

## COLLABORATIVE DEFENSE TOOLKIT

# Client Focus Group

The integration of collaborative defense requires a mission, values, and service delivery structure informed by the people whom the defender represents. It is critical to root service menus in articulated client and community goals, which can be identified by listening to and learning from community members and system-impacted residents.

One method of soliciting client feedback is through a focus group. Former clients and other community members can share their thoughts on current public defense efforts and how defenders can better serve their clients and communities. Focus groups provide the venue for defenders to learn what effective representation looks like for their respective jurisdictions and identify areas of improvement for their practice.

Questions for focus groups should be open-ended, allowing for a wide range of responses and interpretations. However, these questions should also be narrow enough to elicit responses that remain within the scope of the defender's practice. While it is critical to make participants feel heard and utilize their valuable community expertise, focus group facilitators should acknowledge that they may ask for feedback on issues they cannot immediately address.

Once the focus group has been conducted, defender offices can extrapolate common themes, areas of highest concern, and client priorities. These takeaways can be incorporated into a strategic plan, a revised mission statement and guide service offerings. Signaling a collaboration between the clients, the community, and the defender that improves indigent representation.