

Legal Services Society

2014 Public Opinion Poll

Final

May 6, 2014

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03

**Objectives &
Methodology**



05

**Highlights &
Implications**



07

**Summary of
Findings**

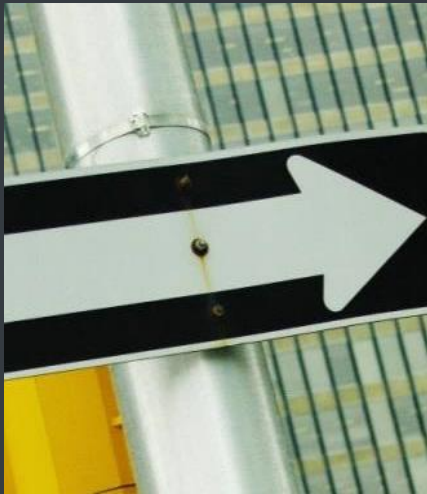


26

**Appendix
Comparison of
Telephone and
Online Results**

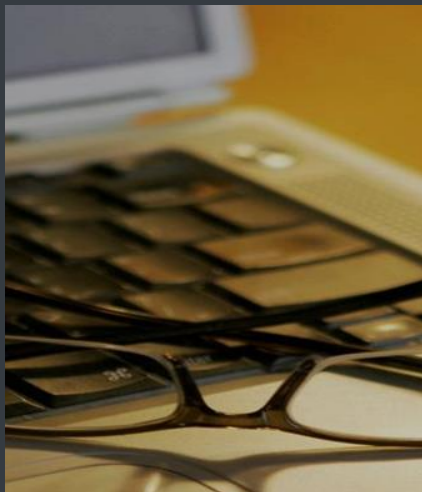
**Copies of the
Questionnaires**

contents



Objectives & Methodology

- Since 2005, Legal Services Society (LSS) has collaborated with research partners to conduct a province-wide poll to assess the awareness, knowledge and attitudes surrounding legal aid in BC.
- The results are trended back to 2005 where possible. As the study has been in place for several years, some question wording has changed and this has been noted, where applicable, throughout the report.
- A total of 600 telephone surveys were conducted between February 27 to March 15, 2014 from Sentis' Vancouver-based call centre. The data was mathematically weighted by age and gender within region to ensure it accurately reflected the BC population.
- The margins of error at the 95% level of confidence for the various sample sizes found with this study are as follows:
 - Total sample size of 600: +/-6%
 - Comparing 2014 to past waves: a maximum difference of +/-7 percentage points is required for the difference to be considered statistically significant.
- This year, along with conducting the study via telephone interviewing the same survey was also run concurrently as an online survey. Sample for the online survey was provided through Vision Critical's Canadian general access panel. Vision Critical is an insight community technologies provider based in Vancouver. The organization manages and maintains proprietary general population panels in Canada, US and UK.
- The purpose of the concurrent online survey was to provide LSS with a comparison of results before switching to an online methodology for 2015.
- Given the increasing difficulty of achieving a representative general population sample via telephone interviewing, the switch to an online methodology is recommended. However, before making such a switch, LSS wanted to fully understand how study results may shift with a change in methodology.
- A total of 612 online surveys were collected between February 27 and March 11, 2014. The data was mathematically weighted by age and gender within region to ensure it accurately reflected the BC population.
- The Appendix contains the comparison of telephone and online results.



Highlights & Implications

- The majority of British Columbians (eight-in-ten) are generally aware of legal aid and even more (broadly 90%) support the organization's mandate of providing legal services to lower income individuals and consider it to be important to ensuring fairness in the justice system. Most residents also support the fundamental position that everyone should have access to the justice system, even if it means the province has to spend more money to ensure this happens.
- There continues to be a relatively lower level of awareness regarding certain aspects of legal aid services with these being:
 - That there is legal aid for immigration/refugee matters
 - Whether or not legal aid receives adequate funding (40% of residents profess to have no idea)
- Among the 60% who did express an opinion about the adequacy of legal aid funding, twice as many feel it is inadequate as believe it is adequately (or more than adequately) funded. Further on the subject of funding, the majority of British Columbians continue to support legal aid funding getting the same priority as other social services; however, support is just as likely to be strongly as moderately held on this issue.
- When it comes to LSS's approach to providing legal aid, British Columbians are generally in agreement that helping clients to solve the issues related to their legal problems (such as housing or debt) is the right direction to be taking. However, as has historically been the case, compared to other aspects of legal aid, opinions are not as strongly held.
- Consistent with past trends, British Columbians rely on media stories and word-of-mouth for information about legal aid. However, over 50% admit to hearing nothing about legal aid in the past few months.



Summary of Findings

- Eight-in ten BC residents continue to claim they are aware of legal aid services for low income people. Awareness is only marginally below 2013 levels and in line with trends from 2010 to 2012.
- Province-wide awareness is at 81%, compared with 86% last year. Regionally, awareness tends to have dipped most on the Island and the Interior; however, all regions continue to have at least 80% claiming awareness of legal aid services.
- Awareness of legal aid tends to increase with age; awareness sitting at 70% for residents under 35, at 82% for those 35 to 54 and reaching 88% among residents 55 and older. From a household income perspective, awareness is consistent across all income brackets.

% Aware



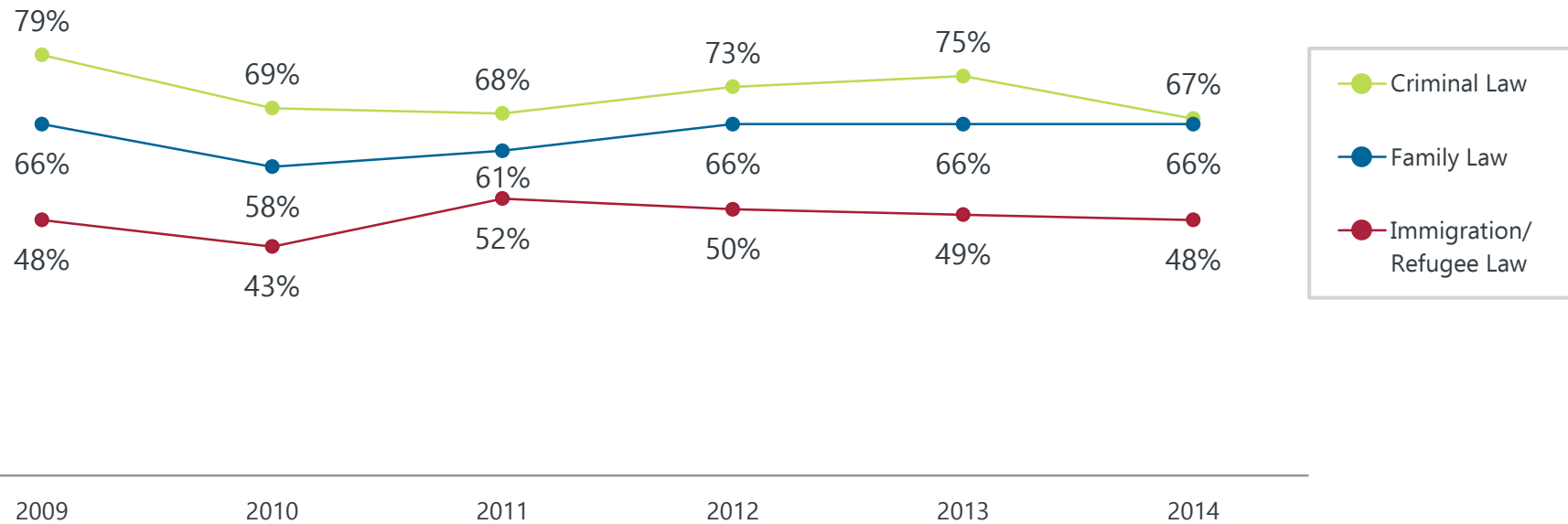
Total base size: 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

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 are aware that legal aid is available in criminal and family law cases (67% and 66%, respectively). Regarding immigration/refugee matters, just under half of BC residents claim to be aware of legal aid in this area.
- While awareness of legal aid services being available for family law and immigration/refugee matters are in line with past results, awareness of legal aid in the area of criminal law is lower than 2013 and 2012 and actually is back in line with 2010-2011 levels.
- Middle-aged residents (35 to 54) tend to have the greatest awareness of the different types of cases handled by legal aid.
- Awareness of legal aid for criminal and family law matters is generally consistent across residents in all household income groups. When it comes to legal aid for immigration/refugee matters, those with lower income households tend to be the least aware (36% versus 48% overall), while those in the highest household income group have the highest awareness (57%).

Awareness of Legal Aid for Different Types of Cases

% Aware



Total base size: 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

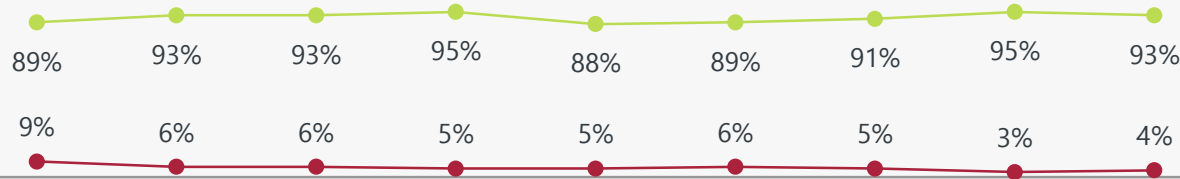
LS2a-c. Did you know that legal aid services are available for people facing criminal law / family law / immigration/refugee matters?

