

Disability Justice Study

2025

“Disability justice means no one is disposable.”

— Mia Mingus

KMG Consulting Firm



PRESENTERS



Kabir Amari, M.Ed.
they/them



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she/her



PRESENTERS 2



**Jerri Ann Berry Danso, MS,
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Insights from Surveys & Focus Groups

KMG Consulting Firm



FIRST PRESENTER



Jerri Berry Danso

She/her

Overview

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Q & A

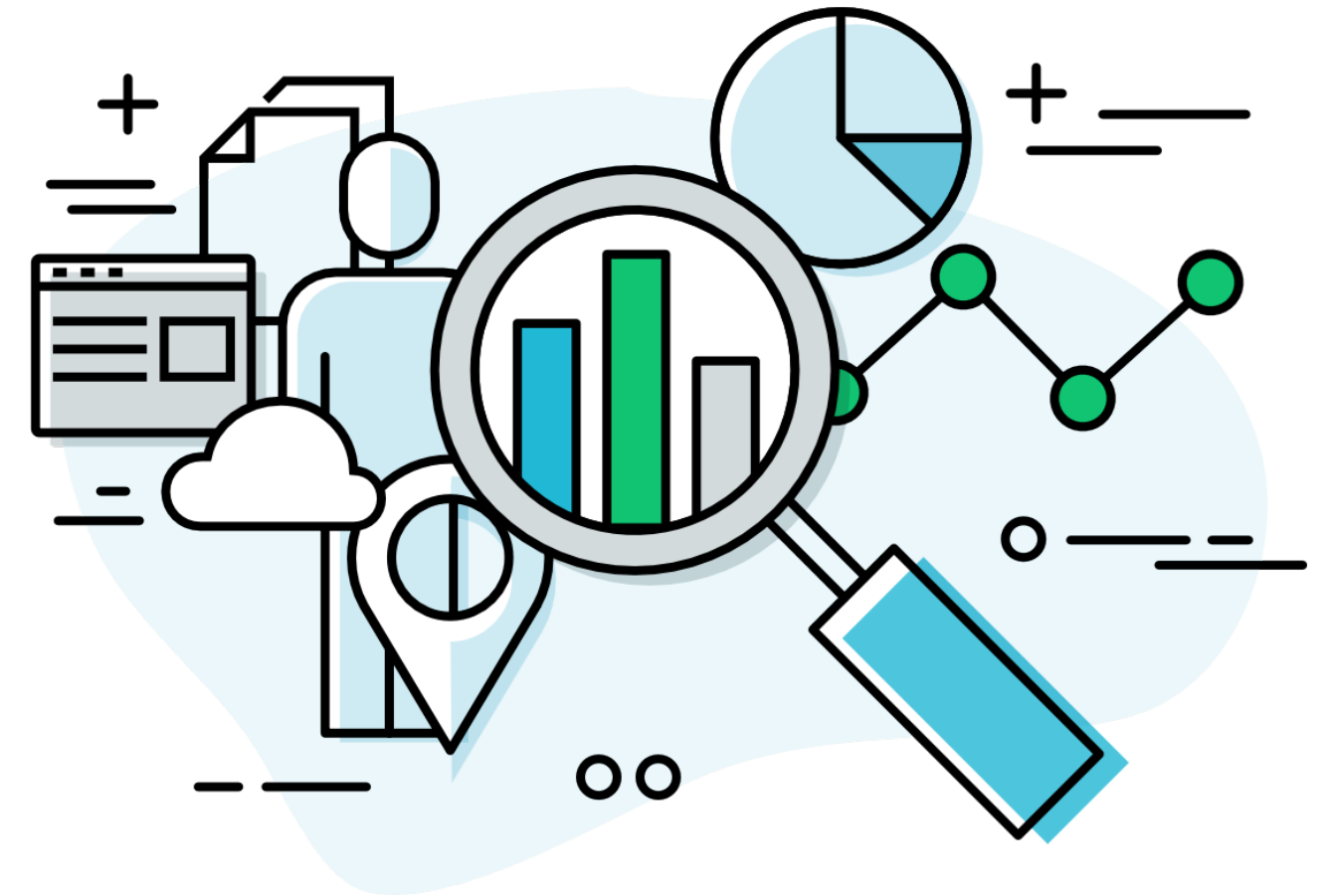


Methodology Part 1



Research Design

- Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data
- Sequential explanatory model: surveys first, followed by focus groups



Methodology Part 2



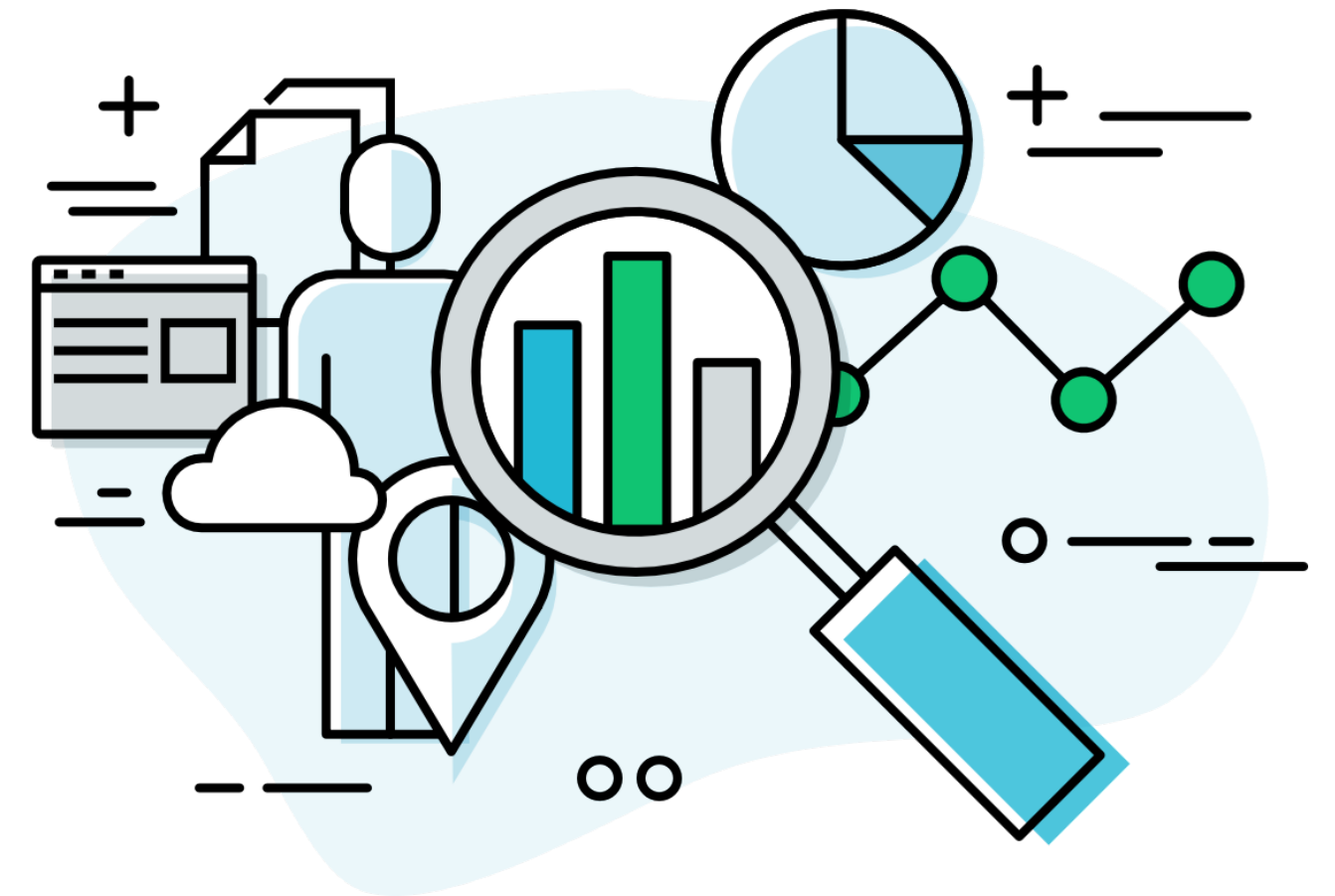
Sampling & Recruitment

Surveys:

- Convenience sampling
- Outreach via court listservs, partner organizations, flyers, direct outreach

Focus Groups:

- Purposive sampling
- Outreach via partner organizations, media, flyers, direct outreach

