



FIRST CALL FOR FAMILIES

2023-24 EVALUATION REPORT

Developed by Applied Survey Research in
partnership with the Dependency Advocacy Center



Table of Contents

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3**
- INTRODUCTION..... 6**
 - Project Background..... 6
 - Strategic Framework..... 7
- IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING 10**
 - Key Findings from Implementation Monitoring..... 10
 - Know Your Rights Presentations 11
 - Warm Line 13
- SUMMARY OF CLIENT EXIT INTERVIEW FINDINGS 22**
 - Overall Experience In The Program 22
 - Opportunities For Improvement..... 23
 - Final Thoughts..... 23
- SUMMARY OF CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS 24**
- LOOKING FORWARD 26**
 - Partnership with DFCS and ASR to Continuously Improve 26
 - Program Considerations 26
- APPENDIX – SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX 27**

Table of Figures

Figure 1.	Referral source for community members attending Know Your Rights presentations (N = 6).....	12
Figure 2.	Race/ethnicity of community members attending Know Your Rights presentations (N = 6).....	12
Figure 3.	CBO Survey Participants Interested In Additional Trainings (N = 18).....	13
Figure 4.	Race and ethnicity, Language, and Gender of Warm Line callers (N=357).....	14
Figure 5.	Referral source for Warm Line callers (N=357).....	14
Figure 6.	Warm Line callers' level of involvement with DFCS (N = 336).....	15
Figure 7.	Percentage of families with identified needs met at Warm Line Closing (N = 47).....	15
Figure 8.	Outcomes of Warm Line calls for support (N = 357).....	17
Figure 9.	Needs of families served in Individualized Support at Intake (N = 40).....	18
Figure 10.	Average Self-Sufficiency Scores at Intake (N = 40).....	18
Figure 11.	Interim meeting activities (1,924 meetings).....	19
Figure 12.	Needs met among families exiting Individualized Support (N = 46).....	20
Figure 13.	Average Self-Sufficiency Scores for Support Clients with Outcomes (N = 46).....	21
Figure 14.	First Call Client Satisfaction Survey Results (N = 5).....	24

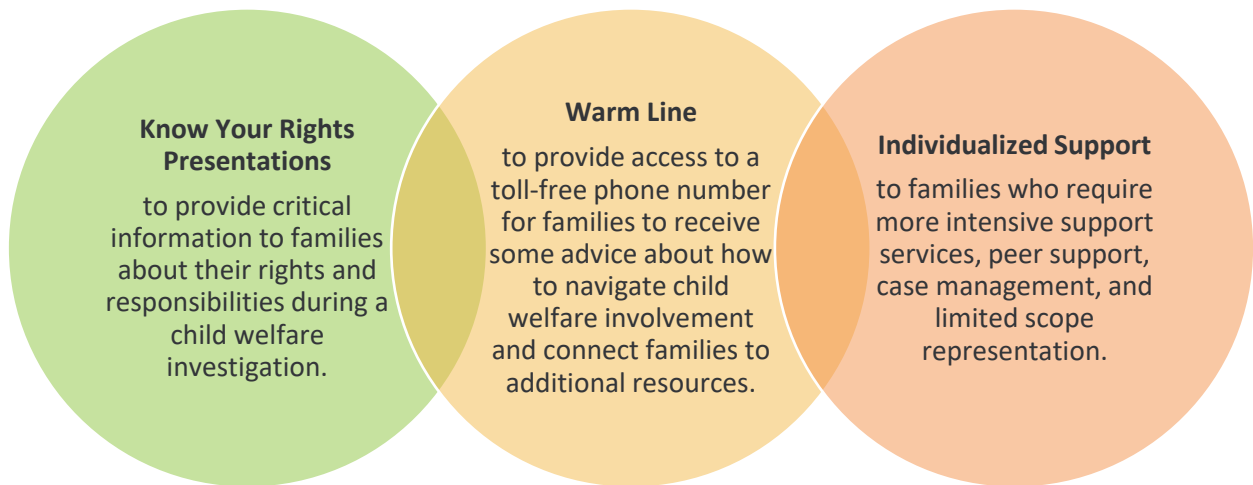
Executive Summary

Dependency Advocacy Center (DAC) is a nonprofit organization that provides legal services to economically disadvantaged parents involved with Santa Clara County’s child welfare system who face the possibility of child removal due to allegations of abuse and neglect. Families often find themselves in this predicament due to experiencing symptoms of poverty, trauma, illicit substance use, domestic violence, and mental health struggles. DAC has implemented innovative programs to serve families in a more comprehensive manner by employing in-house social workers and mentor parents and offering legal support to secure clients’ legal rights while simultaneously engaging clients to improve their circumstances with an aim to enhance family safety and stability.

Dependency Advocacy Center’s Mission

Dependency Advocacy Center provides zealous legal representation to indigent clients in the juvenile dependency system to promote timely reunification and preservation of families in a safe, healthy environment. DAC believes that every parent and child entering the dependency system has a right to be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

First Call for Families (First Call) is one of the innovative programs operated by DAC. First Call’s goal is to prevent children from being separated from their families by avoiding formal involvement with juvenile dependency court. First Call is made up of three essential components:



The First Call team includes an **attorney** to provide legal advice and support; a **social worker** to provide clinical support services including risk assessments, safety planning, and support during meetings with child welfare social workers; and **mentor parents** to provide hope and support to families as they have experienced first-hand what is it like to be formally involved with the child welfare system and successfully reunified with their children.

First Call launched in 2021 and since September 2022, Santa Clara County’s Social Services Agency (SSA) has funded the program. The initiative assists at-risk parents in informed decision-making to promote family stability, decrease disparities in child welfare involvement, and prevent continued system engagement. Partnership with the Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) has been crucial to enhancing communication and program outreach among DFCS social workers, particularly among those working with families informally and prior to any juvenile dependency court intervention.¹

¹ While working in partnership with the Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS), communications between First Call staff and clients are still protected by attorney-client privilege.

KEY FINDINGS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2023-24

Know your Rights Presentations



- First Call for Families held 11 **Know Your Rights presentations**, reaching a total of **73 participants**. Of the 73 participants, 22 were community members and the other 51 were from community-based organizations.
- One hundred percent of participants from community-based organizations reported they would be likely (20%) or very likely (80%) to recommend Know Your Rights presentations to others.
- One hundred percent of surveyed participants from both the general public and community-based organizations reported that attending an event increased their knowledge about their rights related to the child welfare system.

Warm Line Support



- The Warm Line was contacted by **357 families (716 children)**.
- Referrals to the Warm Line were most often (**68%**) from our partners at the **Department of Family and Children Services**.
- About **55% of callers needed help with custody** (including legal guardianship) when calling into the Warm Line.
- Of the 357 callers, 222 received limited legal advice, 36 were referred to Individualized Support, and 28 were either referred out to external resources or no further support was needed.

