# WYOMING CIVIL LEGAL

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The conduct of a comprehensive needs assessment requires cooperation and effort from multiple organizations and individuals in order to provide the data necessary to get an accurate picture of need. It was refreshing to work with such a large group of individuals who believed this effort was important enough to give so generously with their time.

The Datacorp needs assessment team would like to express its sincere appreciation to Legal Aid of Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming, and the Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation. The civil legal needs assessment would not have been possible without their support and thoughtful input. Raymond Macchia, Angie Dorsch, Walter Eggers and the Equal Justice Wyoming AmeriCorps VISTA member, Kevin Murphy met monthly for a year to assist in planning the needs assessment. They provided invaluable guidance and feedback as each phase of the needs assessment was planned and unfolded, and they made themselves amiable whenever the needs assessment team had questions or when any aspect of the project need facilitation.

We also wish to express our gratitude to the many individuals and organizations that provided data for the needs assessment. Several legal professionals and other professionals that work with the client population took time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed or participate in focus groups to help us better understand the clients' needs and the challenges they face providing services to them. We are also grateful to the Legal Aid of Wyoming clients that agreed to be interviewed to help us better understand their civil legal needs and the difficulties they experience getting their civil legal needs met.

To all of the organizations that assisted with the client survey by distributing and returning questionnaires to us, we thank you. Similarly, we wish to thank the legal and other professionals who thoughtfully completed the professionals' survey. Both surveys constituted a key component of the needs assessment and have enhanced the value of the findings substantially.

It is our sincere hope that the civil legal field will find the needs assessment useful as it makes its plans to allocate resources and serve its client population in the upcoming months and years.

## INTRODUCTION

Legal Aid of Wyoming (LAW). Equal Justice Wyoming (EJW), and the Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation (EJWF) commissioned this comprehensive civil legal needs assessment to determine the civil legal needs of Wyoming's economically disadvantaged residents.  EJW also provided extremely valuable staffing and other assistance to this assessment.  Legal Aid of Wyoming is a federally funded, non-profit law firm funded largely by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a non-profit established by the United States Congress in 1974.  The LSC administers the financial support used to provide civil legal aid to low-income Americans through competitive grant mechanisms, and it conducts compliance reviews to oversee program quality and compliance with federal requirements. One of the federal requirements that LSC oversees is that its grantees regularly conduct needs assessments for planning purposes.  LSC also encourages grantees to partner and collaborate with other funders of legal aid.

The Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation (EJWF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3).  EJWF's mission is to strengthen and defend access to justice and civil legal services in Wyoming through fundraising and other supportive activities.  EJWF also administers Wyoming's Interest On Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program and distributes the IOLTA funds for the purposes of (1) providing civil legal services to low-income individuals in Wyoming, who would otherwise be unable to obtain legal assistance; (2) providing public education projects which promote a knowledge and awareness of the law; and (3) providing projects which improve the administration of justice.

Equal Justice Wyoming, formerly known as the Wyoming Center for Legal Aid, was established by the Wyoming Supreme Court in 2011 and is authorized by the Wyoming Civil Legal Services Act.  EJW manages a statewide program to improve access to justice and civil legal services to Wyoming's low-income citizens.  It is Wyoming's first state-sponsored civil legal aid program and is funded by special revenue generated by court-filing fees and assessments.  EJW's mission to provide a statewide delivery system for civil legal aid is largely carried out through its grant program to nonprofit civil legal services organizations.  EJW is the largest single funder of civil legal aid in Wyoming.  EJW partnered with LAW and EJWF on this needs assessment to help facilitate statewide civil legal service planning for economically disadvantaged Wyomingites.

The primary purpose of this needs assessment was to estimate the number of individuals that qualify for Wyoming civil legal aid providers' services, their civil legal needs, and identify service gaps among economically disadvantaged individuals across Wyoming's 23 counties.

## METHODS

It is well-known in the legal community that the civil legal needs of Wyoming's economically disadvantaged residents far exceed the available resources. For this reason, we designed a comprehensive needs assessment grounded in mixed methods research to fully understand Wyoming's low-income population, their civil legal needs, and how their needs are distributed throughout the state.

The mixed method design used in this needs assessment is a convergent parallel design.

In this type of design qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel. The data are analyzed separately and then integrated to provide a comprehensive picture of civil legal needs in Wyoming. The sections below describe each type of data that were collected, where the data were obtained, and how the data were used to determine civil legal needs.

## Quantitative Data Collection

Three types of quantitative data were collected in this needs assessment. They included:

- Social indicators
- Survey data
- Case management data and other program service data

## Social Indicators

Social indicators are archival data typically collected by organizations for their own, internal purposes. These data also can be used by outside organizations for other purposes, such as needs assessments, outcome monitoring, and planning purposes. Social indicators describe populations of interest, the health and well-being of communities, and they are particularly useful when looking at the complex, interrelated needs of impoverished individuals.

The table below describes the key topics and indicators employed in the needs assessment. These indicators were chosen to better understand LAW and EJW's clients' needs, how they relate to their civil-legal needs, and how they are distributed around the state. Data were gathered at the county level wherever possible. The results appear as a series of tables, graphs, and figures in the results section of this report.

*Table 1. Key Topics and Social Indicator Measures Used in the Needs Assessment*

| Key Topic | Indicator | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Demographics | Population size<br>Age and sex<br>Race and Hispanic origin<br>Population characteristics<br>Education<br>Income and poverty<br>Federal poverty guidelines | U.S. Census |
| Poverty | Poverty all ages and ages 18 and over<br>Population age18-64 below poverty<br>Poverty rank by county | U.S. Census |
| Economic Vulnerability | Percent of population at various poverty levels<br>Income compared to cost of living<br>Income inequality<br>Food insecurity | 2014-2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey<br><br>Feedingamerica.org |
| Employment | Unemployment<br>Wage changes<br>Employment changes<br>Wages by gender and age | U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Wyoming Department of Workforce Services |

| Key Topic | Indicator | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Financial Vulnerability | Medical debt collections<br>Other debt collections | Engagementnetwork.org |
| Transportation | Households with no vehicle | American Community Survey |
| Housing | Rental housing<br>Cost of home ownership | Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division<br>U.S. Census |

## Statewide Surveys

Two statewide surveys were conducted as part of this comprehensive needs assessment. In one survey, clients and potential clients visiting Wyoming legal aid providers offices were surveyed about their civil legal needs in the past year. In the other survey, Wyoming's legal professionals were surveyed regarding services they provided in the past year.

### Civil Legal Needs Survey of Clients and Potential Clients
*Survey Overview, Respondents, and Distribution Dates*
The civil legal needs survey of low-income clients and potential clients was sponsored by Legal Aid of Wyoming, the Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation, and Equal Justice Wyoming. The Datacorp needs assessment team conducted this survey between November 2019 and March 2020 with assistance from EJW's 2019-2020 AmeriCorps VISTA member.

*Questionnaire Topics*
Several questionnaires and civil legal needs assessment reports were reviewed as a means for selecting questionnaire items for the client survey.  The Datacorp needs assessment team developed a questionnaire that included survey items from a previous LAW needs assessment survey and numerous survey items garnered from the Oregon 2018 Legal Needs Survey. The Oregon survey was originally designed to be administered as a telephone survey.  Therefore, the wording of selected questionnaire items was modified where necessary to make the questions appropriate for a self-administered survey.  In addition to detailed demographic information, questionnaire topics included the following civil legal issues and related topics:

- Housing
- Child and family
- Financial, credit and debt collection
- Disability
- Military
- Native American/tribal related legal issues
- Employment
- Medical
- Police involvement – noncriminal
- Immigration
- Discrimination
- Legal help they tried to receive in the last year and source if applicable

- Type of legal help received
- Treatment within the legal system and impression of its "fairness"
- Most helpful ways of getting legal help
- Familiarity with various legal resources

Each category had several questions that exhaustively explored potential legal issues an individual might experience in the category. An "other" response option was also included that allowed respondents to provide a response that may not have been in the fixed-choice list. Each main category question was followed by an open-ended question that allowed respondents to provide suggestions about how civil legal aid could help individuals reporting that they had experienced any of the issues within the category.

*Data Collection*

Potential survey distribution sites were contacted in September and October of 2019 to distribute the questionnaire to their clients and potential clients. Participating sites were sent a total of 250 paper questionnaires (25 per site) between October 24th and 28th for distribution in November. All paper copies had a QR reader code to facilitate taking the questionnaire electronically. EJW's AmeriCorps VISTA member created a tracking spreadsheet with the number of questionnaires sent and returned to and from each site, along with documentation of when reminders were made and whether the site received the electronic version. Reminders were sent December 3rd and 10th. The VISTA member followed up with sites on a regular basis to encourage distribution and return of the questionnaires. Paper copies that were returned were entered into SurveyMonkey by the VISTA member.

Initially, the Datacorp needs assessment team and the LAW, EJWF, and EJW planning team intended to close the survey December 13th. However, the response rate was low, and a decision was made to extend the data collection period following the new year to afford sites the opportunity to continue distributing the questionnaire.

*Response Rate*

As of December 13th, our response rate was 23.2%. Based on the needs assessment planning teams' decision to extend the data collection period, the VISTA member reinitiated contact with the sites in January and encouraged them to continue distributing the questionnaire. The VISTA member also sent 20 additional questionnaires to the University of Wyoming's legal clinics. The survey was closed at the end of March with a total of 99 respondents completing questionnaires. This resulted in a response rate of approximately 37%. It should be noted that this estimate is most likely an underestimate as we are not certain every site distributed every questionnaire we provided to them. Our response rate calculation is therefore conservative as we accounted for the total number of surveys we sent to providers (N = 270) whether they were given out or not. Appendix B contains item-level results.

## Professional's Survey

*Survey Overview, Respondents, and Distribution Dates*

The Wyoming statewide professionals' survey was conducted between November 19, 2019 and December 13, 2019. EJW's VISTA member who assisted with the needs assessment project compiled a list of legal and other professionals' email addresses for

distribution. Professional respondents we surveyed included lawyers, judges, public defenders, court clerks, librarians, and behavioral health professionals who serve low-income clients.

*Questionnaire Topics*
The professionals' survey mirrored topics in the client survey. While the clients were asked if they or anyone in their household had experienced problems across the variety of topics surveyed, the professionals were asked if they served clients who had any of the issues asked about in the survey. They were also asked a series of questions at the end of the questionnaire that inquired about places their clients may seek help and other civil legal resources their clients may use. The following topics were included in the questionnaire:

- Housing
- Child and family
- Financial, credit and debt collection
- Disability
- Military
- Native Americans
- Employment
- Health
- Immigration
- Discrimination
- Places clients seek help prior to coming to respondent's organization
- Perceptions of clients' awareness of civil legal resources that are available
- Other information that may be important to serving the client population
- Emerging issues they may have noticed we did not ask about

Similar to the client survey each category had a set of choices that represented various types of legal needs within the category. Each category question was followed by an open-ended question that allowed professional respondents to provide suggestions about how civil legal aid could further help the individuals they serve.

*Data Collection*
The Datacorp needs assessment team created a survey distribution protocol designed to optimize response rates for electronic data collection. Using best practices for electronic data collection the survey was launched on a Tuesday morning via email to the list of professionals compiled by the EJW's VISTA member. The email explained the needs assessment study partnership of Legal Aid of Wyoming, the Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation, and Equal Justice Wyoming, the purpose of the study, and the reason they were being contacted to provide information about the low-income clients they serve. It also explained that their input would help us get a comprehensive picture of civil legal needs as well as the barriers their clients face getting their civil legal needs met. The email also included a link to the questionnaire. Reminders were sent December 3rd and December 10th. The survey was closed December 13th. The survey link was sent to 319 professionals who work with low-income clients who experience civil legal needs.

Of the 319 professionals who received the survey link, 148 responded. This resulted in response rate of 46.3%.

## Case Management Data

Case management data collected by LAW, EJW and four of EJW's grantees was used to conduct a trend analysis of client needs.

### Data Collection

Datacorp prepared a template that was used by each organization for the purpose of creating a uniform data extract that was then transferred to Datacorp. Data were extracted for the years 2017-2019. Larger organizations had the most complete data and were able to produce their extracts easily. Gathering the case management extracts from the smaller organizations proved to be more challenging. In some cases, EJW's VISTA member provided assistance to help the organizations prepare their case management data extract.

### Measures

The measures extracted for the case management data collection systems included the following:

- Unique ID – Identification number for client
- Legal problem – describes the type of case
- Open and close dates – dates the cases were opened and closed
- Close codes – Code that delineates the level of services provided
- Percent of poverty – Client's calculated percent of poverty based on reported income
- Persons and children in household – Count of number of people and number of children living in the household
- Race – Client's race as identified by the client
- Age – Client's age reported at intake
- Primary language – Primary language spoken by the client
- Case County – County where case occurred

We created two additional variables for the case management data set. One was an "Organization" variable we used to identify the organization that provided the data so each organization could be distinguished in the merged data set. The other variable we created was an aggregate of the "Legal Problem" variable. The case management system has several detailed legal problems that fall into categories that have been identified for the case management system. We created aggregates to facilitate examining "categories" of cases then drilled down to actual case types when more detailed information was useful or required to understand the results or to facilitate planning.

Case management data was provided by the following organizations:

- Legal Aid of Wyoming
- Equal Justice Wyoming
- Cheyenne Regional medical Center's Medical Legal Partnership
- Teton County Access to Justice Center

- Wyoming Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Wyoming Children's Law Center

## Data Preparation

Upon receipt of the case management data extracts, the needs assessment team logged and reviewed each data file for completeness. Once it was determined a file was useable, data management began. The greatest amount of effort was spent "harmonizing" the data so it could be merged for analysis. In this case, harmonizing the data included recoding variable response codes. For example, data that indicated whether the client was veteran had responses that read "yes and no" and "0 and 1" inconsistently across the six files. We recoded all files such that no = 0 and yes = 1. The same was true for a number of other Yes/No items. In other instances, some files had the type of case coded with a number that indicates the type of case that was served. Other files had a number along with the definition of what the number meant. We recoded all the files so there would only be a number in the cell that defined the type of case. All variables used in the analyses were checked for inconsistencies, out of range values, and implausible values. In cases where it was possible, the data were recoded. When a recode wasn't possible, the data were marked missing if there was no way to ascertain the correct response.

It should also be mentioned that the CRMC Medical-Legal Partnership and Equal Justice Wyoming are on the same case management system and use the same case management codes. The other four organizations data required substantial recoding in order to harmonize with the other organizations' data.

## Data Quality

The current case management systems used by EJW's grantees, other than the Medical-Legal partnership, are somewhat old and lets users to input errant data. Legal Aid of Wyoming has plans for a new system that includes a "data scrubber", which will eliminate numerous errors that current system allows. For instance, the current system permits users to input values that inconsistent, out of range, and implausible. For example, variables that assess the home county and case county allow users to enter misspellings and variants of correct spellings, e.g., Bighorn, Big Horn, BIG HORN, big horn. It also allows users to input implausible values. For example, all case county variables should be Wyoming counties. We found several entries for Colorado and other out-of-state counties, which would be implausible.

## Merged Analytic File

Once the data were cleaned and harmonized a merged data file was created that included data from all six organizations. Several data management checks were performed prior to and after merging each new file in the final analytic file. The final merged data file contained a total of 14,632 records across all three years of data collected.

## Trend Analysis

The trend analysis involved reporting frequencies across time for aggregated case categories. The most frequently reported categories were reviewed and broken down further to identify the most common types of cases within a category. Case management data were also analyzed by year across the years 2017 – 2019.

## Synthetic Estimates of Legal Service Need and Demand

The Datacorp needs assessment team created synthetic estimates to facilitate determination of county-level civil legal service eligibility, need, and demand for services. Two groups of synthetic estimates were generated:

- County-level estimates of the number of individuals eligible for civil legal services.
- County-level estimates of the number of households eligible for services for 1, 2, or 6 more different civil legal problems.

### Individual Estimates for Civil Legal Service Eligibility

Individual-level estimates of eligibility for civil legal services involved using US Census population estimate data for 2017. The population estimates were used in conjunction with the US Census federal poverty level estimates from 2018 for individuals at or below 200% of poverty to coincide with the civil legal aid services eligibility criteria. The 2017 population data was selected over the 2018 data to coincide with the year the prevalence estimate was created (see below).

### Household Estimates of Need and Demand for 1, 2, and 6 or More Legal Issues

Household estimates were computed using the US Census American Community Survey data from 2014-2018 obtained via the CARES Engagement Network. County level estimates of the number of households were entered into a data file. Prevalence estimates from The Justice Gap Report were used to estimate the number of households at 125% percent of poverty. The prevalence estimate from the LSC Justice Gap Report for demand for services (20%) was used to estimate the number of households in each Wyoming County that would demand services.

*Limitations of the Estimates*

Synthetic estimates involve applying a prevalence rate from an outside, but related, source or geographic location to create estimates for a geographic region for which there is no current prevalence rate. The estimates are limited by the data and prevalence rates that are available. For instance, we created household level estimates because a prevalence rate was only available at the household level. The prevalence rate was also only available for households at 125% of poverty, not 200%, which is the criterion used by Wyoming's legal aid service providers. Therefore, the household level estimates are conservative as there would have been more households in the estimates had there been a rate available for households at 200% of poverty. We considered converting household size back to the population of individuals; however, average household size available from the US Census includes children and would have created erroneous estimates.

## Qualitative Data Collection

This mixed methods study included extensive qualitative data collection. Focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted with numerous legal and social service professionals who serve the legal aid client population. We also conducted key informant interviews with legal aid clients to better understand their legal needs.

### Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups

The qualitative component of the needs assessment included 26 key informant interviews with professionals and clients receiving services from Legal Aid of Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming, and other civil legal organizations. We conducted five focus groups with legal

professionals and other professionals that work with clients that qualify for legal aid services.

## Data Collection

Interviews and focus groups were conducted between August 8, 2019 and February 24, 2020. The Datacorp needs assessment team in conjunction with LAW and EJW developed a set of questions that were used for the interviews and focus groups conducted in this study. Separate questions were developed for professionals and clients.

### *Professional Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Questions*

The professionals' key informant interview and focus group questions focused on the client population and systemic issues. We asked them to describe the most pressing needs among the clients they serve (met need and demand for services) and reasons they are not able to serve clients who seek assistance (unmet need and demand). We also asked them about community partners, how they believe greater access to legal services could be accomplished, resources they use, and barriers clients encounter that prevent them from accessing court and barriers to providing services in general.

### *Client Key Informant Interviews and focus Group Questions*

Questions asked of clients receiving services from legal aid services and other organizations centered on where clients access help, legal issues people need the most help with, barriers that keep them from getting legal help, access to and using resources like the Internet for legal assistance, how they perceive they are "treated" when they seek legal services, legal outcomes and resolutions to their legal problems, and what would improve their situation and legal services in Wyoming.

The two tables below provide a listing of the interviews and focus groups that were conducted, the dates they were conducted, and the type of participant.

## Stakeholder Interviews

*Table 2. Stakeholder Interviews Conducted for the Needs Assessment*

| Date | Representative |
|------|----------------|
| 8/8/2019 | Teton County Access to Justice |
| 8/8/2019 | Wyoming Bar |
| 8/13/2019 | University of Wyoming College of Law |
| 8/14/2019 | Wyoming Children's Law Center |
| 8/19/2019 | Wyoming 211 |
| 8/20/2019 | Circuit Court Clerk |
| 8/21/2019 | District Court Clerk |
| 8/21/2019 | Medical Legal Partnership |
| 8/21/2019 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |
| 8/22/2019 | Supreme Court of Wyoming/Wyoming Access to Justice Commission |
| 8/22/2019 | Wyoming Department of Family Services |
| 8/22/2019 | VA |
| 8/23/2019 | Circuit Court Judge |
| 8/26/2019 | Wyoming Department of Health |
| 8/28/2019 | CLIMB Wyoming |
| 8/29/2019 | District Court Judge |
| 8/29/2019 | Legal Aid of Wyoming |

| Date | Representative |
|---|---|
| 09/04/2019 | Child Support Authority/Family Lawyer |
| 09/06/2019 | University of Wyoming College of Law |
| 09/10/2019 | Pro Bono Attorney |
| 01/15/2020 | Equal Justice Wyoming Client |
| 01/23/2020 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |
| 01/30/2020 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |
| 01/31/2020 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |
| 02/20/2020 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |
| 2/24/2020 | Legal Aid of Wyoming Client |

## Focus Groups

*Table 3. Focus Groups Conducted for the Needs Assessment*

| Date | Location | Representatives | Number of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10/9/2019 | Riverton | Fremont County Alliance Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault<br>Fremont County Good Samaritan Center<br>First Stop Help Center<br>Legal Aid of Wyoming<br>Fremont Counseling Service | 6 |
| 10/10/2019 | Pinedale | Sublette County Sexual Assault Family Violence Task Force<br>Sublette County Library<br>Public Defender<br>High County Behavioral Health<br>Municipal Judge<br>District Court<br>Circuit Court<br>Prisoner Advocate | 8 |
| 11/6/2019 | Casper | Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation<br>Community Action Partnership<br>CASA<br>Natrona County Library<br>Seton House | 8 |
| 11/7/2019 | Gillette | Council of Community Services<br>GARF<br>Personal Frontiers<br>Legal Aid of Wyoming<br>Department of Family Services<br>Wyoming Child Support Program | 10 |
| 1/22/2020 | Cheyenne | District Court<br>Coalition Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault<br>Children's Law Center<br>Laramie County Library | 9 |

| Date | Location | Representatives | Number of Participants |
|------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|
|      |          | Community Action Laramie County<br>CLIMB Wyoming |  |

## Data Preparation

Interviews were combined and the text was reviewed and coded via editing procedures to ensure consistency across respondents and to felicitate emerging themes and interpretation of the data. For example, abbreviations were spelled out, and words that were different but mean the same thing were recoded (e.g., lawyer and attorney were coded to read attorney). When there were two words that should appear together, the software feature that enables users to keep text together was used to keep the words together allowing the results to be contextually meaningful. For instance, "behavioral health" would normally be separated as would "psychical health", which would give misleading results because the word health would be counted more frequently. By coding the two words together they always appear together and the context is preserved. Following these steps, the text for each question from every respondent was then analyzed for emergent themes.

## Data Analysis

### Quantitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and estimation methods for needs assessment. These included simple frequencies to describe types of clients and cases and trends. These were also used to documents needs identified in the professional and client surveys. We also utilized synthetic estimation methods to analyze the data for smaller geographic areas, such as county when data were not available for desired unit of analysis.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed for emergent themes. First, we reviewed the data content and created preliminary codes. The data were then reviewed for consistency in the use of terms in order to identify synonyms for the preliminary codes. Terms that represented themes were assigned to categories. Next the data were merged across respondents for each question after which we identified patterns and themes for the data as a whole and for each question. Data were analyzed separately for professionals and clients.

## RESULTS

In the sections that follow we report the results for each type of data collected in the needs assessment. Following the results for each data source there is a mixed-methods integration section where we examined the extent to which the results of the various data collection efforts converged and the merged results are interpreted.

## Social Indicators

In this section we report findings from data we gathered across the various archival databases described above in the methodology section of the report. This section of the report is meant to provide context for the client population served in this legal system. It describes their lives and some of the challenges they face navigating life. We begin with

a description of Wyoming's statewide demographics and poverty statistics that are reported at the county level. This is then followed by a report on the economic vulnerability and employment statistics, which is then followed by financial vulnerability, transportation and finally housing. Results are presented at the county level wherever it was possible.

## Demographics

The table below provides a snapshot of Wyoming's statewide demographics. The data are from US Census estimates calculated as of July 1, 2019. County-level population demographics appear in the table found in the Poverty section of this report. It should be noted that any observed variations in the demographic estimates are due to sources and years for which the most current data estimates are available for a particular unit of analysis and the type of analysis being conducted, e.g., county versus state.

Wyoming's population is largely homogeneous with the "white alone" population comprising 92.6% of the state's resident population. The next largest subgroup is the Hispanic and Latino population, which makes up 10.1% of Wyoming's population. The Native Indian and Alaska Native category accounts for 2.7% of Wyoming's population. The state has a substantial number of veterans (45,389) and a foreign-born population that comprises 3.5% of the state's population. The percent of residents living in poverty is estimated by the U.S. Census to be 11.1%.

For convenience we have provided a Wyoming map with each county identified to use as a reference for the maps that follow in this section.
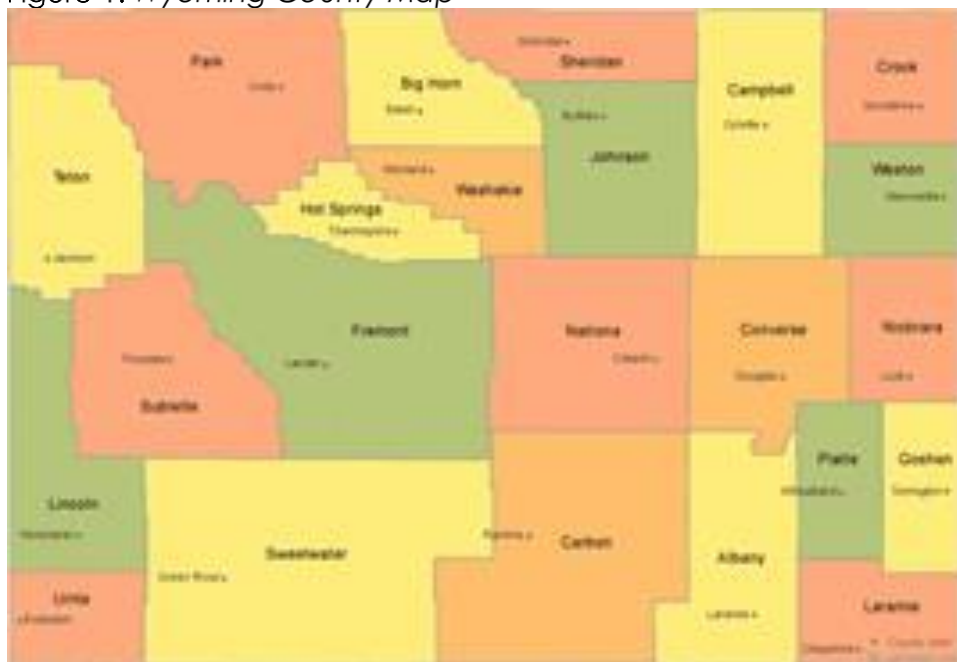
Figure 1. *Wyoming County Map*

*Table 4. United States Census - Wyoming Population Estimates, July 1, 2019*

| People | Estimate |
|---|---|
| **Population** | **Number / Percent** |
| Population estimate base | 578,759 |
| Population percent change (April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019 | 2.7% |
| Population Census, April 1, 2010 | 563,626 |
| **Age and Sex** | |
| Persons under 5 years, percent | 6.2% |
| Persons under 18 years, percent | 23.3% |
| Persons 65 years and over, percent | 16.5% |
| Female persons, percent | 49% |
| **Race and Hispanic Origin** | |
| White alone, percent | 92.6% |
| Black or African American alone, percent (a) | 1.3% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a) | 2.7% |
| Asian alone, percent (a) | 1.1% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a) | 0.1% |
| Two or more races, percent | 2.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino, percent (b) | 10.1 |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino | 83.8% |
| **Population Characteristics** | |
| Veterans, 2014 - 2018 | 45,389 |
| Foreign born persons, percent | 3.5% |
| **Education** | |
| High school graduate or higher, % of persons age 25 years +, 2014-2018 | 92.9% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, % of persons age 25years +, 2014-2018 | 26.9% |
| **Income and Poverty** | |
| Median household income (in 2018 dollars) | $62,268 |
| Persons in poverty, percent | 11.1%* |

*Source: https:www.census.gov/quickfacts/WY, Captured April 28, 2020.*
*Note: (a) includes persons reporting only one race, (b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories, * Poverty statistic source is from 2018 ACS.*

## Poverty

Poverty rates in Wyoming are well below the national average and have remained relatively stable over time. Nevertheless, as of 2018 nearly 11.1% of Wyoming residents are in poverty, accounting for just over 60,000 people. Poverty rates vary by county with Albany County having the greatest percentage of its residents living in poverty. The tables, figures, and maps below list the federal poverty guidelines for 2020 and the number and percent of the population of Wyomingites in poverty.

*Table 5. 2020 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia*

| Persons in Family/Household | Poverty Guideline |
|---|---|
| 1 | $12,760 |
| 2 | $17,240 |
| 3 | $21,720 |
| 4 | $26,200 |
| 5 | $30,680 |

| Persons in Family/Household | Poverty Guideline |
|---|---|
| 6 | $35,160 |
| 7 | $39,640 |
| 8 | $44,120 |

*Note: For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,480 for each additional person.*

## Poverty: All Ages and Ages 18 and Over

*Table 6. Wyoming Poverty Census Data*

| County | Population | All Ages Poverty Count | All Ages Poverty Percent | Over 18 Poverty Universe | Over 18 Poverty Count | Over 18 Poverty Percent | Median Household Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albany | 36,444 | 7,451 | 20.4 | 30,319 | 6,624 | 21.8 | $ 47,561 |
| Big Horn | 11,678 | 1,519 | 13 | 8,706 | 1,008 | 11.6 | $ 55,195 |
| Campbell | 45,479 | 4,200 | 9.2 | 33,228 | 2,787 | 8.4 | $ 78,112 |
| Carbon | 14,118 | 1,894 | 13.4 | 10,769 | 1,362 | 12.6 | $ 61,773 |
| Converse | 13,516 | 1,287 | 9.5 | 10,217 | 887 | 8.7 | $ 68,162 |
| Crook | 7,392 | 604 | 8.2 | 5,606 | 385 | 6.9 | $ 64,053 |
| Fremont | 38,546 | 6,070 | 15.7 | 28,653 | 3,888 | 13.6 | $ 51,204 |
| Goshen | 12,146 | 1,567 | 12.9 | 9,558 | 1,101 | 11.5 | $ 51,676 |
| Hot Springs | 4,463 | 604 | 13.5 | 3,537 | 434 | 12.3 | $ 49,356 |
| Johnson | 8,359 | 859 | 10.3 | 6,536 | 615 | 9.4 | $ 57,676 |
| Laramie | 96,833 | 8,839 | 9.1 | 74,301 | 5,962 | 8.0 | $ 63,839 |
| Lincoln | 19,318 | 1,518 | 7.9 | 14,237 | 1,050 | 7.4 | $ 69,598 |
| Natrona | 77,259 | 7,677 | 9.9 | 58,699 | 5,258 | 9.0 | $ 64,714 |
| Niobrara | 2,143 | 292 | 13.6 | 1,722 | 223 | 13.0 | $ 51,036 |
| Park | 28,575 | 2,921 | 10.2 | 22,630 | 2,119 | 9.4 | $ 58,873 |
| Platte | 8,454 | 899 | 10.6 | 6,739 | 607 | 9.0 | $ 54,165 |
| Sheridan | 29,318 | 2,551 | 8.7 | 23,053 | 1,862 | 8.1 | $ 58,307 |
| Sublette | 9,747 | 658 | 6.8 | 7,586 | 501 | 6.6 | $ 74,570 |
| Sweetwater | 42,205 | 3,540 | 8.4 | 31,182 | 2,441 | 7.8 | $ 73,315 |
| Teton | 22,888 | 1,443 | 6.3 | 18,716 | 1,165 | 6.2 | $ 99,087 |
| Uinta | 20,135 | 2,010 | 10 | 14,378 | 1,314 | 9.1 | $ 63,401 |
| Washakie | 7,735 | 918 | 11.9 | 6,013 | 641 | 10.7 | $ 55,190 |
| Weston | 6,595 | 777 | 11.8 | 5,187 | 550 | 10.6 | $ 54,319 |
| Wyoming | 563,345 | 60,097 | 10.7 | 431,570 | 42,783 | 9.9 | $ 62,259 |

## Percent of the Population 18-64 below the Poverty Level
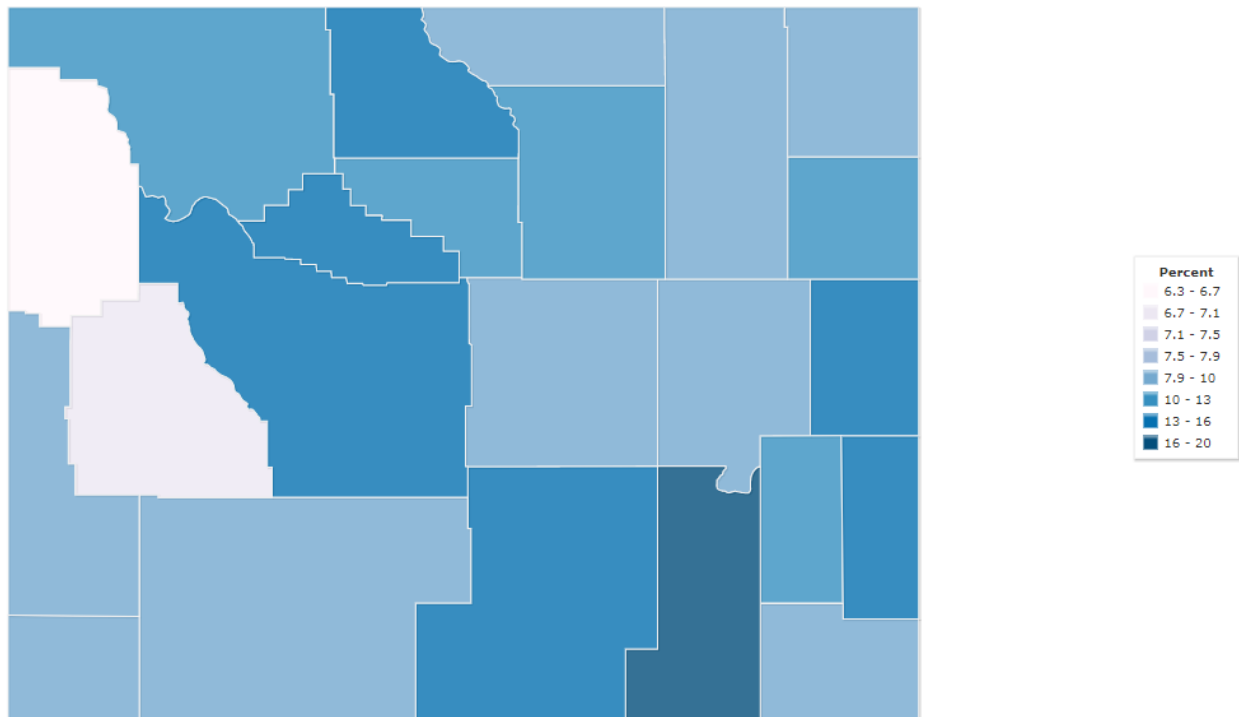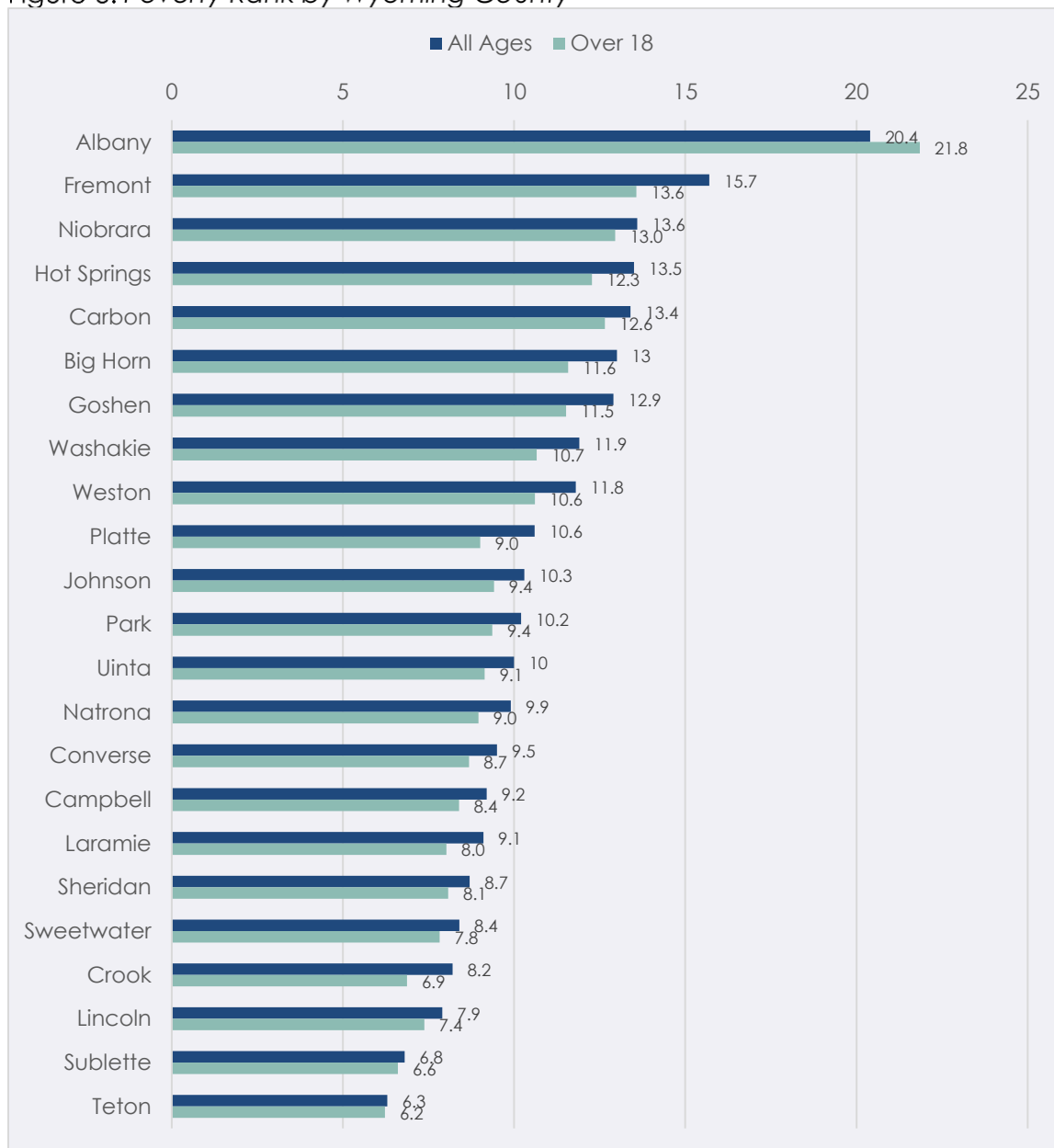
Figure 2. *Poverty Map*

Figure 3. *Poverty Rank by Wyoming County*



## Economic Vulnerability

Percent of Population below Various Levels of Poverty

*Table 7. Percent in Poverty by Federal Poverty Levels*

| Location | Under 100% | 100-199% | 200-399% | 400+% | Total |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Wyoming | 11% | 16% | 33% | 40% | 100% |

*Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey*

## Income Compared to Cost of Living

### Housing Cost-Burdened Residents

The next two maps show the distribution of individuals who are "cost-burdened" in their housing arrangements. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines being cost burdened as anyone who has to spend 30% or more of his or her income on housing. For those who are "severely cost-burdened" 50% or more of their income is spent on housing. We have provided maps for individuals who meet the definition of being severely cost-burdened.

### *Severely Cost-Burden - Homeowners*

The map below shows the distribution of residential homeowners who are "severely cost-burdened". The data show that this applies most to homeowners living in Teton and Johnson Counties. Among renters, residents who live in Albany and Niobrara Counties are the most cost-burdened residents in the state.

Figure 4. *Estimated Percent of All Homeowners who are Severely Burdened by Housing Costs, Between 2014-2018*



Insufficient Data
5.66% or less
5.67% - 6.82%
6.83% - 7.91%
7.92% - 9.57%
9.58% or more
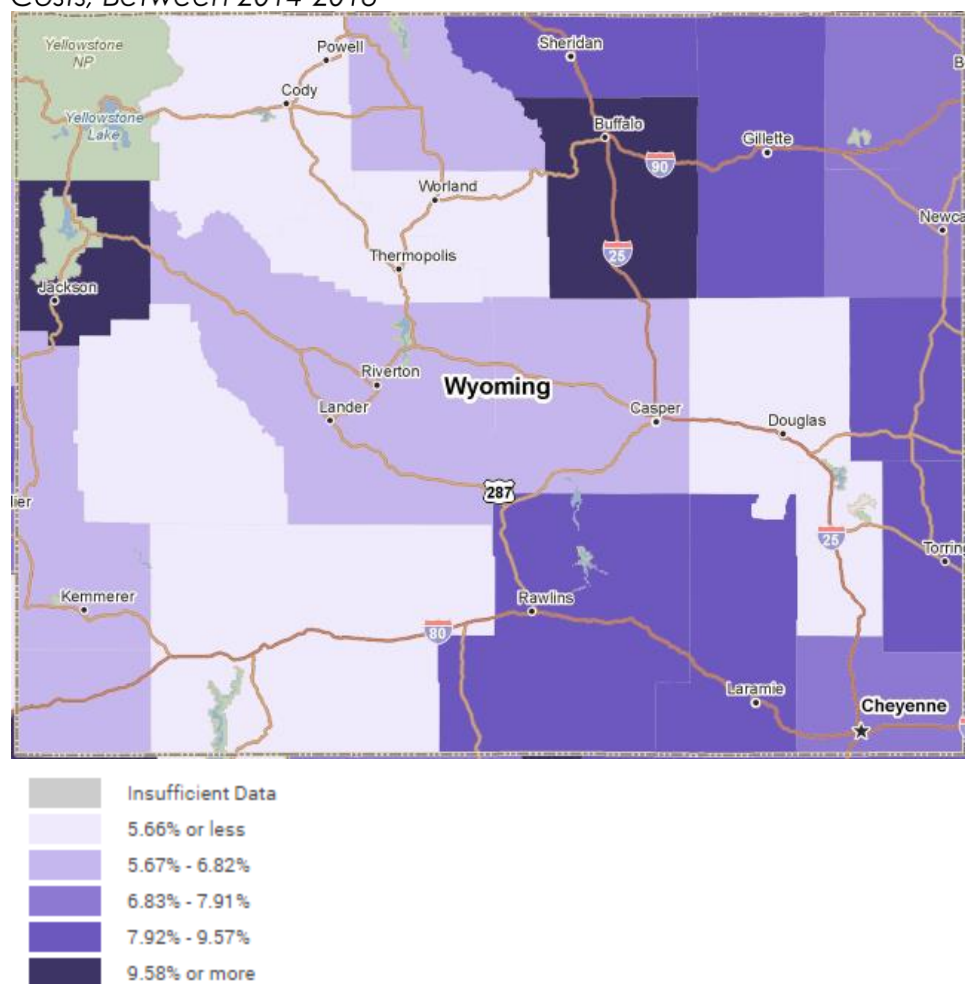
*Source: Policymap.org*

*Severely Cost-Burden - Rentals*

The map below shows the distribution of "severely cost-burdened" renters.