- The level of support for legal aid services to provide low income people with legal information, advice and/or representation in court remains high (93% support legal aid services) and remains relatively stable compared with past years.
- Residents on Vancouver Island tend to take a particularly strong stance toward legal aid with three-quarters strongly supporting it compared with Metro Vancouver and the Interior residents (64% and 56%, respectively, being in strong support).
- 77% of residents currently agree that LSS should support clients by addressing problems that are related to their legal issues (such as housing problems, debt). This is slightly below the 81% who agreed in 2013, but is generally in line with trends from 2011 and 2012.
- Vancouver Island residents tend to feel the most strongly that legal aid should support clients in this way, while those in higher income households tend to be marginally less in agreement (72% versus 77% overall).

Support / Oppose Legal Aid Services

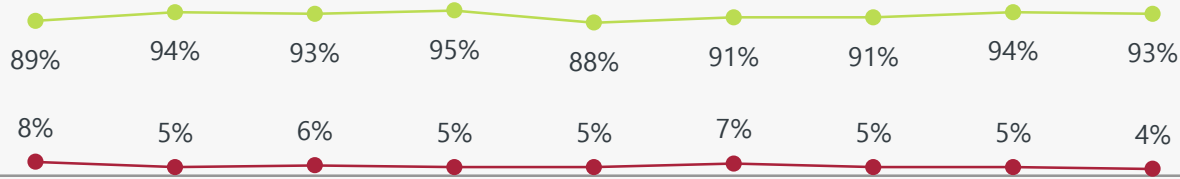
Support Oppose

Total



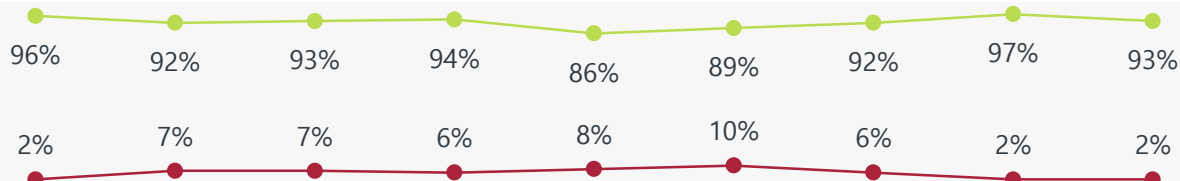
2014 (600)	
Strongly	64%
Moderately	29%
Moderately	3%
Strongly	1%
No opinion / don't know	3%

Metro Van & Southwest



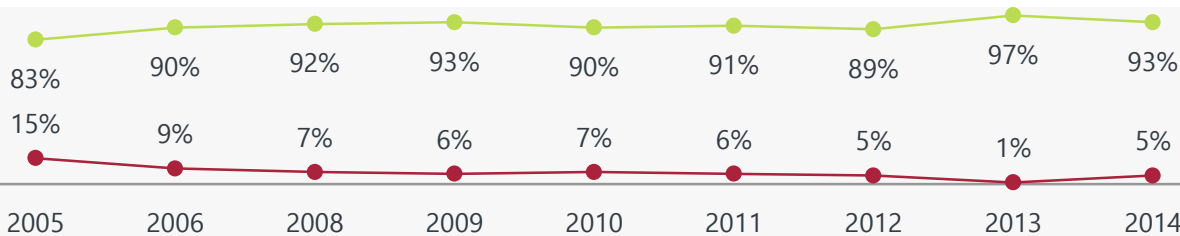
Strongly	64%
Moderately	29%
Moderately	4%
Strongly	0%
No opinion / don't know	3%

Island



Strongly	74%
Moderately	19%
Moderately	1%
Strongly	1%
No opinion / don't know	5%

Interior



Strongly	56%
Moderately	37%
Moderately	3%
Strongly	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

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?

Should LSS Support Clients by Addressing Legal Related Issues?

% Agreeing



2014 (600)	
Strongly agree	46%
Agree	31%
Partly agree / disagree	15%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
No opinion / don't know	3%

Strongly agree	44%
Agree	34%
Partly agree / disagree	15%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
No opinion / don't know	4%

Strongly agree	59%
Agree	20%
Partly agree / disagree	10%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	1%
No opinion / don't know	4%

Strongly agree	41%
Agree	32%
Partly agree / disagree	18%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%

Total base size: 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

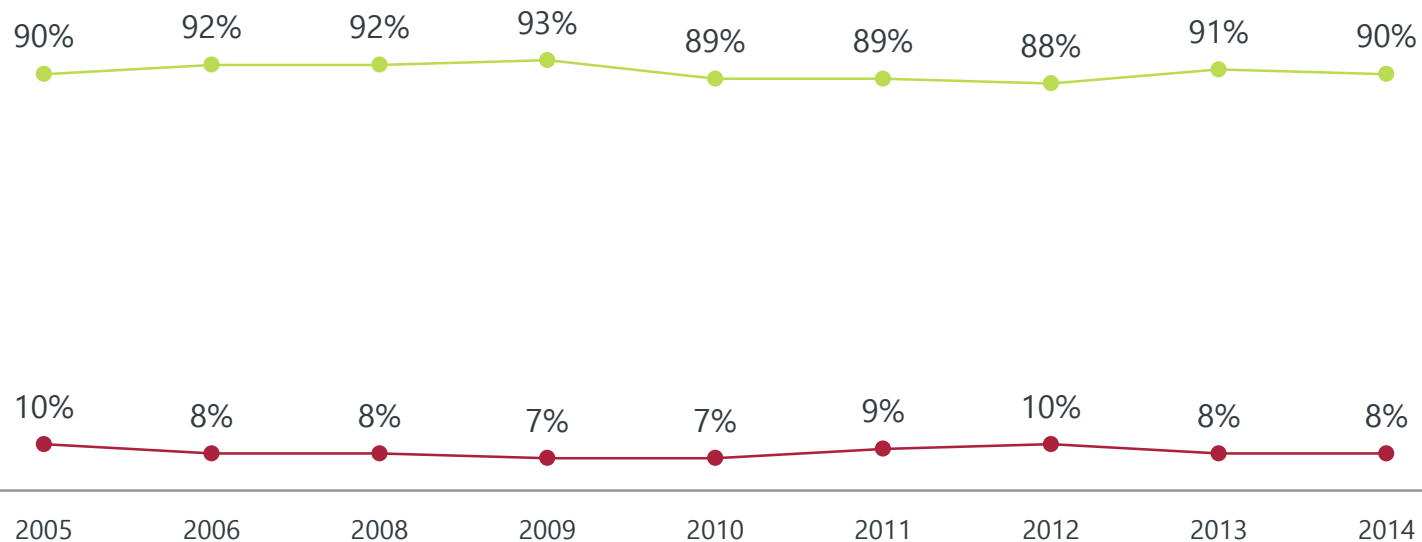
Note: 22% of tariff lawyers agree that LSS helps them to help their clients address problems that are related to their legal issues (2010 Tariff Lawyer Survey)
Note: 48% of LSS clients agree that they are satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them so they could address problems related to their 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.)

- The overall importance of providing legal aid support to low income people (in family court, criminal court, other civil legal proceedings and immigration/refugee hearings) to ensure fairness in the justice system is in line with previous trends. 90% feel legal aid services are important with 61% feeling legal aid is very important to ensuring fairness in the justice system.
- Of the four legal areas, BC residents consider legal aid in family court to be the most important to ensuring fairness in the justice system (95%). Conversely, legal aid for immigration/refugee matters is considered relatively less important to ensuring fairness in the justice system (82%). Results across all four legal areas are in line with those of past waves.
- Once again, Vancouver Island residents place the strongest importance on several legal aid areas while Interior residents place relatively less importance in several areas.
- From a household income perspective, the following differences are apparent:
 - Criminal Court: Importance is high across all income groups; however, those in the lowest income households are the most likely to say it is not important (i.e. 12% versus 4% to 7% among all other income groups saying it is not important)
 - Other Civil Legal Proceedings: while overall importance accorded to this area of law is consistent across the various household income groups, agreement is softer (i.e. residents are less likely to say it is very important) among those in the highest and lowest income households
 - Immigration/Refugee Matters: those with lower household incomes are slightly more likely to lack an opinion (which is consistent with their lower level of awareness regarding legal aid for this area of law)

Fairness in the Justice System – Overall

● Important ● Not Important



2014 (600)	
Very	61%
Somewhat	29%
Not very	5%
Not at all	3%
No opinion / don't know	3%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

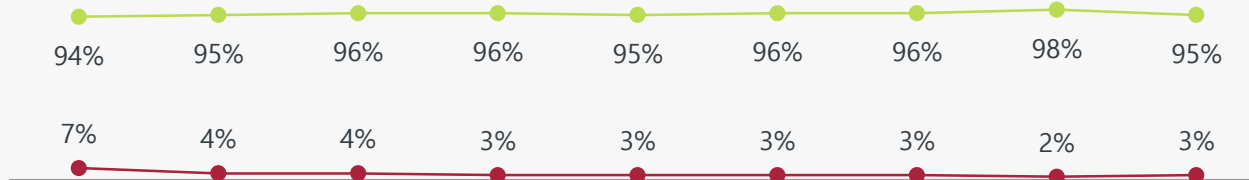
Results are based on an average of importance ratings for providing legal aid in the following four areas combined: family court, criminal court, immigration/refugee hearings and other civil legal proceedings.