Individualized Support



- Throughout the 2023-24 fiscal year, First Call for Families provided **Individualized Support to 81 families**, and 46 of them completed/exited services (e.g., their case was closed).
- The most common needs for families receiving Individualized Support were for **housing (13%), various legal issues (11%) and substance use (9%)**.
- Self-sufficiency was evaluated at intake and case closure for 46 clients.² Clients demonstrated increased self-sufficiency in the domains of employment, family/social relations, housing, and substance abuse. Self-sufficiency decreased in the community involvement and legal issue domains, while no change in self-sufficiency occurred in the life skills, mobility, and parenting skills domains.
- There were 27 families identified for a DFCS outcomes lookup. Most of the families did not have any new contact with DFCS in the 6 months after exiting services. 22 families did not have a petition filed or subsequent substantiated allegations within 6 months after exiting First Call services. Of the 27 families, First Call closed out 5 families' cases because DFCS filed a petition.

² Self-sufficiency includes 9 domains: housing, employment, mobility, life skills, family relationships, community involvement, parenting skills, legal, and substance use. Domains are scored to identify families (1) in crisis, (2) vulnerable, (3) safe, (4) building capacity, or (5) thriving/empowered.

Introduction

PROJECT BACKGROUND

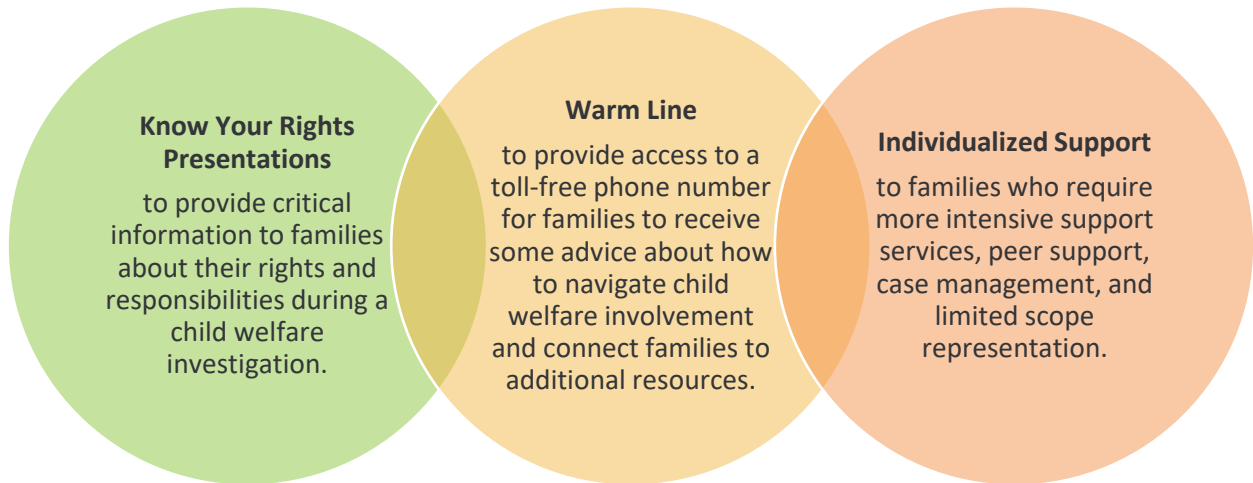
Dependency Advocacy Center (DAC) provides zealous legal representation to indigent clients in the juvenile dependency system to promote timely reunification and preservation of families in a safe, healthy environment. DAC believes that every parent and child entering the dependency system has a right to be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

First Call for Families (First Call) is one of the innovative programs operated by DAC. First Call launched in 2021 and since September 2022, Santa Clara County's Social Services Agency (SSA) has funded the program. The initiative assists at-risk parents in informed decision-making to promote family stability, decrease disparities in child welfare involvement, and prevent continued system involvement. Partnership with DFCS has been crucial to enhancing communication and program outreach among DFCS social workers, particularly among those working with families informally and prior to any court intervention.

First Call's goals are to:

- Increase awareness and knowledge of legal rights associated with child welfare system involvement.
- Increase stabilization and self-sufficiency of families who are at risk of becoming formally involved with juvenile dependency court.
- Reduce rates of substantiated abuse and neglect referrals for children whose families are receiving *individualized support*, up to 6 months post-services.
- Reduce rates of sustained petitions for children whose families are receiving *individualized support*, up to 6 months post-services.

First Call is made up of three essential components:



The First Call team includes an **attorney** to provide legal advice and support; a **social worker** to provide clinical support services including risk assessments, safety planning, and support during meetings with child welfare social workers; and **mentor parents** to provide hope and support to families as they have experienced first-hand what is it like to be formally involved with the child welfare system and successfully reunified with their children.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

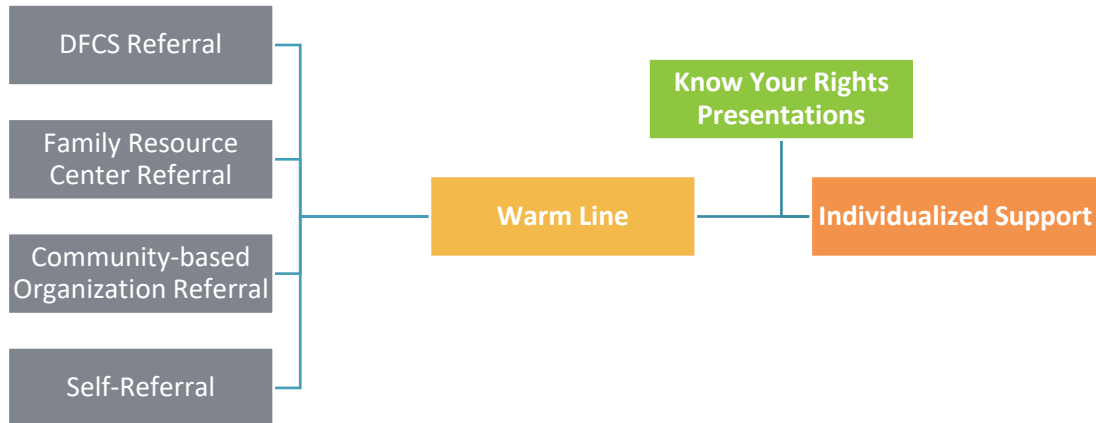
First Call focuses on reaching parents in the areas of the county with disproportionate allegation rates of child maltreatment. First Call expanded its focus on priority zip codes in the last year and includes families living in zip codes 95111, 95112, 95127, 95116, 95020, and 95122 who have been contacted by DFCS within the last 12 months or who are currently receiving informal supervision or non-court DFCS services.

First Call’s goal is to reduce the rate of petitions among such families by implementing a three-tiered approach:

1. Creating a **toll-free warm line** to offer advice about how to navigate child welfare involvement and resource and referral information. Families can call in directly to the Warm Line or may be referred by a DFCS social worker, a Family Resource Center a community-based organization, or a friend/relative.
2. Delivering “Know Your Rights” **community presentations** to families to help them learn what rights and responsibilities they have during a DFCS investigation. Families may be referred from the Warm Line or a community-based organization to participate in these presentations.
3. Providing intensive targeted case management and representation to parents/caregivers who require more **individualized support**, including ongoing case management, peer mentoring, and/or limited scope representation.