Figure 5. *Estimated Percent of All Renters who are Severely Burdened by Housing Costs, Between 2014-2018*



Insufficient Data

12.62% or less

12.63% - 16.51%

16.52% - 19.38%

19.39% - 22.67%

22.68% or more
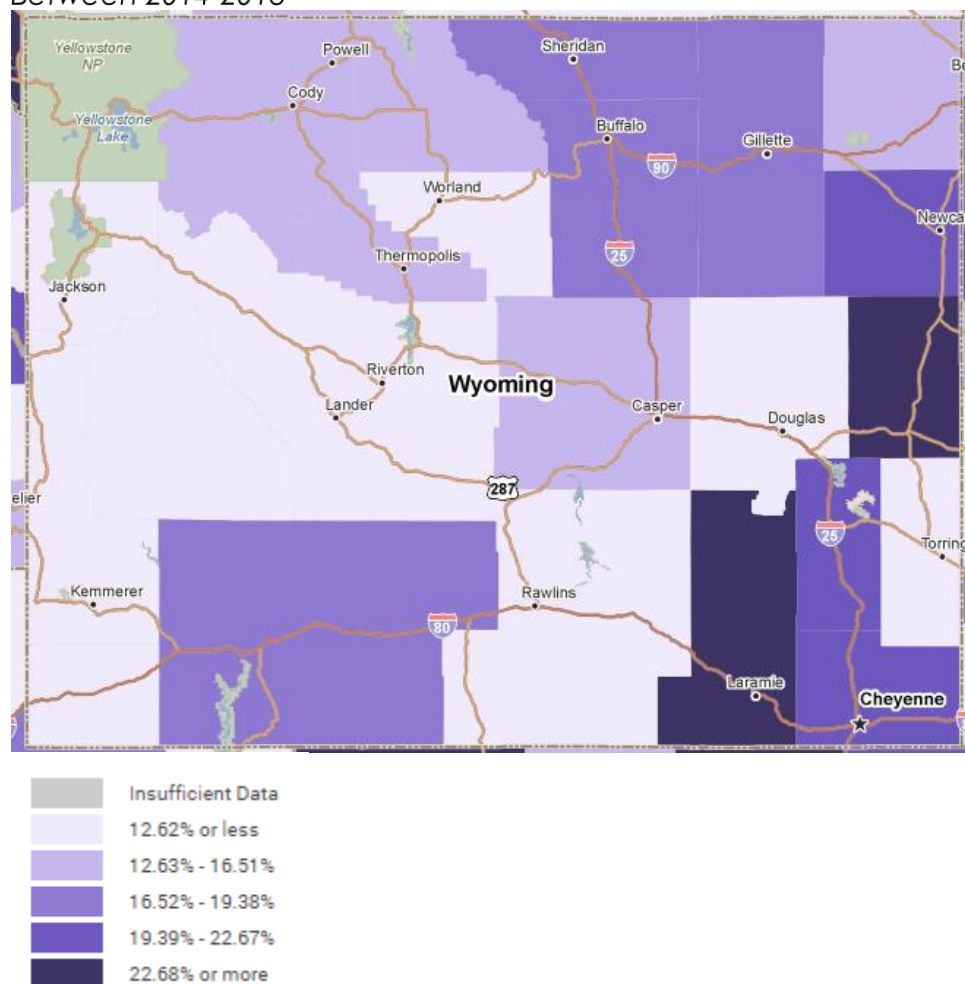
*Source: Policymap.org*

*Gini Coefficient*

The Gini Coefficient is a standardized measure that documents income inequality by creating a representation of income distribution. The coefficient ranges from zero to one, where a value of zero is considered perfect income equality, i.e., everyone in a geographic location has the same income, and a value of one indicates maximal inequality, i.e., one person has a very large income and everyone else has none. The state value for Wyoming is .4360. Wyoming's rank is the 4th lowest in the US, indicating that compared to the rest of the country, income earnings are more equitable than they are in the rest of the country. The map below shows the Gini Coefficient by county in Wyoming.

Figure 6. *Estimated inequality of Household lincome According to the Gini Index, between 2014-2018*
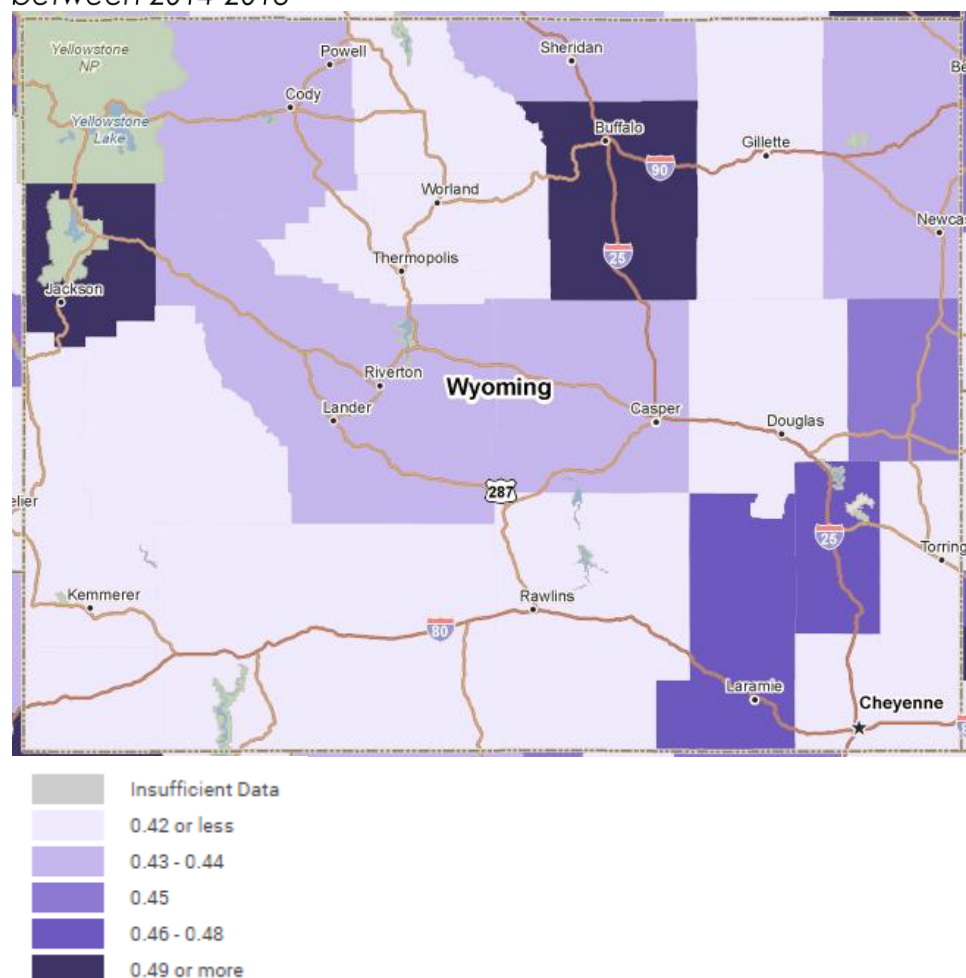


Source: Policymap.org

## Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is problem that plagues more than 70,000 Wyoming residents or roughly 12.2% of the state population. Food insecurity as defined by Healthy People 2020 is "the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources." Food insecurity can be a temporary condition or it can be chronic. It is influenced by a number of factors related to clients seeking legal services, such as income, employment, race/ethnicity and disability. Nationally 31.6% of the nation's residents were food insecure in 2016 (Healthy People 2020).

*While racial and ethnic disparities exist, disabled adults may be at higher risk for food insecurity due to lack of employment and the burden of having increased health care expenses.*

Food insecurity rates are relatively stable across Wyoming counties according to the most recent data which are reported for 2018 (Feeding America, 2020). The food insecurity rate hovers at just over 12% in each county. This marks an improvement for Albany County which had higher levels of food insecurity in the 2017 data (Feeding America, 2019).
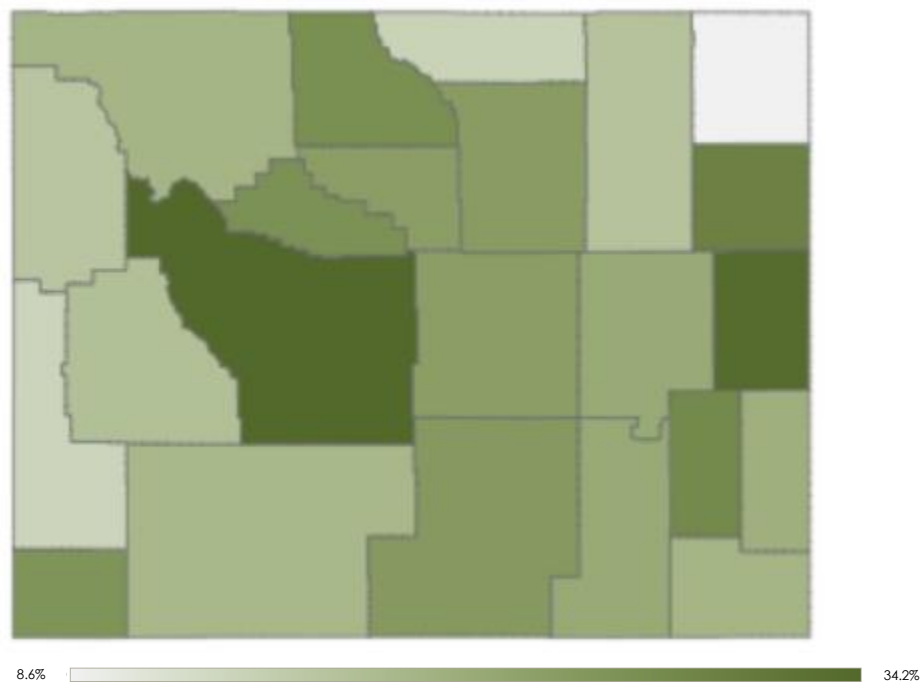
Given the advance of the COVID-19 pandemic it is highly likely these rates have increased as the available data were nearly three years old. In fact, Feeding America (2020) released a special report in May with the projected updated food insecurity rates for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The estimated rates for Wyoming's counties are projected to increase substantially and are expected to range from a low of 15.3% in Crook County to a high of 20.3% in Fremont County as a direct result of the pandemic.

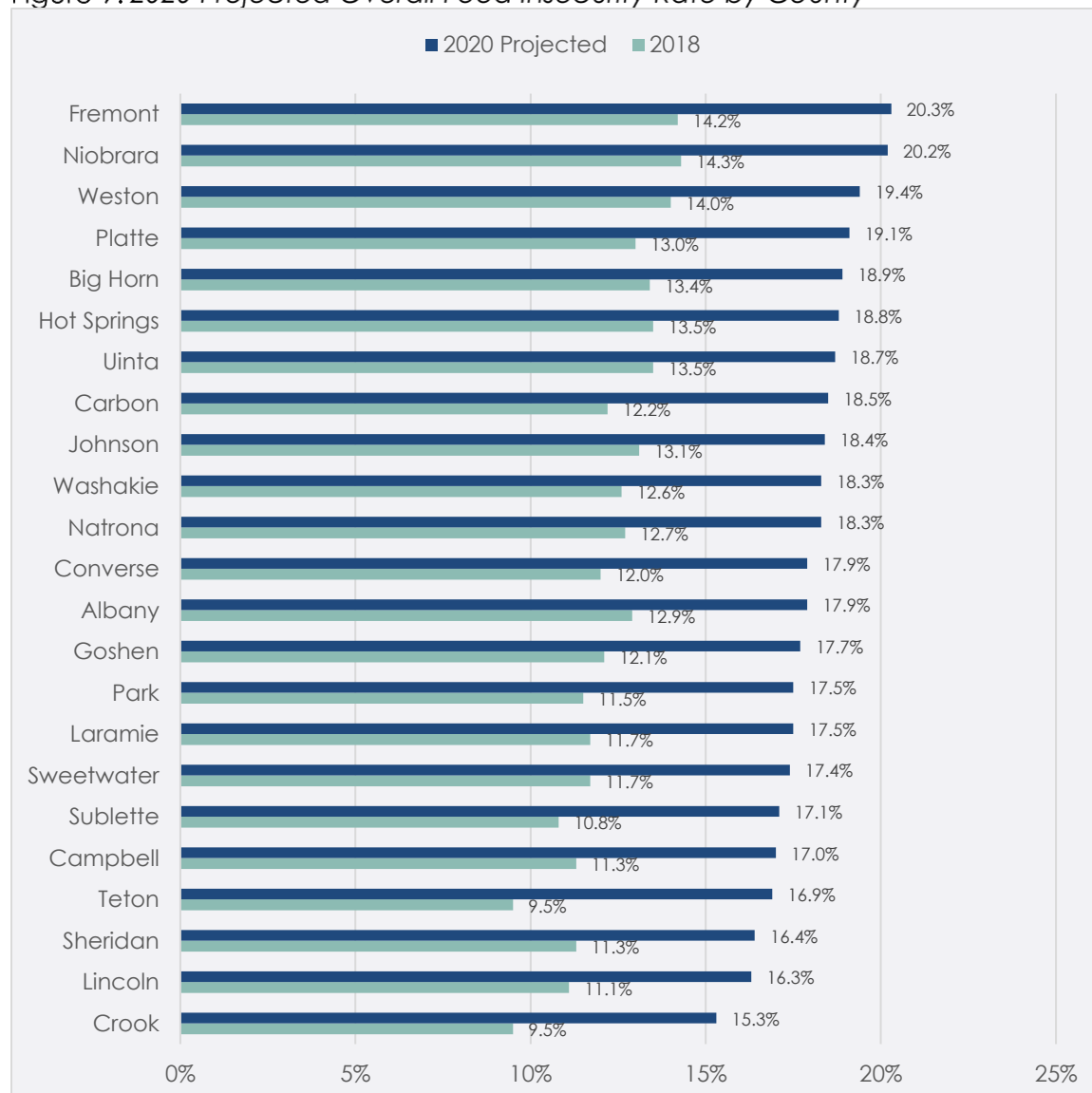Figure 7. *Wyoming Food Insecurity Rate and Related Data 2018*



*Source: https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/wyoming*
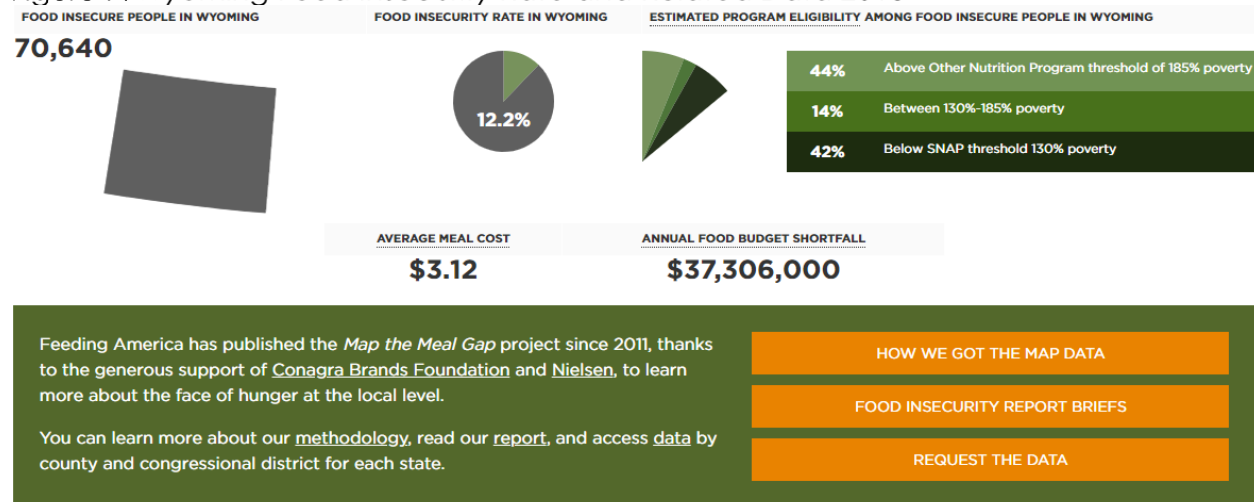
Figure 8. *2020 Projected Overall Food Insecurity Rate Map*



*Source: https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/*

Figure 9. *2020 Projected Overall Food Insecurity Rate by County*



| | 2020 Projected | 2018 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fremont | 20.3% | 14.2% |
| Niobrara | 20.2% | 14.3% |
| Weston | 19.4% | 14.0% |
| Platte | 19.1% | 13.0% |
| Big Horn | 18.9% | 13.4% |
| Hot Springs | 18.8% | 13.5% |
| Uinta | 18.7% | 13.5% |
| Carbon | 18.5% | 12.2% |
| Johnson | 18.4% | 13.1% |
| Washakie | 18.3% | 12.6% |
| Natrona | 18.3% | 12.7% |
| Converse | 17.9% | 12.0% |
| Albany | 17.9% | 12.9% |
| Goshen | 17.7% | 12.1% |
| Park | 17.5% | 11.5% |
| Laramie | 17.5% | 11.7% |
| Sweetwater | 17.4% | 11.7% |
| Sublette | 17.1% | 10.8% |
| Campbell | 17.0% | 11.3% |
| Teton | 16.9% | 9.5% |
| Sheridan | 16.4% | 11.3% |
| Lincoln | 16.3% | 11.1% |
| Crook | 15.3% | 9.5% |

*Source: https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/*

## Employment

The Wyoming Department of Workforces Services had an abundance of data available to describe unemployment and wages in Wyoming. Despite having the most recent data available, the data are already out-of-date due to the pandemic as the COVID-19 pandemic struck while this needs assessment was being conducted. As late as January of 2020 unemployment rates were hovering around 3.7% (Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, 2020). In April 2020, the unemployment rate was 9.2%, which is substantially higher than the rates depicted in the tables and figures. At that point, the largest increases were in Teton County where the unemployment rate was 18.3% followed by Natrona (12.7%), Sublette (11.3%), Sweetwater (10.5%), and Campbell Counties (10.2%). The county with the lowest unemployment rate is currently Niobrara, which had a rate of 4.4%. The rates have improved since the state began reopening

businesses. As of June 2020, the statewide unemployment rate was 7.6%.

*Table 8. Total Number of Persons Working in Wyoming at Any Time by Gender and Age, 2017-2018*

| Gender | 2017 | 2018 | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | N | % |
| Women | 139,917 | 137,942 | -1,975 | -1.4 |
| Men | 161,600 | 159,654 | -1,946 | -1.2 |
| Nonresidents | 37,767 | 46,240 | 8,473 | 22.4 |
| *Total* | *339,284* | *343,836* | *4,552* | *1.3* |
| Age | 2017 | 2018 | Change | |
| | | | N | % |
| 00-19 | 19,945 | 19,956 | 11 | 0.1 |
| 20-24 | 31,661 | 30,737 | -924 | -2.9 |
| 25-34 | 68,560 | 66,210 | -2,350 | -3.4 |
| 35-44 | 60,336 | 61,026 | 690 | 1.1 |
| 45-54 | 51,843 | 50,554 | -1,289 | -2.5 |
| 55-64 | 50,411 | 49,595 | -816 | -1.6 |
| 65-Up | 18,364 | 19,128 | 764 | 4.2 |
| Nonresidents | 38,164 | 46,630 | 8,466 | 22.2 |
| *Total* | *339,284* | *343,836* | *4,552* | *1.3* |

*Source: Demographics of Persons Working in Wyoming by County, Industry, Age, & Gender, 2000-2018. Research & Planning, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Prepared by M. Moore, Research & Planning, WY DWS, 7/25/19.*
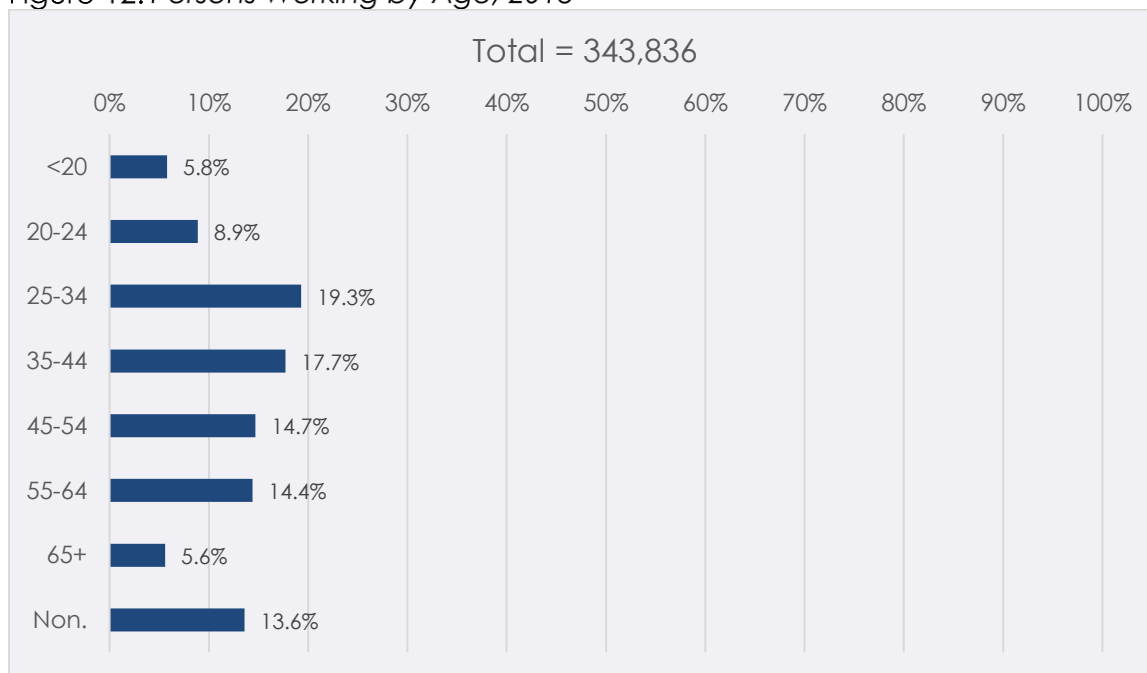
Figure 10. *Average Annual Wages by Gender, 2018*
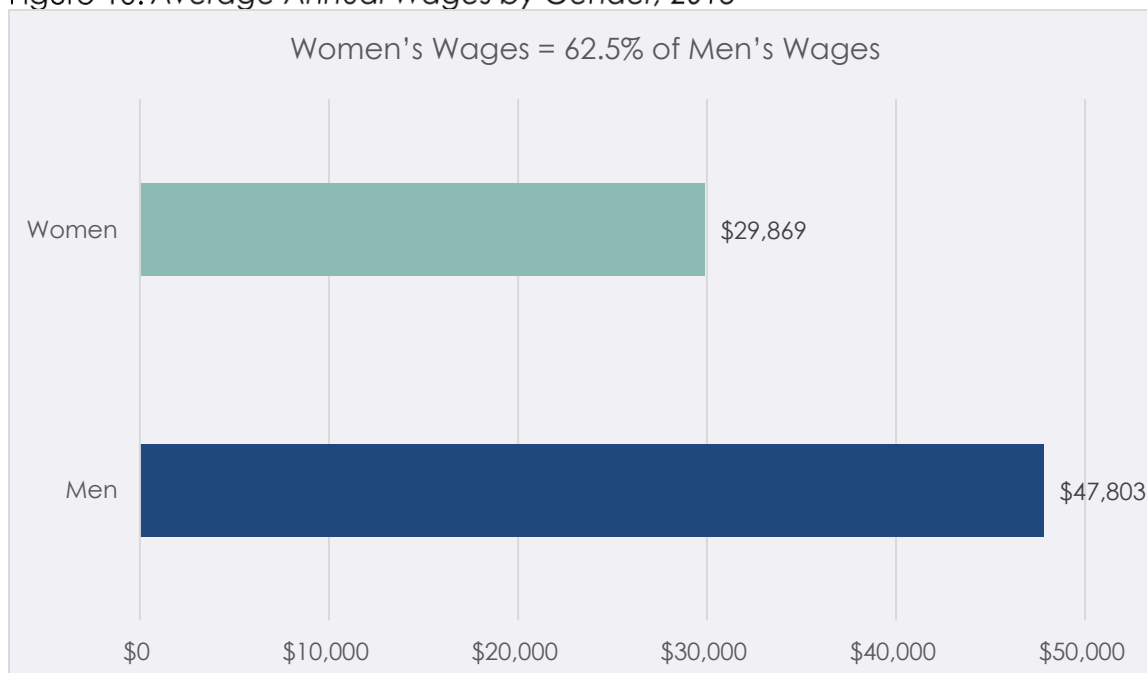


*Source: Demographics of Persons Working in Wyoming by County, Industry, Age, & Gender, 2000-2018. Research & Planning, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Prepared by M. Moore, Research & Planning, WY DWS, 7/25/19.*

Figure 11. *Persons Working by Gender, 2018*
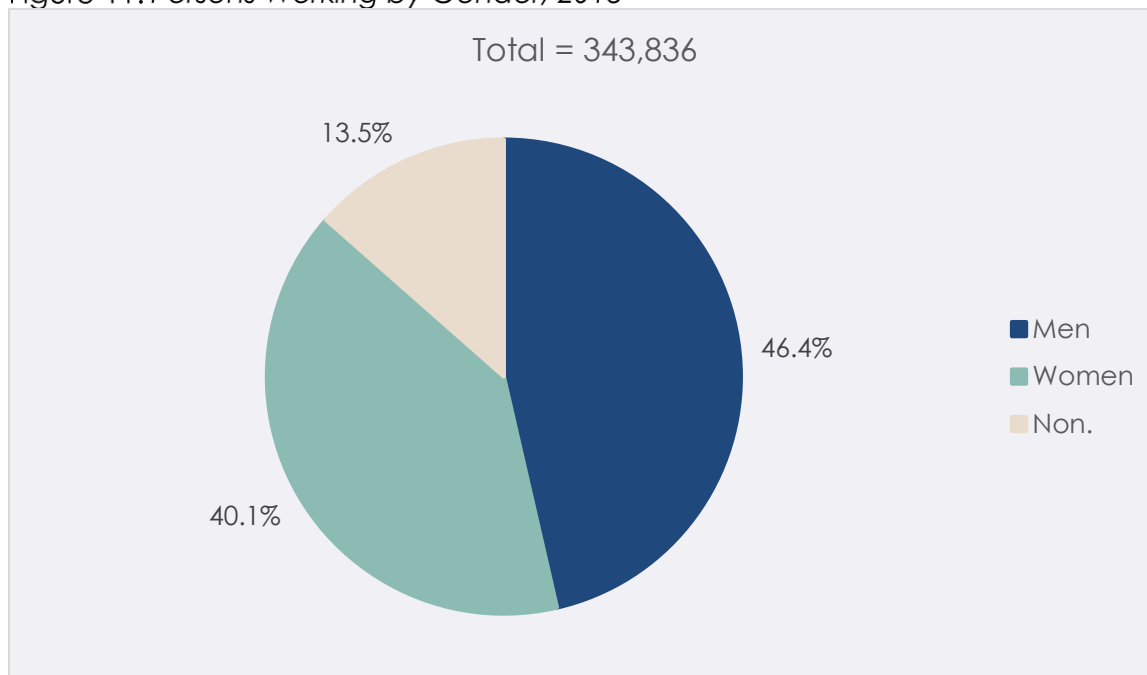


Total = 343,836

13.5%

46.4%

40.1%

- ■ Men
- ■ Women
- ■ Non.

*Non. = Nonresidents; individuals for whom demographic data are not available.*
*Source: Demographics of Persons Working in Wyoming by County, Industry, Age, & Gender, 2000-2018. Research & Planning, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Prepared by M. Moore, Research & Planning, WY DWS, 7/25/19.*

Figure 12. *Persons Working by Age, 2018*



Total = 343,836

| Age | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| <20 | 5.8% |
| 20-24 | 8.9% |
| 25-34 | 19.3% |
| 35-44 | 17.7% |
| 45-54 | 14.7% |
| 55-64 | 14.4% |
| 65+ | 5.6% |
| Non. | 13.6% |

*Non. = Nonresidents; individuals for whom demographic data are not available.*
*Source: Demographics of Persons Working in Wyoming by County, Industry, Age, & Gender, 2000-2018. Research & Planning, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Prepared by M. Moore, Research & Planning, WY DWS, 7/25/19.*

Figure 13. *Unemployment Rate by Wyoming County, January 2020 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)*
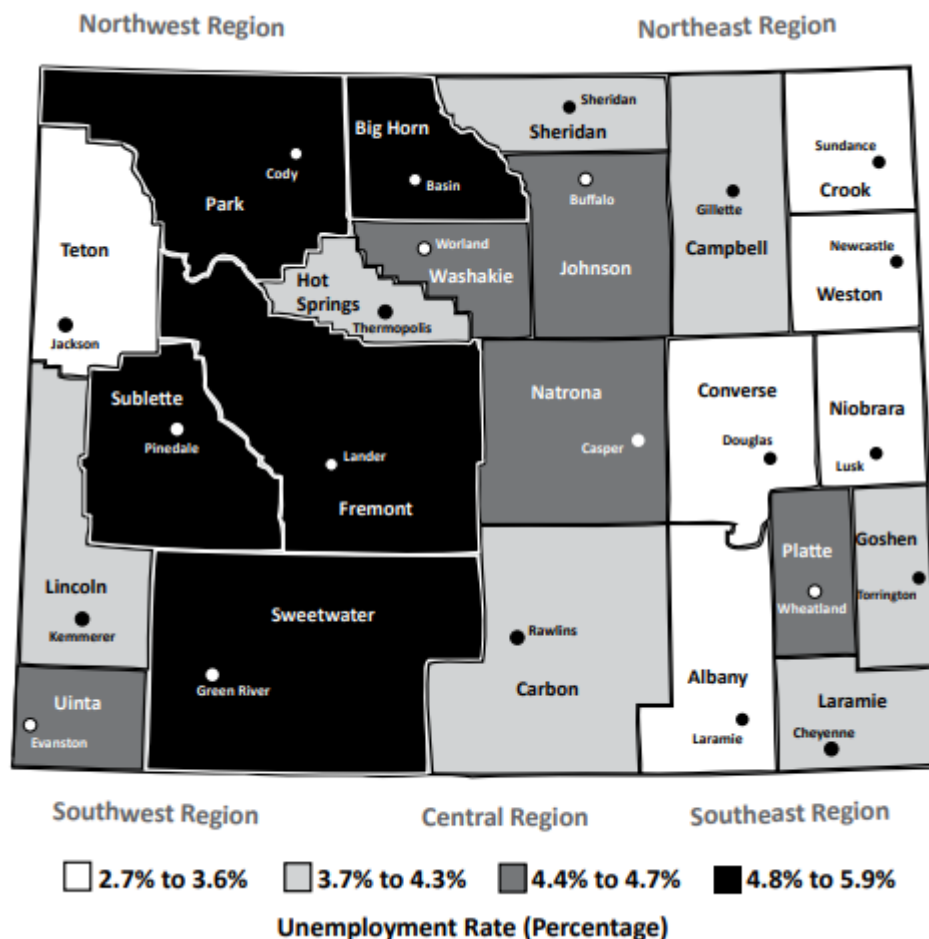


## Financial Vulnerability

As identified in every data source in this needs assessment debt collection is common among the civil legal clients served in this system. The two maps below show the distribution of Wyoming residents who have experienced medical and other debt collections. The varying shades of blue show the extent of the medical collection debt among Wyoming's citizens. The greatest amount of medical debt collection is in Campbell, Carbon, Fremont, Natrona, and Sheridan counties where it runs over $1,156 dollars for individual who are having this experience. For debt collection other than medical, the map below shows the distribution of debt collection in varying shades of purple. Numerous Wyoming counties have residents that have debt in collection in amounts over $1,600. The list of counties where individuals have the most debt in collection includes Campbell, Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Laramie, Lincoln, Natrona, Park, Sheridan, and Sweetwater.

*Qualitative interviews and the client and legal professionals' survey data also showed Wyoming's economically vulnerable population has legal issues that involve debt collection. Medical debt collection was emphasized across all research modes as it tended to be more costly and difficult to resolve without legal assistance.*
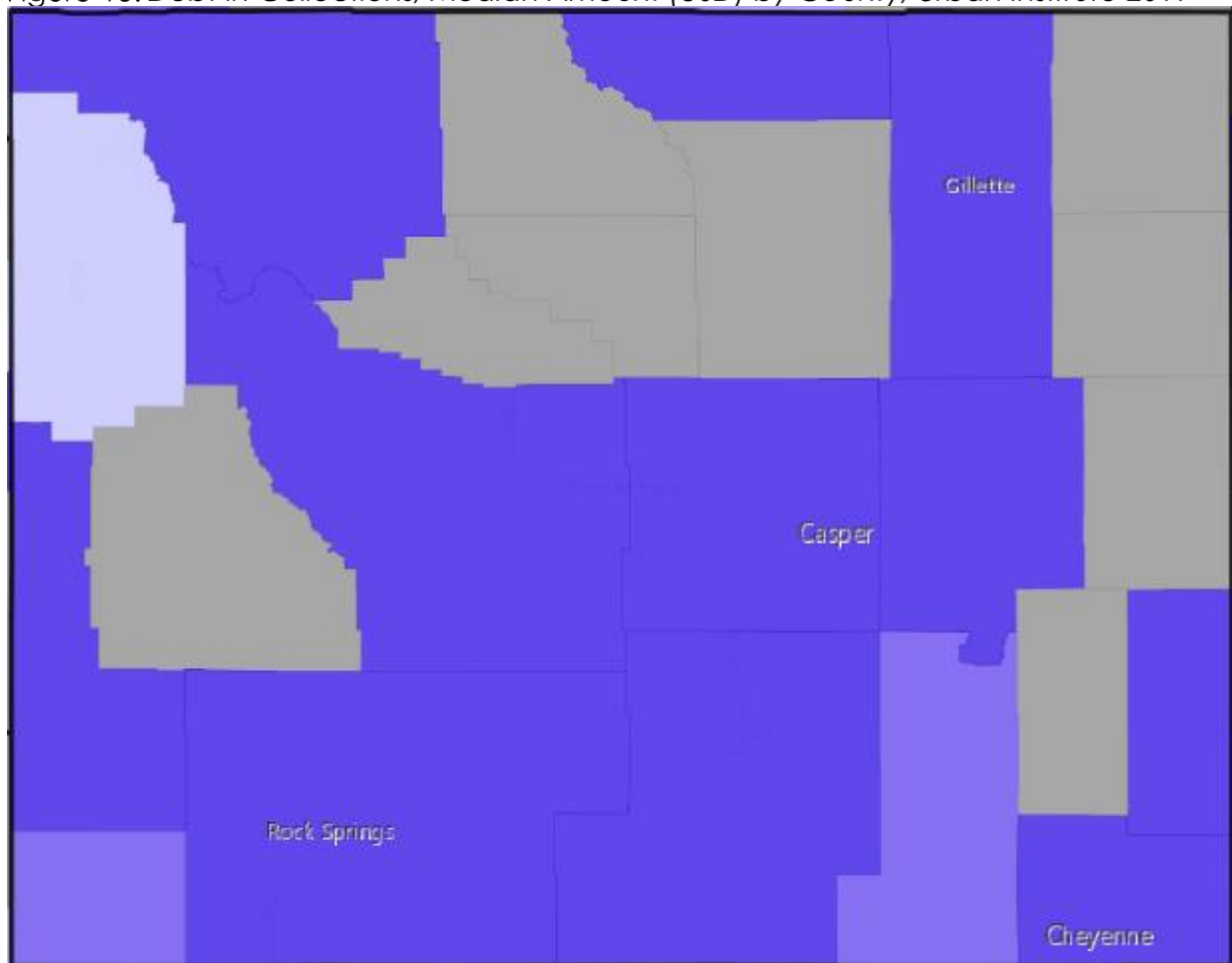
Figure 14. *Medical Debt in Collections, Median Amount (USD) by County, Urban Institute 2019*
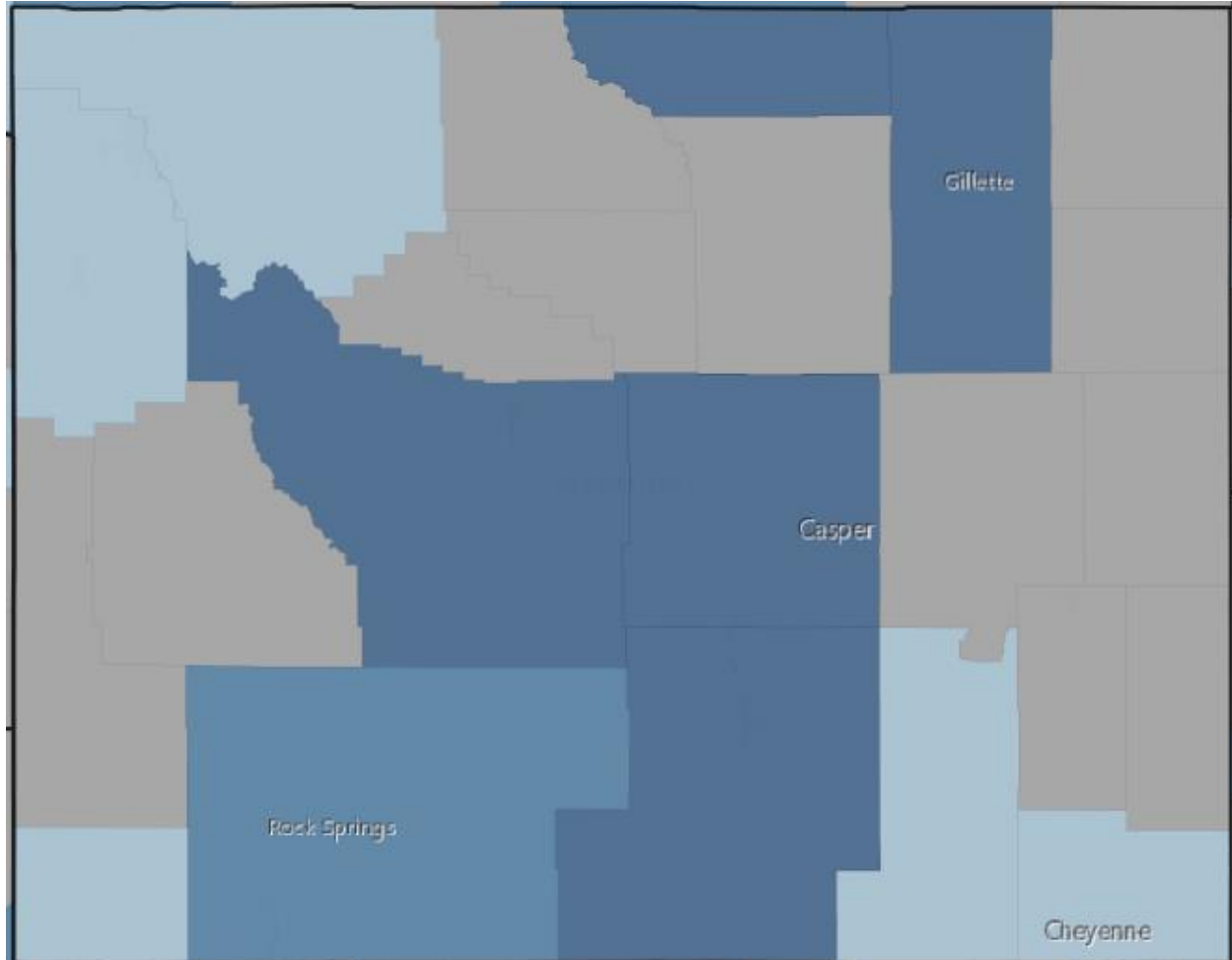


Medical Debt in Collections, Median Amount (USD) by County, Urban Institute 2019
- Over $1156
- $818 - $1156
- $567 - $817
- Under $567
- No Data or Data Suppressed

Figure 15. *Debt in Collections, Median Amount (USD) by County, Urban Institute 2019*



Debt in Collections, Median Amount (USD) by County, Urban Institute 2019
- Over $1,600
- $1,401 - $1,600
- $1,201 - $1,400
- Under $1,201
- No Data or Data Suppressed
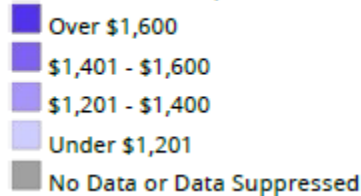
## Transportation

For many economically disadvantaged Wyomingites lack of transportation for accessing any type of service is an issue. Wyoming lacks sound public transportation. The map below shows the distribution of households in Wyoming's counties that have no automobile. For the most part, it is under 4.1%. However, in Albany, Fremont, Laramie, Sheridan, and Washakie it runs between 6.1 and 8%. In Johnson County more than 8% of households are without a vehicle. Even when economically disadvantaged individuals have automobiles, few are

*Transportation was reported in interviews and focus groups as a huge barrier to accessing any kind of services, obtaining gainful employment, and navigating life's responsibilities. A review of Wyoming's recent needs assessments shows this is a common theme.*

able to afford the costs of maintaining, insuring, registering and putting fuel in their vehicles.

