

LSS 2010 Public Opinion Poll

Final



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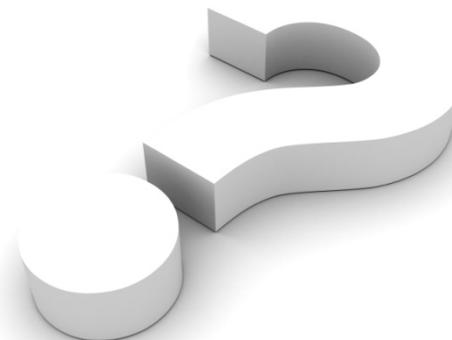
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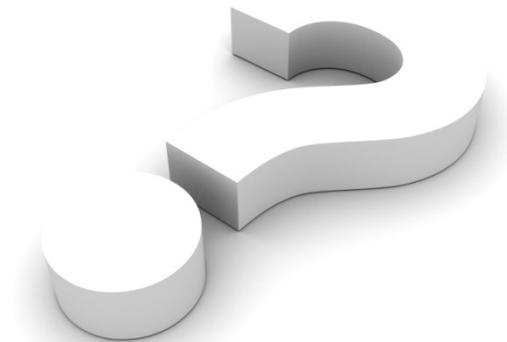
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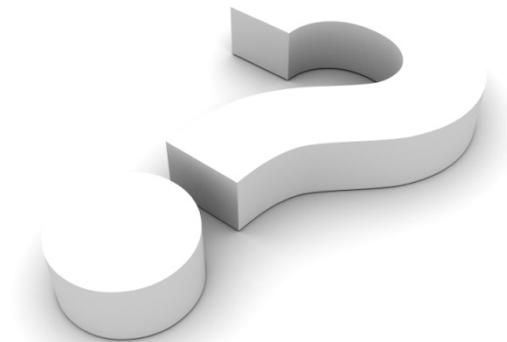
Objectives & Methodology



Objectives & Methodology

- Each year, Legal Services Society (LSS) of BC participates in a province-wide poll to measure awareness, knowledge and attitudes toward legal aid in BC.
- For the 2010 study, the Legal Services Society added 9 questions to Synovate's telephone omnibus study. (see the Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire).
- The study consists of 600 telephone interviews with a representative sample of BC residents.
- All interviewing was conducted from Synovate's fully supervised, in-house CATI facility located in Vancouver, BC. Interviewing for this study took place from March 16th to 31st, 2010.
- To ensure the final sample was an accurate representation of the BC population, it was mathematically weighted by age and gender within region to match 2010 population estimates.
- For the LSS survey, respondents were screened out if a respondent or anyone in their household was closely related to a Legal Services Society employee or a lawyer who provides legal aid services.
- As a result, 574 out of the 600 respondents qualified for the LSS survey. The margins of error at the 95% level of confidence for a sample size of 574 is +/-4%.
- When comparing 2010 to 2009 findings (n=574 versus n=753), a maximum difference of +/-5.5 percentage points is required to be considered significant at the 95% level of confidence.

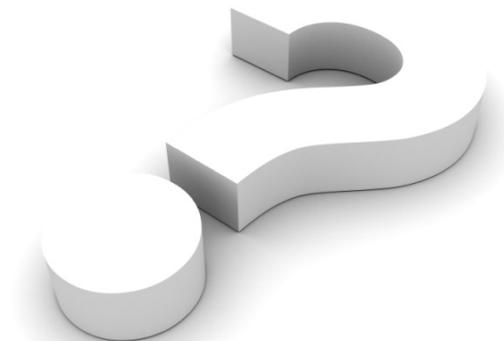
Highlights



Highlights

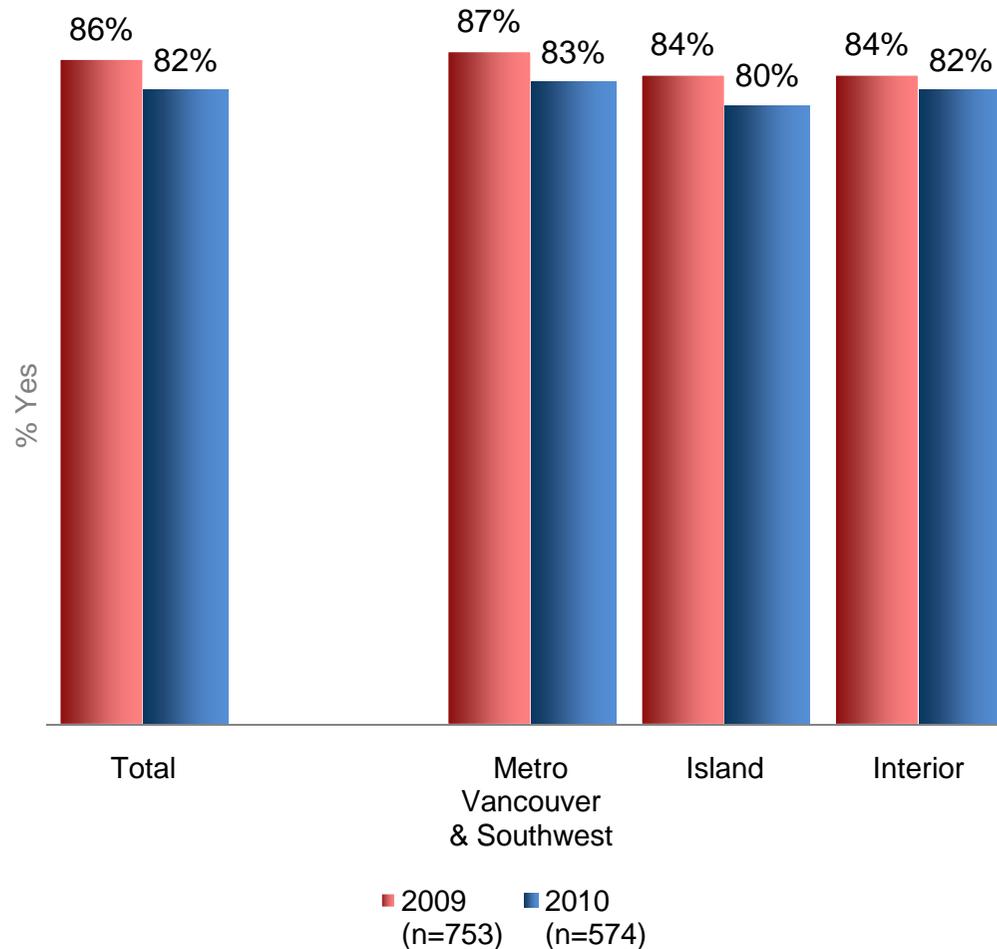
- Consistent with 2009, the large majority of BC residents (82%) report being aware of legal aid for people with low incomes.
- Specifically, awareness is highest for legal aid in criminal law matters (69%), followed by family law (58%) and lowest for immigration/refugee law matters (43%). These awareness levels are lower than recorded in 2009.
- While 88% of residents continue to say they support legal aid services, support is not as strong as it was one year ago.
- The main suggestions to improve legal aid services in BC continue to be to improve funding and raise public awareness through more advertising.
- British Columbians are not fully sure how available legal aid is for those who need it, although they tend to think it is most available for criminal law matters. Residents are most unsure about legal aid availability for immigration/refugee law matters.
- The majority of BC residents continue to agree that providing legal aid to low income people is important to fairness in the justice system and that everyone should have the right to access the justice system.
- Family law legal aid is considered to be the most important to providing fairness in the justice system.
- At present, residents are divided in their opinions as to whether or not legal aid services are adequately funded: 28% think services are at least adequately funded, 43% think they are not and 28% admit to not knowing.
- When it comes to giving legal aid funding the same priority as other social services such as health care, education, welfare and child protection, residents are moderately-to-strongly in agreement.

