

DC Social Justice Transformations Network Referral Initiatives Subnetwork Brief



Background

The DC Bar Foundation is the leading funder of civil legal aid in the District of Columbia. We are committed to the vision that residents of the District have equal access to justice, regardless of income. Our mission is to fund, support, and improve legal representation of people who are financially disenfranchised or who are otherwise underserved in the District of Columbia. Learn more: dcbarfoundation.org.

About This Project: The DC Social Justice Transformations Network (DCSJTN) creates space to meet, collaborate, and identify strategic action steps for establishing and advancing anti-racist, anti-poverty, user-centered systems that promote the wellbeing of all District residents. We have begun by establishing a Coordinated Intake and Referral system in DC, ensuring fair and easy access to legal aid services. Using network data captured via PARTNER and in collaboration with Visible Network Labs, the project identifies strengths and opportunities to enhance collaboration.

Method: A social network analysis examined partnerships, member engagement, and perceptions of the network's outcomes. Members provided feedback on the network's effectiveness and the existing ecosystem supporting legal aid access. This subnetwork brief focuses on the DCSJTN's referral initiatives.

Key Findings

- **Network Composition:** The subnetwork comprises 58 organizations and 298 relationships exchanging client referrals, indicating a collaborative effort to address community needs. Most organizations serve all eight district wards of Washington, DC.
- **Key Players:** Organizations receiving and/or making the most referrals are predominantly legal aid providers.
- **Focus Areas:** Many organizations in the referral network focus on housing, immigration, and public benefit issues.
- **Partnership Perceptions:** Respondents within the referral network reported high levels of value and very high levels of trust in their partners. Partnerships within the referral network are assessed more positively than in the DCSJTN as a whole.

Network Structure

This is a map of the referral network within the DCSJTN. This map shows each organization represented as a circle (node). The lines among the nodes represent all relationships that were reported by respondents that involve referrals.

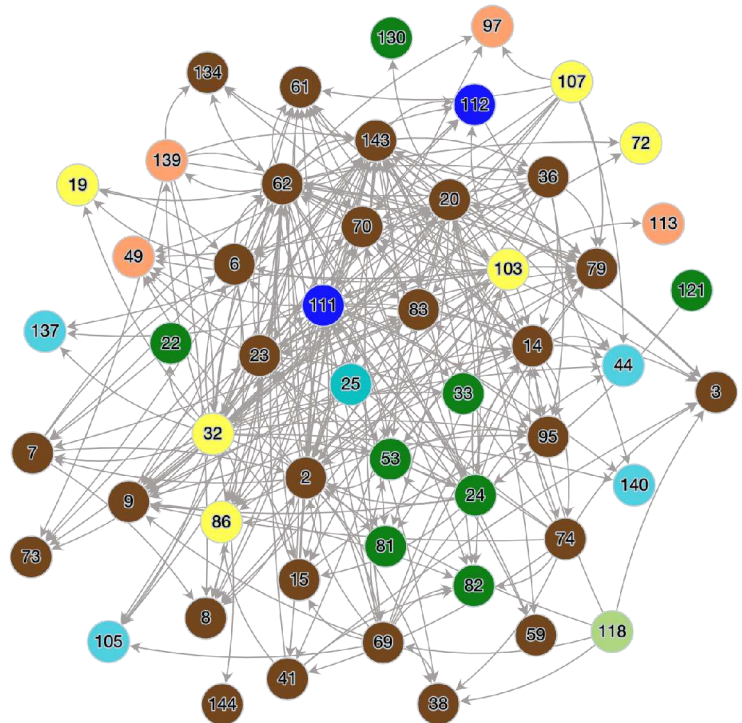
Nodes are colored by the organizational types.

The node labels, their corresponding organization names, and their organizational types are listed in the Aggregate Report.

Organizational Type*

- Academia (4)
- Business (1)
- Community Organization (4)
- Government (2)
- Health & Social Services (6)
- Legal (8)
- Legal Aid Provider (26)
- Philanthropy (1)

58 organizations reported 298 relationships in the referral network



Key Players in the Referral Network

The tables below list the top ten organizations receiving the most referrals and the top ten organizations making the most referrals. Organizations that appear in both tables are bolded.

All ten organizations receiving the most referrals are **legal aid providers**, with six of them indicating that expertise in legal aid/the justice system is their most important contribution to the DCSJTN. The ten organizations making the most referrals are somewhat more varied, including **government entities**, **health and social services providers**, and **legal firms**. Apart from expertise in legal aid/the justice system, their most important contributions include facilitation/leadership, advocacy skills and resources, and services.

