

# **Exploring Legal Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviors of Mixed-Status Immigrant Families**

Hayley Park

University of Maryland, USA

hp00@umd.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

Access to information is a fundamental human right and a defining characteristic of democracy. However, access to legal information, despite its importance in creating an informed citizenry and increasing individuals' understanding of their rights, is understudied in current information behavior literature. Legal issues affect many U.S. residents, significantly, however, often unequally. In 2019, at least one in three U.S. households faced legal issues (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019). Among those, members of low-income communities faced a disproportionately greater number of legal issues, while rarely seeking and receiving legal assistance (Legal Services Corporation, 2022). Furthermore, the current anti-immigrant political climate threatening the human rights of immigrant members of our society calls for serious scholarship into this topic. With the current gap in the literature, this mixed-methods study focuses on the legal information needs and information-seeking behaviors of mixed-status immigrant families residing in the United States. Mixed-status immigrant families, despite facing various intersectional needs, remain largely underrepresented. Therefore, this study aims to 1) seek ways to deepen the scholarly understanding of specific legal information needs and information-seeking behaviors of the historically understudied populations in research, and 2) suggest community-driven recommendations to expand access to relevant legal information and services.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Information needs; Information seeking; Social justice; Libraries, Community-led services

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Immigrant information behavior; Legal information behavior; Safety, Trust, Political Climate

Copyright 2025 by the authors. Published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2025.2070>

## REFERENCES

Pew Charitable Trusts. (2019). *Civil legal survey: Topline report*. SSRS. In <https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2019/04/survey-topline-report.pdf>

Legal Services Corporation. (2022). *The justice gap: The unmet civil legal needs of low-income Americans* (Prepared by Mary C. Slosar Research, LLC). <https://lsc-live.app.box.com/s/x12v2uraiotbbzrhwtjlgioemp3myz1>