



LSS 2013 Public Opinion Poll

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- Objectives & Methodology
- Highlights
- Summary of Findings

- Appendix
 - Questionnaire

Objectives & Methodology

Objectives & Methodology

- Each year, Legal Services Society (LSS) of BC participates in a province-wide poll to measure awareness, knowledge and attitudes about legal aid in BC.
- The study has been in place since 2005, with the questionnaire changing slightly each year to reflect current goals and priorities. Hence, for some questions, trends date back as far as 2005 and on others, only as far back as 2011.
- A total of 600 BC residents were interviewed from Ipsos Reid's fully supervised CATI facility. Interviewing for this study took place from February 21st to March 3rd, 2013.
- Respondents were screened out of the survey if they or anyone in their household was closely related to a Legal Services Society employee or a lawyer who provides legal aid services.
- To ensure the final sample reflects the actual BC population, it was mathematically weighted by age and gender within region.
- The margins of error at the 95% level of confidence for a sample size of 600 is +/-4%.
- When comparing 2013 findings to the past 10 waves, a difference of approximately +/-6 percentage points is required to be considered significant at the 95% level of confidence. The required difference narrows on any given question as consensus grows.
- When comparing 2013 to 2012 findings among regional sub-groups (such as Metro Vancouver/Southwest, Island and Interior), the following differences are required in order for the difference to be considered significant at the 95% level of confidence:

Metro Vancouver/Southwest	+/-7 percentage points
Island	+/-14 percentage points
Interior	+/-12 percentage points

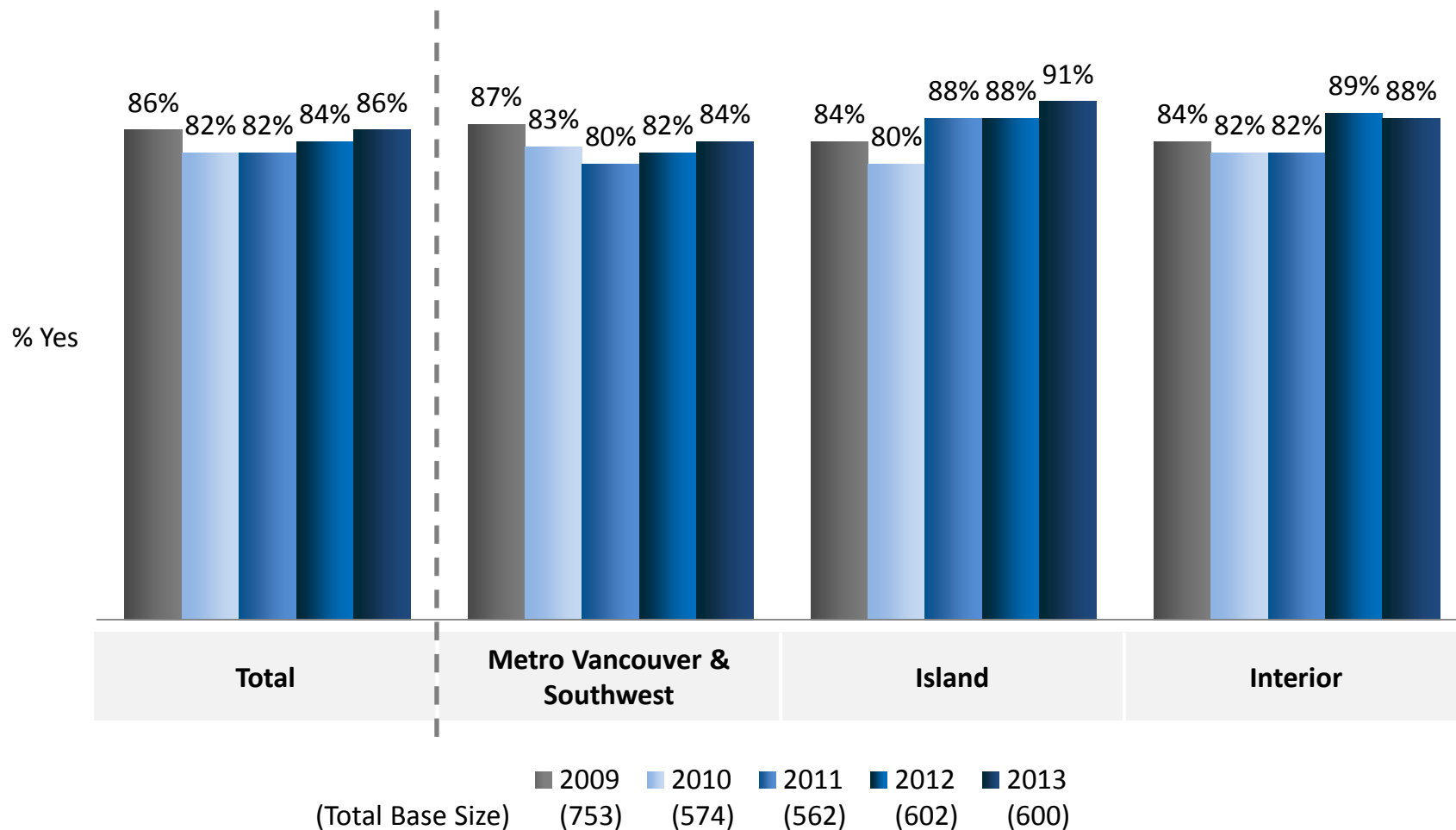
Highlights

- **Awareness of legal aid services in BC remains stable at 86%**, with residents whose household incomes are at the polar ends of the spectrum (less than \$25,000/year and more than \$100,000/year) having the highest awareness. While the most popular source of legal aid information continues to be media stories, fewer BC residents have seen or heard such media stories in the past few months compared to last year.
- **BC residents are most aware of legal aid services for criminal law matters and their level of awareness continues to increase** (from 68% in 2011 to 75% in 2013). Two-thirds of residents (66%) continue to be aware of the availability of legal aid for family law, with awareness being highest among those with household incomes of \$65,000 or more. Awareness of immigration/refugee legal aid services remains relatively lower at 49%.
- **The vast majority of the public continue to support legal aid services, and their level of support has increased from 91% in 2012 to 95% this year.** In particular, residents from the Interior region show a statistically significant increase of 8 percentage points in their level of support for legal aid services. Those who have household incomes between \$45,000-\$65,000 per year are not as *strongly* supportive of legal aid as those in higher and lower income groups.
- **Most of the province agree that legal aid should support their clients by helping them address problems that are related to their legal issues, with increasingly more residents having *strong* agreement to this approach.** Residents with lower household incomes (less than \$25,000/year) express *stronger* agreement with this approach compared to those in the middle to higher income brackets.
- **More BC residents than a year ago feel that it is *very* important to ensuring fairness in the justice system that legal aid provides services to low income people (from 56% in 2012 to 62% in 2013).** The order of importance by legal areas remains the same: family court (98%), criminal court (93%), other civil legal proceedings (90%), and immigration/refugee hearings (83%).
 - In particular, there has been a statistically significant increase from 2012 to 2013 in the proportion of residents who feel that it is *very* important to provide legal aid in criminal court and immigration/refugee hearings.
 - Compared to other income groups, those with household incomes of less than \$25,000 consider legal aid in criminal court to be relatively more important and legal aid in immigration/refugee hearings and other civil legal proceedings to be less important.

