



Legal Aid BC Everyday Legal Needs 2020 Survey

PREPARED FOR

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Background, Objectives & Methodology

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Legal Aid BC (LABC) provides legal information, advice and representation services to low income British Columbians facing legal problems.

To ensure it provides the most effective services to this group, LABC has historically conducted a research study (the Everyday Legal Needs Survey) with low-income individuals across the province.

The objectives of this survey are to better understand the types of legal problems low income British Columbians are facing, how they deal with these legal problems and how these legal problems affect their perceptions of the justice system in BC and affect their everyday lives.

LABC typically conducts the Everyday Legal Needs Survey every 5 years, with previous waves run in 2008, 2013 and 2018. However, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted LABC to run the survey in 2020 to help gauge the effect that COVID-19 may have had on the legal problems of low-income British Columbians.

Specific areas of investigation include:

- › The types of legal problems low income individuals deal with
- › How they have sought to rectify these legal problems
- › The barriers they have faced when addressing these legal problems
- › The impact these legal problems have had on them
- › Their perceived fairness of the justice system in BC
- › *NEW 2020*: The impact of COVID-19; including whether legal problems resulted from the pandemic and whether the pandemic affected problem outcome or resolution.

Note: A number of updates were made to the study in 2018, including revisions to the survey questions, online programming, qualifying criteria, and data weighting. Therefore, this report focuses on only the findings from the 2020 and 2018 surveys as the results are not directly comparable to prior waves.



METHODOLOGY



1,207 surveys with low income British Columbians



Survey open from June 29 - July 15, 2020



11-minute online survey



Mathematical weighting was applied based on age and gender within region to the incoming sample (i.e. those who answered the qualifier questions) to ensure it was reflective of the province's population aged 18 and older.

This weighting approach ensures the resulting 1,207 qualified respondents were representative of low-income individuals in BC.



The margins of error for a sample size of 1,207 at the 95% level of confidence is $\pm 3\%$. Please note that margins of error will be greater for sub-group analysis shown in this report.



Reporting note: the results for several questions are presented based on a summary of the total responses rather than the actual number of respondents (i.e. each legal problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response). This has been footnoted on all relevant pages.

Eligible respondents had to be BC residents, 18+, not closely related to a legal aid employee or lawyer or living with anyone who is, and, meet low income eligibility cut-offs.

Criteria for Low Income Eligibility*	HH Income	HH Size
<p>Criteria for Low Income Eligibility*</p> <p>(based household size and annual household income before taxes)</p>	<\$44,000 / year >	1 person icon
	<\$53,000 / year >	2 person icons
	<\$63,000 / year >	3 person icons
	<\$71,000 / year >	4 person icons +

*Sourced from the BC government's 2018 Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit table and adjusted for 2020 by cost of living.

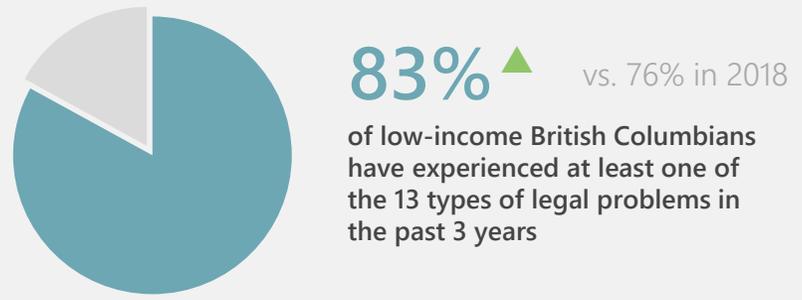


Highlights

HIGHLIGHTS



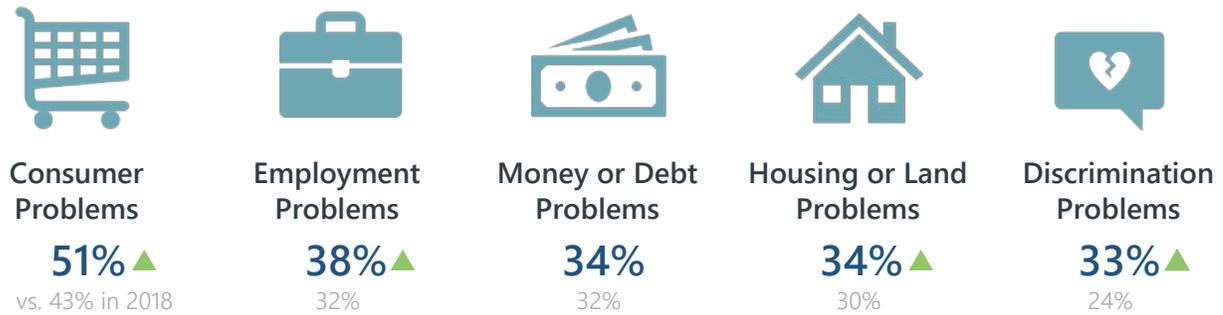
Legal Problem Incidence



Average # of types of legal problems experienced: **7** vs. 6 in 2018

Top 5 Legal Problems Experienced

(% experiencing legal problem in the past 3 years)



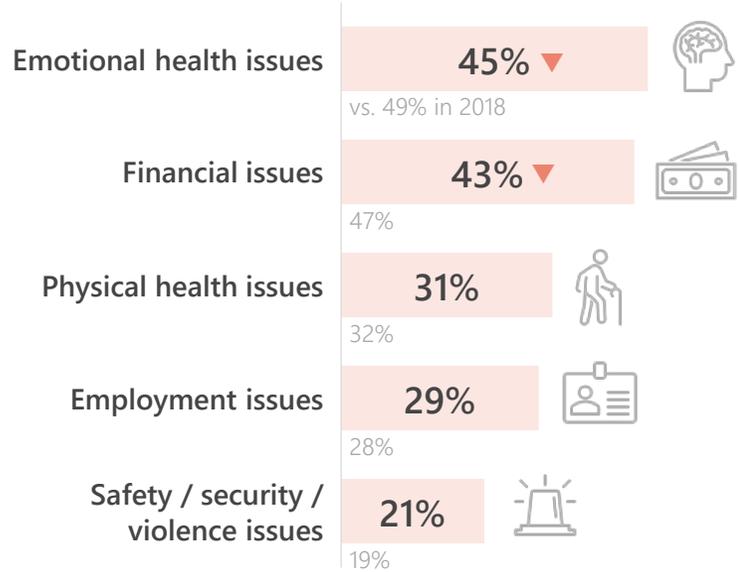
Least Frequent Legal Problems Experienced

(% experiencing legal problem in the past 3 years)



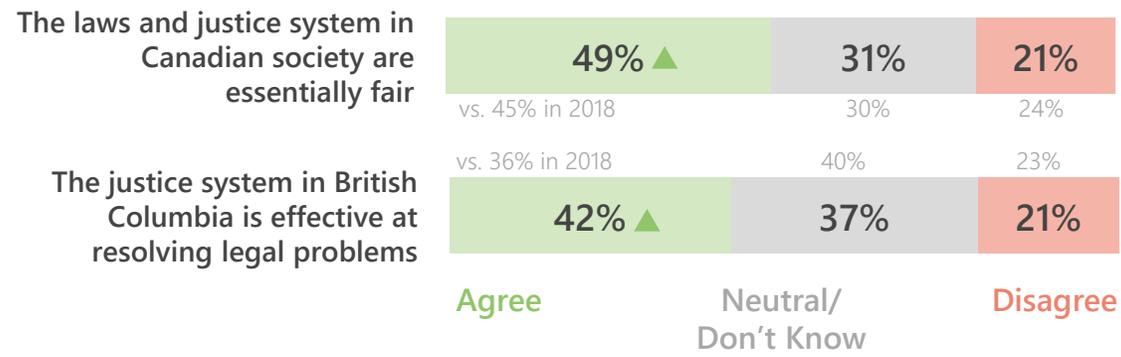
Top Issues Experienced as a Result of Legal Problems

(% experiencing issue as a result of their legal problem(s))



Justice System Perceptions

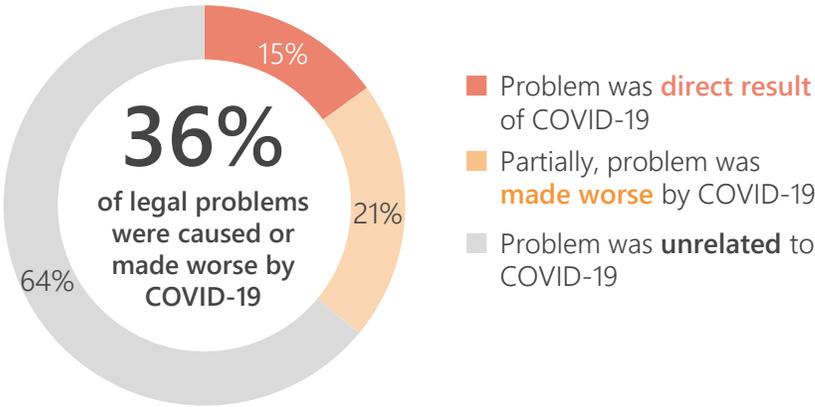
(among all low income British Columbians)



▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018 (shown in light grey font)