This flow chart depicts the typical entry points for the parents and caregivers who work with First Call. Families may be referred to the **Warm Line**, which then refers them to the **Know Your Rights presentations**, or vice versa. From there, if families need additional support, they will be referred for **Individualized Support**.

Referral and Support Services Flow Chart



DAC partnered with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct an evaluation of the program in fiscal year 2023-24. The evaluation team developed **data collection tools** and **data dashboards to measure implementation and outcomes**. The list below shows the various data collection tools/processes:

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Know Your Rights Activity Log	Populated by First Call for Families staff with aggregate data collected to describe participant demographics.
Know Your Rights Surveys	Collects responses for two surveys: Know Your Rights Participation Surveys for Community-Based Organizations and Know Your Rights Participation Surveys for the General Public.
Warm Line Call Log	Populated by First Call for Families staff for every call received. Includes information collected during the intake process and consult. Includes eligibility and referral information.
Individualized Support Log	Populated by First Call for Families staff. Includes separate records for each engagement.
Client Satisfaction Surveys	Collect responses from clients who exit Individualized Support.
Exit Interviews	Exit interviews were conducted by external evaluation partners at Applied Survey Research to capture details about the success and challenges of the First Call Program.

It is worth noting that during fiscal year 2023-24, DAC worked with consultants at ASR to create a unified approach to data storage across DAC's two prevention programs: First Call and Corridor. This will allow DAC to better describe outcomes for families served across both programs in the future. This new process was implemented in late Spring of 2024.

Highlighted findings from fiscal year 2023-24 evaluation are outlined in the sections below.

Implementation Monitoring

KEY FINDINGS FROM IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING

First Call for Families (First Call) has been implementing its program model since June 2021. Throughout implementation, First Call has been recording information about key efforts, outputs, and outcomes. Key findings from the implementation monitoring are detailed below.

- **First Call for Families facilitated 11 Know Your Rights presentations**, reaching 73 participants (22 community members and 51 staff from community-based organizations). Community members reported that these presentations effectively increased their knowledge and confidence in navigating dependency court systems and additionally stated they would be likely to recommend a presentation to other members of their community. Among community members who participated in the Know Your Rights presentations, 83% lived within the priority zip codes (95111, 95112, 95122, 95127, 94303, 95070).
- **The Warm Line has been successful in reaching 357 families** in the past year, and the majority (68%) were referred by social workers in the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS). Over one-third (43%) had an open DFCS investigation or non-court case, 55% of families needed support with custody, 40% needed support with navigating DFCS investigations, 11% needed support for domestic violence services, and 9% needed assistance with child support. The Warm Line has provided direct referrals to Individualized Support or other community services depending on the needs and eligibility of the family.
- **Individualized Support has been delivered to 88 families** in the past year, of which 46 exited services (e.g., their case was closed). Activities included ongoing communication, case management, preparing legal documents, attending court hearings, participating in Child Family Team meetings with DFCS, developing safety plans, and conducting needs assessments. Participants in Individualized Support demonstrated preliminary outcomes showing improved self-sufficiency in four out of nine domains, addressing unmet needs, and high levels of satisfaction with the support they received from First Call for Families.

Detailed information about the process and outcome measures are shown below.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PRESENTATIONS

First Call for Families has been delivering “Know Your Rights” community presentations to families to help them learn what rights and responsibilities they have during a DFCS investigation. Families can sign-up directly at FIRST 5 Family Resource Centers or may be referred from the warm line to participate in these presentations.

First Call for Families hosted 11 Know Your Rights presentations reaching 73 participants.

First Call staff hosted 11 presentations, of which four presentations were directed to community members from the general public, with a total of 22 participants, and seven presentations were for staff located at CBOs and other partner organizations, with a total of 51 participants.

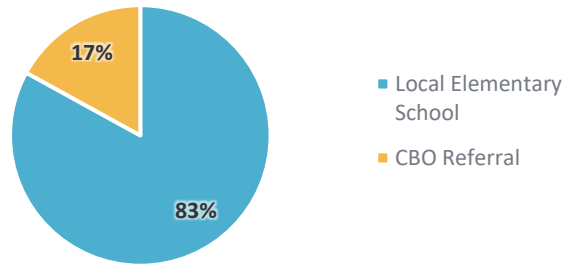


Community members reported increased knowledge and awareness of their legal rights.

Community member attendees were asked to participate in an electronic or paper survey for each Know Your Rights presentation to identify how families found out about the service, whether they were residing in the priority zip codes, and key demographics to ensure that diverse families were supported by this effort. Six community members who attended the Know Your Rights presentations completed the survey (27% completion rate). There were 83% of respondents (N = 5) who found out about the Know Your Rights presentation from their local elementary school and 17% (N = 1) who found out about the opportunity from another community-based organization (see figure below for additional detail). Among community member attendees who completed the survey, **83% of them were from the priority zip codes** (95111, 95112, 95122, 95127, 94303, 95070).

All of the community member attendees (100%) reported that participation in the Know Your Rights presentation increased their knowledge and awareness of legal rights associated with child welfare system involvement. The general public attended presentations on **what they should do if they get contacted by CPS** and **dependency laws and the juvenile dependency court process**.

Figure 1. Referral source for community members attending Know Your Rights presentations (N = 6)



Participants also shared their race and ethnicity upon completing the survey. Know Your Rights presentations were primarily attended by community members who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Mexican (100%).

Figure 2. Race/ethnicity of community members attending Know Your Rights presentations (N = 6)

	N	%
Mexican	4	67%
Other Hispanic or Latino	2	33%

Note: None selected Black/African Descent, Non-Hispanic White, Vietnamese, Filipino, East Asian (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Chinese), South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani), Other Southeast Asian (e.g., Thai, Cambodian), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Two or more races.

Sixty-seven percent of the community member survey participants want to learn about Child Welfare and Immigration.

The public was asked what topics they would like to learn more about. Sixty-seven percent of respondents (N = 4) stated they would like to learn more about child welfare and immigration, one respondent stated they would like a presentation on how domestic violence affects a CPS case, and another respondent indicated they would like a presentation focused on Fathers.

Participants want presentations to be offered more frequently.

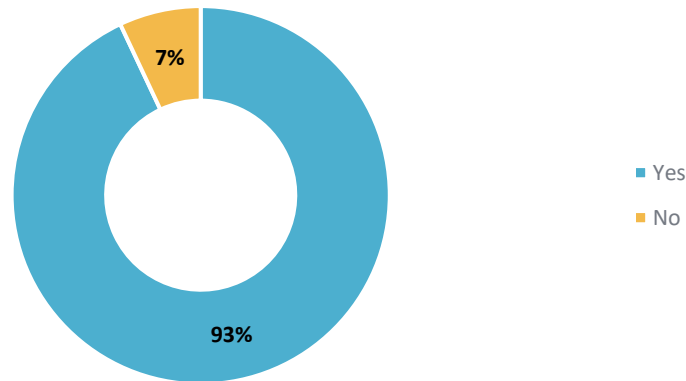
Survey participants were asked how Know Your Rights presentations could be improved for the future. Overall, they found the presentations valuable and felt they were clearly presented. One respondent offered the suggestion to hold meetings more frequently.