Figure 16. *Households with No Vehicle, Percent by County, ACS 2014 - 2018*



Households with No Vehicle, Percent by County, ACS 2014-18
- ▮ Over 8.0%
- ▮ 6.1 - 8.0%
- ▮ 4.1 - 6.0%
- ▯ Under 4.1%
- ▮ No Data or Data Suppressed
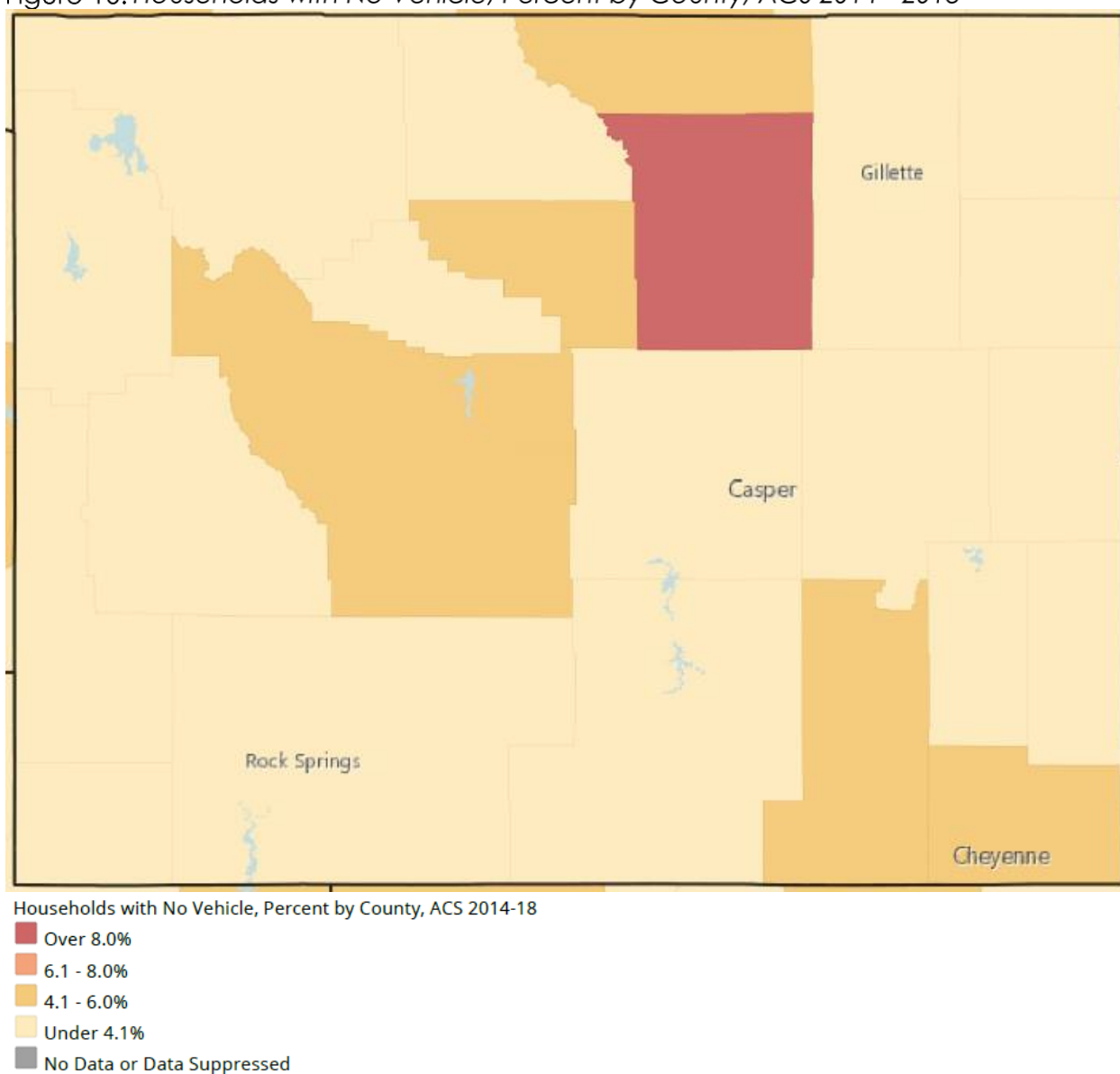
> *One focus group participant reported they knew of a client who went to jail because he could not get $10 to buy gas for his car to get to court.*

## Housing

Historically, Wyoming has either been below or on par with the nation's housing growth rates. In the first decade of the 2000's, Wyoming experienced a growth rate of 15.4% compared to the national rate of 9.9%. The maps and tables below provide information on the cost of living as it pertains to owning and renting homes in Wyoming.

## Rental Housing Costs in Wyoming

The Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division reports a host of local data including cost of living, demographic information and other economic data. The table below reports Wyoming rental housing rates as of the last quarter of 2019. The table provides rental information, by county, for the cost of a two-bedroom unfurnished apartment, excluding utilities; the cost to rent a single-wide mobile home lot, including the cost of water; the cost to rent a two or three bedroom single family house, excluding gas and electricity; and the cost of renting a two or three bedroom mobile home, including the expense for the lot rental. Also shown in the table is the percent change between the second quarter of 2018 and the second quarter of 2019.

Statewide rental housing for apartments has increased by 3.9%.  The greatest increase in the cost of apartment rentals was observed in Converse (16%) and Washakie (12.8%) counties. Decreases were relatively minor by comparison. The largest decrease in the cost of renting an apartment occurred in Johnson County.  For mobile home lots the largest increase was observed in Hot Springs County (14%).  For renting a two-three-bedroom single family house, a similar pattern emerged.  Converse County had the greatest increase at 26.6% followed by Hot Springs County which had a 12.6% increase in the cost of renting a single-family home.  Decreases in the cost of renting a single-family home were nearly nonexistent and came in at around only 1% when they were observed. The cost of renting a mobile home rose the most in Hot Springs (6%), Sheridan (6%), Converse (5.6%) and Teton (5.5%) Counties.  The greatest drop was in Johnson County, which came in at 7.2%.

## Table 9. Wyoming Average Rental Rates: 2nd Quarter 2019 and 2nd Quarter 2018.

| County | APARTMENT (1) | | | MOBILE HOME LOT (2) | | | HOUSE (3) | | | MOBILE HOME (4) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2Q19 | 2Q18 | Percent Change | 2Q19 | 2Q18 | Percent Change | 2Q19 | 2Q18 | Percent Change | 2Q19 | 2Q18 | Percent Change |
| Albany | $696 | $661 | 5.3% | $368 | $354 | 3.8% | $1,067 | $1,040 | 2.6% | $803 | $819 | -1.9% |
| Big Horn | $504 | $494 | 2.0% | $189 | $192 | -1.5% | $659 | $639 | 3.1% | $451 | $463 | -2.6% |
| Campbell | $696 | $660 | 5.4% | $478 | $462 | 3.4% | $1,115 | $1,100 | 1.3% | $746 | $750 | -0.6% |
| Carbon | $690 | $706 | -2.3% | $369 | $361 | 2.2% | $984 | $969 | 1.6% | $848 | $841 | 0.9% |
| Converse | $774 | $667 | 16.0% | $205 | $205 | 0.0% | $1,223 | $966 | 26.6% | $744 | $704 | 5.6% |
| Crook | $629 | $629 | 0.0% | NA | NA | NA | $730 | $738 | -1.0% | NA | NA | NA |
| Fremont | $677 | $676 | 0.2% | $207 | $204 | 1.2% | $941 | $889 | 5.8% | $673 | $643 | 4.7% |
| Goshen | $549 | $564 | -2.8% | NA | $195 | NA | $669 | $614 | 9.0% | $488 | $500 | -2.5% |
| Hot Springs | $506 | $505 | 0.1% | $245 | $215 | 14.0% | $715 | $635 | 12.6% | $586 | $553 | 6.0% |
| Johnson | $566 | $592 | -4.5% | $235 | $231 | 1.6% | $990 | $952 | 3.9% | $505 | $545 | -7.2% |
| Laramie | $831 | $779 | 6.8% | $442 | $455 | -2.9% | $1,311 | $1,215 | 7.9% | $915 | $882 | 3.7% |
| Lincoln (Kemmerer) | $515 | $502 | 2.7% | NA | NA | NA | $603 | $609 | -1.0% | $671 | $667 | 0.6% |
| Lincoln (Afton) | $562 | $551 | 2.0% | NA | NA | NA | $959 | $954 | 0.5% | NA | NA | NA |
| Natrona | $723 | $705 | 2.6% | $349 | $405 | -13.8% | $1,040 | $996 | 4.4% | $605 | $613 | -1.2% |
| Niobrara | $564 | $572 | -1.3% | NA | NA | NA | $683 | $682 | 0.1% | NA | NA | NA |
| Park | $665 | $648 | 2.6% | $299 | $274 | 9.2% | $933 | $916 | 1.9% | $728 | $772 | -5.7% |
| Platte | $619 | $621 | -0.4% | NA | NA | NA | $782 | $754 | 3.7% | NA | NA | NA |
| Sheridan | $676 | $688 | -1.7% | $362 | $353 | 2.5% | $1,178 | $1,055 | 11.7% | $619 | $584 | 6.0% |
| Sublette | $839 | $838 | 0.1% | NA | NA | NA | $1,136 | $1,108 | 2.6% | NA | NA | NA |
| Sweetwater | $639 | $620 | 3.1% | $417 | $417 | 0.0% | $988 | $1,002 | -1.4% | $810 | $824 | -1.7% |
| Teton | $2,274 | $2,092 | 8.7% | $590 | $581 | 1.5% | $2,761 | $2,695 | 2.5% | $1,232 | $1,168 | 5.5% |
| Uinta | $603 | $600 | 0.5% | $296 | $294 | 0.7% | $858 | $853 | 0.6% | $654 | $641 | 2.0% |
| Washakie | $527 | $467 | 12.8% | NA | NA | NA | $718 | $706 | 1.8% | NA | NA | NA |
| Weston | $570 | $563 | 1.3% | $166 | $163 | 2.2% | $679 | $675 | 0.6% | $530 | $526 | 0.7% |
| Southeast | $755 | $720 | 4.8% | $390 | $392 | -0.4% | $1,147 | $1,081 | 6.2% | $834 | $820 | 1.8% |
| Southwest | $631 | $618 | 2.0% | $380 | $380 | -0.1% | $926 | $929 | -0.3% | $706 | $691 | 2.1% |
| Central | $715 | $692 | 3.2% | $291 | $324 | -10.1% | $1,029 | $961 | 7.1% | $640 | $631 | 1.3% |
| Northeast | $665 | $654 | 1.7% | $376 | $366 | 3.0% | $1,064 | $1,017 | 4.7% | $652 | $647 | 0.9% |
| Northwest | $1,100 | $1,031 | 6.7% | $361 | $342 | 5.5% | $1,406 | $1,370 | 2.6% | $803 | $802 | 0.2% |
| Statewide Average | $756 | $727 | 3.9% | $360 | $363 | -1.0% | $1,105 | $1,056 | 4.6% | $734 | $724 | 1.4% |

Regions:
**Southeast:** Albany, Carbon, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, Platte
**Southwest:** Lincoln (Afton), Lincoln (Kemmerer), Sublette, Sweetwater, Uinta
**Central:** Converse, Fremont, Natrona
**Northeast:** Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan, Weston
**Northwest:** Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, Teton, Washakie

(1) - Two-bedroom, unfurnished, excluding gas and electric.
(2) - Single-wide, including water.
(3) - Two or three-bedroom, single family, excluding gas and electric.
(4) - Two or three-bedroom, including lot rent.
Note: The regional averages are weighted by population within the region.
(NA) - There were too few observations to report the data.

*Source: Wyoming Department of Administration and Information: Economic Analysis Division - Housing*

## Cost: Homeownership

The cost of homeownership in Wyoming has increased substantially over the last 29 years and has outpaced the US as shown in the figure below. A dip can be observed between 2009 and 2011, following the national housing crisis that began in 2008. From 2012 until 2019 (the last year reported in the figure) there was a steady increase with the cost of a single-family home rising to approximately $360,000 in Wyoming.

Figure 17. *Wyoming Single Family House Price index (1Q1991 = 100) Compared to US*
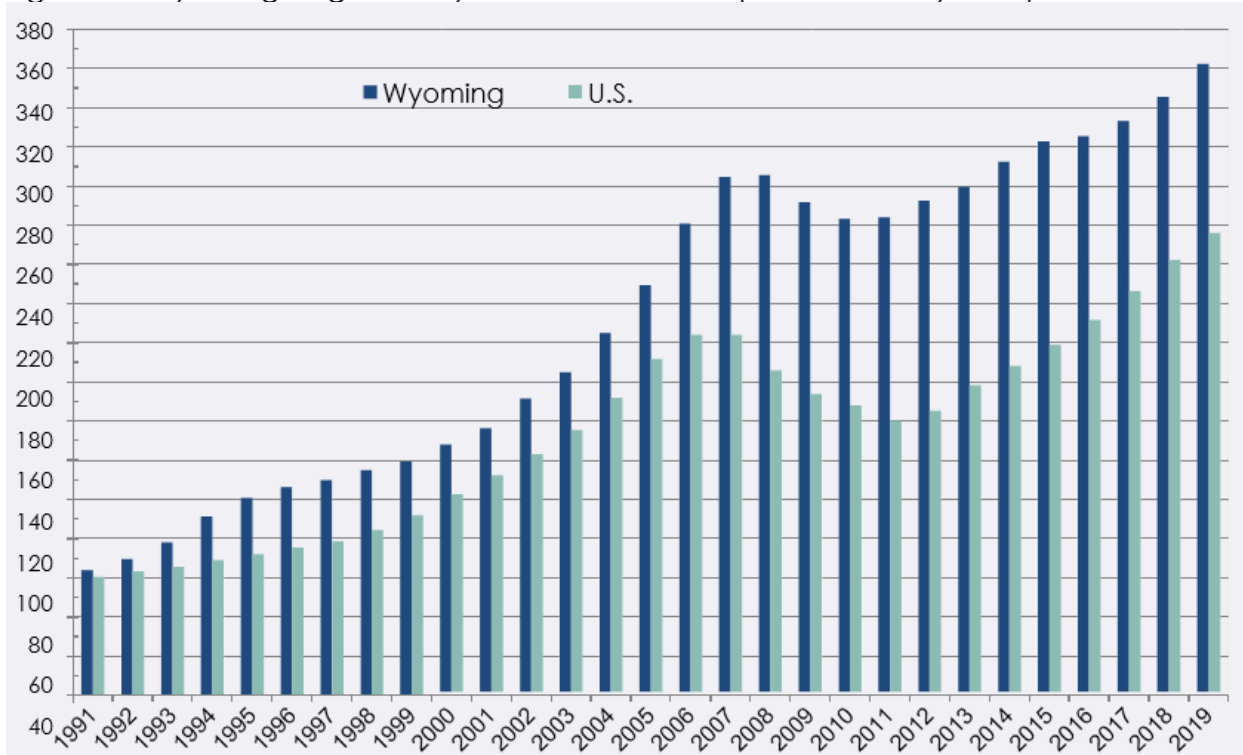


*Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency (http://www.fhfa.gov/); Prepared by Wyoming Economic Analysis Division (http://eadiv.state.wy.us)*

## Survey Results

### Top Civil Legal Issues Reported by Clients and Legal Professionals

Key findings from the client and professionals' civil legal surveys are presented separately for each survey later in this section of the report. The table below provides a brief summary, for comparison purposes, of the most frequently reported legal issues clients' experienced and the types of cases professionals reported serving in the last year. The sections that follow the summary table provide greater detail on the most frequent types of issues and cases reported by clients and professionals who completed the survey.

The next table shows the types of legal problems clients reported and the types of legal services provided by legal professionals are fairly well aligned across both surveys. The discrimination category in the client list aligns with the criminal justice related cases list in the professional survey as it included responses indicating the clients they serve are often stopped and harassed by police without a seemingly good reason. Based on the information we gathered in the stakeholder interviews, it appears that the immigration category may be more of an emerging issue, as a couple of the stakeholders we interviewed mentioned that they felt they needed more training on how to work with immigration cases.

*Table 10. Most Commonly Reported Legal Issues by Clients and Potential Clients and by Legal Professionals*

| Clients | Percent | Professionals | Percent |
|---------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Family | 63 | Family | 79 |
| Medical Debt | 32 | Other Financial Debt | 70 |
| Housing | 28 | Housing | 68 |
| Other Financial Debt | 29 | Police Involvement | 44 |
| Discrimination (self) | 27 | Employment | 43 |
| Immigration | 12 | Medical Debt | 43 |

## Civil Legal Needs Client Survey

Ninety-nine actual and potential legal aid organizations' clients completed the civil legal needs survey. In this section we present key demographics, key findings, and information on how clients seek legal services. Appendix B has item-level responses to the client survey questions.

### Demographics

The clients spanned all age groups. The 45-64-year-old group had the greatest representation and 65 years and older group had the fewest respondents. Survey respondents were mostly female (74%), 83% Caucasian, and 9% reported being Hispanic. Only 5% had less than a high school education, and 49% were employed full-time. Fifty-one percent reported being single parents. Detailed demographics appear in the figures that follow.
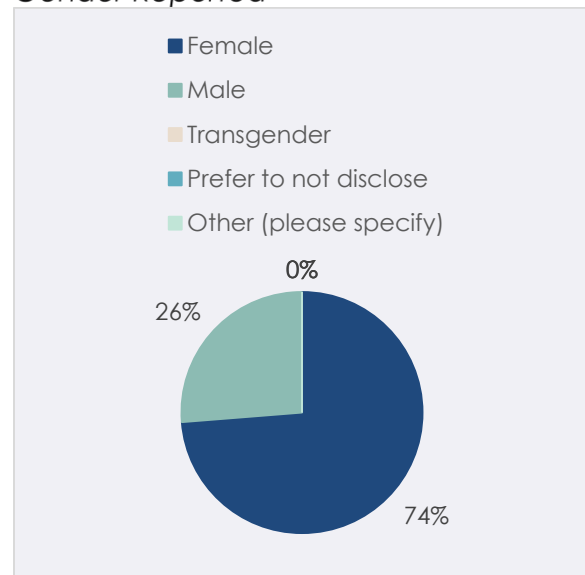
Age
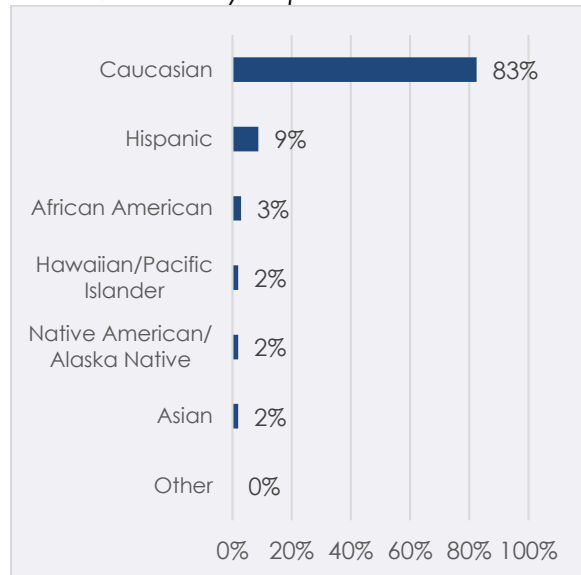Figure 18. *Civil Legal Aid Client Survey: Age Reported*
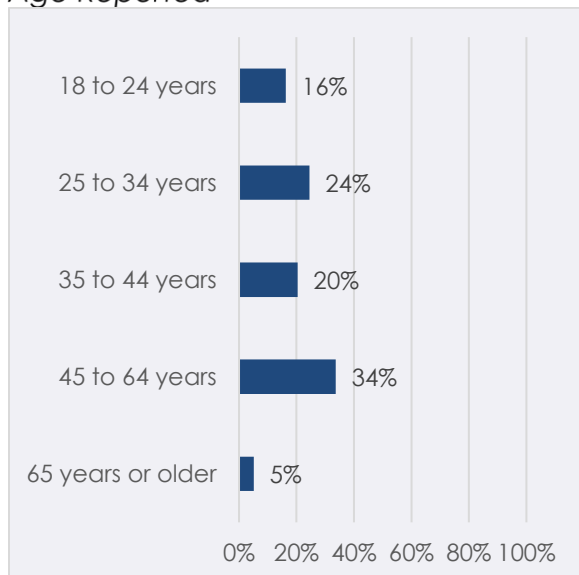


Gender
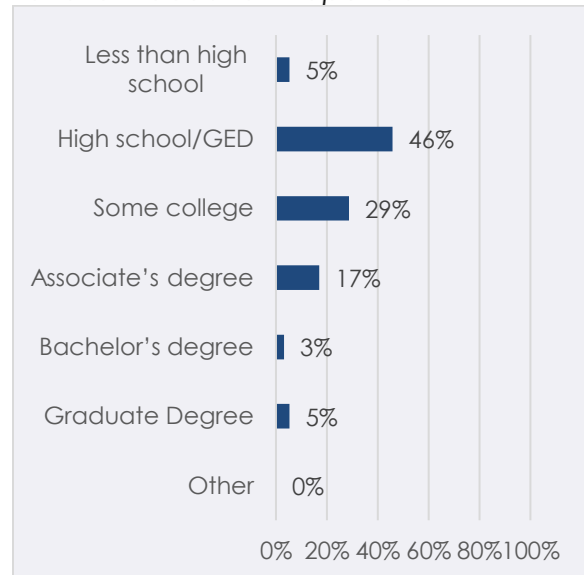Figure 19. *Civil Legal Aid Client Survey: Gender Reported*

## Race and Ethnicity

Figure 20. *Civil Legal Aid Client Survey: Race & Ethnicity Reported*



## Education

Figure 21. *Civil Legal Aid Client Survey: Level of Education Reported*



## Employment Status

Figure 22. *Civil Legal Aid Client Survey: Employment Status Reported*
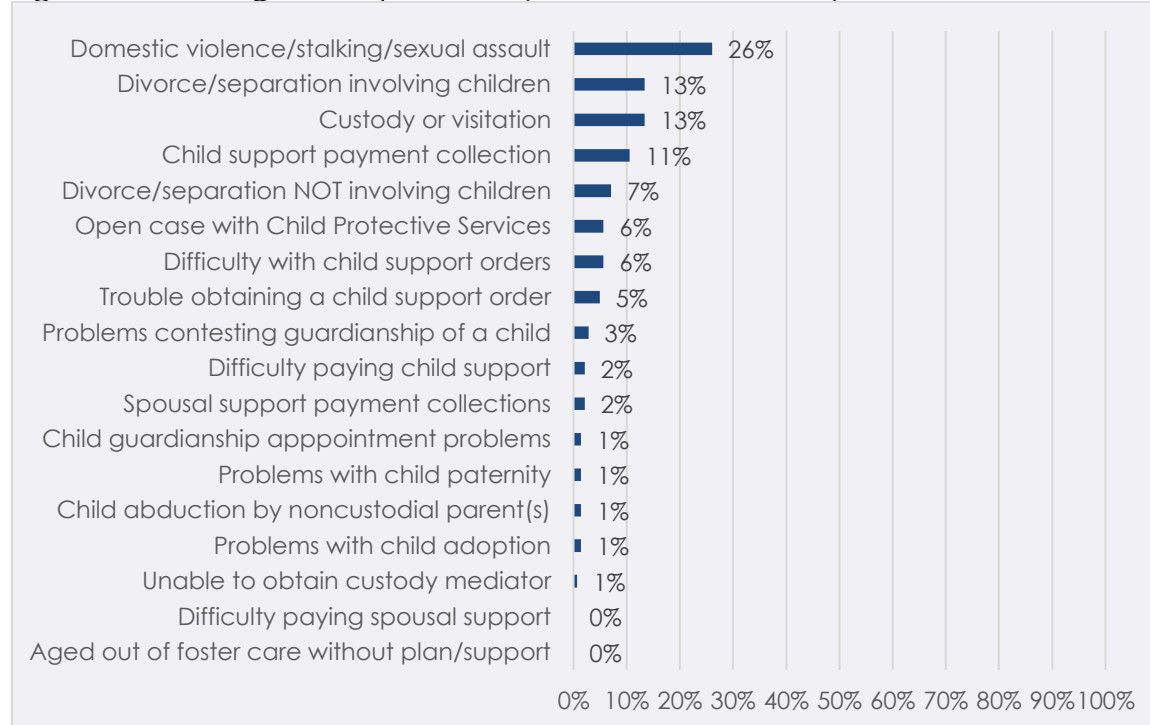


### Key Findings

The majority of the clients who responded to the survey reported they were experiencing civil legal issues that would require family law assistance; this was followed by clients experiencing medical debt issues, housing issues, other debt, and discrimination against the self and discrimination when seeking services in the community. In the figures below each legal category is broken down in detail to show the specific types of legal issues the clients reported.
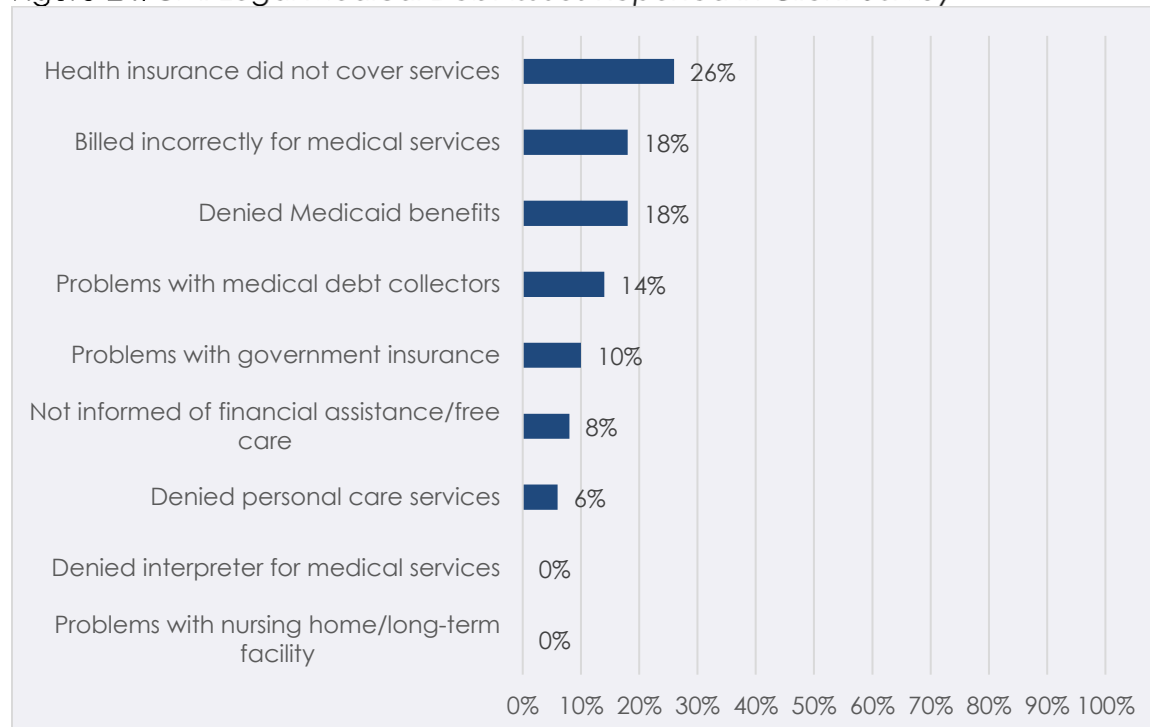
## Civil Legal Family Issues

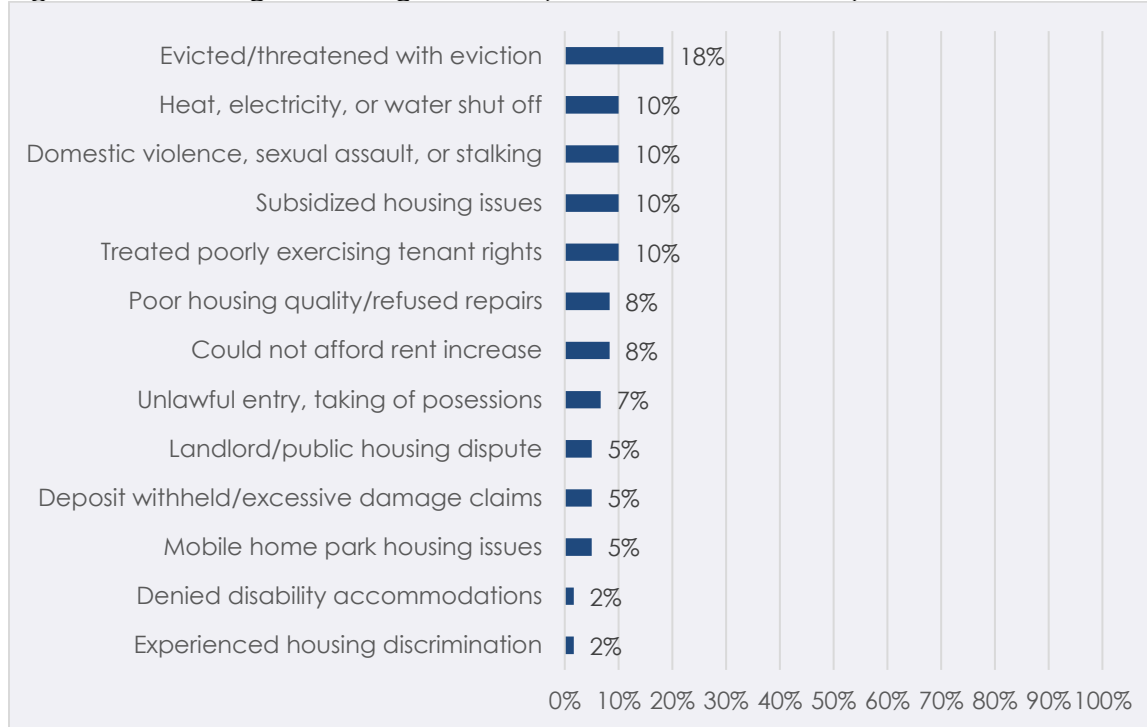Figure 23. *Civil Legal Family Issues Reported in Client Survey*



| Issue | Percent |
|---|---|
| Domestic violence/stalking/sexual assault | 26% |
| Divorce/separation involving children | 13% |
| Custody or visitation | 13% |
| Child support payment collection | 11% |
| Divorce/separation NOT involving children | 7% |
| Open case with Child Protective Services | 6% |
| Difficulty with child support orders | 6% |
| Trouble obtaining a child support order | 5% |
| Problems contesting guardianship of a child | 3% |
| Difficulty paying child support | 2% |
| Spousal support payment collections | 2% |
| Child guardianship apppointment problems | 1% |
| Problems with child paternity | 1% |
| Child abduction by noncustodial parent(s) | 1% |
| Problems with child adoption | 1% |
| Unable to obtain custody mediator | 1% |
| Difficulty paying spousal support | 0% |
| Aged out of foster care without plan/support | 0% |

## Medical Debt

Figure 24. *Civil Legal Medical Debt Issues Reported in Client Survey*



| Issue | Percent |
|---|---|
| Health insurance did not cover services | 26% |
| Billed incorrectly for medical services | 18% |
| Denied Medicaid benefits | 18% |
| Problems with medical debt collectors | 14% |
| Problems with government insurance | 10% |
| Not informed of financial assistance/free care | 8% |
| Denied personal care services | 6% |
| Denied interpreter for medical services | 0% |
| Problems with nursing home/long-term facility | 0% |

## Civil Legal Housing Issues

Figure 25. *Civil Legal Housing Issues Reported in Client Survey*



| Issue | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Evicted/threatened with eviction | 18% |
| Heat, electricity, or water shut off | 10% |
| Domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking | 10% |
| Subsidized housing issues | 10% |
| Treated poorly exercising tenant rights | 10% |
| Poor housing quality/refused repairs | 8% |
| Could not afford rent increase | 8% |
| Unlawful entry, taking of posessions | 7% |
| Landlord/public housing dispute | 5% |
| Deposit withheld/excessive damage claims | 5% |
| Mobile home park housing issues | 5% |
| Denied disability accommodations | 2% |
| Experienced housing discrimination | 2% |

## Other Financial Debt – Non Medical

Figure 26. *Civil Legal Debt Issues, Non-Medical Reported in Client Survey*



| Issue | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Threats from bill collectors | 19% |
| Wages garnished | 14% |
| Credit problems from identity theft | 11% |
| Experienced scam | 9% |
| Filed for or needed bankruptcy | 9% |
| Payday loans | 7% |
| Problems with debt reduction companies | 5% |
| Problems paying interest (non-mortgage) | 5% |
| Problems paying fine/judgement | 5% |
| Vehicle issues (payment, reposession, etc.) | 5% |
| Business fraud | 4% |
| Products that did not work as advertised | 4% |
| Problems with taxes | 4% |
| Other loans with illegal/unfair fees/terms | 0% |

## Discrimination (against self)
Figure 27. *Civil Legal Debt Issues, Discrimination against the Self-Reported in Client Survey*
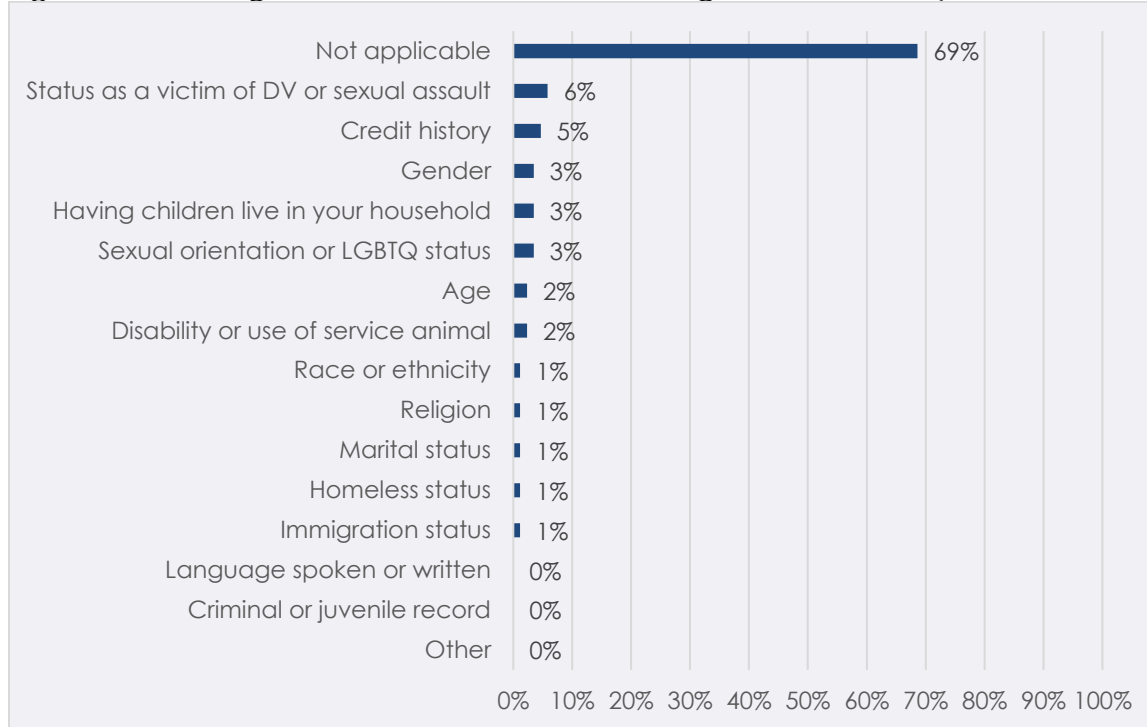


## Discrimination (while seeking services)
Figure 28. *Civil Legal Debt Issues, Discrimination While Seeking Services Reported in Client Survey*
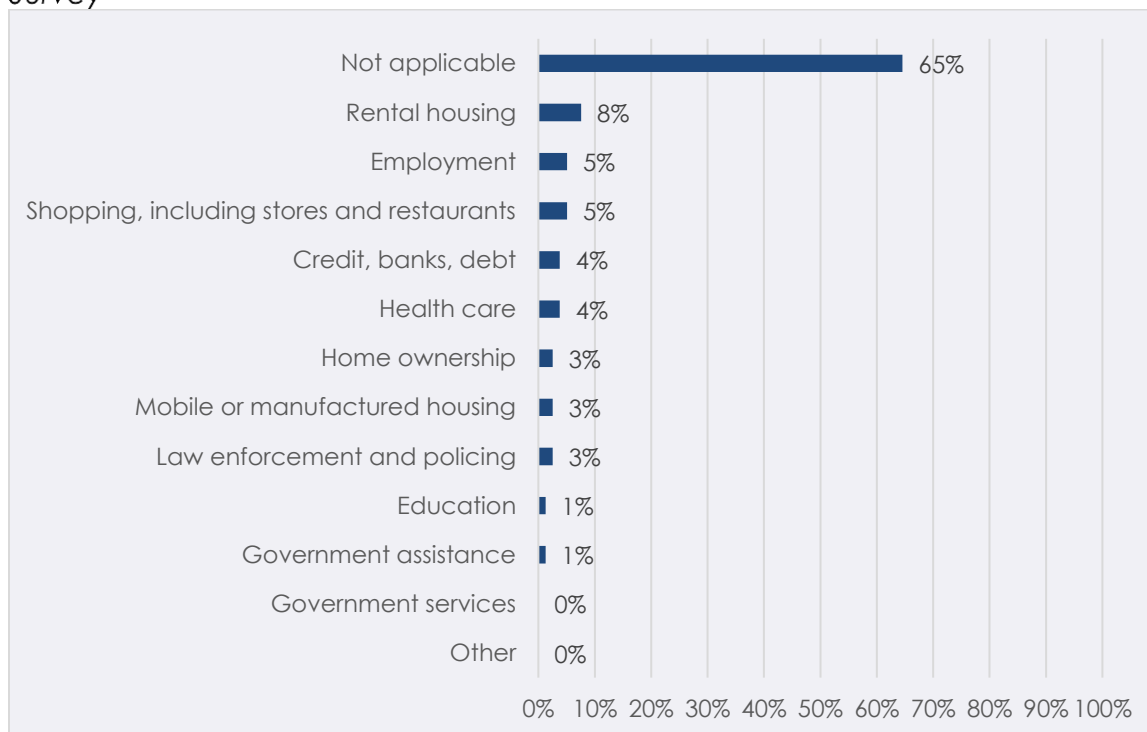
## How Clients Access Legal Services

The civil legal client survey also asked questions about where and what kind of legal services clients may have sought in the past year and issues or barriers they may have encountered when seeking legal assistance, including whether they thought they were treated fairly. Clients were also asked about their familiarity with the available services.

The most common legal service clients reported trying to access was legal aid, such as help from Legal Aid of Wyoming (21%), which was followed by volunteer and other unpaid attorneys (14%). The majority of the clients reported getting legal advice (20%) and assistance completing forms and other paperwork (14%).

The most common barrier reported by respondents was that they have trouble understanding court rules and procedures (36%). This was followed by another 29% reporting they were denied an attorney. A total of 52% of respondents reported they are treated fairly in the legal system *most or all of the time*, and 47% reported being treated fairly only *some of the time, rarely, or not at all* (percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding).

When asked which way of getting legal information is helpful and useful, 18% reported talking to a lawyer by phone or in person was most useful, and 14% reported visiting a website was useful. The next most frequent means of receiving useful help included having a lawyer prepare forms and letters (13%), having a lawyer review forms and letters (12%), and having a lawyer "take care of the problem" (11%). Finally, clients reported when they are seeking legal help the two resources they were most familiar with were Legal Aid of Wyoming (26%) and Equal Justice Wyoming (15%). Another 8% reported familiarity with the Wyoming Children's Law Center. Complete results for each of these service findings appear in the figures that follow.