Detailed Findings



Awareness Of Legal Aid In BC

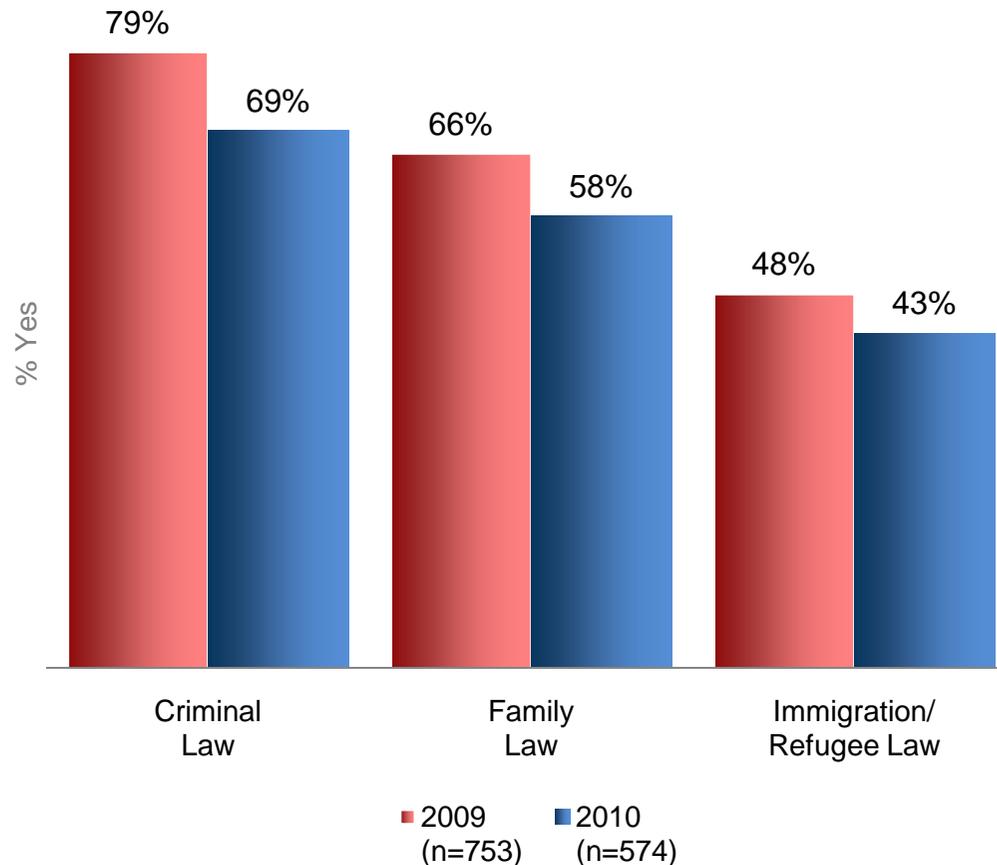
LS1. I would like to ask you a few questions about legal aid. First of all, are you aware that there are legal aid services in BC for people with low incomes?



- The majority of BC residents (82%) continue to report being aware of legal aid services, consistent with 2009 (86%).
- Regional awareness levels are also in line with 2009.
- Awareness of legal aid services tends to increase as age and household income increases.

