

Using Data in Self-Help and Civil Legal Assistance Programs

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Maryland Judiciary



Data is Not an End in Itself

What questions are you asking? What's the best way to get answers?

Management Information

Program goals, Efficient use of resources

Accountability

Program effectiveness, management/governance abilities

Overview

- Maryland Self-Help and Legal Aid resources overview
- Management data examples
 - Call center data
- Evaluation Research examples
 - Evaluation of a new grant for Tenant Volunteer Lawyer Program
 - Self Help Resource Evaluation
- Research and Evaluation lessons learned

Maryland Court Help Centers

FREE legal advice and information for individuals who do not have a lawyer.

The screenshot shows the Maryland Courts website with a navigation bar containing 'COURTS', 'SELF-HELP', 'E-SERVICES', 'LAWYERS', 'MEDIA', and 'COMMUN'. Below the navigation bar, a banner reads 'FREE legal help in civil cases for individuals who do not have a lawyer.' The main content area is divided into two columns: 'Call or Chat' and 'In-Person Help'. The 'Call or Chat' section features a photo of a woman at a laptop and a 'CHAT with a lawyer about your civil case' button with a 'Click Here' link. Below this is the phone number '410-260-1392'. The 'In-Person Help' section features a photo of three people at a table and lists 'Family Law', 'Circuit Court', and 'District Court'. A 'FREE ONLINE CLASSES' button is visible on the right side of the page.

Maryland Court Help Centers

Free legal advice and information for litigants without counsel

Help Center staff can help litigants:

- Complete COURT FORMS
- Learn HOW TO FILE court documents
- Prepare for TRIAL, COURT HEARINGS, or MEDIATION
- Understand court DOCUMENTS
- Find a LAWYER

Staffing

Help Center Data – All Centers

Case data

- Instances of Service
- Case type
- Procedural posture of the case

Litigant data

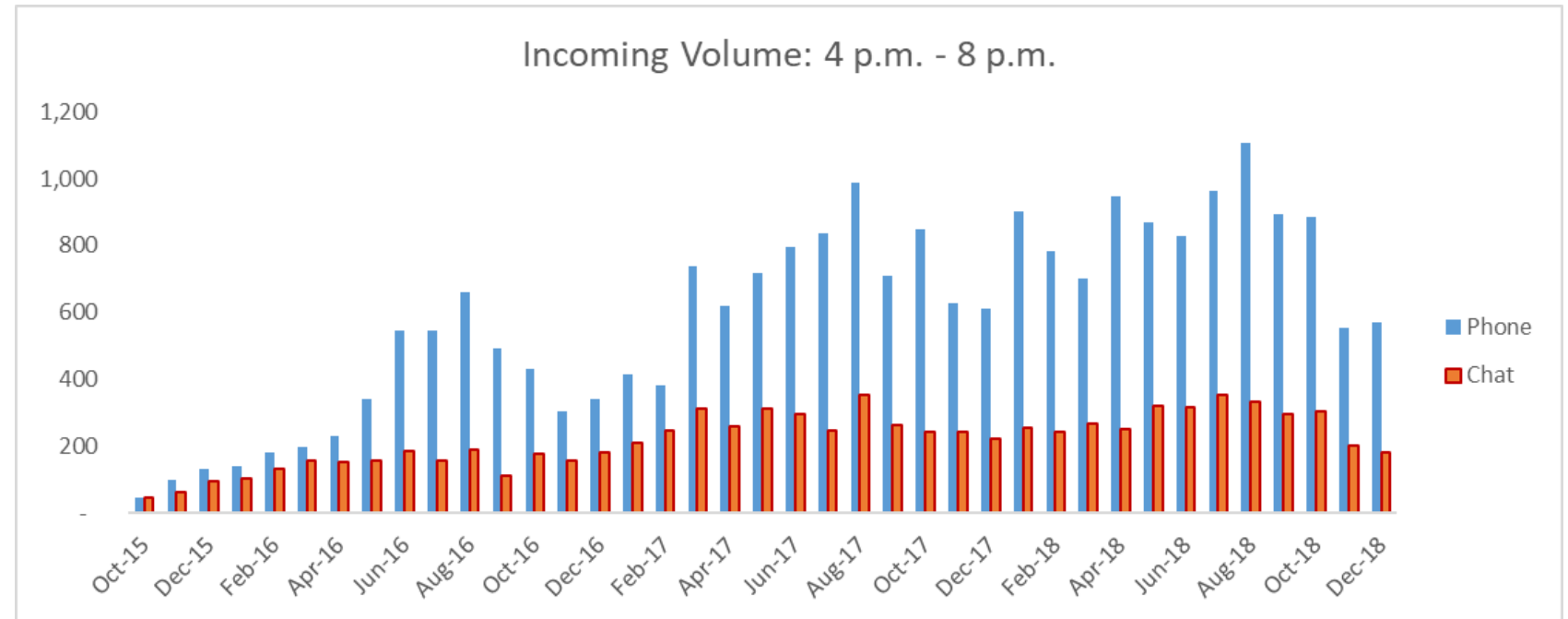
- Demographic data – age, gender, race, language, income, etc.
- Zip code