Community partners reported increased knowledge and awareness of how families are impacted by child welfare involvement.

Community partners were also asked to report on the impact of the Know Your Rights presentations. Eighteen CBO participants completed the survey. Seven participants were from another nonlegal organization, one participant was from a Family Resource Center, and the remaining six participants did not specify their organization. All participants said the presentation they attended increased their

knowledge and/or awareness of the child welfare system and were at least *Likely* to recommend the presentation they attended to others. Additionally, over 99% said they would like to attend additional trainings.

Figure 3. CBO Survey Participants Interested In Additional Trainings (N = 18)



CBO survey participants found learning about the topics of dependency laws and processes useful

CBO survey participants were also asked what areas of the presentation were useful. They mentioned the presentations gave valuable information on:

- ✓ Different outcomes of a CPS investigation and the fact it can/may appear on a person’s record.
- ✓ The explanation of the court process, particularly juvenile dependency court.
- ✓ The process leading up to a court hearing or appearance.
- ✓ The available prevention and support resources through First Call for Families.
- ✓ Information about what causes a case to become substantiated.
- ✓ The presentation of information tailored to Santa Clara County.
- ✓ Confirmation that DAC are not mandatory reporters
- ✓ Legal assistance

WARM LINE

First Call operated a toll-free Warm Line to offer advice about how to navigate child welfare involvement and limited resource and referral information. Families can call in directly to the Warm Line or may be referred by a DFCS social worker, a Family Resource Center, or a CBO.

There were 357 families that contacted the First Call for Families Warm Line for support in navigating the court system.

There were 357 community members who called the Warm Line to get more information or support services to help them navigate child welfare involvement. These 357 families also represent 716 children (on average 2 children per family and a maximum of 7), of whom 54% (390 children) were five years of age or younger. Over 1 in 3 families (34%) were located within the priority zip codes (95122, 95112, 95116, 95127, 95111, 95020) and 61% were living below the federal poverty level (average household income \$2,000). Most of the Warm Line callers were Hispanic/Latino/Chicano or Mexican (59%), nearly one-third spoke Spanish (31%) and 1% spoke Vietnamese. The majority of callers were Female (70%).

Figure 4. Race and ethnicity, Language, and Gender of Warm Line callers (N=357)

Race/Ethnicity	N	%
Mexican	158	44%
Hispanic/Latino/Chicano	53	15%
Non-Hispanic White	45	13%
Two or more races	33	9%
Black/African Descent	26	7%
Declined to state	12	3%
Vietnamese	9	3%
Chinese	6	2%
South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani)	6	2%
Filipino	3	1%
Puerto Rican	2	1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	1%
Other Asian	2	1%

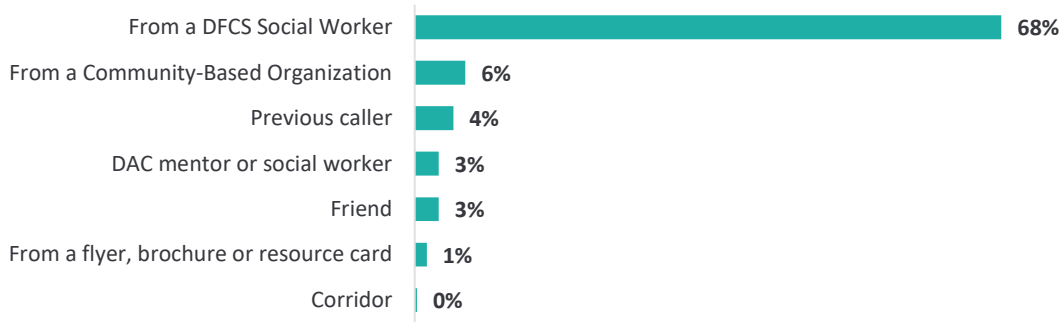
Language	N	%
English	241	68%
Spanish	109	31%
Vietnamese	4	1%
Other South Asian Language (e.g., Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu)	1	<1%
Mandarin	1	<1%
Urdu	1	<1%

Gender	N	%
Female	251	70%
Male	106	30%

Over two-thirds (68%) of families were referred to the Warm Line by DFCS, and 43% had a current investigation with a DFCS social worker.

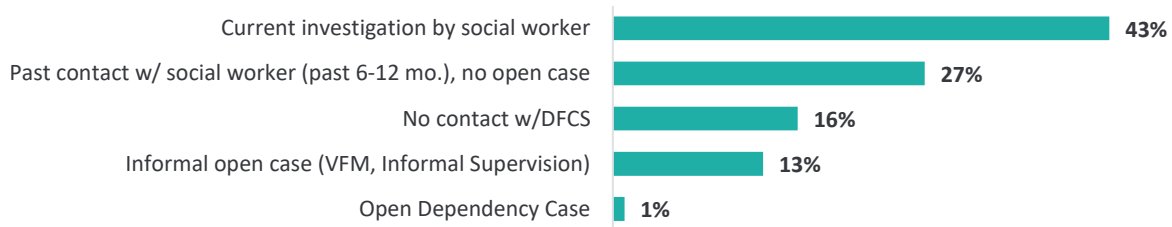
Families were asked to indicate a referral source, or in other words, how they learned about the Warm Line (see figure below). More than two-thirds (68%) were referred from a DFCS Social Worker, 6% were referred by other community-based organizations, and 4% were previous Warm Line callers. This indicates that the continued outreach efforts with DFCS have been a crucial step in supporting families.

Figure 5. Referral source for Warm Line callers (N=357)



Callers were asked to provide additional information about their current level of involvement with DFCS. Over one-third (43%) of callers indicated that they had a current investigation by a DFCS social worker, 27% had been contacted by a DFCS social worker in the past six months to a year but had no open dependency case, 16% had no contact with DFCS, 13% indicated that they had an informal open case, and 1% had an open dependency case.

Figure 6. Warm Line callers' level of involvement with DFCS (N = 336)



Note: This reflects callers who received a second contact by the Warm Line after checking on eligibility and conflict of interest. There were 21 cases that were excluded due to ineligibility.