Awareness Of Legal Aid For Different Types Of Cases

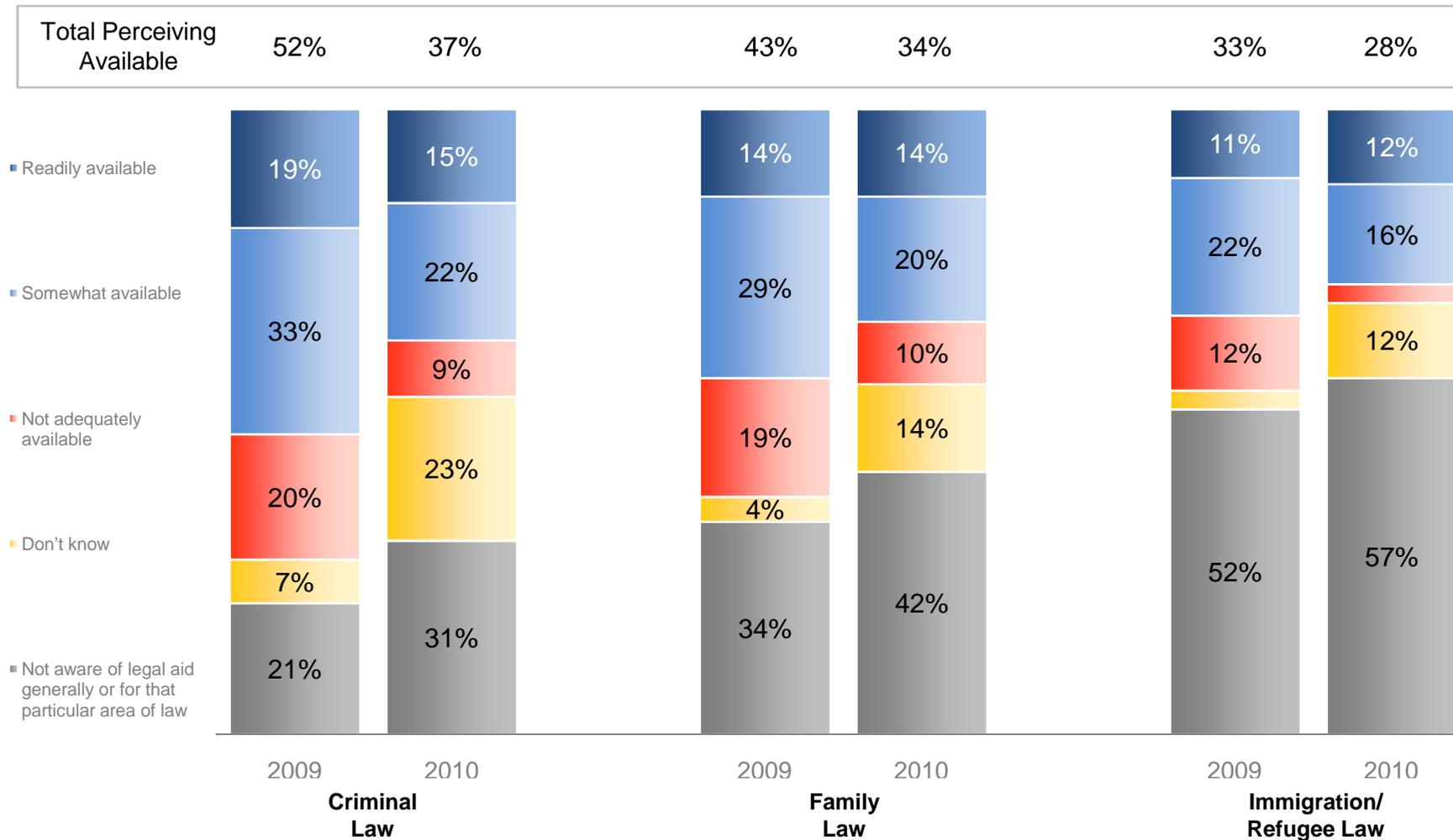
LS2a-c. Did you know that legal aid services are available for people facing criminal law/family law/immigration/refugee law matters?



- When it comes to the specific areas of law, BC residents are most aware that legal aid services are available for criminal law matters (69% reporting awareness).
- Fewer BC residents are aware that legal aid services are available for family law matters (58%) and immigration/refugee law (43%).
- Since last year, awareness of legal services for criminal law and family law matters have decreased.
- Awareness of legal aid services for all three types of law is higher among BC residents with post secondary schooling.
- Metro Vancouver/Southwest residents have the highest awareness of legal aid services for immigration/refugee law matters.

Perceived Availability Of Legal Aid

LS2a-c.1 Overall, for those who need it, would you say that legal aid in BC is readily available, somewhat available, or not adequately available when it comes to criminal law/family law/immigration/refugee law?