- **Although about one-quarter (27%) of the general public are still uncertain about the adequacy level of the legal aid funding, more residents currently have an opinion on this matter than one year ago.** Among those who offer an opinion, there has been a statistically significant increase in residents who believe funding is at least adequate compared to a year ago (from 33% in 2012 to 42% in 2013). Further, there are also more residents in the Metro Vancouver and Southwest region who hold this belief than last year. However, there still remains almost six in ten residents (58%), among those with an opinion, who believe legal aid funding in the province is inadequate.
- **It follows then that on an unprompted basis, “increase funding” continues to be the top-suggested improvement for legal aid services (19%).** Unchanged from last year, other suggestions include more advertising and promotion and improved access and availability.
- **While a majority of the public still support the concept of universal access to the justice system (84%), this support is lower and not as strongly held as it was a year ago.** Results are not directly comparable to past trends as the question was re-framed in 2013 to remind residents that to provide this level of access, the provincial government must spend more money. The decrease in support may not be entirely attributable to the change in question wording, so caution must be used when interpreting these results.
- **Three-quarters of BC residents agree that funding priority for legal aid should be equal to that of other social services, which is consistent with last year.** When looking at the relationship between the two propositions (i.e. universal access and equal funding priority), the majority of residents (66%) express some level of support for both. However, nearly one-in-five residents (17%) who support universal access disagree that legal aid should be granted the same funding priority. Opposite from their counterparts, lower income residents (less than \$25,000/year) tend to show greater disagreement to having universal access, but more agreement to having the same funding priority.

Summary of Findings

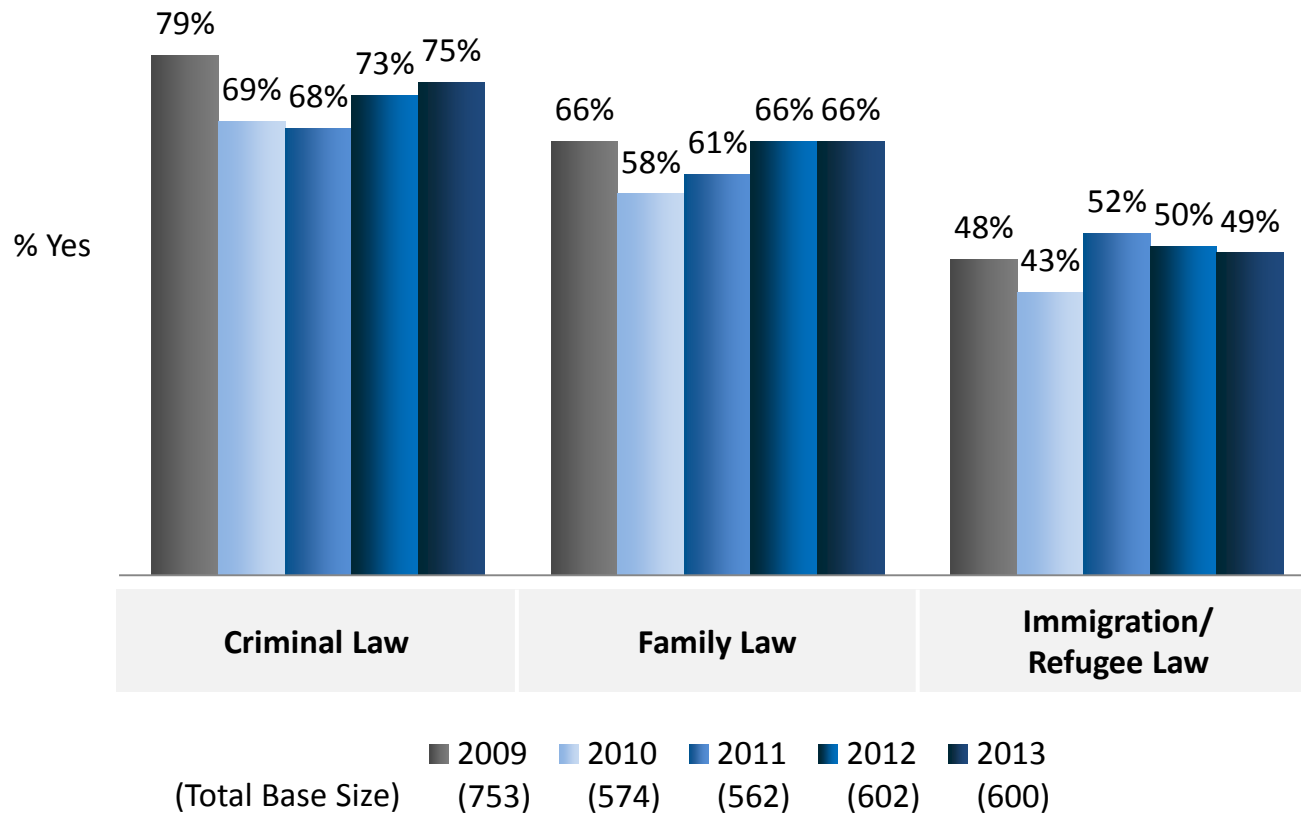
Awareness of Legal Aid in BC



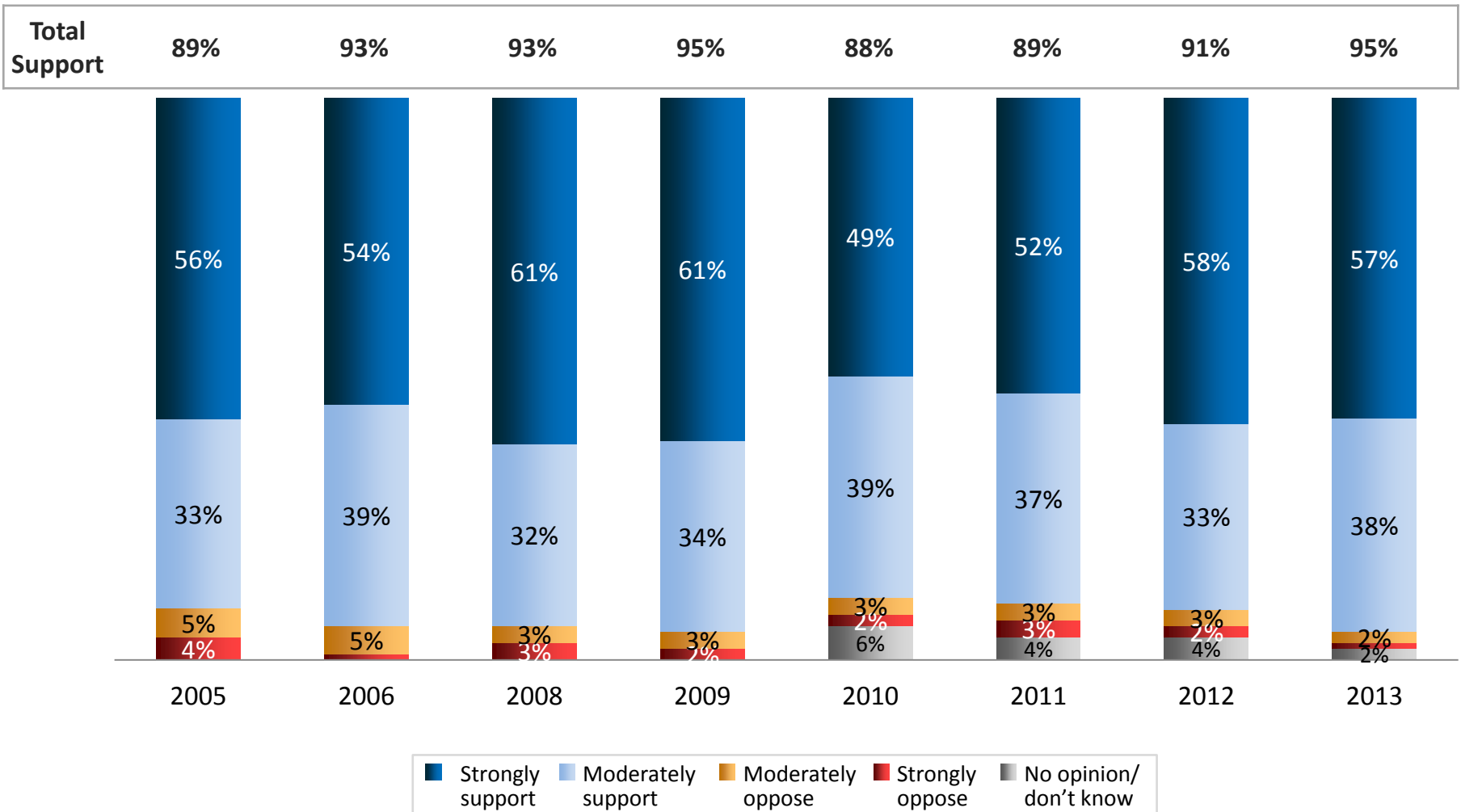
Note: Required differences when comparing 2013 to 2012 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