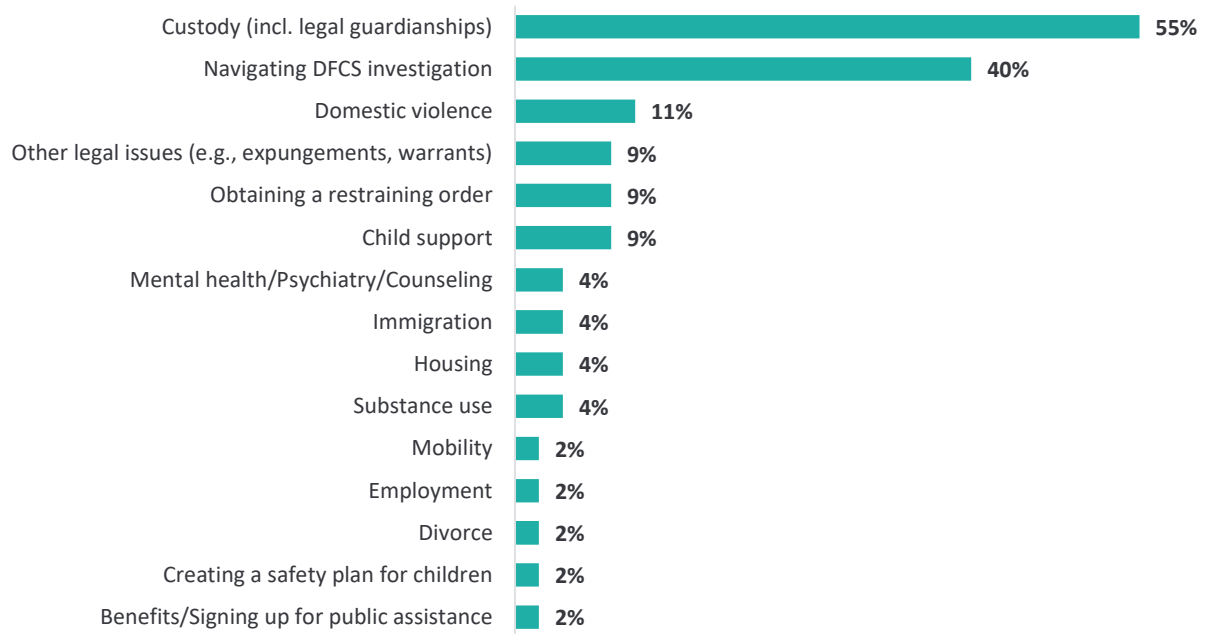
Over half (55%) of families calling the Warm Line needed support with custody.

First Call staff documented the most pressing needs of callers to identify support strategies. The list of needs to select from expanded from the previous year following the merger of the First Call and Corridor³ data systems for initial intake. Therefore, results slightly varied from the previous year. Over half (55%) of families needed support with custody (including guardianship) and 40% needed help navigating DFCS investigations. About 11% needed support for domestic violence, 9% needed help with other legal issues

³ Corridor is another interdisciplinary legal services program at DAC, focusing on serving parents with criminal justice involvement who also either have an open dependency case or are at risk of a formal child welfare involvement. Given that both Corridor and First Call serve parents at risk of formal DFCS involvement, DAC streamlined the intake process by having eligible families call one phone number. DAC then refers the family to the appropriate program.

(e.g., expungements and warrants), 9% needed help with obtaining a restraining order, and 4% needed assistance with child support. More information is shown in the figure below.

Figure 7. Percentage of families with identified needs met at Warm Line Closing (N = 47)



Note: This reflects callers who received a second contact by the Warm Line after checking on eligibility and conflict of interest. There were 21 cases that were excluded due to ineligibility. There were 43 cases that did not have any needs identified. An additional 267 cases were left blank due to this question being added during the data system updates implemented in Spring 2024.

Of the 357 callers, 222 received limited counsel legal advice, 36 were referred to Individualized Support, and 28 callers were referred to additional support in the community.

Of the 357 callers, 222 received limited legal advice, 36 were referred to Individualized Support, and 28 were referred to external resources. Details about the outcomes of calls to the Warm Line are documented in the figure below.

Figure 8. Outcomes of Warm Line calls for support (N = 357)

Warm Line Caller Outcomes and Referrals	N	%
Limited counsel and advice only	222	62%
Referred to Individualized Support	36	10%
Transferred case to Corridor	28	8%
Referred case to external resources, no further assistance needed	28	8%
Conflict of interest	18	5%
Unable to make second contact	17	5%
Unknown/In Progress	8	2%

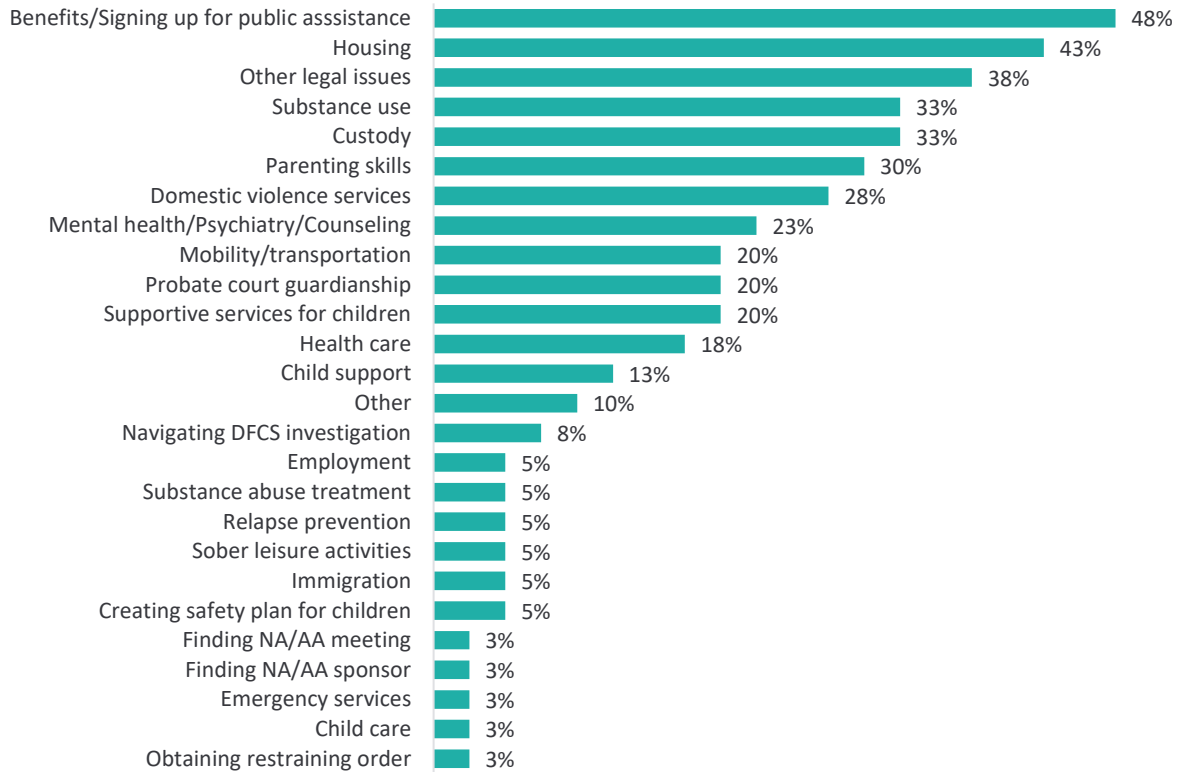
INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT

Families with more intensive case management and representation needs were referred from the Warm Line to Individualized Support. First Call supported parents/caregivers who required more individualized support, including ongoing case management, peer mentoring, and/or limited scope representation.

There were 88 families who received intensive services through Individualized Support with needs related to navigating a DFCS investigation, substance use treatment, sober leisure activities, relapse prevention, creating a safety plan for their children if unable to care for them, and obtaining a restraining order.