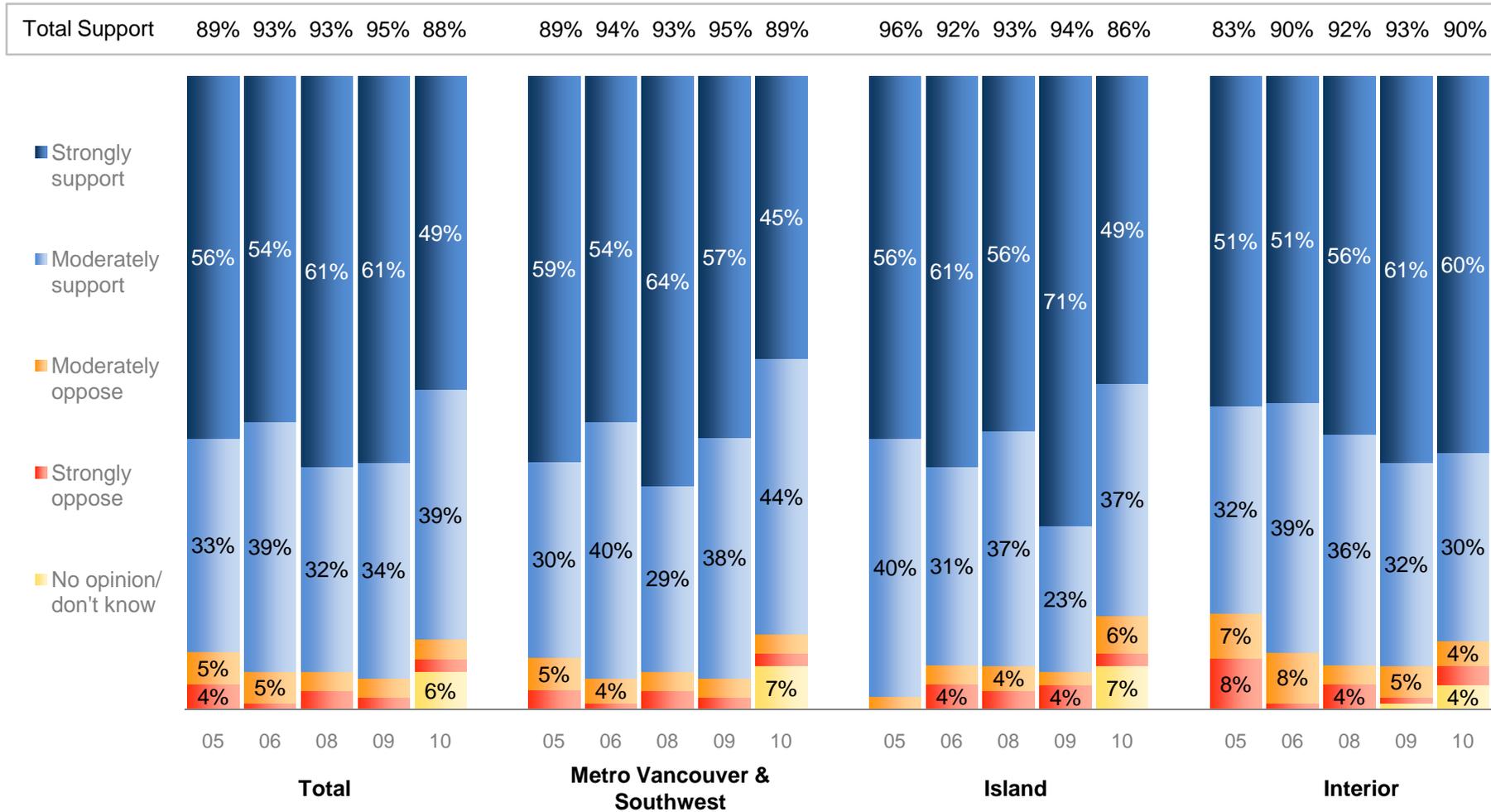
2009 n=753, 2010 n=574

Perceived Availability Of Legal Aid

- Anywhere from 28% to 37% of BC residents feel that legal aid in BC is at least somewhat available, including 12% to 15% who believe that legal aid is readily available.
- Residents are less apt to feel legal aid is available to those who need it than they were one year ago.
- This leaves broadly two-thirds of residents who do not think services are adequately available, are not sure, or do not have enough awareness of legal aid services to form an opinion.

Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services

LS3. As you may already know, legal aid services provide low income people with legal information, advice, and/or representation in court. This can include providing them with a self-help kit, giving them a few hours of legal advice, or paying a lawyer to represent them in court for serious family, criminal, or immigration/refugee problems. Knowing this, to what extent do you support or oppose legal aid services?



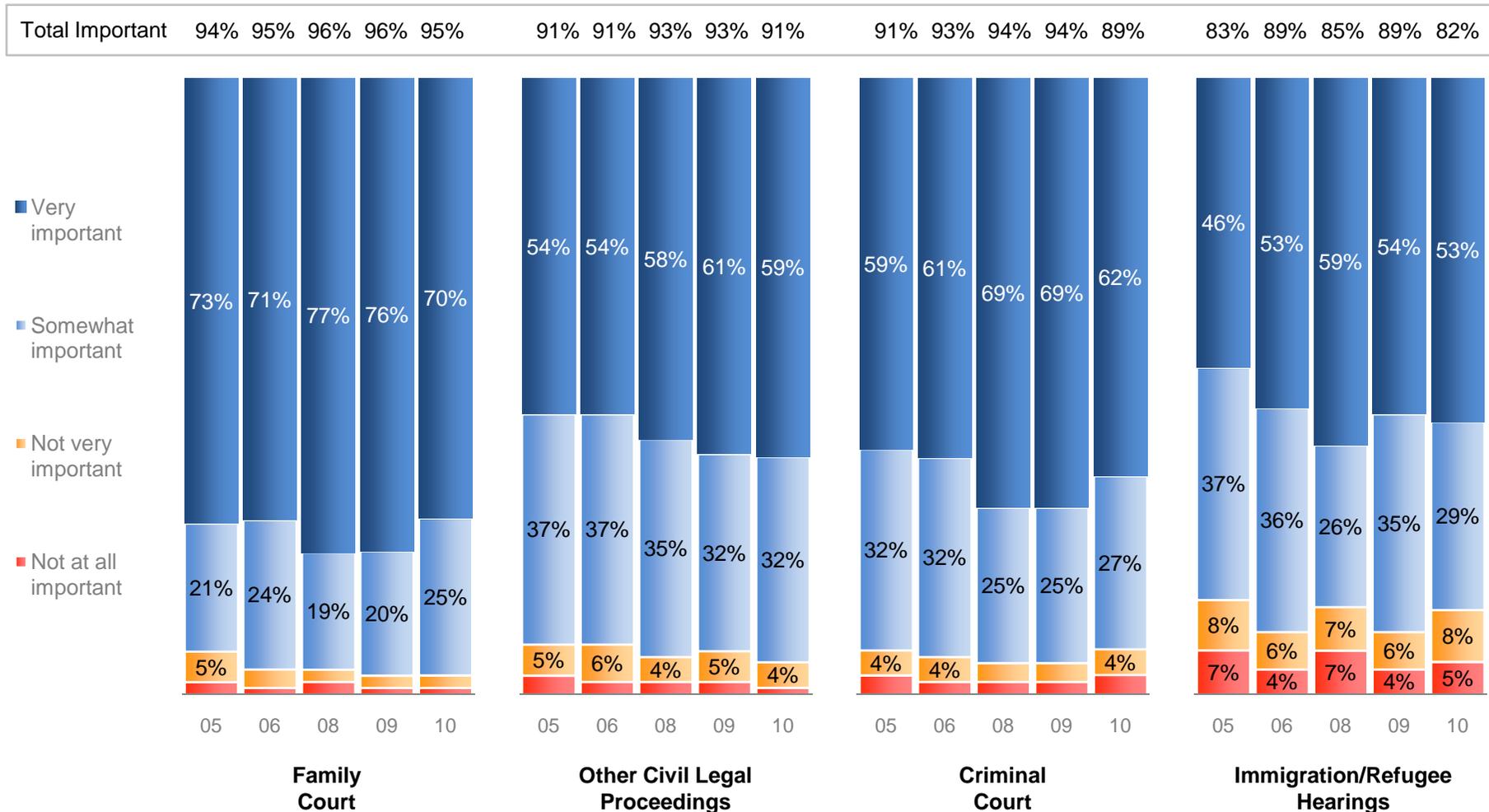
Base: 2005 n=763, 2006 n=745, 2008 n=730, 2009 n=753, 2010 n=574

Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services

- The large majority of BC residents continue to support legal aid services (88%).
- Although high, support for legal aid services is not as strong as it was one year ago (strong support has gone from 61% in 2009 to 49%).
- The decline in strong support since last year has occurred mainly in Metro Vancouver/Southwest and on the Island. Interior residents continue to hold the same position on legal aid services.

Importance Of Fairness In The Justice System

LS4. In your opinion, how important is it to fairness in the justice system for BC to provide low income people with legal aid in...?