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LEGAL PROBLEMS

Effect of COVID-19 on Legal Problems Experienced

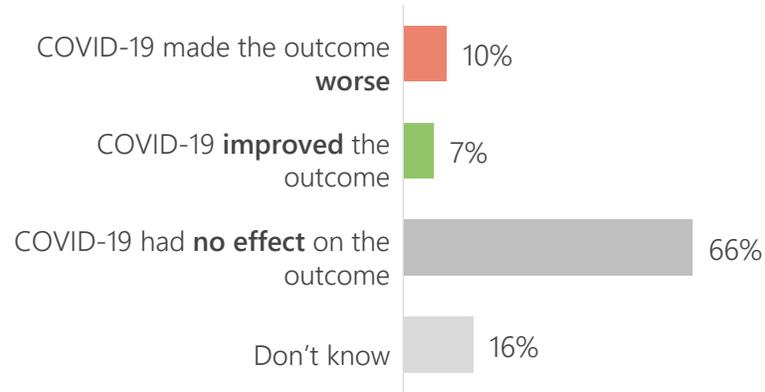


15% Among those who had a serious problem and did not take action, **15% did not take action because of COVID-19 and services not being available or open.**

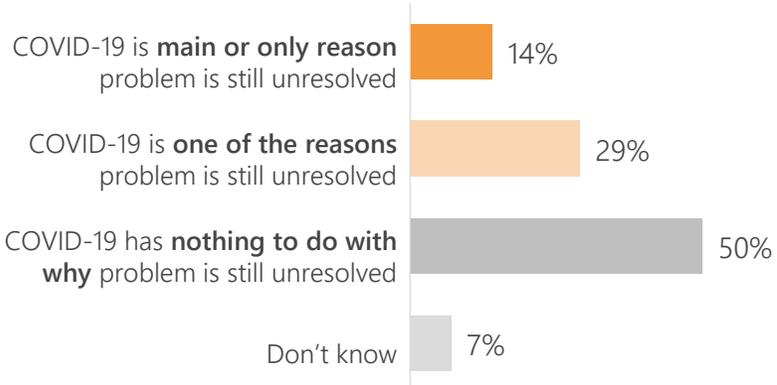
6% Among those who had a serious problem and did not seek legal assistance, **6% did not seek legal assistance because legal services were unavailable/closed due to COVID-19.**

Among the 37% of low-income British Columbians who feel their problem would have had a better outcome with more assistance, **the majority (57%) feel that increased or better availability of legal services during COVID-19 might have helped.**

Effect of COVID-19 on Problem Outcome (among those who experienced a problem that was resolved)



Effect of COVID-19 on Ability to Resolve Problem (among those who experienced a problem that is unresolved)





CONSUMER PROBLEMS

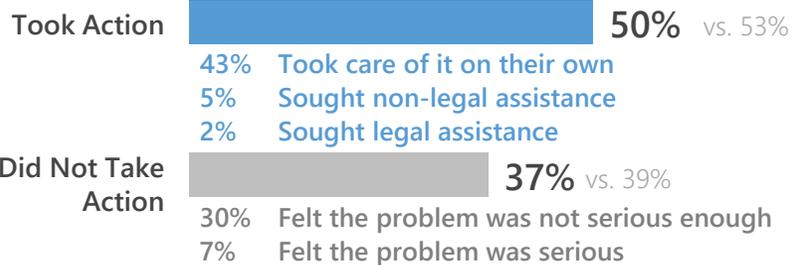
Examples: Purchasing faulty goods or appliances, receiving incorrect or misleading information, being overcharged for goods and services, etc.

Legal Problem Incidence

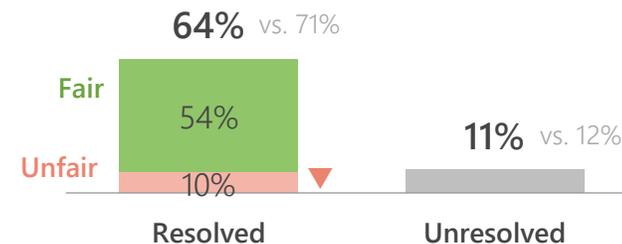


9% Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
19% Problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Action Taken To Resolve Legal Problem:



Resolution Rate & Fairness of Outcome



Among those with Resolved Problems:

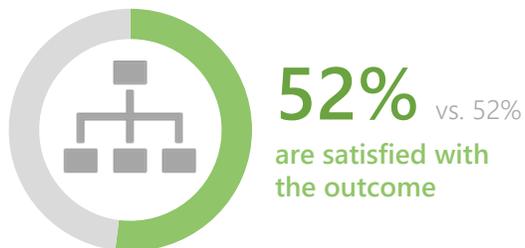
8% COVID-19 made the outcome **worse**
1% COVID-19 made the outcome **better**

Among those with Unresolved Problems:

16% COVID-19 is **main/only reason** still unresolved
9% COVID-19 is **one of the reasons**

Outcome Satisfaction

(among those with a legal problem that was resolved)

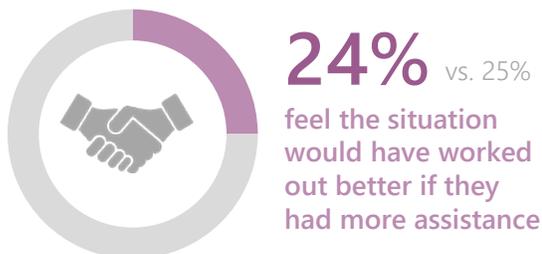


Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Assistance

(among those who did not seek legal assistance)

- 1 Thought it would cost too much **21%** [▼] vs. 31%
- 2 Thought nothing could be done **18%** vs. 22%
- 3 Thought it would take too much time **15%** [▼] vs. 25%

Impact of Having More Assistance Available



61% [▲] vs. 52%
Additional/better info

52% [▲] vs. 48%
Someone to explain legal aspects/help with forms

43% [▲] vs. 45%
Someone to deal with other party

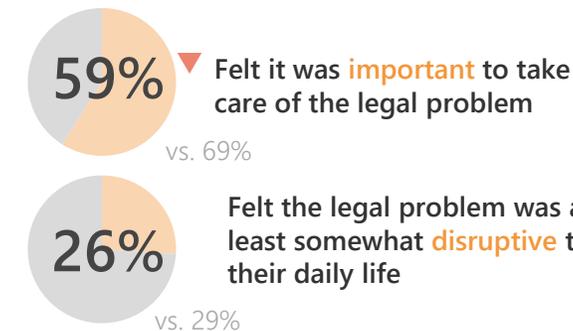
34% [▲]
Better availability of legal services during COVID-19

41% [▲] vs. 27%
A lawyer

What Would Have Helped

(among those who thought they needed more assistance)

Importance of Legal Problem Resolution & Overall Impact





EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

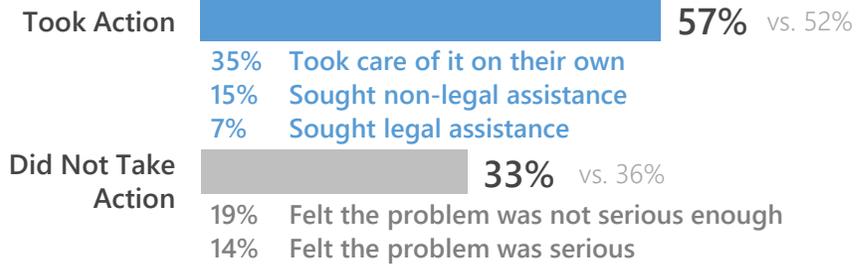
Examples: Job loss, harassment, bullying or discrimination, difficulty collecting employment benefits or unemployment insurance, etc.

Legal Problem Incidence

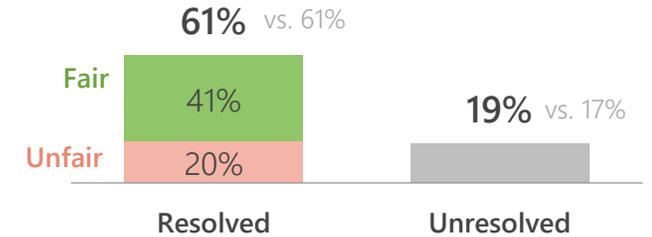


35% Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
23% Problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Action Taken To Resolve Legal Problem:



Resolution Rate & Fairness of Outcome



Among those with Resolved Problems:

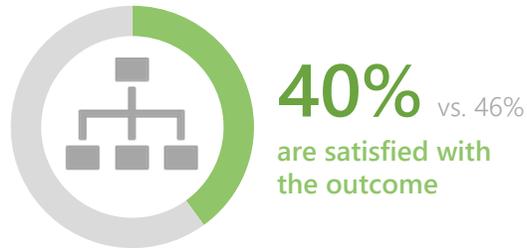
23% COVID-19 made the outcome **worse**
5% COVID-19 made the outcome **better**

Among those with Unresolved Problems:

34% COVID-19 is **main/only reason** still unresolved
22% COVID-19 is **one of the reasons**

Outcome Satisfaction

(among those with a legal problem that was resolved)

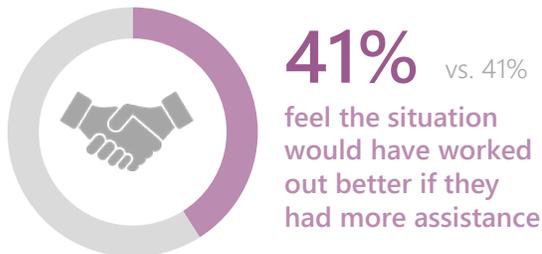


Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Assistance

(among those who did not seek legal assistance)

