



Overview

The Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ) is a national network of college students trained and mobilized to organize for policy change by providing pro bono legal representation to asylum seekers and empowering clients and other immigrants to lead on issues directly impacting them.

Between January-May 2021, SCIJ paired 27 trained students from Brown University and Worcester State University with 11 immigration attorneys and 1 Fully Accredited Representative.

Students worked with attorneys in pairs of 2 and assisted on multiple aspects of an asylum case including the declaration, I-589, country conditions, collecting evidence, index, and more. SCIJ supported students during this process through case rounds, individual check-ins, drop-in hours, and other resources.

This report shares findings and learnings from this experience, in addition to areas for growth. The data shared here is based on feedback from all 12 of SCIJ's partner attorneys and Fully Accredited Representatives and 21 of SCIJ's trained students.

"I found SCIJ's advocates to be very capable of taking direction and working independently. They produced high quality work that saved me valuable time in the preparation of my cases."

– Ondine Sniffin, Esq.

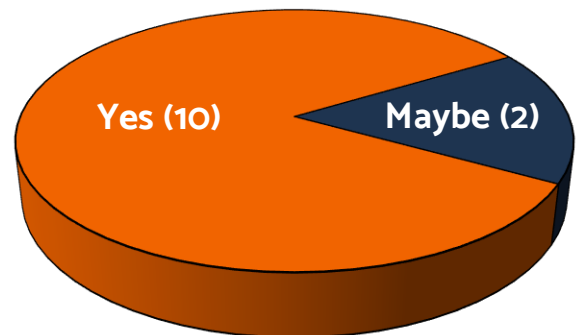
Findings

Overall, SCIJ's partners reported that SCIJ's explanation of the collaboration was very clear. 12 out of 12 of SCIJ's partners, on a scale of 1-5, reported either a 4 or 5 about the clarity of SCIJ's explanation of the collaboration.

In addition, almost every partner reported that their expectations were completely or mostly met. 8 out of 12 partners reported a 5 as to how well the collaboration met their expectations, 2 reported a 4, 1 reported a 3, and 1 reported a 2.

Across the board, SCIJ's partners said they definitely or likely would recommend SCIJ to other attorneys. 10 out of 12 of SCIJ's partners reported that they would recommend SCIJ to other attorneys and the other 2 attorneys reported they might recommend SCIJ to other attorneys.

Would you recommend SCIJ to other attorneys?



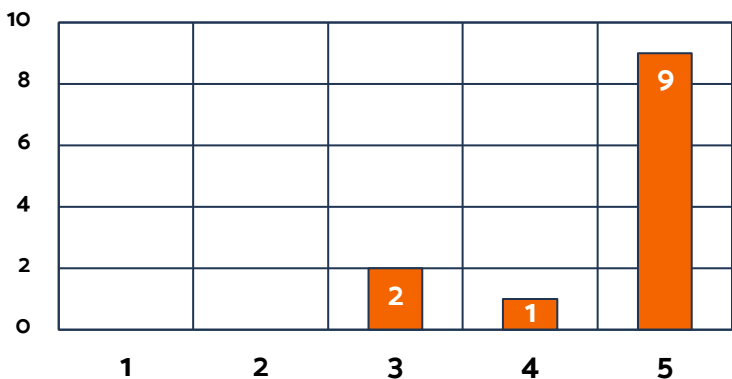
■ Yes ■ Maybe

Findings (cont.)

“I was extremely fortunate to have worked with SCIJ because the students are resilient advocates... They’re truly amazing!”
 – Luanne Santelises, Esq.

SCIJ’s partners also reported very positive experiences working with SCIJ’s students. 9 out of 12 of SCIJ’s partners rated their experience partnering with SCIJ’s students as a 5, 1 rated it as a 4, and 2 partners rated it as a 3.

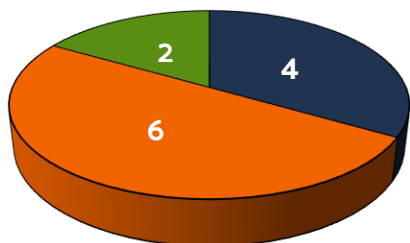
From a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your experience partnering with the Advocates?