In fiscal year 2023-24, there were 88 cases active in Individualized Support services. There were 40 families that had an intake meeting and 46 who exited services during this fiscal year. Family needs were documented at intake to be able to customize support and address unmet needs (see figure below). The most common needs among families receiving Individualized Support were for **signing up for benefits or public assistance, housing, other legal issues, substance use, custody, parenting skills, and domestic violence services.**

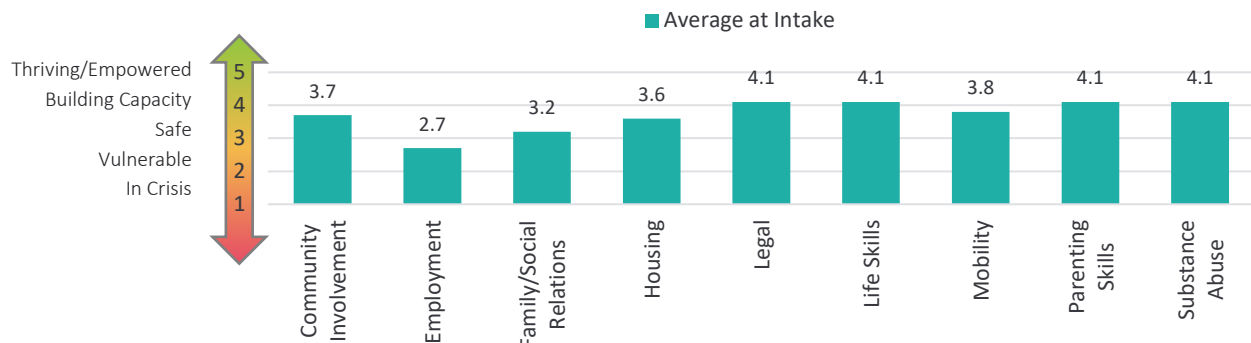
Figure 9. Needs of families served in Individualized Support at Intake (N = 40)



Note that many of these “needs” categories were added as a result of the data system updates implemented in Spring 2024.

Self-sufficiency was evaluated at intake for all clients. First Call social workers and mentor parents utilize the Self-Sufficiency Matrix to rate the client’s status in nine domains: housing, employment, mobility, life skills, family relationships, community involvement, parenting skills, legal issues, and substance use. Domains are scored to identify families who are (1) in crisis, (2) vulnerable, (3) safe, (4) building capacity, or (5) thriving/empowered. Among families with an intake documented during the 2023-24 fiscal year, the areas with the **lowest self-sufficiency scores were employment, family/social relations, and housing.**

Figure 10. Average Self-Sufficiency Scores at Intake (N = 40)



In response to the identified needs of the family, First Call for Families staff provided ongoing support and case management by meeting with clients and DFCS social workers.

Staff engaged in 40 Intake meetings, 1,924 Interim meetings, and 46 meetings to close-out cases. Interim meeting activities are detailed in the figure below. The most common activities included meeting with clients (or communicating by phone, email, or text), and communicating with DFCS social workers. On occasion, First Call for Families attorneys attended court hearings, and social workers and mentor parents participated in Child and Family Team meetings with DFCS.

Figure 11. Interim meeting activities (1,924 meetings)

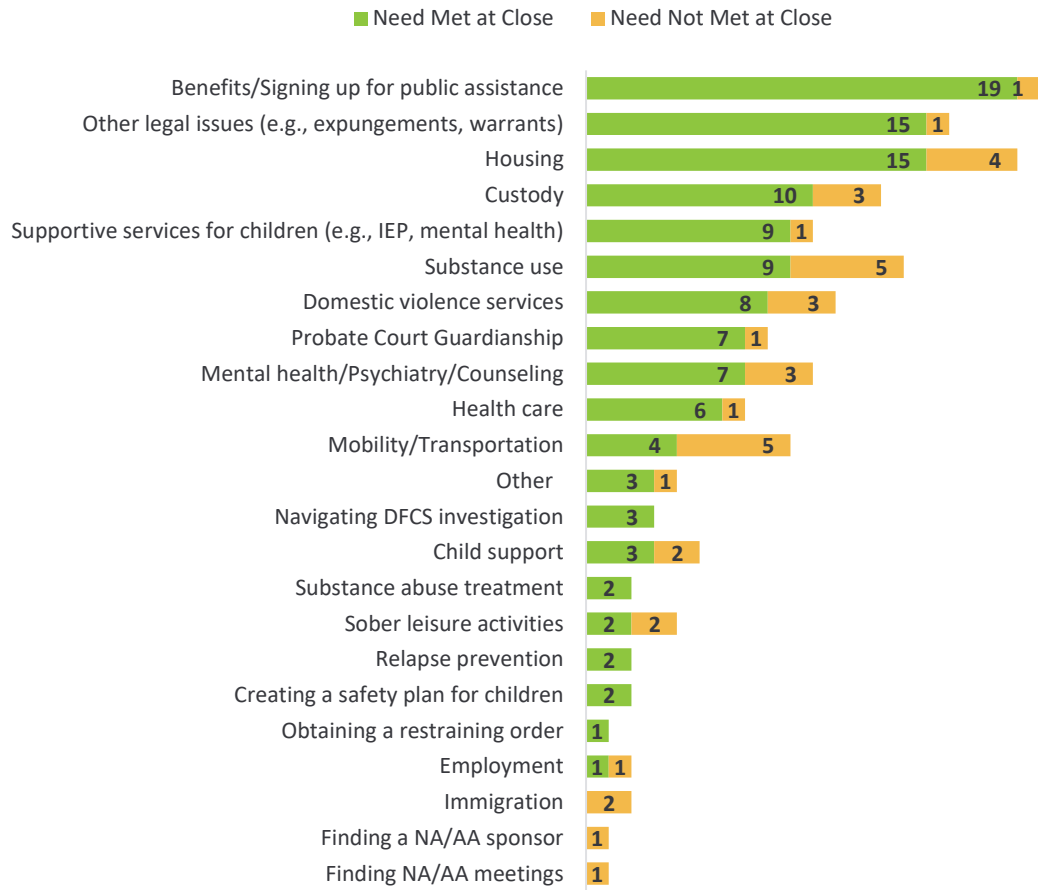
Interim Meeting Activities	N	%
Communication		90%
Texted client	823	32%
Called client	415	28%
Met with client in person	361	14%
Communicated with other community-based organization	206	8%
Communicated with DFCS social worker	135	5%
Sent email / letter to client	67	3%
Communicated with family member or other support person	25	1%
Case management	83	3%
Attended court hearing	81	3%
Participated in Child Family Team meetings (DFCS)	42	2%
Staffing with First Call team	31	1%
Prepared legal documents	17	1%

Forty-six Individualized Support cases were closed out by the end of the fiscal year.

Among the 52 cases, 46 completed program services and have documented outcomes. The remaining 6 families exited services when they stopped responding or showing up for meetings with First Call staff (no-shows). This evaluation report includes a summary of key outcomes for families with a documented case closure (excluding no-shows). Outcomes for this evaluation include the percentage of families who had their needs met by case closure, the changes in self-sufficiency from intake to case closure, and the placement and stability of families served.