- 1 Thought nothing could be done **32%** vs. 28%
- 2 Didn't know what to do **21%** vs. 20%
- 3 Thought it would cost too much **20%** vs. 20%

Impact of Having More Assistance Available



48% vs. 62%
Additional/better info

47% vs. 58%
Someone to explain legal aspects/help with forms

44% vs. 52%
Someone to deal with other party

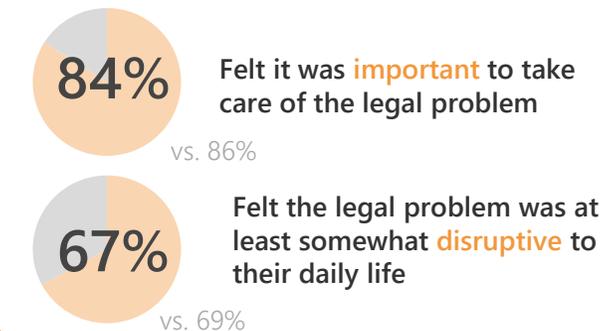
26%
Better availability of legal services during COVID-19

24% vs. 34%
A lawyer

What Would Have Helped

(among those who thought they needed more assistance)

Importance of Legal Problem Resolution & Overall Impact





MONEY OR DEBT PROBLEMS

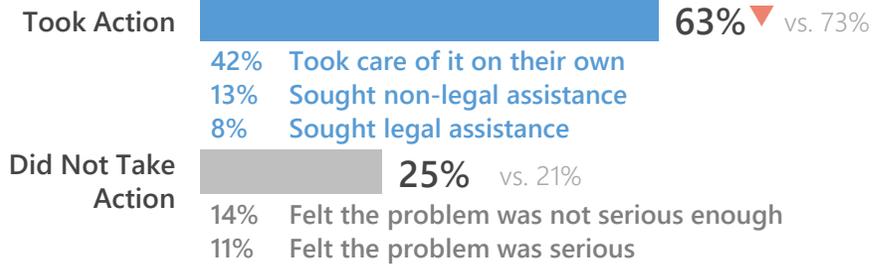
Examples: Inability to make payments, personal bankruptcy, collecting a debt, etc.

Legal Problem Incidence

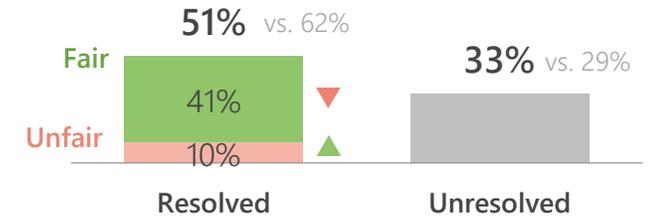


27% Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
30% Problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Action Taken To Resolve Legal Problem:



Resolution Rate & Fairness of Outcome



Among those with Resolved Problems:

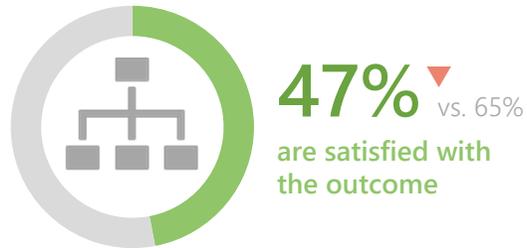
20% COVID-19 made the outcome **worse**
6% COVID-19 made the outcome **better**

Among those with Unresolved Problems:

19% COVID-19 is **main/only** reason still unresolved
37% COVID-19 is **one of the reasons**

Outcome Satisfaction

(among those with a legal problem that was resolved)

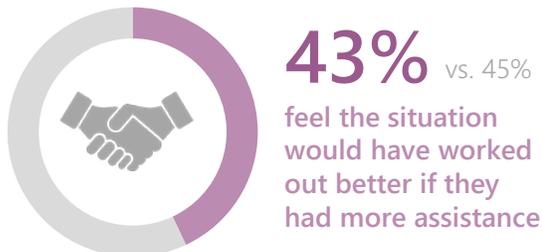


Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Assistance

(among those who did not seek legal assistance)

- 1 Thought nothing could be done **29%** vs. 22%
- 2 Thought it would cost too much **26%** vs. 29%
- 3 Didn't know what to do **24%** vs. 28%

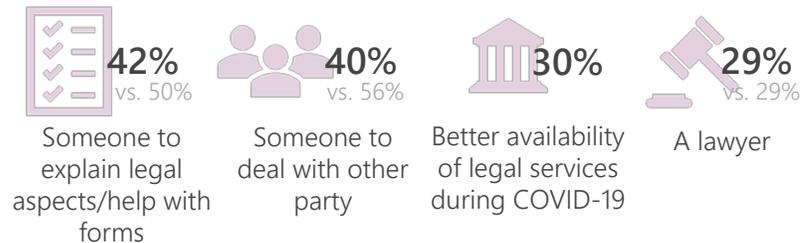
Impact of Having More Assistance Available



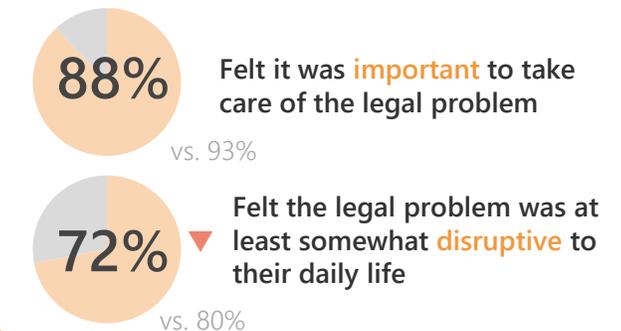
45% vs. 56%
Additional/better info

What Would Have Helped

(among those who thought they needed more assistance)



Importance of Legal Problem Resolution & Overall Impact





HOUSING OR LAND PROBLEMS

Examples: Neighbour problems, zoning or development, landlord-tenant problems, etc.

Legal Problem Incidence

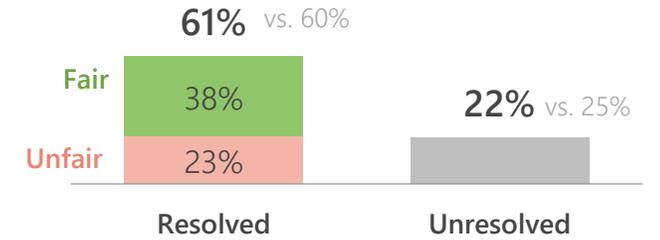


12% Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
13% Problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Action Taken To Resolve Legal Problem:



Resolution Rate & Fairness of Outcome



Among those with Resolved Problems:

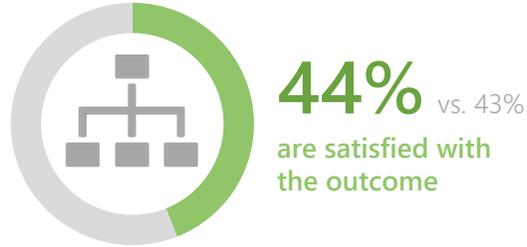
3% COVID-19 made the outcome worse
2% COVID-19 made the outcome better

Among those with Unresolved Problems:

2% COVID-19 is **main/only reason still unresolved**
19% COVID-19 is **one of the reasons**

Outcome Satisfaction

(among those with a legal problem that was resolved)

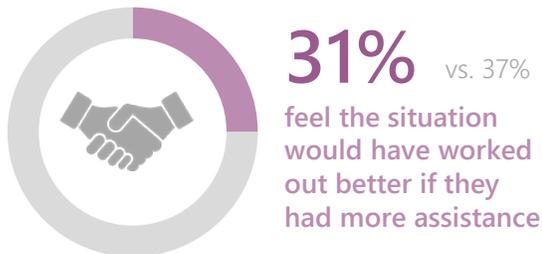


Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Assistance

(among those who did not seek legal assistance)

- 1 Thought it would cost too much **21%** vs. 26%
- 2 Thought it would be too stressful **21%** vs. 17%
- 3 Thought nothing could be done **20%** vs. 24%

Impact of Having More Assistance Available

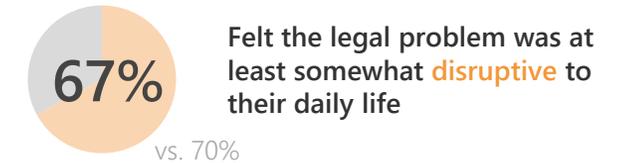
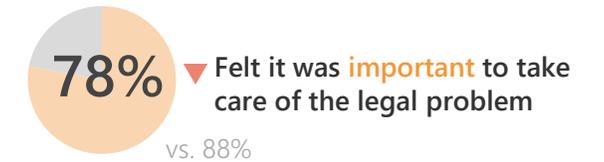


What Would Have Helped

(among those who thought they needed more assistance)



Importance of Legal Problem Resolution & Overall Impact



▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018 (shown in light grey font)



DISCRIMINATION PROBLEMS

Examples: Problems on the basis of race, gender, age, ability, etc.