Satisfaction data

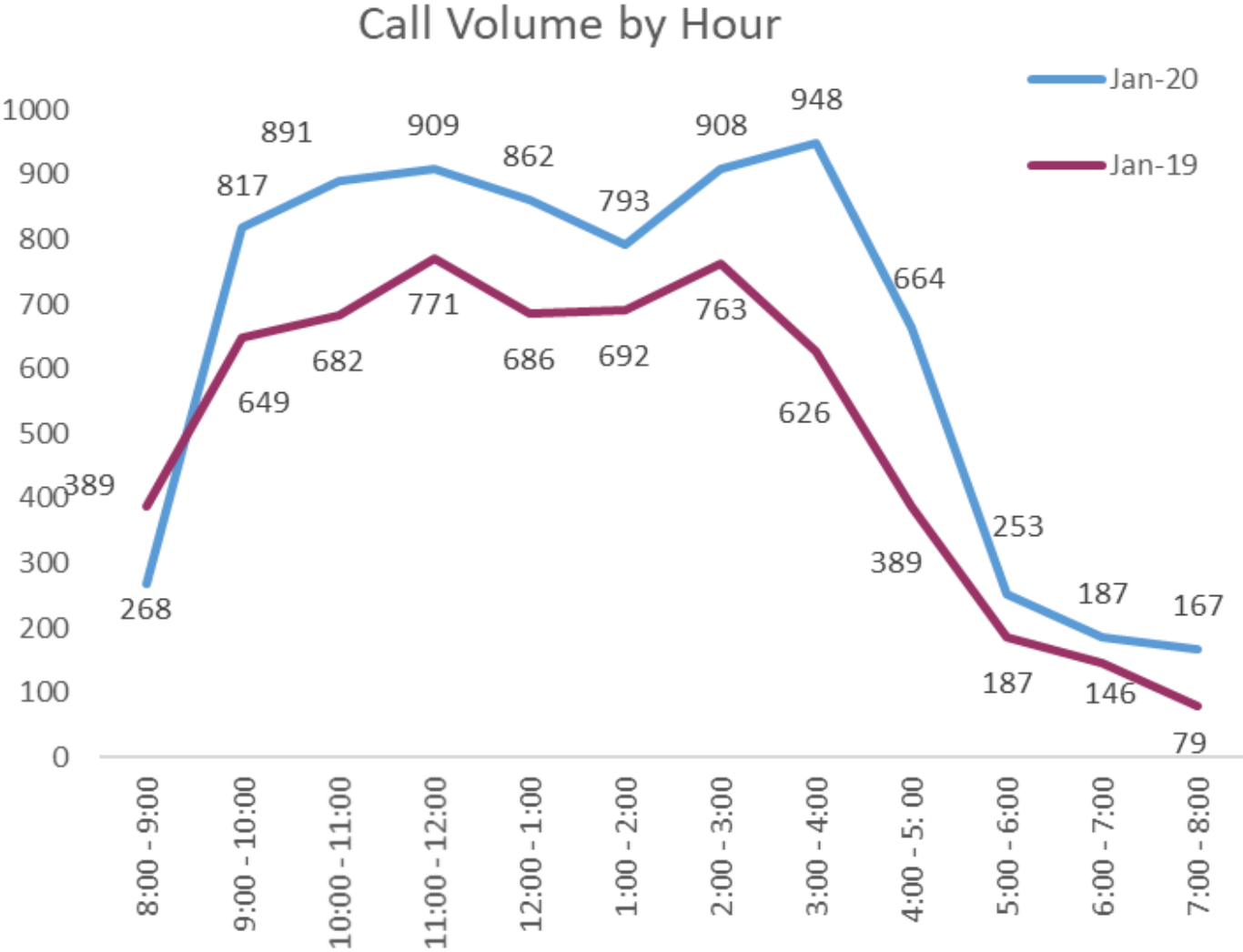
Management Information Examples

Management Data

- Wait times
- Dropped calls
- Overflow calls
- Demand peaks and valleys
 - Day of the week
 - Month
 - Hours