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?

Awareness of Legal Aid for Different Types of Cases



Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services (Total)

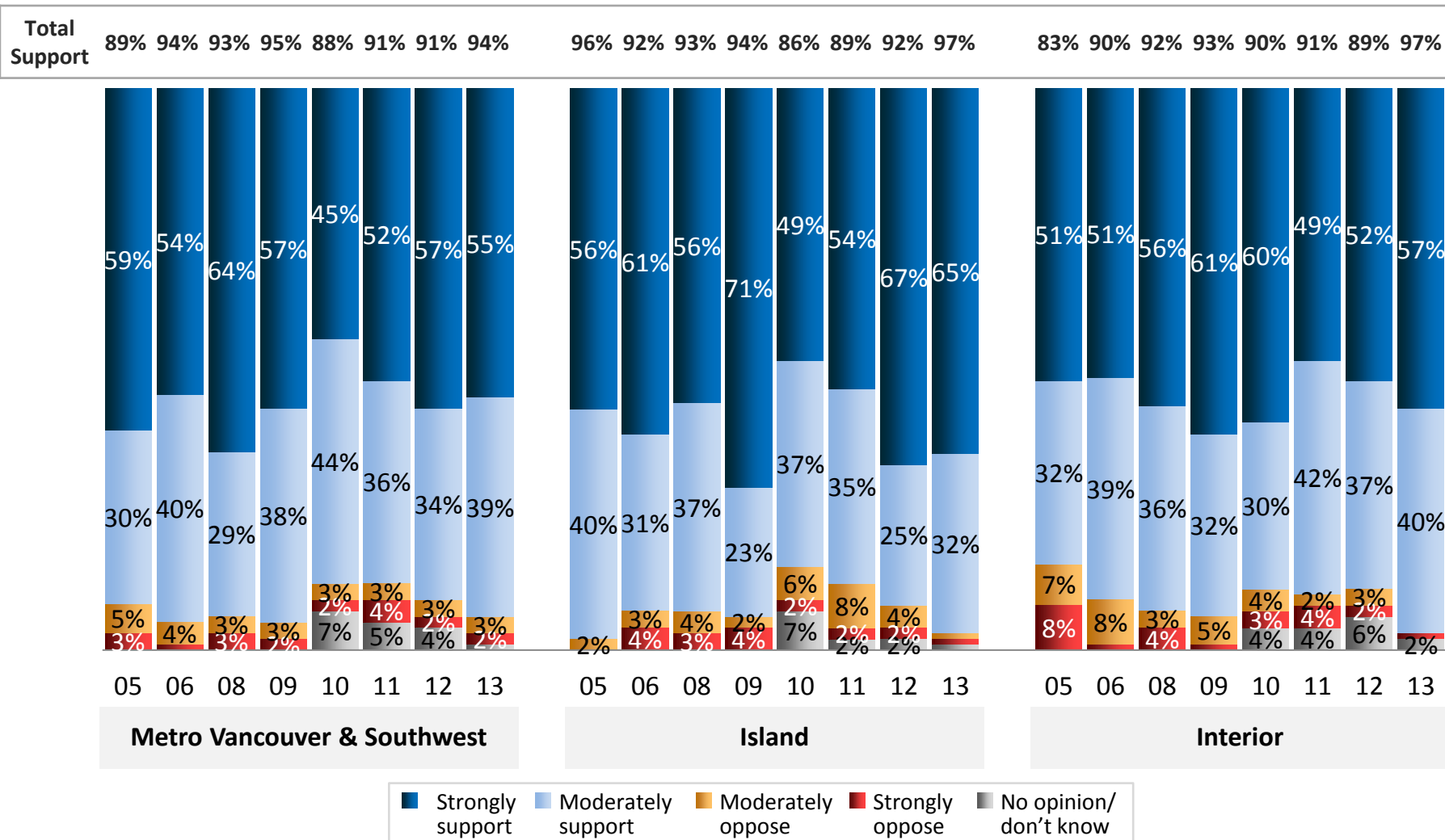


Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

Note: Required differences when comparing 2013 to 2012 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

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 materials, 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?

Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services (By Region)