Legal Problem Incidence

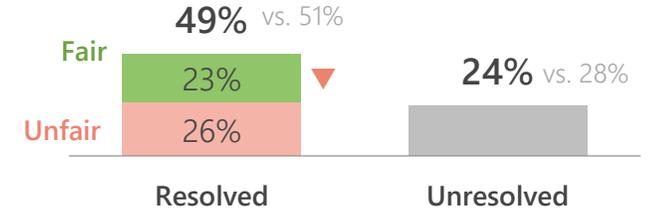


10% Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
19% Problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Action Taken To Resolve Legal Problem:



Resolution Rate & Fairness of Outcome



Among those with Resolved Problems:

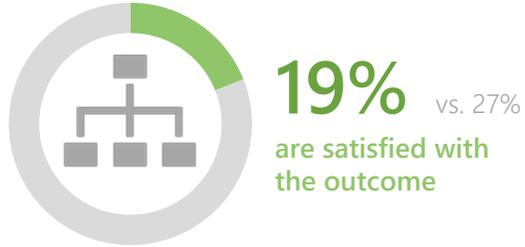
10% COVID-19 made the outcome worse
1% COVID-19 made the outcome better

Among those with Unresolved Problems:

6% COVID-19 is **main/only** reason still unresolved
16% COVID-19 is **one of the reasons**

Outcome Satisfaction

(among those with a legal problem that was resolved)

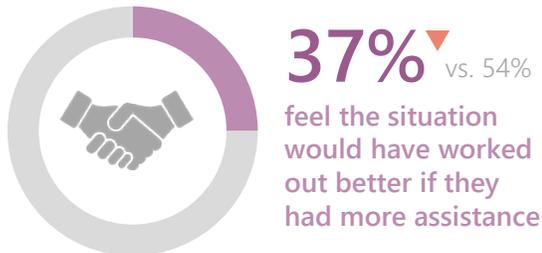


Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Assistance

(among those who did not seek legal assistance)

- Thought nothing could be done **33%** vs. 35%
- Thought it would be too stressful **30%** vs. 29%
- Was uncertain of my rights **23%** vs. 22%

Impact of Having More Assistance Available



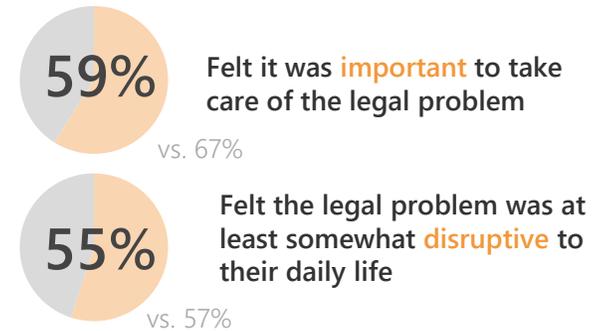
57% vs. 66%
Someone to explain legal aspects/help with forms

What Would Have Helped

(among those who thought they needed more assistance)



Importance of Legal Problem Resolution & Overall Impact





Detailed Findings



DETAILED FINDINGS

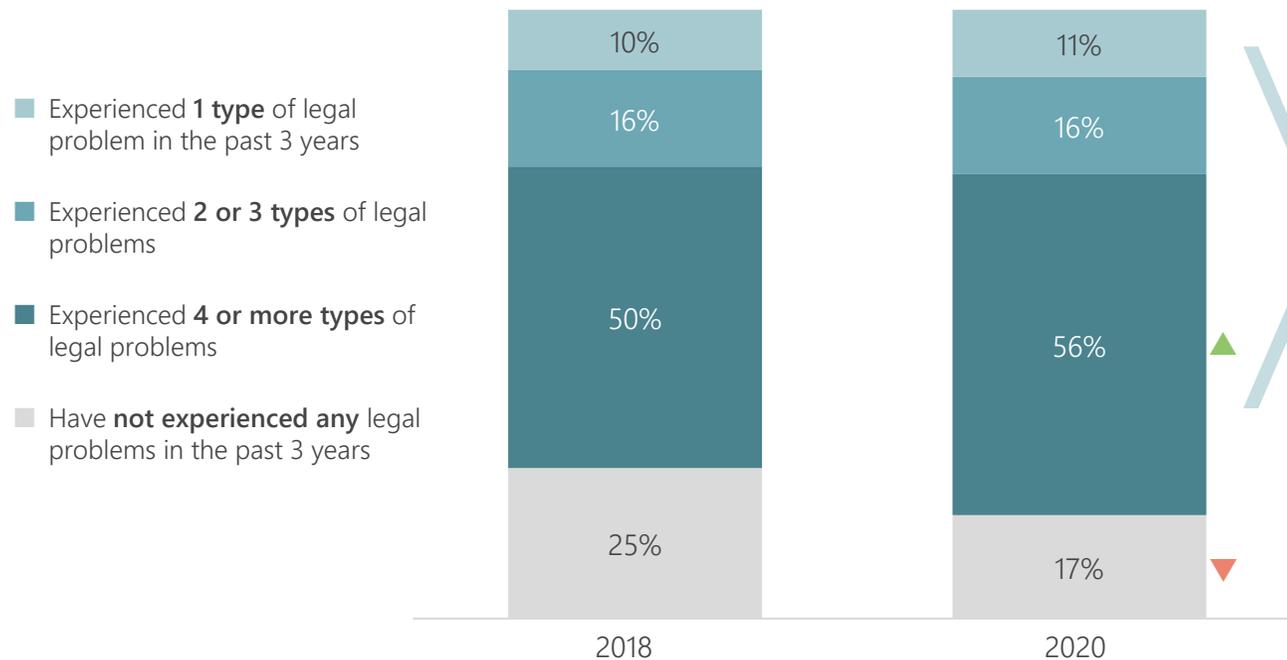
Legal Problems Experienced

LEGAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST 3 YEARS

Compared to 2018, the incidence of legal problems has increased both in terms of the percentage of low-income British Columbians experiencing them, as well as the number of problems they encounter.

Specifically, 83% of low-income British Columbians experienced at least one of the 13 legal problem types in the past 3 years, up from 76% in 2018. And 56% experienced 4+ different types, up from 50% in 2018.

Number of Legal Problems Experienced in the Past 3 Years



83% experienced at least 1 of the 13 legal problem types in the past 3 years (vs. 76% in 2018)

Average # of types of legal problems experienced: 7 (vs. 6 in 2018)

- Consumer
- Employment
- Money or debt
- Housing or land
- Personal injury
- Discrimination
- Family relationship
- Welfare or social assistance
- Wills and powers of attorney
- Hospital treatment or release
- Police incidents
- Legal action
- Immigration

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Base: Total respondents – 2020 (1,207); 2018 (1,204)

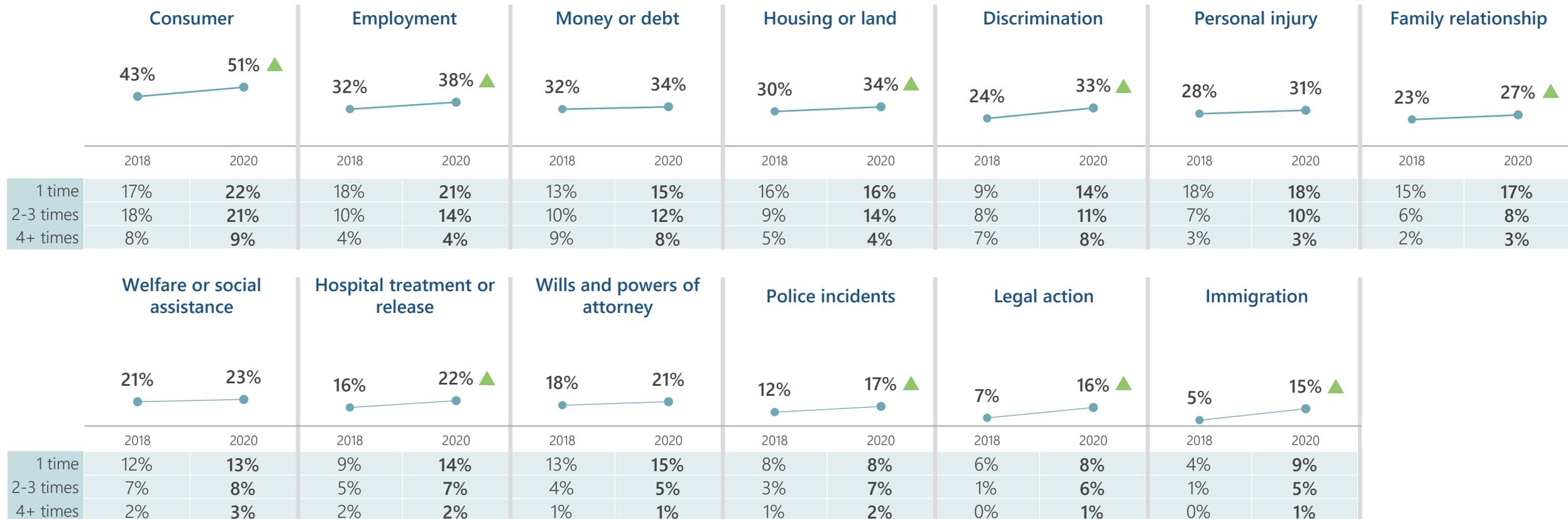
Q1. People can experience many different problems in their day-to-day lives. Some are relatively minor, while others are more serious and difficult to resolve. Please read the description of each type of problem, and then indicate the approximate number of times, if any, in the past 3 years you have experienced a problem in that category that was serious and difficult to resolve.

TYPES OF LEGAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST 3 YEARS



The percentage of low-income British Columbians experiencing each type of legal problem has either held steady or increased since 2018. Of note, the incidence of legal action problems has doubled, and the incidence of immigration problems has tripled since two years ago.

% Experiencing Legal Problem in Past 3 Years



Base: Total respondents – 2020 (1,207); 2018 (1,204)

Note: % “don’t know” responses not shown.