Top 10 Organizations Receiving the Most Referrals

Organization	Map Label	Number of Referrals Received	Organizational Type	Most Important Resource Contribution
Network for Victim Recovery of DC	62	14	Legal Aid Provider	Advocacy skills and resources
Legal Aid DC	143	14	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Tzedek DC	79	14	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Bread For The City	9	13	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Legal Counsel for the Elderly	2	12	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in senior issues
Children's Law Center	14	12	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Neighborhood Legal Services Program of the District of Columbia	61	12	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
DC Affordable Law Firm	23	11	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
DC Bar Pro Bono Center	95	11	Legal Aid Provider	<i>No data</i>
Rising for Justice	70	10	Legal Aid Provider	Community connections

Top 10 Organizations Making the Most Referrals

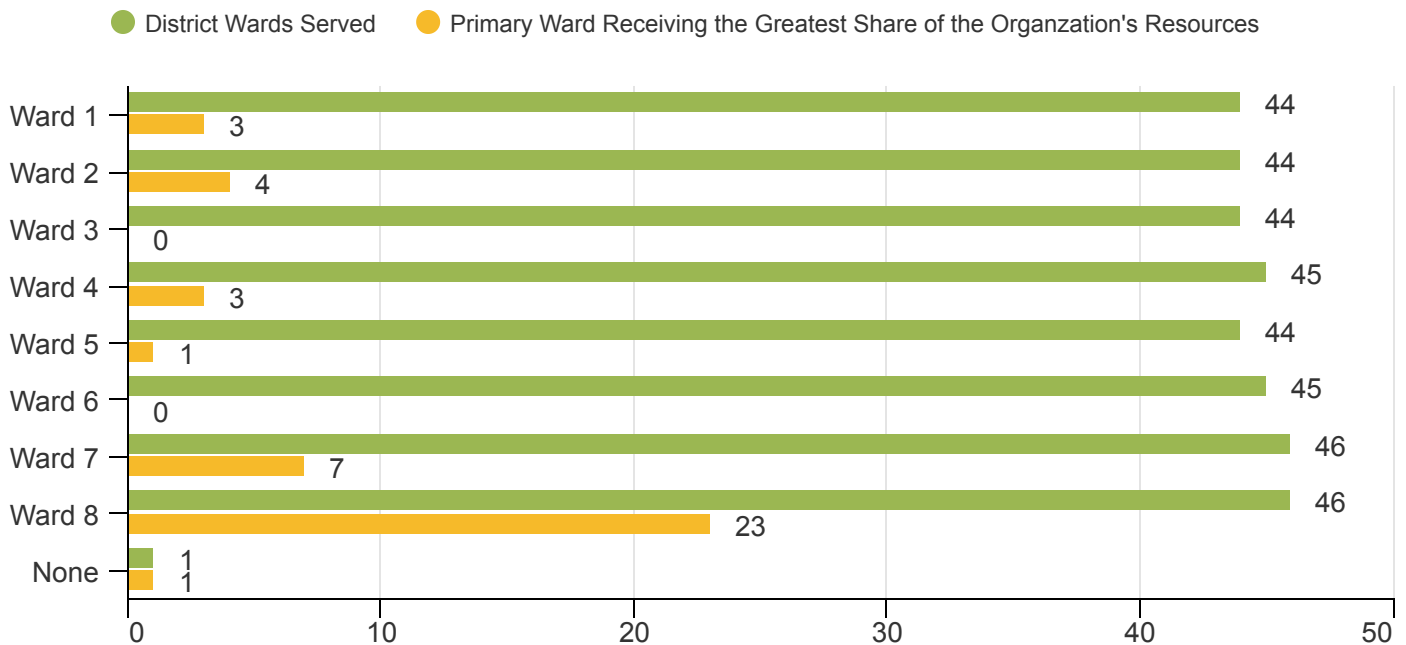
Organization	Map Label	Number of Referrals Made	Organizational Type	Most Important Resource Contribution
DC Superior Court	111	31	Government	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
DC Rape Crisis Center	32	30	Health & Social Services	Facilitation/Leadership
Network for Victim Recovery of DC	62	29	Legal Aid Provider	Advocacy skills and resources
Legal Aid DC	143	26	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Legal Counsel for the Elderly	2	22	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in senior issues
DC KinCare Alliance	20	22	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)	103	16	Health & Social Services	Services
DC Affordable Law Firm	23	14	Legal Aid Provider	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
DC Bar	24	14	Legal	Expertise in legal aid/the justice system
Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities	69	13	Legal Aid Provider	Advocacy skills and resources

Composition of the Referral Network

Organizations in the referral network most commonly have the following focus areas in the context of issues related to legal aid and social justice: (n = 42 respondents)



Most respondents' organizations in the referral network provide services in all eight district wards of Washington, DC. Meanwhile, about half of the respondents indicate that ward 8 receives the greatest share of their organizations' resources.