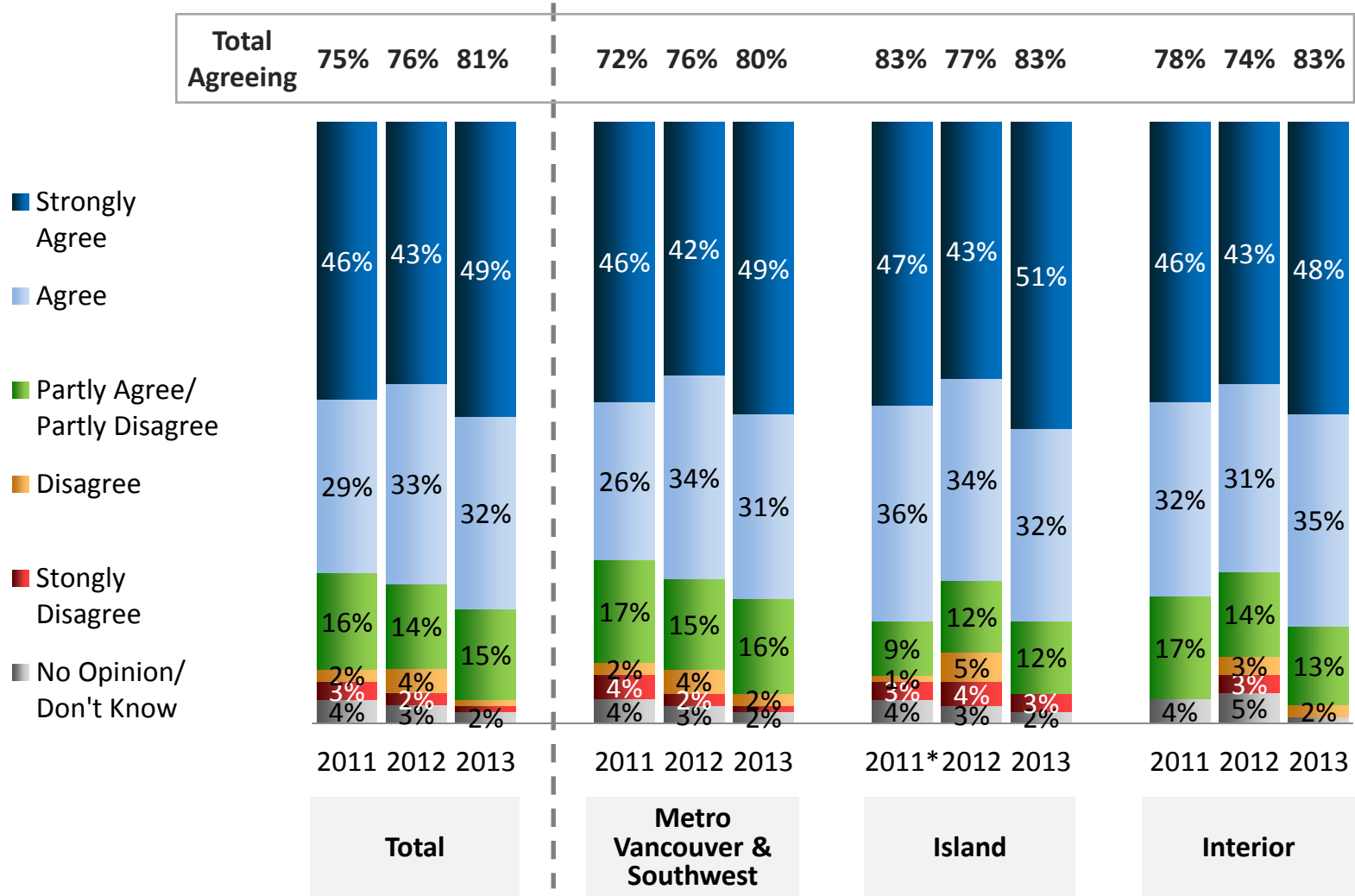


Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

Note: Required differences when comparing 2013 to 2012 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

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?

LSS Priorities: Should LSS Support Clients by Addressing Problems Related to Their Legal Issues?



Total base size: 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

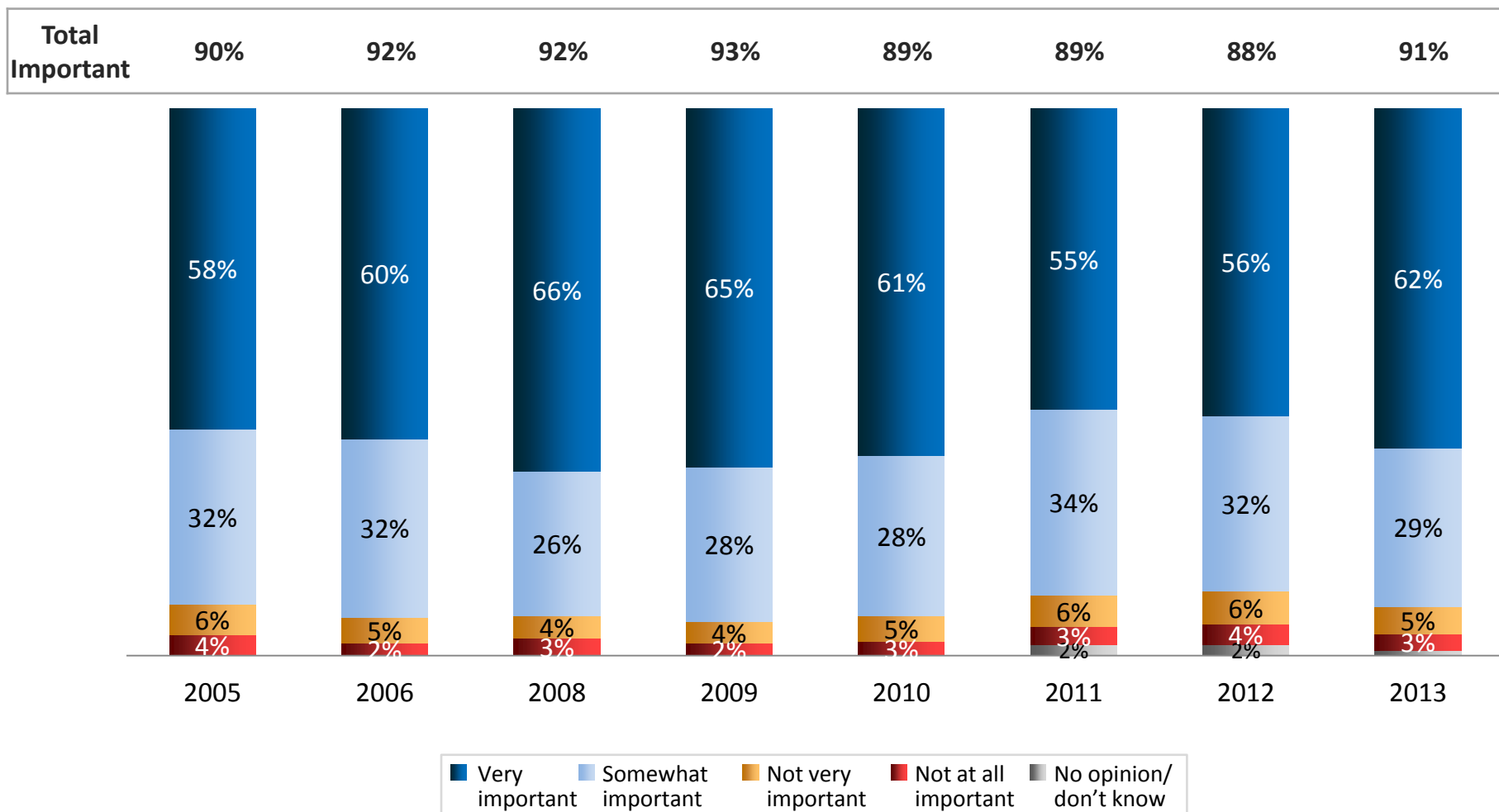
*Small base size, interpret with caution.

Note: 22% of tariff lawyers agree that LSS helps them to help their clients address problems that are related to their legal issues (2010 Tariff Lawyer Survey)

Note: 48% of LSS clients agree that they are satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them so they could address problems related to their legal issues (2011 Client Services Survey)

LS3a. Do you strongly agree/agree/partly agree or partly disagree/disagree/strongly disagree with the following statement: Legal Aid should support their clients in addressing problems that are related to their legal issues (such as housing problems, debt, health problems, etc.)