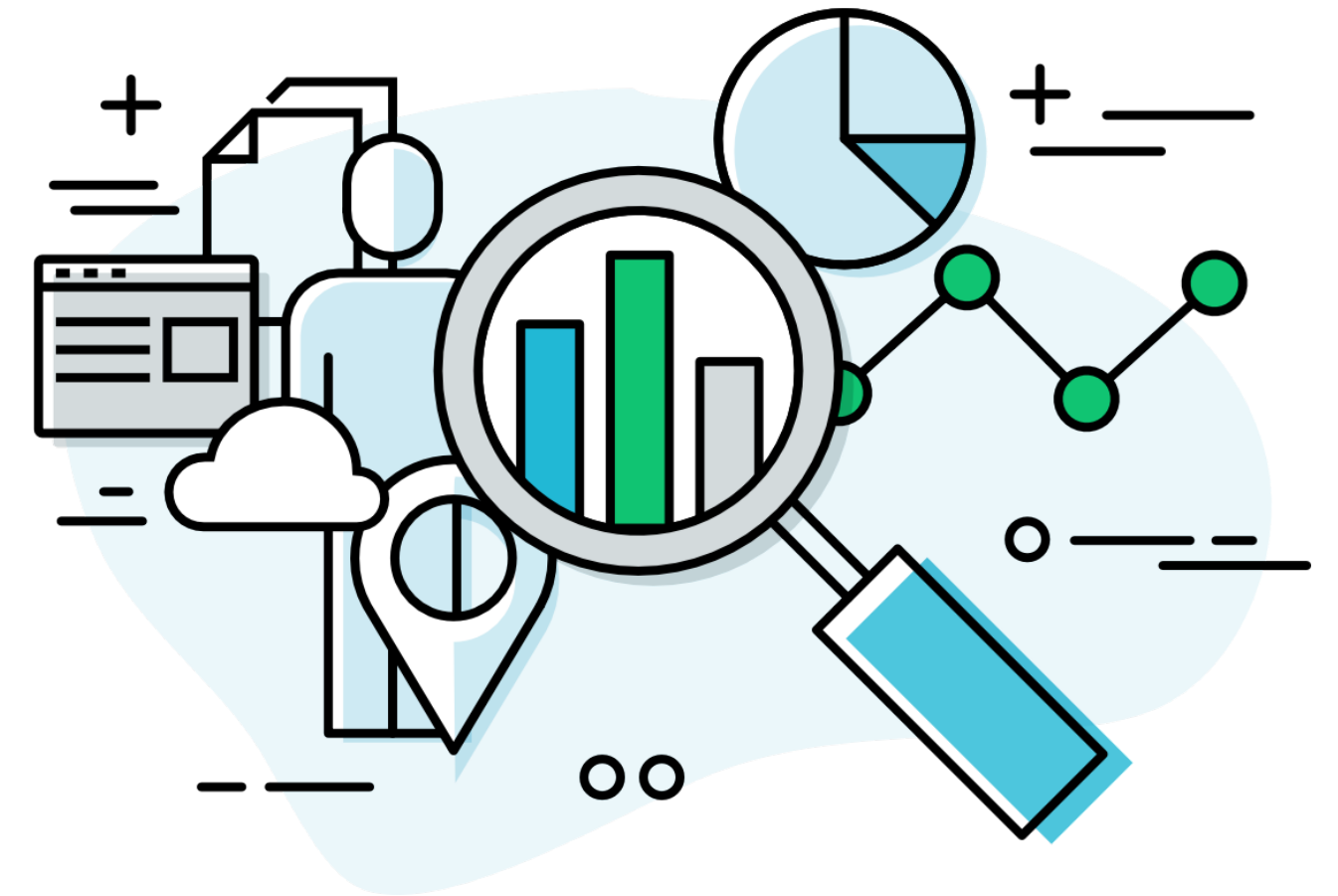


Methodology part 3



Data Collection Instruments

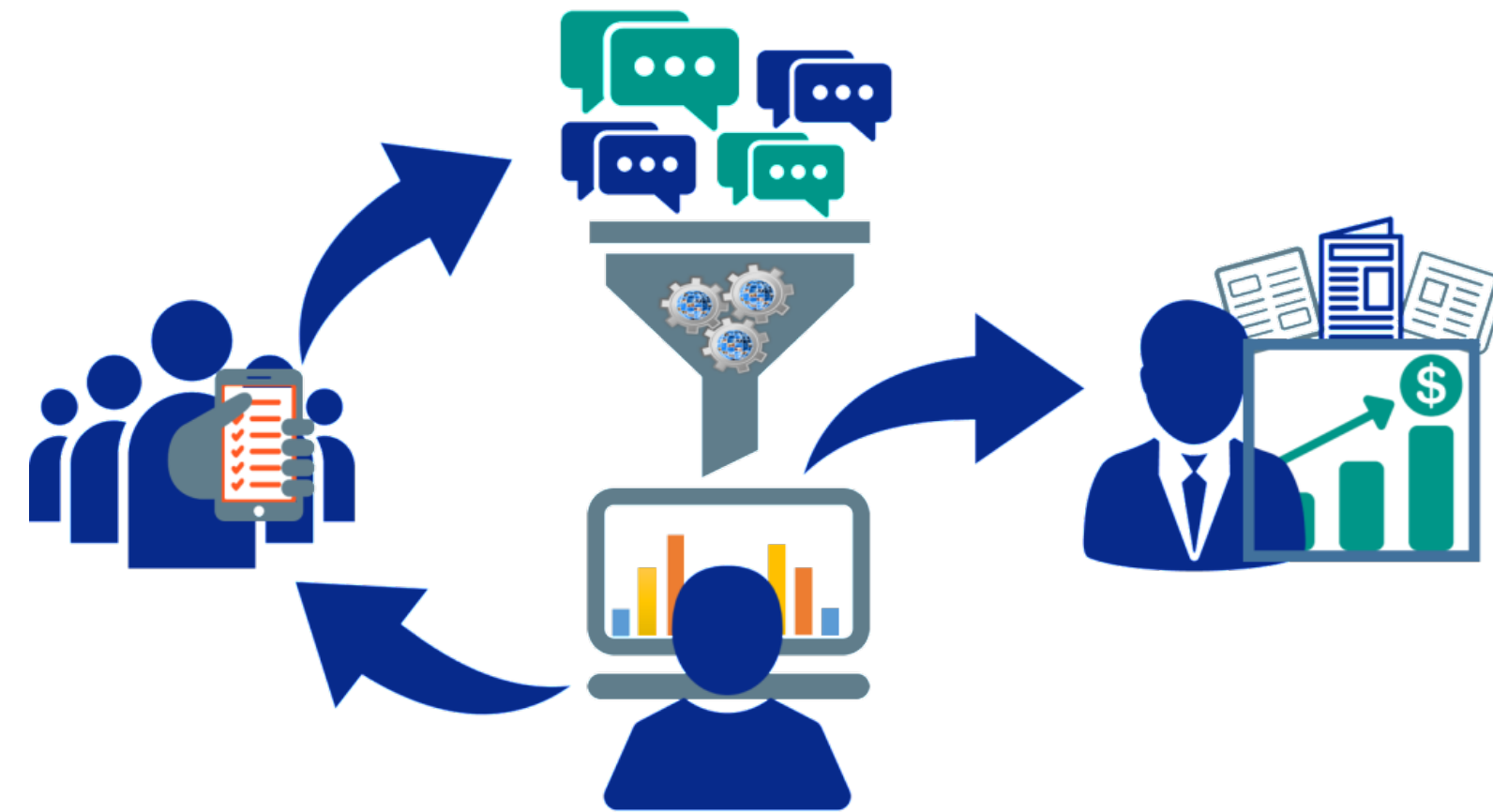
- **Survey 1:** Court personnel (judges, staff, administrators)
- **Survey 2:** Court users with disabilities, caregivers, & community staff
- **Focus Groups:** Five sessions segmented by stakeholder type



Methodology Part 4

Survey Administration

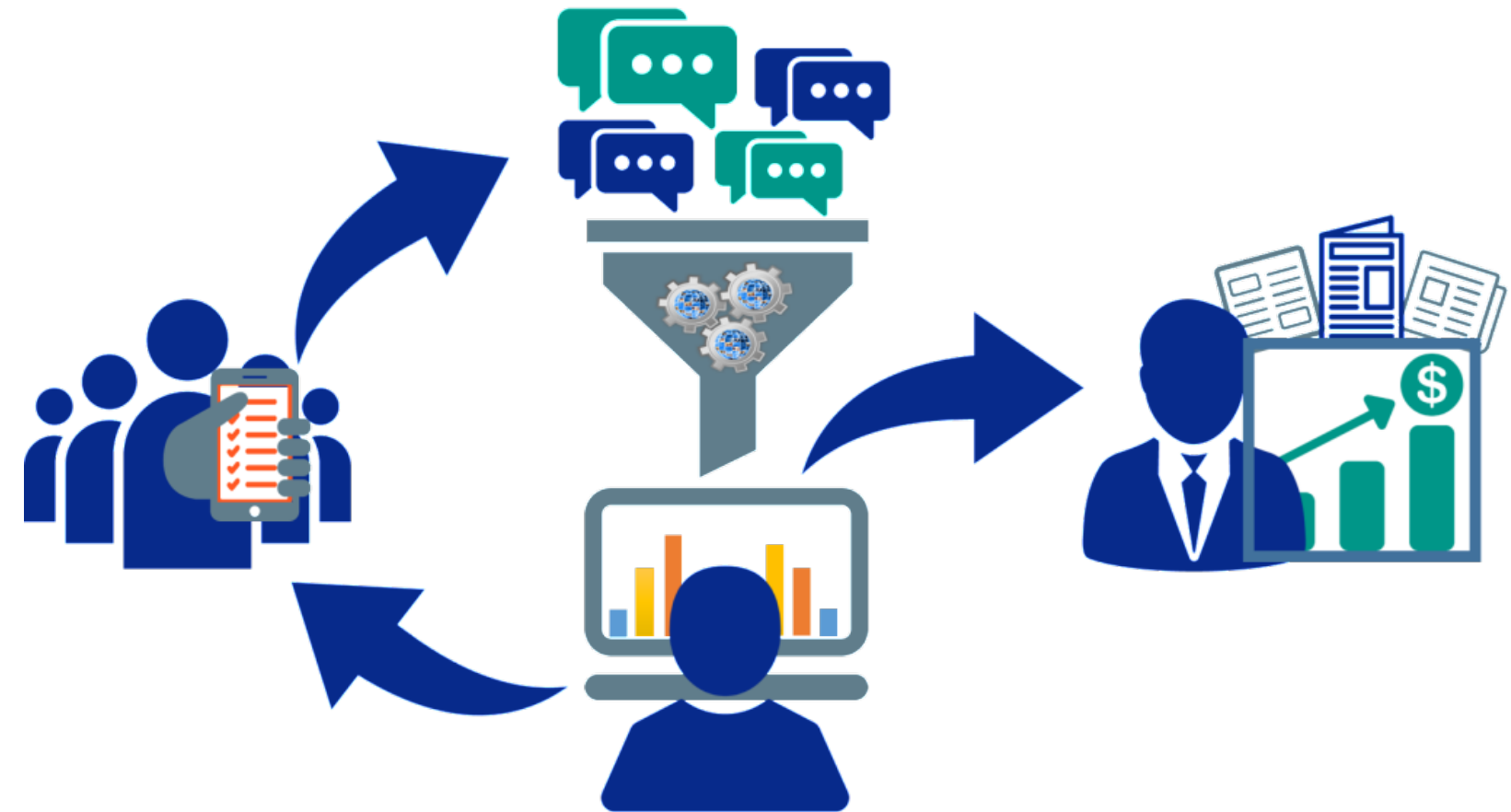
- Online platform
- Open for about 3 weeks, with reminder emails
- Items include Likert scales, multiple-choice, and open-ended responses