The following roles are well-represented in DCSJTN's referral network: (n = 42 respondents)

- 88%** General participant in the network
- 40%** Coordinated Intake and Referral Work
- 29%** Member of a DCSJTN working group
- 26%** Content expert
- 26%** Leader of a working group focused on specific issue or objective

In comparison, these roles are less represented: (n = 42 respondents)

- 21%** Member of Network Action Team (NAT)
- 17%** Peer consultant to others in the network
- 12%** Liaison to other networks or coalitions doing work related to DCSJTN
- 5%** Funder/Fundraiser for network activities and initiatives

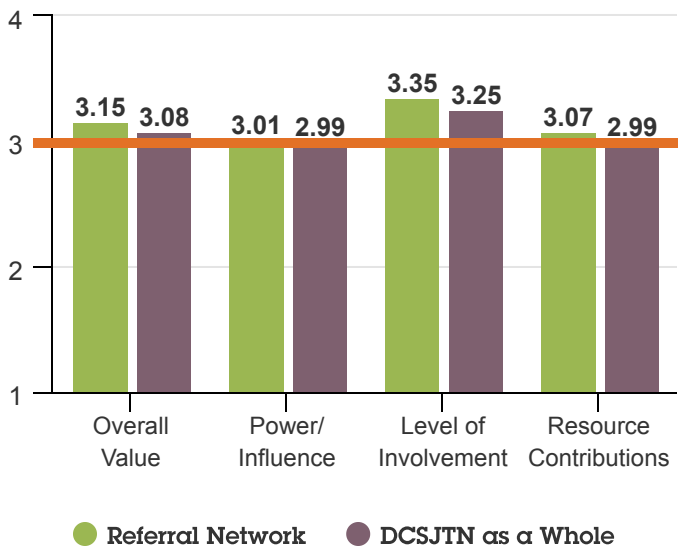
Perceptions of Value and Trust in the Referral Network vs. DCSJTN

Respondents within the referral network reported **high levels of value** and **very high levels of trust** in their partners. Partnerships within the referral network are assessed slightly more positively than in the DCSJTN as a whole across all dimensions of value and trust.

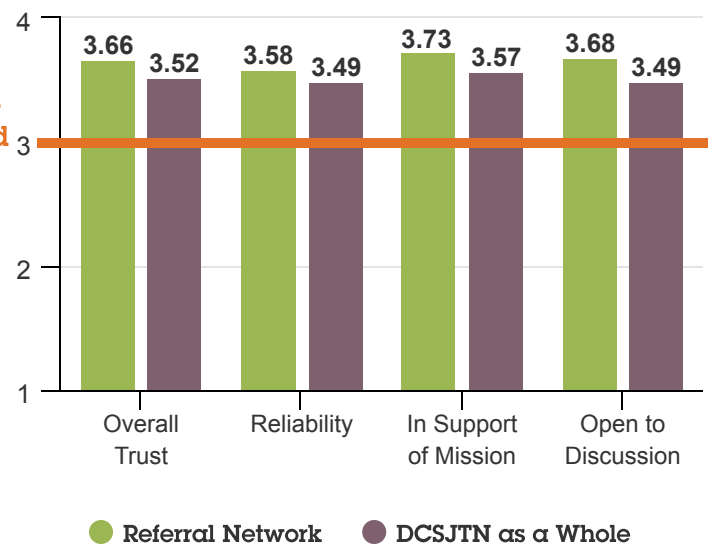
The following charts show the network's average perceptions of partners along three dimensions of value and three dimensions of trust. Survey participants assessed each of their reported relationships on each of the three dimensions of trust/value according to a 4-point scale, with 1 = Not at all, 2 = A small amount, 3 = A fair amount, and 4 = A great deal. Scores over 3 are considered the most positive.

The referral network has an overall value score of **3.15 out of 4**. The trust score is **3.66 out of 4**, higher than the value score. Perceptions of value and trust are critical to building a network.

Value Scores



Trust Scores



Scores over 3 are considered the most positive

Effectiveness of the Coordinated Intake and Referral Program

When asked to assess the effectiveness of the coordinated intake and referral program, 13% of respondents within the referral network reported it has been "very effective," 33% reported "effective," while 10% reported "somewhat effective." Meanwhile, 45% of the respondents indicated they were not sure and no respondent reported "not effective."

(n = 40 respondents)

Very effective Effective Somewhat effective Not effective Not sure