Fairness in the Justice System – Overall



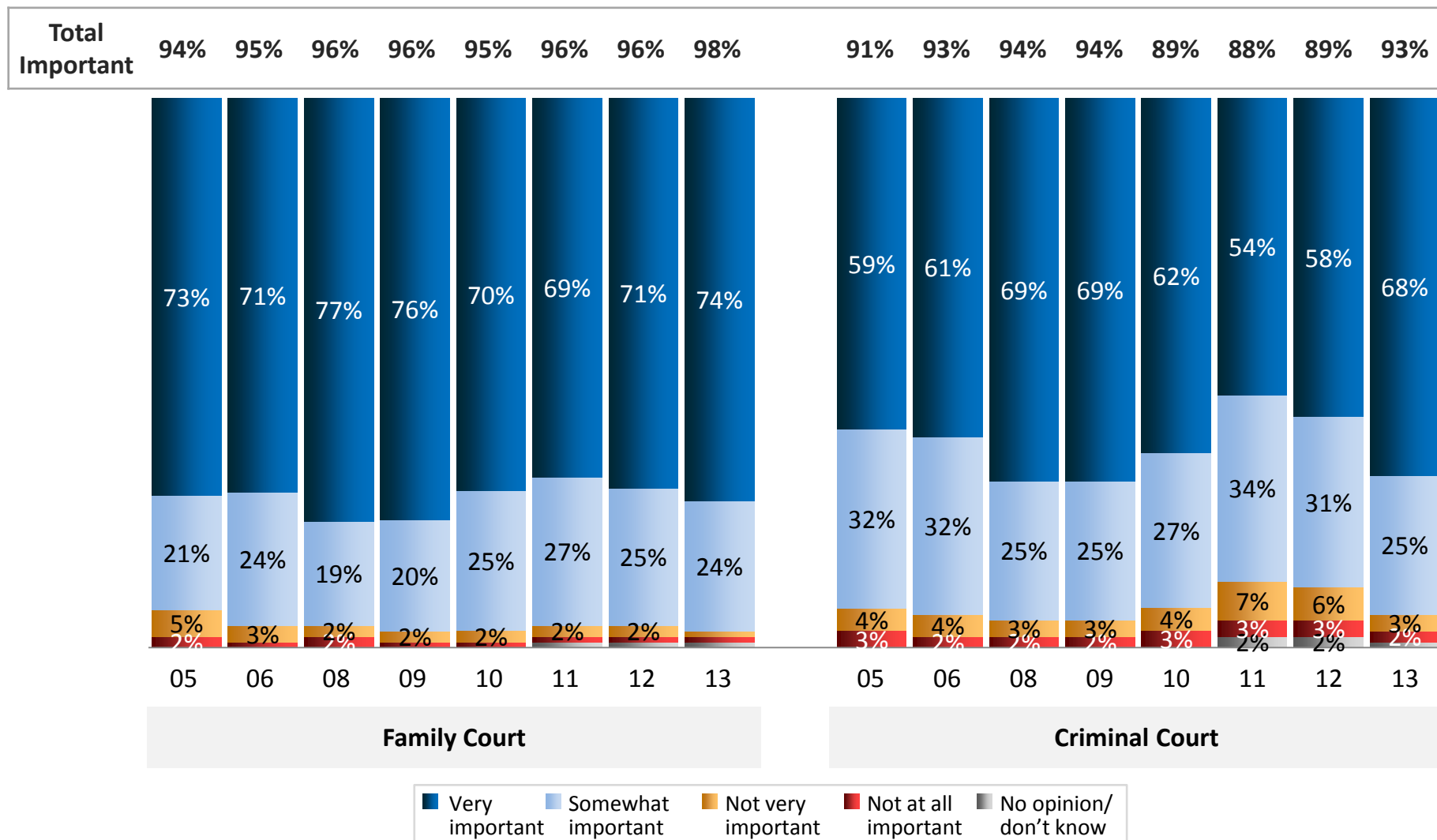
Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

Note: Don't Know responses not shown prior to 2011, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

Results are based on an average of importance ratings for providing legal aid in the following four areas combined: family court, criminal court, immigration/refugee hearings and other civil legal proceedings.

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...?

Fairness in the Justice System – By Legal Area



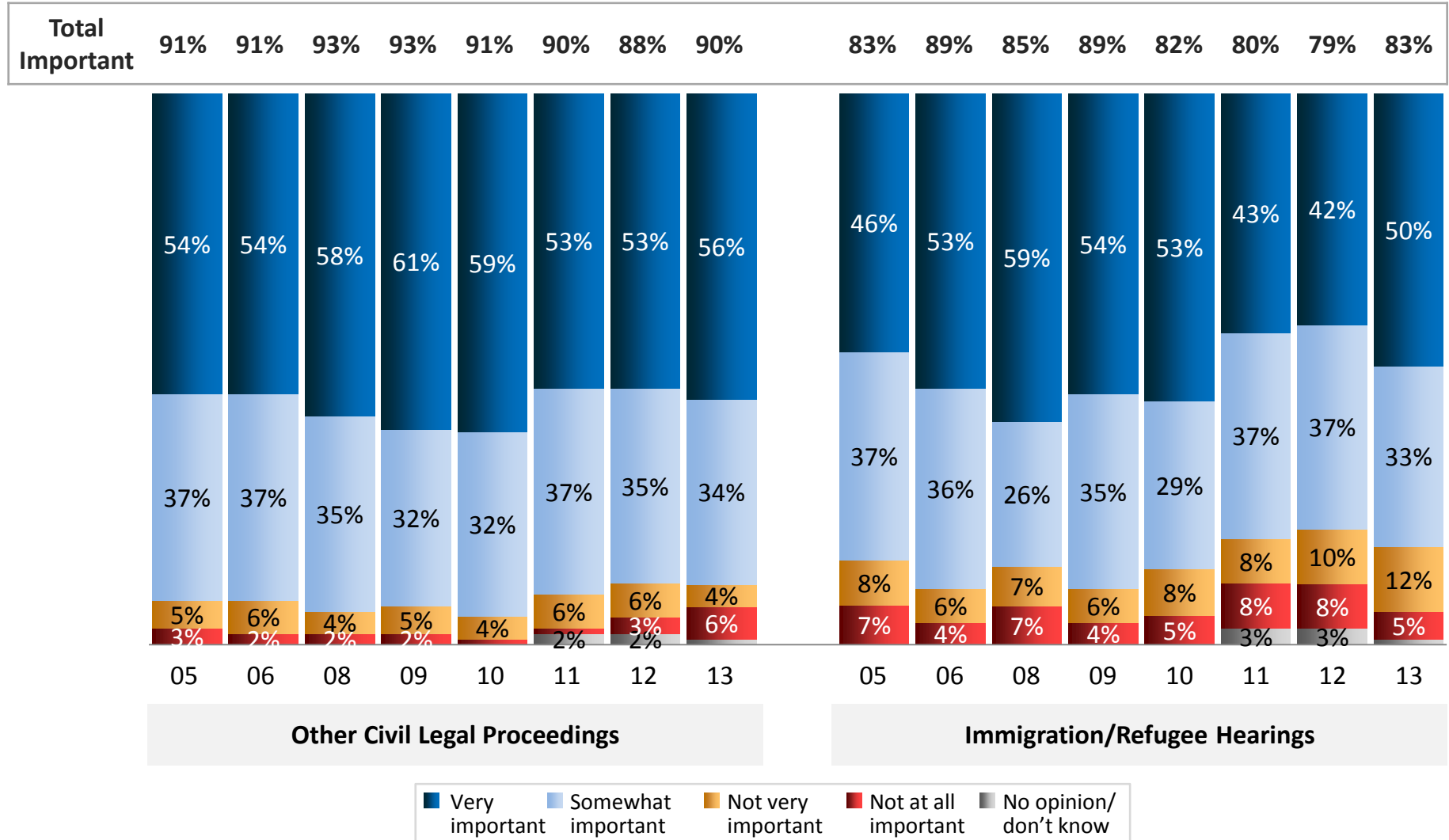
Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

Note: Don't Know responses not shown prior to 2011, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

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...?

