

DC Social Justice Transformations Network Celebrations 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 access to social justice.

Key Findings

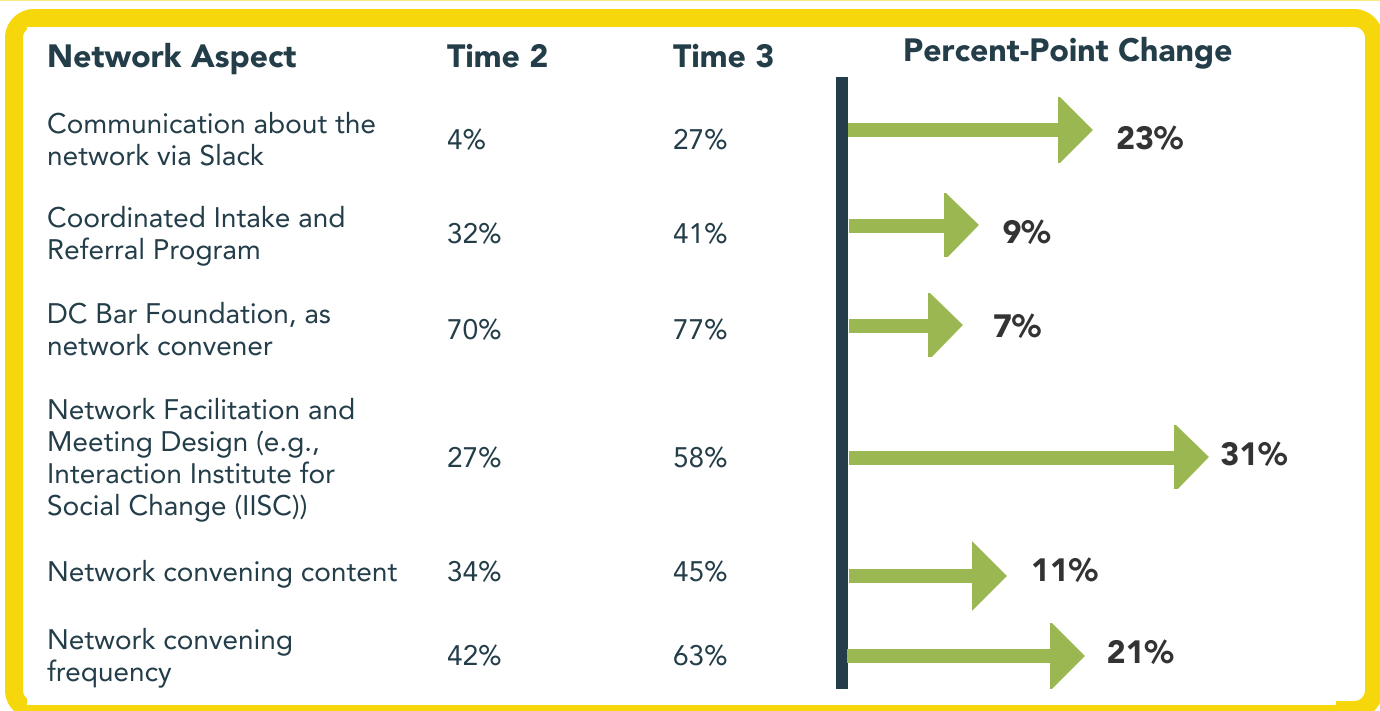
The DCSJTN has demonstrated notable impact and value in these areas:

- **Advancements in Anti-Racism and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** The network's efforts in anti-racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion have seen marked success, with more participants rating them as effective or very effective.
- **Improved Network Effectiveness:** From Time 2 to Time 3, all aspects of network effectiveness improved, including a standout 31 percentage-point increase in network facilitation and meeting design.
- **Participation Yields Clear Benefits:** Organizations consistently engaged across all three time points reported double the outcomes and significantly higher centrality scores (32% vs. 12%), demonstrating the value of long-term involvement in fostering collaboration, advocacy, and equity-focused strategies.

Effectiveness Over Time



Every network aspect increased in effectiveness from time 2 to time 3. Most notably, network facilitation and meeting design increased by 31 percentage points.