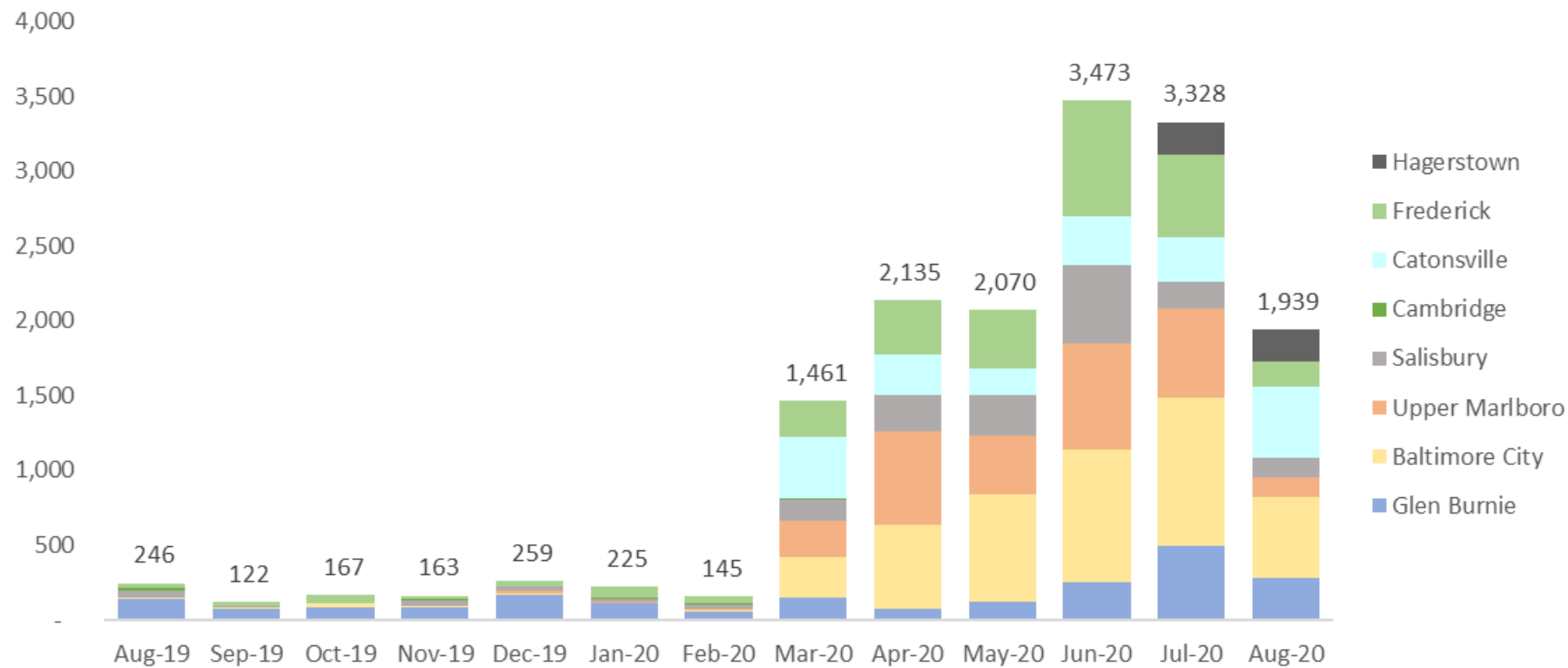


Management Data: Call Volume by Hour

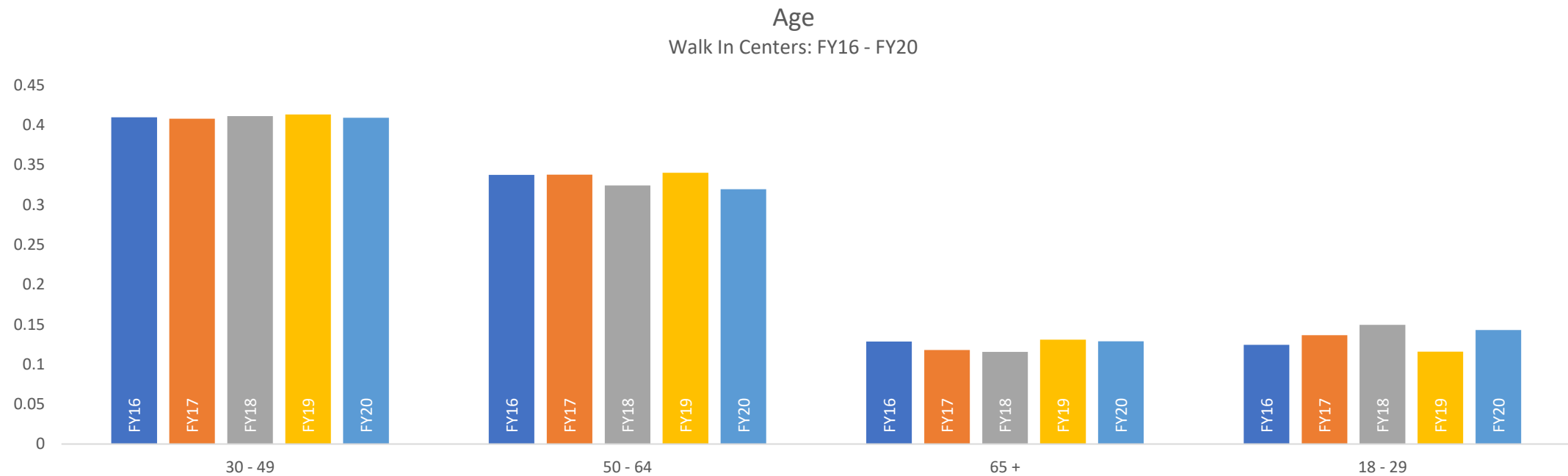


Management Data: Overflow Calls

Calls Transferred to Walk-In Staff



Demographics Are Stable Over Time



Evaluation Research: Examples

Evaluation Research

- Program or grant-specific focused evaluations.
 - Opening of first self-help center (2012)
 - Tenant Volunteer Lawyer for a Day
 - Mode of Service Delivery
 - Self-Help Online, Chat, and Walk In (Current)

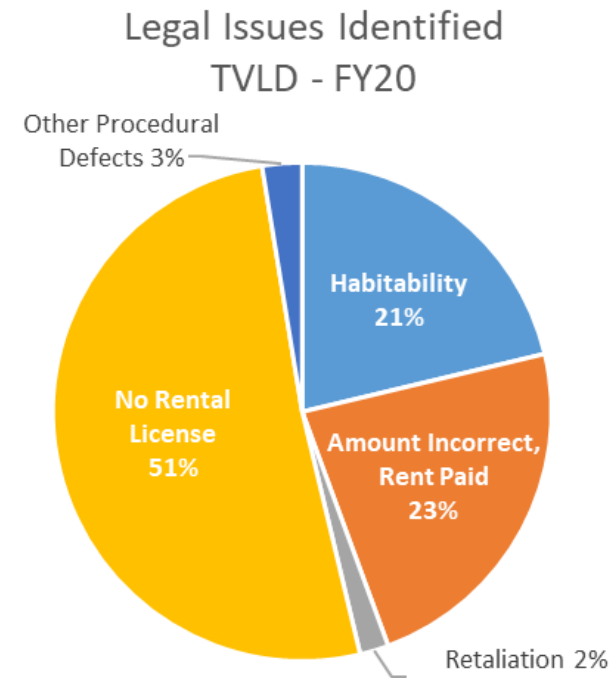
Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day (TVLD)

- FY17 – New Program
- Baltimore City
- High Volume Docket

Connects tenants with volunteer lawyers who represent them on their day of trial.

Helps tenants identify legal issues

- Improper licensing
- Incorrect amount of rent claimed
- Housing conditions that threaten life, health or safety



Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day (TVLD)

Evaluation Questions

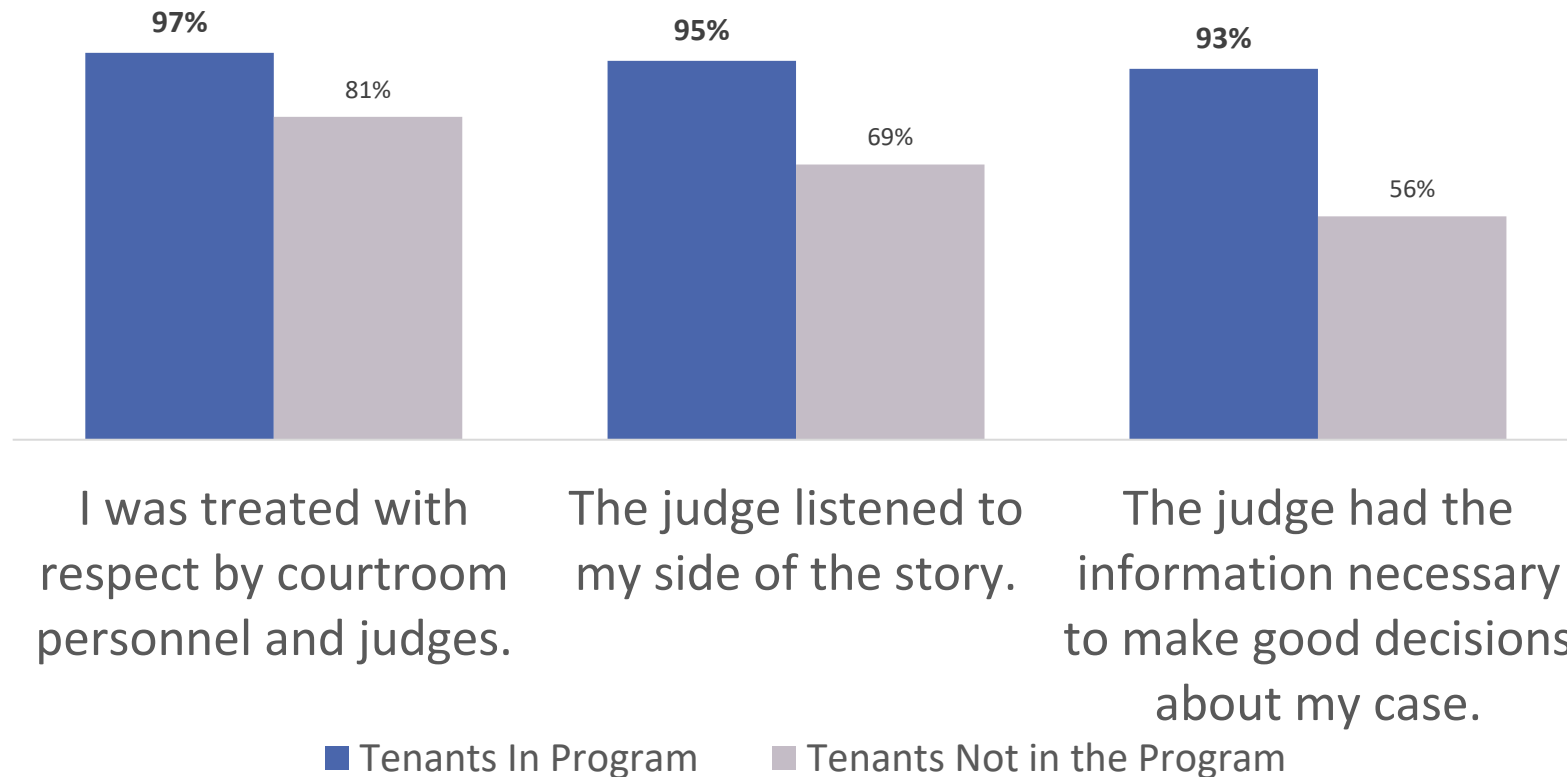
- Did this program meet deliverables?
- Did this program enhance access to justice for tenants?
- Should this program be expanded?

Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day (TVLD)

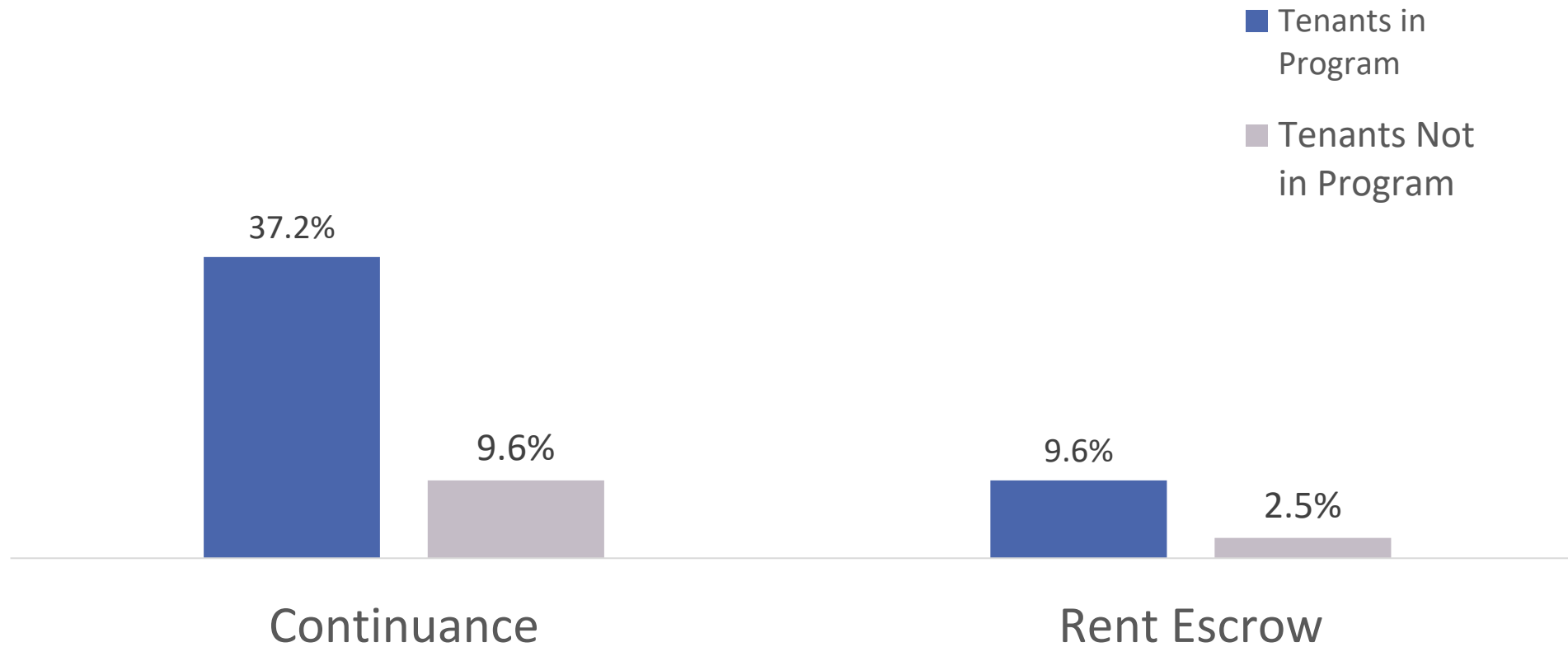
Evaluation Questions

- Did this program meet deliverables? **Count number of clients served**
 - **Program data**
- Did this program enhance access to justice for tenants? **Access and Fairness, Court Outcomes**
 - **Court Exit Surveys, Court Observations**
- Should this program be expanded?
 - **Recommendations**