Base: 2005 n=763, 2006 n=745, 2008 n=730, 2009 n=753, 2010 n=574

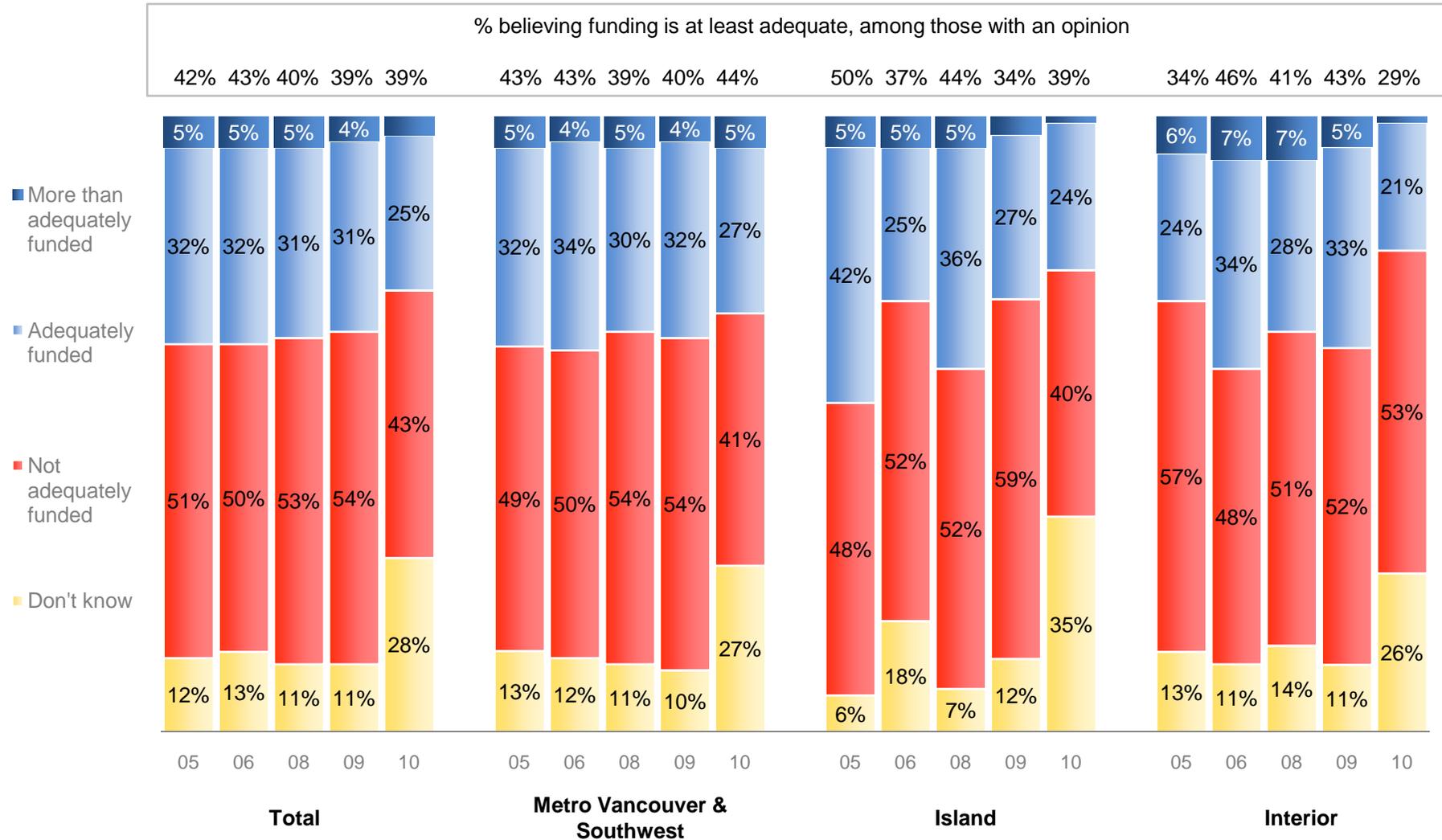
Note: Don't Know responses not shown, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

Importance Of Fairness In The Justice System

- The large majority of BC residents continue to believe that it is important to fairness in the justice system that low income people in the province are provided with legal aid in various courts, proceedings and hearings.
- Residents place the most importance on providing legal aid in family court (95%), followed by in civic legal proceedings (91%), criminal court (89%) and in immigration/refugee hearings (82%).
- Since last year, importance attributed to having legal aid representation in family court, criminal court and immigration/refugee hearings has decreased. Further, those saying providing legal aid is *very* important to fairness in the justice system has decreased for both family and criminal court.
- With the exception of family court, lower income residents (i.e. household income is below \$25,000/year) place especially strong importance on maintaining fairness in the justice system by providing legal aid in the various legal settings.

State Of Legal Aid Services In BC

LS5. Based on anything you may have read, heard, or seen, would you say that legal aid services in British Columbia are...