### Type of Legal Help Sought by Clients

Figure 29. *Where Clients Tried to Access Legal Help in the Past 12 Months*
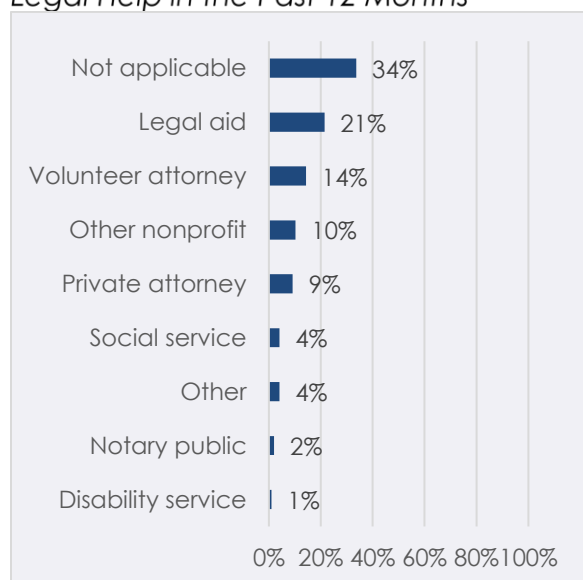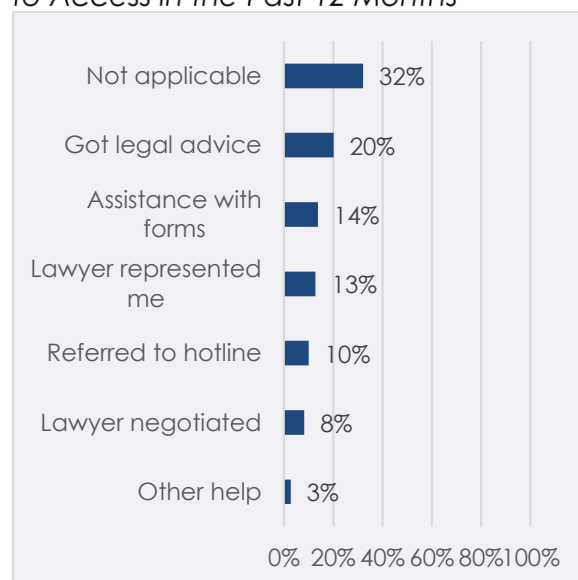


Figure 30. *Type of Legal Help Clients Tried to Access in the Past 12 Months*

## Barriers to Service and Fair Treatment Accessing Services

Figure 31. *Barriers to Accessing Services in the Past 12 Months*
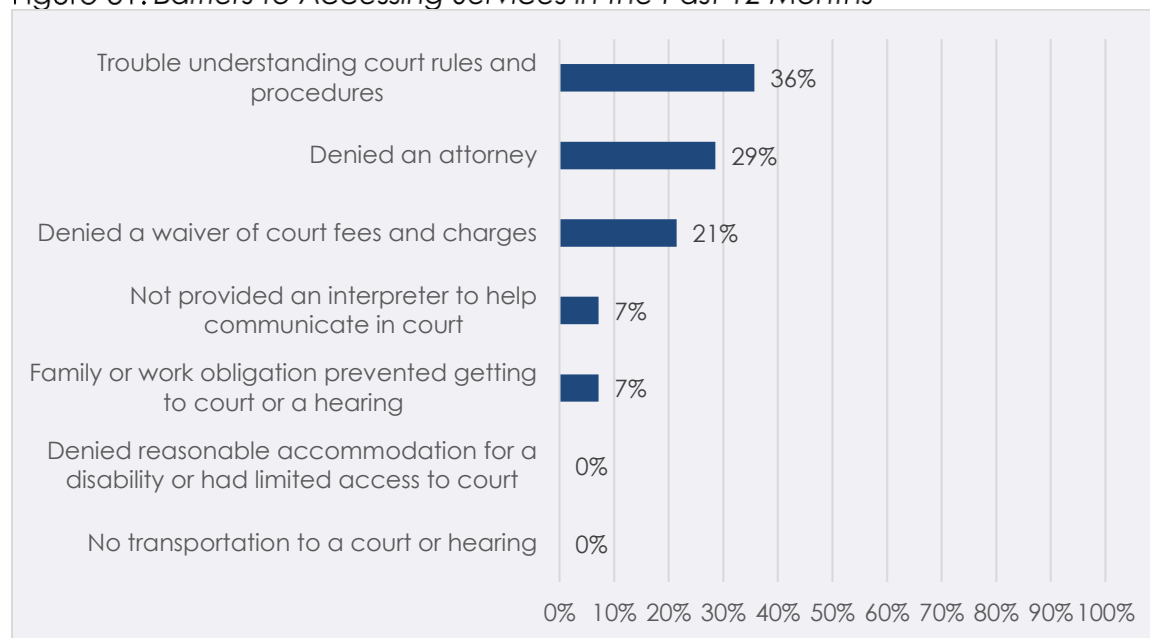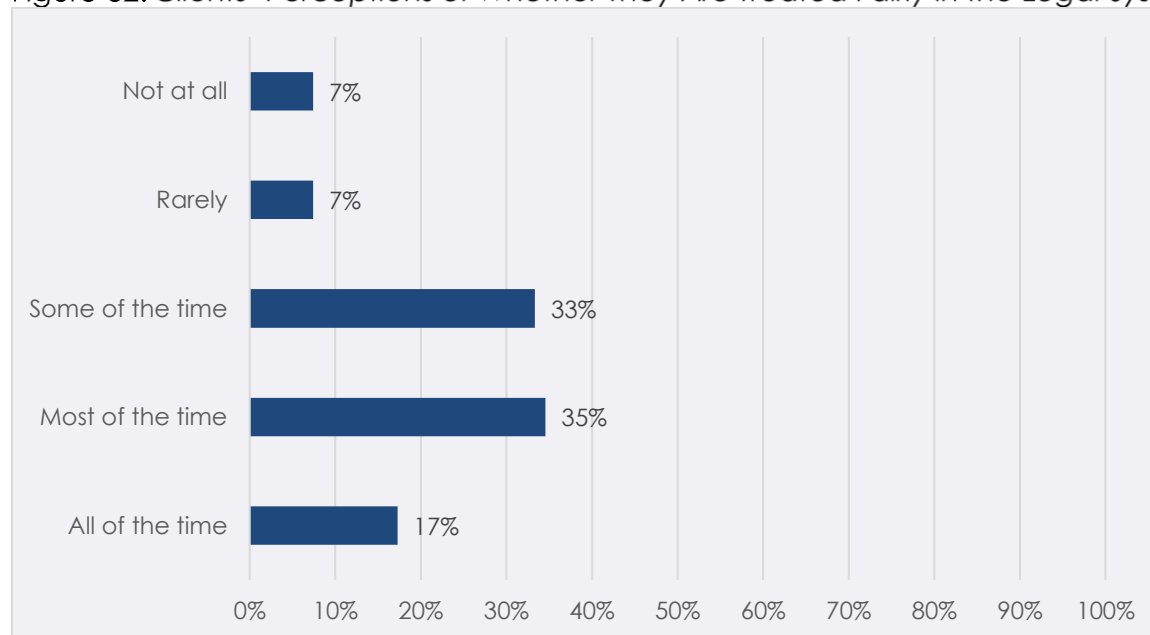


Figure 32. *Clients' Perceptions of Whether They Are Treated Fairly in the Legal System*
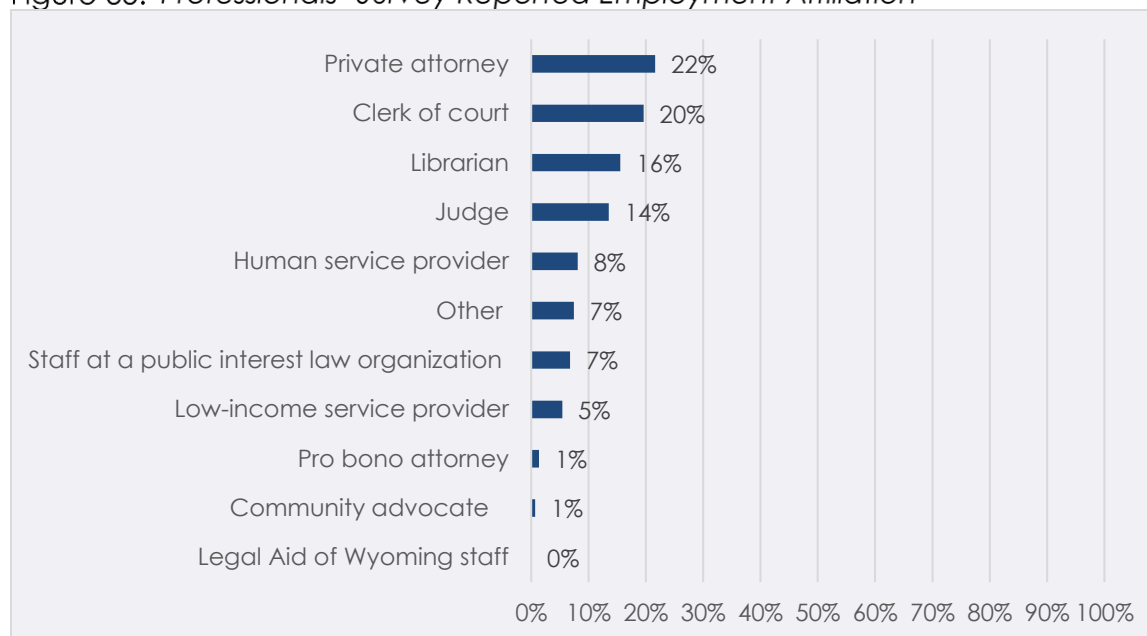


## Legal Professional's Survey

We had 148 legal professionals and professionals who work in fields that have contact with the client population complete the survey In this section we present key demographics, key findings, and information on how professionals perceive their clients' legal needs. Appendix A has item-level responses to the professionals' survey questions.

## Demographics

The greatest percentage of respondents was private attorneys (22%), court clerks (20%), librarians (16%), and judges (14%). Respondents represented every county in Wyoming with the exception of Hot Springs.

Figure 33. *Professionals' Survey Reported Employment Affiliation*



## Most Common Legal Services Provided

Similar to the client survey, professionals responded that the bulk of their cases in the last 12 months involved family law matters (79%). Services that facilitate divorce were most common (10%) followed by domestic violence, stalking, and sexual abuse cases (9%), and by individuals who had an open case with the Department of Family Services (9%). Financial debt other than medical debt (70%) was reported next most. Wage garnishment (17%) and bankruptcy (15%) cases also were most frequently reported. This was followed by housing (68%), which involved working most often with homeless individuals (15%), individuals who were evicted or threatened with eviction (14%), and those who were involved landlord or public housing disputes of various natures (12%).

> *Key informant interviews and open-ended survey questions revealed concerns about the elderly, especially with regard to housing issues. One survey respondent indicated . . . "Aging adults who live alone seem to have a limited support network."*

Several professionals reported they serve clients with issues involving police and criminal justice system (44%). The most typical cases reported included needing to expunge a criminal record (42%), working with clients who are afraid to call the police after experiencing a crime (24%), and being stopped by the police without good reason or being unfairly arrested (17%). Employment related cases were also common accounting 43% of cases reported by the professionals. The most typical employment cases served involved having work issues due to domestic violence, being unfairly terminated (18%), having employers who did not want to pay wages, overtime, or benefits that were due

(14%). Professionals also reported serving a large number of cases that involve medical debt (43%). The most common type of medical debt cases were health insurance not paying for medically covered services (19%), experience difficulty with medical debt collections (18%), and being billed incorrectly for medical services (18%). Details that describe the specific types of issues for each topic are displayed in the graphs that follow.
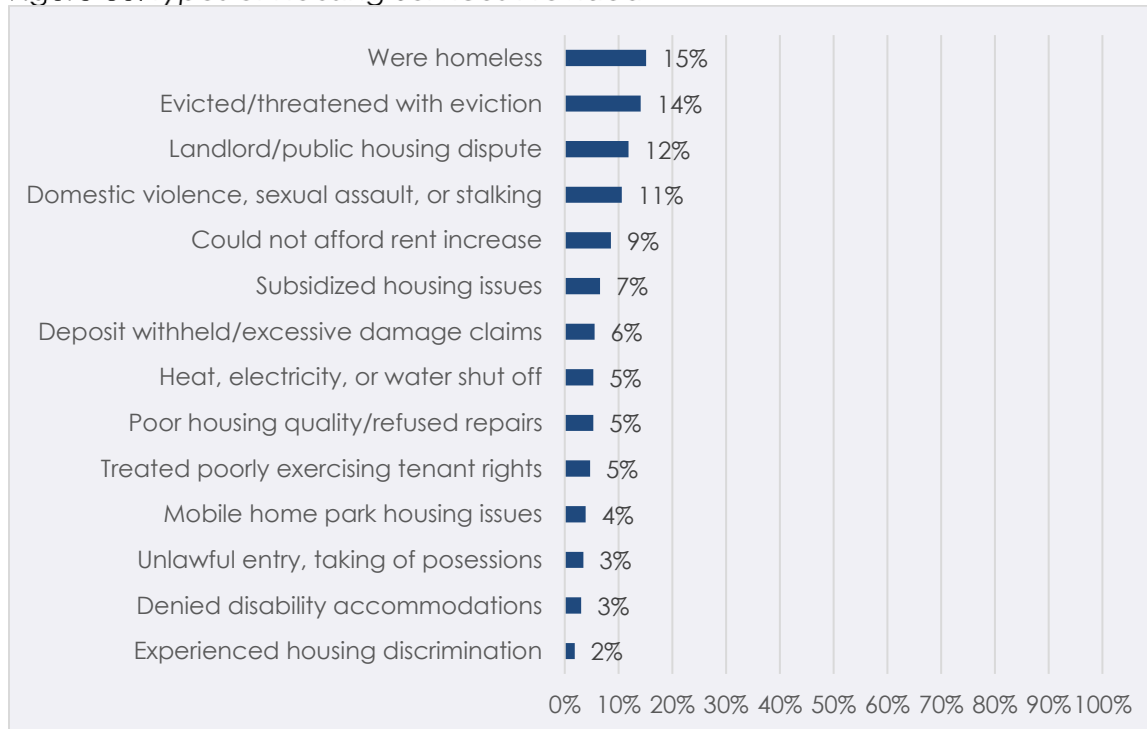
## Family Law

Figure 34. *Types of Family Law Services Provided*
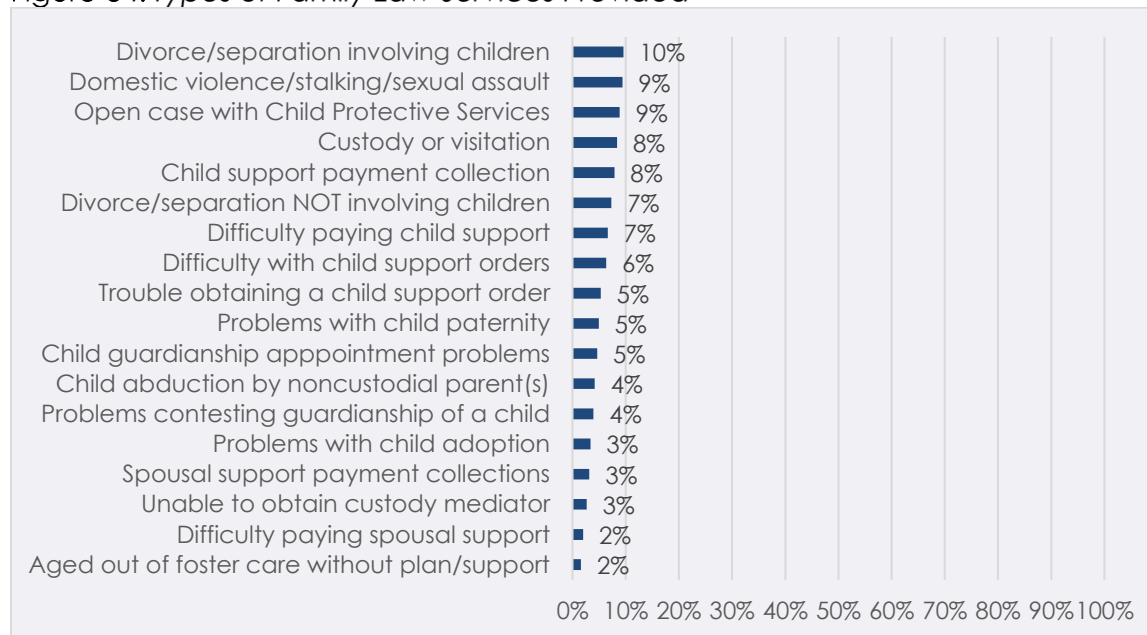


## Financial Debt other than Medical Debt

Figure 35. *Types of Financial Debt Services Provided*

Figure 36. *Types of Housing Services Provided*

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Were homeless | 15% |
| Evicted/threatened with eviction | 14% |
| Landlord/public housing dispute | 12% |
| Domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking | 11% |
| Could not afford rent increase | 9% |
| Subsidized housing issues | 7% |
| Deposit withheld/excessive damage claims | 6% |
| Heat, electricity, or water shut off | 5% |
| Poor housing quality/refused repairs | 5% |
| Treated poorly exercising tenant rights | 5% |
| Mobile home park housing issues | 4% |
| Unlawful entry, taking of posessions | 3% |
| Denied disability accommodations | 3% |
| Experienced housing discrimination | 2% |

Criminal Justice Related

Figure 37. *Types of Law Enforcement Involvement in the Past Year*

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Needed to expunge or remove something from a criminal record | 42% |
| Afraid to call the police after experiencing a crime | 24% |
| Stopped by the police without a good reason or unfairly arrested | 17% |
| Not enough police in neighborhood, police did not respond quickly to a 911 call, or police did not take reports of problems… | 10% |
| Verbally or physically threatened, treated roughly, or assaulted by the police | 7% |

## Open-Ended Questions

The professionals' needs assessment survey had a few open-ended questions asking them if there was anything else they thought would be useful for us to know and if there were any emerging issues they may be seeing that we didn't ask about.  The word clouds

below show the topics mentioned most often.

In the question about whether there was anything else they thought it would be useful for us to know several respondents mentioned the pro-se forms and ways that the difficulty with the forms could be addressed. This has been a recurring theme across all data sources in the needs assessment. They also mentioned how much more helpful they believe the librarians could be, especially in light of the fact that the infrastructure for working with librarians is already present in every county.

In response to the emerging issues question, several attorneys mentioned that they are seeing a lot of cases wherein grandparents and parents who are having their rights reinstated are having a lot of difficulty with the schools. Several legal professionals also expressed how difficult it is to work with clients who have active mental health and substance abuse issues. Also frequently mentioned was a rise in human trafficking, problems with rural isolation, and while not new transportation was frequently mentioned in response to this question.

Figure 38. *Please use this space to tell us anything else you think it would be useful for us to know about serving our clients*

Figure 39. *Are there any "emerging issues" or types of clients you see, or are beginning to see, that we didn't ask about?*



## Case Management Trend Analysis

### Types of Services Provided: 2017 - 2019

We examined closed cases in the case management data for service trends across the years 2017-2019.  This section begins with aggregate-level data for the types of cases served by Legal Aid of Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming and Equal Justice Wyoming's grantees.  We examined the data across all years to determine which types of cases occur most frequently at the aggregate level.  We then report the types of cases in detail for the "top five" aggregate categories.

In accordance with the survey data, family law cases were most common. During the three-year period there were 7,701 family law cases for which services were provided. This was followed by 2,250 consumer finance cases, and 1,446 housing cases. The aggregate category that contained the next most common types of cases was a "miscellaneous" category of which there were 793 cases. This category included cases such as wills and estates, tribal law, advance directives and power of attorney, among others.  Coming in 5th were cases that concern individual rights. There were 712 individual rights cases over the three-year period.

## Case Frequency as Reported in Legal Providers' Case Management Databases
Figure 40. *Civil Legal Aid Closed Case Management Case Types 2017-2019*
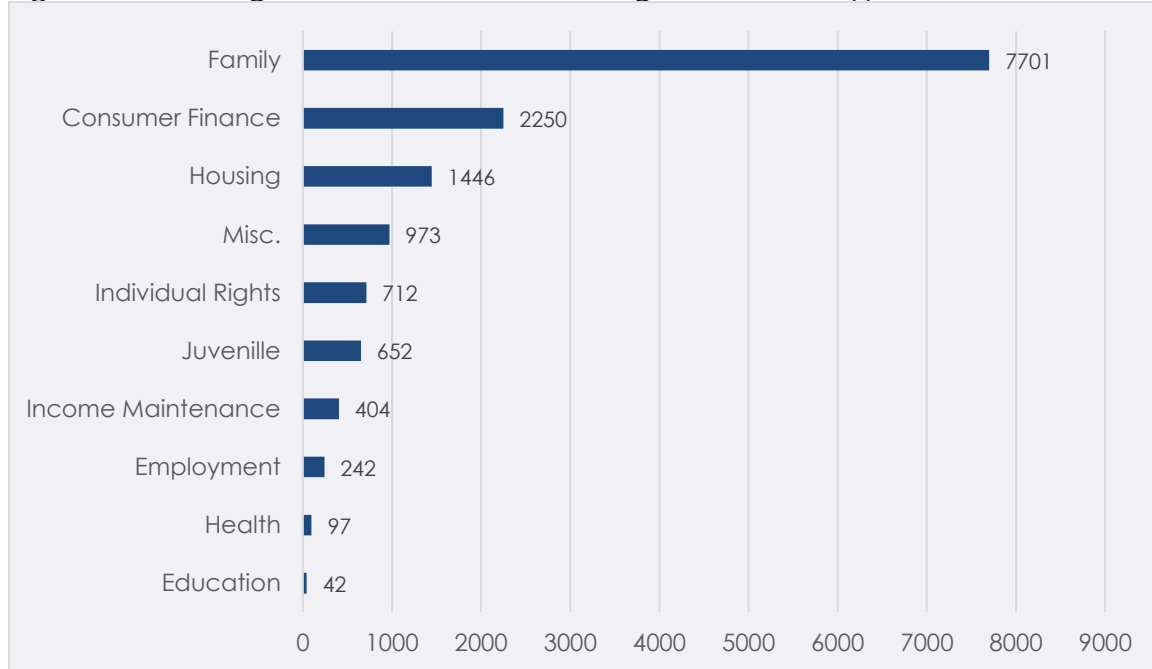


## Family Cases
Figure 41. *Family Case Management Data 2017-2019*
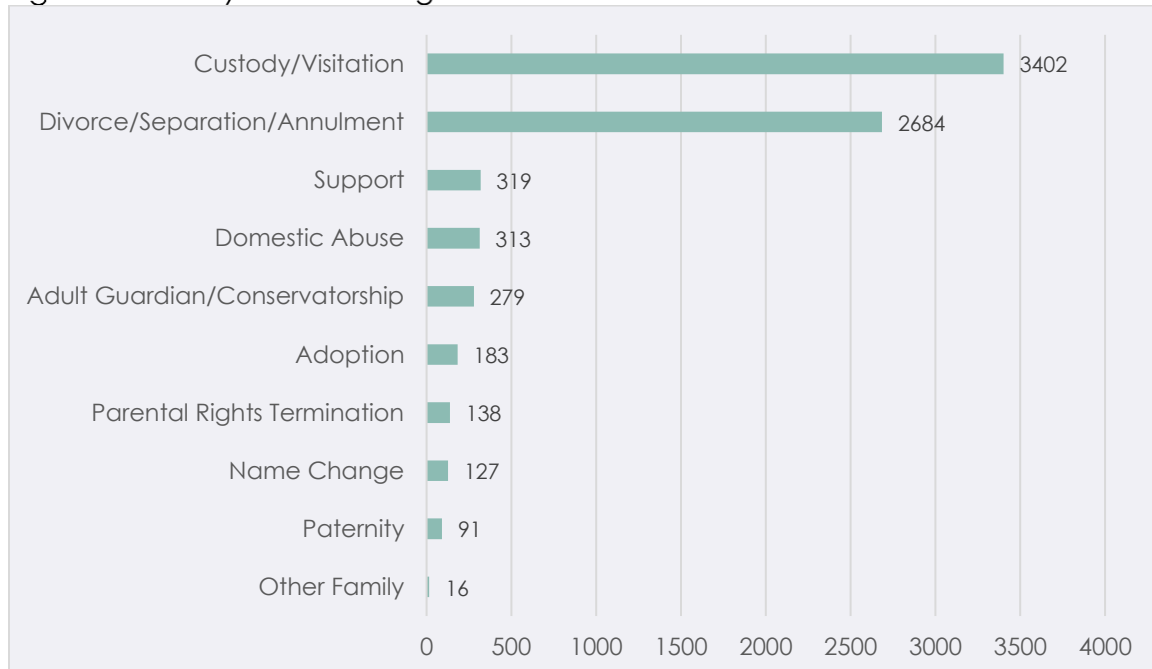
## Consumer Finance Cases

Figure 42. *Consumer/Finance Case Management Cases 2017-2019*
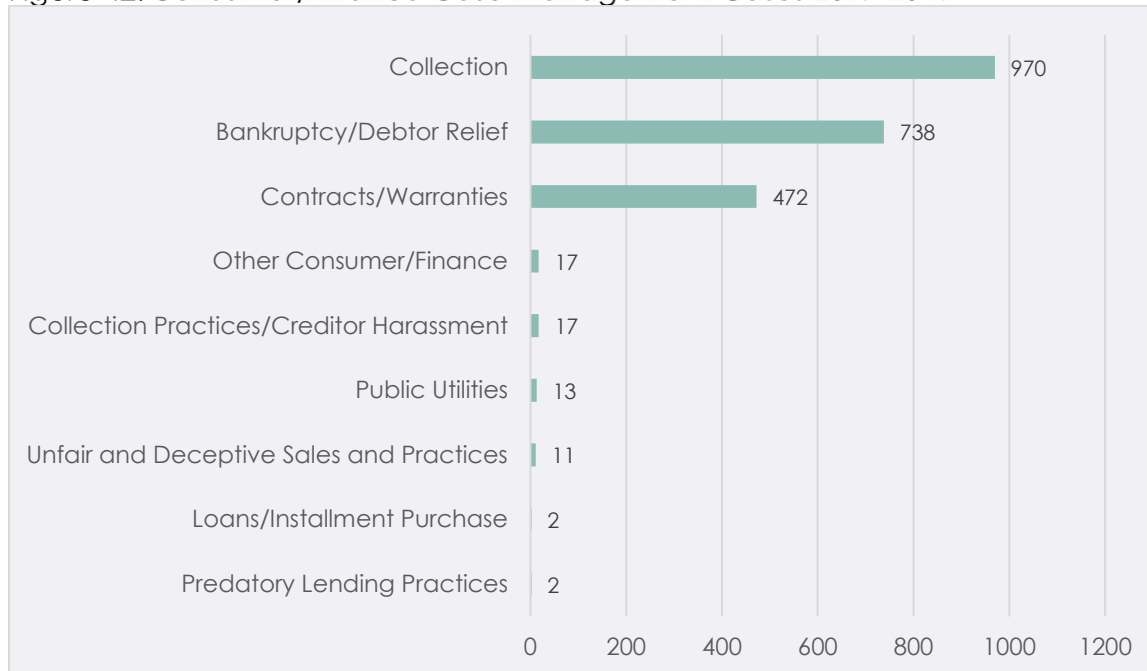


Figure 43. *Housing Case Management Cases 2017-2019*
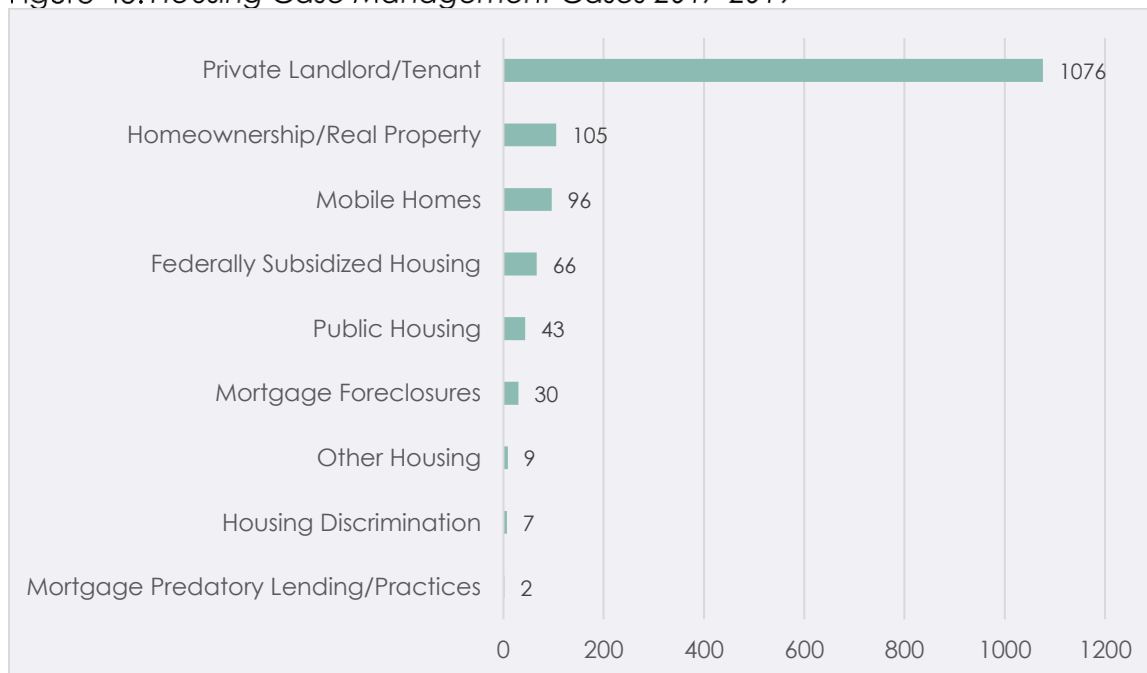
Figure 44. *Individual Rights Management Cases 2017-2019*
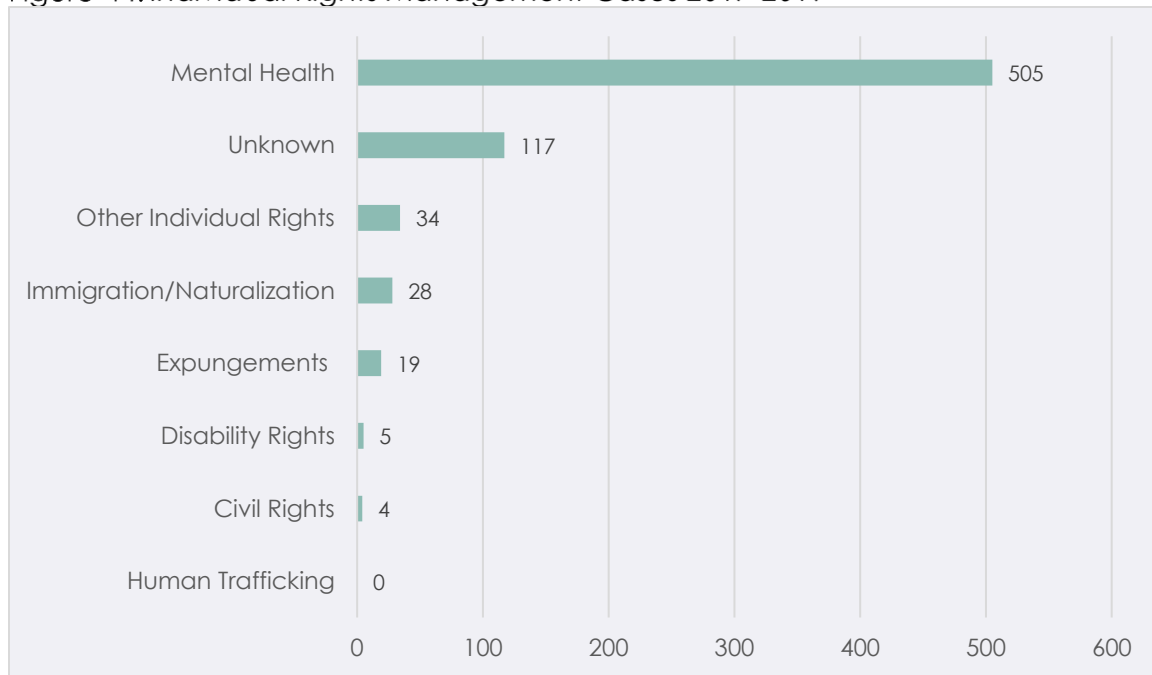


Figure 45. *Miscellaneous Case Management Cases 2017-2019*
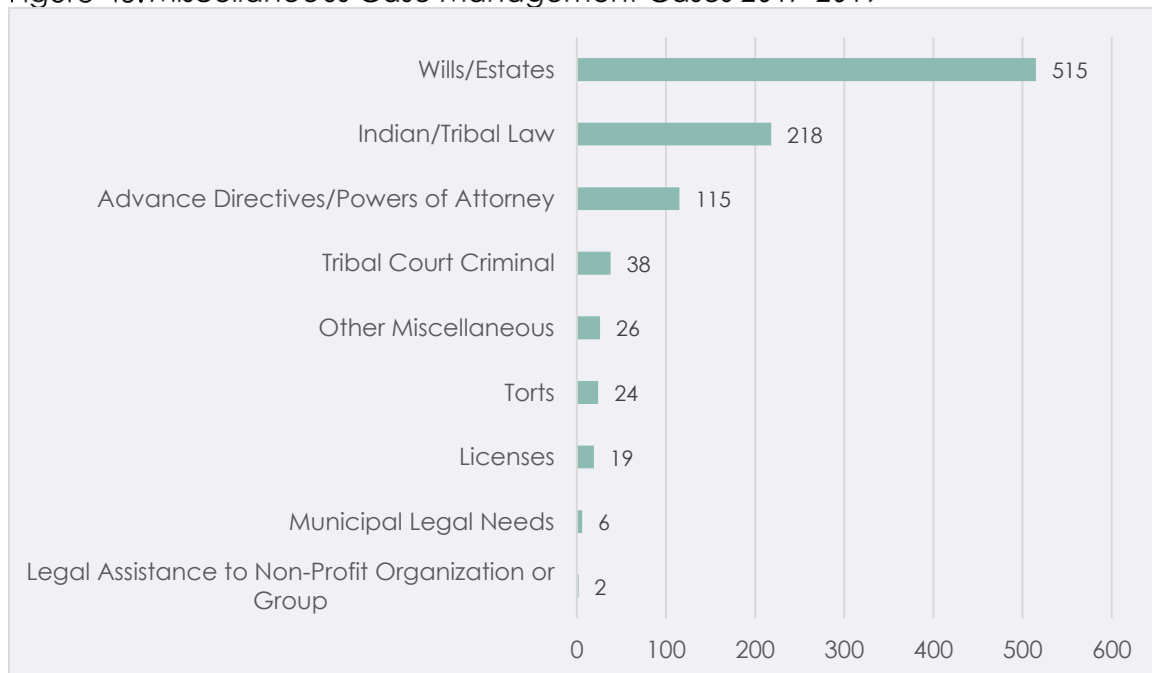
## Types of Case Management Cases by Year 2017 – 2019

Next, we examined the aggregate data across years to discern trends for the top five case categories. Throughout the state of Wyoming, legal professionals provide family law services for well over 2,000 individuals annually ranging from over 2,300 to over 2700 in each year. Other types of cases showed similar patterns, meaning the numbers were stable across years and did not show any wide levels of variation.

Most Common Civil Legal Cases Served

Figure 46. *Top Five Civil Legal Aid Types of Cases 2017-2019*
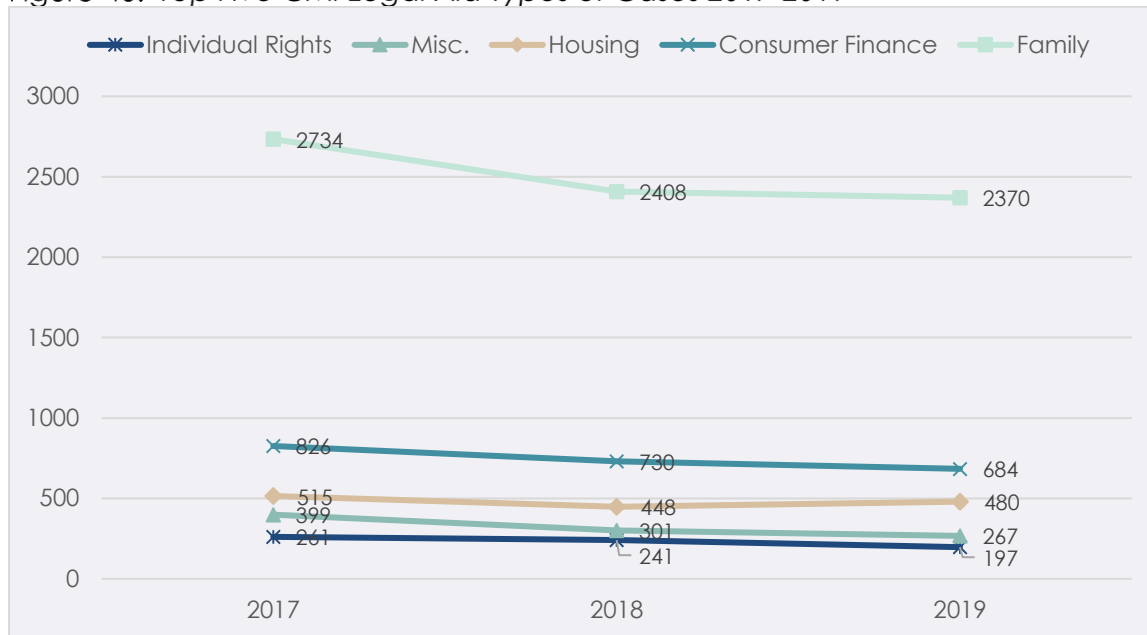


Other Civil Legal Cases Served

Figure 47. *Other Civil Legal Aid Types of Cases 2017-2019*

## Key Informant and Focus Group Interviews
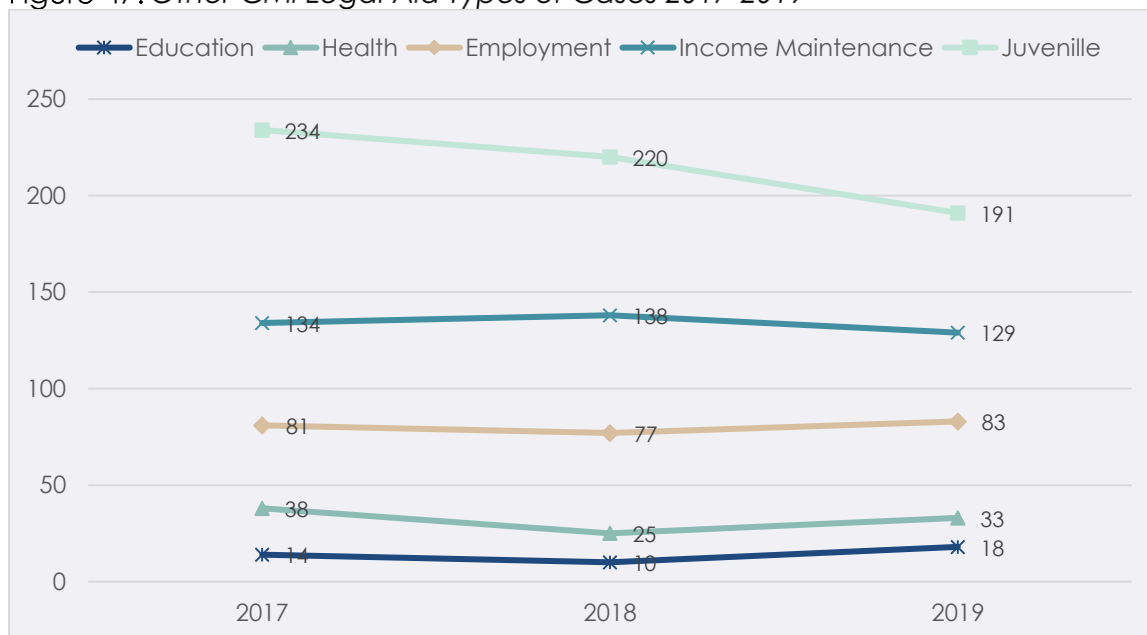
Overall, there was consensus among clients and professionals that the legal system is extremely difficult to understand and navigate for people who are not familiar with the system. These problems are magnified for individuals who are unable to access free legal services due to conflicts of interest, or who are unable to afford attorney fees. Many clients indicated they found it difficult to describe their problems, and had even more difficulty researching what to do about their problems using the internet.

The following section presents the results from the combined professional key informant interviews and focus groups, and results from the combined client key informant interviews.

## Professional Interviews and Focus Groups

1.  What are the most pressing or harmful issues facing the clients you serve?



The most pressing or harmful issues facing clients are related to family law, landlord-tenant and other housing issues, and financial problems. The family law issues primarily include child custody and divorce. Landlord-tenant issues are related to the condition of housing units, issues related to security deposits, and evictions, while other housing issues include renters' rights, housing assistance, and access to affordable housing. Financial problems are related to debt collection and bankruptcy. An overriding issue facing most clients seeking free legal services involves a general inability to understand or complete the required pro se legal forms.

## 1a. What types of cases do you routinely see?



Interviewees and focus group participants indicated that the majority of cases they routinely see fall into the following four main categories:

- Family law – child custody, child support, divorce
- Landlord-tenant cases
- Protection orders
- Debt collection

## 2. What are the three or four most important unmet legal needs for individuals?



The most important unmet needs for individuals seeking legal assistance are a lack of financial resources and general inability to afford lawyers and an inability to understand or complete the pro se legal packets. These two issues are particularly apparent in family law cases, and divorce in particular. Lawyers cited communication difficulties during divorce proceedings, especially when protection orders are in place or when neither party has legal representation. Lack of legal resources or administrative ways to dissolve marriages leave many people unable to secure a divorce in Wyoming.

### 3. How many times in the past year did you turn away clients who otherwise qualified for services?



Most programs providing legal services to low income clients reported they needed to turn potential clients away. The primary reasons for denying services to potential clients include the program already being at full-capacity, or available lawyers have a conflict of interest. Many individuals request assistance with pro se legal packets from court clerks or librarians who are not able to dispense legal advice. When programs are unable to serve a potential client they are most likely to refer the person to Legal Aid Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming, the Wyoming State Bar, or the University of Wyoming Legal Services Clinics.

### 3d. What are the two or three most important things that could be done to increase access to free legal services for more clients?



Most interviewees and focus group participants felt the best way to increase access to free legal services for more clients was by increasing funding to hire more attorneys and other legal professionals. Services could also be increased by improving access to and understanding of the pro se legal packets.

## 4. What would make the services you provide more effective?



Interviewees and focus group participants overwhelmingly felt that the best way to make services more effective was by making more attorneys available who can assist with the Legal Aid hotline, and by having more attorneys who do not have conflicts of interest, and by allowing more time to adequately and effectively represent people. Services could also be made more effective by providing more ways for individuals to access services, and by allowing a broader group of individuals to assist with lower-level legal tasks while under the supervision of an attorney.

## 4a. Which resources do you use the most?



The most widely used legal resources include Equal Justice Wyoming, Legal Aid Wyoming, and the University of Wyoming Legal Services Clinics. Other services include the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the State Law Library, social services across the state. And the electronic pro se legal packets.

## 5.  What types of barriers do clients have that prevent them from accessing court?



There are numerous barriers that prevent clients from accessing court.  For example, clients face financial barriers including a lack of money to pay court costs, transportation costs to and from court, and attorney's fees.  There are significant geographic barriers across the state that make it difficult for clients to access court including distance to court houses, and the time required to miss work to attend court.  Other barriers include a lack of knowledge about court processes and procedures, difficulty understanding the pro se legal packets, and a lack of computer and internet access, and research skills to research legal issues.

## 6.  What are the barriers to providing services to this population?



Interviewees and focus group participants identified many diverse reasons why it is difficult to provide services.  Many lawyers indicated they lacked experience in needed areas like immigration law, or cases involving disability claims and appeals.  Other lawyers indicated the biggest barrier to providing services was not having enough attorneys to meet demand.  Others stated that lack of funds made it especially difficult to provide services to clients living in very rural or remote communities and counties.  Finally, many people reported that clients with untreated mental health problems were particularly difficult to work with.

## Client Interviews & Focus Group

### 1. Where do you go to get legal help?

Clients who participated in key informant interviews accessed help from a number of different sources. The primary places clients sought help was from Legal Aid Wyoming, the Wyoming State Bar, Equal Justice Wyoming, and the University of Wyoming Legal Clinics. Most clients did not know where to go on their own but were referred to the above agencies either by friends or by personnel at the court house.

### 2. What kinds of issues do you think people need the most legal help with?

Clients indicated that they believe most people need help with family law issues, landlord-tenant issues, financial issues including bankruptcy, and employment discrimination. The general consensus was that most people in Wyoming do not have enough money to hire a private attorney and find themselves overwhelmed with and intimidated by their legal situation.

When asked what the most important issue was they needed help with, most clients indicated they needed help identifying the steps they need to take to work through their legal problem. Clients reported being unfamiliar with the legal system, processes, and procedures. Even when they could access the pro se legal packets, most clients reported they did not know how to determine which forms to complete or how to complete them.

### 3. What barriers keep you from getting the help you need?



Initially, most clients reported that they did not know where to get help with their legal problem until they asked either friends or staff at the courthouse. Once they identified where to go for help, most clients indicated there were no further barriers. A few clients experienced staff turnover mid-case and felt that the case transition was difficult. Other clients said they experienced a false sense of security once a lawyer was assigned to their case, and they would have done much more work if they knew earlier that the lawyer assigned to them had little experience with the issue they were facing. Families going through divorce reported frustration that only one party could receive legal assistance from Legal Aid Wyoming leaving the other party at a significant disadvantage legally.

> *Families going through divorce reported frustration that only one party could receive legal assistance from Legal Aid Wyoming leaving the other party at a significant disadvantage legally.*

When trying to access services, several clients reported that their biggest barriers to getting legal help was their personal difficulty explaining the situation they needed help with and retaining information given to them by lawyers. Several other clients needed help with harassment at subsidized housing complexes and found it difficult to get help resolving their problems.

