

## **Nevada Department of Indigent Defense Services**

### **DIDS Client Satisfaction Survey Cover Letter**

The Nevada Department of Indigent Defense Services (DIDS) provides Nevada counties with assistance in delivering constitutionally protected defense services to indigent defendants. To ensure that public defenders are providing optimal representation to clients across Nevada, it is beneficial to gauge the satisfaction of clients who are provided with indigent defense services. Consequently, DIDS has partnered with Soval Solutions to develop the DIDS Client Satisfaction Survey.

As with any client-facing organization, accurately measuring client satisfaction will help agencies identify potential areas of improvement in delivering services to clients. To accurately measure client satisfaction through a survey or questionnaire, it is important to carefully consider how questions are worded, and whether questions in fact target client attitudes about concepts of interest. Once the survey is properly developed, the next important consideration is the administration of the survey. Finally, an analytic strategy is needed to properly analyze the data collected from the surveys.

#### **Survey Development**

There are multiple strategies an agency might pursue in developing a satisfaction survey of this nature. First, developing a survey in-house using facially valid questions is a cost-effective way to potentially measure client satisfaction. However, the limitation of this approach lies in the fact that survey development requires expertise to ensure that one is accurately measuring concepts and constructs of interest. Most public defender offices or equivalent offices lack this in-house expertise.

An alternative to developing a novel survey instrument is utilizing an already-existing survey that has been previously utilized by outside agencies. Doing so may provide greater confidence that the survey tool has been vetted and that it measures concepts of interest. An agency such as DIDS might choose to simply apply a survey developed by an analogous agency in another jurisdiction, or it might choose to adapt the survey for its own use. While this approach may increase confidence that survey questions more accurately measure constructs of interest, it does not guarantee that the survey tool in use by another jurisdiction has been properly validated against objective criteria, or that it has been thoroughly reviewed by experts in the field.

Using a survey instrument that has been peer-reviewed and validated offers the greatest chance that the survey will accurately measure the constructs of interest, and that responses to the survey will correlate with objective criteria. With this consideration in mind, we recommend relying upon a set of client satisfaction questions that has appeared in a peer-reviewed academic journal. In particular, we recommend including 10 questions from the article by Campbell, Moore, Maier, and Gaffney (2015).<sup>1</sup>

The questions put forth by Campbell et al. (2015) cover the conceptual areas of: satisfaction with attorney (one question); clients feel listened to (participation/voice; three questions); attorneys are investigating clients' cases (two questions); time is used efficiently (two questions); and attorneys

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, C., Moore, J., Maier, W., & Gaffney, M. (2015). Unnoticed, untapped, and underappreciated: Clients' perceptions of their public defenders. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 33, 751-770.

explain all possible outcomes to clients (two questions). An analysis of the data show that each of the nine non-satisfaction questions is correlated with satisfaction with the defendants' attorneys. This provides confidence that the questions are associated with defendants' satisfaction with their court appointed attorneys.

An added benefit of this set of questions is that it is relatively short. There are several other peer-reviewed (and non-peer reviewed) instruments that assess client satisfaction with attorneys. However, many of these instruments contain upwards of 25 or 30 questions. Surveys of such length risk leading to "survey fatigue" whereby survey respondents do not complete the entire survey, "satisfice" responses by selecting the same response to every question, or even fail to begin the survey when they see its length. The ten questions found in Campbell et al. (2015), therefore provide a relatively brief assessment of client survey with a low risk of response fatigue. A complete draft of the survey is included on pages 4 and 5 of this document.

### **Survey Administration**

The Nevada DIDS Satisfaction Survey will be distributed in two ways. First, postage-paid paper copies will be made available to clients via public defenders' offices and contract attorneys. The satisfaction survey will be provided to clients to complete once their case has been disposed and are no longer in need of assistance from their attorney. For clients who are serving jail terms, a copy of the survey will be delivered to them in the jail. Clients can complete the survey and simply drop it in the mail. Second, an electronic version of the survey will be made available to clients. The electronic survey will be developed by Legal Server, the same company that has developed the case management software to be used by DIDS and select county offices. Once a client's case has been disposed, he or she can receive an invitation via text message or email to complete the survey online. The survey results will be stored on Legal Server databases and will be linked to the client records related to that case. DIDS may want to consider translating the survey into Spanish to make it more accessible to the broader population of clients.

### **Analytic Strategy**

To utilize the results of the Satisfaction Survey to inform decision-making at the organizational level, it is important to take the proper steps to score and analyze the survey. Doing so will allow DIDS to identify specific areas in which clients communicate dissatisfaction with services, and will allow DIDS to take corrective action at the individual or organizational level. Below is some guidance on how to score and analyze the DIDS Satisfaction Survey.

*Scoring.* To quantitatively analyze the data from the DIDS Satisfaction Survey it is necessary to first convert categorical responses to numeric values. For example, on Question 3 of the survey: "Were you in custody when you first met with your attorney?", it is appropriate to score a "Yes" response a "1", and score a "No" response a "0". The same approach should be taken for other "Yes/No" questions, as well as Questions 4, 17, and 18.