Methodology Part 5

Focus Groups

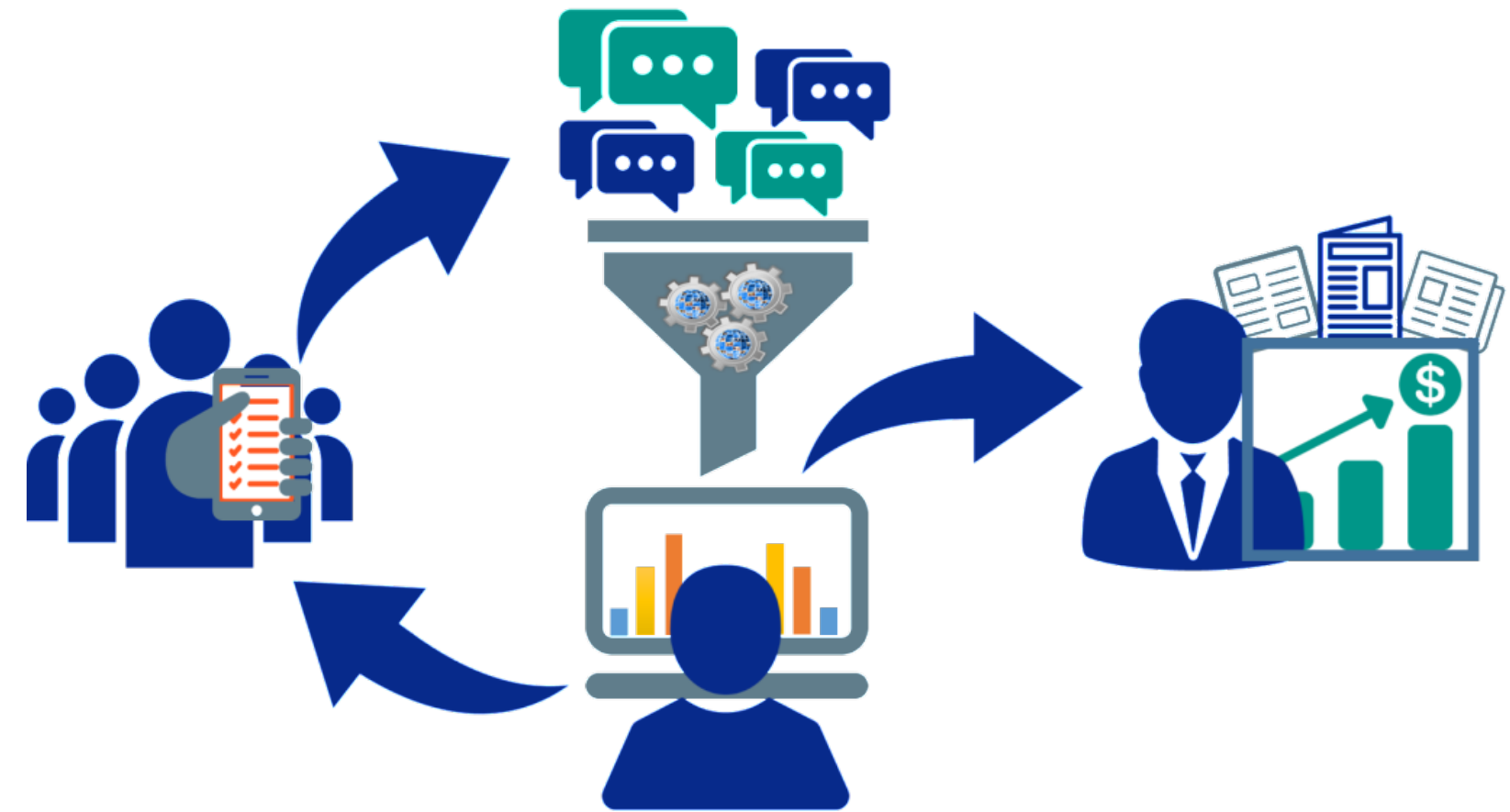
- About 5 participants each, 60-minute sessions, virtual
- Facilitator guide with core questions + probes (semi-structured)



Methodology Part 6

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative:**
 - Descriptive statistics (frequencies, cross-tabs)
 - Comparative analyses
- **Qualitative:**
 - Thematic coding
 - Double-coding for reliability; thematic synthesis across groups