## 4.  Do you have access to the internet?



Every client interviewed for the needs assessment study except one reported they had access to the internet.  The client who did not have access did not want a computer or a smart cell phone.  The clients who do have access indicated that they either access the internet through a computer in their home or through their cell phones.  No one reported having difficulties accessing the internet.

Even though clients had access to the internet, most did not know how to use the internet to find out about their legal issues.  Several clients were referred to helpful websites by credit counseling agencies, but outside of financial problems, clients indicated they did not know how to do their own research.

> *Even though clients had access to the internet, most did not know how to use the internet to find out about their legal issues.*

Clients indicated the best way to help them would be to provide a protocol of steps that should be taken to work through legal issues.  If more guided information can't be given, clients expressed a strong desire to have someone sit down with them and walk them through what they need to do using language they can understand.

> *Clients expressed a strong desire to have someone sit down with them and walk them through what they need to do using language they can understand*

## 4a.  Which civil legal topics would you be most interested in learning about?

TAX LAW
VERBALLY HEARD
LANDLORD TENANT ISSUES
CHILD CUSTODY
PEOPLE
LAWYER
DISABILITY CLAIMS AND APPEALS
HARASSED RELATED
PROPERTY MANAGER PROTECT
ISSUES
HARASSMENT
BACKED-DOWN
TALKING

Clients who participated in interviews indicated they would be most interested in learning about child custody, landlord-tenant issues, disability claims and appeals, and tax law. Two clients reported experiencing serious harassment in subsidized housing complexes and did not know where to go to find out what they could do to improve their situation despite talking to both the police and lawyers.

## 4b.  What websites did you visit when you were looking for help?

INTERNET EXPLORER WEBSITES
GUARDIAN AD LITEM
MEDIATION
STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
WEBSITE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BANKRUPTCY COURT
NO
LEGAL AID WYOMING
FIND
EQUAL JUSTICE WYOMING
TO TRIED
GOOGLE

The clients who did try to research their legal problem accessed websites from Legal Aid Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming, the Wyoming State Bar, the Federal Government Bankruptcy Court website, mediation websites, and the Guardian Ad Litem website.

Most clients were not asked for money on any of the legal aid websites they visited.  One client was asked for money on several websites but backed out of them and did not give any money.

## 5. If you have received legal help before, how did you feel you were treated?



Most clients who participated in interviews reported feeling very grateful for the legal help they received. Several clients reported having to wait a long time to talk to someone at the legal clinics but reported being satisfied once they were helped.

Several clients indicated they would have done much more work on their case if they had known ahead of time that they could participate at this level. There was an assumption that once they had a lawyer, the lawyer would take care of everything and they didn't realize how much they could have contributed to the outcome of their case.

> *Several clients indicated they would have done much more work on their case if they had known ahead of time that they could participate at this level.*

## 6. What was the final outcome of your legal issue?



Most clients reported that their legal issues were either already resolved or would be resolved in the near future. The two clients dealing with landlord-tenant issues indicated that their issues were unresolved and they did not know of any legal course of action they could take to resolve the problems.

## 7. What is the most important thing that would help improve your situation?



Clients had many thoughts on actions that could be taken to help improve their situation. Primarily, clients felt that the most important thing that could help them was knowing where to go to get affordable legal help. Secondly, clients felt they needed access to

> *Clients felt that more work on the front-end, especially with financial issues, could have prevented the legal situations they found themselves in*

understandable information to help them sort through their legal issues and plan a course of action. Finally, clients felt that more work on the front-end, especially with financial issues, could have prevented the legal situations they found themselves in.

## 8. Is there anything else we should know that would help us improve the civil legal system in Wyoming?



Several clients reported that using e-mail communications would have facilitated their legal process greatly instead of having to rely on in-person visits or phone calls. Other clients suggested that having more lawyers at the legal clinics would reduce wait times and provide a way to help more people. In general, clients felt that there was a shortage of lawyers in Wyoming with the specialized training they needed to address their legal problems, especially lawyers well-versed in disability law, and immigration law. Finally,

several clients felt it would be helpful to have a resource guide on where to go for different kinds of help, and to have a worksheet that would help them clearly articulate the problems they need to explain to legal professionals.

## Mixed Methods Data Integration Results

The needs assessment had four key data sources that were utilized to determine the statewide need for civil legal services. These included

1. Social indicators that describe the population in need of services
2. Surveys of clients and legal professionals to describe current civil legal needs
3. Analysis of case management data to discern needs that have been met over time
4. Focus groups and stakeholder interviews to further ascertain current and emerging civil legal service needs and to provide context for the quantitative data

All four data sources converge with each other. That is, similar results emerge in each type of data. We have demonstrated this throughout the report utilizing text boxes to underscore similar results found across data sources. While the quantitative data point to several issues in isolation, the qualitative data provides an opportunity to add contextual factors to the findings. For instance, housing was a top issue in every data source. And while this is true for numerous clients, it was only through the qualitative data analysis that we learned there are key issues being experienced by the growing elderly population (lack of quality housing) and that landlords threaten to withhold security deposits without which most tenants cannot afford to move.

> *At least two clients reported in their interviews that they felt they were trapped in their living situations by their landlords:*
>
> *One said she was living in a senior housing complex that wasn't safely or properly maintained and that people who had moved because of it did not get their security deposit back. Without her deposit she was unable to secure another apartment.*
>
> *Another client reported a hostile landlord situation and also felt he couldn't move because he wouldn't get his security deposit back.*

The focus groups were held in several libraries around the state. This enabled a large number of librarians to attend the focus groups. A number of librarians also completed the professionals' survey. The professionals' survey did not have a specific category for "librarian" on the demographic question that asked about the respondent's role. Given the number of librarians that participated in the survey and the focus groups, a decision was made to recode them from the "other" category into their own category in the survey data. It is not uncommon for analysis of data from multiple sources to inform a mid-study decision such as this in a convergent mixed methods design. These two data sources further showed that there is untapped potential among our state's libraries and librarians. Several people in the focus groups mentioned that clients of legal service providers often seek help in libraries (using computers, internet, and other resources) and the librarians help them access forms, websites, and other relevant information.

> *Several librarians completed the professionals' survey and reported in focus groups that they assist a large number of civil legal aid clients.*

Another important area where the data converged and we found confirmation across databases was the complexity of the clients' life problems. The social indicator data describe various aspects of the clients' lives relative to their economic means and challenges. This includes not only poverty but challenges accessing food and transportation, financial challenges paying both medical and non-medical bills, and challenges keeping a home. And while all of their issues may not necessarily be legal issues the multiple, complex problems they face become part of the dialogue with legal service providers and often affect their ability to effectively resolve their legal problems. We conducted 5 focus groups, 20 stakeholder interviews with professionals, 5 interviews with Legal Aid of Wyoming clients and one interview with an Equal Justice Wyoming client wherein these issues were discussed at length. The overarching perception by professionals was that clients seem to be experiencing more numerous, complex problems that are more difficult to solve than they may have been in the past. While we did not collect any specific data that bears this out per se, it is a theme that can be seen throughout the data sources in this needs assessment and could be explored in future needs assessments.

> *The clients being served by the legal professionals in Wyoming seem to be consumed in their effort to address life's basic needs. Many clients have multiple, complex problems that include lack of safe and secure housing, being cost-burdened when they do have housing, not having enough food to eat, and not having reliable transportation, among numerous other problems.*

## Civil Legal Services:  Capacity, Eligibility, Need and Demand

### Met Demand: Civil Legal Service Provider Capacity 2017 - 2019

The Wyoming legal aid system has six primary legal service providers. The table below shows the number of closed cases between 2017 and 2019 obtained via the providers' case management records. The table also shows the capacity provided by two newer programs, Wyoming Free Legal Answers and the Volunteer Reference Attorney programs that Equal Justice Wyoming manages.  The Wyoming Free Legal Answers program is implemented via a secure online portal and offers free legal advice online to eligible individuals who submit their questions through the portal.  The Volunteer Reference Attorney program places volunteer attorneys in courthouses to assist individuals that represent themselves as they navigate the court system. It should be noted that the drop in cases in 2018 and 2019 observed at Equal Justice Wyoming coincides with the onset and familiarity of these two new programs.  It should also be noted that the Wyoming Coalition against Domestic Violence provided services in 2017 but the data were missing in the data sources available for the needs assessment.

*Table 11. Statewide Civil Legal Service Capacity Summary 2017-2019*

| Service Provided | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legal Aid of Wyoming | 4,795 | 4,139 | 3,957 |
| Equal Justice Wyoming | 278 | 186* | 146* |
| Medical Legal Partnership | 90 | 132 | 53 |
| Teton County Access to Justice Center | 42 | 83 | 63 |
| Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault | Missing | 45 | 125 |
| Children's Law Center | 70 | 46 | 147 |
| Wyoming Free Legal Answers | 162 | 236 | 236 |

| Service Provided | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Volunteer Reference Attorney | 533 | 762 | 747 |
| University of Wyoming Civil and Family Law Clinics | 134 | 142 | 90 |
| **Total Numbers Served** | **6,104** | **5,771** | **5,564** |

Note: In order for a case to be counted in this table the service provider must have had the closed year in their case management data file.

The next table shows the number of services by case county (the county where the case occurred) as they were reported in the legal service providers' case management databases. Cases were aggregated across providers and presented by year. As previously stated, the Wyoming Free Legal Answers and Volunteer Reference Attorney programs have helped with some of the case load at Equal Justice Wyoming. Those cases *are not* included in this table as they are not part of the case management system.

*Table 12. Aggregated County Level Civil Legal Services Provided by Legal Aid of Wyoming, Equal Justice Wyoming, Medical Legal Partnership, Teton County Access to Justice Center, Wyoming Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the Children's Law Center 2017-2019*

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Albany | 118 | 129 | 114 |
| Big Horn | 44 | 41 | 47 |
| Campbell | 311 | 202 | 234 |
| Carbon | 86 | 68 | 56 |
| Converse | 69 | 71 | 45 |
| Crook | 25 | 24 | 24 |
| Fremont | 543 | 349 | 277 |
| Goshen | 46 | 60 | 58 |
| Hot Springs | 37 | 23 | 29 |
| Johnson | 28 | 12 | 14 |
| Laramie | 1120 | 1050 | 972 |
| Lincoln | 35 | 34 | 26 |
| Natrona | 631 | 616 | 592 |
| Niobrara | 8 | 8 | 14 |
| Park | 124 | 112 | 134 |
| Platte | 34 | 25 | 31 |
| Sheridan | 123 | 117 | 119 |
| Sublette | 15 | 10 | 14 |
| Sweetwater | 211 | 240 | 146 |
| Teton | 56 | 96 | 74 |
| Uinta | 75 | 74 | 48 |
| Washakie | 32 | 25 | 27 |
| Weston | 26 | 28 | 21 |
| Tribal Court | 0 | 3 | 13 |
| *Total* | *3797* | *3417* | *3129* |

The figure below is the poverty map with the number and location of legal aid service providers over-laid on it.

Figure 48. *Poverty and Legal Aid Service Map*
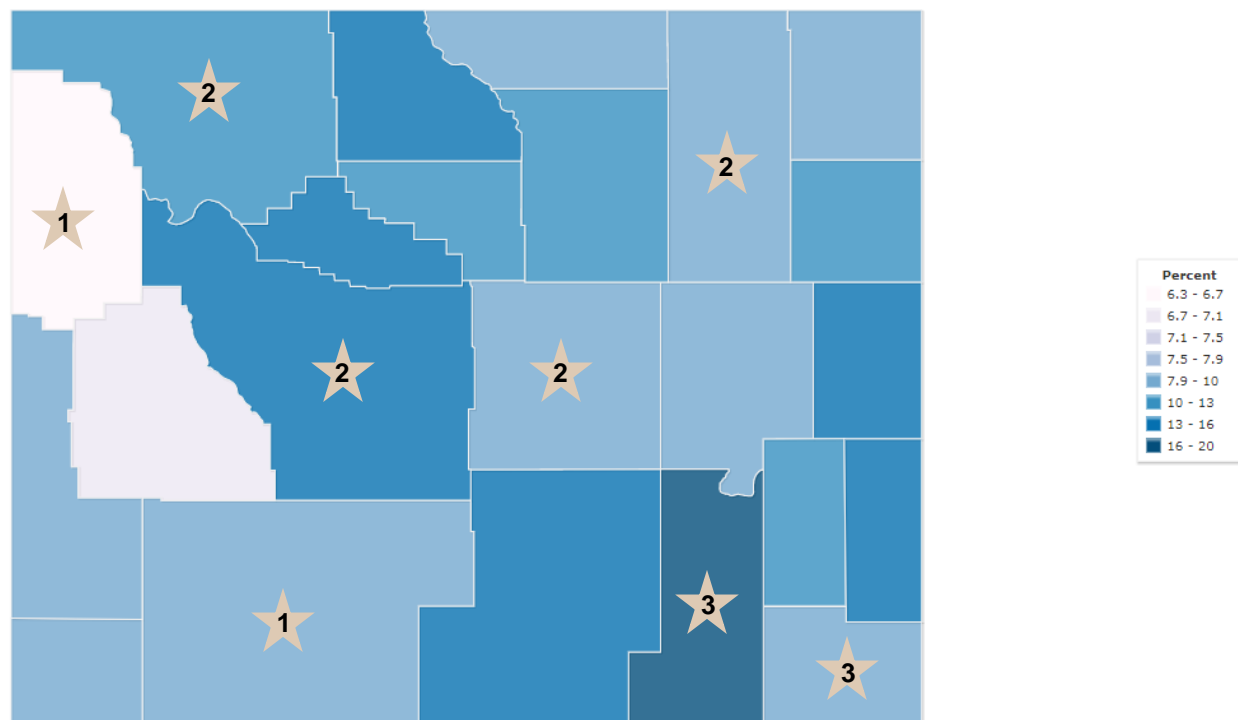


Table 13. *Legal Aid Services by County Details*

| County | Services |
|--------|----------|
| Albany | UW Clinic, Children's Law Center, DV Coalition |
| Campbell | LAW, DV, Coalition |
| Fremont | LAW, DV Coalition |
| Laramie | LAW, Medical Legal Partnership, EJW |
| Natrona | LAW, DV Coalition, |
| Park | LAW, DV Coalition |
| Sweetwater | LAW |
| Teton | Teton Access to Justice |

## Synthetic Estimate of Civil Legal Service Need and Demand

One of the overarching goals of the needs assessment was to determine need for civil legal services among Wyoming's eligible resident population. This section provides synthetic estimates of need and demand for services. Data sources used to create the synthetic estimates included US Census state and county-level population estimates gathered via U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018 and the Legal Services Corporation Justice Gap Report (2017). The Justice Gap report only had prevalence rates available at the household level for households with 1, 2, and 6 or more legal problems. The prevalence rate for household level estimates was also only available for 125% of poverty and is therefore considered conservative as the legal aid service providers' eligibility level is 200% of poverty.

The needs assessment questions that guided the synthetic estimates were answered using individual and household level census data. The LSC Justice Gap Report provided household level prevalence rates from which the synthetic estimates were derived. Each estimate we generated was driven by the nature of the prevalence rate that was used to create the estimate, i.e., whether it was available at the individual level or the household level. The results for the questions that follow appear in Table 13.

Synthetic Estimate Questions of County Level Civil Legal Need and Demand
1. How many individuals over the age of 18 are eligible for civil legal services in each of Wyoming's counties?
2. How many households are in need of at least 1 type of civil legal service in each Wyoming county and how many would demand services?
3. How many households are in need of at least 2 types of civil legal services in each Wyoming county and how many would demand services?
4. How many households are in need of 6 or more types of civil legal services and how many would demand services?

Table13. Individual and Household Eligibility, Need, and Demand for Civil Legal Services among Wyoming Counties

| Geographic Location | Eligible Individuals | Demand for Services by Eligible Households and Household Size | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Location | # Eligible for Services at 200% Poverty & below | Households Below Poverty Level (125%) | Eligible Households 1 Civil Legal Problem (125%) | Demand: Households 1 Civil Legal Problem | Eligible Households 2 Civil Legal Problems (125%) | Demand: Households 2 Civil Legal Problems | Eligible Households 6+ Civil Legal Problems (125%) | Demand: Households 6+ Civil Legal Problems |
| **Wyoming** | **150,523** | **25,047** | **17,783** | **3,557** | **13,525** | **2,705** | **6,011** | **1,202** |
| Albany | 9,992 | 3,929 | 2,790 | **558** | 2,122 | **424** | 943 | **189** |
| Big Horn | 3,089 | 493 | 350 | **70** | 266 | **53** | 118 | **24** |
| Campbell | 12,025 | 1,860 | 1,321 | **264** | 1,004 | **201** | 446 | **89** |
| Carbon | 3,963 | 855 | 607 | **121** | 462 | **92** | 205 | **41** |
| Converse | 3,573 | 394 | 280 | **56** | 213 | **43** | 95 | **19** |
| Crook | 1,930 | 267 | 190 | **38** | 144 | **29** | 64 | **13** |
| Fremont | 10,357 | 1,752 | 1,244 | **249** | 946 | **189** | 420 | **84** |
| Goshen | 3,485 | 131 | 93 | **19** | 71 | **14** | 31 | **6** |
| Hot Springs | 1,218 | 292 | 207 | **41** | 158 | **32** | 70 | **14** |
| Johnson | 2,195 | 535 | 380 | **76** | 289 | **58** | 128 | **26** |
| Laramie | 25,600 | 3,797 | 2,696 | **539** | 2,050 | **410** | 911 | **182** |
| Lincoln | 5,007 | 694 | 493 | **99** | 375 | **75** | 167 | **33** |
| Natrona | 20,685 | 3,273 | 2,324 | **465** | 1,767 | **353** | 786 | **157** |
| Niobrara | 623 | 202 | 143 | **29** | 109 | **22** | 48 | **10** |
| Park | 7,589 | 1,010 | 717 | **143** | 545 | **109** | 242 | **48** |
| Platte | 2,226 | 427 | 303 | **61** | 231 | **46** | 102 | **20** |
| Sheridan | 7,834 | 895 | 635 | **127** | 483 | **97** | 215 | **43** |
| Sublette | 2,537 | 143 | 102 | **20** | 77 | **15** | 34 | **7** |
| Sweetwater | 11,322 | 1,978 | 1,404 | **281** | 1,068 | **214** | 475 | **95** |
| Teton | 6,048 | 443 | 315 | **63** | 239 | **48** | 106 | **21** |
| Uinta | 5,319 | 898 | 638 | **128** | 485 | **97** | 216 | **43** |
| Washakie | 2,089 | 358 | 254 | **51** | 193 | **39** | 86 | **17** |
| Weston | 1,816 | 421 | 299 | **60** | 227 | **45** | 101 | **20** |

## KEY FINDINGS

The key findings in this needs assessment underscore the many legal needs and the complex life situations of Wyoming's economically disadvantaged population. Professionals who participated in the needs assessment emphasized how little direct service they are able to provide due to lack of funding, attorney shortages, and lack of resources to address the demand for services. Many seemed overwhelmed by the continued, escalating needs of the client population and felt the client's problems have become more numerous and challenging to solve. On the other hand, they were very forthcoming and offered alternative, creative solutions to try and solve the gap between need and service capacity.

- Family law issues are the most common civil legal problems. In the professionals' survey, divorce, legal separation, and custody cases are among the most frequent. The next most frequent cases involve domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. These were the top two issues in the client survey. However, they appeared in reverse order. That is, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking were reported more frequently by clients than divorce, legal separation and custody issues as having occurred in the last year.

- Librarians are an excellent resource. Several librarians participated in the needs assessment. They reported they see numerous individuals trying to solve civil legal issues. One of the most common issues involved clients who need help with both finding and completing legal forms. They reported that most of the clients find the forms cumbersome and difficult to understand, as did attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals. There was general consensus that librarians could probably do more to help.

  > *Clients find the legal forms cumbersome (which forms in this packet do I really need to fill out?), and difficult to understand (How do I fill these out without a lawyer?).*

- Legal professionals who were interviewed reported they could use more training in immigration issues and with disability claims and appeals. Immigration is an emerging area, and there are an extremely limited number of attorneys with legal expertise in immigration. While disability claims is not an emerging issue, there are only two lawyers in Wyoming with expertise in this area.

- Several attorneys reported concerns regarding elderly and disadvantaged individuals, especially as it concerns housing and housing quality. Clients reported having to endure living in homes where the housing quality is poor and that they are afraid to complain about the quality. Several clients were unable to move because landlords threatened to withhold security deposits, which they need in order to afford the next rental unit.

- Client problems are many and complex with few resources to solve them. In addition to what is shown in the social indicator data, several professionals reported their clients problems seem to present with more complex problems than in the past. Clients who were interviewed described having difficulties articulating their legal problems. Moreover, they have even more difficulty separating their legal issues from their interpersonal issues. This is even more pronounced for clients with mental health issues and was confirmed during the interviews with legal professionals.

- Organizational data provided for the needs assessment was diverse and inconsistent resulting in numerous data quality challenges that were time-consuming to address. Grantees use of a higher quality case management system would ensure higher quality data are collected and will be more conducive to tracking and updating services.
- The COVID pandemic broke out during this needs assessment. With the exception of food insecurity and employment most data sources do not yet reflect the impact it's having on the client population. Legal Aid received an increase in the number of landlord/tenant questions, assistance with Wills and Power of Attorneys, and a slight increase in the number of domestic restraining orders.

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## Appendix A

### List of Tables

### List of Figures

# APPENDIX B

## Civil Legal Needs Assessment Professionals' Survey

Figure 49. *Which of the following best describes you?*



Figure 50. *If you selected "Staff at a public interest law organization", please select which organization you are with:*
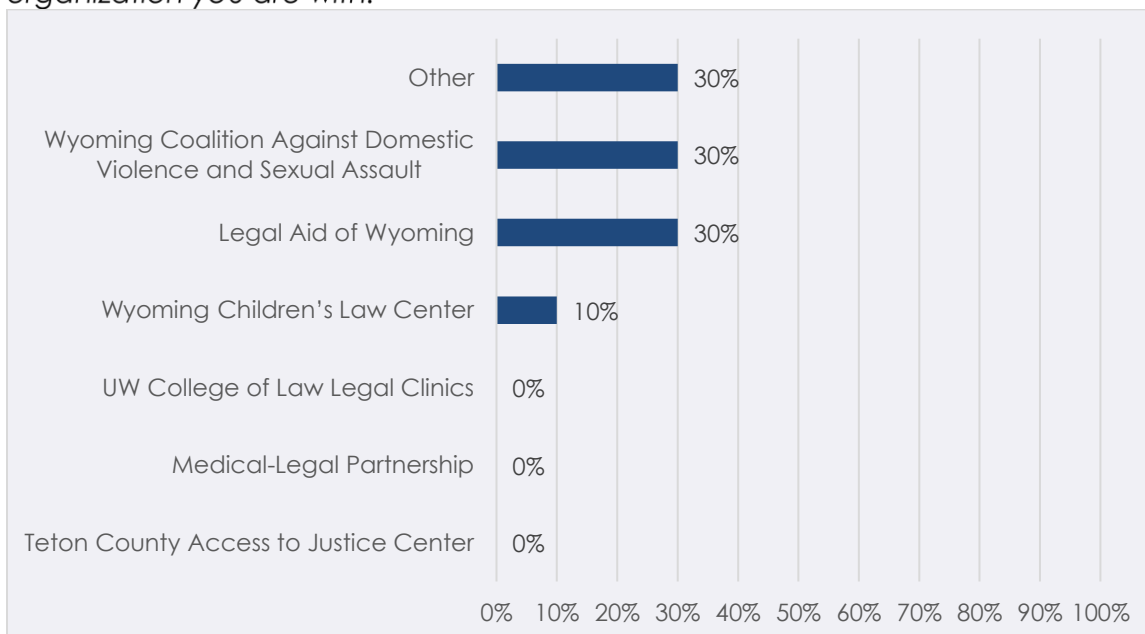
Figure 51. *In which county do you primarily work or practice law?*



| County | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Laramie | 18% |
| Albany | 14% |
| Natrona | 13% |
| Campbell | 9% |
| Sublette | 6% |
| Teton | 6% |
| Sheridan | 5% |
| Lincoln | 4% |
| Sweetwater | 4% |
| Big Horn | 3% |
| Park | 2% |
| Johnson | 2% |
| Fremont | 2% |
| Crook | 2% |
| Washakie | 1% |
| Uinta | 1% |
| Niobrara | 1% |
| Goshen | 1% |
| Converse | 1% |
| Carbon | 1% |
| Weston | 1% |
| Platte | 1% |
| Hot Springs | 0% |
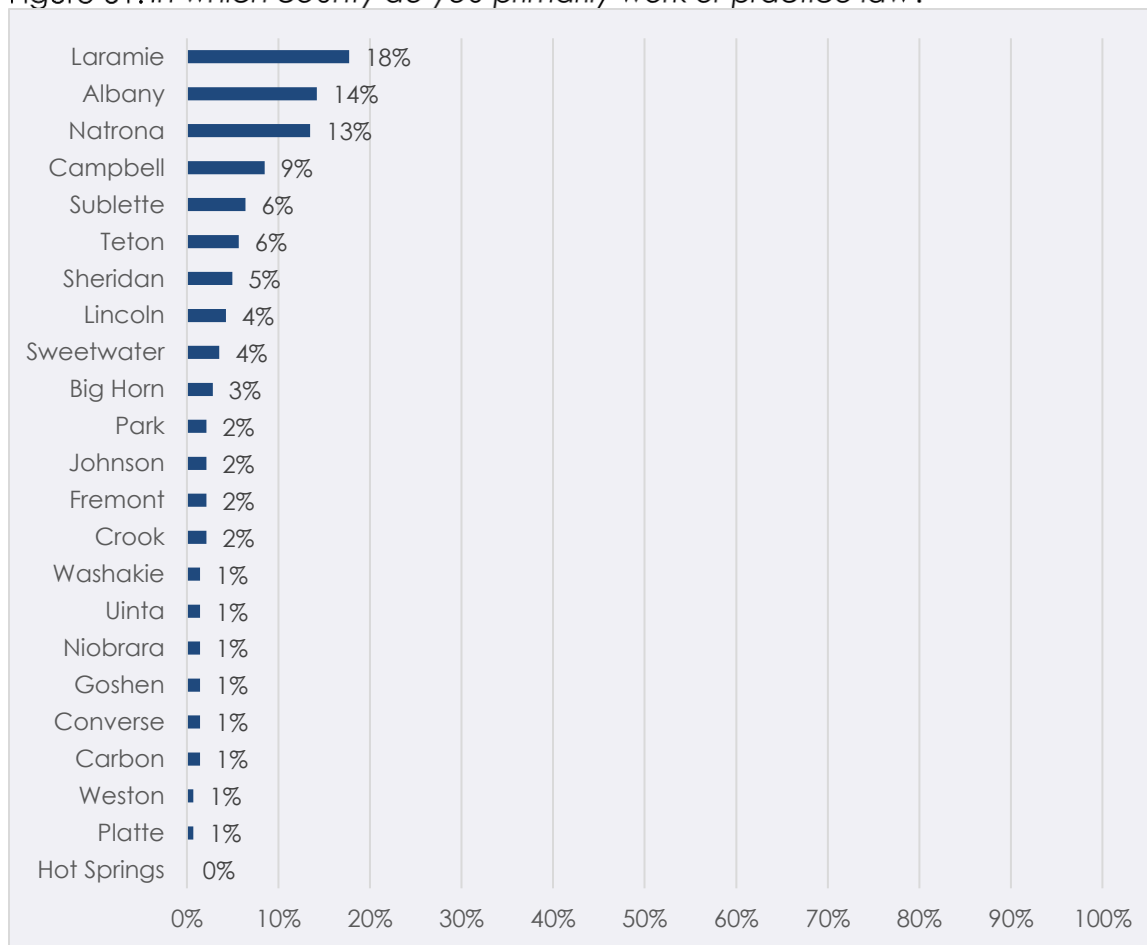
Figure 52. *Housing: In the last 12 months have you served clients who: (Check all that apply)*



| | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Were homeless | 15% |
| Evicted/threatened with eviction | 14% |
| Landlord/public housing dispute | 12% |
| Domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking | 11% |
| Could not afford rent increase | 9% |
| Subsidized housing issues | 7% |
| Deposit withheld/excessive damage claims | 6% |
| Heat, electricity, or water shut off | 5% |
| Poor housing quality/refused repairs | 5% |
| Treated poorly exercising tenant rights | 5% |
| Mobile home park housing issues | 4% |
| Unlawful entry, taking of posessions | 3% |
| Denied disability accommodations | 3% |
| Experienced housing discrimination | 2% |

Figure 53. *Have any of the clients you worked with in the last 12 months who owned a home or had a mortgage experienced any of the following: (Check all that apply)*



| | |
|---|---|
| Don't know | 38% |
| Fell several payments behind on a mortgage | 18% |
| Home went into foreclosure | 17% |
| None of my clients had/have a mortgage | 10% |
| Had trouble refinancing a mortgage | 9% |
| Had trouble with tax liens or other government liens | 6% |
| Experienced misleading or dishonest mortgage lending | 2% |
| Told by lender you must purchase "extra" financial products to get a mortgage | 1% |
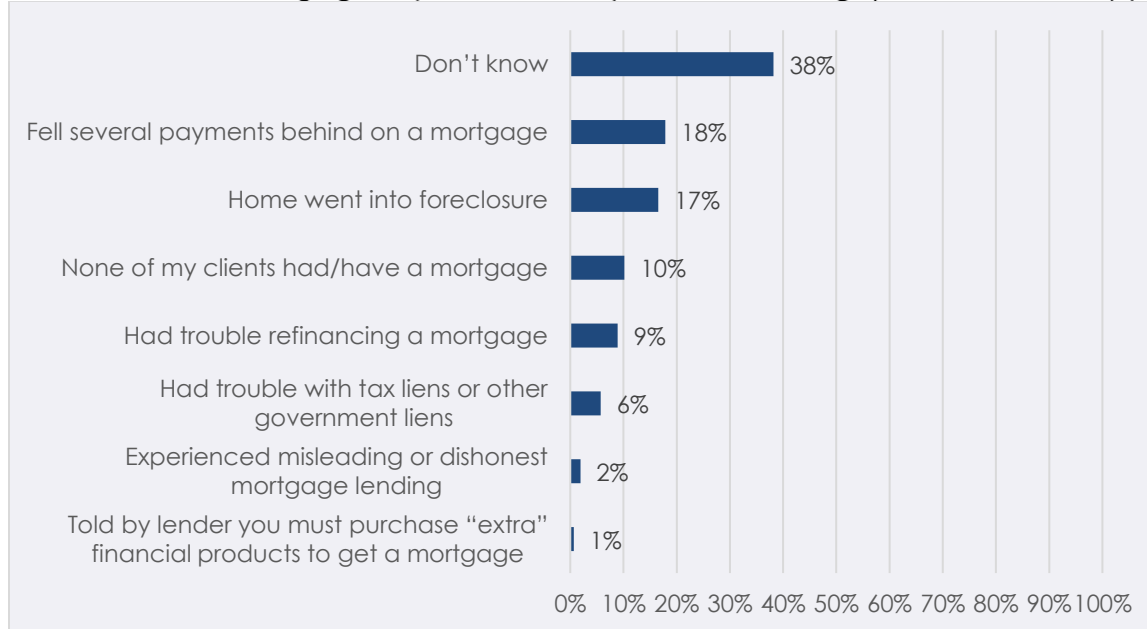
Figure 54. *Family & Children: Have you served any clients in the last 12 months who: (Check all that apply)*



| | |
|---|---|
| Divorce/separation involving children | 10% |
| Domestic violence/stalking/sexual assault | 9% |
| Open case with Child Protective Services | 9% |
| Custody or visitation | 8% |
| Child support payment collection | 8% |
| Divorce/separation NOT involving children | 7% |
| Difficulty paying child support | 7% |
| Difficulty with child support orders | 6% |
| Trouble obtaining a child support order | 5% |
| Problems with child paternity | 5% |
| Child guardianship apppointment problems | 5% |
| Child abduction by noncustodial parent(s) | 4% |
| Problems contesting guardianship of a child | 4% |
| Problems with child adoption | 3% |
| Spousal support payment collections | 3% |
| Unable to obtain custody mediator | 3% |
| Difficulty paying spousal support | 2% |
| Aged out of foster care without plan/support | 2% |

Figure 55. *Consumer/Financial Issues: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience the following: (Check all that apply)*

Wages garnished — 17%
Filed for or needed bankruptcy — 15%
Problems paying fine/judgement — 11%
Threats from bill collectors — 10%
Experienced scam — 9%
Payday loans — 8%
Vehicle issues (payment, reposession, etc.) — 6%
Business fraud — 5%
Problems with taxes — 5%
Other loans with illegal/unfair fees/terms — 4%
Problems with debt reduction companies — 3%
Problems paying interest (non-mortgage) — 3%
Credit problems from identity theft — 3%
Products that did not work as advertised — 2%

Figure 56. *Disability: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience the following: (Check all that apply)*

Disability benefits/services denied, reduced, or terminated — 26%
Elderly/disabled person being abused — 26%
Guardian mishandled SS, SSI, etc. benefits — 23%
Lived in a mental/long-term care facility, but wanted to live elsewhere — 17%
Denied disability accomodations — 5%
Problems accessing businesses due to disability — 3%

Figure 57. *Did you serve anyone in the military or any veterans in the last 12 months who experienced any of the following: (Check all that apply)*
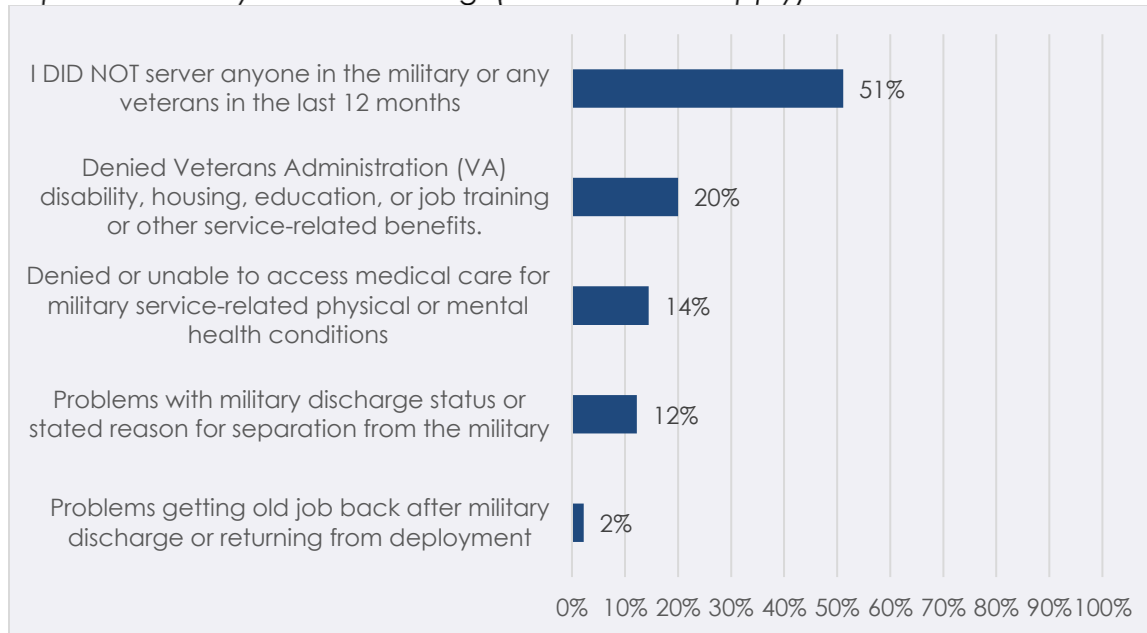


Figure 58. *Native Americans: Did you serve any clients in the last 12 months who experienced any of the following: (Check all that apply)*

Figure 59. *Employment: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience any of the following: (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|
| Job problems from DV, sexual assault, etc. | 18% |
| Unfairly terminated from a job | 16% |
| Employer failed to pay wages/benefits due | 14% |
| Denied worker's compensation | 10% |
| Unsafe working conditions | 9% |
| Sexual harassment/unfair treatment at work | 8% |
| Workplace complaint not taken seriously | 8% |
| Unreasonable workplace rules | 6% |
| Denied unemployment benefits | 6% |
| Disability accommodation necessary for job | 5% |

Figure 60. *Health: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience any of the following: (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|
| Health insurance did not cover services | 19% |
| Problems with medical debt collectors | 18% |
| Billed incorrectly for medical services | 18% |
| Denied Medicaid benefits | 14% |
| Not informed of financial assistance/free care | 11% |
| Problems with nursing home/long-term facility | 9% |
| Problems with government insurance | 5% |
| Denied personal care services | 3% |
| Denied interpreter for medical services | 2% |
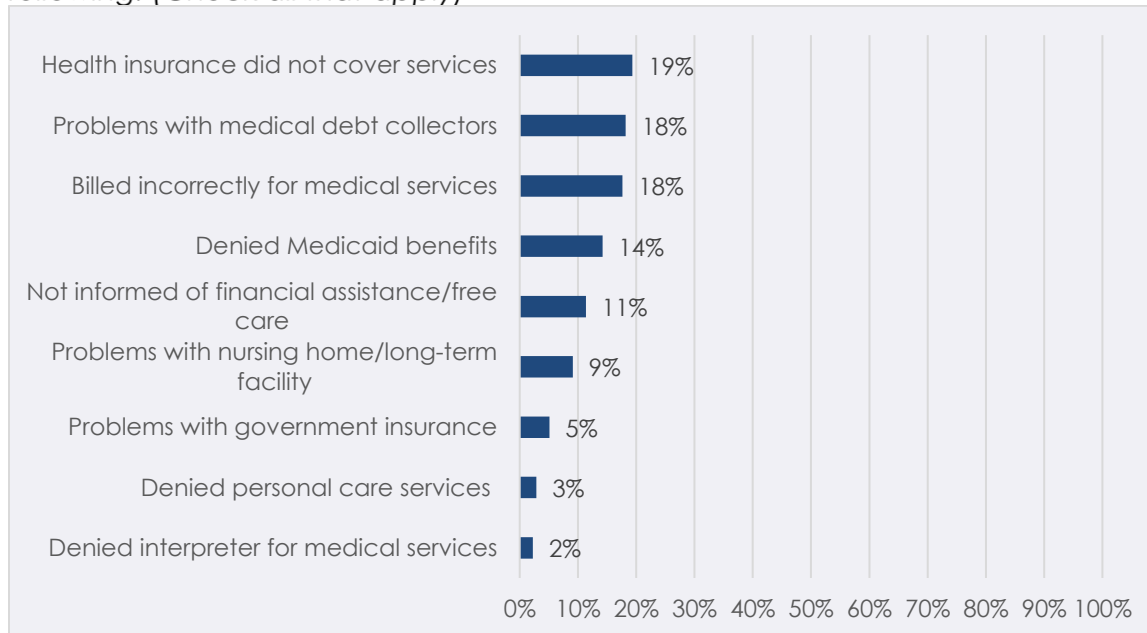
Figure 61. *Criminal & Law Enforcement Involvement: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience any of the following: (Check all that apply)*
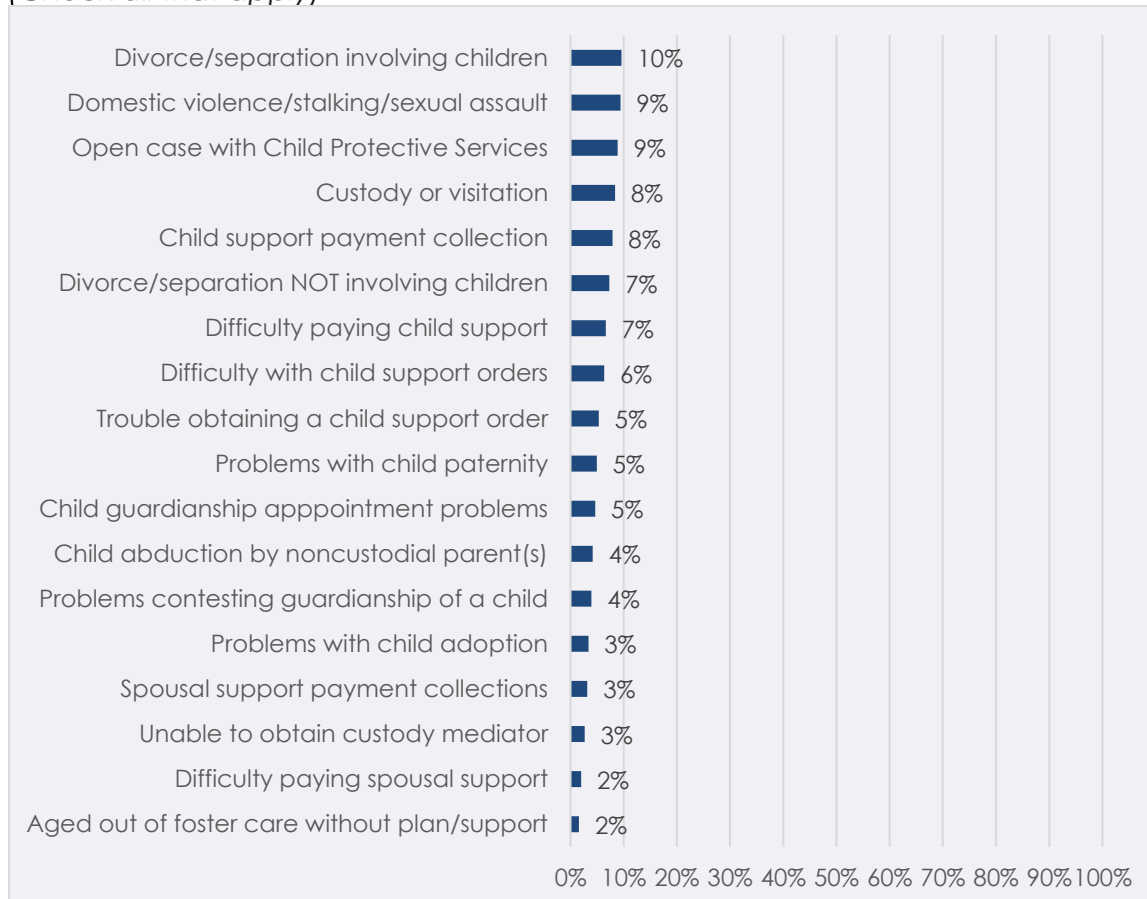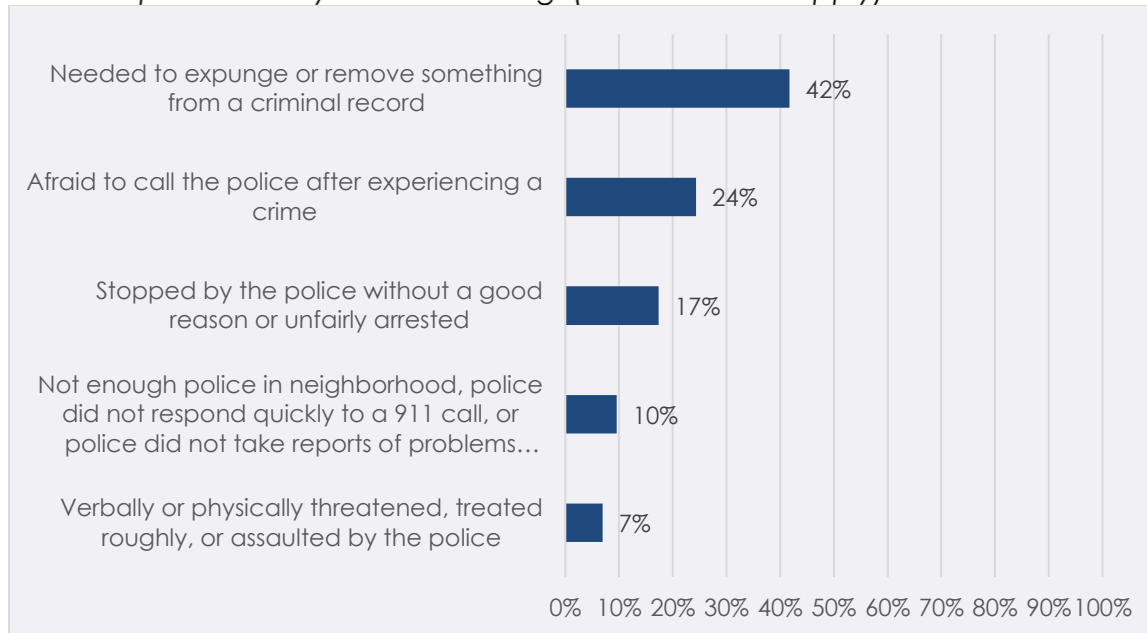