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Fairness in the Justice System – By Legal Area (cont'd)

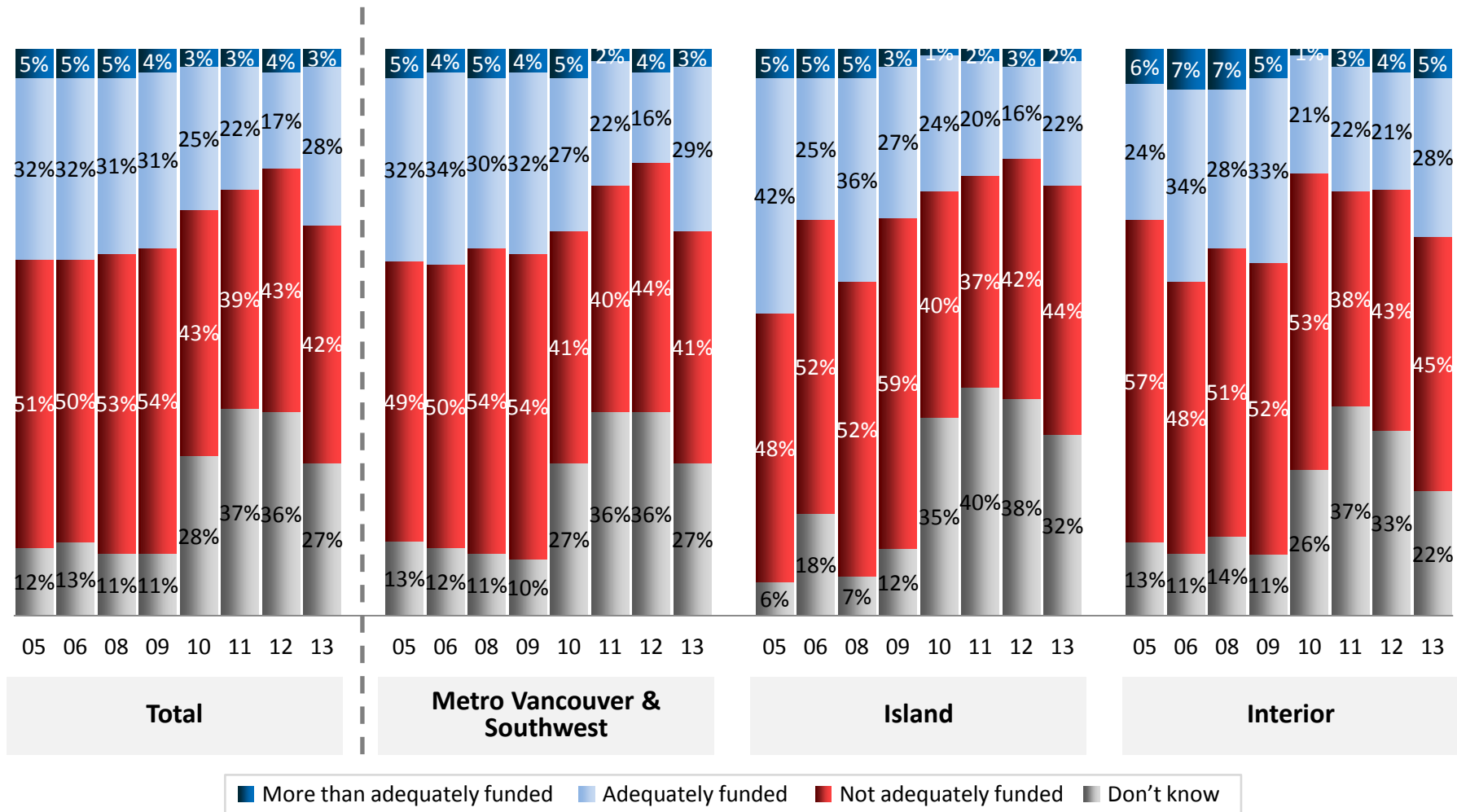


Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

Note: Don't Know responses not shown prior to 2011, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

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...?

State of Legal Aid Services in BC



Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602, 2013=600

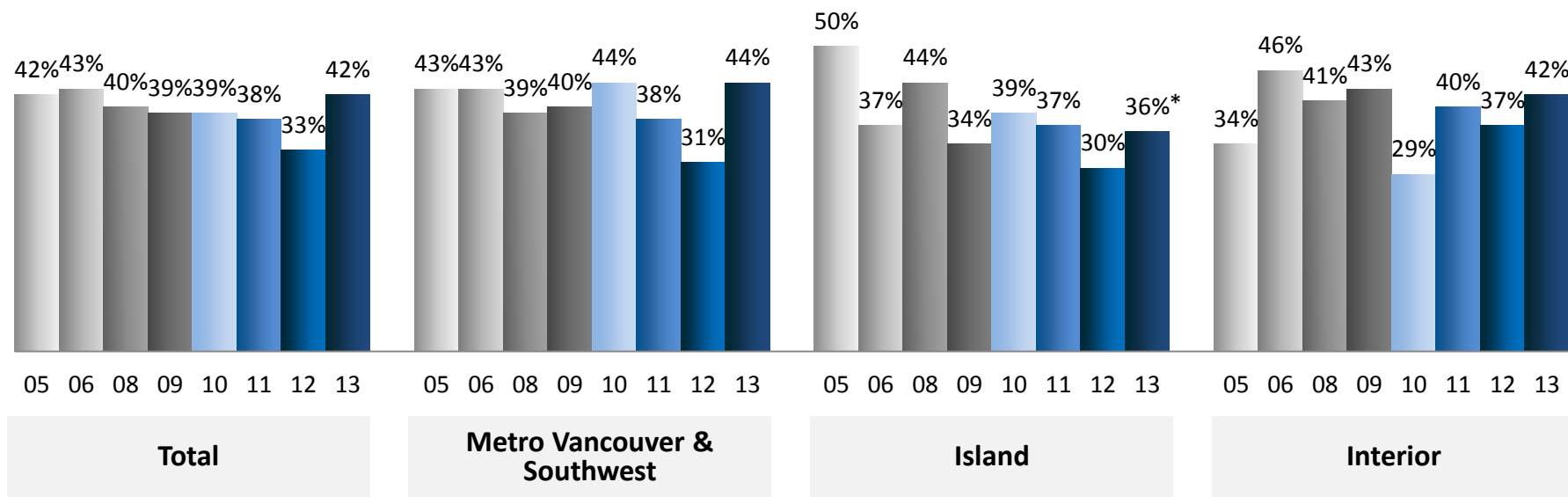
Note: Required differences when comparing 2013 and 2012 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

The increase in don't know responses from 2010 onwards may be related to a shift in the approach to the interviewing when the research supplier used to conduct this study changed that year.