Base: 2005 n=763, 2006 n=745, 2008 n=730, 2009 n=753, 2010 n=574

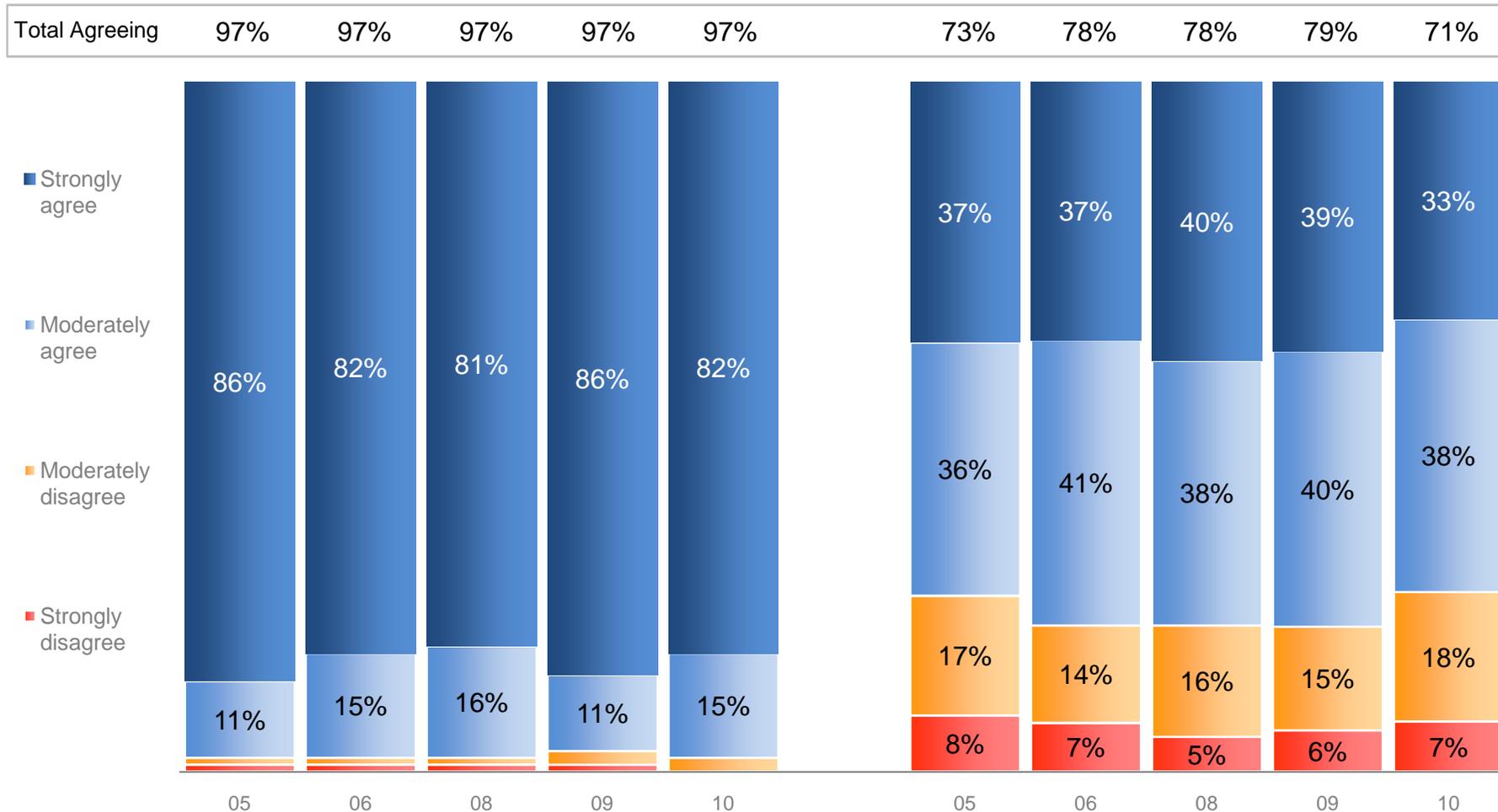
State Of Legal Aid Services In BC

- BC residents are divided in their opinions regarding whether or not legal aid services in the province are adequately funded.
- Presently, 28% think the services are adequately, or more than adequately funded, while 43% think they are not and 28% simply are not sure.
- *Among residents who could actually offer an opinion*, the proportion feeling that legal aid is adequately (or more than adequately) funded stands at 39%, consistent with 2009.
- Interior residents and those age 55 and older are the most apt to consider the funding for legal aid services lacking.
- Those that consider legal aid services inadequately funded tend to strongly support legal aid in general and place high importance on it in terms of maintaining fairness in the justice system.

Public Positions On The Justice System & Legal Aid

LS6. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Everyone should have the right to access the justice system.

LS7. Most of the funding for legal aid comes from the provincial government. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement : *Governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as they give to funding for other social services such as health care, education, welfare, and child protection.*



Base: 2005 n=763, 2006 n=745, 2008 n=730, 2009 n=753, 2010 n=574

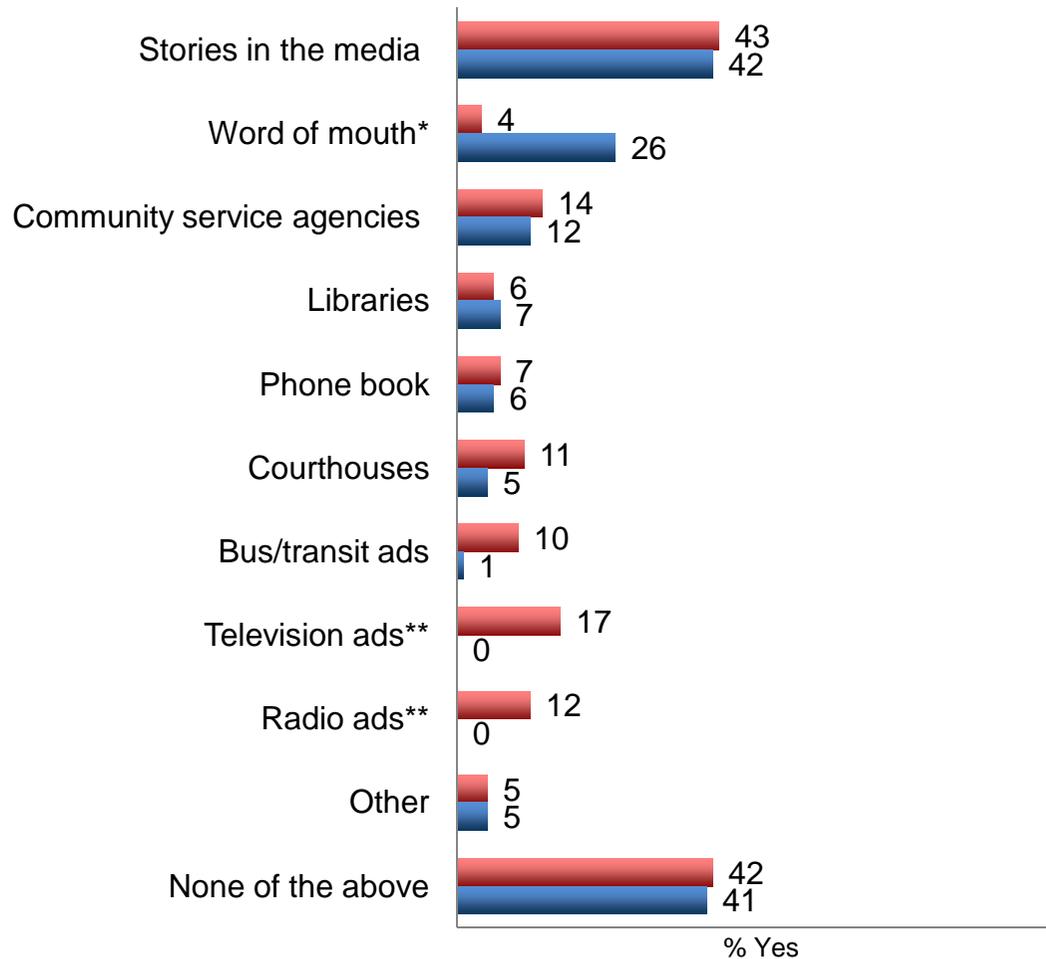
Note: Don't Know responses not shown, but are 1% for QLS6 and 4% for QLS7 in 2010.

