely
   - ☐ Somewhat Unlikely
   - ☐ Very Unlikely
   - ☐ I do not have an Order of Protection

7. **(VICTIMS ONLY) If you have an Order of Protection, how seriously do you think the Judge would take it if the Order of Protection were broken?**
   - ☐ Very Seriously
   - ☐ Somewhat seriously
   - ☐ Not seriously

8. **(VICTIMS ONLY) After the arrest of the other person in your case, what did you want to happen?**
   - ☐ I wanted to pursue criminal charges against the other person in this case
   - ☐ I wanted to drop the charges
   - ☐ I wanted to drop the charges if the other person got help (*for example, attended a domestic violence education program or a drug /alcohol treatment program*)
   - ☐ I wasn't sure what I wanted to do at the time
   - ☐ Other_____

9. **(VICTIMS ONLY) Did you discuss your wishes with the prosecutor (the District Attorney) in this case?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No→ Skip question 7 and 8. Go Directly to Question 9.
   - ☐ Not sure

10. **(VICTIMS ONLY) How seriously do you think the District Attorney (the prosecutor) took your wishes about the criminal case?**
    - ☐ Very Seriously
    - ☐ Somewhat Seriously
    - ☐ Not Seriously
    - ☐ Not Sure

11. **(VICTIMS ONLY) Did you feel pressured by the District Attorney (prosecutor) to do anything you didn't really want to do?**
    - ☐ I did not feel at all pressured

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

- ☐ I felt a little pressured
- ☐ I felt very pressured
- ☐ Not sure

12. (VICTIMS ONLY) Were you at the court while the criminal case was being heard by the judge?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. Has your criminal case finished yet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

14. If your criminal case is finished, what decision did the judge make? (check all that apply)

- ☐ The judge gave a sentence to attend a domestic violence program
- ☐ The judge gave a sentence to attend another program (for example, drug or alcohol treatment)
- ☐ The judge gave a sentence of jail time
- ☐ The judge gave a sentence of probation
- ☐ The case was dismissed
- ☐ The judge gave an Adjournment in Contemplation of Dismissal (ACD)
- ☐ Other_____
- ☐ Not sure

15. Are you satisfied with the judge's decision?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat unsatisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied

16. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) Are you currently attending a program that the court requires you to attend? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Yes, I am attending a domestic violence program
- ☐ Yes, I am attending a drug or alcohol treatment program
- ☐ Yes, I am in another program (please specify): _____
- ☐ No, I am not attending a program

17. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) Do you currently have an Order of Protection against you from this court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No→ Skip Questions 3 and 4. Go directly to question 5.

18. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) If there is an Order of Protection against you, do you understand what the Order of Protection in your case requires?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ There is no Order of Protection against me from this court

19. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) If there is an Order of Protection against you, do you plan to follow this order?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ There is no Order of Protection against me from this court

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

20. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) Are you currently on probation as part of your case with this court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

21. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) If yes, how long have you been on probation with this court?

__ __Months

22. (DEFENDANTS ONLY) If you are on probation, how often have you had contact with this court's probation officer?

- ☐ Four or more times in the last month
- ☐ Two or three times in the last month
- ☐ One time in the last month
- ☐ Zero times in the last month

YOUR FAMILY CASE

The next questions ask you about your family case (for example, a child custody or child visitation case). Please check the answer that best describes your current situation.

23. What kind of family case do you have in this court? (check all that apply)

- ☐ A child visitation or custody case
- ☐ A family offense case *(In this type of case you or the other person is asking for an Order of Protection)*
- ☐ Other_____
- ☐ Not sure

24. Do you have a lawyer in your family court case?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

25. If you have a lawyer, how do you think it has affected your case?

- ☐ Having a lawyer has made my family case stronger
- ☐ Having a lawyer has made my family case weaker
- ☐ Having a lawyer has not affected my case
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ I do not have a lawyer in my family court case

26. Think about the last time, including today, that you went before the judge in your family case. Did he make a new decision? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Yes, the judge made a decision about my visits with my child or children
- ☐ Yes, the judge made a decision about the other parent or guardian's visits with our child or children
- ☐ Yes, the judge made a decision about child custody
- ☐ Yes, the judge made a decision about an Order of Protection
- ☐ No, the judge left the decision the same as it was at the last court date
- ☐ I have not yet been before the judge in my family case

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

27. If the judge made a decision in your family case, did you get what you wanted?

- ☐ Yes, I got all of what I wanted
- ☐ Yes, I got some of what I wanted
- ☐ No, I got very little of what I wanted
- ☐ No, I got none of what I wanted
- ☐ I have not yet been before the judge in my family case

28. Is the outcome of one of your cases (criminal or family) more important to you?

- ☐ Yes, the outcome of my family case
- ☐ Yes, the outcome of my criminal case
- ☐ The outcome of each of my cases is equally important to me

YOUR COURT EXPERIENCE

29. About how many times have you been to this court?

__ __ Times

- ☐ Today is my first time at this court

30. How long have you been coming to this court?

__ __ Months __ __Weeks

- ☐ Today is my first time at this court

31. Thinking about the last time you were here, including today, about how long after you arrived at the courthouse did you wait for your case to be heard?

