

Results of an independent qualitative study of One Can Help's work

August 2020

Independent research

What is One Can Help's role in the journey of underserved children and families through the juvenile court and child welfare systems? This qualitative research study sought to answer this question through data from One Can Help's applications and outcome surveys as well as interviews and focus group discussions with clients – the social workers and attorneys who apply for their assistance – and one of OCH's past beneficiaries. Research was conducted by Jess Littman of American University and Understanding Impact.

One Can Help fills critical gaps

Research participants identified critical gaps in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems that One Can Help fills:

- The systems do not serve children's and families' best interests
- Often the assistance that children and families need is low-cost but high-impact
- Without One Can Help, social workers and attorneys frequently used personal funds to provide needed assistance (or were unable to provide it)

One Can Help provides for basic needs and opportunities

Basic needs that One Can Help covers include clothing, food and shelter. Research participants felt that One Can Help's assistance in providing opportunities beyond the basic needs was equally as important. One Can Help assists children and families in gaining opportunities that range from fulfilling court requirements in order to reunify after children have been placed in foster care to sending a child to a summer camp that allows them to realize their passions.

One Can Help changes lives

Outcomes of One Can Help assistance discussed by research participants included relief from significant hardship, increased access to justice and effects that changed the entire course of beneficiaries' lives. While this qualitative research did not seek to demonstrate causal relationships, participants were confident in attributing impact to One Can Help.

“Being able to rely and know that there's this agency that will help when nothing else will...it just makes it so much easier and it makes me feel more confident in being able to support my clients.”

-A social worker who regularly applies for OCH assistance for her clients

“This is a place that helps provide resources for enrichment. And I really think about it as a place that I can go to help enrich the lives of kids that I'm working with.”

-A social worker who regularly applies for OCH assistance for his clients

“Because of that little help with that apartment, it gave my family so much more than that little deposit. It opened the door for my daughter to go to a great school.... We can breathe a little bit easier. We can actually sleep through the night. Now we can work on our mental health.”

-A past beneficiary of One Can Help

“It's a stepping stone for families to be able to reunify, for a parent to be able to get a better paying job, for a kid to be able to engage in a program that they wouldn't otherwise be able to engage in.”

-An attorney who regularly applies for OCH assistance for her clients