Q1. People can experience many different problems in their day-to-day lives. Some are relatively minor, while others are more serious and difficult to resolve. Please read the description of each type of problem, and then indicate the approximate number of times, if any, in the past 3 years you have experienced a problem in that category that was serious and difficult to resolve.

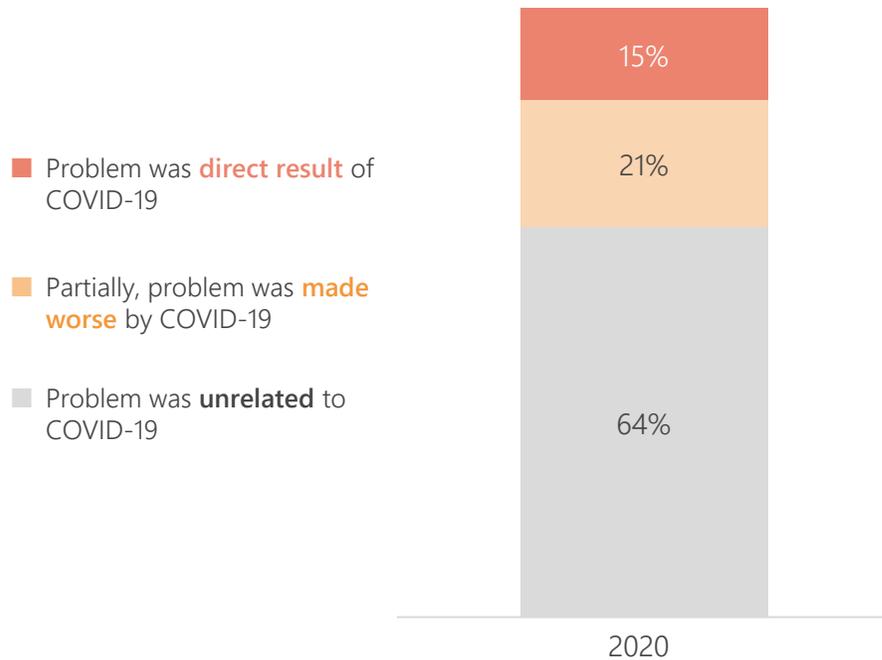
▲ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON INCIDENCE OF LEGAL PROBLEMS

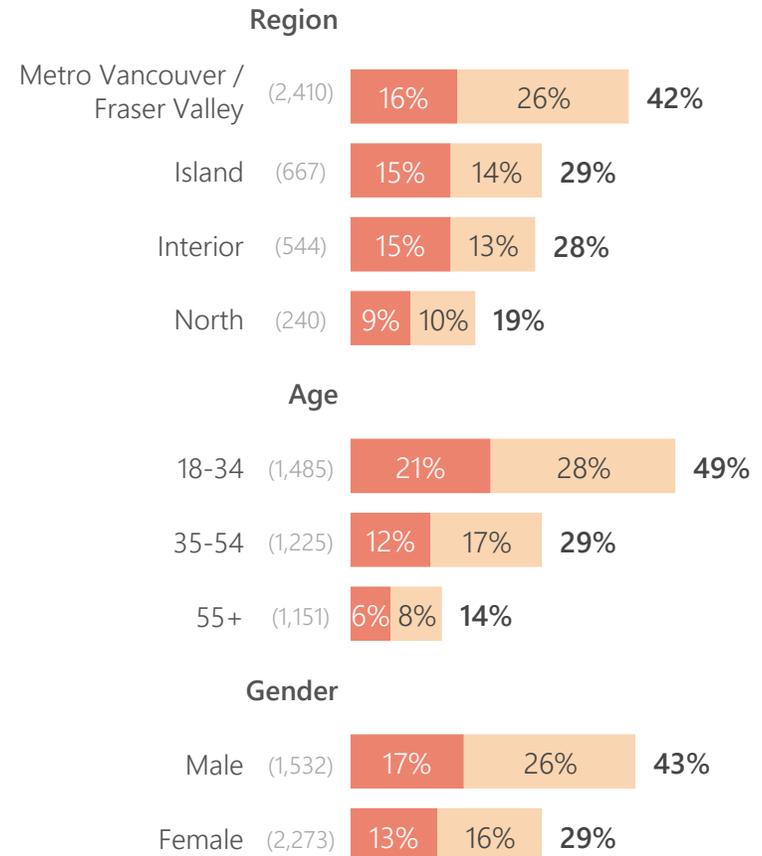


Just over one-third of the legal problems experienced by low-income British Columbians were directly caused by COVID-19 (15%) or made worse by COVID-19 (21%). Regionally, the pandemic had the most impact on Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley residents and the least impact on those residing in the North. Compared to their counterparts, younger residents (18-34) and men were more likely to have experienced legal problems that were affected by the pandemic.

Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Legal Problems Experienced



By Demographic Subgroup



Base: Total responses – 2020 (3,861)

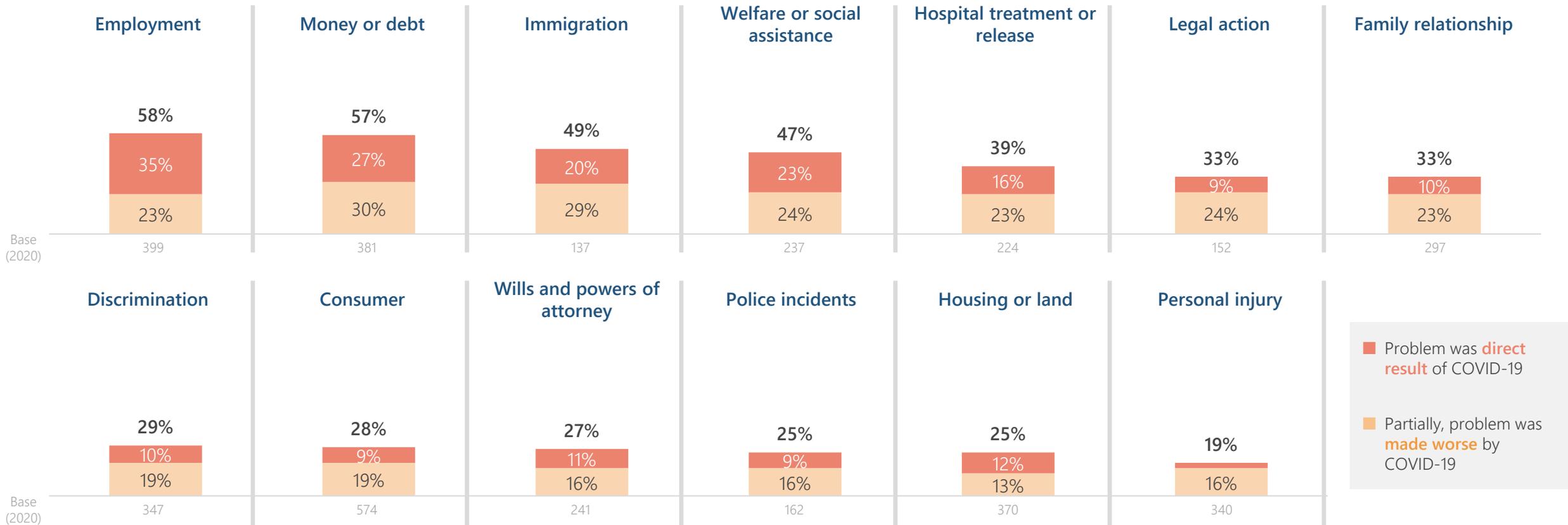
Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q1x. Thinking of the last time you experienced each of the following problem types, were any of them a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON EACH LEGAL PROBLEM TYPE

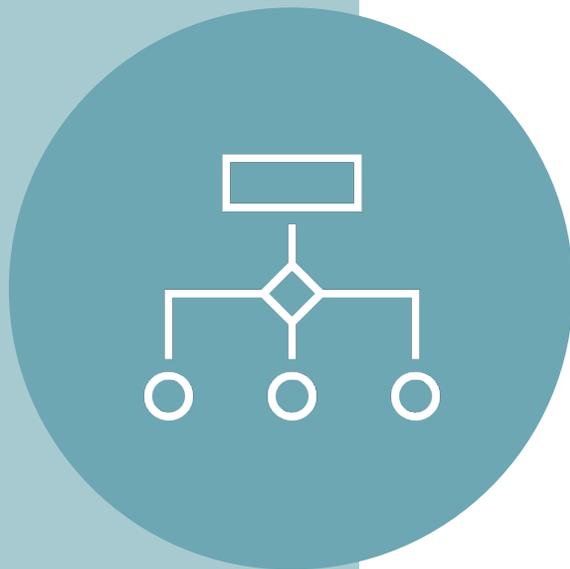
Employment and money/debt problems were the most negatively affected by COVID-19, with 35% and 27% of problems, respectively, being a direct result of COVID-19.

