Redesign of FJD Website
by Virginia Pilgrim, Lydia Hurtado, and Ray Stiles
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METHODOLOGY

USER TEST SCENARIOS
Identified six common legal issues faced by Philadelphians and attempted to address them using the FJD and DC sites:
- Landlord/Tenant
- Protective Orders
- Debt Collection
- Custody Dispute
- Wage Garnishment
- Eviction

INTERVIEWS
- Suzan Chao (Elder Justice & Civil Resource Center)
- Kristen Cherry (PLA)

INVESTIGATING COURT SITES
Explored how the FJD site addresses literacy, disability, and language barriers while searching for better alternatives on other court sites, which include:
- DC
- CA
- San Antonio
DISABILITY
Ensuring that the website is designed to accommodate the needs of user with a visual disability and is compatible with any assistive technologies she may use.

LITERACY
Ensuring information is comprehensible to all users to promote equitable outcomes.

LANGUAGE
Ensuring that LEP populations can also access the legal information and tools available on the FJD Site.
SELF-HELP COURT USERS: COMMON ISSUES

TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY
SRLs tend to be low- or very low-income. Consequently, many do not own or have access to laptops. At best, these individuals can use a smartphone to access the Internet, but many have a basic phone with limited Internet features. Moreover, even if SRLs had phones or computers that could access the Internet, the high cost of data plans may further prevent them from searching the web or, specifically, searching every corner of the FJD website for the information they need.

TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS
Because of the lack of access to technology, many SRLs have not had the same amount of experience using computers or smartphones. Furthermore, they may not know the nuances of conducting an Internet search, an in-site search, or even how to navigate a website, generally.
SHORTER-TERM RECOMMENDATION: SELF-HELP PAGE

DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS
A compilation of all legal aid organizations, separated by practice area. This information is currently found under the “Legal Assistance” page of the website. Along with the name of the organization, the page would also provide a contact number, business hours, a contact email address, and a link to the website.

FORMS
A compilation of all court forms, separated by legal issue, e.g., housing, family, employment. This information is currently found under the “Forms” page of the website. The SRL page, however, would only contain those forms relevant to SRLs, excluding forms such as those for Pro Hac Vice, Election Forms, and Expert Witness Payment.

RESOURCES
A compilation of all FJD materials, including brochures and informational videos, separated by legal issue, e.g., domestic relations, housing. This information is currently found under the “Brochures and Manuals” page of the website. The SRL page would only contain informational literature related to civil legal issues, excluding information on topics like passport services and mitigation protocols.
SHORTER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

**DISABILITY**
- Add option to increase font size

**LITERACY**
- Ensure all language on the self-help page is at, or below, a 7th grade reading level.
- Define all legalistic terms when a complete substitution is not possible.

**LANGUAGE**
- Add a Google Translate option
- Provide all basic Court contact info in multiple languages without having to use Google Translate
Self Help Guide to the California Courts

Resources and information to help you navigate your court case, including step-by-step guides for following procedures and help with understanding your options.

What would you like to do?

- Get help with papers I was served
  - Look up by form number to understand your options. (Find the form number in the upper right or upper left corner of your papers.)
  - Choose form
  - Go

- Start a court case
  - Find your case type to get started
  - Choose case type
  - Go

- Work on my court case
  - Take the next step, update an order, see all the options during or after your case
  - Choose case type
  - Go

- Get information about a legal topic
  - Get general information and learn about your options
  - Choose topic
  - Go

- Look up a court case or citation
  - Find a traffic ticket or court case using the county court's website
  - Choose County
  - Go

- Get help from the court
  - Find self-help centers, forms, interpreters, disability access and more
  - Choose resource
  - Go

More Information

- Find a free or low-cost lawyer
- Find a court form
- Find out about jury duty or serving as a witness
- Find other information about the California Courts

CALIFORNIA COURT SYSTEM
selfhelp.courts.ca.gov
THE ISSUE: DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY

WHO
- Elderly individuals facing landlord-tenant issues, debt collection problems, or trying to get guardianship of their grandchildren
- Philadelphians with visual disabilities dealing with any civil legal issue

WHY
- 16% of Philadelphians had a physical, emotional, or cognitive disability in 2016
- 22% of Philadelphians living in poverty were disabled.
- Elderly individuals comprised 14% of Philadelphia’s nearly 1.6 million residents in 2019.
- In 2017, 23% of Philadelphians ages 60 and older lived in poverty

HOW
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (World Wide Web Consortium)
- Other court websites
LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY

ALLOW USERS TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN SETTINGS

- Font size and color
- JavaScript
LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:
DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY

CREATE CONSISTENT NAVIGATION BARS
LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY

PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR CONSUMING MEDIA

- Alt tags and text alternatives for video and images.
- HTML or RTF documents.
THE ISSUE: LITERACY ACCESSIBILITY

WHO
- Low literacy Philadelphians facing any sort of legal issue.