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

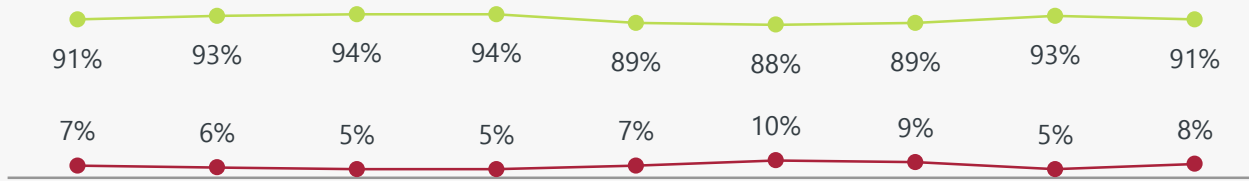
● Important ● Not Important

Family Court



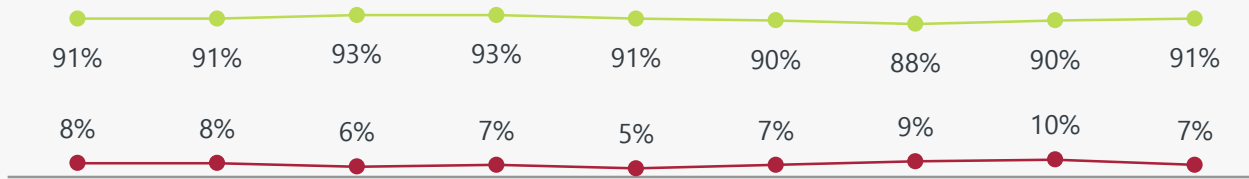
2014 (600)	
Very	76%
Somewhat	20%
Not very	2%
Not at all	1%
No opinion / don't know	2%

Criminal Court



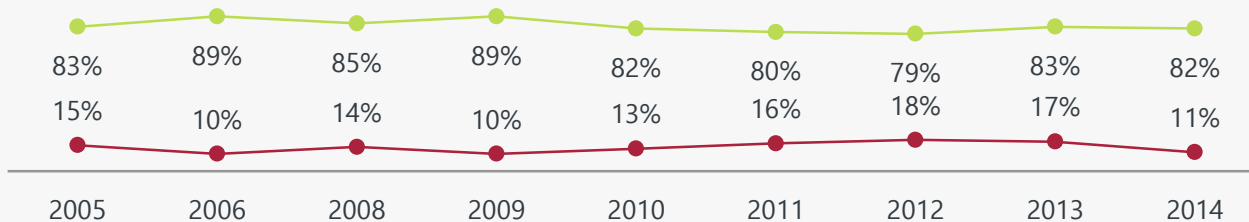
Very	62%
Somewhat	29%
Not very	6%
Not at all	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%

Other Civil Legal Proceedings



Very	57%
Somewhat	34%
Not very	5%
Not at all	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%

Immigration/ Refugee Hearings



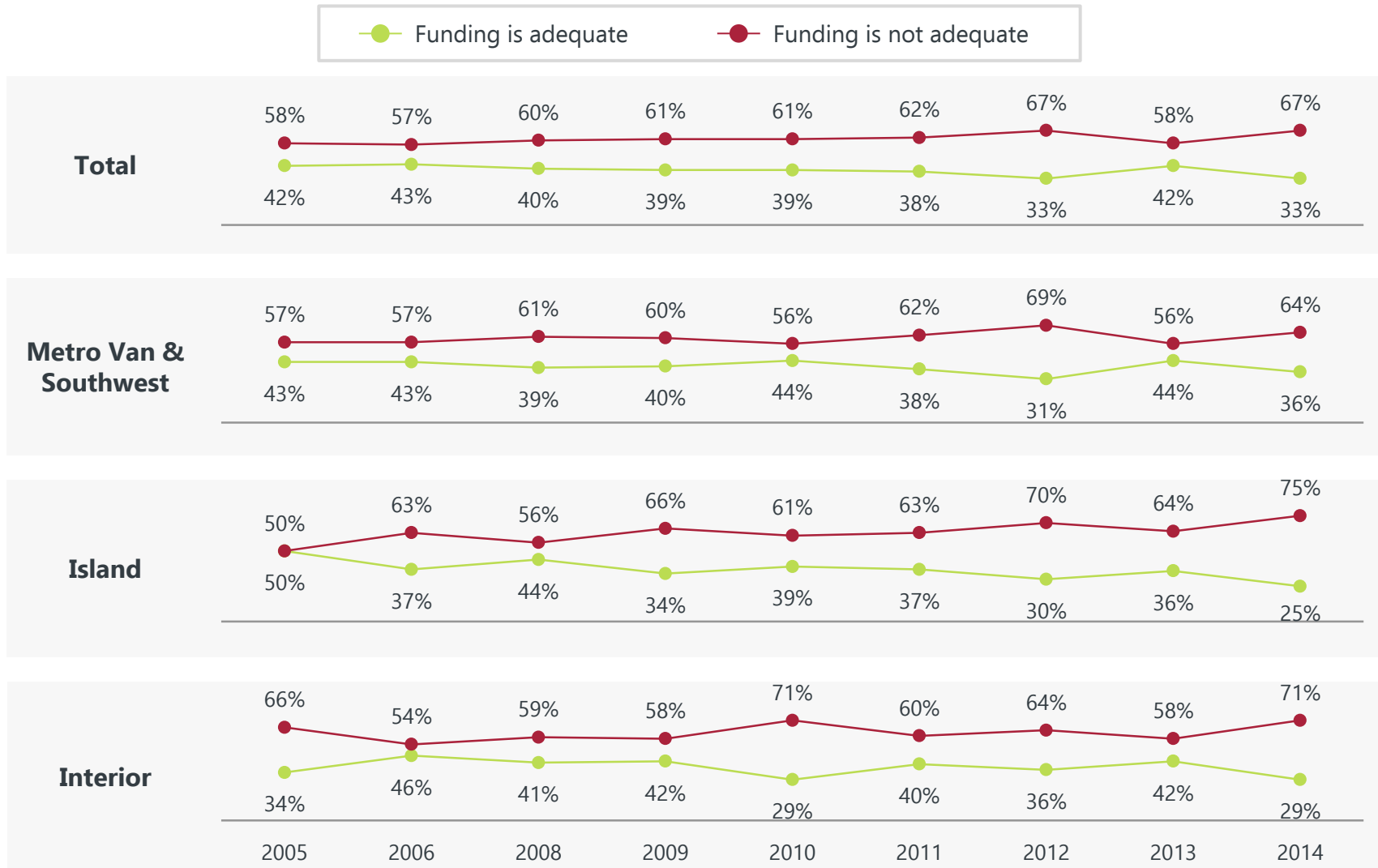
Very	49%
Somewhat	33%
Not very	7%
Not at all	6%
No opinion / don't know	4%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

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...?

- When it comes to the adequacy of legal aid funding, residents are equally likely to feel that funding is inadequate (40%) as they are to admit to that they do not know (40%) .
- Among those with an opinion, 67% think funding is not adequate while 33% think it is, mirroring sentiments from 2012. In comparison, in 2013, among those with an opinion, 58% thought funding was inadequate and 42% adequate.
- Regionally, Vancouver Island residents with an opinion are the most apt to believe that funding is not adequate (75%). This is followed closely by Interior at 71%. Two-thirds of residents in Metro Vancouver also believe that legal aid funding is inadequate.
- The belief that legal aid funding is lacking, is most strongly held by:
 - Middle-aged to older residents (compared with their younger counterparts)
 - Residents living outside of Metro Vancouver/Southwest,
 - Those in the lower household income brackets (compared with households earning \$65,000/year or more)
 - Residents with university degrees

State of Legal Aid Services in BC (among those with an opinion*)



2014 base: Among those giving an opinion (370)

Note: Base sizes for 2005 to 2013 are not available

*"Don't know" responses in 2012 (36%), 2013 (27%) and 2014 (40%)

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

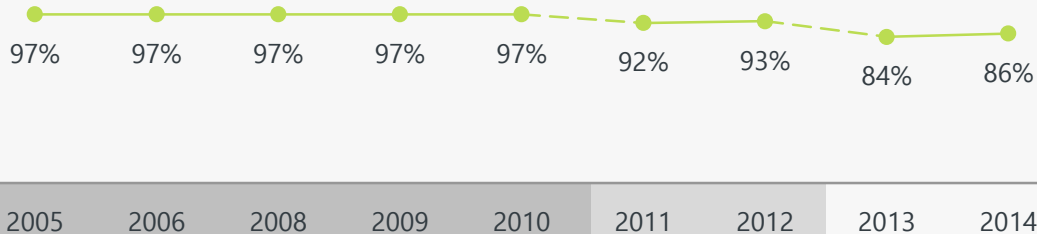
- When it comes to supporting universal access to the justice system and prioritizing legal aid alongside other social services (such as health care, education, welfare, and child protection), there continues to be a high level of support for both among BC residents. 2014 results are generally in line with 2013, with support for universal access remaining strong at 86% and support for prioritizing legal aid funding alongside other social services inching up slightly from 75% in 2013 to 80% currently.
- While support for both positions (universal access and equalized funding) is generally high across all income groups, lower income households express especially strong support for giving legal aid funding priority equal to that of other social services.
- Consistent with previous trends, from a regional perspective, Vancouver Island residents express the strongest support for both universal access and equalized funding. (However, the majority of residents in all regions support both these positions.)
- When resident opinions/positions on universal access to the justice system and prioritizing legal aid alongside other social services are blended, four 'quadrants' are created. The majority of residents fall into the quadrant that supports both these positions (top right-hand quadrant on slide 22). Specifically, three-quarters of the BC public (74%) feels that everyone deserves the right to access the justice system even if the provincial government needs to spend more money on legal aid *and* they also agree that legal aid funding should be given the same priority as other social services. This is slightly higher than in 2013, when 67% fell into the same quadrant.
- Another one-in-ten residents (11%) also support the concept of universal access to the justice system, but do not support legal aid funding being prioritized the same as other social services (bottom right-hand quadrant on slide 22). Over the last year, the proportion of residents falling into this quadrant has declined marginally (17% in 2013 to 11% currently).
- Given that few residents oppose universal access to the justice system, it follows that only a small proportion fall into the remaining two left-hand quadrants that include those who are opposed. However, that said, twice as many residents disagree with both positions on legal aid (universal access and equal funding priority) as oppose universal access, but support equalized funding (6% versus 3%, respectively).

Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid

% Supporting

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.*

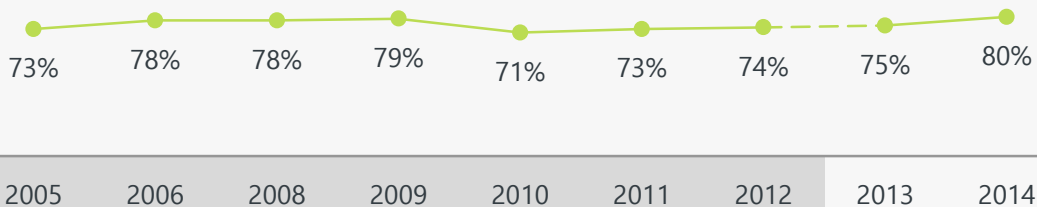
Total



2014 (600)	
Strongly support	50%
Moderately support	36%
Moderately oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	2%
No opinion / don't know	4%

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



Strongly support	43%
Moderately support	36%
Moderately oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	5%
No opinion / don't know	3%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600)

*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)

The chart below combines resident opinions on universal access to the justice system *and* their opinions on legal aid funding priority. As the top, right-hand quadrant shows, the majority of residents agree with both positions, while only 6% disagree with both positions (bottom, left-hand quadrant).

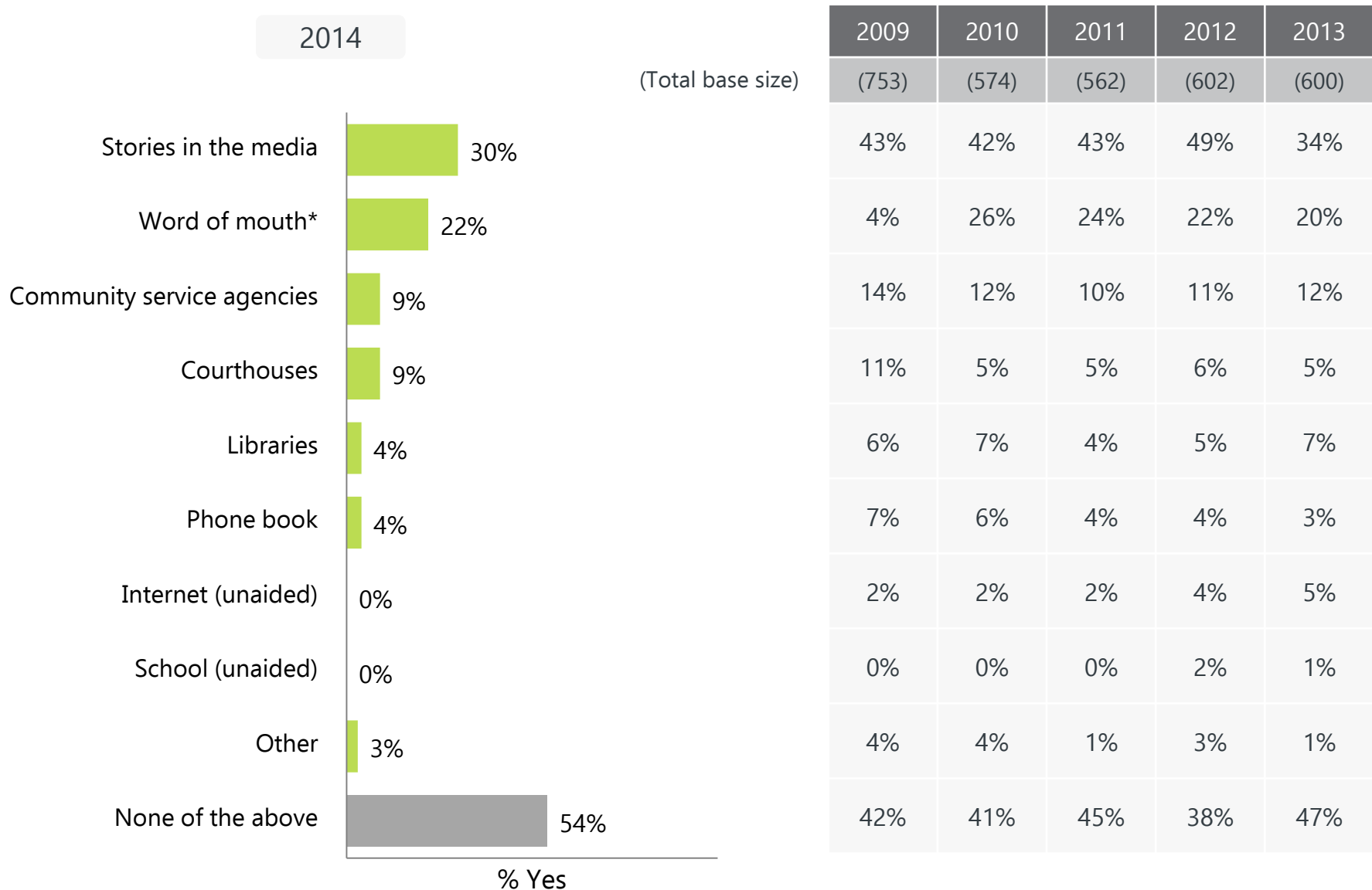


LS6. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement "Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means the provincial government, which provides most of the funding for legal aid, has to spend more money on it." Would that be strongly or moderately agree/disagree?

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?

- The most common channels of information about legal aid continue to be stories in the media and word of mouth (30% and 22%, respectively). Over half of BC residents have not seen or heard any information regarding legal aid in the past few months.
- Vancouver Island residents and/or older residents (55+) are the most apt to have heard about legal aid through media stories, while compared with their counterparts, those in lower income households are the most apt to have heard about it through word-of-mouth and also more likely to have heard about legal aid in courthouses compared to those with higher household incomes.
- When asked for ways to improve legal aid, almost six-in-ten residents provided a suggestion. In line with 2013, the top suggestions are to improve funding and increase public awareness, the latter being the top suggestion among those in the lowest income households.
- Reflecting their strong support of legal aid, the top suggestion from Vancouver Island residents is to increase funding – mentioned by 25% compared to 16% and 13% in Metro Vancouver and the Interior, respectively.

Sources of Legal Aid Information



Total base size: 2014 (600)

*This response was added to the response list in 2010.

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

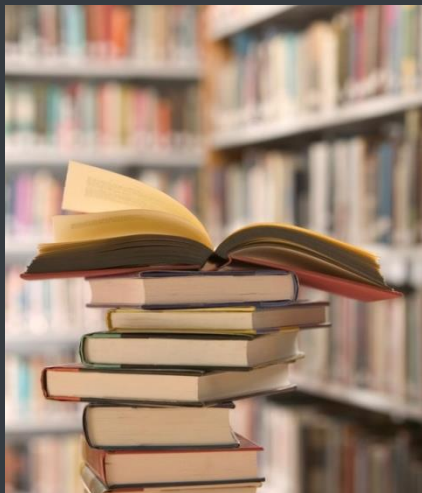
Suggested Improvements for Legal Aid Services

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
(Total base size)	(753)	(574)	(562)	(602)	(600)	(600)
Improve / increase funding	22%	18%	18%	21%	19%	17%
More advertising / promotion / public awareness	14%	14%	15%	11%	13%	13%
Improved access / availability	18%	9%	6%	7%	6%	9%
Better guidelines as to who should qualify for legal aid	5%	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Make system more efficient (legal / judicial / courts)	3%	2%	5%	3%	5%	3%
Improved access / availability for lower income people	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%
More lawyers available	8%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Better government / a government that supports legal aid	–	–	1%	1%	3%	2%
Provide more information on how to obtain legal aid	2%	4%	2%	–	3%	2%
Better funding management	–	–	–	–	3%	2%
Expand qualifications for legal aid / raise max. income level	–	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
More qualified legal representation	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%
More help / support for family matters	–	–	–	–	2%	2%
More lawyers doing pro bono work / who will work for lower fees	–	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%
Discontinue coverage for immigration cases*	–	–	–	–	–	1%
Improve access for small towns / rural areas*	–	–	–	–	–	<1%
Utilize law students / paralegals*	–	–	–	–	–	<1%
Other	10%	3%	2%	2%	5%	6%
None / no improvement necessary	2%	24%	24%	36%	4%	5%
Don't know / not stated	32%	26%	26%	15%	43%	42%

Note: 2014 main mentions only.