For Questions 6 through 15, responses should be re-scored on a 1-5 scale. That is, a response of "Strongly Disagree" should be scored a "1", and a response of "Strongly Agree" should be scored a "5". Similarly, Question 16 should be scored such that a response of "Very Unfair" should be scored a "1", and a response of "Very Fair" should be scored a "5". Questions 6 through 16 are worded in such a way,

that higher response values on these questions represent higher levels of agreement that attorneys are effectively representing clients.

*Descriptive Statistics.* Questions 6 to 16 represent the key evaluative questions of the survey. These questions will allow DIDS to evaluate the extent to which clients agree that they are being effectively represented by their public defender, are satisfied with their public defender, and view the outcome of their case as fair. By converting responses to these questions to numeric values as described above, it is possible to conduct a quantitative analysis of these questions. In particular, mean scores (and standard deviations) can be computed on each of these questions. This will allow DIDS to see those questions on which clients score attorneys relatively high or low, and allow for comparisons across questions.

*Comparison of Mean Scores.* The quantification of responses allows for a wide range of comparisons to be made. For example, after a sufficient number of Satisfaction Surveys have been collected, DIDS can compare responses to Question 6 across age categories, across attorneys, or even across offices/counties. A t-test or analysis of variance (ANOVA) can be utilized to make these comparisons. These statistical tests provide mean scores for various groups (e.g., compare mean scores on Question 6 across those under 30 versus those over 30), as well as a statistical test to determine whether such differences are statistically significant. Such a test can provide DIDS with an understanding of whether different groups of clients view their interactions with public defenders differently. Once again, corrective actions can be taken if differences are found.

*Correlation Analysis.* The final analytic strategy recommended here is a correlation analysis. Correlation is a statistical technique used to describe the relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient will range between a score of -1 (a perfect negative relationship) and 1 (a perfect positive relationship). A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no relationship between two variables.

To provide an example, it is likely that there will be a high level of correlation between one's agreement that "My attorney asked for my opinion on issues regarding my case", and "My attorney listened carefully to what I said". Upon collecting a sufficient number of surveys, and after converting variables to numeric scores, a Pearson Correlation can be computed to assess the positive relationship between these two variables. Often, public opinion researchers will conduct large correlational analysis of many relevant variables included in a dataset. This approach can yield a large correlation matrix that allows researchers to see patterns in the relationships between many variables at one time. It is important to keep in mind the Pearson Correlation is appropriate with scaled variables such as Questions 6 through 16 on the Satisfaction Survey. If scaled questions are correlated with categorical variables (e.g., Yes/No questions or binary variables related to race/ethnicity/gender), Point Biserial Correlations are more appropriate. In many statistical packages, Person Correlations and Point Biserial Correlations are executed in the same way. The interpretation of the output will differ slightly, however.

## Nevada Department of Indigent Defense Services Satisfaction Survey

The Nevada Department of Indigent Defense Services wants to learn more about your experiences with your appointed public defender. The responses you give to the survey will be confidential and will not be shared with your attorney or anyone else. The results will help us improve representation for indigent defendants in Nevada. Please fill in the blank or circle your response.

1. What was the name of your appointed attorney? (paper version only)  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. After your arrest, how many days was it until you saw your attorney?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Days

3. Were you in custody when you first met with your attorney?  
Yes
No

4. How was your case resolved?  
Plea
Trial
Case was Dismissed
Other  
 Describe Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you currently incarcerated?  
Yes
No

We would now like to ask you some questions about your satisfaction with your attorney. Please circle whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

6. My attorney wanted to know all of the details of my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

7. My attorney asked for my opinion on issues regarding my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

8. My attorney listened carefully to what I said.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

9. My attorney investigated my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

10. My attorney looked into the prosecutor's evidence.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

11. Every time my attorney met with me, we focused on my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

12. My attorney always used our meeting time efficiently.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

13. My attorney told me about everything that could happen with my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

14. My attorney explained what the consequences were for each possible outcome of my case.  
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

15. Overall, I am satisfied with the way my attorney handled my case.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

16. How fair or unfair was the outcome of your case?

Very Fair      Fair      Neutral      Unfair      Very Unfair

Finally, we would like to know some information about you.

17. I would identify my gender as: (paper version only)

Female      Male      Other

18. I would describe my race as: (paper version only)

African American/Black      Asian or Pacific Islander      American Indian or Native American      Caucasian/White      Other (please specify below)

19. Are you of Hispanic/Latino origin? (paper version only)

Yes      No

20. What is your age? (paper version only)

\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that The Department of Indigent Defense has established a separate form for submitting recommendations or complaints to the Board of Indigent Defense. The Complaints or Recommendations may be submitted anonymously here:

[https://hal.nv.gov/form/DIDs/Complaint\\_or\\_Recommendation\\_Form](https://hal.nv.gov/form/DIDs/Complaint_or_Recommendation_Form)

When completed, please fold along the black line, allowing the mailing address to show. Tape or staple the top edge of the postcard and place in the mail.

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No Postage Needed if  
Mailed Within US