% of Problems Caused by or Made Worse by COVID-19 Pandemic



■ Problem was **direct result** of COVID-19
■ Partially, problem was **made worse** by COVID-19

Base: Those experiencing each legal problem.
 Q1x. Thinking of the last time you experienced each of the following problem types, were any of them a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



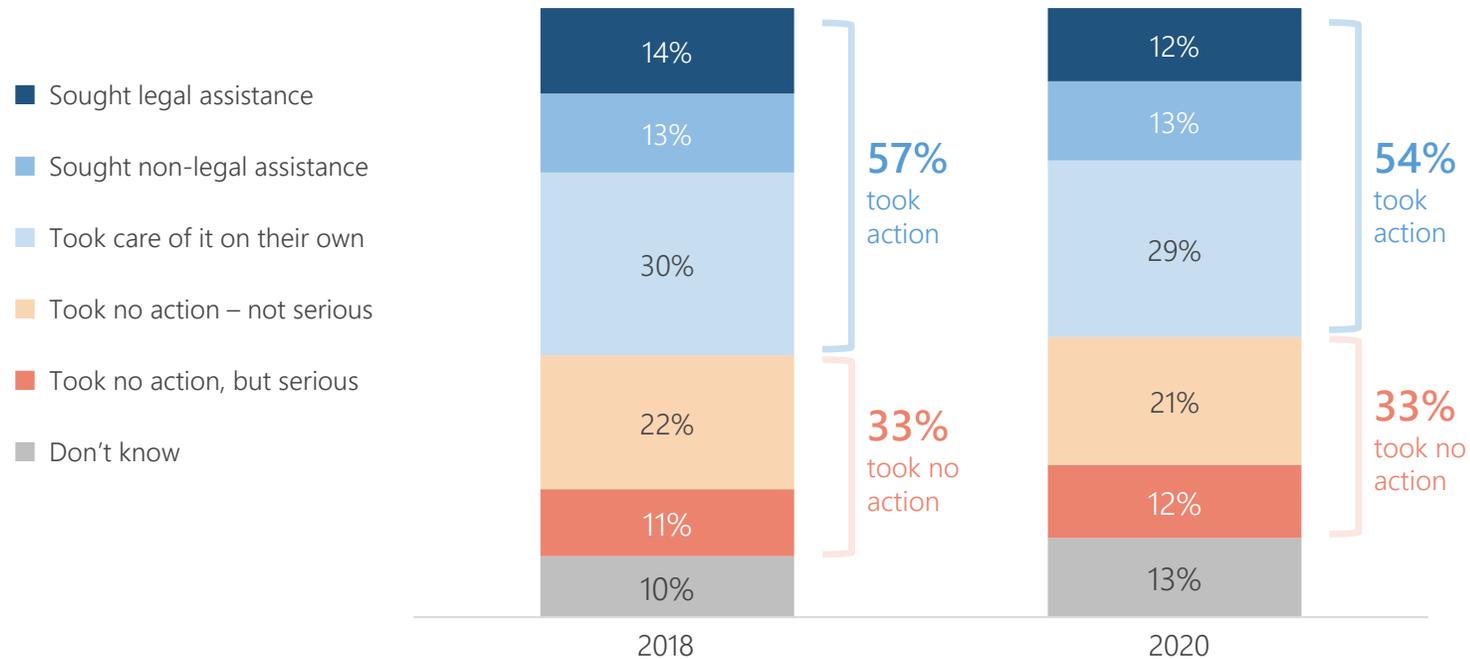
DETAILED FINDINGS

Responding to Legal Problems

TAKING ACTION TO RESOLVE THE LEGAL PROBLEM

Consistent with 2018, three-in-ten report resolving their legal problem on their own while one-quarter sought legal or non-legal assistance. This leaves one-third who did not take any action to resolve the issue.

Response to Problems Experienced



➔ Older individuals (55+) are more likely to seek legal assistance, while younger individuals (18-34) are more likely to seek non-legal assistance.

Base: Total responses – 2020 (2,775); 2018 (2,705)

Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

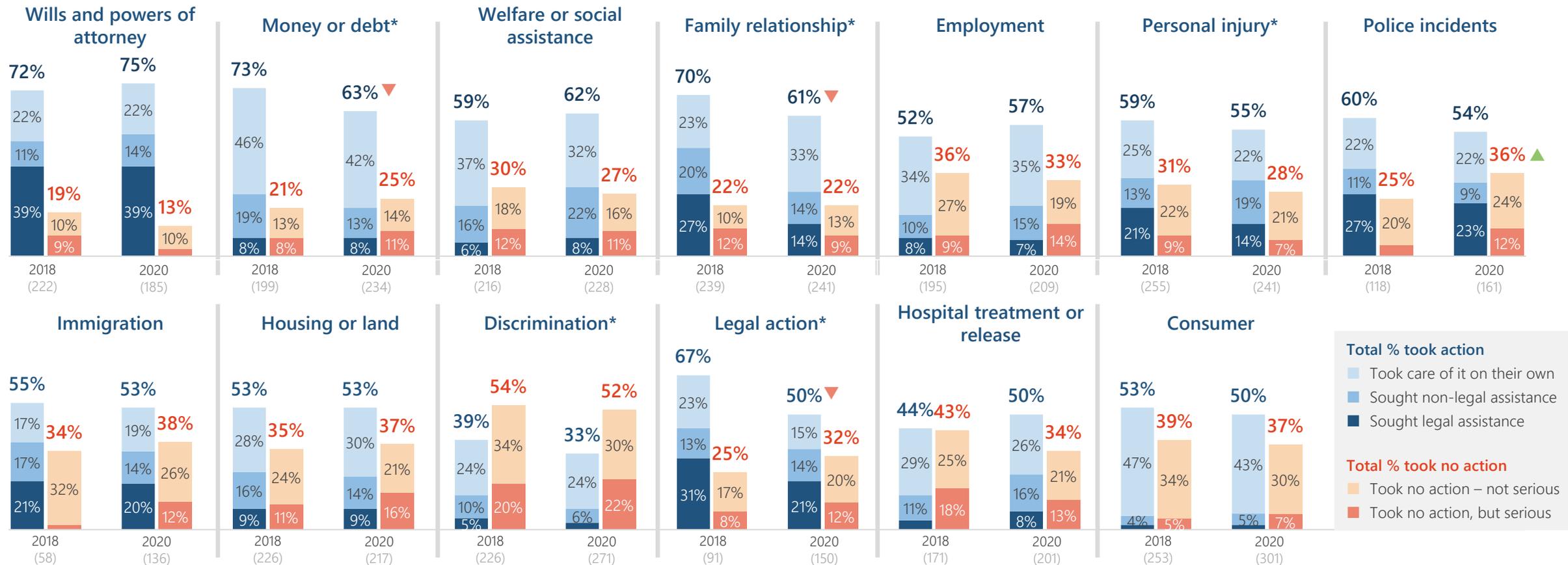
Q2. How did you respond to each of the *serious and difficult to resolve* problems you experienced over the *past 3 years*? Please select the one best response for each problem.

TAKING ACTION TO RESOLVE THE LEGAL PROBLEM BY PROBLEM TYPE



Overall, low-income British Columbians continue to respond similarly to their legal problems as in 2018. Exceptions are: money/debt problems – fewer report taking action compared to 2018, family relationship problems – more are taking care of it on their own and fewer are seeking legal or non-legal assistance, police incidents – more likely are reporting not taking action to resolve the problem, and finally, legal action problems – fewer are taking action compared to 2018.

Response to Problems Experienced



Total % took action

- Light blue: Took care of it on their own
- Medium blue: Sought non-legal assistance
- Dark blue: Sought legal assistance

Total % took no action

- Light orange: Took no action – not serious
- Dark orange: Took no action, but serious

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Base: Those experiencing each legal problem.

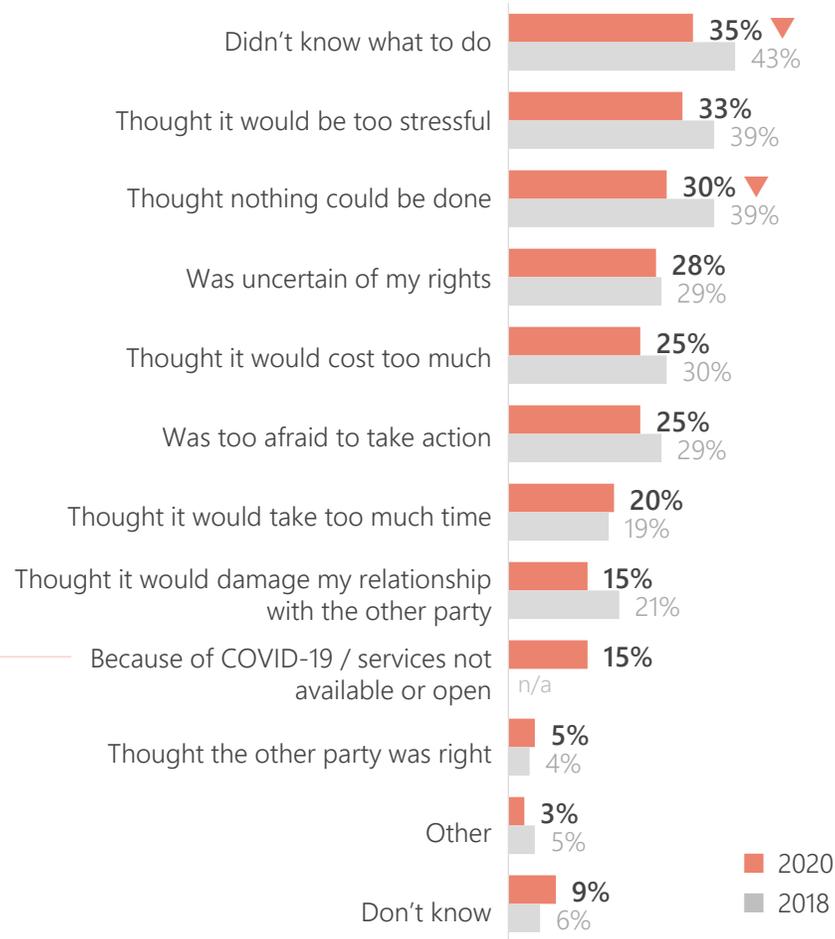
Note: % "don't know" responses not shown. *Denotes where % don't know responses changed significantly since 2018.