Figure 62. *Immigration: In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience any of the following: (Check all that apply)*
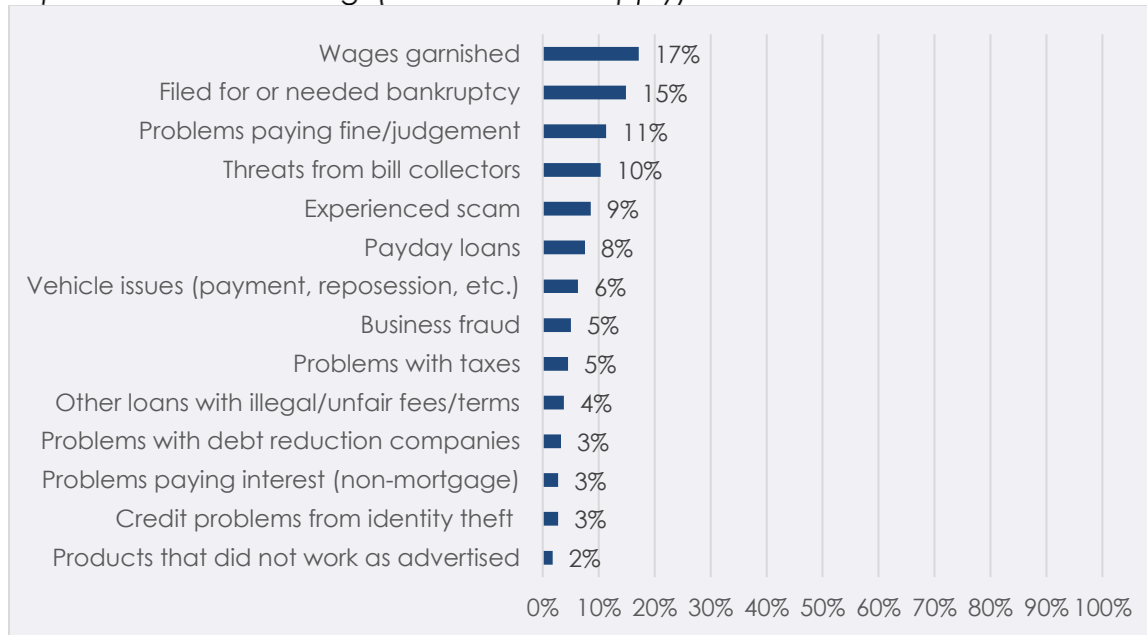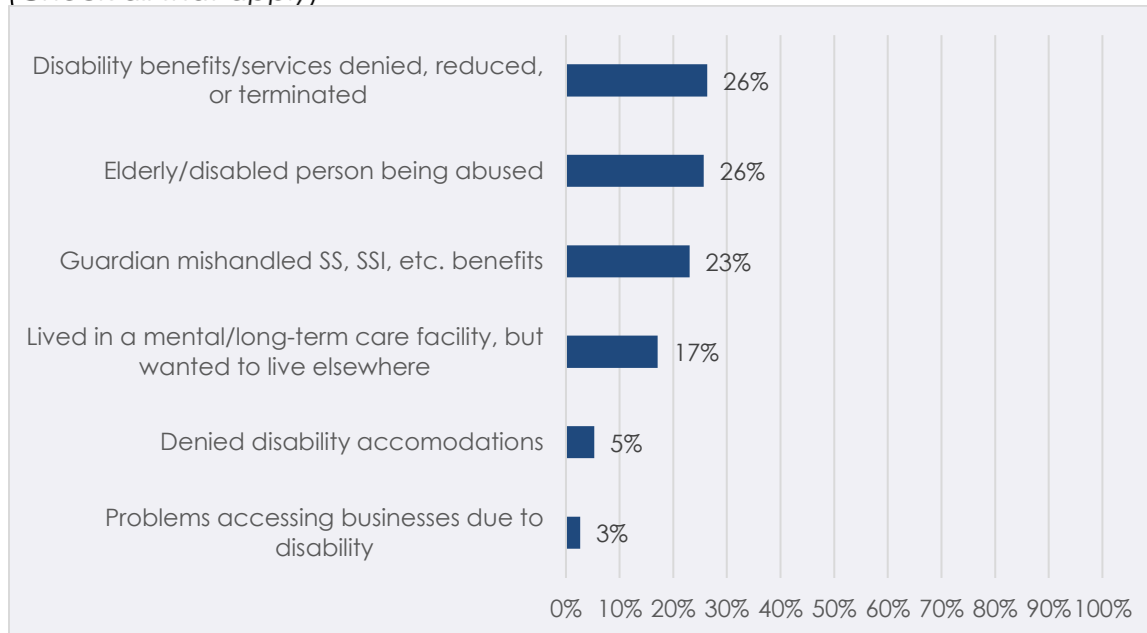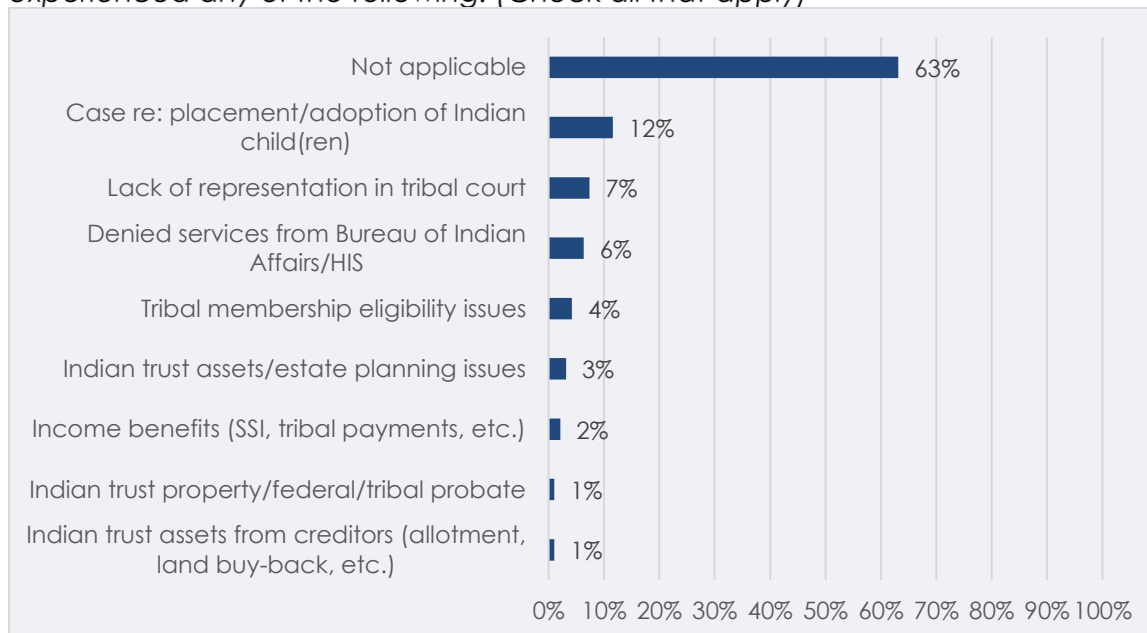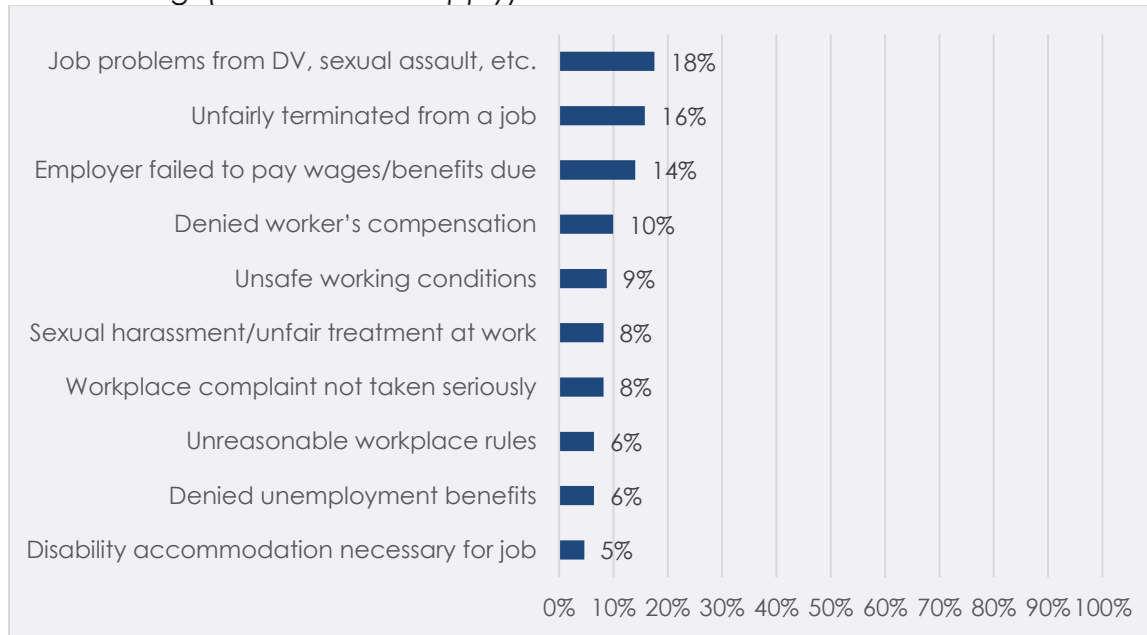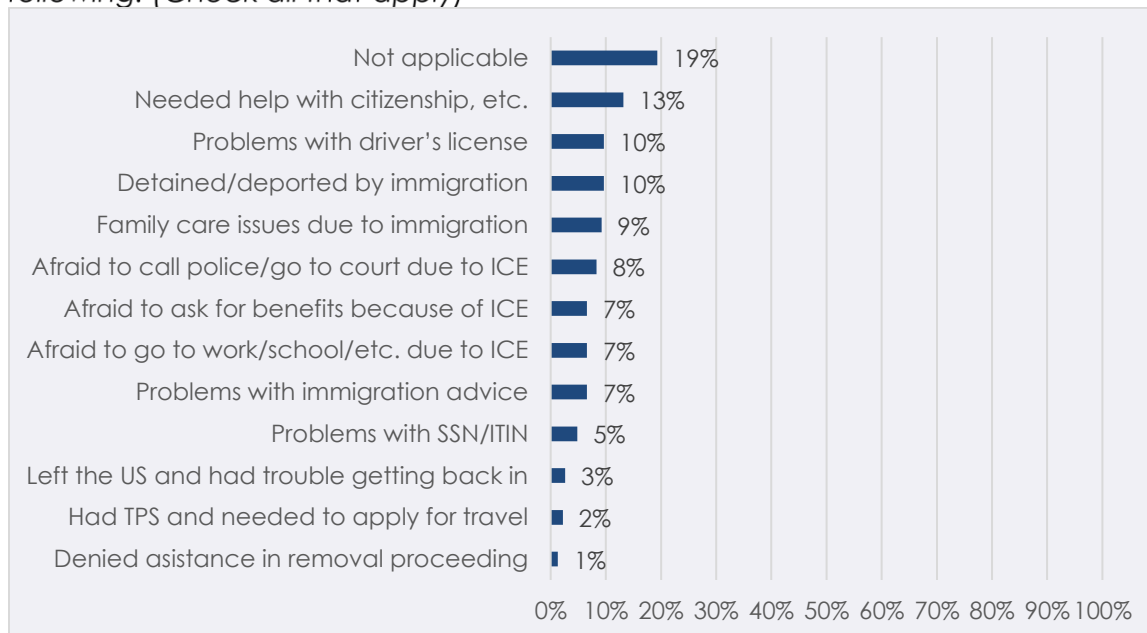
Figure 63. *In the last 12 months, did any of your clients experience discrimination, denial of services, harassment, or unfair treatment because of any of the following: (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 13% |
| Race or ethnicity | 10% |
| Status as a victim of domestic violence or… | 9% |
| Criminal or juvenile record | 9% |
| Homeless status | 9% |
| Language spoken or written | 9% |
| Sexual orientation or LGBTQ status | 7% |
| Immigration status | 7% |
| Sensory, mental, or physical disability or… | 6% |
| Gender | 6% |
| Credit history | 5% |
| Other | 4% |
| Age | 2% |
| Having children live in your household | 1% |
| Marital status | 1% |
| Religion | 0% |
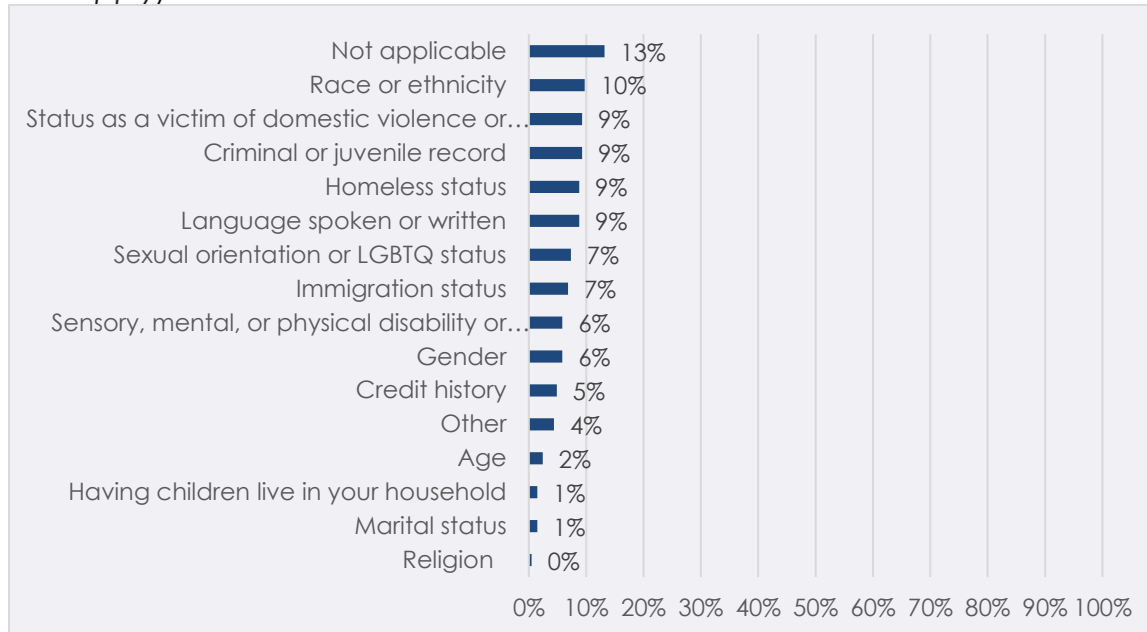
Figure 64. *In the last 12 months, did any clients have discrimination, denial of services, harassment or unfair treatment occur in any of the following situations: (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 20% |
| Employment | 12% |
| Rental housing | 11% |
| Law enforcement and policing | 10% |
| Health care | 8% |
| Credit, banks, debt | 8% |
| Education | 6% |
| Shopping, including stores and restaurants | 6% |
| Other | 5% |
| Government assistance | 4% |
| Mobile or manufactured housing | 4% |
| Don't Know | 3% |
| Government services | 2% |
| Home ownership | 1% |
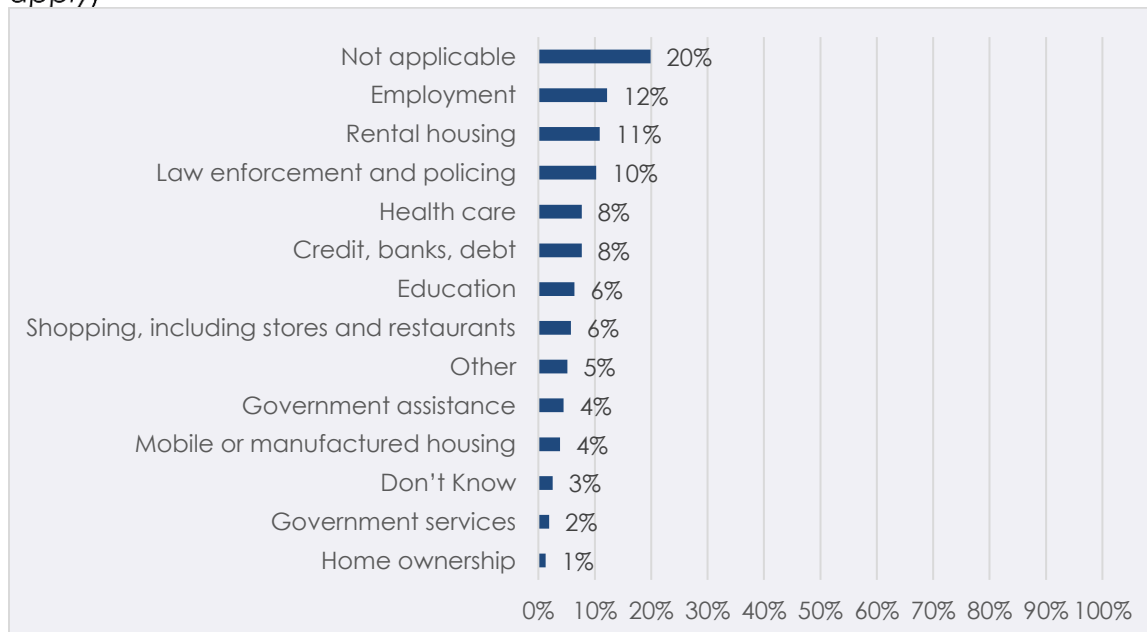
Figure 65. *Low income persons are generally aware of services provided by…: (choose the appropriate response)*
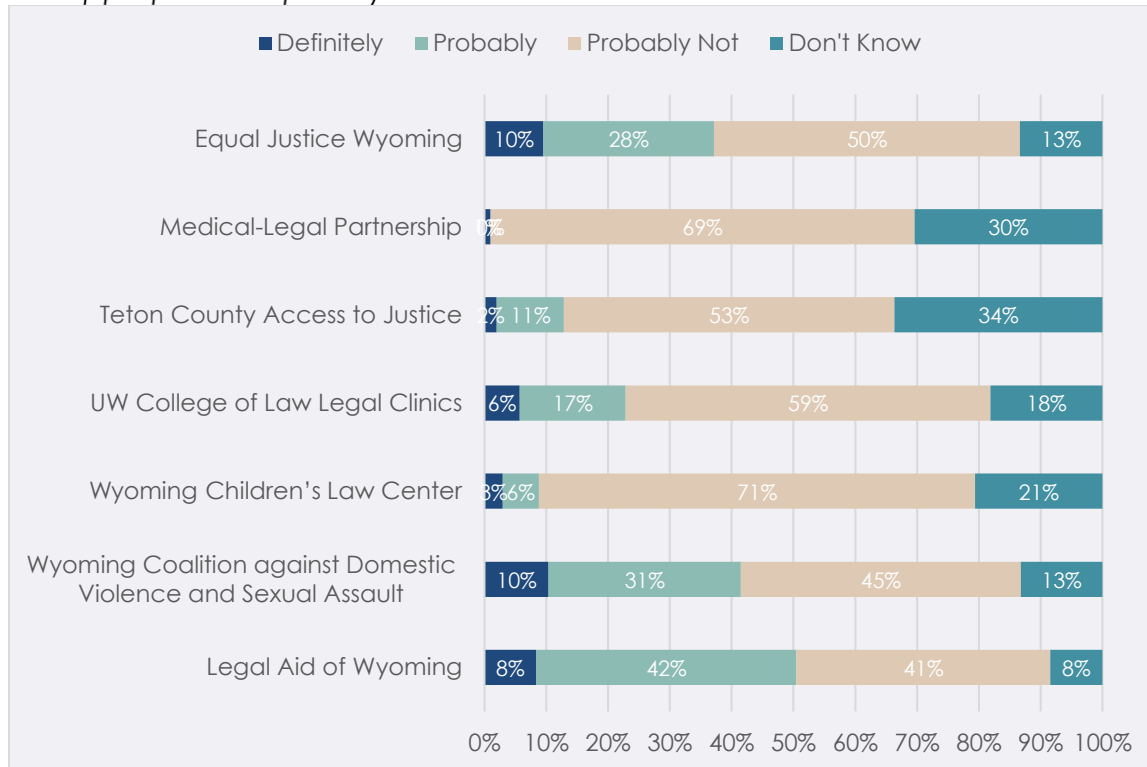


Figure 66. *I know what types of services are provided by…: (choose the appropriate response)*
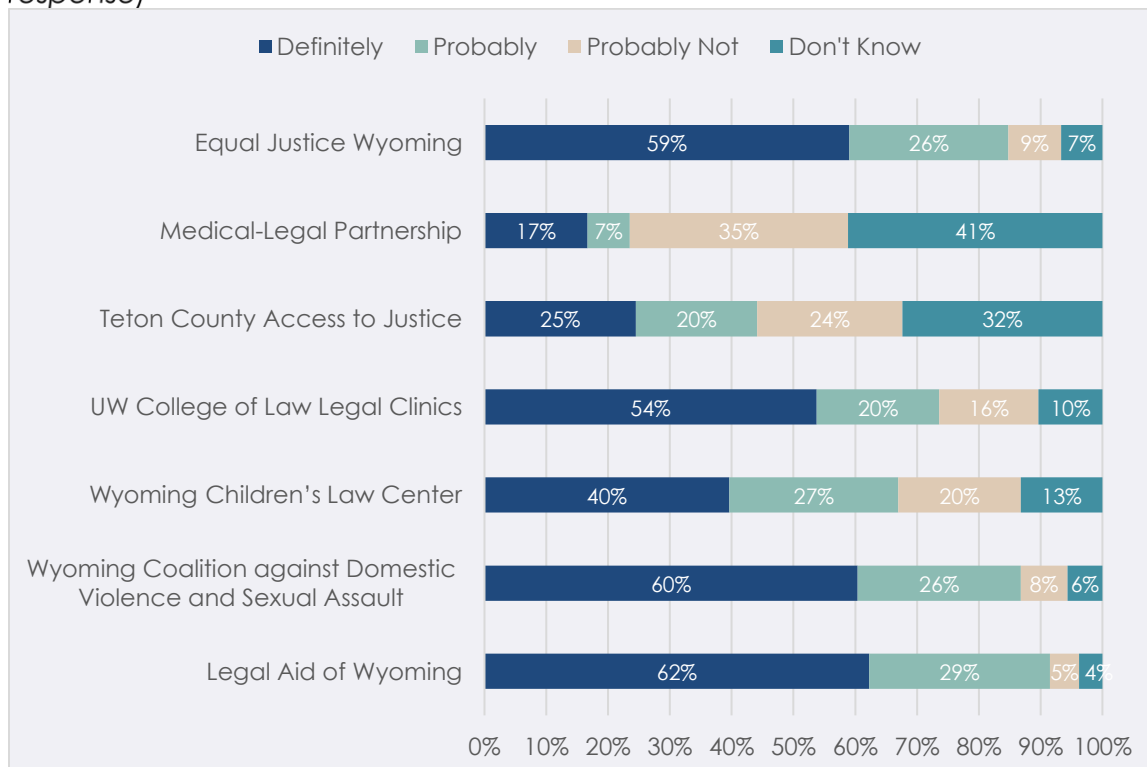
Figure 67. *It is reasonably easy for client to access help through…(choose the appropriate response)*
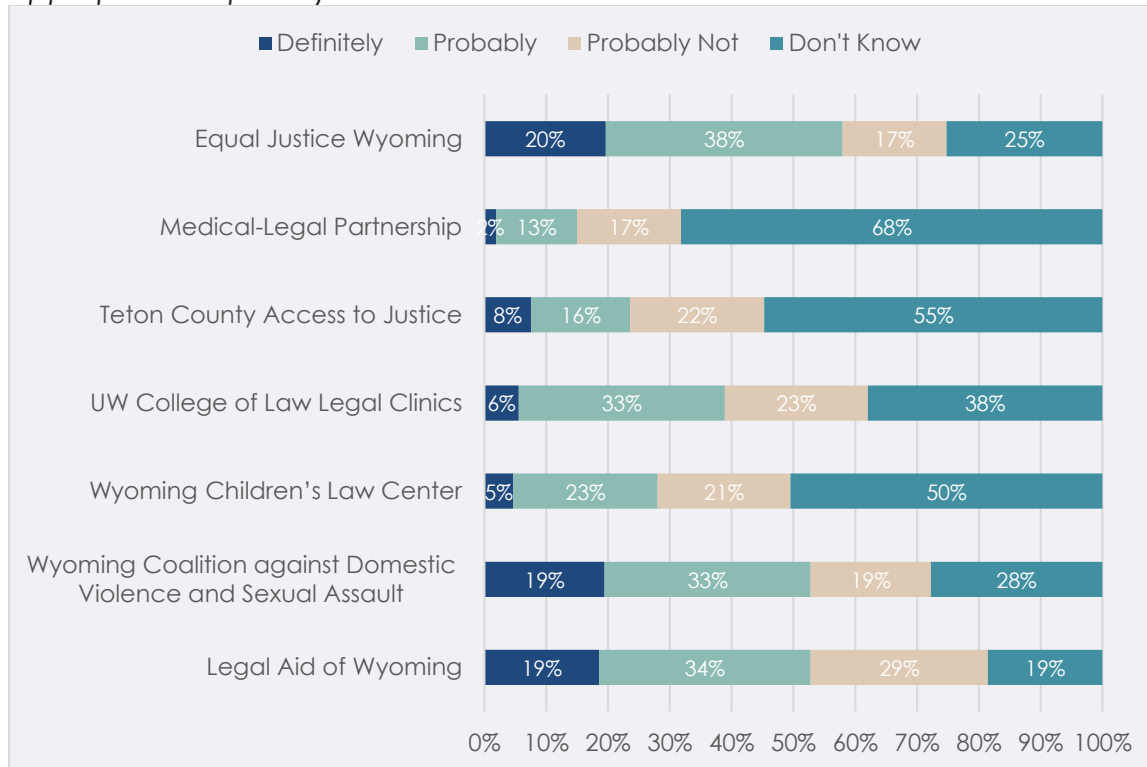


Figure 68. *Choose the appropriate response:*

Figure 69. *Please use this space to tell us anything else you think it would be useful for us to know about serving our clients.*



Figure 70. *Are there any "emerging issues" or types of clients you see, or are beginning to see, that we didn't ask about?  Please use this space to describe them:*
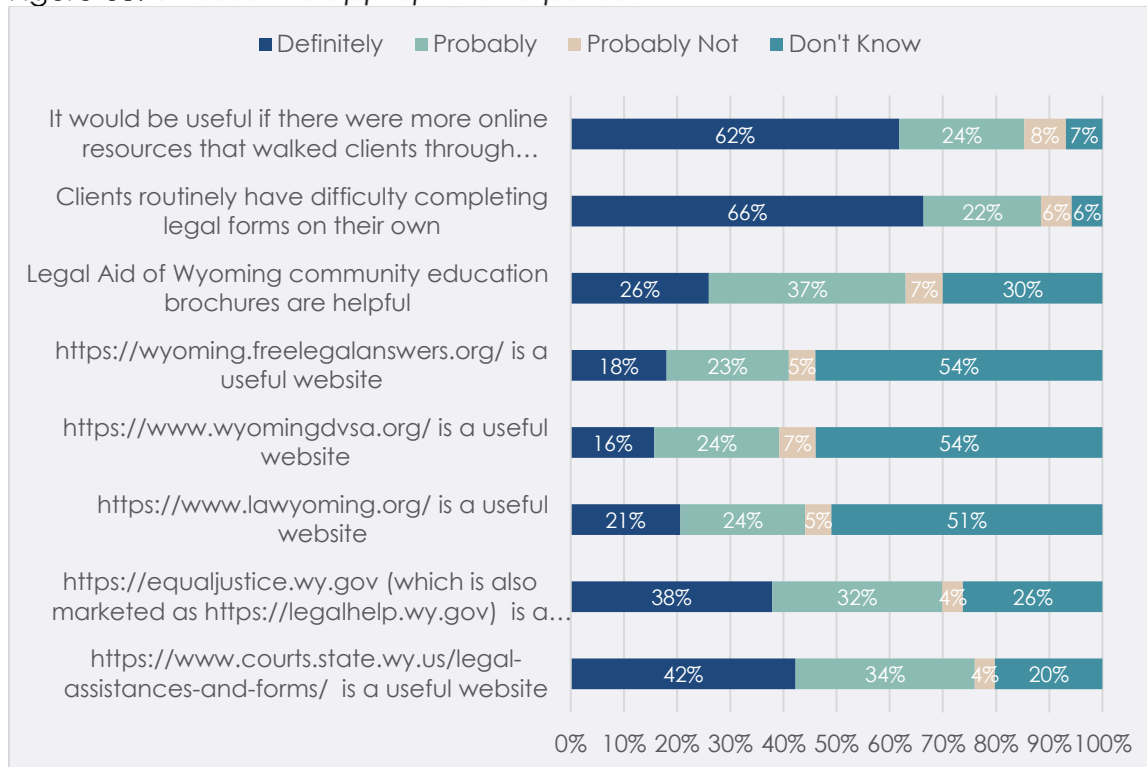
## APPENDIX C

## Wyoming Statewide Civil Legal Needs Assessment: Client Survey

Figure 71. *Which of the following categories best represents your age?*
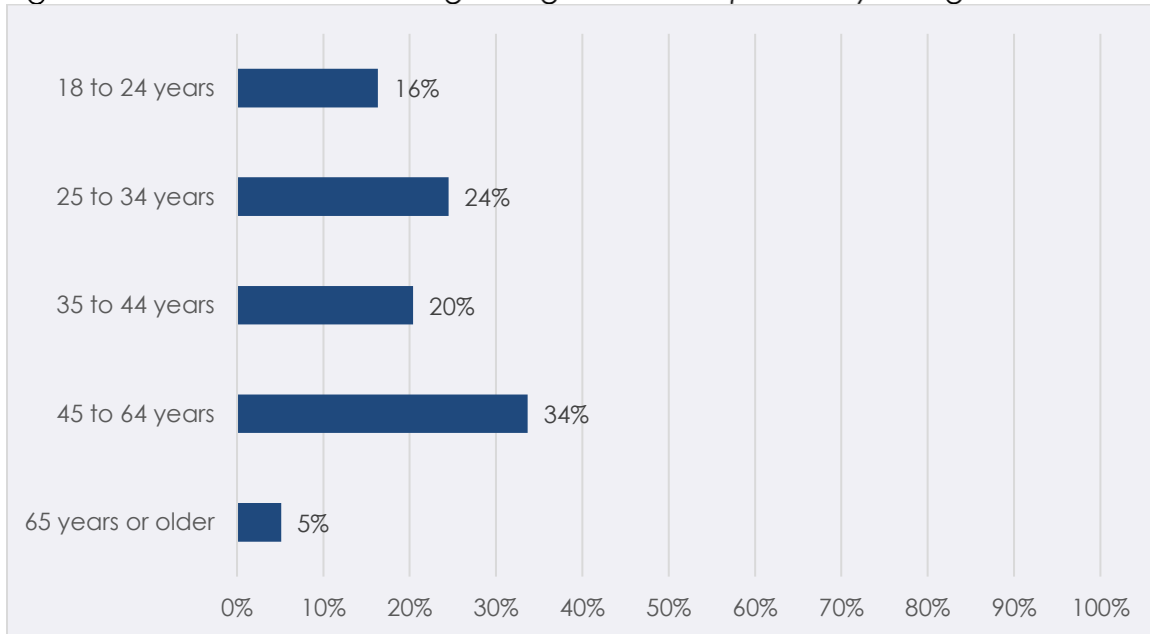


Figure 72. *How do you identify your gender?*
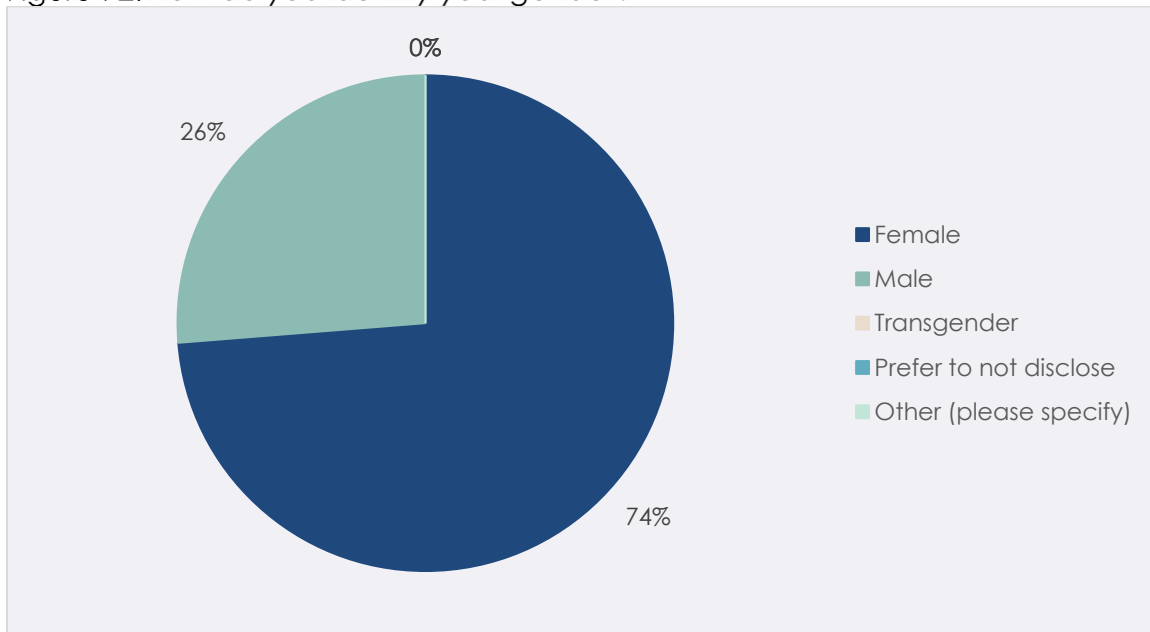
Figure 73. *What racial or ethnic background best describes you? (Check all that apply)*



Caucasian — 83%
Hispanic — 9%
African American — 3%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander — 2%
Native American/ Alaska Native — 2%
Asian — 2%
Other — 0%
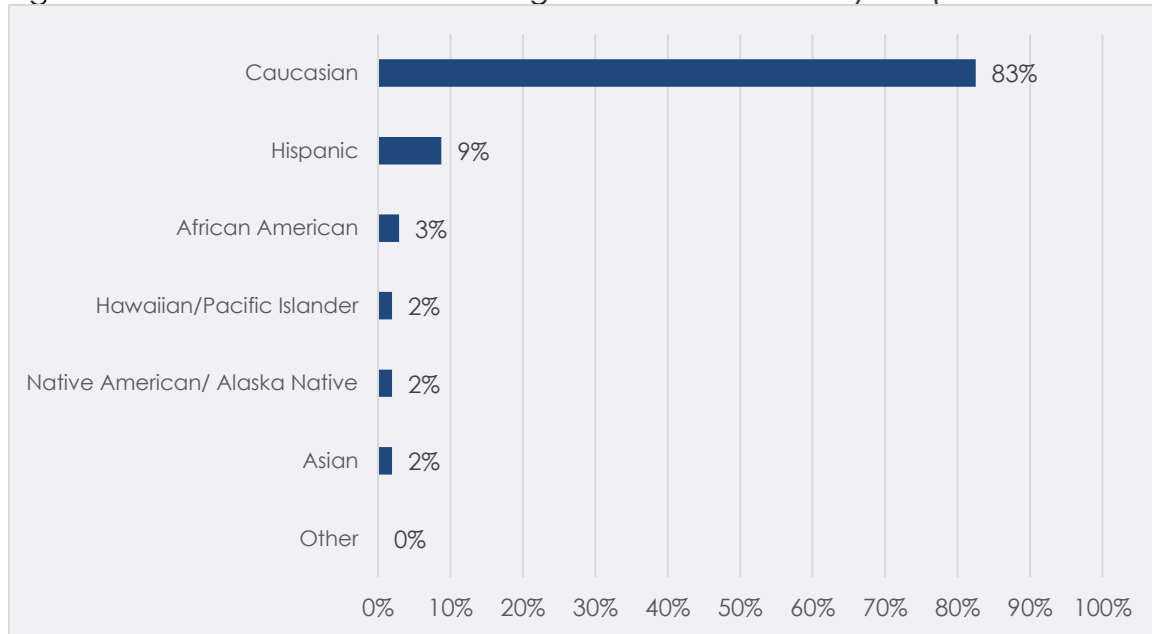
Figure 74. *What is the primary language spoken in your home?*



English — 98%
Spanish — 2%
Russian — 0%
Vietnamese — 0%
Other — 0%
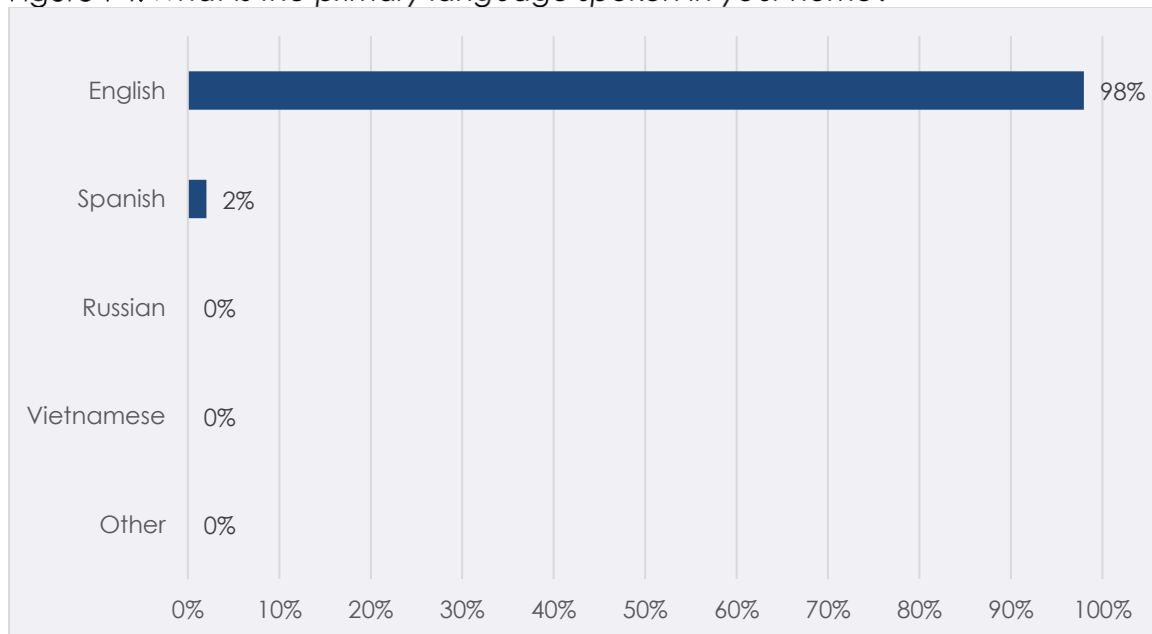
Figure 75. *Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?*
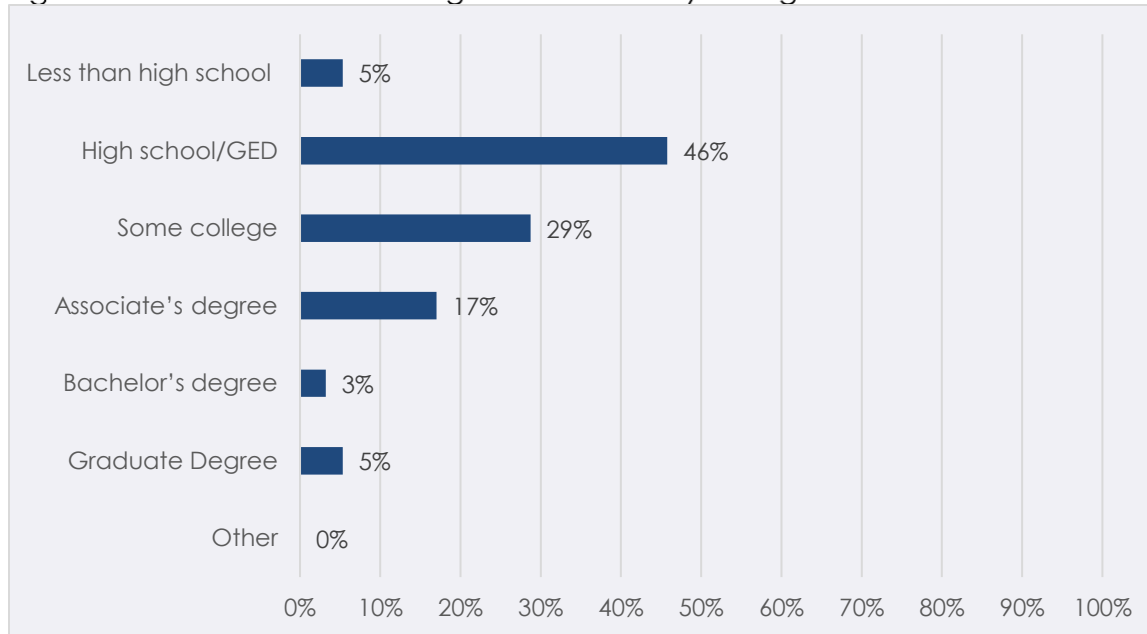