Percent of Tenants who Agreed or Strongly Agreed



Court Outcomes: Observations in Court

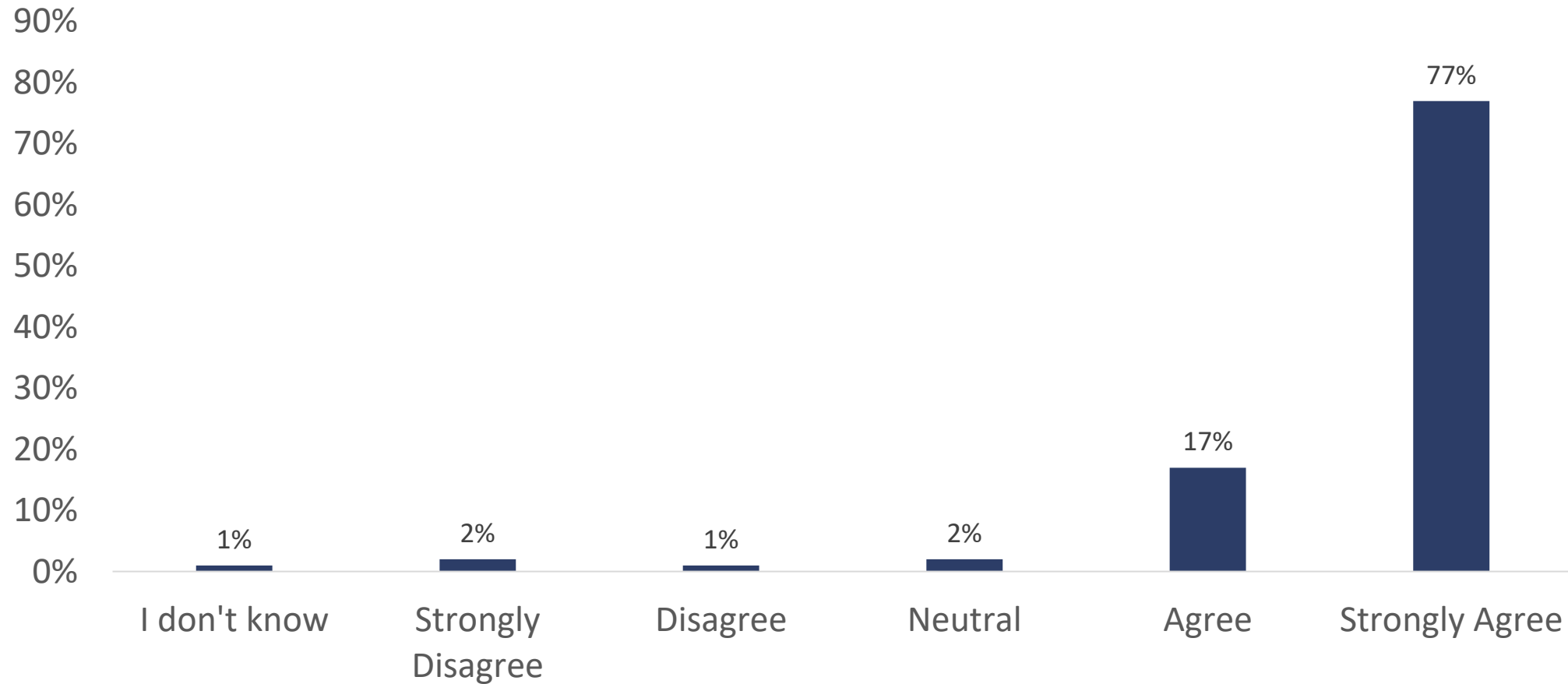


Tenant Volunteer Lawyer for a Day: **Lessons Learned**

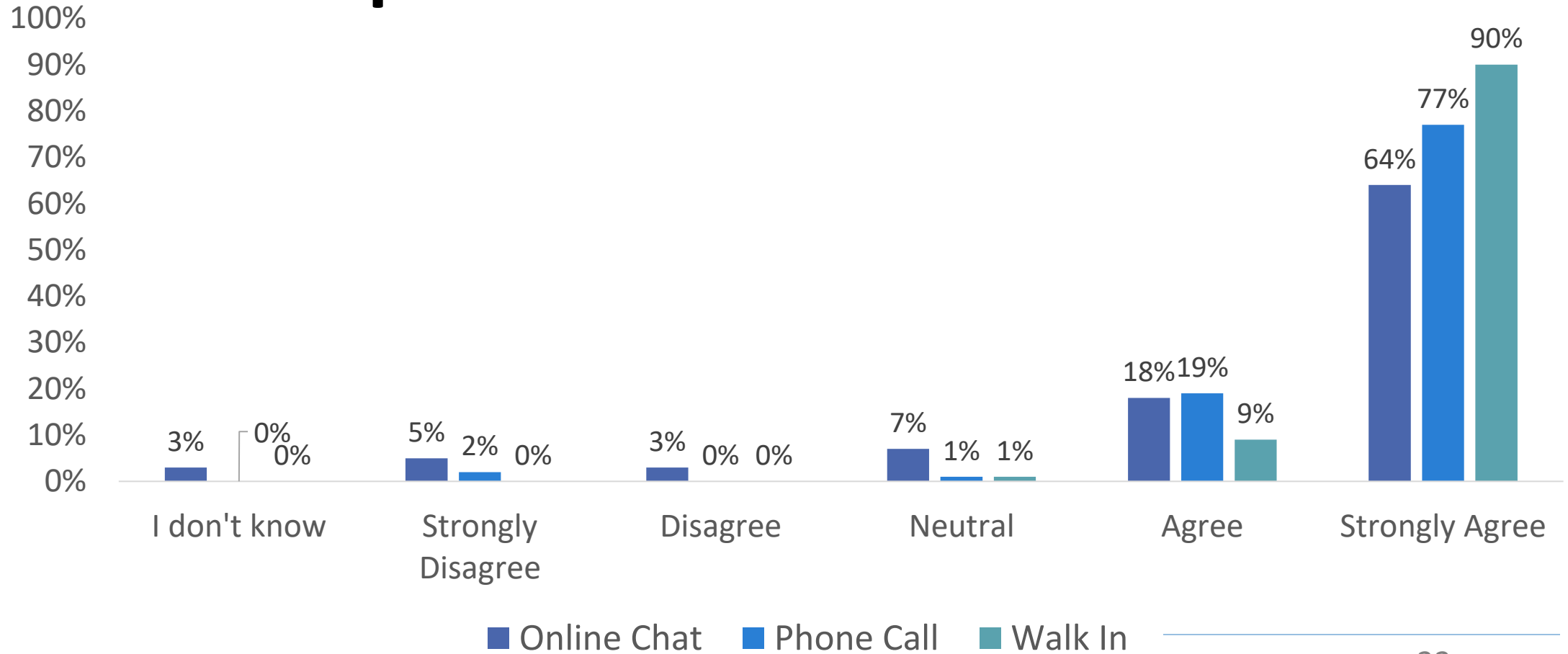
- Be quick!
- Be adaptable
- Keep it simple
 - Fewer questions is OK.

Mode of Service Delivery

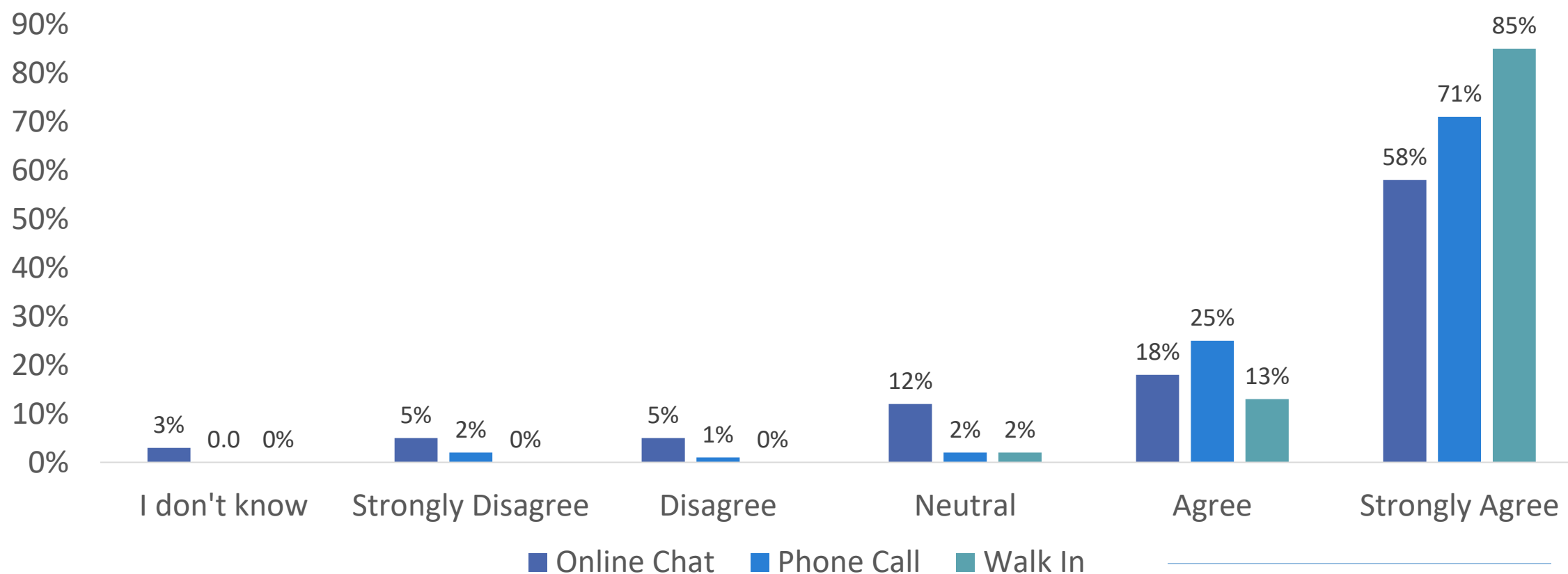
“I was satisfied with the services provided by the Self-Help Center.”