Public Positions On The Justice System And Legal Aid

- Consistent with historical trends, the large majority of BC residents strongly agree that everyone should have the right to access the justice system.
- Once those who moderately agree are added in, total agreement on equal access to the justice system reaches 97%.
- Strong agreement on equal access to the justice system reaches 92% among young residents (18 to 34), but then falls to 78% among those 35 and older.
- Currently, 71% of BC residents agree that governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as they give to funding for other social services such as health care, education, welfare and child protection.
- Compared with one year ago, agreement on the priority of legal aid funding is lower (79% versus 71%), disagreement is unchanged (21% versus 25%) and those who are unsure has inched up (from 0% to 4%).
- Families with children and those in the highest income bracket (i.e. annual household income is \$100,000+) are the most apt to *disagree* that government should give legal aid funding the same priority as other social services.

Sources Of Legal Aid Information

LS8. In the past few months, did you hear about (get your information about) legal aid from any of the following sources?



- Among the 60% of BC residents who heard something about legal aid in the past few months, most cite stories in the media, followed by word-of-mouth as their primary information sources.
- Community service agencies, libraries and the phone book are secondary information sources about legal aid in BC.

*Unaided in 2009, aided in 2010
 **Aided in 2009, unaided in 2010

■ 2009 (n=753) ■ 2010 (n=574)

Suggested Improvements For Legal Aid Services

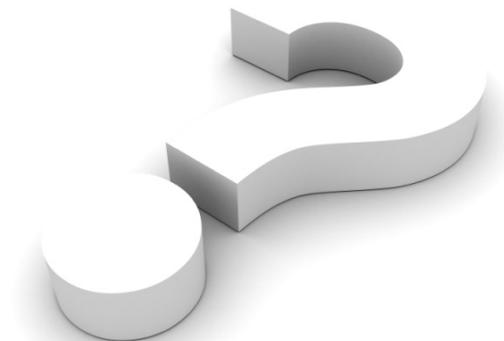
LS9. How do you think legal aid services in British Columbia could be improved?

	2009 (n=753) %	2010 (n=574) %
Improved funding	22	18
More advertising/promotion/public awareness	14	14
Improved access/availability	18	9
More lawyers available	8	5
Provide more information on how to obtain legal aid	2	4
Better guidelines as to who should qualify for legal aid	5	3
More qualified legal representation	2	3
Improved access/availability of lower income people	4	2
Make the system more efficient (legal/judicial/courts)	3	2
Provide more services/programs	2	2
Improved access/availability in remote areas	-	2
More lawyers doing pro bono work /who will work for lower fees	-	2
Expand qualifications for legal aid/raise max. income level	-	2
More time/hours of legal aid assistance	-	1
Other	10	3
None/no improvement necessary	2	24
Don't know/not stated	32	26

- Consistent with 2009, the top two suggestions given by BC residents to improve legal aid services is to improve funding and to raise public awareness through more advertising and promotion.

Appendix

Questionnaire



BC Omnibus – March 2010

Sections 1, 2, 3

Hello, this is _____ calling from Synovate, a professional public opinion research company. We are conducting a 6-minute survey today on some interesting topics. Would it be possible to speak to the person at home who is 18 or older who had the last birthday? Would that be you?

IF NO: May I please speak to that person?

IF NOT AVAILABLE: ARRANGE CALLBACK

PRIMARY TARGET (RANDOM)

- The person at home 18 or older who had the last birthday in the household? Would that be you?
IF NO: May I please speak to that person?
IF NOT AVAILABLE: ARRANGE CALLBACK

SECONDARY TARGETS (TO BALANCE SAMPLE BY AGE/GENDER)

- The person who is between the ages of 18 and 34?
IF NOT AVAILABLE, OR NOT AT HOME: In that case, may I speak to a person at home who is 35 or older?
- The male who is 18 or older?
IF NOT AVAILABLE, OR NOT AT HOME: In that case, may I speak to the female at home 18 or older?

DO NOT ROTATE SECTIONS

A. Olympic Games

1. Overall, do you view the 2010 Olympic Winter Games as being **READ LIST**
 1. Very beneficial to BC
 2. Somewhat beneficial
 3. Not very beneficial, or
 4. Not at all beneficial to BC?

**ASK QS 2 & 3 OF METRO VANCOUVER RESIDENTS ONLY (REGION CODES 1-8).
ALL OTHERS GO TO NEXT SECTION**

2. Aside from February, during the Olympics,, do you take public transit, that is, Bus, SeaBus and SkyTrain, at least once in a typical month?
 1. Yes
 2. No

3a. **IF TRANSIT USER READ:** Did you use public transit more, less or about the same during the Olympics?

- More
- Less
- Same

3b. **IF NOT A TRANSIT USER READ:** Did you use public transit during the Olympics?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

B. Corporate Image –

1. Now I'd like you to consider the following organizations and the value they provide to the customersthey serve. Based on your own experience or impressions, overall would you say that [ORGANIZATION] provides excellent, very good, good, fair or poor value to its customers?. **READ LIST IN RANDOM ORDER**

How about [ORGANIZATION]?

- a. WorkSafeBC
- b. Terasen Gas
- c. BC Hydro
- d. ICBC
- e. TransLink

- 1. Excellent
- 2. Very Good
- 3. Good
- 4. Fair, or
- 5. Poor

C. Grocery Shopping

1. Thinking now about grocery shopping, in a typical month, where do you buy the majority of your groceries? **DO NOT READ. ONE RESPONSE ONLY**

1. Buy Low Foods
2. Choices
3. Cooper's
4. Costco
5. Extra Foods
6. MarketPlace/IGA
7. Meinhardt's
8. M&M Meat Shops
9. Nesters
10. Overwaita
11. PriceSmart Foods
12. QF/Quality Foods
13. Real Canadian Superstore/Warehouse
14. Safeway
15. Save-On-Foods
16. Stongs
17. Super Valu
18. T&T Supermarket
19. Thrifty Foods
20. Urban Fare
21. Wal-Mart
22. Whole Foods
23. Zellers
96. Can't remember/Don't Know
98. Don't grocery shop

GO TO NEXT SECTION
GO TO NEXT SECTION

2. How would you rate your overall experience the last time you shopped at [INSERT STORE]? Would you say...**READ LIST**

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair, or
5. Poor

- LSa Next... Are you, or is anyone in your household, closely related to a Legal Services Society employee or a lawyer who provides legal aid services?