At case closure, the First Call staff document the needs of each client that have or have not been addressed at the time the family exits the program. Among 46 families who exited services, 19 of them reported they needed and received support to meet their needs related to signing up for benefits or public assistance, 15 of them needed and received support for other legal issues and housing, respectively. Some families exited the program without meeting all of their needs, particularly needs related to substance use, mobility/transportation, and housing. Additional details are shown in the figure below.

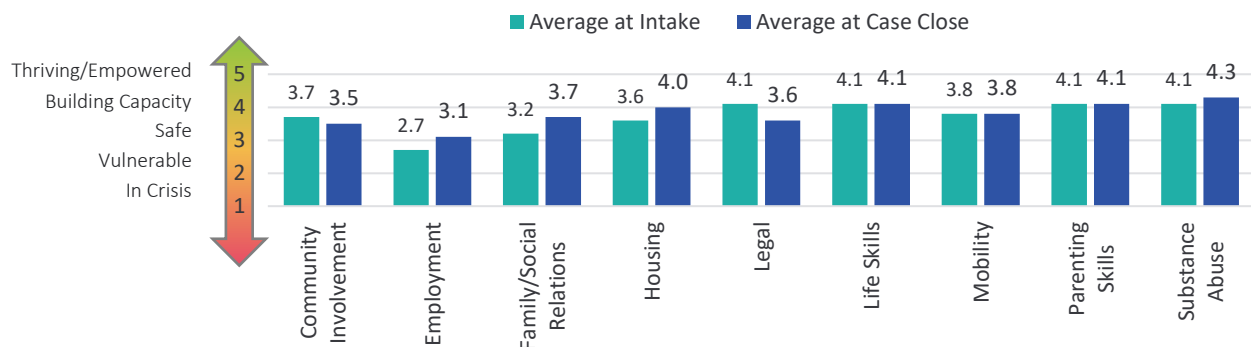
Figure 12. Needs met among families exiting Individualized Support (N = 46)



Note that many of these “needs” categories were added as a result of the data system updates implemented in Spring 2024.

Self-sufficiency was also re-evaluated when clients exited the program. Clients demonstrated **increased self-sufficiency in the domains of employment, family/social relations, housing, and substance abuse**, with the largest increase occurring in the family/social relations domain. Self-sufficiency decreased slightly in the community involvement and legal issue domains while no change occurred in the life skills, mobility, and parenting skills domains.

Figure 13. Average Self-Sufficiency Scores for Support Clients with Outcomes (N = 46)



At the time that families exit the program, First Call staff also document the placement of children to identify any changes that took place since intake. Placement information was documented for 39 of 46 families. For 33 of these families, the child’s placement remained the same at case closure as it was at intake. Twenty-two children were in the care of their parent at intake and case close, eight remained in the care of a relative, and three remained with another caretaker.

22 of the 27 families who had exited First Call services had no new contact with the Department of Family and Children Services within 6 months of exiting services.

To assess the long-term outcomes for families and children receiving Individualized Support from the First Call program, ASR collaborated with analysts at DFCS to identify outcomes from case closure to six months of exiting services. ASR provided a list of clients served by the program who had received at least 45 days of services and were exited from the program for at least 6 months by the end of the fiscal year (i.e., exited services before January 1, 2023). **Out of 27 cases identified by ASR, 22 of them had no new contact with DFCS in the 6 months after exiting services, including no petition being filed and no subsequent substantiated allegations.** For the remaining 5 families, First Call closed out their cases because DFCS filed a petition.

Summary of Client Exit Interview Findings

ASR conducted exit interviews on behalf of First Call to learn more about participant experiences in the program within 30 days of program exit. Program exit was determined by the date the attorney documented the case closed. Participants were asked to discuss their overall experience, how it positively impacted their lives, and any opportunities for the program to improve. A total of four exit interviews were conducted. Interviews took about 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN THE PROGRAM

Overall, interviewed participants believe the program went above and beyond expectations, reassured them, and helped them navigate a stressful time in their lives.

Participants reported that the program was a positive experience where they felt reassured because of the staff helping them to navigate stressful situations in their lives. Participants felt supported by staff to navigate the legal process for different issues, including custody and domestic violence.

“It was good for me, it did achieve all my expectations. They were always there with whatever I or my child needed, they were always answering my calls, and they were always present. If I needed them, they would either come to my place or I would go where they were.”

Program staff helped make a positive impact in participants’ lives by being available to always answer their calls, answering their questions, and advocating for them.

“They were very helpful and attentive, they picked up their phones all the time, no matter the questions I had they were able to answer it. It gave me an extra leg of support and advocacy.”

Program participants also mentioned feeling like they had a lot of support from staff to:

- ✓ Navigate conversations with DFCS
- ✓ Provide legal advice and consultations
- ✓ Offer reassurance that they could handle their specific situation
- ✓ Access social programs (i.e., financial, housing/rental assistance programs)
- ✓ Access parenting supports and resources

“[First Call] did make me feel more stable. Like I could do it on my own, gave me financial advice, donation places to go through. It gave me knowledge of resources that I did not know about before.”

“They knew what I lived through, they helped me and my children get counseling. They helped me get a restraining order so my family and I could feel safe at home.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

One participant indicated that there could be more diligent follow-up to ensure closed loop service connections.

One of the participants mentioned receiving a recommendation from First Call to connect with a lawyer for services related to their immigration status. Although the program staff attempted to contact the lawyer, the client was unable to obtain support before their case was closed. Their needs remained unresolved at the time of the exit interview. This represents an opportunity to conduct more thorough closed loop referrals, even for those clients who have exited the program.

“The only thing that was missing was that they recommended a lawyer to get my visa. The program called; however, the office was closed due to the holidays. After the holidays passed, my case closed so the program did not help me through the process of getting my visa. I had to call the lawyers myself to get my visa and I’m still in the process of it.”

Participants did not offer any specific recommendations to improve the program and have recommended the program to others.

All interview participants said they did not have any suggestions to improve the First Call for Families Program. There were even two participants who said they gave the program information to a family member or a friend who was experiencing a similar issue.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Participants who were exited from the First Call program and completed an exit interview were very positive about their experience in the program. They felt the program helped them to navigate the legal process, supported them and their family through a difficult time, provided strong advocacy efforts, and provided key resources to participants when needed. Participants felt so strongly about the positive impact of the program that they have already recommended the program to others they know including family and friends. They appreciated the program being available whenever questions arose during the process and the support to navigate a variety of legal situations.

Summary of Client Satisfaction Surveys

Clients exiting Individualized Support were asked to participate in a Client Satisfaction Survey to gain deeper insights into their experiences with services received from First Call. Five surveys were completed during the 2023-24 fiscal year. As displayed in Figure 14, respondents strongly endorsed the services provided by First Call and expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experiences.

Figure 14. First Call Client Satisfaction Survey Results (N = 5)



The First Call team is accessible, dependable, and caring.