*New suggestions in 2014

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



Appendix

Comparison of Telephone and Online Results

- *In the following charts and tables online results have been presented in orange font and/or with an orange ♦. While both telephone and online results have been provided in the following charts/tables, the focus should be on the distribution or general pattern of results and not on percentage –to-percentage comparisons due to the different methodologies. Particular caution should be used when viewing regional level results due to lower base sizes.*
- *Both the telephone and online samples have been mathematically weighted identically by age and gender within region to accurately represent BC residents aged 18 and older. Both samples are also consistent in terms of household income (and both samples are generally in line with Statistics Canada figures).*
- For the most part, results from the online survey are in line with current and past telephone survey results, which helps support switching to an online survey in future waves. The most notable apparent differences between the two 2014 modes are:
 - Claimed awareness of legal aid for specific types of law is **higher** than seen with past telephone survey results.
 - Strong agreement to having legal aid supporting their clients by addressing the problems that are related to their legal issues is **lower** than current telephone survey results.
 - Strong importance to having legal aid in family court in terms of providing fairness in the justice system is **lower** than current telephone survey results.
 - Overall importance of having immigration/refugee hearings in terms of providing fairness in the justice system is **lower** than current telephone survey results.
 - Support for giving legal aid funding the same priority as other social services is **lower** than past telephone survey results.
- What is notable for several questions is that the *overall* support or agreement is consistent between the telephone and online results, but the *strength* of the support or agreement is where differences tend to emerge. Given the anonymity afforded by an online methodology, online respondents can sometimes overstate their knowledge of a given subject, but be more candid when asked for their opinion or stance on a subject/issue. For a topic such as legal aid, that has an inherent 'worthiness' attached to it, this type of disparity can even be more apparent. For example, a telephone survey respondent may feel uncomfortable telling a live interviewer that they do not think legal aid funding deserves the same priority as other social services. However, the same respondent completing an online survey may feel less compelled to give the 'expected' response and provide a more frank answer.

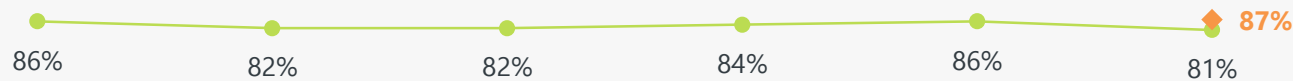
- While understanding *why* differences occur between telephone and online surveying is helpful, it leads to the question of whether one is preferred or better than the other and what this means for LSS going forward. In short, both methodologies have their inherent strengths and weaknesses, so the accepted course of action would be to choose a method and stay with it so that any changes in results can be attributed to actual changes in opinion and not to method. However, given the (increasing) challenges of reaching a demographically representative sample via telephone surveying, the recommendation is to switch to online surveying for this study for 2015 and into the future.
- Switching to online surveying means LSS should now consider the 2014 online survey results its new 'baseline' for measuring public opinion. The 2005 to 2013 trends from telephone surveying can still be used as a broad indicator of past public opinion, but for 2015, LSS should focus on the changes between 2014 and 2015.

Awareness of Legal Aid in BC

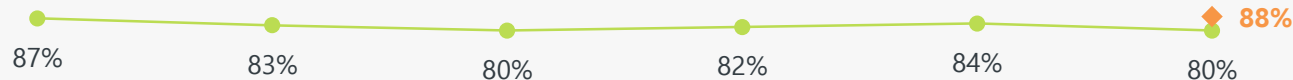
% Aware

● Telephone ♦ Online

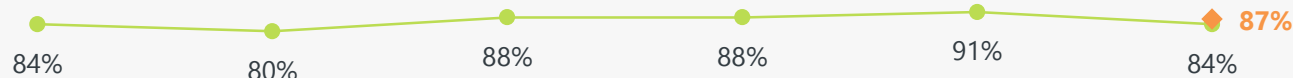
Total



Metro Van & Southwest



Island



Interior



2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

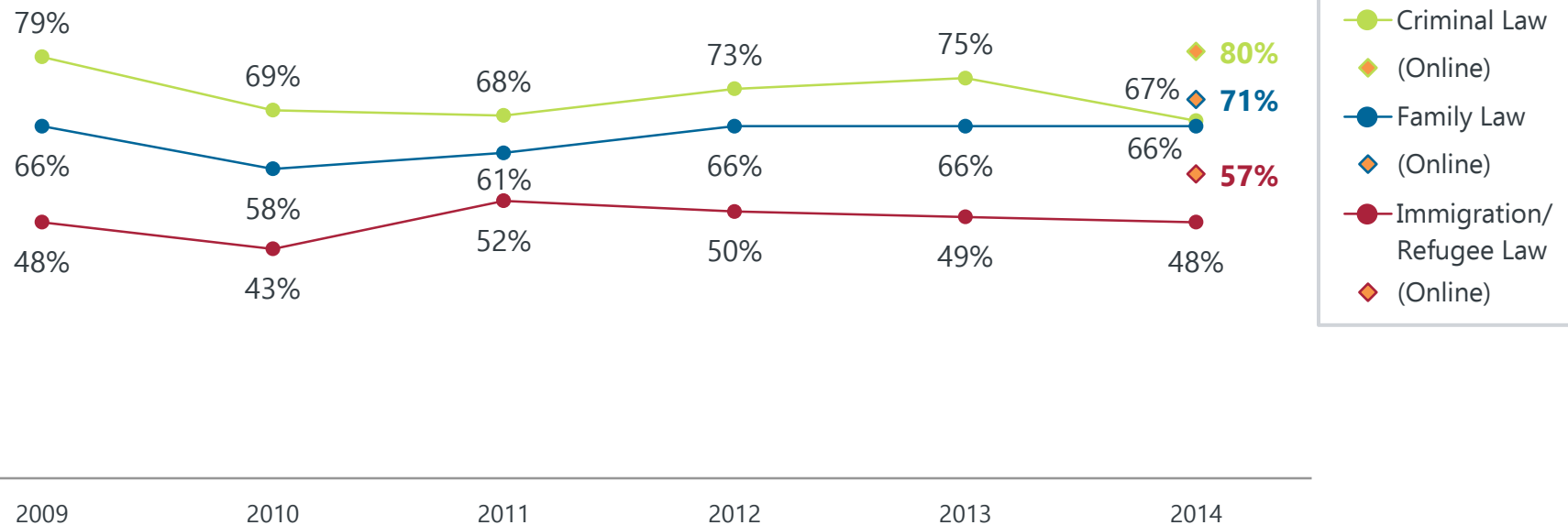
2014

Total base size: 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), *Online (612)*

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

% Aware



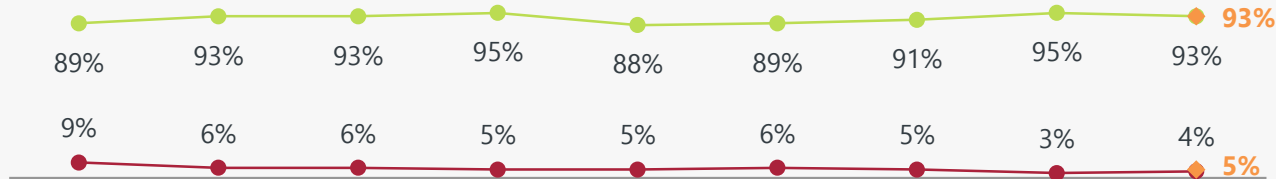
Total base size: 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), *Online* (612)

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

Support / Oppose Legal Aid Services

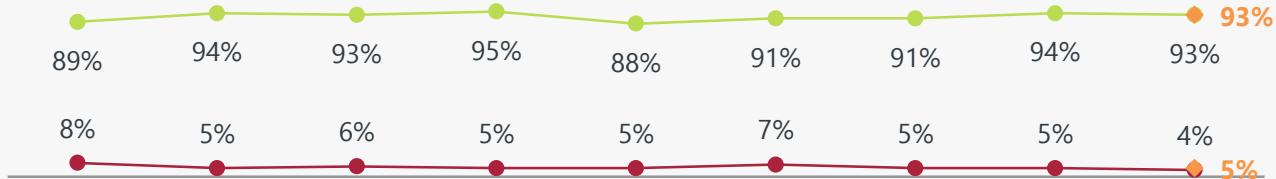
Support Oppose Online

Total



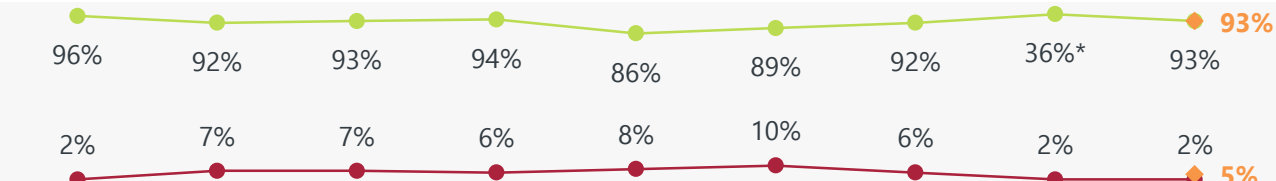
2014	OL	TEL
	612	600
Strongly	59%	64%
Moderately	34%	29%
Moderately	4%	3%
Strongly	1%	1%
No opinion / don't know	2%	3%

Metro Van & Southwest



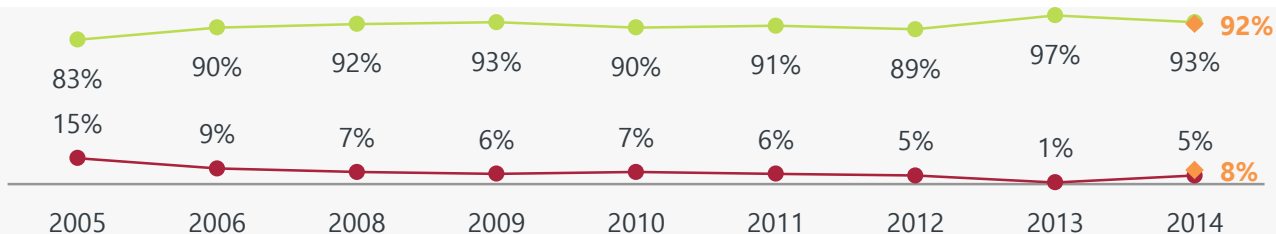
Strongly	59%	64%
Moderately	35%	29%
Moderately	4%	4%
Strongly	1%	-
No opinion / don't know	2%	3%

Island



Strongly	58%	74%
Moderately	35%	19%
Moderately	5%	1%
Strongly	-	1%
No opinion / don't know	2%	5%

Interior



Strongly	60%	56%
Moderately	32%	37%
Moderately	6%	3%
Strongly	2%	2%
No opinion / don't know	-	2%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), Online (612)

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?