__ __ Hours __ __Minutes

32. How easy is it for you to get to and from the courthouse?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

33. Think about the last time, including today, that you were in this court. When it was your time to see the judge, did you feel rushed?

- ☐ I felt very rushed
- ☐ I felt somewhat rushed
- ☐ I did not feel rushed
- ☐ Not sure

34. (VICTIMS ONLY) How safe do you feel in the courtroom?

- ☐ Very Safe
- ☐ Somewhat Safe
- ☐ Somewhat Unsafe
- ☐ Very Unsafe
- ☐ Not sure

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

35. (VICTIMS ONLY) Do the security officers in the courtroom affect your sense of safety?

- ☐ Yes, the security officers make me feel more safe
- ☐ Yes, the security officers make me feel less safe
- ☐ The presence of the security officers do not affect my sense of safety
- ☐ Not sure

36. (VICTIMS ONLY) Have you had contact with a victim advocate through this court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. (VICTIMS ONLY) Did the advocate discuss referral to any of the following services with you? (Please check all that apply.)

- ☐ Safety Planning
- ☐ Housing / Shelter
- ☐ Legal Assistance
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Other_____
- ☐ The advocate did not discuss referral to any services
- ☐ I have not had contact with the victim advocate

38. Thinking about all the times that you have appeared before this judge, how often have you understood which case (Criminal or Family) was being discussed?

- ☐ I always understood which case was being discussed
- ☐ I usually understood which case was being discussed
- ☐ I usually did not understand which case was being discussed
- ☐ I never understood which case was being discussed
- ☐ Today is my first time at this court

YOUR OPINIONS OF THIS COURT

39. Think about all the times you have been in this court. What issues seem to be most important to the Court? (When we say "the Court", we mean the judge, the court attorneys, the probation officer, etc.)

- ☐ The punishment of people who have committed domestic violence
- ☐ The safety of domestic violence victims
- ☐ The welfare of the children in the case
- ☐ Helping out people who have committed domestic violence
- ☐ Other_____

40. Of the people appearing in court on your criminal case, who do you think the judge listens to most when making a decision?

- ☐ The judge listens to the defense attorney the most
- ☐ The judge listens to the District Attorney (the prosecutor) the most
- ☐ The judge listens to both the defense and the District Attorney (the prosecutor) about the same amount
- ☐ Not sure

41. Of the people appearing in court on your family case, who do you think the judge listens to most when making a decision?

- ☐ My lawyer
- ☐ The lawyer for the other parent in this case

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

☐ The children's lawyer (the law guardian)

42. In general, what is your opinion of this court's response to domestic violence?
- ☐ The court's response to domestic violence is too harsh
- ☐ The court's response to domestic violence is too easy
- ☐ The court's response to domestic violence is about right

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

43. Having all of my cases in one court made getting to and from court easier.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

44. Because I have all of my cases in one court, I have had to take fewer days off work to deal with court matters.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

45. The judge here listens carefully to my side of the story.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

46. Having all my cases in front of one judge has helped me to get positive results in my cases.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ I have not had any of my cases decided yet

47. Having all my cases in one court made getting childcare easier.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

48. The outcome(s) of my case(s) would have been the same in any court.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

49. The judge took my opinions into account when making decisions.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

50. Having the same judge know the details of my family and criminal case may have a negative affect on his decision in one or both of my cases.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

51. The judge uses things he learns from my criminal case when making a decision about my family case and vice-versa.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

52. Overall, I would say the American court system treats people fairly.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

53. Overall, this court has handled my case(s) fairly.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

54. How old are you?

__ __ Years

55. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

56. How much schooling have you completed?

- ☐ No high school diploma or GED
- ☐ High schoold diploma or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Some graduate school
- ☐ Graduate or professional degree

57. Other than the Yonkers Integrated Domestic Violence Court, have you ever been to a family or criminal court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Litigant Survey

APPENDIX G (continued)

58. Are you currently employed?

- ☐ Yes, I have a full-time job
- ☐ Yes, I have a part-time job
- ☐ No

59. What is your race (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Black or African-American (African, African American, Afro-Caribbean)
- ☐ Caucasian or white
- ☐ Asian American / Pacific Islander
- ☐ American Indian / Alaska Native
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

60. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

61. What is your current relationship with the other person in this case?

- ☐ We are "exes" (no longer in a relationship)
- ☐ We are in a relationship, but not married or living together
- ☐ We are married or living together
- ☐ Other_____

Do you have any Comments or Questions?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Please return your completed survey, including the cover page, to the researcher.

Litigant Survey

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