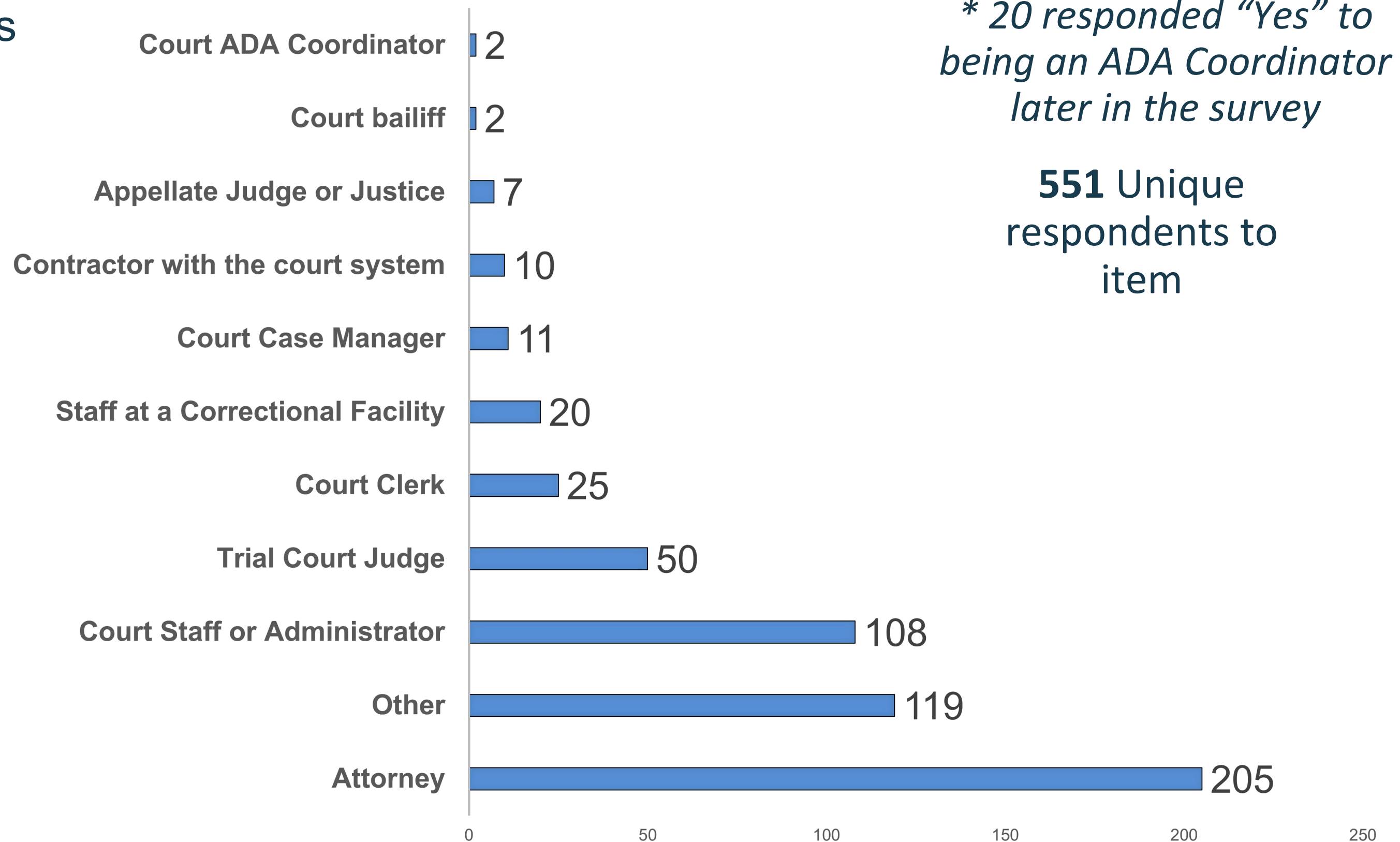


Court Practitioner Survey



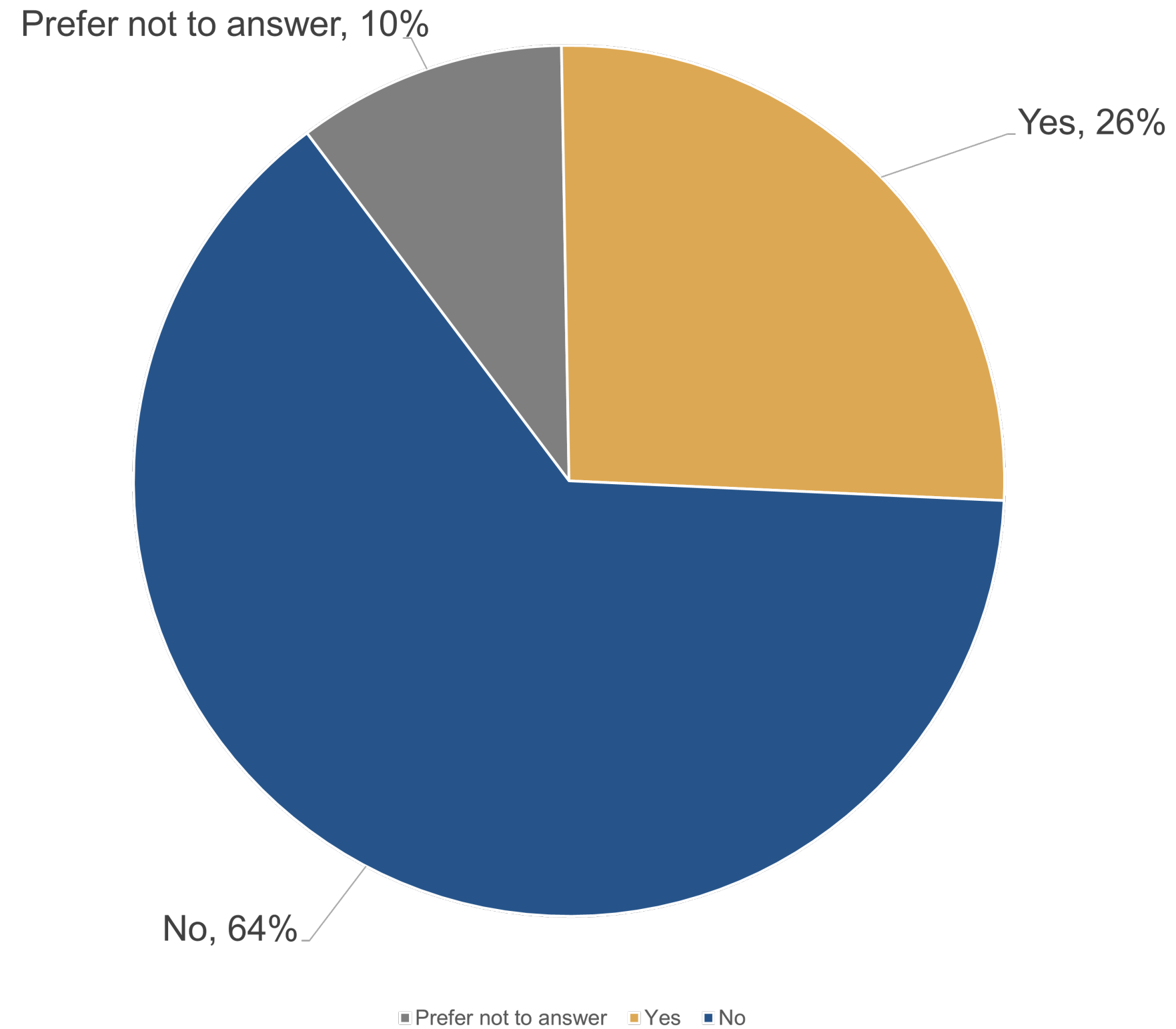
Role within Court System

625 total
survey
responses



Disability Status

Do you identify as a person with one or more disabilities?



Racial Identity

What is your racial/ethnic identity	Count	Percentage
White/Caucasian	276	68.7%
Prefer not to answer	63	15.7%
Latina/e/o	33	8.2%
Multiracial	22	5.5%
African American/Black	12	3.0%
Asian/Asian American	10	2.5%
Other or prefer to self-describe (please specify)	10	2.5%
First Nations/Indigenous	8	2.0%
Indigenous Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.5%
Indigenous Alaskan	0	0.0%
Southwest Asian or North African	0	0.0%
Total Unique	402	

Judges

In cases involving litigants with disabilities, do you ever consider the race of the litigant?

	Count	Percentage
Yes	26	60.5%
No	17	39.5%
Total	43	

Judges Part 2

In cases involving litigants with disabilities,
do you ever consider the immigration status
of the litigant?

	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	36.4%
No	28	63.6%
Total	44	

Judges Part 3

In your opinion, what additional resources would help your court ensure full access to justice for individuals with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More training or resources on the ADA and GR 33	26	60.5%
Funding for additional interpreters (sign language and foreign language)	22	51.2%
More training or resources on assistive communication technology use in courts	21	48.8%
Training on trauma-informed care to better support persons with disabilities	20	46.5%
Funding to hire additional personnel to implement accommodations	18	41.9%

Judges Part 4

In your opinion, what additional resources would help your court ensure full access to justice for individuals with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More training or resources on intersectionality	15	34.9%
More training or resources on accessibility for remote meetings and hearings	11	25.6%
More training or resources related to language accessibility	6	14.0%
Other (please specify)	5	11.6%
I am not sure	2	4.7%
The court does not need additional resources for working with individuals living with disabilities	0	0.0%
Total Unique	43	

Judges Part 5

Are you **familiar** with the requirements of GR 33?

95.1%
selected “Yes”

How confident do you feel in your ability to **apply GR 33 accommodations** in your role?

76.3 %
Very or Moderately Confident

Judges Part 6

Have you encountered unique **challenges** while implementing GR 33 or the ADA **for self - represented litigants (SRLs) with disabilities?**

43.6% selected “Yes”
53.8% selected “No”
2.6% selected “No difference”

Example Challenges:

- Inadequate training / Lack of understanding
- Communication issues with court staff
- Struggles with allowing others (relatives) to speak on behalf of litigant
- Lack of funding/resources for accommodations

Attorneys Part 1

Which of the following best describes your position as an attorney?	Count	Percentage
Public Defender	36	17.9%
Other (please specify)	26	12.9%
Civil Litigation Attorney	25	12.4%
Staff attorney at a legal community-based organization	24	11.9%
Private Criminal Defense Attorney	20	10.0%
Family Law Attorney	20	10.0%
Prosecutor	19	9.5%
Estate Planning Attorney	8	4.0%
Personal Injury Attorney	7	3.5%
Guardianship Attorney	6	3.0%
Civil Rights Attorney	6	3.0%
Employment Attorney	2	1.0%
Immigration Attorney	1	0.5%
Staff attorney at the disability rights organization	1	0.5%
Total	201	

Attorneys Part 2

Which of the following resources from community-based organizations would benefit your clients with disabilities?

	Count	Percentage
Mental health assistance	137	81%
Financial assistance	125	74%
Housing assistance	118	70%
Substance abuse treatment programs	112	66%
Medical assistance	95	56%
Bilingual support services	91	54%
Disability community or social-emotional support services	88	52%
Community support services for people of color	73	43%
Educational support services	72	43%
LGBTQIA+ support services	71	42%
Immigration assistance	66	39%
Other (please specify)	26	15%
Faith or religious support services	25	15%
Total Unique	169	

Attorneys Part 3

What additional resources or training would help you effectively handle cases involving litigants with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More efficient and effective accommodation support	102	60%
More comprehensive training on General Rule 33 and ADA requirements	91	53%
Enhanced support from the court system	90	53%
Training on disability law	70	41%
Opportunities for collaboration with disability advocates	70	41%
Training on disability justice principles	69	40%
Other (please specify)	34	20%
<i>Total Unique</i>	<i>171</i>	

Attorneys Part 4

I believe that the court(s) where I practice offer(s) **equitable treatment** to individuals with disabilities who also face other forms of marginalization.

46%

Agree or Strongly Agree

Are you **familiar** with the requirements of GR 33?