Q2. How did you respond to each of the serious and difficult to resolve problems you experienced over the past 3 years? Please select the one best response for each problem.

REASONS FOR NOT TAKING ACTION – EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SERIOUS

Although they are cited less frequently than in 2018, the top three reasons for not taking action to resolve a serious legal problem remain the same: not knowing what to do, believing it would be too stressful and thinking nothing could be done.

Reasons for Not Taking Action on Serious Problem



Problem Types Most Affected by COVID-19

- 31% Immigration*
- 25% Legal action*
- 24% Family relationship
- 23% Hospital treatment or release
- 23% Welfare or social assistance

Top Reasons for Not Taking Action by Problem Type (2020)

Discrimination	Didn't know what to do (44%)
Housing or land	Didn't know what to do (37%)
Legal action*	Didn't know what to do (34%)
Family relationship	Thought it would be too stressful (44%)
Personal injury*	Thought it would be too stressful (42%)
Welfare or social assistance	Thought it would be too stressful (37%)
Employment	Thought nothing could be done (45%)
Consumer	Thought nothing could be done (44%)
Money or debt	Thought nothing could be done (44%)
Police incidents	Thought nothing could be done (35%)
Hospital treatment or release	Was uncertain of my rights (41%)
Immigration*	Thought it would cost too much (46%)
Wills and powers of attorney	Base too small for reliable analysis (n=7)

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

*Caution small base size (n<20)

Base: Experienced a serious problem but didn't take action – 2020 (313); 2018 (267).

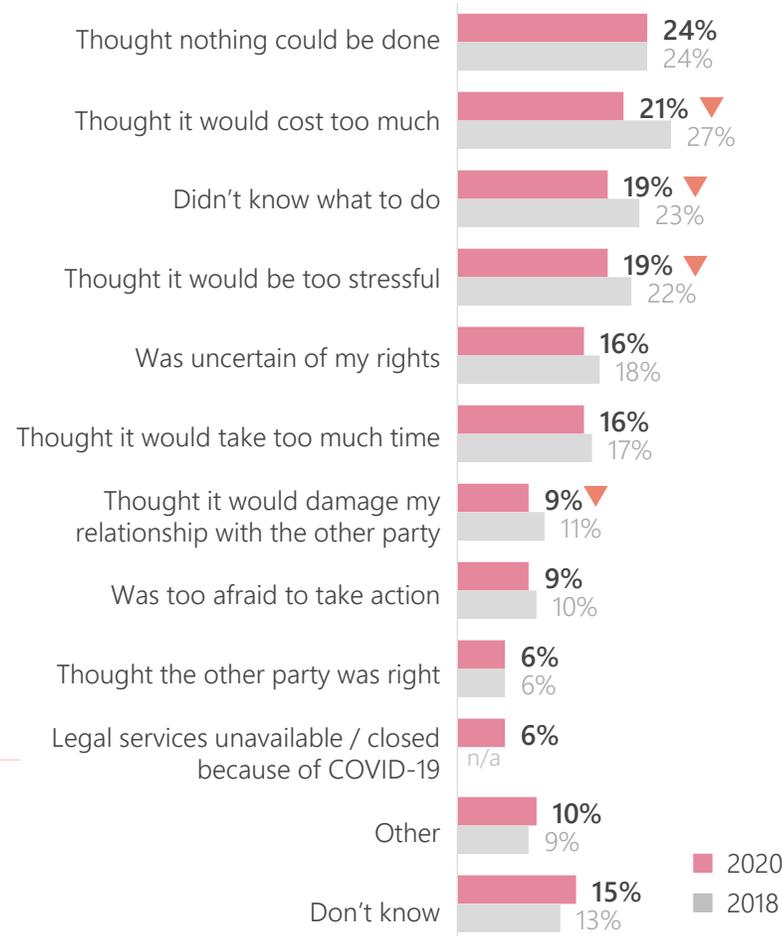
Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q3. Which of the following reasons, if any, describes why you decided to not take any action on your problem(s), even though it was serious?

REASONS FOR NOT SEEKING LEGAL ASSISTANCE – EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SERIOUS

The number one reason that low-income British Columbians did not seek legal assistance for their problem is the belief that nothing could be done. This is followed by the cost of legal services, not knowing what to do and thinking it would be too stressful, which are all mentioned less frequently than in 2018.

Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Advice



Problem Types Most Affected by COVID-19

- 14% Hospital treatment or release
- 13% Welfare or social assistance
- 11% Immigration
- 11% Legal action
- 9% Wills and powers of attorney

Top Reasons for Not Seeking Legal Advice by Problem Type (2020)

Discrimination	Thought nothing could be done (33%)
Employment	Thought nothing could be done (32%)
Money or debt	Thought nothing could be done (29%)
Welfare or social assistance	Thought nothing could be done (29%)
Police incidents	Thought nothing could be done (27%)
Wills and powers of attorney	Thought it would cost too much (37%)
Consumer	Thought it would cost too much (21%)
Housing or land	Thought it would cost too much (21%) Thought it would be too stressful (21%)
Legal action	Thought it would cost too much (21%) Was too afraid to take action (21%)
Hospital treatment or release	Didn't know what to do (25%)
Family relationship	Thought it would be too stressful (23%)
Personal injury	Thought it would be too stressful (22%)
Immigration	Thought it would take too much time (25%)

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018



DETAILED FINDINGS

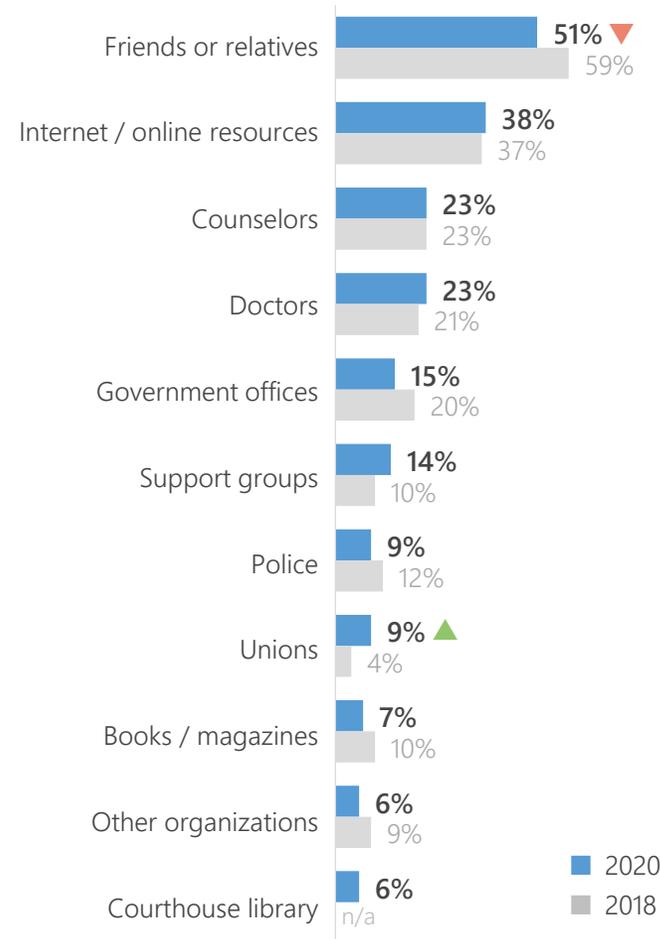
Non-Legal Assistance

SOURCES TURNED TO FOR NON-LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Friends and relatives remain the main source of non-legal assistance for low-income British Columbians, although it is down slightly from two years ago (51% vs. 59% in 2018).

On the other hand, low-income British Columbians are now twice as likely to report turning to unions for non-legal assistance (9% did, up from 4% in 2018).

Sources of **Non-Legal Assistance** Used



- ➡ Younger low-income British Columbians (18 to 34) are more likely to reach out to friends or relatives for help (57% vs. 44% among those 35+).
- ➡ Men are more likely than women to seek assistance from unions (14% vs. 5%) and police (13% vs. 6%).

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Note: % “don’t know” and “other” responses not shown.

Base: Experienced a problem and sought non-legal assistance – 2020 (350); 2018 (310).