Should LSS Support Clients by Addressing Legal Related Issues?



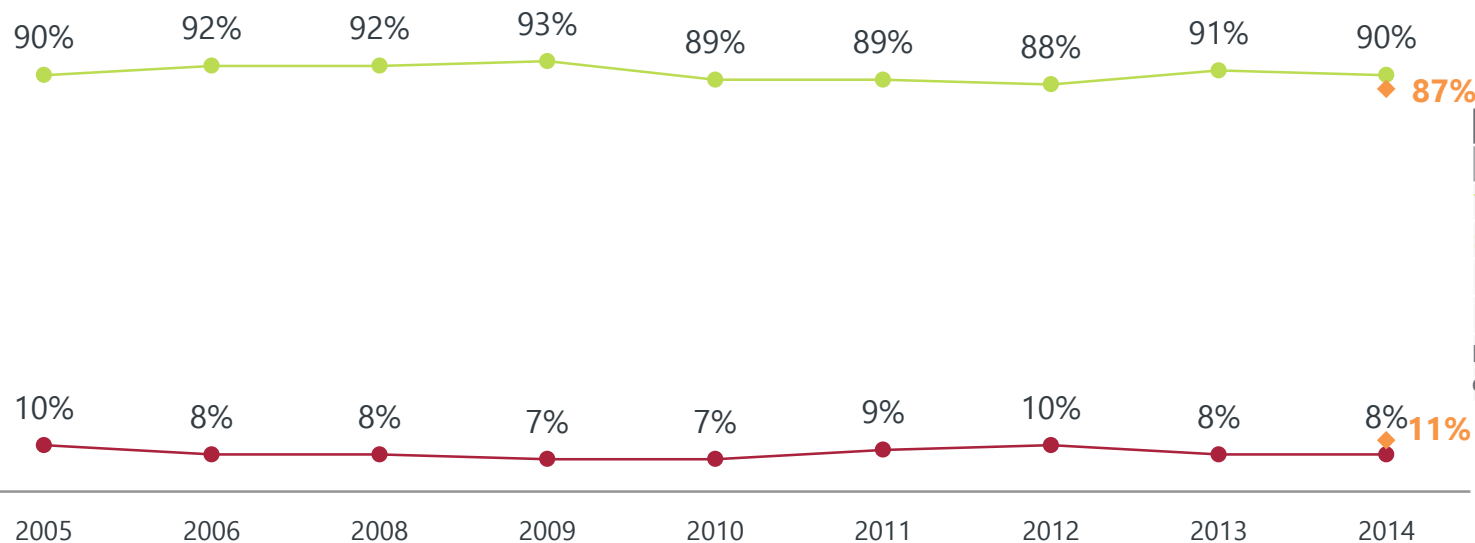
Total base size: 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), *Online* (612)

*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

● Important ● Not Important ◆ Online



2014	OL	TEL
	612	600
Very	58%	61%
Somewhat	29%	29%
Not very	8%	5%
Not at all	3%	3%
No opinion / don't know	2%	3%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), Online (612)

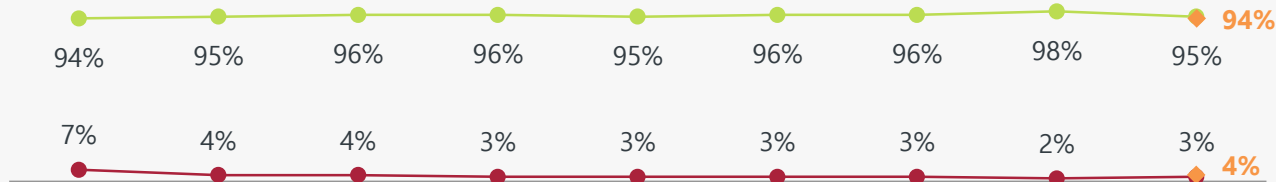
Results are based on an average of importance ratings for providing legal aid in the following four areas combined: family court, criminal court, immigration/refugee hearings and other civil legal proceedings.

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

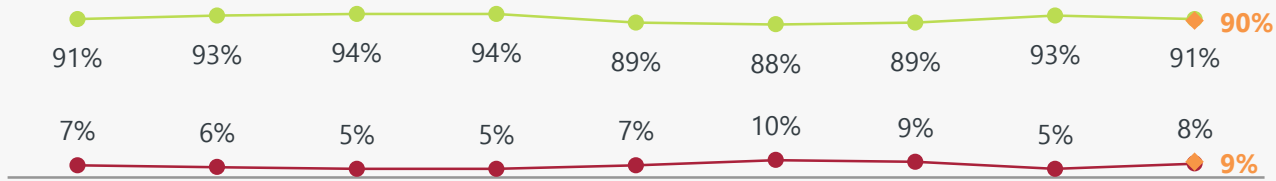
● Important ● Not Important ◆ Online

Family Court



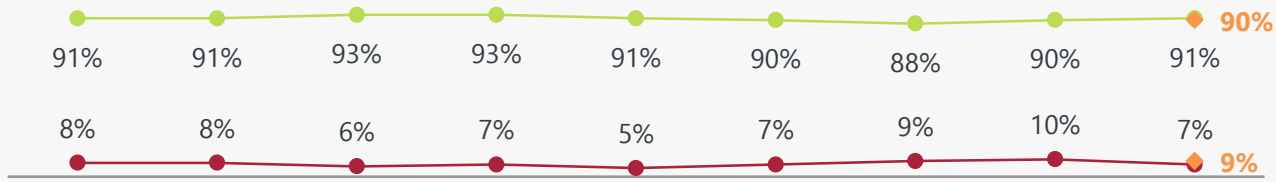
2014	OL	TEL
	612	600
Very	68%	76%
Somewhat	26%	20%
Not very	4%	2%
Not at all	-	1%
No opinion / don't know	2%	2%

Criminal Court



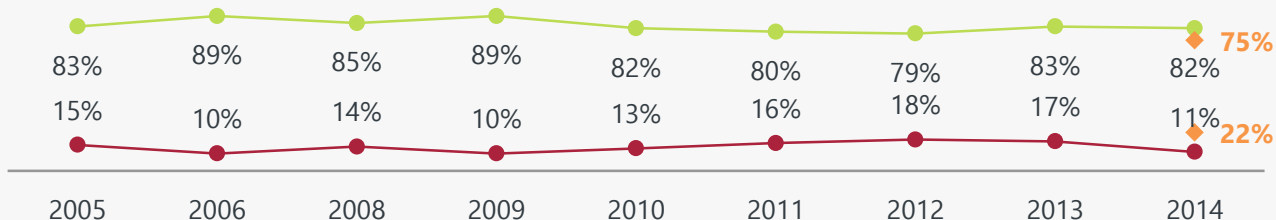
Very	64%	62%
Somewhat	25%	29%
Not very	7%	6%
Not at all	2%	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%	2%

Other Civil Legal Proceedings



Very	55%	57%
Somewhat	35%	34%
Not very	6%	5%
Not at all	3%	2%
No opinion / don't know	2%	2%