“I was satisfied with the services provided by the Self-Help Center.”



“I understand my case better after speaking with a Self-Help Center attorney”



Mode of delivery: Lessons Learned

- Results: Chat – lower on all questions
- Open-ended questions are helpful
- Good questions can lead to more questions
 - Live voice, social interaction
 - Video Conferencing as an alternative?

Videoconferencing

Helps meet the needs of litigants in jurisdictions without full-time, in-person help centers
Facilitates face-to-face communication between individuals who are not in the same location



Videoconferencing - Future

- Everyone is using videoconferencing!
- Help expand in-person help center services to locations that do not have the volume to justify a full-time center.
- Promotes social distancing in existing locations.



Help Center Evaluation

- Exit Surveys
 - Help Center Clients
 - Court Users
 - Follow-up 3 months later
- Interviews
 - Judges
 - Referral Sources
 - Center Attorneys

Research Methods



Use of Interns, research assistants

Law students,
Criminology students,
Budget

Training Considerations

Timing with school semester



Multiple ways to collect data

Tablets
Paper Forms



Multiple languages

Translation Services

Surveys

- Court Exit Surveys
Group comparisons and outcomes
- Self Help Center Exit Surveys
User Metrics, Satisfaction



Did you represent yourself in court today?

- Yes
 No



Powered by Qualtrics [↗](#)



English and Spanish Version

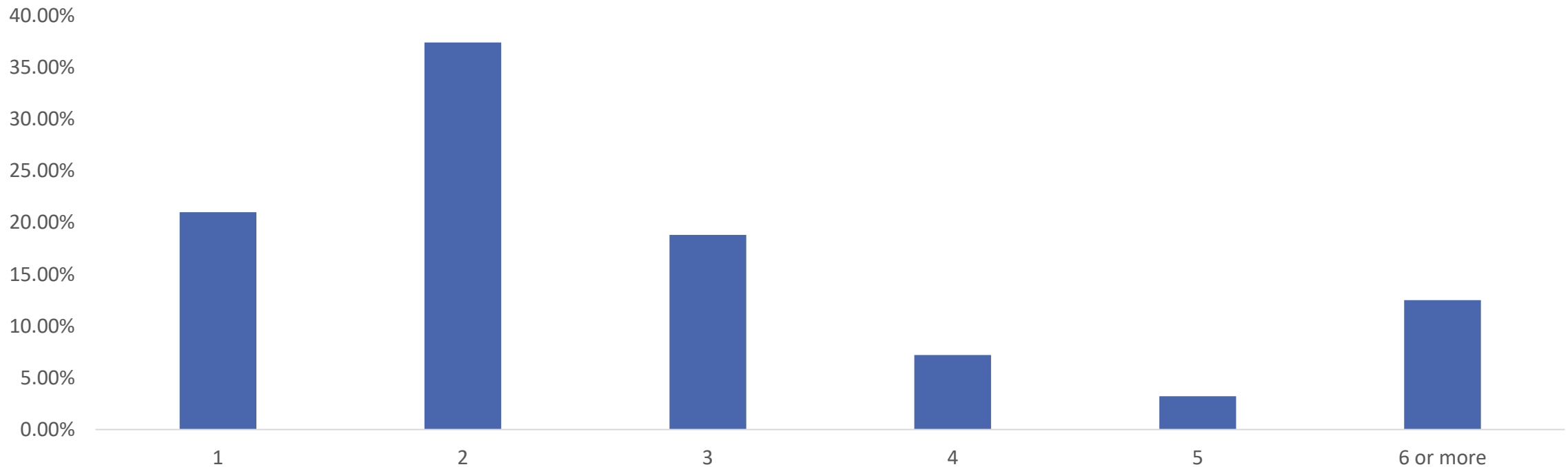
We're going to ask you some questions about your experience in court today. For each statement, please indicate how much you agree or disagree using the following options:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Court staff paid attention to my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