Unique benefits and value from DCSJTN

Respondents highlight a diversity of experiences and benefits within the DCSJTN, underscoring its multifaceted impact across organizations. Themes from responses are listed below.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Many participants highlighted the value of interacting with diverse sectors (legal, social services, and beyond) to forge innovative partnerships.

"Meeting individuals from other organizations, finding out about other organizations doing work that is aligned with ours, and finding ways to collaborate and share resources."

"The ability to connect with other EDs in a safe space to share experiences is of great impact and highly appreciated."

Opportunities for Executive Engagement

The network provides a platform for executive directors to share insights and address equity-related practices, such as pay scales.

Strategic Advocacy and Systemic Change

DCSJTN facilitates collective advocacy for systemic change, making it a unique space for unified efforts. The network inspires participants with its vision of accessible public and nonprofit systems and its adaptable nature.

"DCSJTN is the most visionary network that I engage with. Every meeting fills me with a sense that the people showing up that day are driven to improve or transform DC's public and non-profit systems."

"Access to other leaders in the legal services space in DC."

Networking, Resource Sharing and Training

Participants benefit from shared resources, training opportunities, and discussions aimed at improving practices. Regular meetings provide a venue to identify common issues and brainstorm collective solutions.

Specific Programmatic Benefits

Engagement in working groups (e.g., CIR, Orientation and Training) and network science discussions has helped participants refine their organizational focus and strategies.

"Our participation on the CIR working group has informed and been informed by our internal restructuring of our intake technology and procedures."

Impact Stories

“ By participating in DCSJTN, we gain these unique benefits, enabling us to drive greater impact and achieve our mission more effectively than through other networks or coalitions. ”



Participation in a joint advocacy campaign led to the successful passing of a local policy benefiting underrepresented communities, showcasing the power of collective action.



Partnering with a local arts group within the network allowed the launch a public awareness campaign through community murals, significantly increasing outreach and engagement.



Participating in community-led initiatives within the network helped better understand and address specific local needs, resulting in a more impactful and targeted approach to the work.

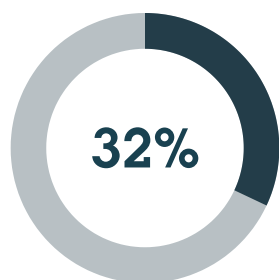
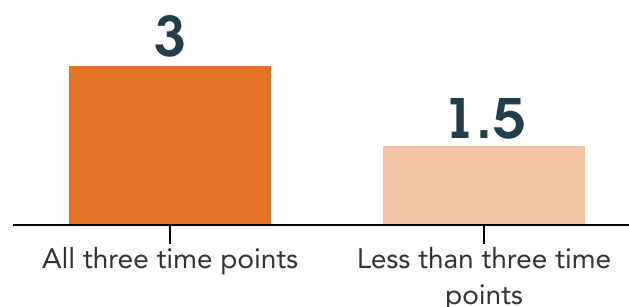
"Our involvement in high-profile network events has increased our recognition and credibility, attracting new partners and supporters to our cause."

"Through DCSJTN, we received specialized training on local grant writing, leading to securing significant funding that directly supported our community programs."

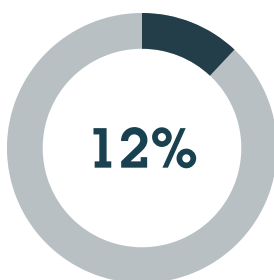
Outcomes and Centrality

Organizations that participated in all three time points reported, on average, twice as many outcomes compared to organizations that participated in fewer than three time points.

Average number of outcomes



Average Centrality for organizations that participated in **all three time points**



Average Centrality for organizations that participated in **fewer than three time points**