1. Yes **GO TO DEMOS**
2. No
3. Don't Know **GO TO DEMOS**

LS1 I would like to ask you a few questions about legal aid. First of all, are you aware that there are legal aid services in BC for people with low incomes?

1. Yes
2. No

GO TO QN LS3

LS2a Did you know that legal aid services are available for people facing criminal law matters?

1. Yes
2. No

GO TO QN LS2b

LS2a.1 Overall, for those who need it, would you say that legal aid in BC is readily available, somewhat available, or not adequately available when it comes to criminal law?

1. Readily available
2. Somewhat available
3. Not adequately available

LS2b. Did you know that legal aid services are available for people facing family law matters?

1. Yes
2. No

GO TO QN LS2c

LS2b.1 Overall, for those who need it, would you say that legal aid in BC is readily available, somewhat available, or not adequately available when it comes to family law?

1. Readily available
2. Somewhat available
3. Not adequately available

LS2c Did you know that legal aid services are available for people facing immigration/refugee matters?

1. Yes
2. No

GO TO QN LS3

LS2c.1 Overall, for those who need it, would you say that legal aid in BC is readily available, somewhat available, or not adequately available when it comes to immigration/refugee law?

1. Readily available
2. Somewhat available
3. Not adequately available

LS3 As you may already know, legal aid services provide low income people with legal information, advice, and/or representation in court. This can include providing them with a self-help kit, giving them a few hours of legal advice, or paying a lawyer to represent them in court for serious family, criminal, or immigration/refugee problems.

[INTERVIEWER: IF ASKED WHAT LOW INCOME MEANS, PROVIDE THIS DEFINITION:] Low income people means those who have less money than what is needed to buy specific basic goods each month as estimated by the federal and provincial governments for different BC communities.

Knowing this, to what extent do you support or oppose legal aid services?

READ LIST

1. Strongly support
 2. Moderately support
 3. Moderately oppose
 4. Strongly oppose
- DO NOT READ:**
5. No opinion / Don't know

LS4 In your opinion, how important is it to fairness in the justice system for BC to provide low income people with legal aid **(INSERT ITEM & ROTATE)**

- a. In family court
- b. In immigration/refugee hearings
- c. In other civil legal proceedings that deal with foreclosures, bankruptcies, employment insurance collection, disability benefits collection, or other poverty law proceedings?
- d. In criminal court:

Is it...**READ LIST**

1. Very important
 2. Somewhat important
 3. Not very important
 4. Not at all important
- DO NOT READ:**
5. No opinion/don't know

LS5. Based on anything you may have read, heard, or seen, would you say that legal aid services in British Columbia are...**READ LIST**

1. More than adequately funded
 2. Adequately funded
 3. Not adequately funded
- DO NOT READ:**
4. No opinion/don't know

- LS6 Would you agree or disagree with the following statement (**READ STATEMENT**).
Would that be strongly or moderately?

Everyone should have the right to access the justice system

1. Strongly agree
2. Moderately agree
3. Moderately disagree
4. Strongly disagree

DO NOT READ:

5. No opinion/don't know

- LS7 Most of the funding for legal aid comes from the provincial government. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement (**READ STATEMENT**) Would that be strongly or moderately?

Governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as they give to funding for other social services such as health care, education, welfare, and child protection.

1. Strongly agree
2. Moderately agree
3. Moderately disagree
4. Strongly disagree

DO NOT READ:

5. No opinion/don't know

- LS8 In the past few months, did you hear about (get information about) legal aid from any of the following sources? **READ LIST & ROTATE**

- a. Courthouses
- b. Libraries
- c. Stories in the media (newspaper, tv, and/or radio)
- d. Phone book
- e. Community service agencies

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: This includes women's centres, transition houses, the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies, Native Courtworker offices, Native Friendship Centres, community centres, multicultural and immigrant associations, seniors centres and youth clinics as examples.)

- f. Word-of-mouth (e.g. friends, family, acquaintances)
- g. Other (**SPECIFY**)

1. Yes
2. No

- LS 9 How do you think legal aid services in British Columbia could be improved?
PROBE FOR DETAILS

Demographics

- D1. Which of the following describes your age? **READ**
1. 18 to 24
 2. 25 to 34
 3. 35 to 44
 4. 45 to 54
 5. 55 to 64
 6. 65+
- D2. Which of the following categories best describes your educational background...? **READ**
1. High school or less
 2. Vocational/technical/college
 3. Some university
 4. Graduated university
- D3. Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes...? **READ**
1. Less than \$25000
 2. \$25000 to less than \$45000
 3. \$45000 to less than \$65000
 4. \$65000 to less than \$100000
 5. \$100000 or more
- D4. Which of the following best describes your current household composition...? **READ**
1. Single with no children
 2. Couple with no children
 3. Family with children (includes single parent household)
 4. Other
- D5. INDICATE GENDER
- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| 1. Male | <u>Quotas</u>
300 |
| 2. Female | 300 |

D6. INDICATE REGION

<u>Metro Vancouver</u>	<u>Quotas</u>
1. Vancouver	85
2. North Shore	24
3. Burnaby/New West	38
4. Tri-Cities (including Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam Port Moody/Anmore/Belcarra),	
5. Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows	41
6. Richmond/Tsawwassen/Ladner/S. Delta	32
7. Surrey/White Rock/North Delta Langley/E. to Aldergrove	74 17
8. Fraser Valley/Sunshine Coast	48
<u>Van Isl & Coast</u>	
9. Capital Region District	50
10. Rest of the Island & Coast	55
11. Thompson/Okanagan	73
12. Kootenay	20
13. Cariboo	21
14. NorthCoast	8
15. Nechacko	5
16. Northeast	9
	<hr/> 600