59.8%

selected “Yes”



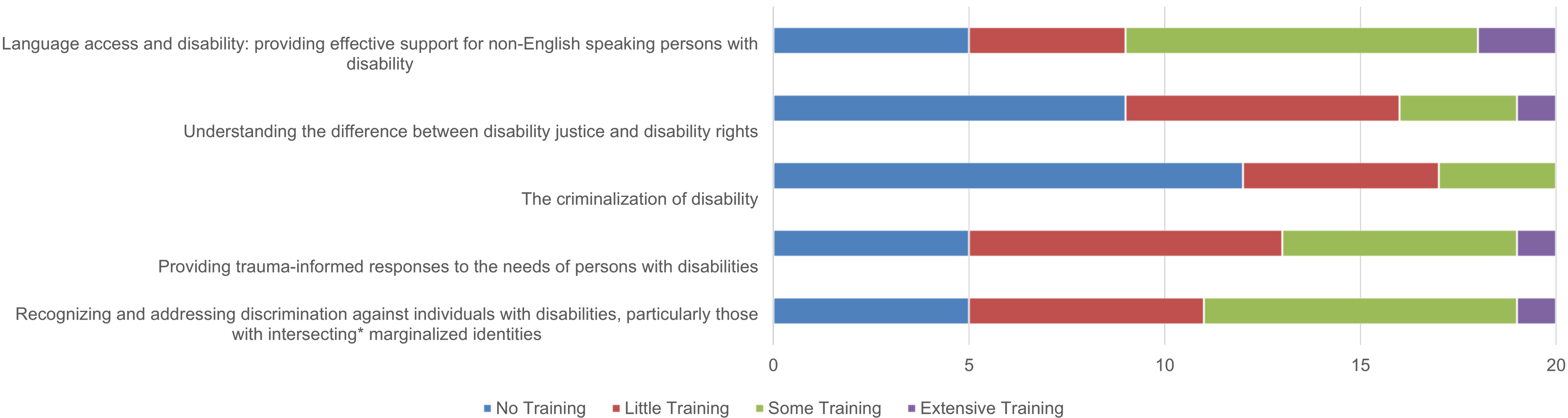
Attorneys Part 5

What challenges have you observed your clients with disabilities face while navigating the court system?	Count	Percentage
Disabilities directly impacting the progression of the case (e.g., mental health issues, intellectual or developmental disabilities, chronic illness, physical disabilities, or multiple co-occurring disabilities)	87	54.0%
Lack of resources in the courts, funding, community resources to provide etc.	79	49.1%
Insufficient time or difficulty keeping pace with procedural requirements (e.g., needing more time to respond or prepare documents)	78	48.4%
Communication barriers (e.g., difficulty verbally describing the dispute or answering questions, lack of assistive technology for alternative communication)	76	47.2%

Attorneys Part 6

What challenges have you observed your clients with disabilities face while navigating the court system?	Count	Percentage
Lack of cultural competency by judges and court staff about clients with disabilities and other intersecting marginalized identities	67	41.6%
Technological constraints (e.g., limited access to TeleTYpewriter (TTY), adaptive equipment/assistive technology, reliable internet)	66	41.0%
Insufficient training for judges, attorneys, or court staff on engaging with individuals with disabilities	64	39.8%
Limited awareness within the court about available accommodations or relevant laws (e.g., GR 33, Washington Law Against Discrimination)	59	36.6%
Lack of physical accessibility for court users with mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, canes, etc.)	47	29.2%
I have not observed any difficulties	27	16.8%
Other (please specify)	12	7.5%
Total Unique	161	

ADA Coordinators Part 1



Topic	No Training	Little Training	Some Training	Extensive Training
Recognizing and addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intersecting* marginalized identities	5	6	8	1
Providing trauma-informed responses to the needs of persons with disabilities	5	8	6	1
The criminalization of disability	12	5	3	0
Understanding the difference between disability justice and disability rights	9	7	3	1
Language access and disability: providing effective support for non-English speaking persons with disability	5	4	9	2

ADA Coordinators part 2

My work is supported by the leadership of the Court where I work.

100%

Agree or Strongly Agree

Have you **received any training** on digital accessibility at any time **since 2020**, or since you began your employment with the court, if hired after 2020?

25% selected “Yes”



ADA Coordinators Part 3

What would make you feel more supported in your work?	Count	Percentage
More funding for assistive technology	18	90.0%
More trainings such as GR33, ADA, forms	15	75.0%
More support from the Administrative Office of the Courts, such as knowing where to find information	9	45.0%
More funding for interpreters (American Sign Language, other Sign Languages, and foreign languages)	7	35.0%
Other (please specify)	6	30.0%
More support from leadership	0	0.0%
Total Unique	20	

Comparison Across Groups Part 1

How accessible do you believe the court where you work is in Physical Access?

	Judges	Attorneys	ADA Coordinators
Not at All Accessible	4 (9.3%)	7 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Partially Accessible	25 (58.1%)	90 (53.6)	10 (52.6%)
Fully Accessible	14 (32.6%)	71 (42.3%)	9 (47.4%)
Total	43	168	19

Comparison Across Groups Part 2

How accessible do you believe the court where you work is in Digital Access?

	Judges	Attorneys	ADA Coordinators
Not at All Accessible	2 (4.7%)	21 (13.3%)	1 (5.6%)
Partially Accessible	28 (65.1%)	105 (66.5%)	17 (94.4%)
Fully Accessible	13 (30.2%)	32 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	43	158	18

Comparison Across Groups Part 3

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the court(s) where you practice?

Very or Moderately Positive

Judges: **71.8%**

Attorneys: **45.1%**



Attorneys With & Without Disabilities

I believe that the court(s) where I practice offer(s) **equitable treatment** to individuals with disabilities who also face other forms of marginalization.

Agree or Strongly Agree

Overall: 46%

W/ Disabilities: 31.7%

W/O Disabilities: 57.1%

How would you describe the **general attitude** towards people with disabilities in the court(s) where you practice?

Very or Moderately Positive

Overall: 45.1%

W/ Disabilities: 28.8%

W/O Disabilities: 53.6%



Court User Survey



Removed

- ✓ Duplicates
- ✓ Bots/Non-humans
- ✓ Incomplete responses
(retained 50% and above
completion; 155
respondents completed
100% of the survey)



Respondents

I am a person with a disability who has participated in proceedings in the Washington court system.

44

I am a relative or caregiver of a person with a disability who has participated in proceedings in the Washington court system.

27

I am a staff member at a non-legal community-based organization that provides support services to persons with disabilities.

33

None of the above

70



Based on your most recent experience requesting help or accessibility tools in court, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

It was easy for me to request the assistance or accessibility tools I needed in court.

25% Agree or Strongly Agree

The assistance or accessibility tools I requested were provided in a timely and efficient manner.

37.5% Agree or Strongly Agree

I received the exact accommodation I requested.

43.8% Agree or Strongly Agree



During your interactions with the court (whether in person, by video, or by phone), did you experience any unfair treatment, judgment, or bias due to your disability from court staff, judges, or others involved in your case?

37.8% “Yes”

*"I had handwritten notes to describe my case, along with photographs of pictures, and the **judge mentioned, how sloppy and difficult they were to read, but there's nothing I can do because that is part of my disability is having bad handwriting.** I do believe I lost the case because of this which sucks."*

Disability Dismissed

*"The county **clerk staff sternly discouraged me** from applying for a change in my child's last name. [...] This same staff member was obviously surprised to see me in the courtroom for the name change hearing with the judge and see that I succeeded."*

Staff Discouragement

*"Judicial officer rescheduled hearing due to their inability to provide accommodation. **Refused to reschedule again when they AGAIN could not obtain an interpreter.** Told me to 'find someone' in my home to assist me during Zoom hearing. Clearly irate and yelled throughout hearing."*

Denied Accommodations

People with Disabilities Part 2

People with Disabilities Part 3

Did you know that if you participated in a civil (non-criminal) case, you might be eligible to have a lawyer appointed to you due to your disability?

77.8%
“I did not Know”



During your case in the Washington court system, did court staff take your individual needs into account and involve you in the decision-making process?

64.9%
“No”

While interacting with the court, did you feel that your needs as a person with disabilities were acknowledged and respected?

27% - “Yes, I felt heard and valued”
43.2% - “I did not disclose my disability”
29.7% - “No, I did not feel heard and valued”



People with Disabilities Part 4

During your most recent case(s), did a lawyer represent you?	Number.	%
Yes, I had one case, and a lawyer represented me	8	21.6%
Yes, I had multiple cases, and a lawyer represented me in each case	1	2.7%
Sometimes, I had multiple cases but was not represented by a lawyer in all of them	5	13.5%
Sometimes, a lawyer represented me for part of the case but not the entire case	4	10.8%
No, I have never been represented by a lawyer	19	51.4%
Total	37	

People with Disabilities Part 5

Did staff at the court you visited give you referrals to or information about resources or social service organizations outside of the court that helped you with your case(s)?