Immigration/ Refugee Hearings

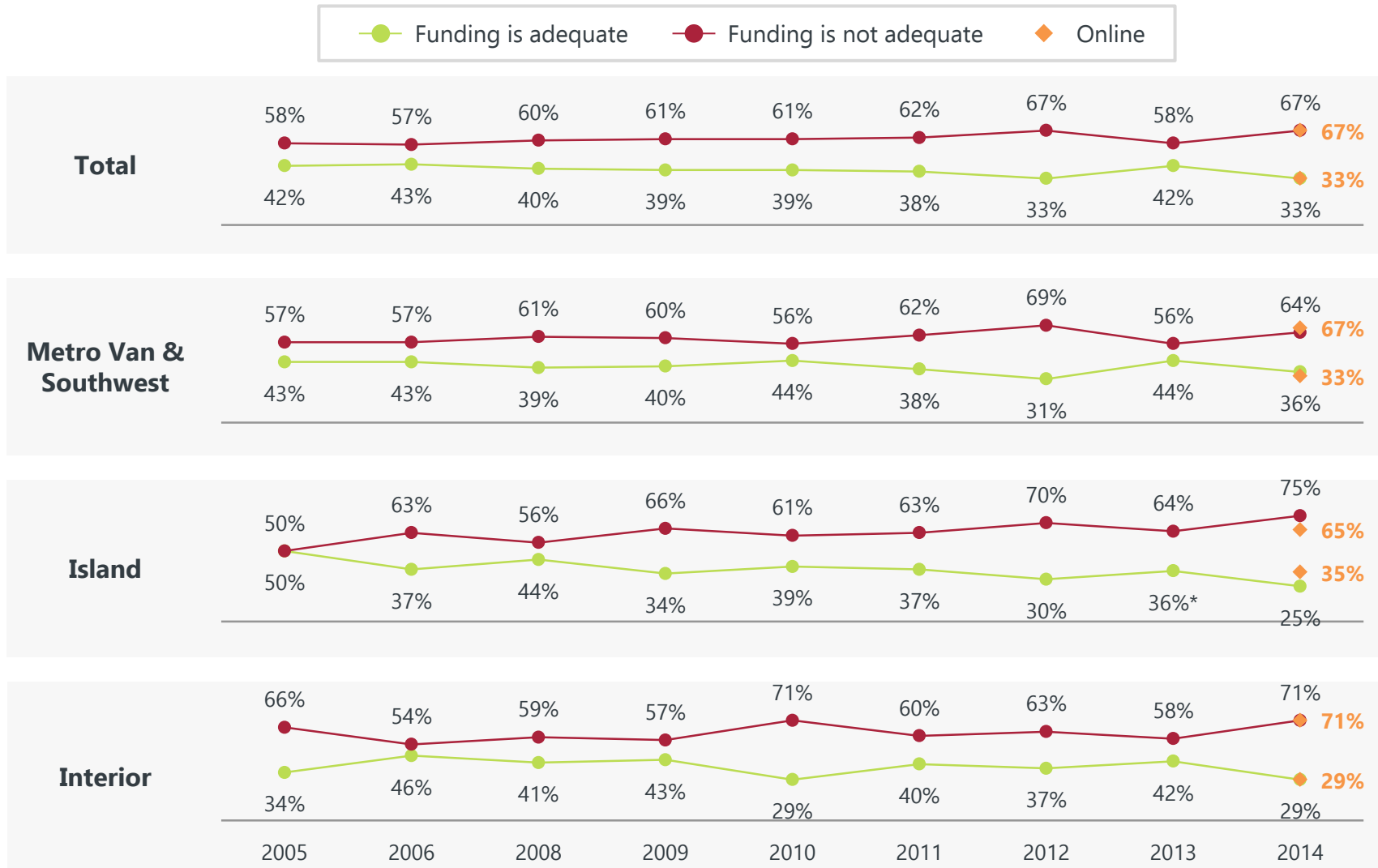


Very	44%	49%
Somewhat	31%	33%
Not very	14%	7%
Not at all	8%	6%
No opinion / don't know	3%	4%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), Online (612)

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 (among those with an opinion*)



Base: Among those giving an opinion (370), *Online* (399)

Note: Base sizes for 2005 to 2013 are not available

*"Don't know" responses in 2012 (36%), 2013 (27%) and 2014 (40% telephone and 35% online)

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

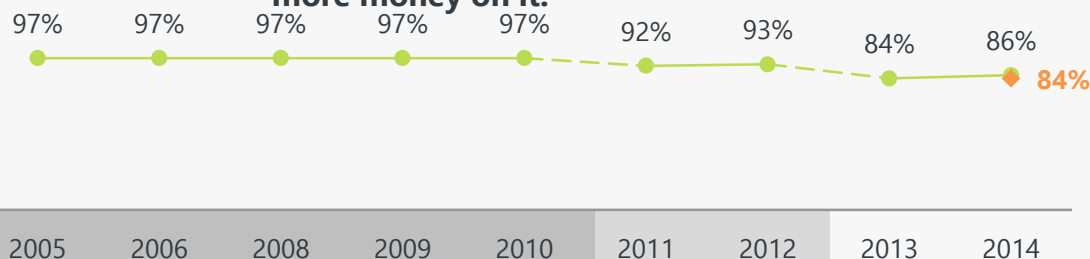
Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid

% Supporting

● Telephone ◆ Online

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.*

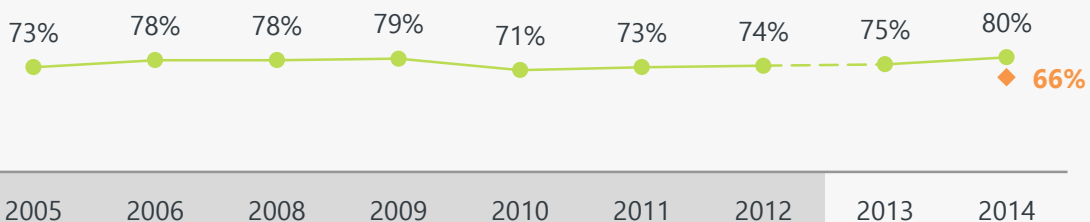
Total



2014	OL	TEL
	612	600
Strongly support	43%	50%
Moderately support	41%	36%
Moderately oppose	9%	8%
Strongly oppose	4%	2%
No opinion / don't know	3%	4%

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



Strongly support	24%	43%
Moderately support	42%	36%
Moderately oppose	21%	13%
Strongly oppose	7%	5%
No opinion / don't know	6%	3%

Total base size: 2005 (763), 2006 (745), 2008 (730), 2009 (753), 2010 (574), 2011 (562), 2012 (602), 2013 (600), 2014 (600), Online (612)

*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.

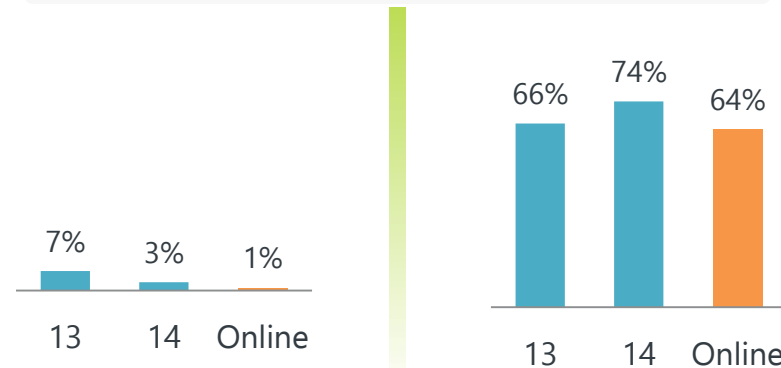
LS7. Most of the funding for legal aid comes from the provincial government. Governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as they give to funding for other social services such as health care, education, welfare, and child protection.

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)

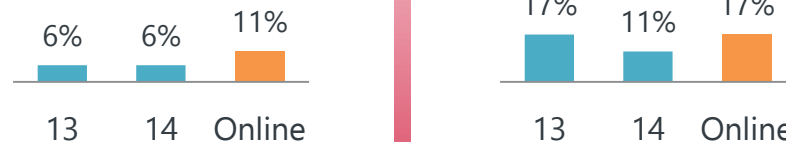
The chart below combines resident opinions on universal access to the justice system *and* their opinions on legal aid funding priority. As the top, right-hand quadrant shows, the majority of residents agree with both positions, while 11% from the online survey disagree with both (bottom, left-hand quadrant).

Legal funding *is equal* to other social services



Oppose universal access to the justice system

Support universal access to the justice system



Legal funding *is not equal* to other social services

● Telephone
● Online

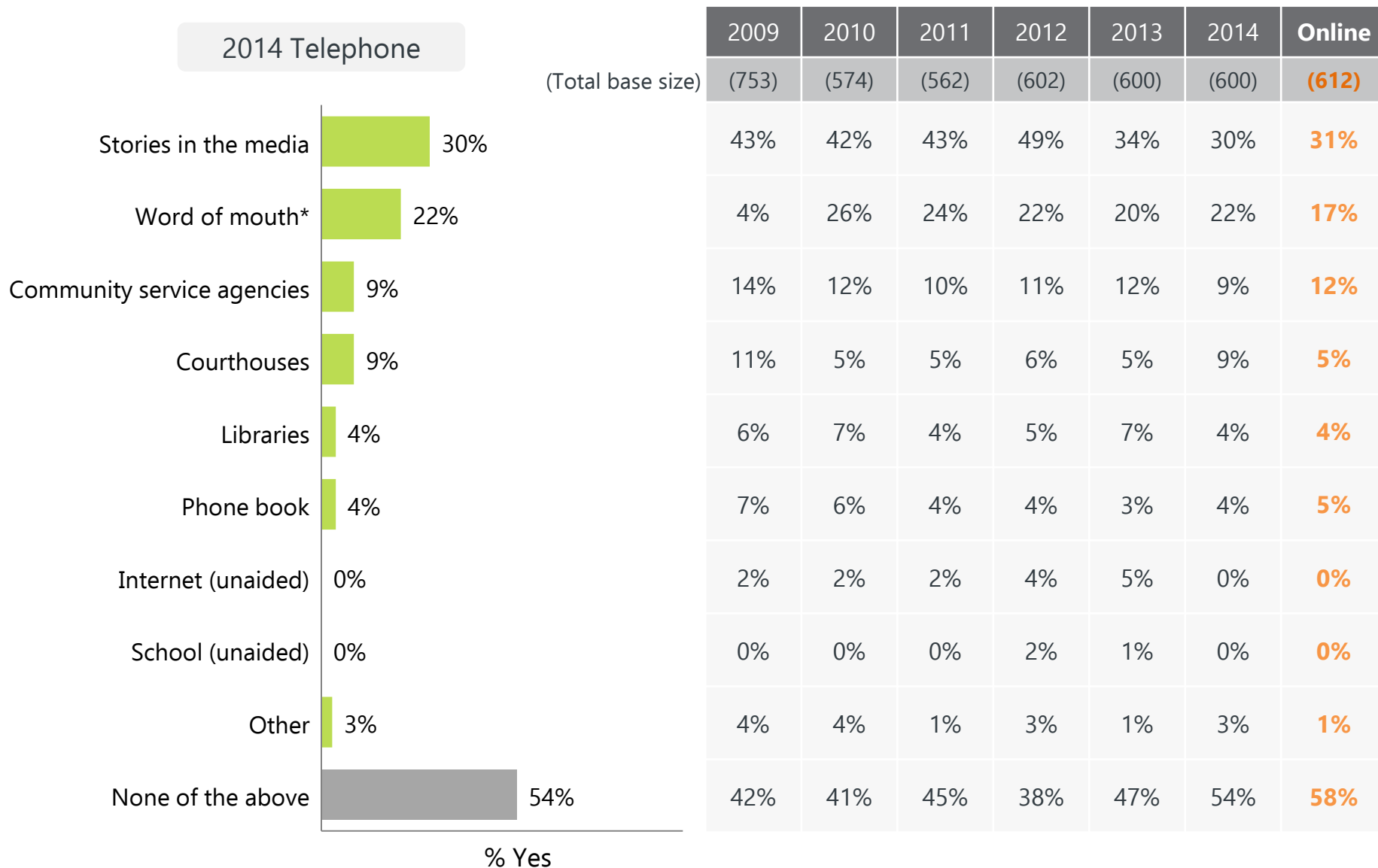
Total base size: 2013 (600), 2014 (600), Online (612)

