



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EMBEDDING CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES AND CIVIL JUSTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING WITHIN UNIVERSITY OF UTAH HEALTH

A summary of i4J's work with U of U Health during the 2022-23 academic year is available at: bit.ly/i4JWestValley



OVERVIEW

The consequences of eviction, debt collection, and domestic violence can devastate low-income and historically marginalized individuals and families. A radical expansion of the social service sector is critical to delivering legal advice and assistance before a socioeconomic challenge becomes a legal problem.

Utah is leading the nation in reforming unauthorized practice of law restrictions, allowing community members with specialized training but not a JD to provide legal advice. The healthcare sector provides a unique opportunity, and i4J, together with University of Utah Health, has been exploring options to embed community-centered legal services into the University's new medical center in West Valley.

By leveraging Utah's new pathways for legal services, patients screened for social determinants of health at the medical center in West Valley will get connected to social services and could also be helped by legal advocates. These advocates can help patients understand their legal options and resolve their substantive problems. i4J has previously designed, built, and launched similar pilots providing non-lawyers services to domestic violence survivors in Arizona, people experiencing medical debt in Utah, and people experiencing housing instability in Arizona and Utah.

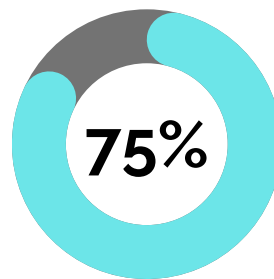


Radically new legal service models are needed to get below the surface and reach those in the Justice Awareness Gap.

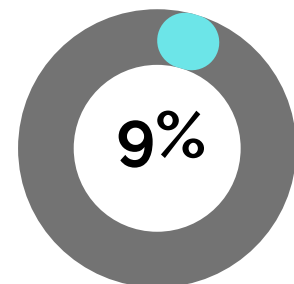


Project Problem Statement

How might we embed civil justice problem-solving in patient care to reach those in the justice awareness gap?



of low-income Americans experience a civil legal problem



only 9% of them are aware the problem is legal.

OBJECTIVE:

Working with University of Utah Health in the West Valley community to apply i4J's design- and systems-thinking framework and gather community-based data to identify, prototype, and test viable interventions that leverage regulatory reform opportunities to embed civil justice problem-solving in patient care.



OUR PROCESS

01

Empathize

Through interviews with diverse stakeholders, observations in the community, and qualitative research, i4J seeks to understand the unmet civil legal needs of the West Valley community from multiple perspectives, emphasizing the perspective of lived-experience experts and the impact of civil justice issues on social determinants of health.

02

Define

i4J aggregates the information collected in the empathize phase and draws insights from that community-based work. The lab explores possible opportunity spaces for intervention, internal and external forces that undercut the capacity for change, and where current bright spots in the U of U Health system can be leveraged to intervene upstream and reduce the downstream health consequences of civil justice issues.

03

Ideate

i4J brainstorms creative ways to legally empower U of U Health patients to understand and assert their legal rights and protections. Ideation includes consideration of Utah's regulatory reform efforts as a way to democratize access to the civil legal system.

04

Prototype and Test

i4J creates prototypes--low-fidelity, tangible models--of the most feasible and impactful ideas generated during ideation and engages communities in providing input and feedback. i4J revises project ideas based on community feedback and finalizes proposed solutions to the "Innovative Approaches to Embedding Civil Legal Services and Civil Justice Problem-Solving within University of Utah Health" challenge.



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research team identified questions and created prototypes for two service models and gathered community feedback. The first model is an interdisciplinary student clinic where students are trained to provide limited-scope legal advice. The second service model is a Community Justice Worker Model, where members of the community are trained to offer legal problem-solving help, including legal advice, to others in the West Valley community. Based on data gathered in prototype testing, the research team identified key takeaways about both models:

- There is an appetite for collaboration in the creation of an interdisciplinary student clinic;
- Right now, there are significant challenges to positioning a student clinic to meet the Licensed Paralegal Practitioner (LPP) experiential requirements;
- Initiating a new interdisciplinary clinic will require meeting the experiential standards required for all students participating from various degree programs;
- Students express a desire for supervision if providing legal services;
- Community members are least likely to seek services from a Student Service Provider;
- Community Justice Workers should be properly trained and compensated for providing legal services;
- There is a capacity concern for Community Health Workers (CHWs) to become CJWs;
- CHWs are interested in pursuing LPP certification, but current requirements present an insurmountable barrier;
- Supervision and oversight of CJWs and students can alleviate authorization and liability concerns;
- Trauma-informed practices must be part of any service model; and
- When choosing between the two service model ideas, community members prefer Community Justice Workers to Student Service Providers.

Based on this feedback, the research team recommends moving forward with the CJW model — the first of its kind seeking to train community members from various backgrounds to provide limited-scope legal advice on multiple topics.

Stage 2: Spring 2023

In Stage 2, i4J collaborated with the University of Utah Population Health Center to further test and refine the CJW model through the creation of a service model blueprint, using the Intensive Outpatient Clinic as a case study. i4J is committed to continued collaboration with U of U Health leadership to answer outstanding service model design questions and guidance in drafting and submitting necessary Sandbox applications for authorization.