WHY
- 5th grade reading level
  - National average: 7th grade
- "Philadelphia faces a literacy crisis." - Jim Kenney
- Functionally illiterate majority.
- 22% of adults lack basic literacy skills

HOW
- No directly applicable law.
- Plain Language Consumer Contracts Act (PA)
- Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Fed.)
Municipal Court - Criminal Division

The Philadelphia Municipal Court was established through a 1968 amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction with 27 law-trained, full-commissioned judges. The Philadelphia Municipal Court is responsible for conducting preliminary arraignments, preliminary hearings and most trials for adults arrested and charged with a criminal offense which carries a sentence of five years or less. Preliminary arraignments are conducted 24 hours daily, 365 days per year. Misdemeanor cases within the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Municipal Court are scheduled from the preliminary arraignment discovery within 30 days, or to a designated diversion program. In accordance with Pennsylvania Procedure, felony cases are scheduled for preliminary hearing before a Municipal Court Judge with from the bail arraignment. Upon hearing evidence presented by the District Attorney’s Office, Municipal Court may forward the case to Common Pleas Court for trial, remand the case to Municipal Court for trial charges or dismiss the case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Title</th>
<th>Reading Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Division</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<td>Domestic Relations</td>
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<td>Juvenile Court</td>
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<td>Municipal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Division</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Division</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Show up to any court hearings on time. Remember that there are lines to get into the courthouse, so arrive early.
• If you cannot come to court on the day you have been ordered to appear, you can ask for a continuance. Remember you have to come to court unless the court date is changed by the Court.
• If you believe the allegations made about you are not true, bring witnesses and evidence. You may present your evidence, documents, and testimony to the judge to decide the case.
• Sit in the opposite side of the courtroom from where the person you are being sued against you is sitting.

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<tr>
<td>Civil Matters</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orders Against Me</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord/Tenant</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>
How the eviction process works

This is a summary of the eviction process. A landlord must meet many legal requirements before they can ask for a court order that says their tenant must move out. There are step-by-step instructions at the bottom of this page with more details.

The landlord gives the tenant a written Notice to do something by a deadline

For example, a Notice might say to fix a problem or move out by a certain date. The deadlines can be very short, like 3 days, or months.

The Landlord starts an eviction case in court

If the tenant doesn't do what the Notice says by the deadline, the landlord can file an eviction case (called an unlawful detainer). The landlord must have a copy of the court papers delivered (served) to the tenant.

The tenant has a few days to file a response in court

If the tenant doesn't respond by the deadline, the landlord can file papers asking a judge to decide the case without their input. If the tenant does respond, either side can ask for a trial where a judge or jury will decide.

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<tr>
<td>Eviction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landlord Eviction Guide</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<td>Tenant Eviction Guide</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Law</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: LITERACY ACCESSIBILITY

IMPLEMENT PLAIN LANGUAGE INITIATIVES

- Shorter sentences
- Use of active voice
- Address readers directly
- Reduce reading level
- Format intentionally
- Emphasize procedural knowledge

USE OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION (OCR) ON ALL GUIDES

- Helpful information exists (See: What is a Custody Order example to the right), but it is indexed poorly

PERFORM A CONTENT AUDIT

- Flesch-Kinkaid metrics

WHAT IS A CUSTODY ORDER?

A custody order is a written order signed by a judge. It defines the amount of time each party will spend with the child (physical custody) and how major decisions are made about the child (legal custody).

Note: People who file for custody and people they file against are called “parties.” Each is a “party.”

Physical custody — There are five types:
- **Shared** — More than one party is allowed to take physical custody of the child, and each of them has significant periods of time with the child.
- **Primary** — A party spends the majority (more than half) of the time with the child. The other
THE ISSUE: LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY

25 M
Limited English Proficient (LEP) People in the US in 2019

166 K
LEP People in Philadelphia in 2019

11%
Philadelphians who are LEP

TOP 5

TOP 5
Languages for which interpreters were requested in FJD in 2018: Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, Portuguese, Vietnamese

73 K
People in Philadelphia in 2019: who speak Spanish and speak English less than "very well"
LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: LANGUAGE ACCESS

FURTHER INCORPORATE WEBSITE INTO LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (LAP)
Currently the FJD LAP only includes plans to translate the notice of interpreter services page into multiple languages.