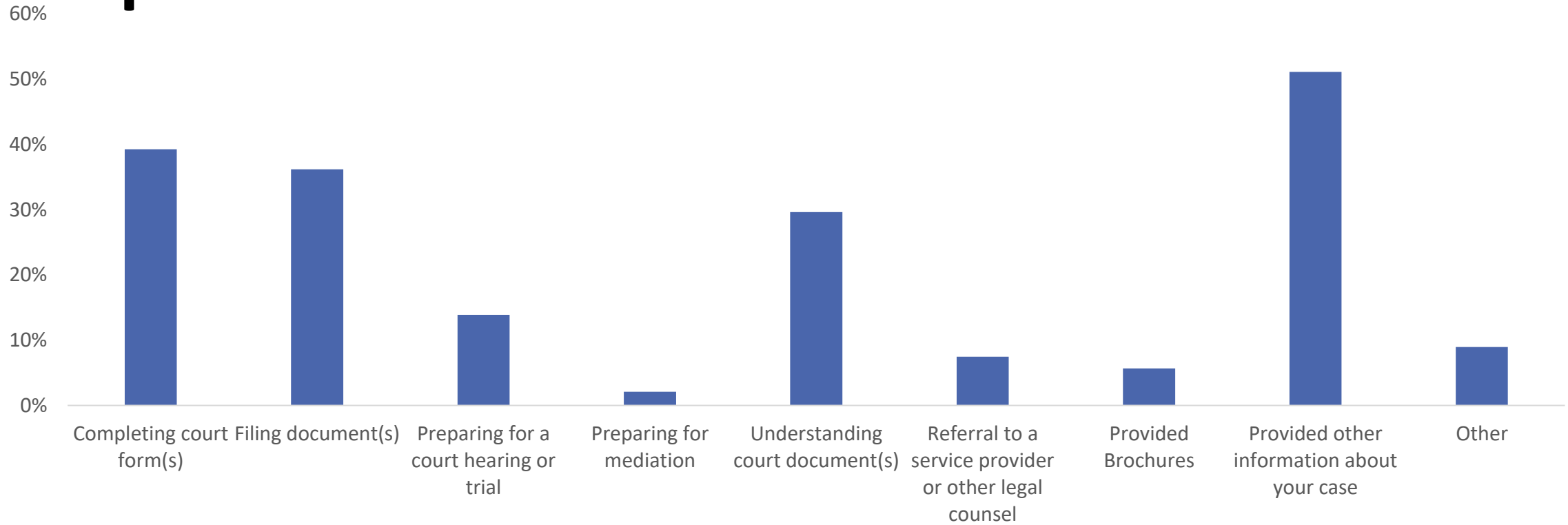


Help Resource Center Exit Survey: Repeat Visits

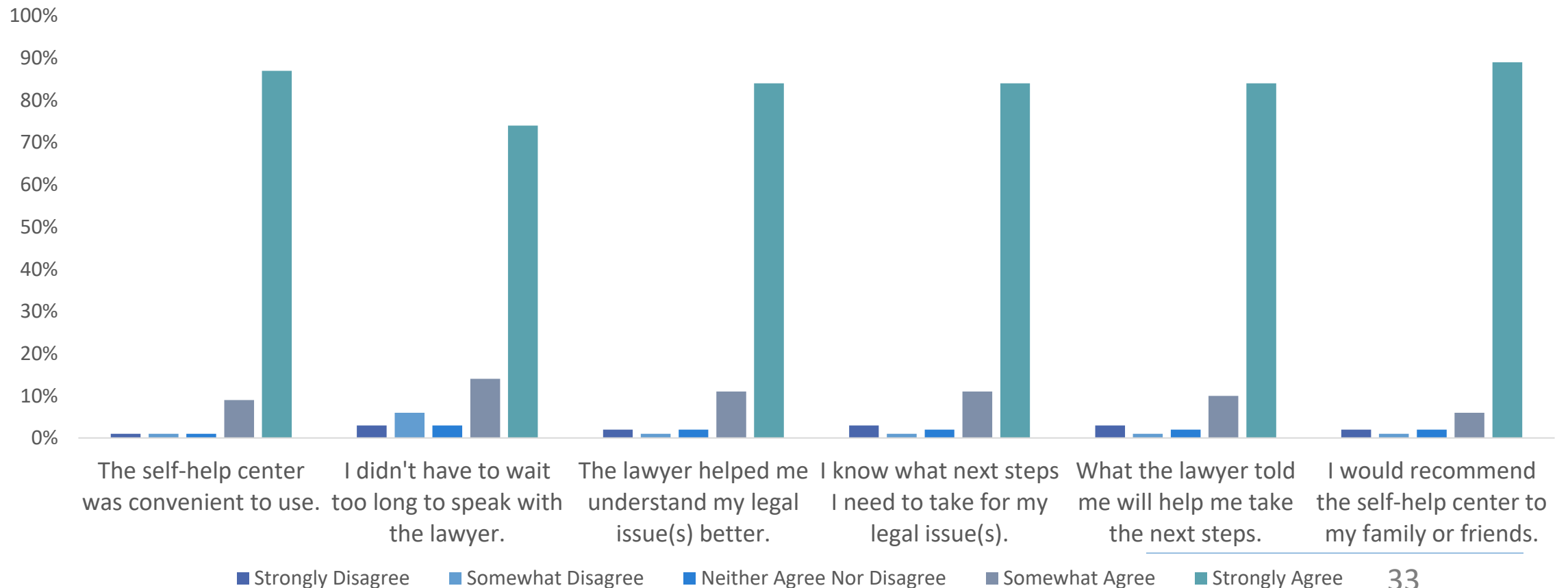
Number of SHC Client Sessions



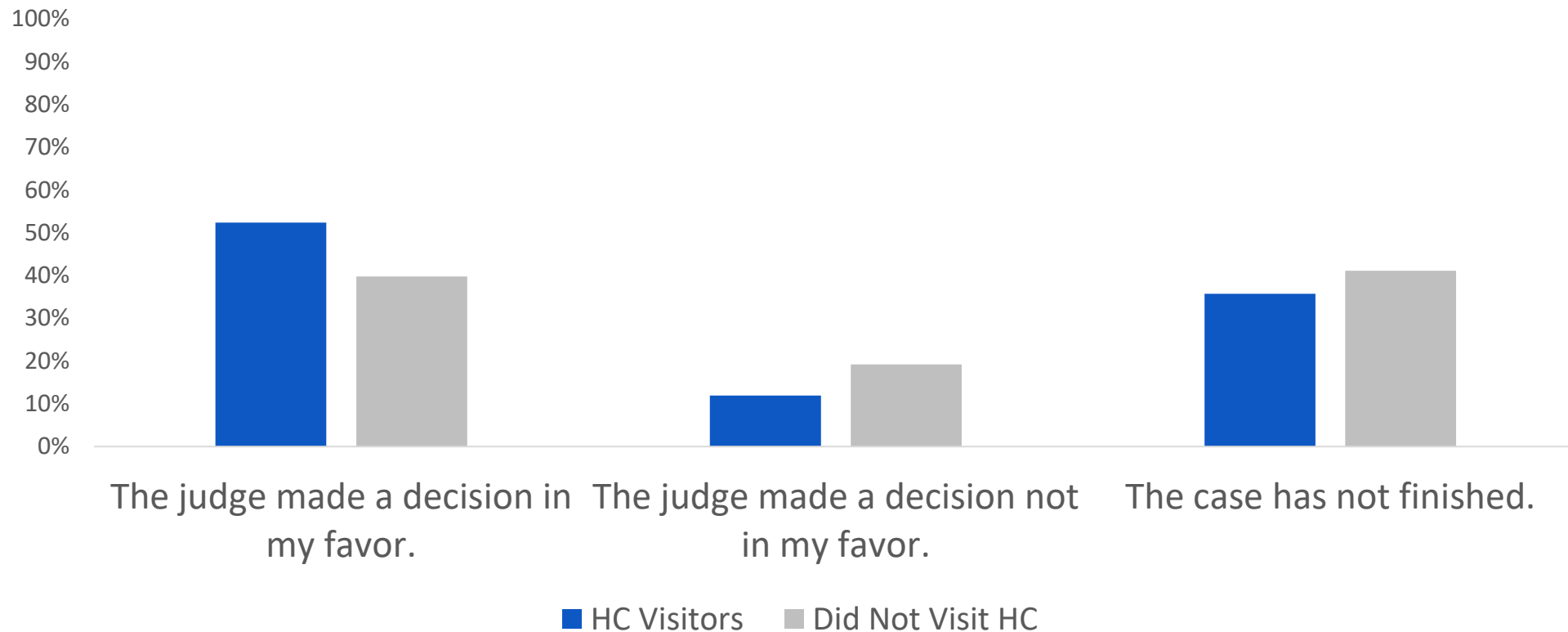
Help Center Exit Survey: Help Provided



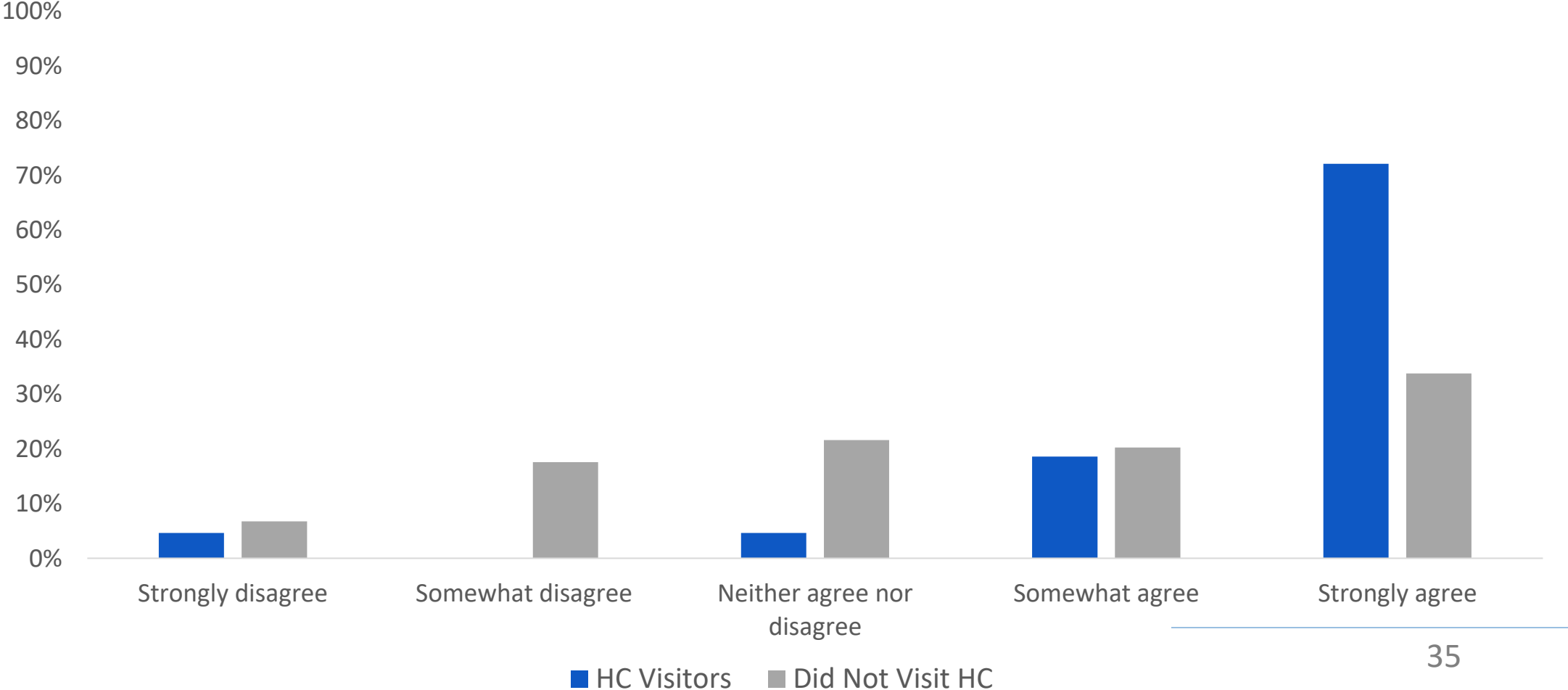
Help Center Exit Survey: Client Satisfaction



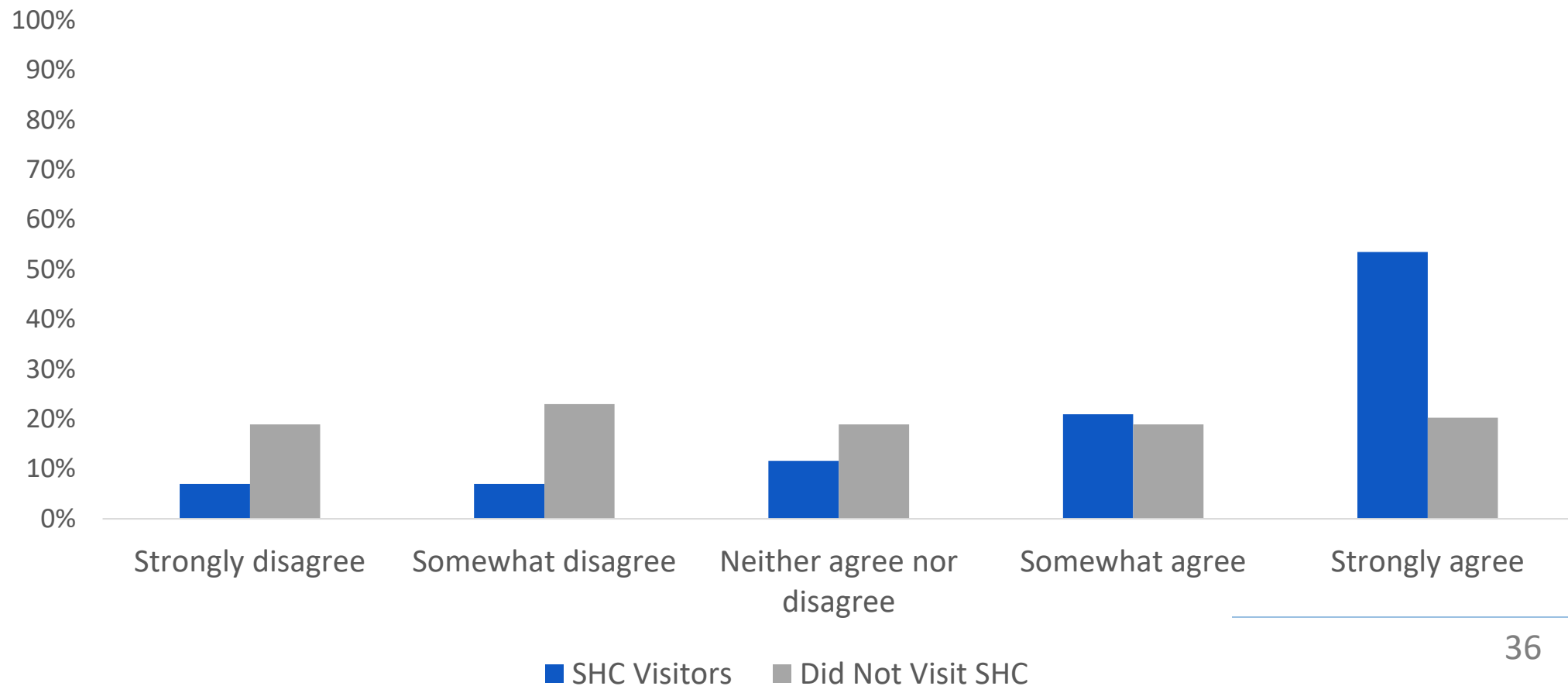
Court Exit Survey: What happened today in court?



Court Exit Survey: I felt prepared for court today



Court Exit Survey: As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.



Judge Interviews

- They [self-represented litigants] **feel better about themselves and their cases.**
- Whatever is going on in that room [the walk-in center] is **really helpful**
- They feel like the system is not against them, they have some say in the process, which really helps the process, that **people feel like they have some say**
- **The motions that have been filed are far better**
- It's helpful when they have a meritorious claim, can send them down for legal advice, it helps them. You hate to see people with good claims get screwed, but you just can't help them. **It helps them feel less frustrated with the judicial system**

Help Center – **Lessons Learned**

- **Exit Surveys**
 - Come early and introduce yourself
 - Debrief with interns
- **Judge and Referral Interviews**
 - Coordination is key
 - Experienced staff

Final **Lessons Learned**

- **Data should always tie back to your goals**
- Answer specific questions
- Be prepared, and be adaptable
- When using interns – train and retrain

Questions?