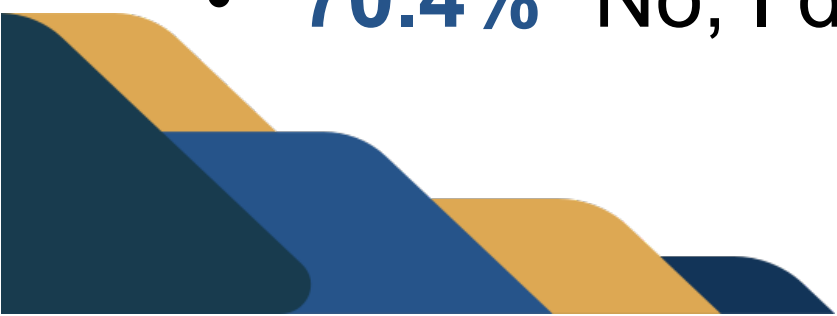
- **75.7%** “No”

Have you ever had a negative experience with a judge or court staff because of your disability?

- **32.4%** “Yes”

If you had to represent yourself in your case (without a lawyer), did anyone at the court provide you with resources or support to help you through that process?

- **70.4%** “No, I did not receive any resources or support”



People with Disabilities Part 6

I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **16.2%** Agree or Strongly Agree

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you visited?

- - **22.2%** Moderately or Very Positive

Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Washington court system?

- - **27%** Moderately or Very Positive



Caregivers

Did you or your relative/person in your care know that if your relative/person in your care participated in a civil (non-criminal) case, they might be eligible to have a lawyer appointed to them due to your disability?

- **65.4%** “No we did not know”

While interacting with the court, did your relative/person in your care feel that their needs as a person with disabilities were acknowledged and respected?

- **30.8%** “No, they did not feel heard and valued”



I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **30%** Agree or Strongly Agree

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you and/or your relative or person in your care visited?

- **38.1%** Moderately or Very Positive

Non-Legal Community Orgs

I believe that courtrooms and other facilities (e.g., waiting areas, court offices) in Washington are physically accessible to people with disabilities.

30.4% Agree or Strongly Agree



Do you believe the Washington court system adequately addresses the intersectionality of disability with other identities (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status)?

14.3% “Yes”

Do you believe judges and court staff have made it easy for you to support your clients with disabilities?

60% “No”

How knowledgeable do you believe judges and court staff are about the needs of litigants with disabilities?

- **42.9%** Very or Moderately Knowledgeable

How effective do you believe the court system is in addressing the needs of litigants with mental health challenges?

- **23.8%** Very or Moderately Effective

Based on my experience, court personnel (e.g., judges, attorneys, bailiffs) have the necessary tools and training to handle emotional outbursts from litigants with disabilities in a supportive, respectful manner that minimizes harm.

- **14.3%** Agree or Strongly Agree



Staff from Non-Legal Community Orgs Part 3

I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **26.3%** Agree or Strongly Agree



How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you visited?

- **15.8%** Very or Moderately Positive





Focus Groups



Themes from Five Focus Groups

Theme	Frequency
Need for accommodations	44
Paperwork burden	36
Staff training needs	30
Financial challenges	26
Need for legal support	24
Technology access issues	21
Attitudinal barriers	21
Inclusivity practices	13
Physical accessibility barriers	12
Racial/ethnic discrimination	8
Incarceration conditions	8
Other	53

Top 4 Themes from Focus Groups

1. **Need for Accommodations (44 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Physical, procedural, and cultural adjustments (e.g., service animals, hearing loops, flexible scheduling)
- 2) *Why it matters:* Without these, participants felt excluded from or rushed through proceedings.

2. **Paperwork Burden (36 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Redundant, multi-agency forms (VA, tribal, state) submitted at every step
- 2) *Why it matters:* Consumes hours, exacerbates confusion, and heightens stress before hearings.

3. **Staff Training Needs (30 mentions)**

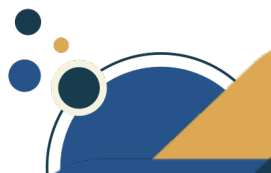
- 1) *What:* Knowledge gaps around sign-language interpreters, trauma-informed communication, tribal-sovereignty protocols
- 2) *Why it matters:* Inconsistent support erodes trust in court processes and prolongs case timelines.

4. **Financial Challenges (26 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Filing fees, attorney retainers, travel costs to distant courthouses
- 2) *Why it matters:* Some postponed or abandoned hearings when unable to cover expenses.



Thank You! Questions?



Physical Assessment

KMG Consulting Firm



SECOND PRESENTER



Mary Rojas
She/Her

“... accessibility, when done improperly, is more damaging to the morale of persons with disabilities than plainly exclusionary spaces.”

- 2025 DJTF Research Study



Components of the Assessment

The physical assessment includes **three main components**:

1. An assessment of the structure;
2. An assessment of the processes and procedures; and
3. An assessment of the programs.



Methodology

Two-hour site visit

- One-hour observational assessment of the physical space (Utilizing the ADA Standards for Accessible Design)
- One-hour interview with court administrator, clerk, or ADA coordinator



Categories 1: Courthouse Building

- Parking
- Access to public transportation
- Restrooms
- Signage
- Building access - ramps, lifts, measurements of entryways, doors, and hallways
- Emergency evacuation routes and systems



Categories 2: Courtrooms

- Accessibility features of jury boxes, witness stands, judge's bench, waiting areas, tables, gallery benches, etc.
- Lighting
- Jury deliberation rooms
- Proximity of the nearest low-sensory area
- Positioning of the court bailiff or the law enforcement within the courthouse or courtroom



Categories 3: Communication & Full Participation

- Availability of auxiliary aids and services
- Availability of CART, qualified ASL interpretation, assistive devices and technology
- Foreign language interpretation
- Courtroom remote access set up for virtual appearance
- Document accessibility
- Accommodation request processes



Categories 4: Other Key Accessibility Features & Support Processes

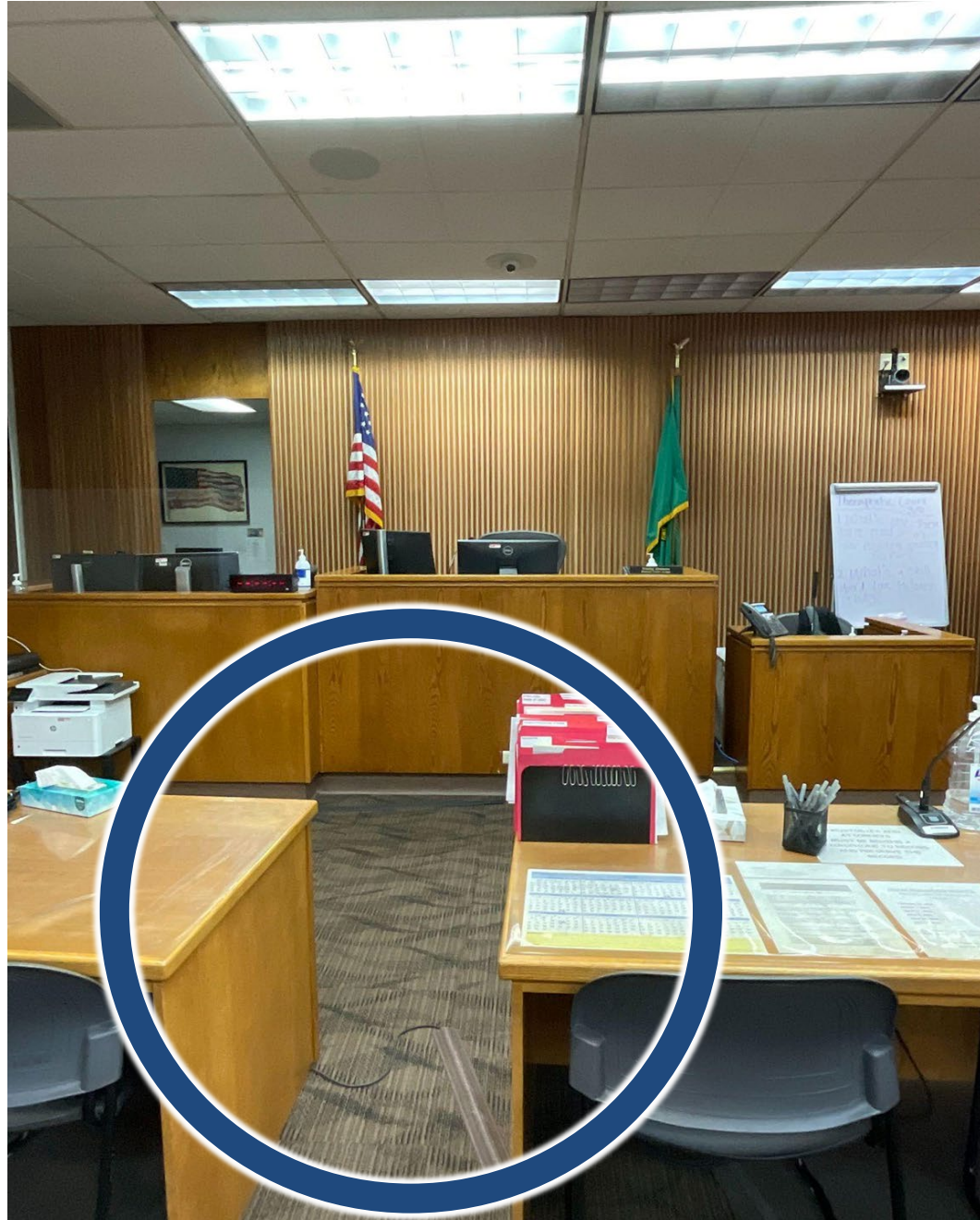
- Failure to accommodate complaint processes
- Self-help desk
- Availability of information about GR 33 and appointment of counsel in civil cases
- Availability of information about social services and resources
- Lactation room
- Service animal relief area



Why was the physical accessibility assessment necessary?