Note: "No opinion / don't know" responses were 3% in 2013 and 7% in 2014.

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



Total base size: 2014 (600)

*This response was added to the response list in 2010.

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

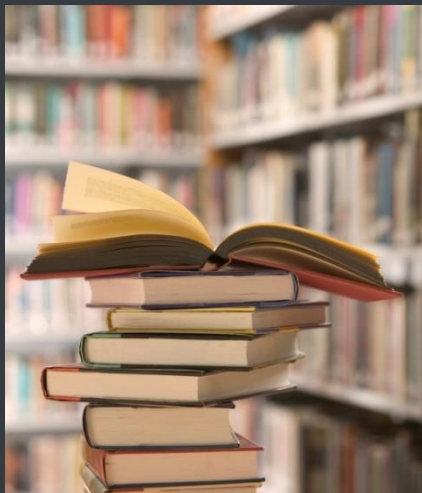
Suggested Improvements for Legal Aid Services

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Online
(Total base size)	(753)	(574)	(562)	(602)	(600)	(600)	(612)
Improve / increase funding	22%	18%	18%	21%	19%	17%	15%
More advertising / promotion / public awareness	14%	14%	15%	11%	13%	13%	9%
Improved access / availability	18%	9%	6%	7%	6%	9%	11%
Better guidelines as to who should qualify for legal aid	5%	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Make system more efficient (legal / judicial / courts)	3%	2%	5%	3%	5%	3%	5%
Improved access / availability for lower income people	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%
More lawyers available	8%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Better government / a government that supports legal aid	–	–	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%
Provide more information on how to obtain legal aid	2%	4%	2%	–	3%	2%	2%
Better funding management	–	–	–	–	3%	2%	2%
Expand qualifications for legal aid / raise max. income level	–	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%
More qualified legal representation	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
More help / support for family matters	–	–	–	–	2%	2%	2%
More lawyers doing pro bono work / who will work for lower fees	–	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	2%
Discontinue coverage for immigration cases*	–	–	–	–	–	1%	1%
Improve access for small towns / rural areas*	–	–	–	–	–	<1%	1%
Utilize law students / paralegals*	–	–	–	–	–	<1%	1%
Other	10%	3%	2%	2%	5%	6%	8%
None / no improvement necessary	2%	24%	24%	36%	4%	5%	7%
Don't know / not stated	32%	26%	26%	15%	43%	42%	37%

Note: 2014 main mentions only.

*New suggestions in 2014

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



Appendix

Copies of the Questionnaires

**Introduction**

Hello, this is _____ calling from Sentis, a professional public opinion research company. We are conducting a short survey today. Would it be possible to speak to someone living in your home that is 18 years of age or older?

WATCH QUOTAS**IF NOT AVAILABLE: ARRANGE CALLBACK****IF NEW PERSON COMES ON LINE RESTATE INTRODUCTION**

1. Yes, continue

LSa 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 **THANK & SKIP TO DEMOS (D1 (ask age, region and gender only))**

2. No

3. Don't Know **THANK & SKIP TO DEMOS (D1 (ask age, region and gender only))**

Legal Aid Funding and Availability

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

3. Don't know

GO TO QN LS3

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

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

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

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

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

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know



- 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 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.

[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

- LS3a Do you strongly agree, agree, partly agree/partly disagree, disagree or strongly disagree that
(READ 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.).

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Partly agree/partly disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

DO NOT READ:

6. 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 **(RANDOMIZE LIST)**

- 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 IN ORDER SHOWN**

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

ROTATE ORDER OF LS6 AND LS7

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 even if that means the provincial government, which provides most of the funding for legal aid, has to spend more money on it.

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 IN ORDER SHOWN**

- 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

LS9 How do you think legal aid services in British Columbia could be improved? **PROBE FOR DETAILS**
[PROG OPEN END BOX]

Wrap Up

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+

DO NOT READ:

- 7. Prefer not to answer

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

DO NOT READ:

- 5. Prefer not to answer



D3 Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes...? **READ**

1. Less than \$25,000
2. \$25,000 to less than \$45,000
3. \$45,000 to less than \$65,000
4. \$65,000 to less than \$100,000
5. \$100,000 or more

DO NOT READ:

6. Prefer not to answer

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

DO NOT READ:

5. Prefer not to answer

D5 INDICATE GENDER (**DO NOT ASK**)

1. Male
2. Female

D6 Which area of BC do you currently live in?

READ LIST

1. Metro Vancouver
2. Fraser Valley
3. Vancouver Island/Coast
4. Thompson/Kootenays/Okanagan
5. North (North Coast/Nechako/Northeast)

DO NOT READ:

6. Do not live in BC

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your time.



Email Invite To Survey

Subject: BC Public Opinion Poll
From: Sentis Research

Dear [NAME],

Sentis Research is conducting a short survey to gather opinions about issues facing the province. It will take around 5 minutes to complete.

There are no qualifiers for this survey – everyone living in BC and over the age of 18 qualifies to take the survey.

Click on this link to go to the survey: www.sentissurvey.com/LSS

The survey will remain open until we reach our target number of completed surveys.

All your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will only be used in combination with the responses of others – they will not be linked to your identity.

Thank you and good luck!

The Sentis Research Team

OPTIONAL:

Enable Back Button

For our privacy policy, click here: http://sentissurvey.com/sentis_research_privacy_policy.pdf

Survey closed message: *Unfortunately this survey is now closed as we have reached the target number of surveys.*

Quota full or respondent disqualified: *We're sorry, unfortunately we have reached our target number of surveys in your region or group.*

If

NEXT



LSa 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 **THANK & SKIP TO DEMOS (D1 (ask age, region and gender only))**
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know **THANK & SKIP TO DEMOS (D1 (ask age, region and gender only))**

D6 In which area of BC do you live?

- 1. Metro Vancouver
- 2. Fraser Valley
- 3. Vancouver Island / Coast
- 4. Thompson / Kootenays / Okanagan
- 5. North (North Coast / Nechako / Northeast)
- 6. Do not live in BC

THANK & TERMINATE

D1 Which of the following describes your age?

- 1. 18 to 24
- 2. 25 to 34
- 3. 35 to 44
- 4. 45 to 54
- 5. 55 to 64
- 6. 65+

D5 Please indicate your gender.

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

IF LSa = 1 OR 3, SEND TO THANK-YOU & TERMINATE

LS1 Now we 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**
- 3. Don't know **GO ON TO LS3**

LS2 Did you know that legal aid services are available for people who are facing...

- a. Criminal law matters
- b. Family law matters
- c. Immigration / refugee matters

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

If

NEXT



- 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 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.

What is low income? (Button that opens up the explanation)

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?

1. Strongly support
2. Moderately support
3. Moderately oppose
4. Strongly oppose
5. No opinion / don't know

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

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Partly agree / partly disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. 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

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- a. In family court
- b. In immigration / refugee hearings
- c. In other civil legal proceedings (such as foreclosures, bankruptcies, employment insurance collection, disability benefits collection, or other poverty law proceedings)
- d. In criminal court

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important
5. No opinion / don't know

If

NEXT



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

1. More than adequately funded
2. Adequately funded
3. Not adequately funded
4. No opinion / don't know

ROTATE ORDER OF LS6 AND LS7

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.

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

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
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? **[RANDOMIZE LIST]**

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

If

NEXT



LS 9 How do you think legal aid services in British Columbia could be improved?
[PROG OPEN END BOX]

Wrap Up

D2 Which of the following categories best describes your educational background?

1. High school or less
2. Vocational / technical / college
3. Some university
4. Graduated university
5. Prefer not to answer

D3 Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes?

1. Less than \$25,000
2. \$25,000 to less than \$45,000
3. \$45,000 to less than \$65,000
4. \$65,000 to less than \$100,000
5. \$100,000 or more
6. Prefer not to answer

D4 Which of the following best describes your current household composition?

1. Single with no children
2. Couple with no children
3. Family with children (includes single parent household)
4. Other
5. Prefer not to answer

Those are all the questions we have. Thank you very much for your time.

If

NEXT