Figure 76. *What is your current relationship status?*
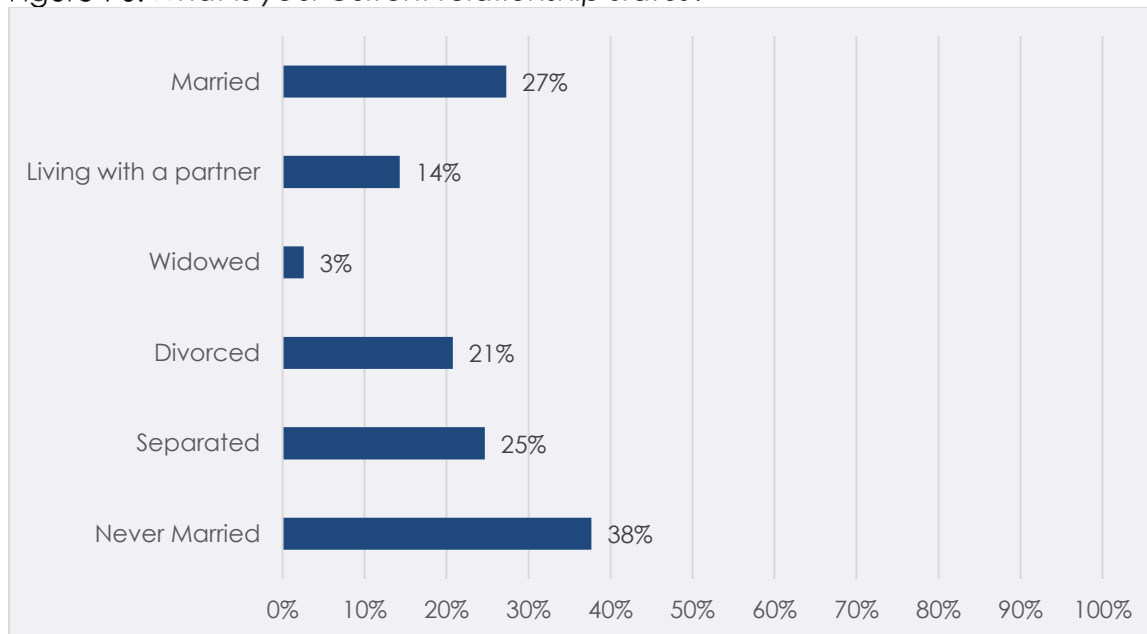
Figure 77. *Which of the following best describes your current employment status?*
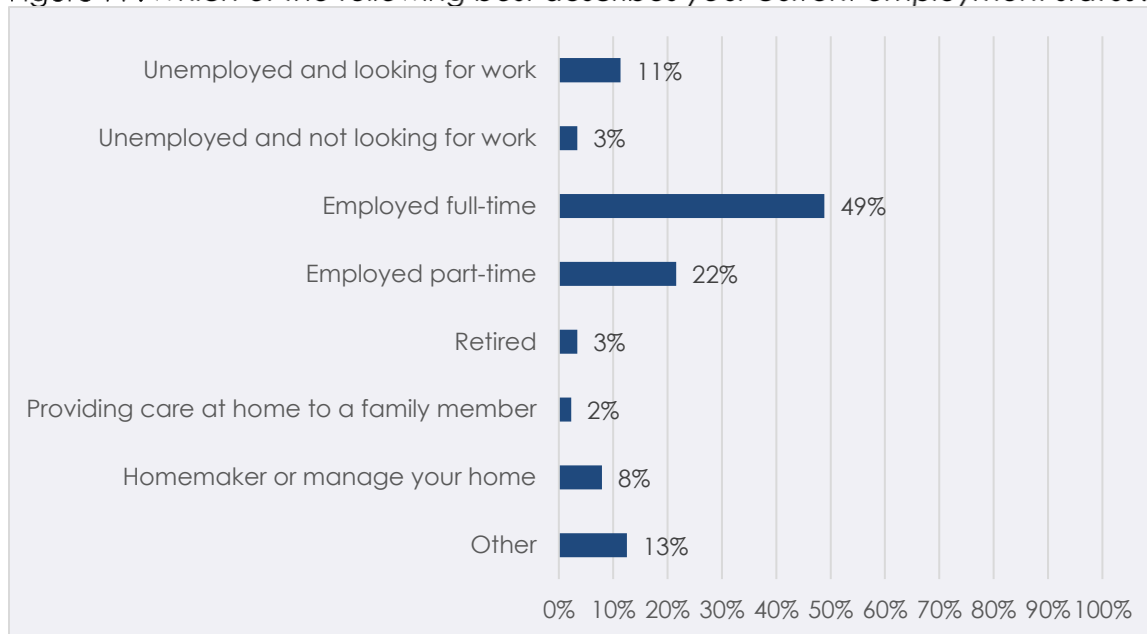


Figure 78. *How many children 17 years of age or younger live in your household?*
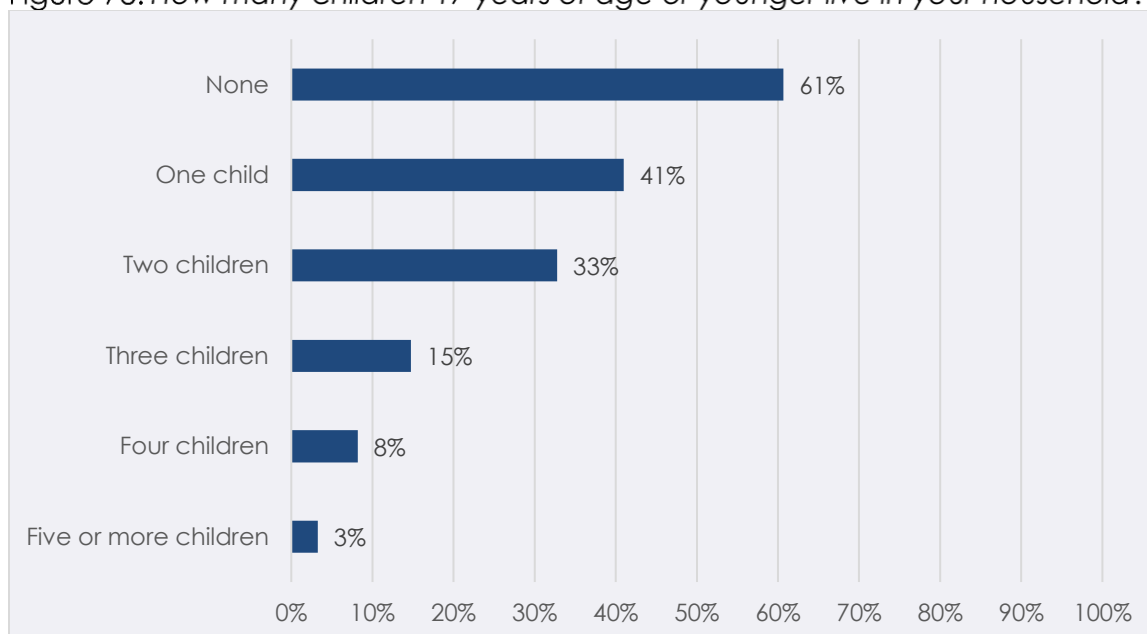
Figure 79. *Are you or is anyone in your household a single parent?*



51%    49%

■ No
■ Yes
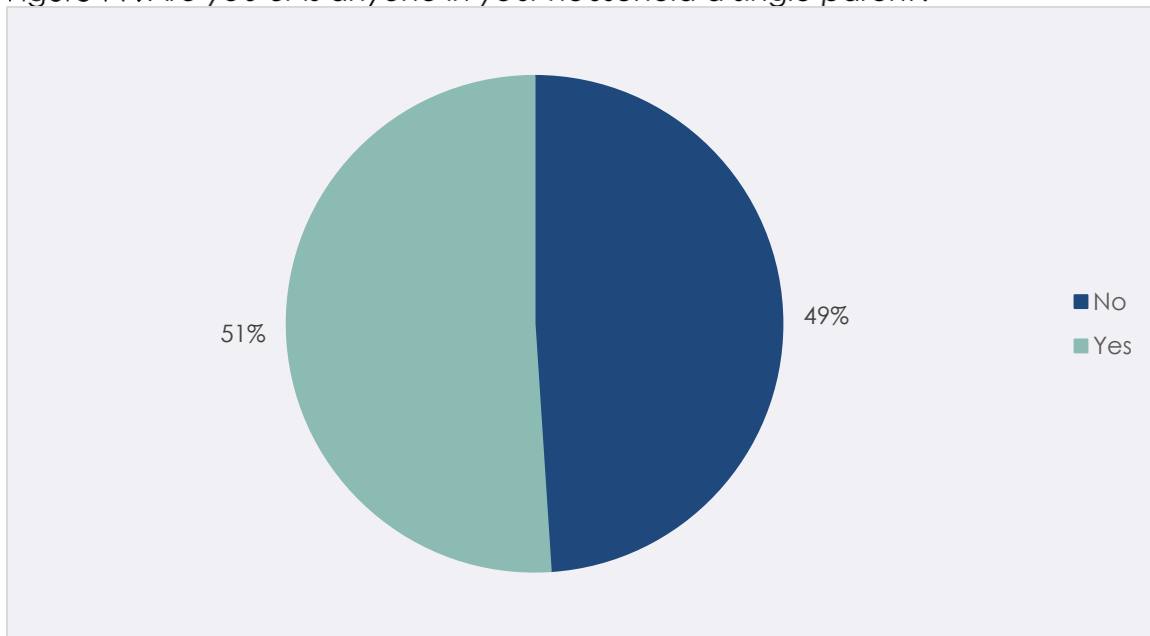
Figure 80. *How do you access the internet most often?*



On a cell phone — 62%
Desk top or laptop computer — 21%
Multiple devices — 11%
On a tablet — 3%
Never access the internet — 3%
Other — 0%
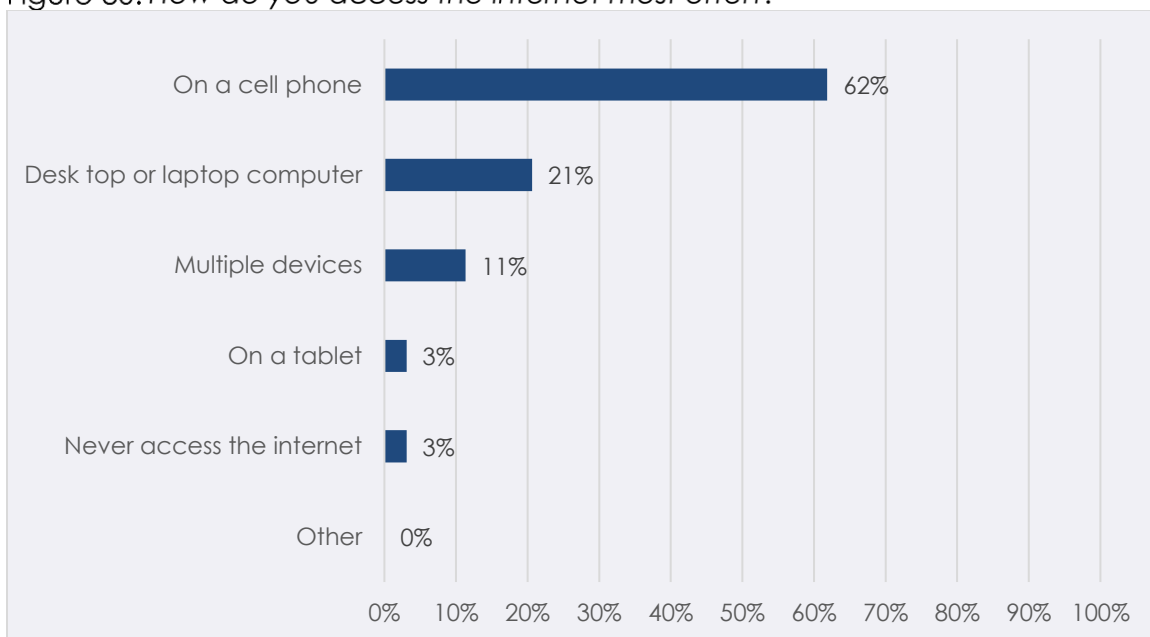
Figure 81. *Do you have access to a computer printer?*



42%

58%

■ No
■ Yes
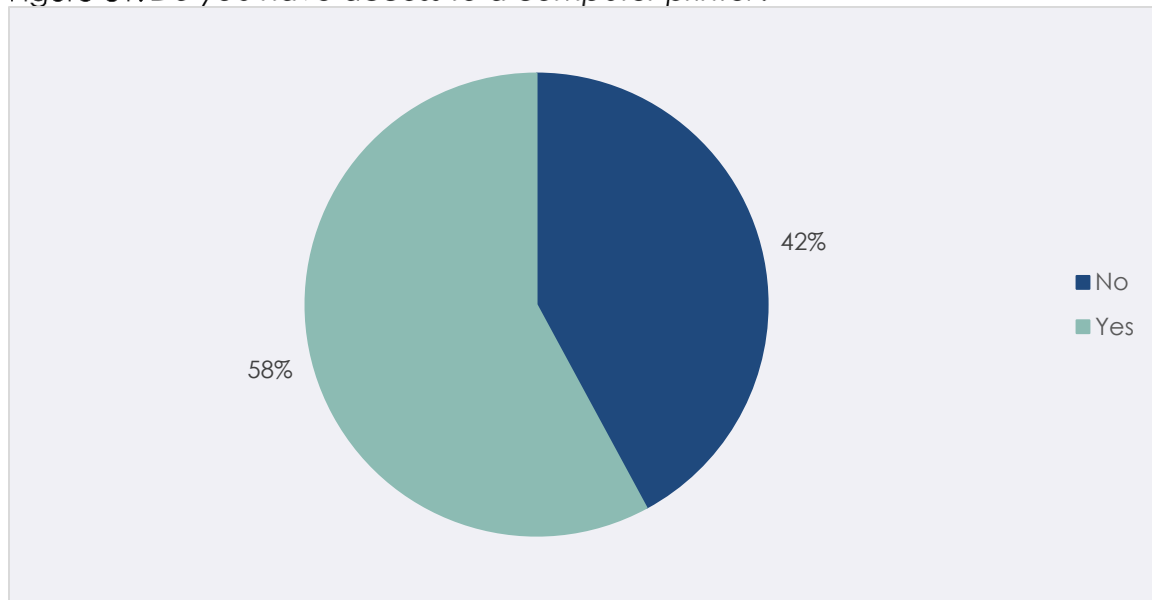
Figure 82. *Where do you live?*



| County | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Laramie | 33% |
| Campbell | 28% |
| Albany | 9% |
| Sweetwater | 9% |
| Sheridan | 7% |
| Natrona | 3% |
| Carbon | 2% |
| Fremont | 2% |
| Goshen | 2% |
| Converse | 1% |
| Crook | 1% |
| Platte | 1% |
| Teton | 1% |
| Washakie | 1% |
| Big Horn | 0% |
| Hot Springs | 0% |
| Johnson | 0% |
| Lincoln | 0% |
| Niobrara | 0% |
| Park | 0% |
| Sublette | 0% |
| Uinta | 0% |
| Weston | 0% |
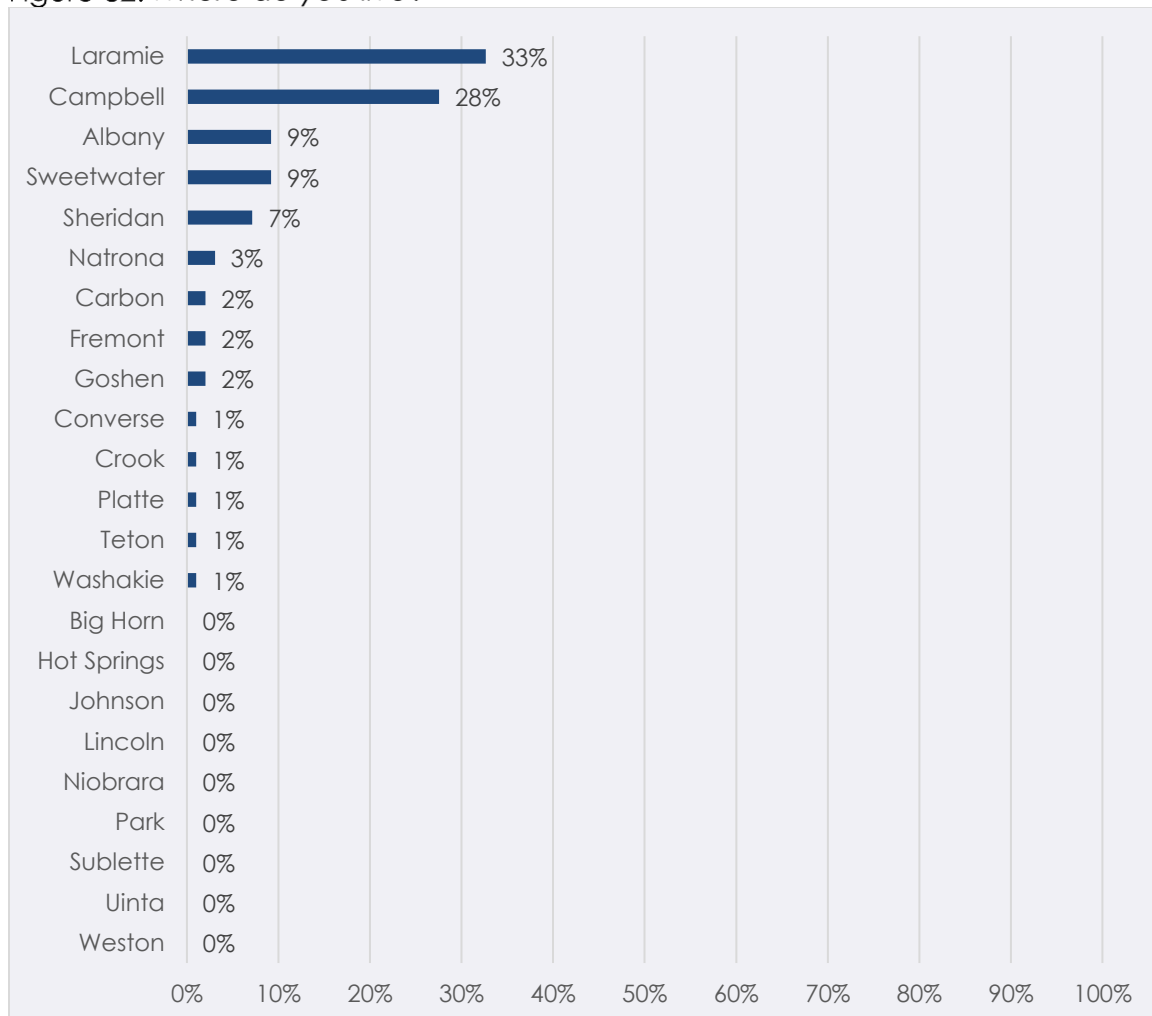
Figure 83. *Do you live on the Wind River Indian Reservation?*



2%

No
Yes

98%
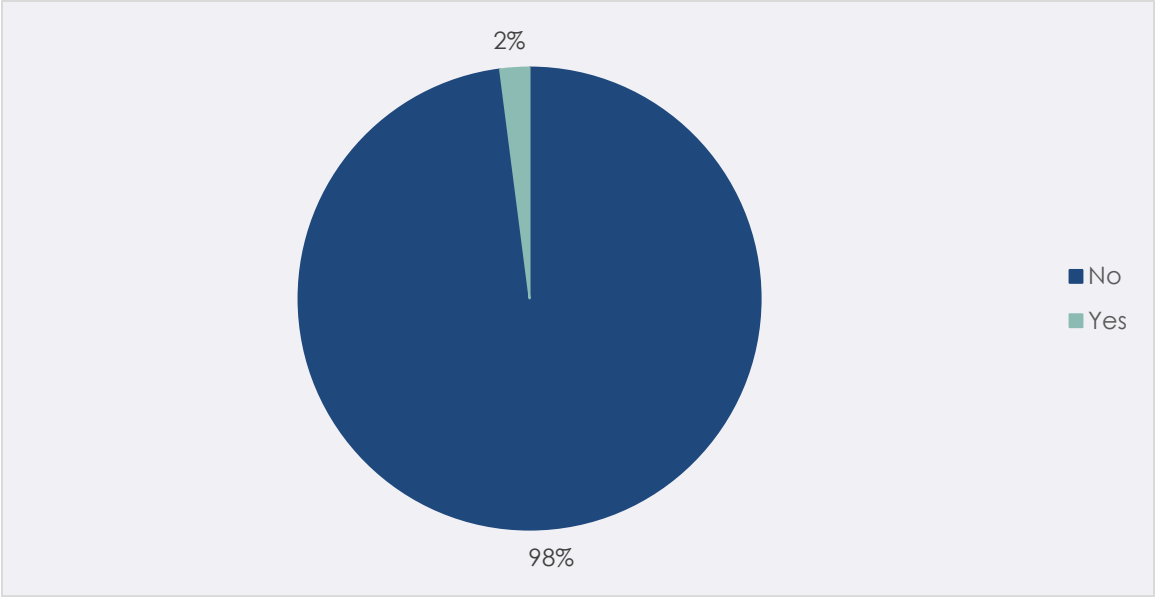
Figure 84. *What is your zip code?*



| Zip | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| 82001 | 17% |
| 82727 | 13% |
| 82718 | 13% |
| 82007 | 10% |
| 82901 | 7% |
| 82935 | 6% |
| 82009 | 5% |
| 82070 | 4% |
| 83001 | 3% |
| 82240 | 2% |
| 82801 | 1% |
| 82729 | 1% |
| 82716 | 1% |
| 82644 | 1% |
| 82636 | 1% |
| 82609 | 1% |
| 82520 | 1% |
| 82514 | 1% |
| 82401 | 1% |
| 82331 | 1% |
| 82325 | 1% |
| 82216 | 1% |
| 82201 | 1% |
| 82072 | 1% |
| 82054 | 1% |
| 80270 | 1% |
| 57735 | 1% |
| 51555 | 1% |
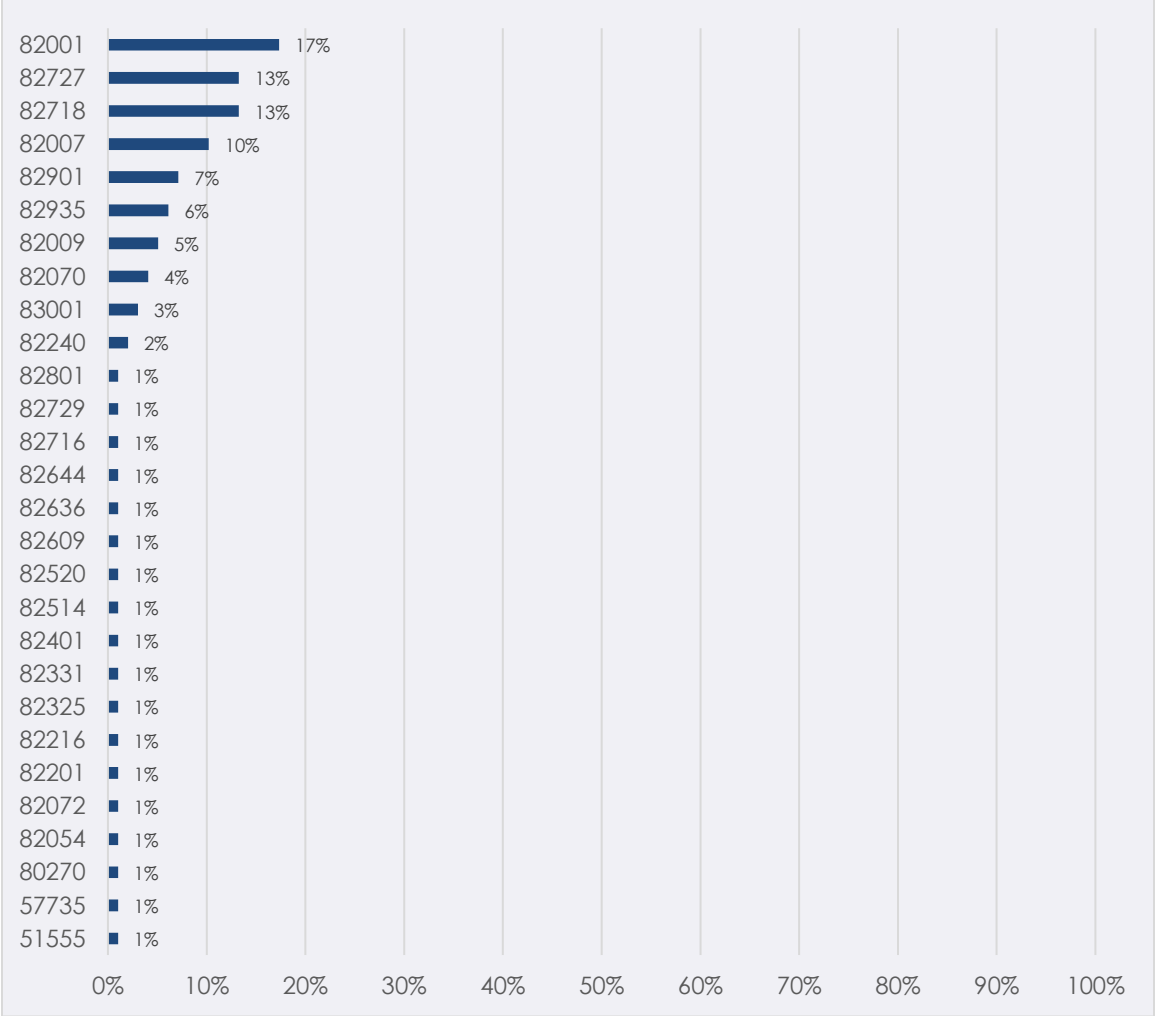
Figure 85. *Housing: In the last 12 months did you or anyone in your family experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Evicted/threatened with eviction | 18% |
| Heat, electricity, or water shut off | 10% |
| Domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking | 10% |
| Subsidized housing issues | 10% |
| Treated poorly exercising tenant rights | 10% |
| Poor housing quality/refused repairs | 8% |
| Could not afford rent increase | 8% |
| Unlawful entry, taking of posessions | 7% |
| Landlord/public housing dispute | 5% |
| Deposit withheld/excessive damage claims | 5% |
| Mobile home park housing issues | 5% |
| Denied disability accommodations | 2% |
| Experienced housing discrimination | 2% |

Figure 86. *If you or anyone in your household owned a home or had a mortgage did you experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I DO NOT have a mortgage | 84% |
| Fell several payments behind on a mortgage | 6% |
| Home went into foreclosure | 5% |
| Had trouble refinancing a mortgage | 3% |
| Had trouble with tax liens or other government liens | 2% |
| Experienced misleading or dishonest mortgage lending | 0% |
| Told by lender you must purchase "extra" financial products to get a mortgage | 0% |
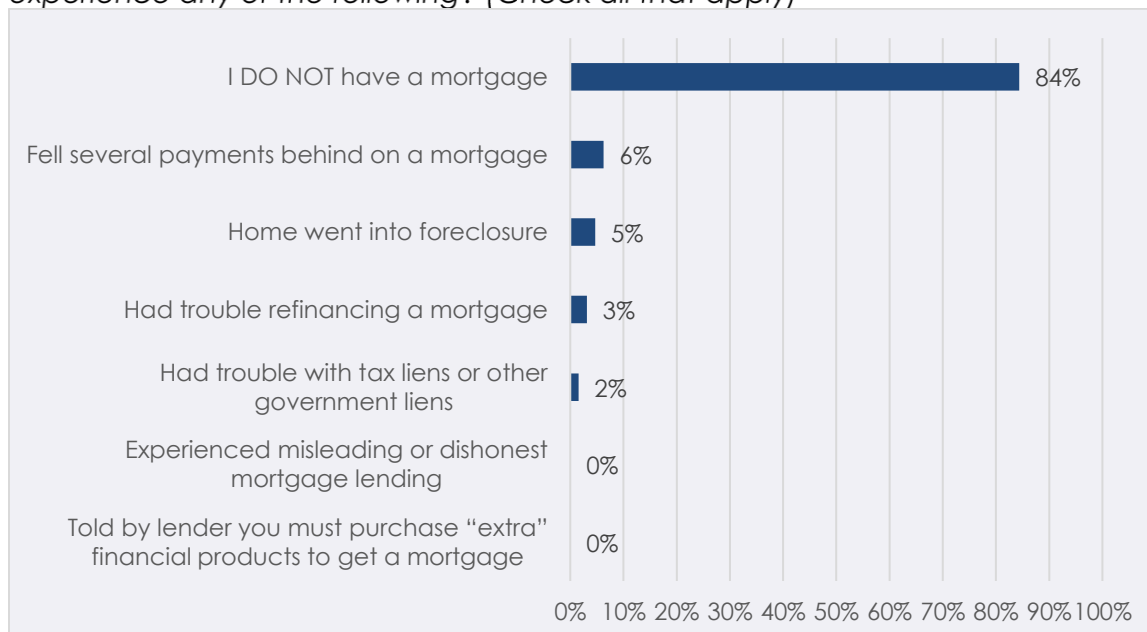
Figure 87. *In the last 12 months have you experienced any of the following when owning, purchasing, or renting a mobile or manufactured home? (Check all that apply)*
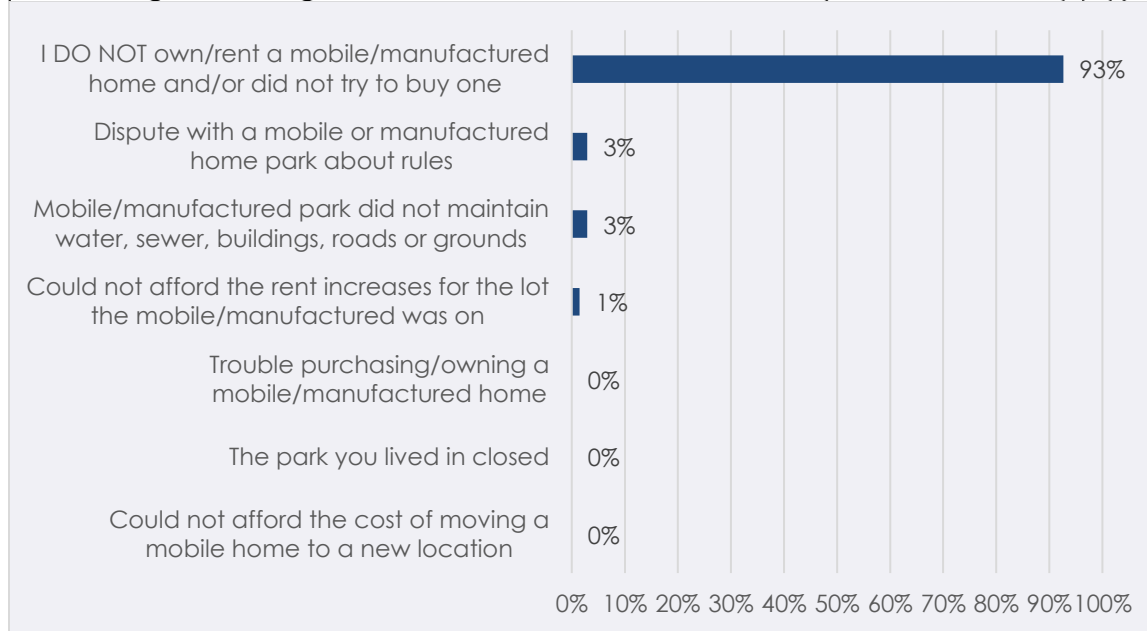


Figure 88. *In the last 12 months if you were homeless did you experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*
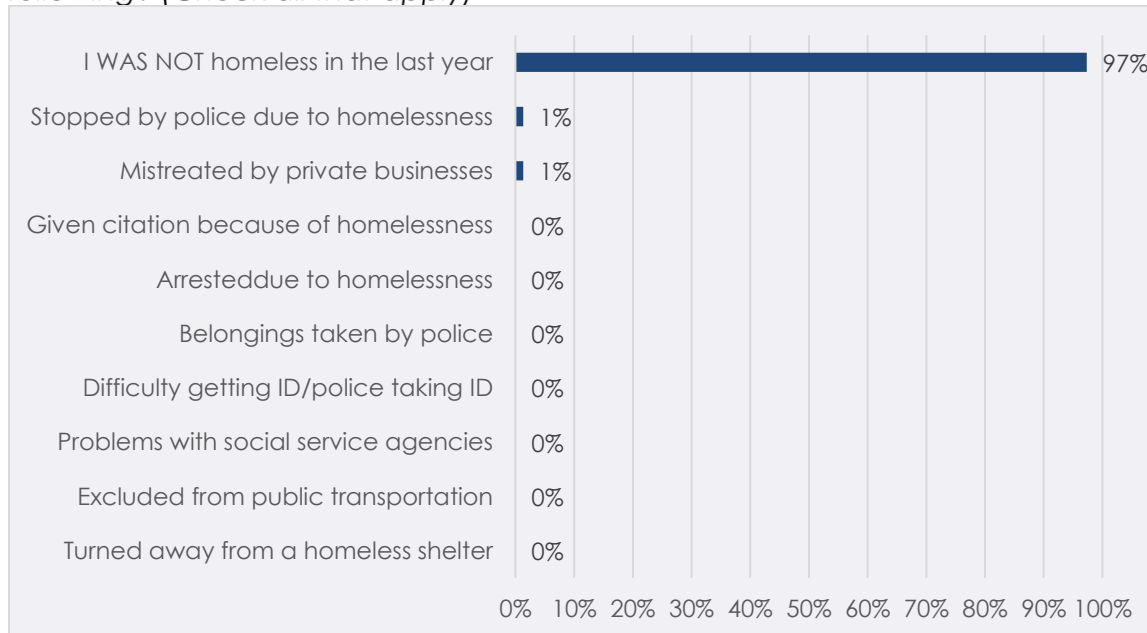
Figure 89. *I do not know what kind of housing issues civil legal aid programs help people with.*



18%

82%

- True
- False
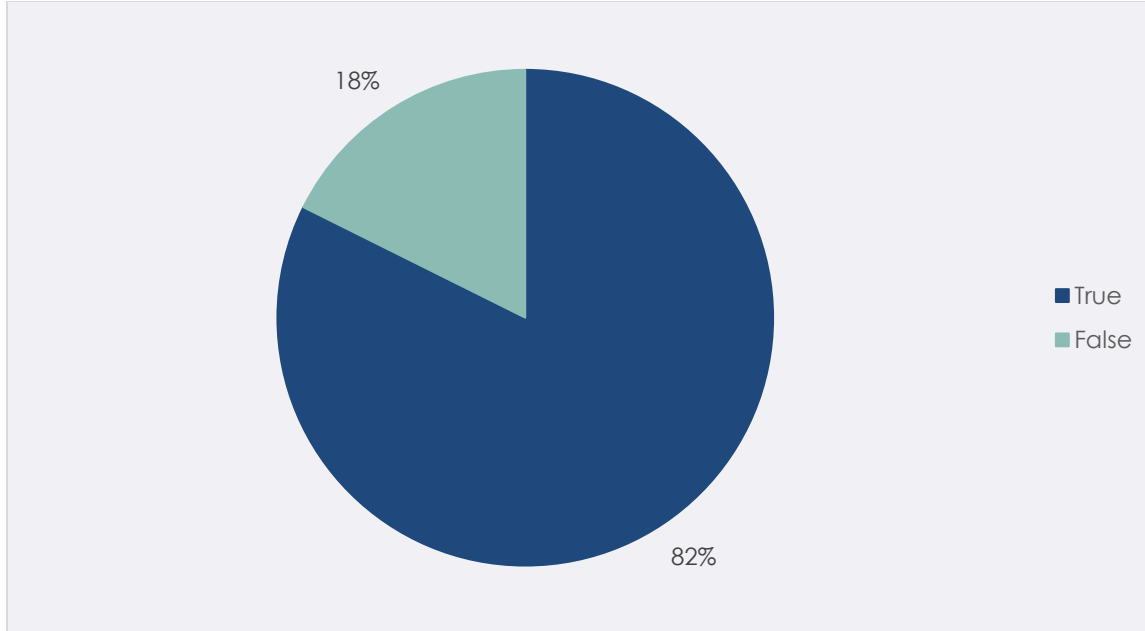
Figure 90. *Family & Children: Have you or anyone in your household experienced any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



| | |
|---|---|
| Domestic violence/stalking/sexual assault | 26% |
| Divorce/separation involving children | 13% |
| Custody or visitation | 13% |
| Child support payment collection | 11% |
| Divorce/separation NOT involving children | 7% |
| Open case with Child Protective Services | 6% |
| Difficulty with child support orders | 6% |
| Trouble obtaining a child support order | 5% |
| Problems contesting guardianship of a child | 3% |
| Difficulty paying child support | 2% |
| Spousal support payment collections | 2% |
| Child guardianship apppointment problems | 1% |
| Problems with child paternity | 1% |
| Child abduction by noncustodial parent(s) | 1% |
| Problems with child adoption | 1% |
| Unable to obtain custody mediator | 1% |
| Difficulty paying spousal support | 0% |
| Aged out of foster care without plan/support | 0% |

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Figure 91. *Consumer/Financial Issues: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Threats from bill collectors | 19% |
| Wages garnished | 14% |
| Credit problems from identity theft | 11% |
| Experienced scam | 9% |
| Filed for or needed bankruptcy | 9% |
| Payday loans | 7% |
| Problems with debt reduction companies | 5% |
| Problems paying interest (non-mortgage) | 5% |
| Problems paying fine/judgement | 5% |
| Vehicle issues (payment, reposession, etc.) | 5% |
| Business fraud | 4% |
| Products that did not work as advertised | 4% |
| Problems with taxes | 4% |
| Other loans with illegal/unfair fees/terms | 0% |

Figure 92. *Disability: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following?*

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Disability benefits/services denied, reduced, or terminated | 70% |
| Elderly/disabled person being abused | 20% |
| Guardian mishandled SS, SSI, etc. benefits | 10% |
| Denied disability accomodations | 0% |
| Problems accessing businesses due to disability | 0% |
| Lived in a mental/long-term care facility, but wanted to live elsewhere | 0% |

Figure 93. *Military/Veterans: If you were in the military, in the last 12 months did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*
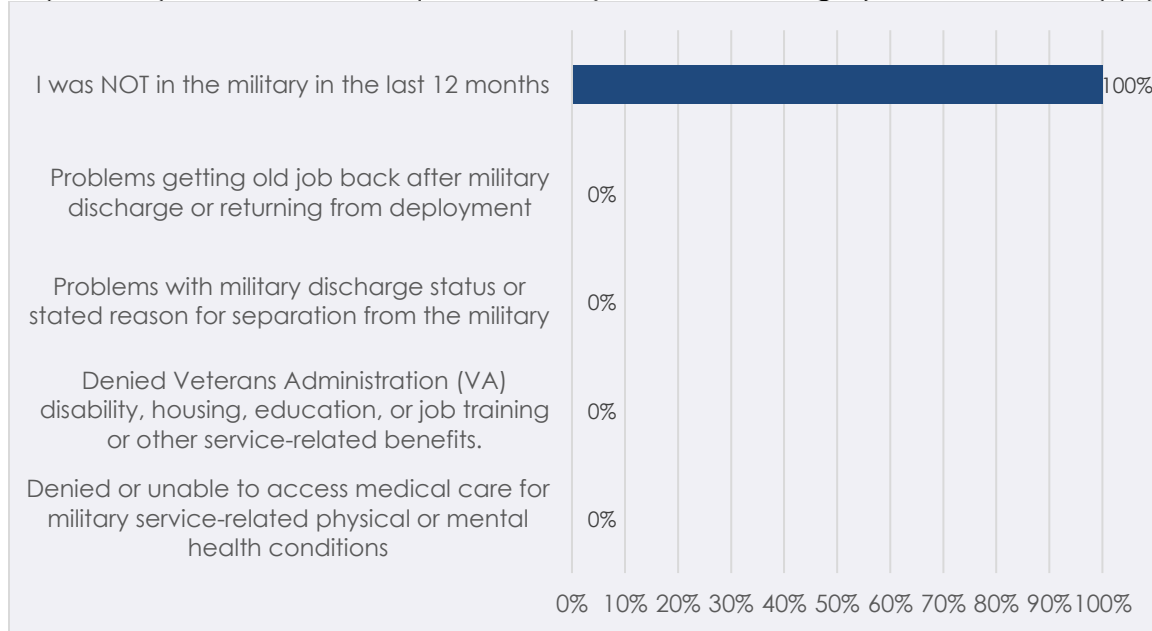