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

State of Legal Aid Services in BC (cont'd)

% Believe funding is at least adequate among those with an opinion



*Small base size, interpret with caution.

Base Size: Among those giving an opinion

Note: Required differences when comparing 2013 and 2012 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

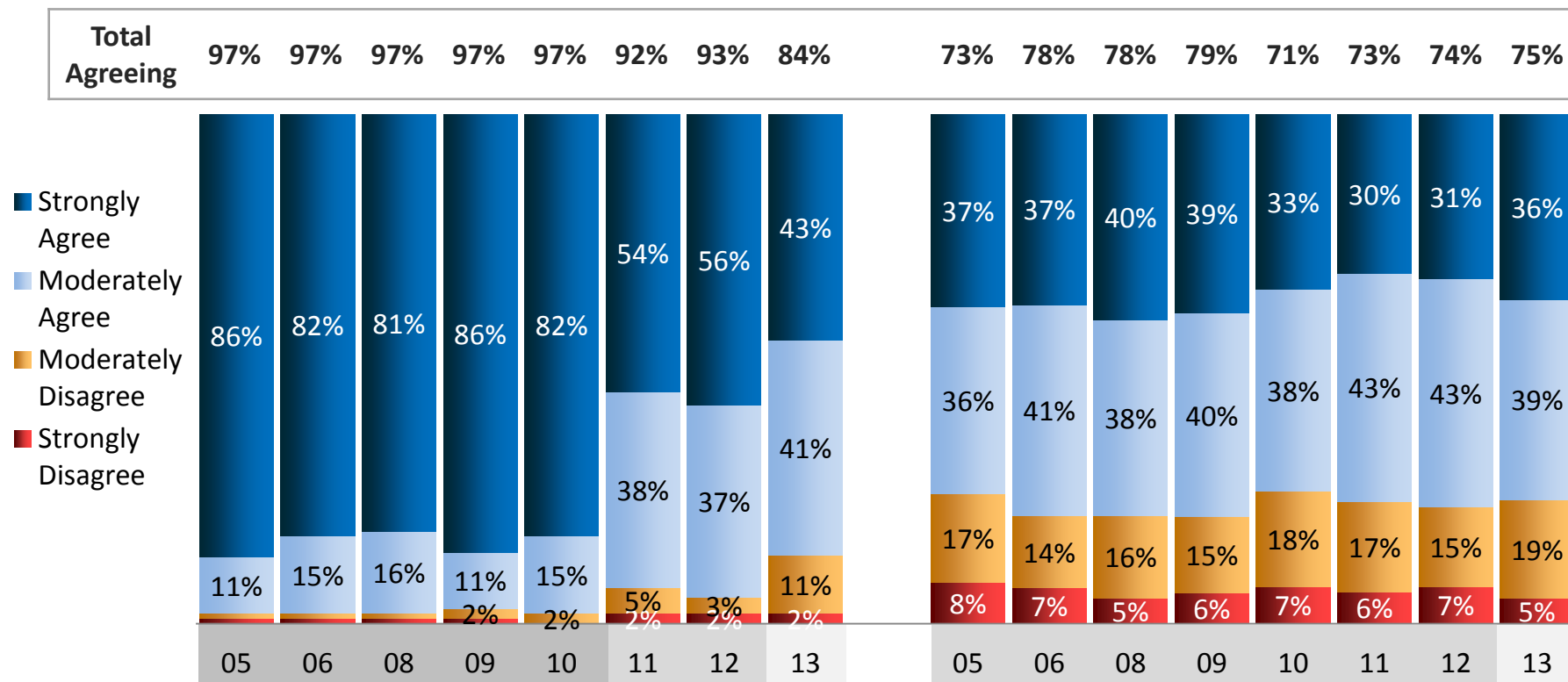
The increase in don't know responses from 2010 onwards may be related to a shift in the approach to the interviewing when the research supplier used to conduct this study changed that year.

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

Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid

Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means the provincial government, which provides most of the funding for legal aid, has to spend more money on it.*

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.*



Total Base Size: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=620, 2013=600

Note: Don't Know responses not shown, but are 3% for QLS6 and 1% for QLS7 in 2013.

*New wording/question order was implemented in 2013, trends should be viewed with caution.

LS6. Would you agree or disagree with the following statements: Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means the provincial government, which provides most of the funding for legal aid, has to spend more money on it.

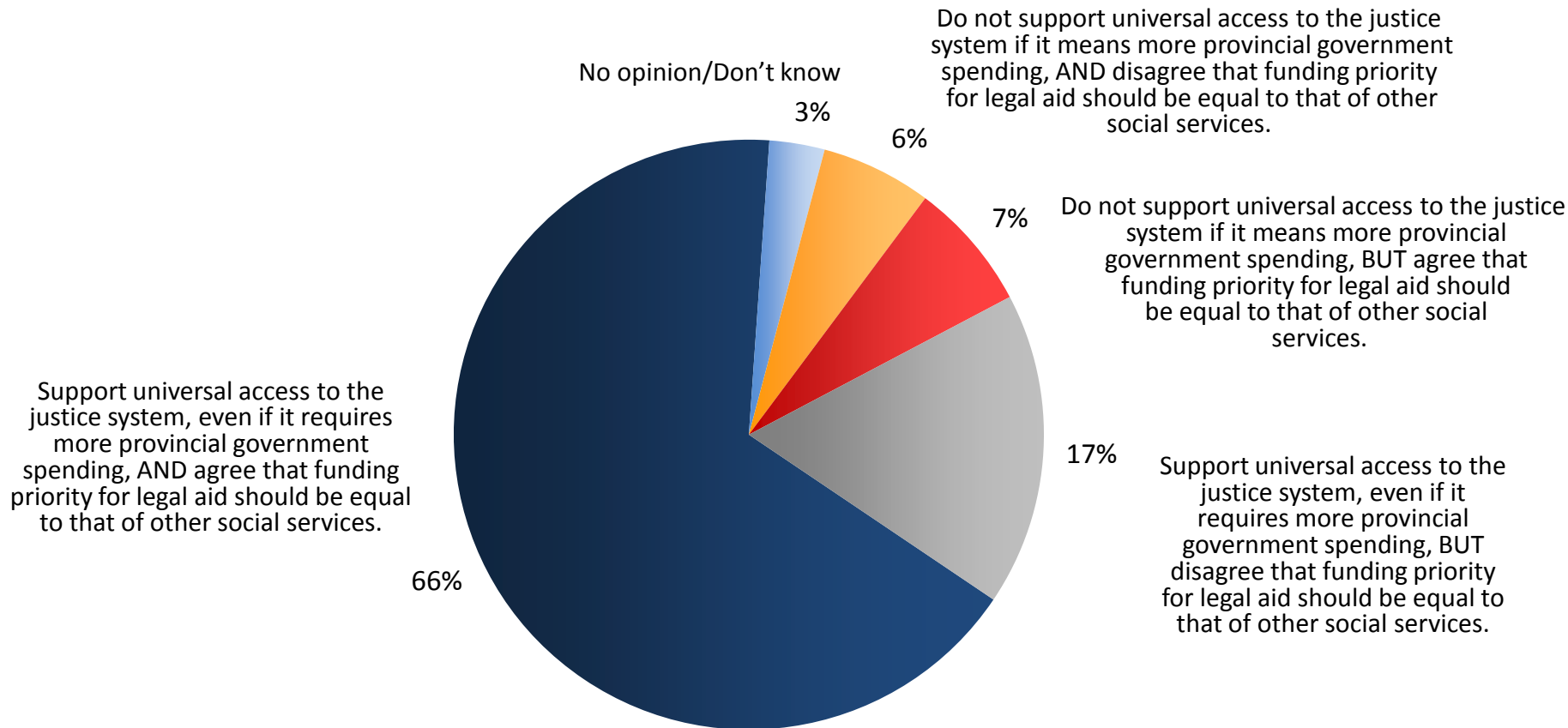
2011-2012 WORDING: Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means spending more money to reach people in remote and rural communities