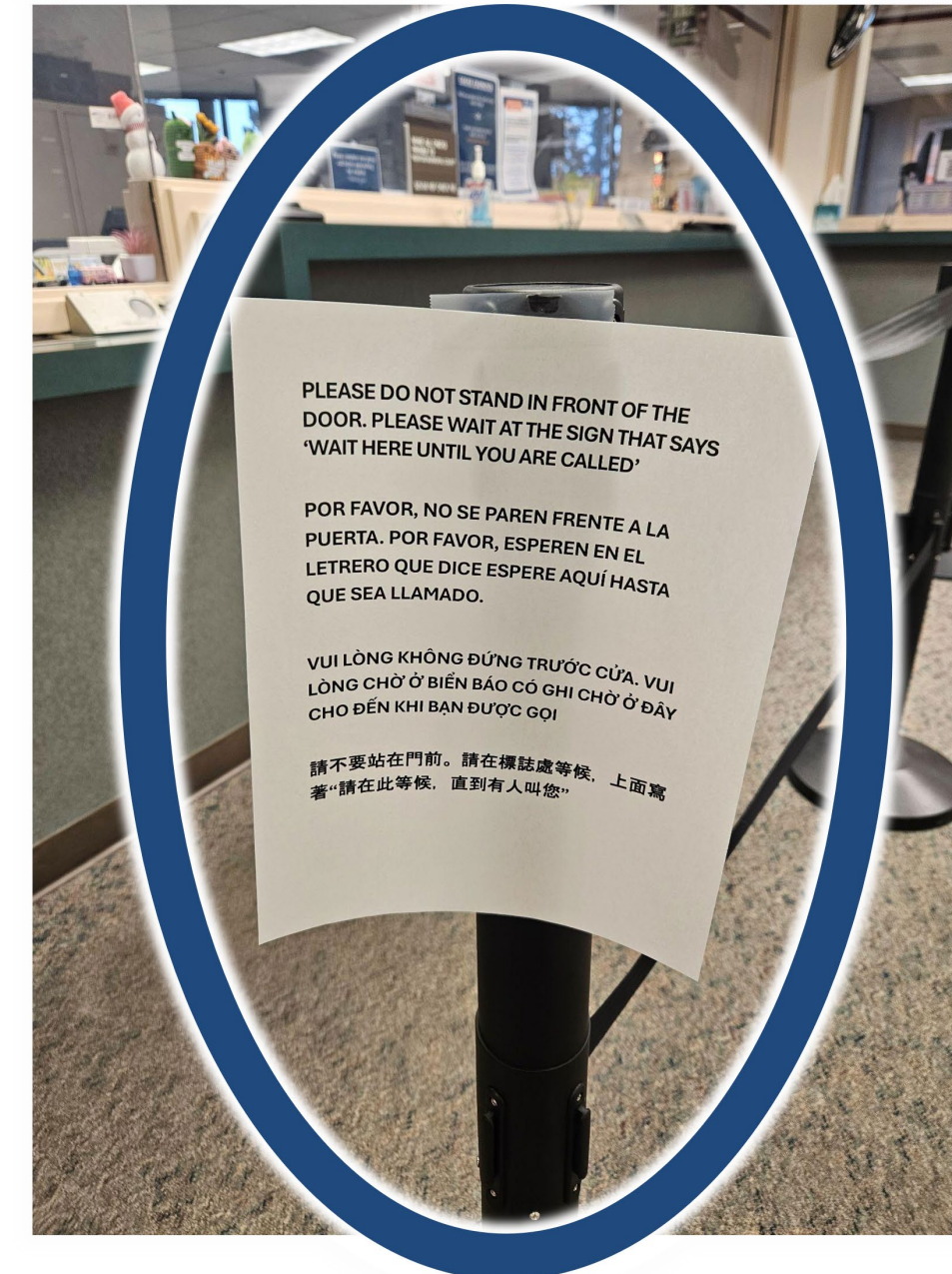
Human-Made Barriers



Human-Made Barriers Part 2



Human-Made Barriers Part 3



Why are Human-Made Barriers a problem?

Human-made barriers are crucial to address because, despite their apparent simplicity, removing them often demands the involvement of another person, frequently a non-disabled individual.

Reliance on others to clear a path is undignifying for people with disabilities who simply want to navigate spaces on their own.



Emergency Exits



Emergency Exits Continued

- Only one building with multiple floors had appropriate signs by the elevators and throughout the building indicating the location of the accessible exit.
- One courthouse had a wheelchair lift, but there was no information on whether it was safe to use in a fire emergency or had standby power. However, their existing evacuation route led to an accessible exterior route.
- Three courthouses with multiple floors did not have proper signage indicating an accessible route at the elevators nor the non-accessible means of egress.



LACK OF SIGNAGE:

A courthouse with an inaccessible main entrance and no signage indicating where the accessible entrance was located (it was in the back of the building).

Inaccessible
entrance



Accessible
entrance



CONFUSING SIGNAGE:



CONFUSING SIGNAGE CON'T:



Findings:

The findings in those four categories were divided by percentage.

- ❑ 0% = none of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 16.66% = one of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 33.33% = two of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 50% = three of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 66.66% = four of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 83.33 % = five of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 100% = all six of the courthouses.



0% of Courthouses:

- 0% of the courts collected information on whether litigants had disabilities.
- 0% of the staff members interviewed who were charged with responding to ADA and GR 33 requests had received disability training since 2020.
- 0% of the staff interviewed who were charged with responding to ADA and GR 33 requests reported having received mandatory disability training.



0% of Courthouses Part 2:

- 0% of the court staff interviewed reported that they were required to receive digital accessibility training post-COVID.
- 0% of the court administrators and staff interviewed could articulate the mandates of GR 33.
- 0% of the court administrators and staff reported that their security personnel or entrance staff had received training on interacting with court users with disabilities.



16.66% of Courthouses Part 3:

- 16.66% of the courtrooms visited had a wheelchair accessible jury box.
- 16.66% of the courthouses had elevators that audibly announced each floor. It is important to note that not all the elevators in that courthouse had that feature.



16.66% of Courthouses Part 4:

- 16.66% of the courthouses visited had a wheelchair-accessible lactation area.
- 16.66% of the courthouses visited had an active prohibition against using service animals. It is important to note that this ban was not imposed by the court itself but by the county where the court is located.



16.66% of Courthouses Part 5:

- 16.66% of the court administrators and staff we interviewed knew of the existence of an ADA access person within the Administrative Offices of the Courts who could assist them with questions related to accommodations and accessibility.
- 16.66% of the courts visited offered free printing and copying services to litigants. Two other courts allowed printing, but court users had to pay.



16.66% of Courthouses Part 6:

- 16.66% of courts visited had requests for accommodations in a language other than English.
- 16.66% of the courts visited responded to court users with disabilities in writing about the outcomes of their requests for accommodations. It was also the only courthouse with a formal written complaint process if court users were dissatisfied with the outcome of their requests.



33.33% of Courthouses Part 7:

- 33.33% of the courts visited had a process to address meltdowns and interruptions without law enforcement intervention.
- 33.33% had recently tested and updated their assistive listening devices.
- 33.33% of the courts had a visible ADA notice.



33.33% of Courthouses Part 8:

- 33.33% of the courthouses visited had specific information for those needing substance use and housing support.
- 33.33% had at least one court facilitator to help unrepresented litigants navigate the court process.



50% of Courthouses Part 9:

- 50% of the courts visited had a law library that litigants with disabilities could use.
- 50% of the courts kept data on the number of requests received and the number of accommodations provided. Two of those three courts started that process in January 2025.



50% of Courthouses Part 10:

- 50% of the courthouses visited had lactation rooms open to the public, **but only one was wheelchair accessible.**
- 50% of the courts had a secured box where court users could drop off their payments to the court after hours and online. Of the three remaining courts, one allowed for online payments only.



