



The Amara Legal Center envisions a society where our clients are free from stigma, violence, oppression, exploitation, and criminalization.

February "Circle of Hope" Speaker Series: Featuring Tanya Gould



Celebrate Black History Month with Amara and join us for our February "Circle of Hope" Speaker Series featuring Virginia Director of Anti-Human Trafficking Tanya Gould. The virtual event is free to the public and will be held on **February 17, from 12:30pm-1:30pm EST**. Gould will share her lived experience, her advocacy work, and her vision for addressing sex trafficking in Virginia.

The Honorable Tanya Gould is an activist fighting against human trafficking, striving to impact legislative policy, and raise public awareness. She currently holds her second term and is co-chair on the U.S. Advisory Council on Human trafficking.

Gould is also the newly appointed Anti-Human Trafficking Director for the Virginia Commonwealth Attorney General's Office. This year, she received the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking in Persons.

Gould has given lectures at universities, local schools, and churches, raising awareness in Hampton Road and across the United States. She has served as a consultant to various anti-human trafficking organizations, as well as DOJ's Office for Victims of Crime, DHS' Blue Campaign, and DOS' TIP office. She also serves on boards and organizations such as Polaris, Beloved Haven and Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum Task Force on Human Trafficking. Gould shares her story of being trafficked as part of her advocacy and gives credit to survivors and family and friends of her community who have helped her in achieving her goals.

The 2021-2022 "Circle of Hope" campaign represents Amara's diverse community, our holistic and culturally-sensitive approach to helping survivors fight for justice, and our training and advocacy efforts to increase awareness and push for equity. We look forward to seeing you!

Register Today

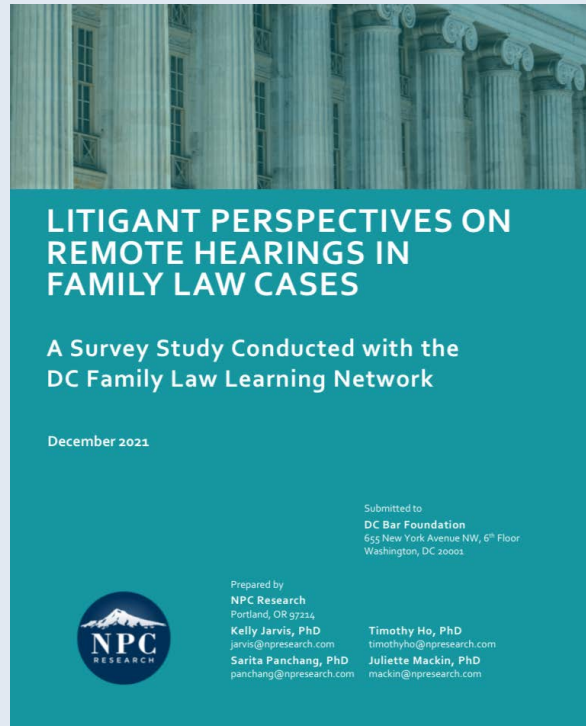
FLLN Report Released Regarding Impact of Remote Hearings on Family Law Litigants in DC

Anticipating the shift back to in-person court proceedings as pandemic disruptions lessen, the Amara Legal Center joined five other legal services organizations in the District of Columbia to understand the impact that remote court proceedings had on their family law litigants.

An online survey, conducted by the Family Law Learning Network and sponsored by the DC Bar Foundation, was open to litigants who participated in a remote hearing. The survey asked about challenges associated with in-person court appearances, litigant access to remote hearings, and litigant preference for either type of hearing. Based on these responses, the study found that remote hearings benefited litigants by reducing stress, increasing safety, and alleviating the logistical challenges associated with in-person court proceedings.

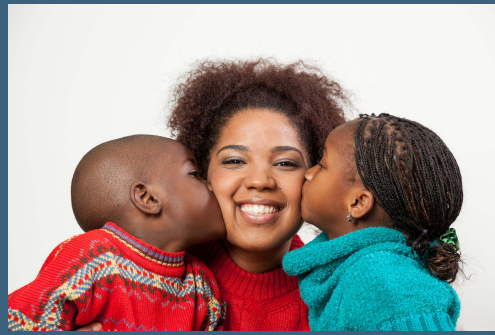
Most notably, litigants pointed to reduced logistic and financial obstacles, increased feelings of security, and saved time and resources.

The survey also identified some persistent challenges for litigants at remote hearings. Most pressing are problems with technology and language access which complicated the hearing process. This detailed examination of the application and limitation of remote hearings has produced several suggestions for the Court in terms of maintaining low-income litigants' ability to meaningfully engage with family court proceedings. These suggestions focused on prioritizing remote hearings for non-evidentiary hearings and expanding the Court's capacity to provide technical support to litigants with remote hearings. While the Covid-19 pandemic exposed deep and concerning inequities in access to justice and the treatment of crime survivors in the legal system, it has also highlighted opportunities to remedy these issues. This study demonstrates that the use of remote hearings can massively increase low-income litigants' access to the court, and therefore their access to justice.



Read the Full Report

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