WORDING PRIOR TO 2011: Everyone should have the right to access the justice system

LS7. Most of the funding for legal aid comes from the provincial government. 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.

WORDING PRIOR TO 2013: Governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as other social services

Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid (cont'd)

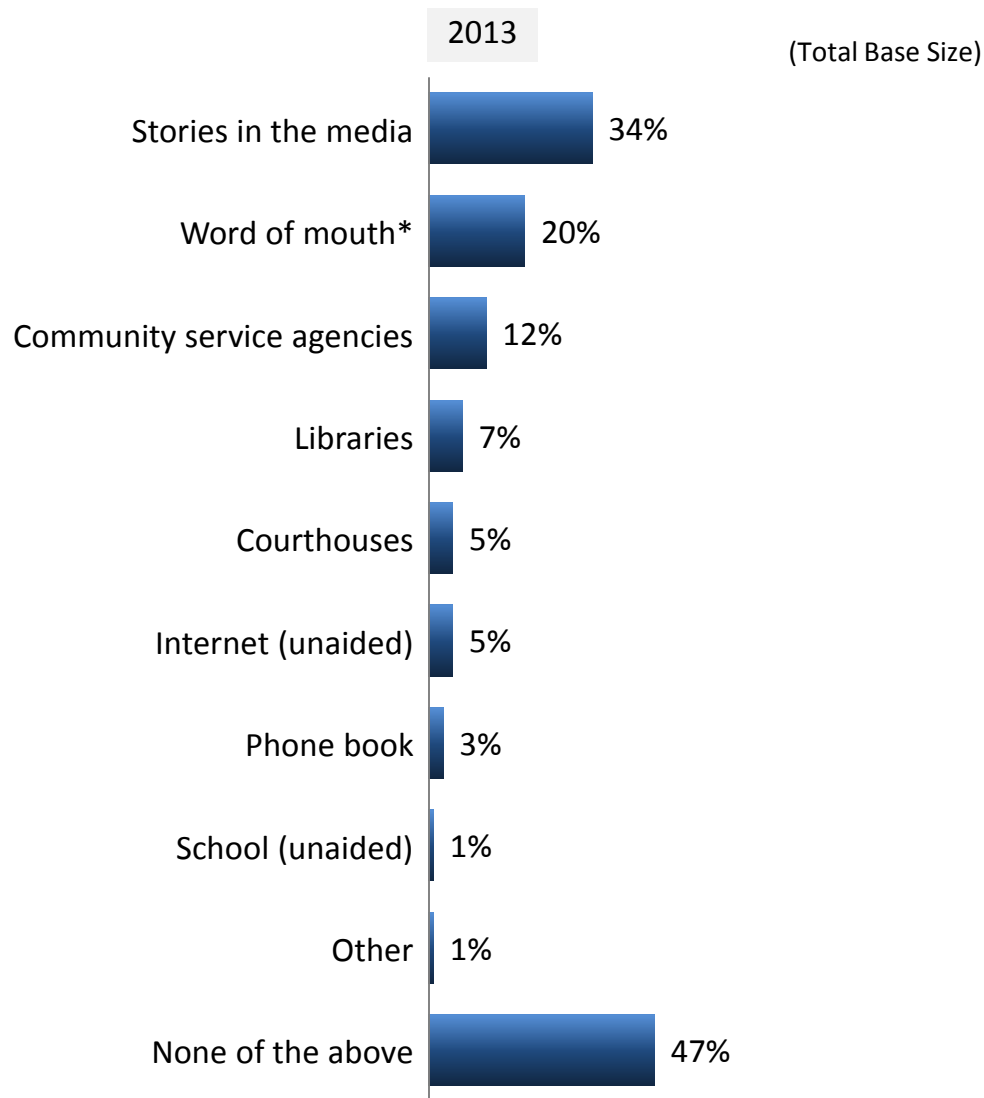


Total Base Size: 2013=600

LS6. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement "Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means the provincial government, which provides most of the funding for legal aid, has to spend more money on it." Would that be strongly or moderately agree/disagree?

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." Would that be strongly or moderately agree/disagree?

Sources of Legal Aid Information



2009	2010	2011	2012
(753)	(574)	(562)	(602)
43%	42%	43%	49%
4%	26%	24%	22%
14%	12%	10%	11%
6%	7%	4%	5%
11%	5%	5%	6%
2%	2%	2%	4%
7%	6%	4%	4%
0%	0%	0%	2%
4%	4%	1%	3%
42%	41%	45%	38%

Total Base Size: 2013=600

% Yes

*This response was not on the list of possible responses read out to respondents in the 2009 survey. However, it was on list for subsequent surveys.

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

Suggested Improvements for Legal Aid Services

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
(Total Base Size)	(753)	(574)	(562)	(602)	(600)
Improve/increase funding	22%	18%	18%	21%	19%
More advertising/promotion/public awareness	14%	14%	15%	11%	13%
Improved access/availability	18%	9%	6%	7%	6%
Better guidelines as to who should qualify for legal aid	5%	3%	3%	5%	5%
Make system more efficient (legal/judicial/courts)	3%	2%	5%	3%	5%
Improved access/availability for lower income people	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%
More lawyers available	8%	5%	3%	5%	3%
Better government/a government that supports legal aid	—	—	1%	1%	3%
Provide more information on how to obtain legal aid	2%	4%	2%	—	3%
Better funding management*	—	—	—	—	3%
More lawyers doing pro bono work/who will work for lower fees	—	2%	1%	4%	2%
Expand qualifications for legal aid/raise max. income level	—	2%	2%	3%	2%
More qualified legal representation	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%
More help/support for family matters*	—	—	—	—	2%
Other	10%	3%	2%	2%	5%
None/no improvement necessary	2%	24%	24%	36%	4%
Don't know/not stated	32%	26%	26%	15%	43%

Note: 2013 main mentions only.

*New suggestions in 2013

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

Appendix