Survey participants were asked to describe what the First Call team did that was helpful. They provided the following responses:

- ✓ They were there when no one else was, and I was treated like family.
- ✓ They explained everything to me very clearly and were always there for me.
- ✓ They did their job well and stayed in touch.
- ✓ They listened and gave helpful, critical insight to the processes and systems involved.

Participants want continued support and on-demand access to sponsors.

Additionally, participants offered suggestions for additional services that could be beneficial to other families involved in the child welfare system. Three participants provided the following responses:

- ✓ Sponsors on call.
- ✓ Benefit services that last a longer time.
- ✓ More support for children and families dealing with disabilities.

Looking Forward

PARTNERSHIP WITH DFCS AND ASR TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE

DAC's First Call program will continue to partner with DFCS in the year ahead. First Call will continue to partner with ASR to refine the evaluation plan and the tools to support data collection and reporting, with the intent to gather and report outcomes across both of DAC's prevention programs (First Call and Corridor).

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

First Call's implementation was documented through a series of Google Forms/Sheets and the program outputs and outcomes were computed and displayed in a Google Data Studio Dashboard for internal review and monitoring. ASR has continued to help build and refine the tools throughout implementation. With the recent data system updates to unify data collection between First Call and Corridor, ASR will provide ongoing technical assistance to ensure data input and data outputs are accurate and do not impose undue burden.

First Call has evolved as a program over the three years since its inception as has the child welfare landscape in Santa Clara County. As First Call continues to grow and learn from experience, new questions emerge that pose data collection and analysis considerations.

For example, most First Call referrals come from DFCS social workers. For First Call to have broad community impact, DAC must continue to partner with DFCS to sustain their referrals while simultaneously increasing community outreach to diversify referral sources. Further, during this fiscal year, DFCS filed a petition on 5 families who were receiving First Call individualized support services. While DAC's outcome measures for individualized support services focused on further DFCS involvement (i.e., a petition filed or subsequent allegations of maltreatment), there seems to be difference in the way the family experiences the dependency court system as compared to those who did not receive prevention legal services. Perhaps developing a way to collect and analyze that data would be useful in painting a broader picture of the impact of preventive legal services.

Additionally, First Call now works with many families who have been receiving individualized support services for a lengthy period of time. Some families have been active in individualized support for over a year. First Call does not currently collect or analyze data with a focus on those families. Assessing the efficacy of individualized support services while families' cases are active, especially for those families active for over a year, could provide further insight into the impact of preventive legal services.

Appendix – Self-Sufficiency Matrix

Adapted Self-Sufficiency Matrix (Completed by Social Worker in consultation with client)

PART 1: PAST STATUS

Please circle the number that best indicated client status BEFORE STARTING services with DAC/MPP using the scale from 1 to 5 (from 1=in crisis to 5 = thriving/empowered)

Domain	1 (in crisis)	2 (vulnerable)	3 (safe)	4 (building capacity)	5 (thriving/ empowered)	Unable to Assess
1. Housing	1	2	3	4	5	UA
2. Employment	1	2	3	4	5	UA
3. Mobility (transportation)	1	2	3	4	5	UA
4. Life Skills	1	2	3	4	5	UA
5. Family /Social Relations	1	2	3	4	5	UA
6. Community Involvement	1	2	3	4	5	UA
7. Parenting Skills	1	2	3	4	5	UA
8. Legal	1	2	3	4	5	UA
9. Substance Abuse	1	2	3	4	5	UA

PART 2: PRESENT STATUS

Please circle the number that best indicates client current status AFTER services with DAC/MPP using the scale from 1 to 5 (from 1=in crisis to 5 = thriving/empowered)

Domain	1 (in crisis)	2 (vulnerable)	3 (safe)	4 (building capacity)	5 (thriving/ empowered)	Unable to Assess
1. Housing	1	2	3	4	5	UA
2. Employment	1	2	3	4	5	UA
3. Mobility (transportation)	1	2	3	4	5	UA
4. Life Skills	1	2	3	4	5	UA
5. Family /Social Relations	1	2	3	4	5	UA
6. Community Involvement	1	2	3	4	5	UA
7. Parenting Skills	1	2	3	4	5	UA
8. Legal	1	2	3	4	5	UA
9. Substance Abuse	1	2	3	4	5	UA

Completed by: _____(Social Worker name)

Administered at approximately 12 months of services:

Y Yes Y No (if no, please note time frame here _____)

REFERENCE SHEET: Definitions for rating self-sufficiency in each domain

Domain	1 (in crisis)	2 (vulnerable)	3 (safe)	4 (building capacity)	5 (thriving/empowered)
Housing	Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In transitional or temporary housing Housing payment is unaffordable 	In stable housing that is safe, but is not adequate	In stable subsidized housing that is safe and adequate.	Unsubsidized household is safe and adequate.
Employment	No job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary Part-time Seasonal Not enough pay to live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed full time Inadequate pay to live Few or no benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed full time Enough pay to live Benefits. 	Maintains permanent employment.
Mobility	No access to transportation, public or private; may have car that is inoperable.	Transportation is available, but unreliable, unpredictable, unaffordable; may have care but no insurance, license, etc.	Transportation is available and reliable, but limited and/or inconvenient; drivers are licensed and minimally insured.	Transportation is generally accessible to meet basic travel needs.	Transportation is readily available and affordable; car is adequately insured
Life Skills	Unable to meet basic needs such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hygiene Food Every day activities 	In need of assistance for some daily living activities	Very minimal assistance to meet daily living activities.	Meets all basic needs of daily living without assistance.	Provides beyond basic needs of daily living for self and family.
Family /Social Relations	Lack of support from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Friends 	Limited Support from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Friends Family and Friend lack the ability/skills to help 	Minimal support from family/friends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family/Friends are learning to communicate and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support from family or friends. 	Has healthy/expanding support and good communication.
Community Involvement	Not applicable due to crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socially isolated No social skills Lacks motivation to become involved. 	Willing to be involved in the community, but is lacking skills or not aware of available opportunities.	Some community involvement, but has barriers such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation Childcare 	Actively involved in community.
Parenting Skills	Safety concerns regarding parenting skills.	Parenting skills are minimal.	Parenting skills are evident, but continuous growth is recommended.	Parenting skills are adequate.	Parenting skills are well developed.
Legal	Current outstanding tickets or warrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal current charges Criminal trial pending, noncompliance with probation/parole. 	Fully compliant with probation/parole terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully completed probation/parole within past 12 months No new charges filed. 	No active criminal justice involvement in more than 12 months
Substance Abuse	Meets criteria for severe abuse/dependence; Resulting problems are severe so that require institutional living or hospitalization may be needed.	Meets criteria for dependence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preoccupation with use or obtaining drugs/alcohol Withdrawal Behaviors demonstrate avoiding withdrawals Use results in neglect of essential life activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use within last 6 months; evidence of occupational, emotional or physical problems (such as disruptive behavior or housing problems) have persisted for at least one month. 	Client has used during last 6 months, but no evidence of recurrent dangerous use.	No drug use/alcohol abuse in last 6 months.