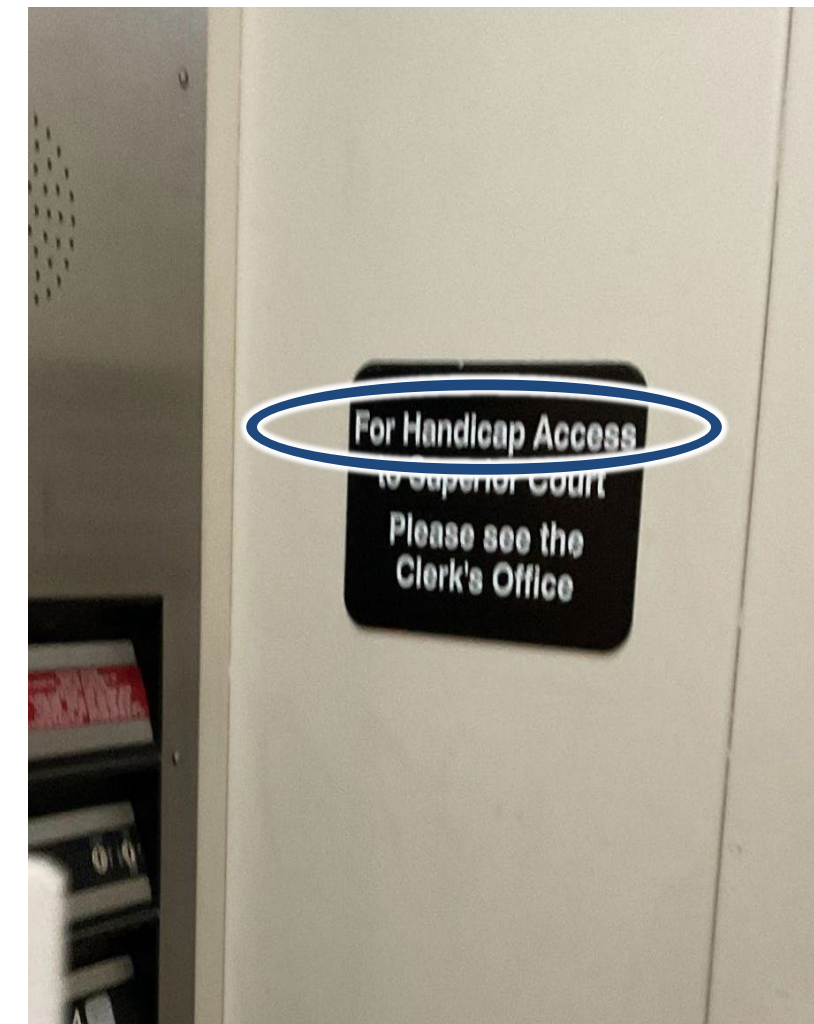
50% of Courthouses Part 11:

- 50% of the courts had a process for persons who were non-speaking to request accommodations independently.
- 50% of the courts had a court clerk who knew what to do if someone requested an accommodation.
- 50% of them had a lactation room (only one of them was wheelchair-accessible).



66.66% of Courthouses Part 12:

- 66.66% of courts had outdated language referring to people with disabilities.
- 66.66% of the courts had no restrictions on any type of animal (service, emotional support or otherwise).



66.66% of Courthouses Part 13:

66.66% of courts had computers that were available to the public (but only 50% of them had computers that wheelchair users would be able to use).



41 inches

83.33% of Courthouses Part 14:

- 83.33% of the courts visited said that making the appointment of counsel compulsory even for one person would significantly impact their court's budget.
- In 83.33% of the courts visited, court clerks were observed having courteous and positive interactions with court users and offering to help.



83.33% of Courthouses Part 15:

- 83.33% had an elevator that met the measurement requirements under the ADA.
 - But only 66.66% of courthouses had elevators that were available 100% of the time.
 - In the courthouse where the elevator was not available 100% of the time, the sheriff's office was using it as a holding cell for part of the week.
 - The one courthouse without elevators had a wheelchair lift.



100% of Courthouses Part 16:

- 100% of the court administrators and staff interviewed expressed strong interest in training on disability.
- 100% of court staff reported that they have thought about accessibility more because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 66.66% said the pandemic led to no significant change in how court users with disabilities are accommodated.



100% of Courthouses Part 17:

- 100% reported being able to provide foreign language and ASL interpretation (the wait time for interpreters varied from same day to up to 3 weeks).
- 100% of courts had a sign indicating the presence of assistive listening devices.
- 100% of courts had ADA-compliant accessible parking for vans and cars.



General Rule 33

- None of the staff were aware of all the requirements of GR 33. They found it confusing and difficult to comply with all requirements.
- There was an inverse correlation between confidence and compliance with GR 33.
- Only one court had a designated staff person who handled requests for accommodations under GR 33.



Issues with Funding

- Many courts do not have sufficient funding to provide appointment of counsel as an accommodation.
- All of the courts reported that they had identified architectural issues and gaps in their programming for people with disabilities but were unable to access funding from their leadership to address them.
- One court reported that their reimbursement from Administrative Office of the Courts for interpretation was being put into the general county budget instead of the court budget.





Thank You! Questions?





Understanding the Experience of Native Court Users with Disabilities



THIRD PRESENTER



WaziHanska Cook, MS, M.Ed.

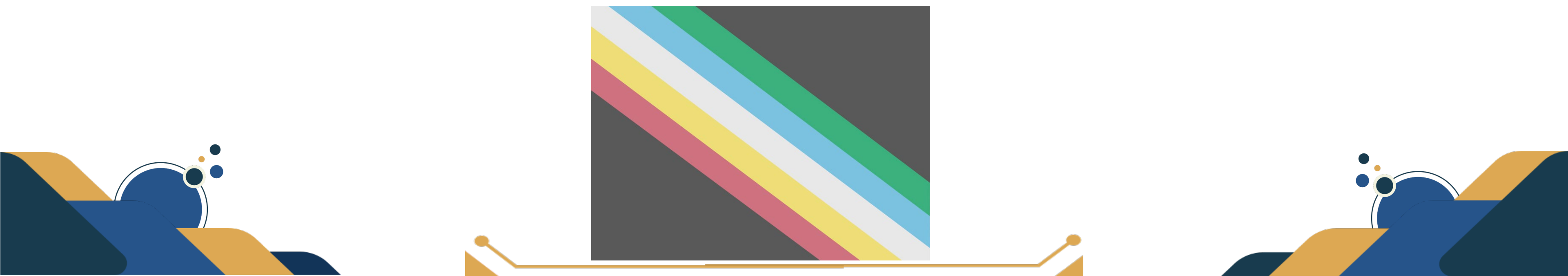
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Historical Context

An overview of the relationship between Native court users and the court system

- Public Law 280
- Jurisdictional challenges
- Criminalization and over policing



Native Court Users Focus Group

- Racial/Ethnic Discrimination
- Harsh sentencing
- Lack of respect for religious practices
- Racism by court-appointed attorneys



Recommendations Specific to the Needs of Native Washingtonians

A study is necessary to examine the experiences of American Indians residing in Washington and members of Indigenous Nations in Washington within the legal system in federal, state, and tribal courts.





Recommendations For the DJTF



PRESENTER



Alexandra Audate, Esq., LLM

She/Her

Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses.

The Washington State Supreme Court should consider developing a recurrent implicit bias trainings for judges and judicial officers on the topics of accessibility, accommodations, and intersectionality; specifically on the criminalization of people with disabilities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, and people of color.



Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses Continued

All courts should implement a clear, consistent accommodations request process for all users with disabilities. Standardizing the process across courts will ensure dignity, clarity, and equal access for people with disabilities, regardless of jurisdiction.



Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses part 2.

- **The Washington State Supreme Court should lead an assessment of how the Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”) can best serve as a resource hub for disability access across the state’s courts.**
- **Strengthen AOC’s role as a voluntary resource hub for disability access.**



Recommendations Based On The Literature And Data Reviews.

- **We recommend additional research studies informed by the principles of disability justice on the following topics:**
- **Conduct a comprehensive research study on the experiences of youth with disabilities who have had contact with the Washington legal system, and the risk factors that lead to their disproportionate contact with this system.**



Recommendations Based On The Literature And Data Reviews Continued

Conduct a comprehensive research study on the experiences of currently and formerly incarcerated Washingtonians with disabilities.



Recommendations Based On The Physical Assessment

- **Implement implicit bias training and accessibility training for court staff in all Washington state courthouses.**
- **Create a physical accessibility improvement plan based on findings within the physical accessibility audit.**
- **Develop inclusive emergency and safety protocols for people with disabilities.**



Recommendations Based On The Physical Assessment Continued

- **Invest in decarceration programming for people with disabilities.**
- **Establish low-sensory protocols for all courthouses and courtrooms.**
- **Revise General Rule 33 to ensure individualized access and provide funding and training for effective implementation.**



Recommendations Based On The Website Accessibility Audit

Conduct a website accessibility audit for each court website in the state and develop accessibility standards for all court websites.



Recommendations For Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- **Establish an Independent Disability Access Ombudsperson or Monitor Recommendations.**
- **Track and Publish Court Accommodation Data.**
- **Fund and Pilot an Accessibility Navigator Program and separate the ADA Coordinator and Navigator Functions.**



Recommendations For Continuous Improvement and Accountability Continued

- **Integrate disability access into judicial and court staff performance metrics.**
- **Standardize disability accommodation notices across all court communications.**
- **Implement voluntary disability access screenings prior to service referrals.**



Recommendations For The Legislature And Executive Branch

- **Require disability accommodation notices for all court-ordered programs.**
- **Strengthen privacy protections for disability disclosures and accommodation records in state law.**
- **Establish that disability-related barriers must be considered by courts in findings of noncompliance with programs.**
- **Implement functional access screenings within Department of Corrections and community supervision programs.**

Recommendation for a Commission

- **The Washington State Supreme Court should establish a permanent Commission on Disability Justice to guide the long-term implementation of these recommendations and promote systemic equity for court users and professionals with disabilities.**
- **The Commission should include individuals with disabilities, court employees, judicial officers, subject matter experts across sectors, and community experts.**





Thank You! Questions?