Half of SCIJ’s partner attorneys reported they spent, on average, 1 hour per week working with SCIJ’s students, 4 reported they spent less than an hour each week, and 2 reported they spent 2 hours on average each week. In addition, about 75% of students reported spending 3-5 hours per week on a case, with the other 25% reporting they worked 1-2 hours per week.

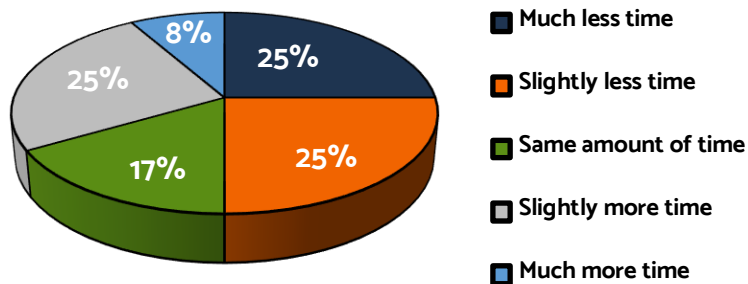
How much time, on average, did you spend working with the Advocate each week?

- <1 Hour
- 1 Hour
- 2 Hours



One of SCIJ’s biggest goals is to expand the capacity of attorneys. In this first year, half of SCIJ’s partners reported that working with SCIJ saved them a lot or a little time on cases, 2 reported there was no time difference, 3 reported it taking slightly more time, and 1 reported it taking much more time.

How did the time you spent working on the asylum case with the Advocates compare to when you work on an asylum case on your own?



Overall, SCIJ’s partners reported being impressed with students’ overall immigration legal knowledge. On a scale of 1-5, 8 out of 12 partners reported students’ immigration knowledge as a 5 or 4, 3 reported 3, and 1 reported 2.

SCIJ’s partners also reported positively on students’ communication skills. On a scale of 1-5, 9 out of 12 partners reported students’ communication ability as a 5 or 4, 2 as a 3, and 1 as a 2.

“SCIJ’S program helped me give a more effective representation and experience to [my] client.”
 – Andréia Précoma, Esq.

Improvements

The main areas for growth identified through feedback from attorneys and students include:

1. Further developing students' professional skills such as emailing etiquette and document formatting
2. Deepening students' understanding of particular social groups and increasing the number of SCIJ workshops focused on the practical application of immigration law
3. Creating clearer guidelines about expectations and when objectives should be completed during the partnerships

SCIJ's partners also expressed an interest in having students expand to helping with other forms of humanitarian immigration and assisting with more intensive tasks such as writing legal briefs.

Based on this feedback, SCIJ is planning to:

1. Include more workshops on professional skills, including providing students with email and document samples, reviewing hypotheticals, and practicing these skills.
2. Add additional training sessions about asylum, including both a deeper dive into asylum law and practical skills such as interviewing and legal research and writing.
3. Develop a sample calendar for students and attorneys to use to guide their work and more clearly outlining the expectations of students and attorneys.

"SCIJ advocates did an incredible job of independently meeting with the client each week to develop the asylum affidavit... This allowed me to work on other aspects of the client's immigration case, and we were able to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time. I highly recommend working with SCIJ."

- Alissa Weinberger, Esq.

"(SCIJ) is a viable option and module to help more people fleeing to the U.S. for safety... I saw how much (the students) connected with our client and how much he relied on them and felt their support... I appreciate having their assistance so that I could represent at least one more asylum seeker on his case."

- Deirdre Stradone, Esq.

SCIJ's Partners



Learn More

Interested in partnering with SCIJ and working with SCIJ's Immigration Advocates? Visit www.SCIJimmigration.org/attorneypartners. SCIJ's next round of partnerships will begin September 2021.

SCIJ is also seeking attorneys, immigration experts, and educators interested in being involved with SCIJ's training program either as guest speakers or to help develop SCIJ's training program content and structure. To get involved, you can visit www.SCIJimmigration.org/contact or email Jonathan Goldman, SCIJ's Executive Director, at jgoldman@SCIJimmigration.org.

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