Figure 94. *Native Americans: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*
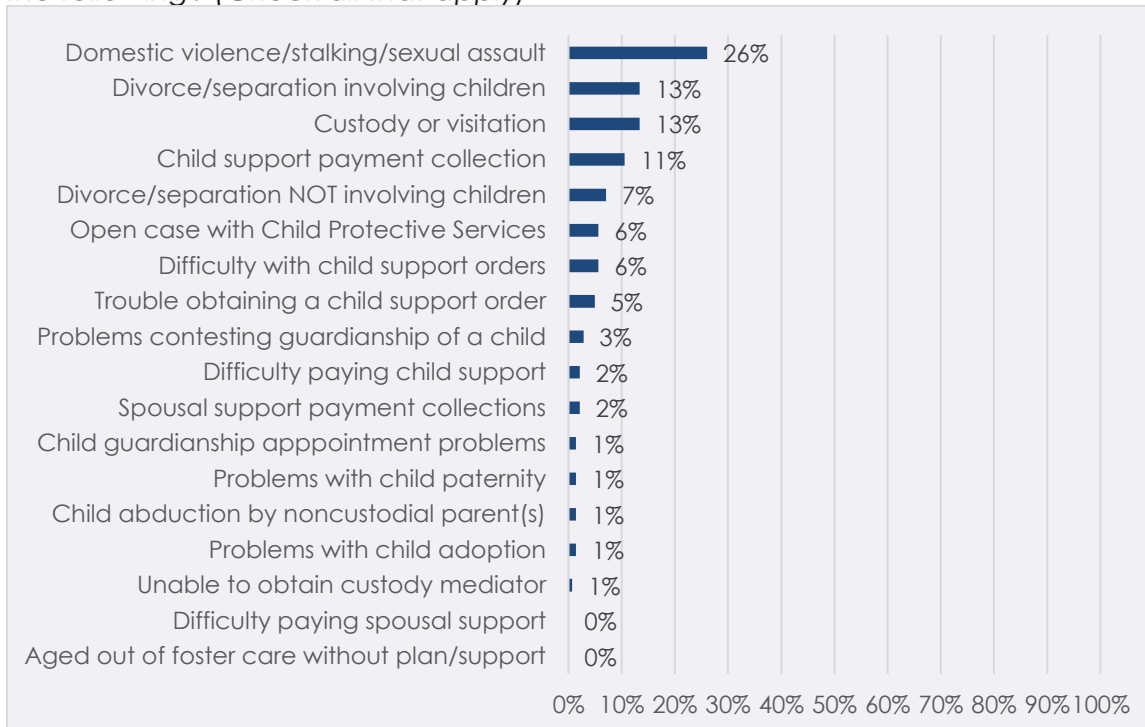
Figure 95. *Employment: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 35% |
| Employer failed to pay wages/benefits due | 13% |
| Denied unemployment benefits | 13% |
| Job problems from DV, sexual assault, etc. | 10% |
| Denied worker's compensation | 6% |
| Unfairly terminated from a job | 6% |
| Sexual harassment/unfair treatment at work | 6% |
| Unsafe working conditions | 3% |
| Workplace complaint not taken seriously | 3% |
| Unreasonable workplace rules | 3% |
| Disability accommodation necessary for job | 0% |

Figure 96. *Health: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



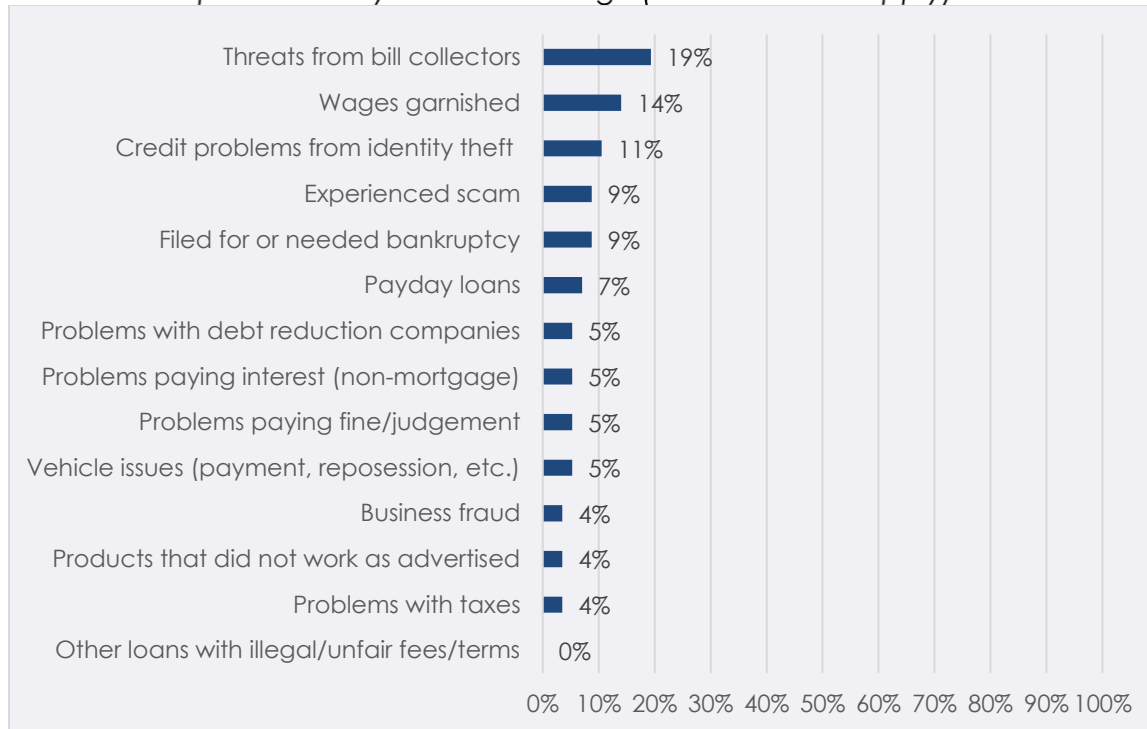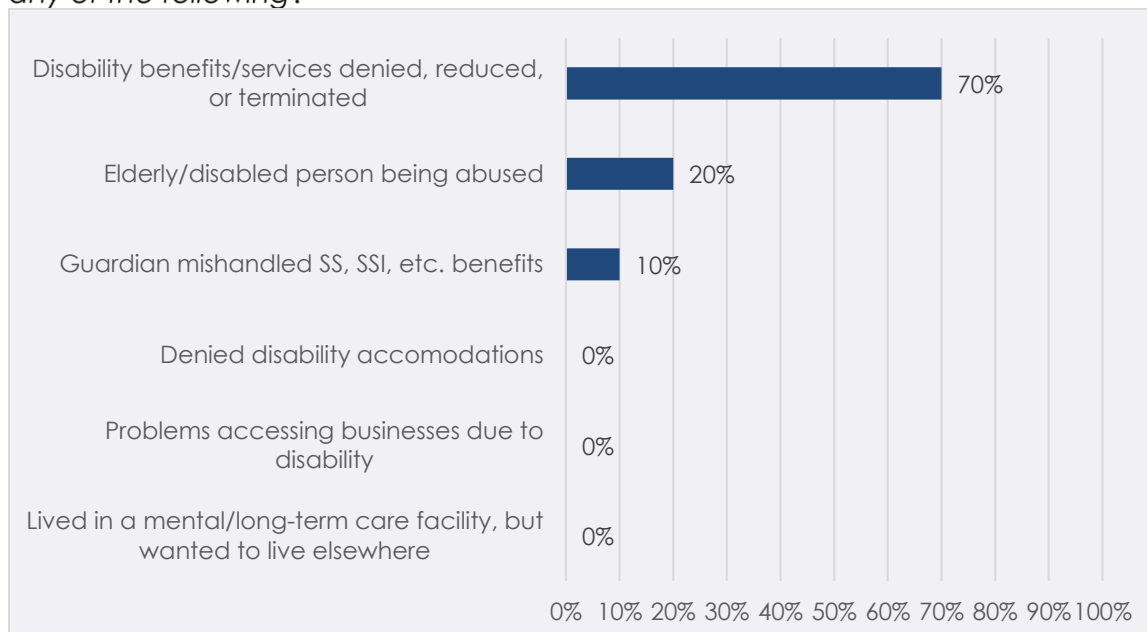| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Health insurance did not cover services | 26% |
| Billed incorrectly for medical services | 18% |
| Denied Medicaid benefits | 18% |
| Problems with medical debt collectors | 14% |
| Problems with government insurance | 10% |
| Not informed of financial assistance/free care | 8% |
| Denied personal care services | 6% |
| Denied interpreter for medical services | 0% |
| Problems with nursing home/long-term facility | 0% |
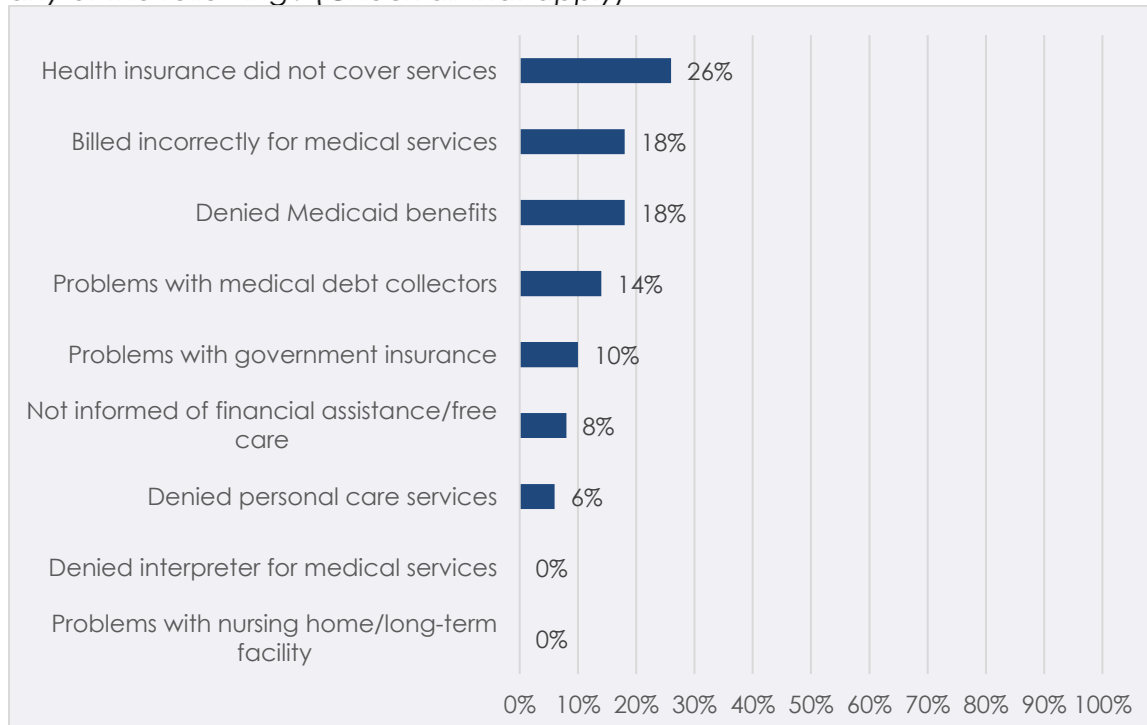
Figure 97. *Criminal & Law Enforcement Involvement: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



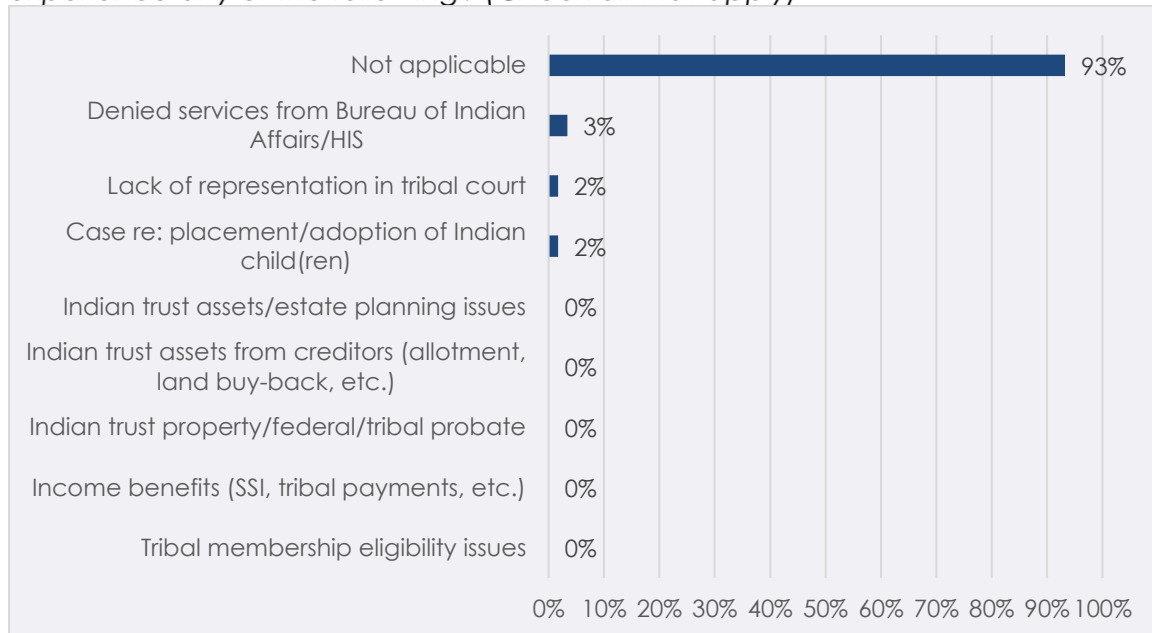Figure 98. *Immigration: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*
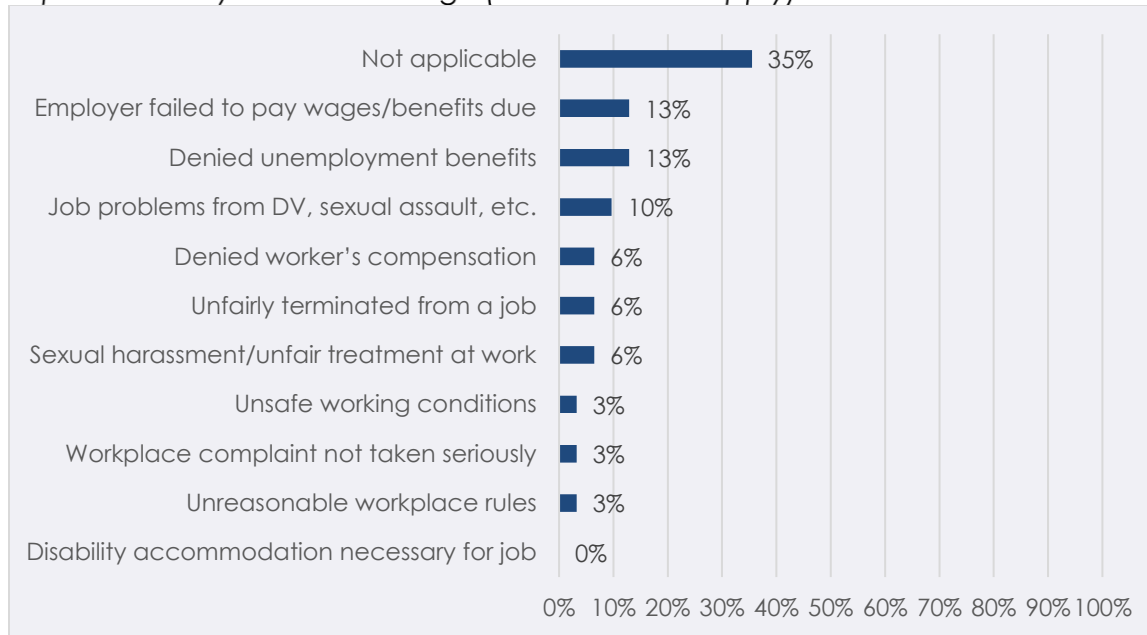
Figure 99. *In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience discrimination, denial of services, harassment, or unfair treatment because of any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



Figure 100. *In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience discrimination, denial of services, harassment, or unfair treatment because of religion?*
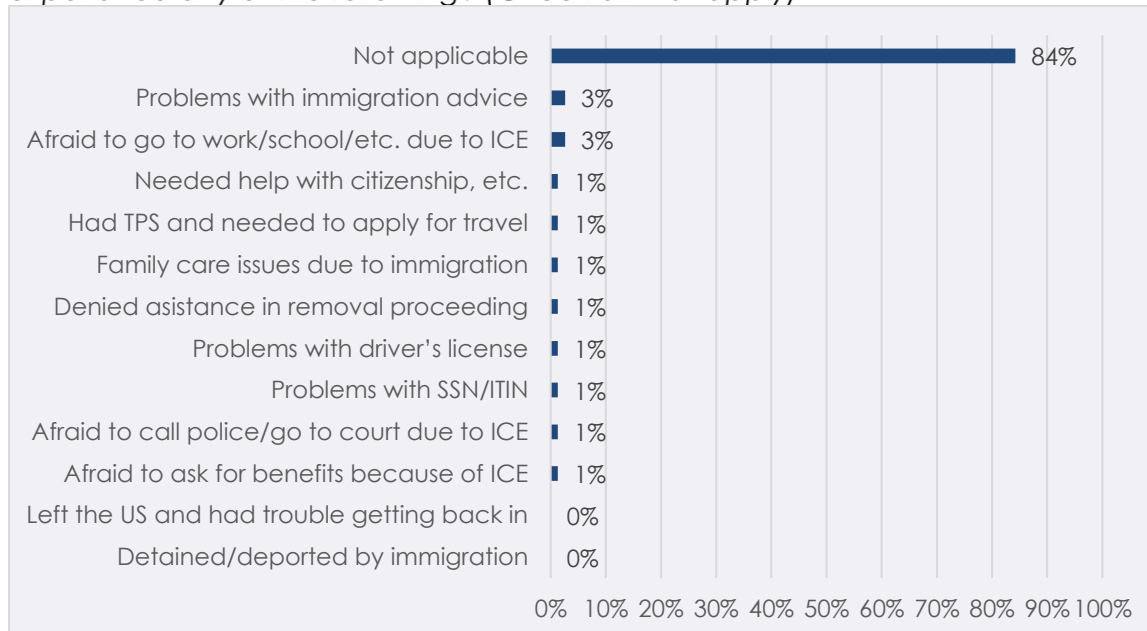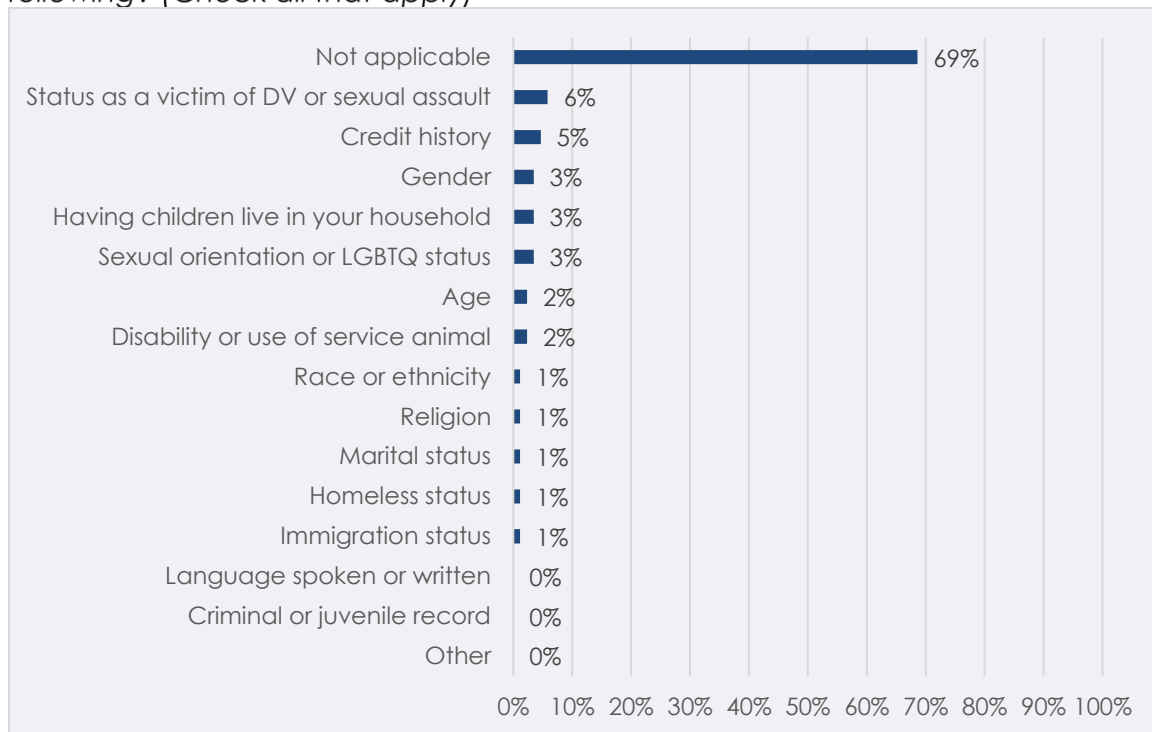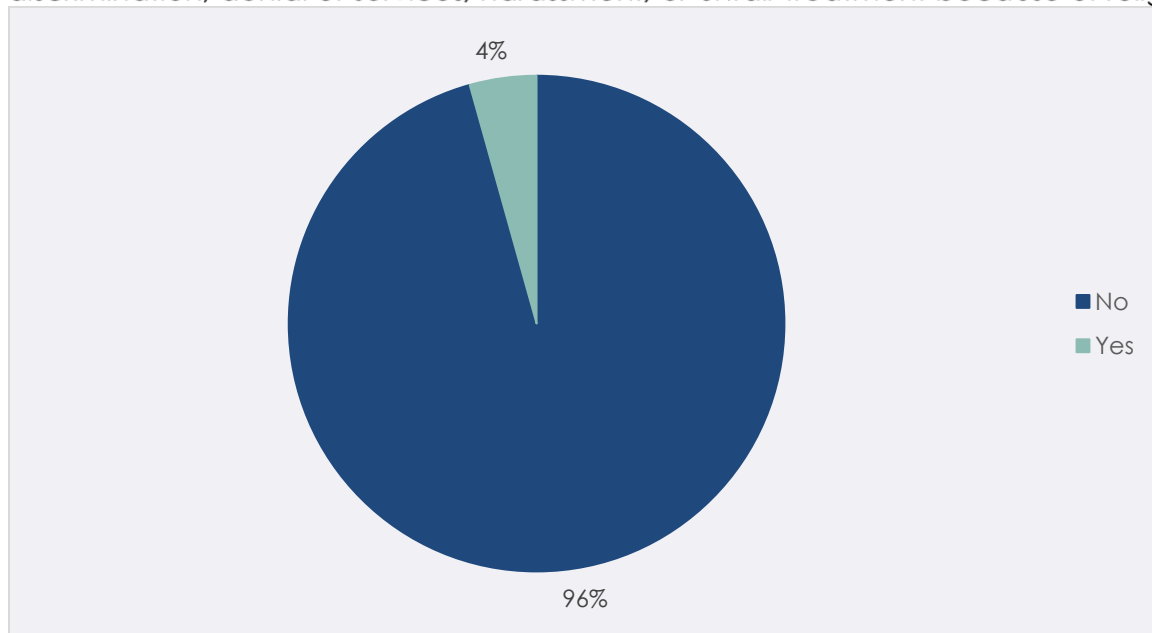
Figure 101. *Did discrimination, denial of services, harassment or unfair treatment occur in any of the following situations? (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 65% |
| Rental housing | 8% |
| Employment | 5% |
| Shopping, including stores and restaurants | 5% |
| Credit, banks, debt | 4% |
| Health care | 4% |
| Home ownership | 3% |
| Mobile or manufactured housing | 3% |
| Law enforcement and policing | 3% |
| Education | 1% |
| Government assistance | 1% |
| Government services | 0% |
| Other | 0% |
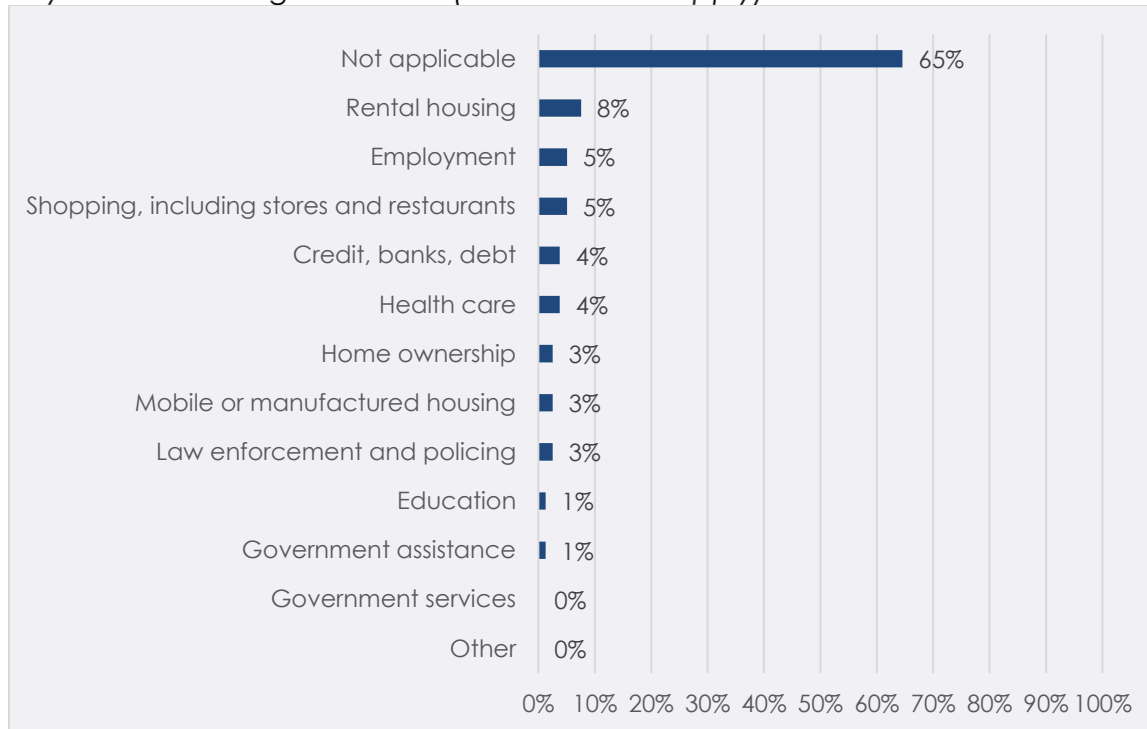
Figure 102. *Did you try to get help for any of these problems from a lawyer in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)*



| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Family and relationships | 44% |
| Rental housing | 11% |
| Home ownership | 7% |
| Credit, debt, and fraud | 7% |
| Health care | 7% |
| Other | 7% |
| Aging or disability | 4% |
| Crime and policing | 4% |
| Mobile or manufactured housing | 2% |
| Veterans or military service members | 2% |
| Education | 2% |
| Government assistance and benefits | 2% |
| Discrimination and harassment | 2% |
| Tribal members or descendants | 0% |
| Employment | 0% |

Figure 103. *If you tried to get legal help in the last 12 months, where did you get it? (Check all that apply)*



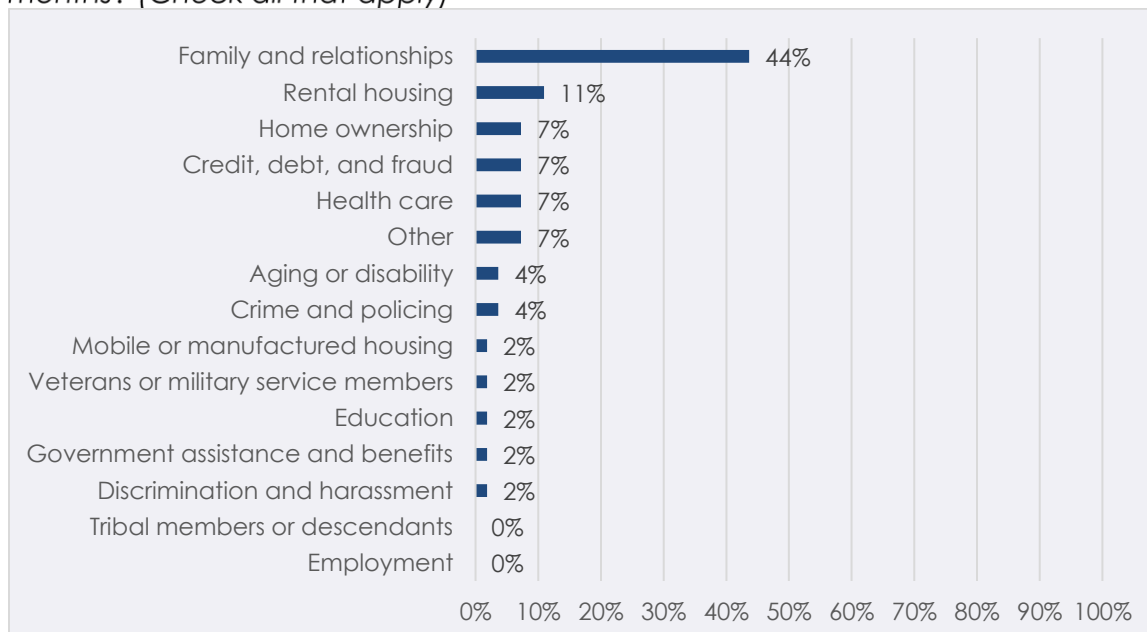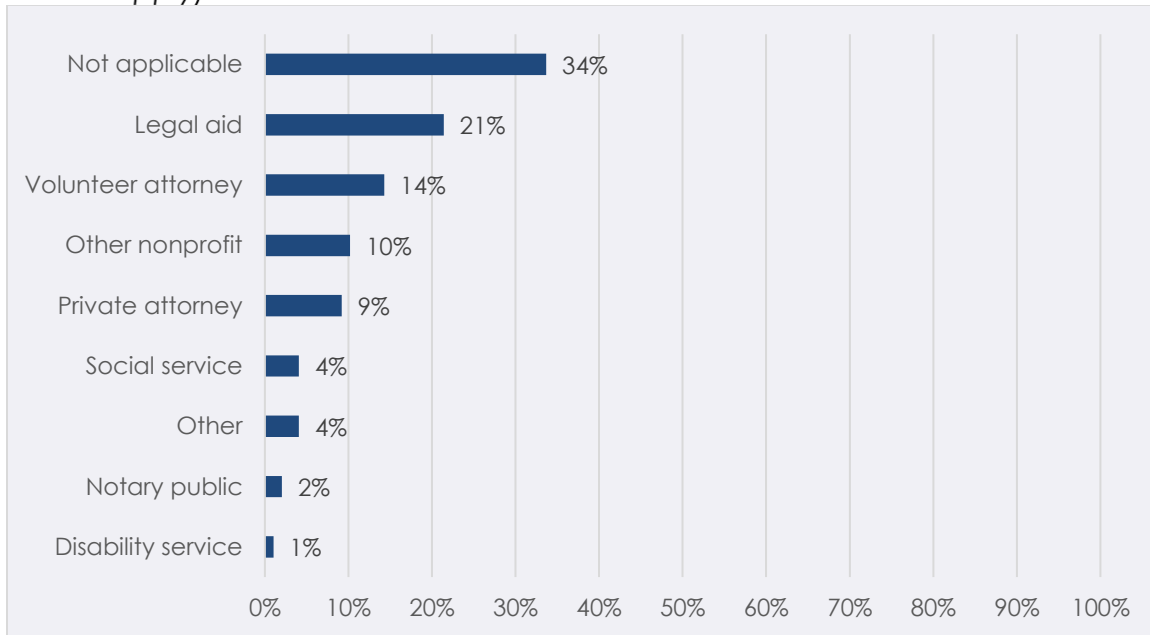| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 34% |
| Legal aid | 21% |
| Volunteer attorney | 14% |
| Other nonprofit | 10% |
| Private attorney | 9% |
| Social service | 4% |
| Other | 4% |
| Notary public | 2% |
| Disability service | 1% |

Figure 104. *What kind of legal help did your receive in the last 12 months when you tried to get help? (Check all that apply)*



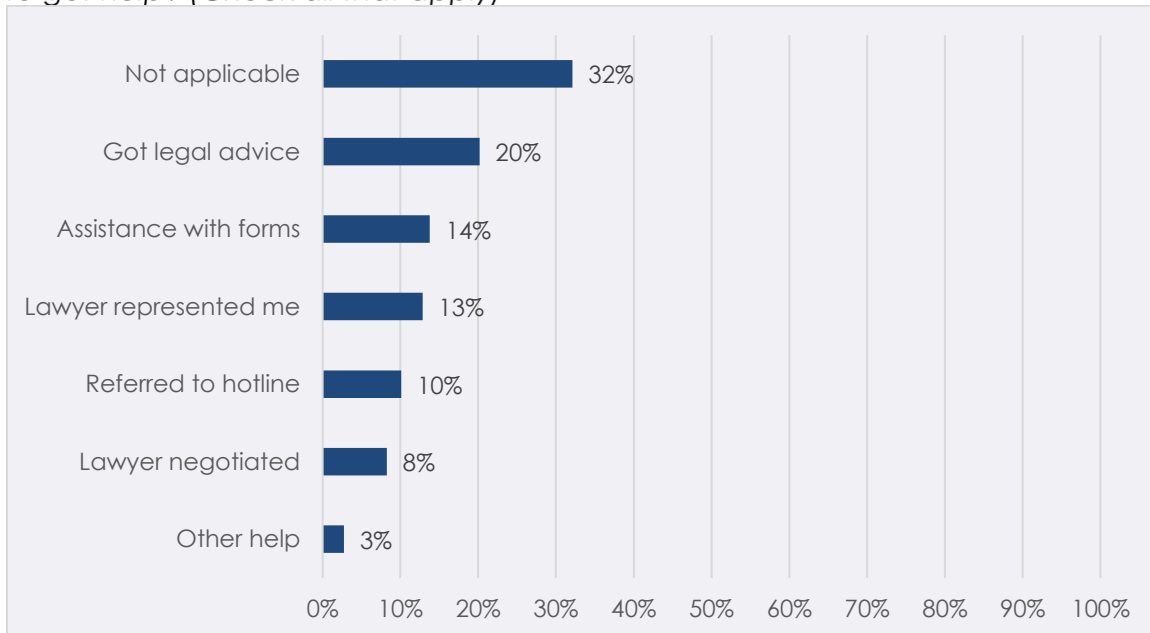| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Not applicable | 32% |
| Got legal advice | 20% |
| Assistance with forms | 14% |
| Lawyer represented me | 13% |
| Referred to hotline | 10% |
| Lawyer negotiated | 8% |
| Other help | 3% |

Figure 105. *Help you may have tried to get: In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household experience any of the following? (Check all that apply)*
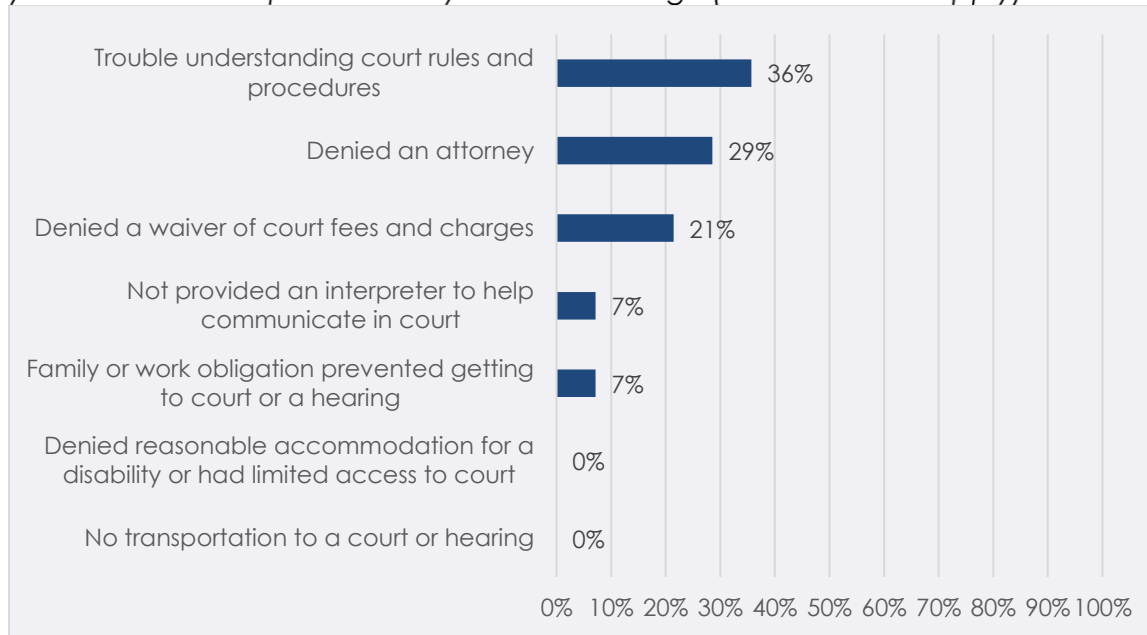


Figure 106. *How often do you think you and your family, friends, and neighbors are treated fairly in the civil legal system?*
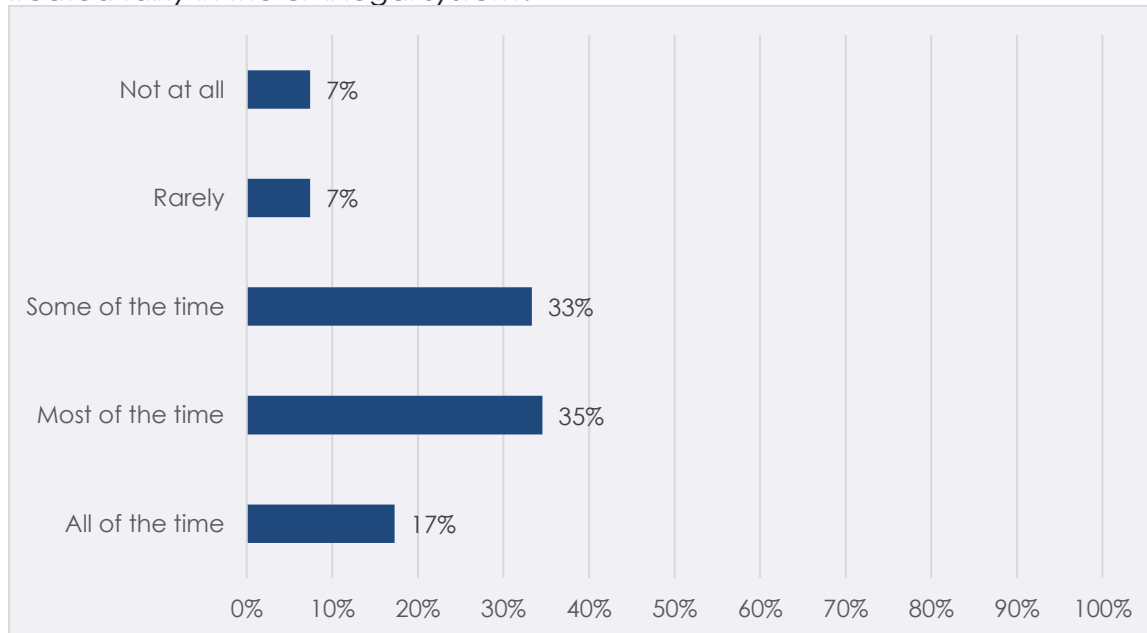
Figure 107. *If you had a legal problem, which of the following ways of getting legal information or help would be useful to you? (Check all that apply)*
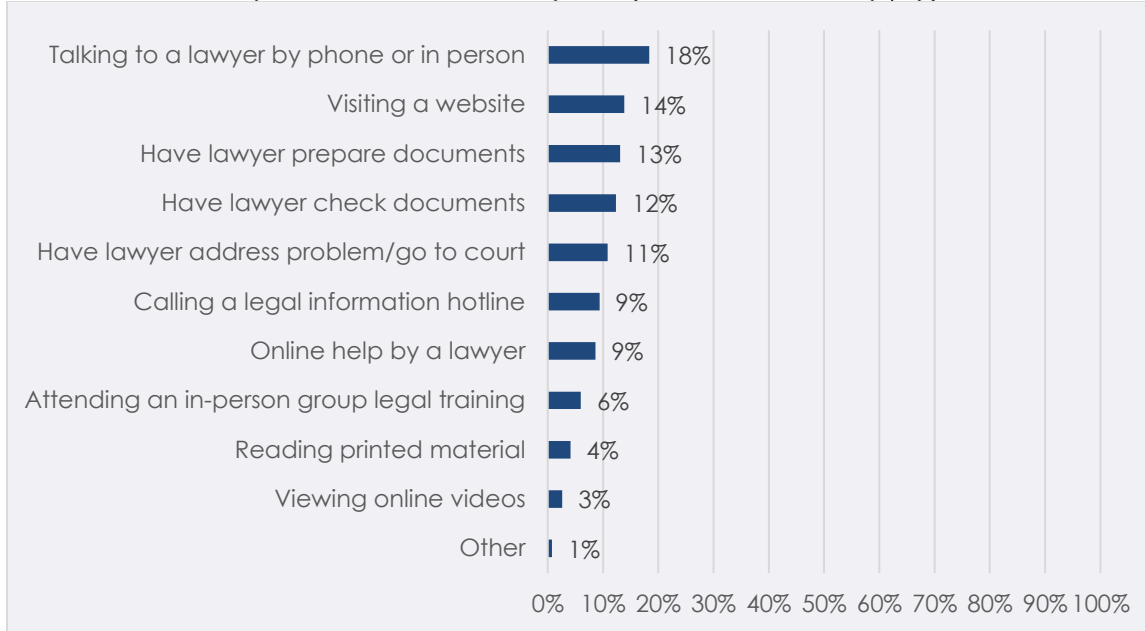


| | |
|---|---|
| Talking to a lawyer by phone or in person | 18% |
| Visiting a website | 14% |
| Have lawyer prepare documents | 13% |
| Have lawyer check documents | 12% |
| Have lawyer address problem/go to court | 11% |
| Calling a legal information hotline | 9% |
| Online help by a lawyer | 9% |
| Attending an in-person group legal training | 6% |
| Reading printed material | 4% |
| Viewing online videos | 3% |
| Other | 1% |

Figure 108. *Which of the following legal information, advice, or assistance sources are you familiar with? (Check all that apply)*



| | |
|---|---|
| Legal Aid of WY | 26% |
| Equal Justice WY | 15% |
| WY Children's Law Center | 8% |
| WY Child Support Program | 8% |
| University of WY Law School Clinics | 6% |
| WY Department of Workforce Services | 6% |
| Equal Justice Wyoming's online resources | 5% |
| WY Coalition Against Domestic Violence… | 5% |
| WY State Law Library | 5% |
| WY Judicial Branch online resources | 4% |
| WY Free Legal Answers website | 3% |
| Volunteer Reference Attorney Program | 3% |
| University of WY Law Library | 2% |
| WY AG's Office – Consumer Protection Unit | 2% |
| Teton County Access to Justice Center | 2% |