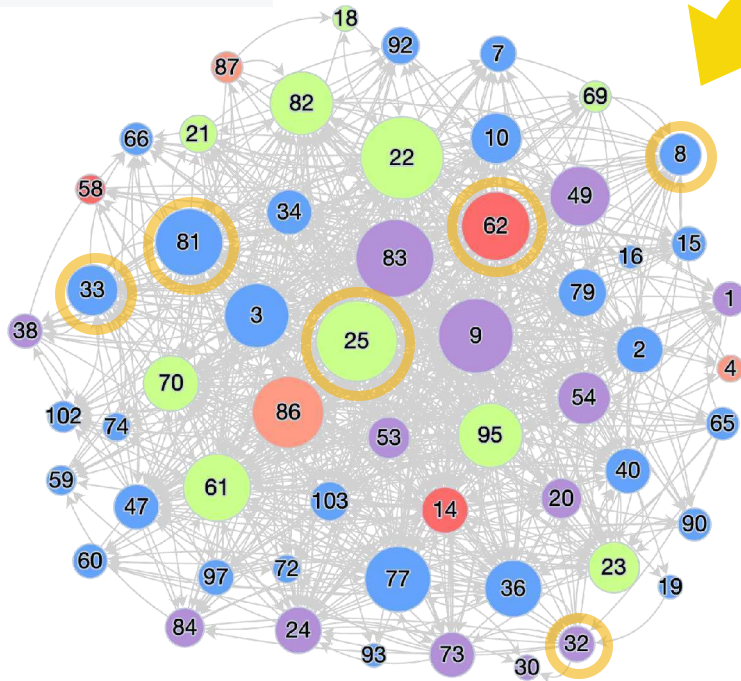
Organizations that participated in all three time points, on average, have higher centrality scores compared to organizations that participated in fewer than three time points.

Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the work being done towards anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion within and across the network. Among respondents who answered the question in 2022 (Time 2) and 2024 (Time 3), **68% reported an increase in effectiveness** in 2024. This includes those who initially selected 'not sure/too early to tell' in 2022 and later chose an 'effective' response option in 2024. This map shows the responses from 2022 and 2024. Highlighted with an orange circle are a few of the more central organizations that indicated an increase in effectiveness. The list of organizations is below.

- Not Effective (3)
- Somewhat Effective (10)
- Effective (13)
- Very Effective (3)
- Not sure/it's too early to assess (28)

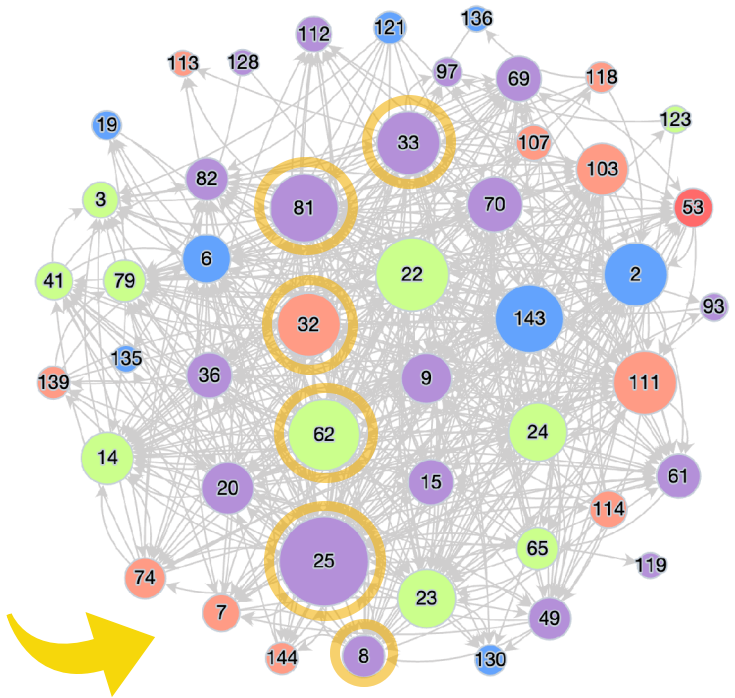
2022



The 2022 map shows a noticeable presence of blue nodes, indicating many respondents were unsure or felt it was too early to assess effectiveness.

By 2024, there is a clear shift, with more green nodes ("somewhat effective") and purple nodes ("effective"), reflecting increasingly positive perceptions of effectiveness.

2024



- Not Effective (1)
- Somewhat Effective (10)
- Effective (18)
- Very Effective (11)
- Not sure/it's too early to assess (8)

Map Label	Organization	Map Label	Organization
8	Ayuda	33	Council for Court Excellence
25	DC Bar Foundation	62	Network for Victim Recovery of DC
32	DC Rape Crisis Center	81	Washington Council of Lawyers