CREATE LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCE PAGE
As DC does, dedicate a page on the website to explaining and listing all information related to language access rights and resources, including interpreter request and complaint forms, and links to information available in other languages.

TRANSLATE KEY RESOURCES: SELF-HELP FLYERS & FORMS
Identify all key resources that should be available in multiple languages. For self-help flyers, work with advocates who created them to get them translated.
Bilingual Forms / Formularios Bilingües

Forms by Language

- العربية (ARABIC)
- Kreyòl Ayisyen (HAITIAN CREOLE)
- 한국어 (KOREAN)
- PORTUGUÊS (PORTUGUESE)
- TIẾNG VIỆT (VIETNAMESE)
- 中文 (CHINESE-SIMPLIFIED)
- ITALIANO (ITALIAN)
- नेपाली (NEPALI)
- Русский (RUSSIAN)
- FRANÇAIS (FRENCH)
- ខ្មែរ (KHMER)
- POLSKI (POLISH)
- ESPAÑOL (SPANISH)

UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF PENNSYLVANIA

This method of putting info in the translated language first makes it easier for LEP speakers to find forms in their language.

Landlord/Tenant

One copy of the landlord-tenant complaint with original signature is required for the magisterial district judge. You will be charged filing costs and service costs when the complaint is filed at the district court. No changes may be made to this form either in content or format.

Desahucio

- Instrucciones complementarias para obtener el aplazamiento del desahucio (Supplemental Instructions for Obtaining a Stay of Eviction)
- Declaración jurada de violencia familiar (Domestic Violence Affidavit)
- Solicitud de declaración de abandono de inmueble (Request for Determination of Abandonment)
- Autorización de representante (Authorization of Representative)
- Demanda de desahucio (Landlord and Tenant Complaint)
- Declaración jurada prevista en la ley de asistencia civil a personal militar (Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Affidavit)
Varied Approaches to Incorporating Other Languages

SAN ANTONIO MUNICIPAL COURT

This tab method is effective for sharing key court info such as contact info and hours in multiple languages, without taking up too much room on the page.

COURT APPEARANCES
IN-PERSON
The Frank Wing Municipal Court Building, 401 S. Frio St. is open to direct physical public access for limited in-person appearances between 8am and 4pm, Monday through Friday.
- Bringing additional family members or friends is discouraged at this time and they may be asked to wait outside.
- A face covering/mask is required to be worn at all times in the building.

CONTACT FREE SERVICES FOR RESOLUTION OF CASES AND CITATIONS
All individuals are encouraged to call or email the Court in lieu of making personal appearances to take care of their court business.
- Virtual contested non-jury trials and hearings as scheduled by the court
- Call the court at 210.207.8870 (Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)
- Email the court at sacourt@sanantonio.gov
- Online to request defensive driving, probation or make a payment

COMPARENCIAS DE CORTE
EN PERSONA
El edificio de la Corte Municipal Frank Wing, 401 S. Frio St. está abierto con acceso directo público para comparecencias limitadas en persona entre 8am y 4pm de lunes a viernes.
- Se desalienta traer a miembros de la familia o amigos en estos momentos pues se les podría pedir esperar afuera.
- Se requiere traer tapabocas/máscara en todo momento adentro del edificio.

SERVICIOS SIN CONTACTO PARA RESOLUCIÓN DE CASOS E INFRACCIONES
A todas las personas se les incentiva llamar o mandar un correo electrónico a la Corte en vez de hacer una comparecencia en persona para hacerse cargo de sus asuntos de corte.
- Juicios sin jurado virtuales y audiencias son programados por la Corte
- Llame a la Corte al 210.207.8870 (lunes - viernes, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)
- Envié un correo electrónico a la Corte a sacourt@sanantonio.gov
- En línea para solicitar un curso de manejo a la defensiva, período de prueba o para hacer un pago.
Putting all language access resources in a dedicated space helps clarify what support is available.
This is the current FJD page on interpreter services. To maximize its accessibility to SRLs, updates of every access type are needed.
IDEAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

**PARTNERED USER TESTING**
Partnering with community groups and help centers to do user testing can help with both identifying current pain points and testing out proposed solutions.

**DATA-GATHERING**
To gain a better understanding of the issues SRLs face and the language they would use to describe them, data on search terms could be helpful.

**COURT-SPECIFIC CONTENT AUDITS**
Assist individual courts in evaluating their webpages and provide more specific recommendations for increasing accessibility.

**ADVOCATE INTERVIEWING**
Advocates are uniquely positioned to speak to the needs of SRLs and can provide insight on how to best address those needs.
QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!