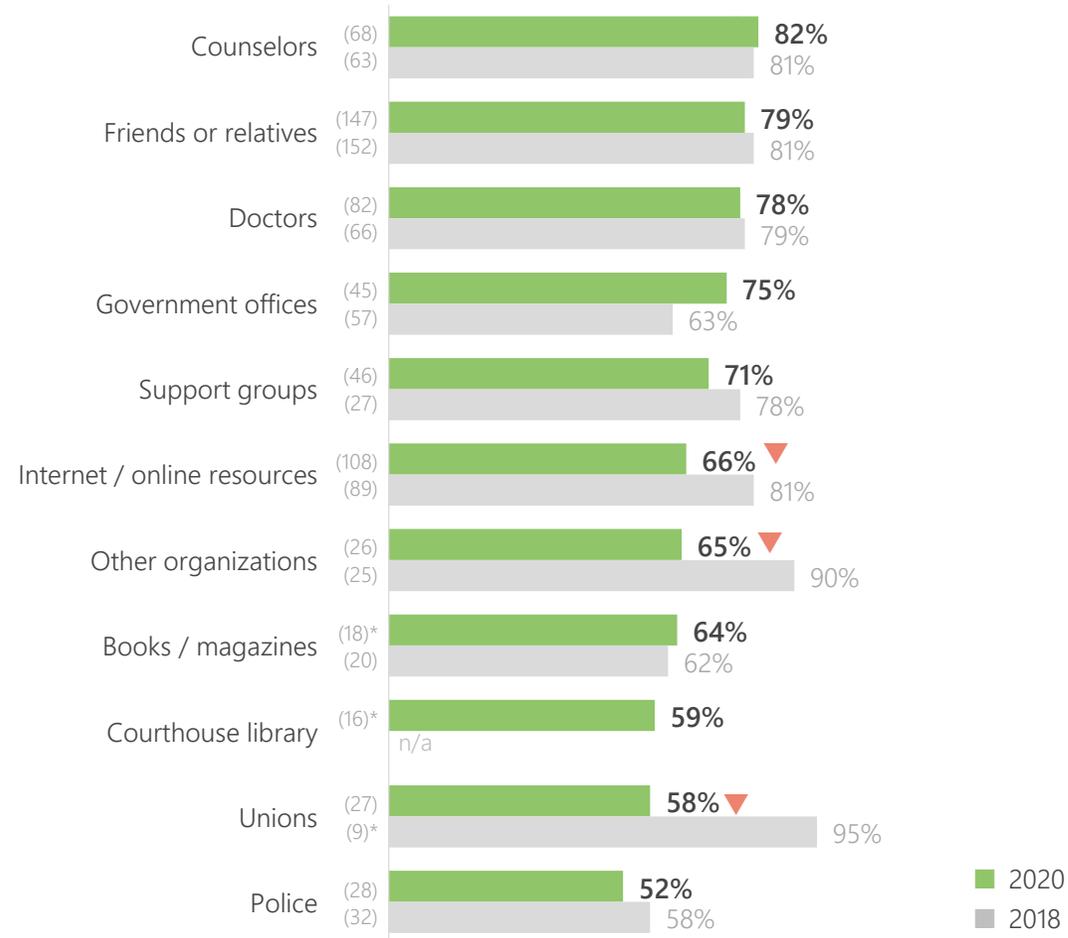
Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q5. Which of the following, if any, did you turn to for non-legal assistance to help you solve your problem(s)? Please select as many as apply for each problem

EFFECTIVENESS OF SOURCES OF NON-LEGAL ASSISTANCE

% Receiving the Non-Legal Assistance Sought

(among those using each source for non-legal assistance)



The majority of low-income British Columbians feel they received the non-legal assistance they were seeking from the sources they used.

The most effective sources are counselors, friends/relatives, doctors and government offices.

Compared to 2018, internet, unions, and other organizations earn lower ratings.

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

*Caution: small base size (n<20).

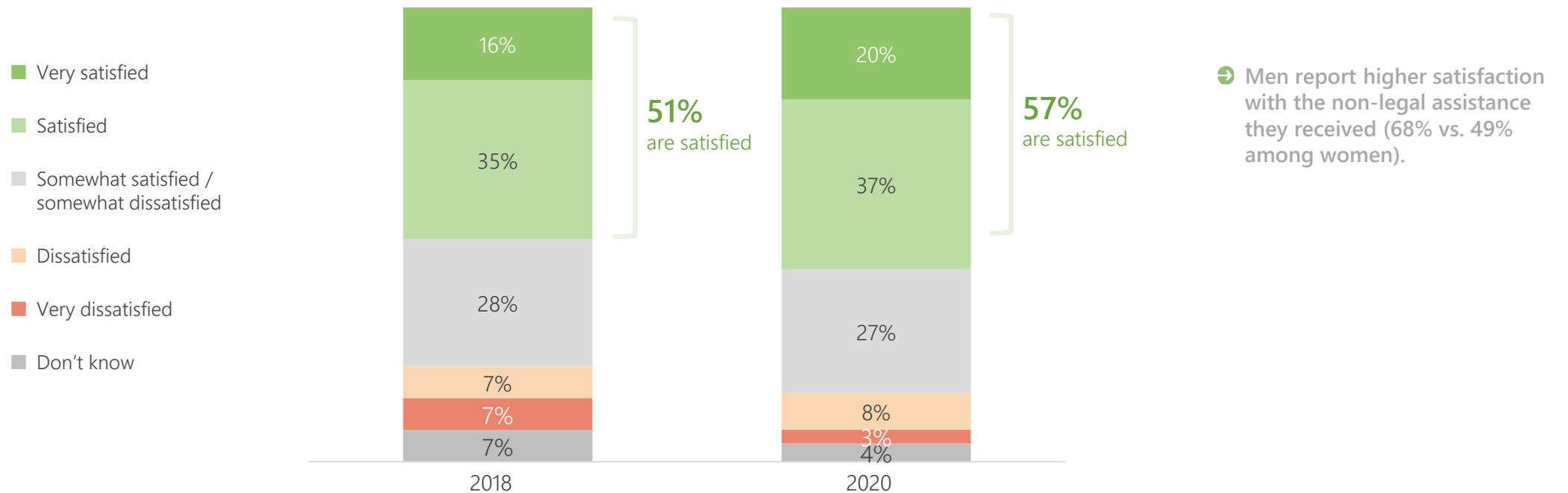
Base: Experienced a problem and sought non-legal assistance from each source (varies).

Q6. And did you receive the non-legal assistance you were seeking/wanting from this/these source(s)?

SATISFACTION WITH NON-LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Overall, 57% of low-income British Columbians who received non-legal assistance are satisfied with the help they received. This has edged up slightly from 51% two years ago.

Satisfaction with Non-Legal Assistance Received



Base: Experienced a problem and sought non-legal assistance – 2020 (451); 2018 (310).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q7. Overall, how satisfied were you with the non-legal assistance you received to help solve your problem(s)?



DETAILED FINDINGS

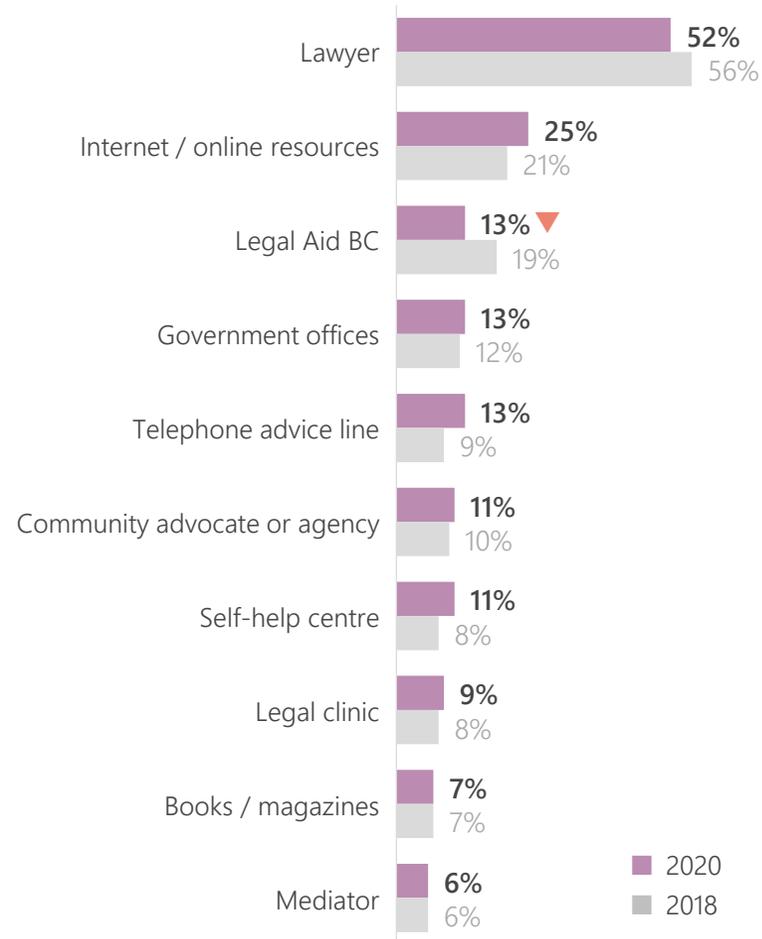
Legal Assistance

SOURCES TURNED TO FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE

In line with 2018, half of low-income British Columbians who sought legal assistance turned to a lawyer and one-quarter went online. The remaining legal sources were used by broadly one-in-ten.

Compared to two years ago, fewer residents report going to Legal Aid BC for legal assistance.

Sources of **Legal Assistance** Used



- ➔ Older individuals (55+) are much less likely to go online for legal assistance (11% vs. 31% of those younger than 55).
- ➔ Meanwhile, those 18-34 are much more likely to turn to self-help centres than their older counterparts (19% vs. 6% among those 35 and older).
- ➔ Island residents are less included to seek legal assistance from government offices (0% compared to 9-16% in other regions).
- ➔ Women are more apt to approach a lawyer to help resolve their problem than men (59% vs. 47%). Conversely, men are twice as likely as women to go to a self-help centre (15% vs. 8%) or a legal clinic (12% vs. 6%).

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Note: % “don’t know” and “other” responses not shown.

Base: Experienced a problem and sought legal assistance – 2020 (334); 2018: (394).

Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q8. Which of the following, if any, did you turn to for legal assistance to help you solve your problem(s)?

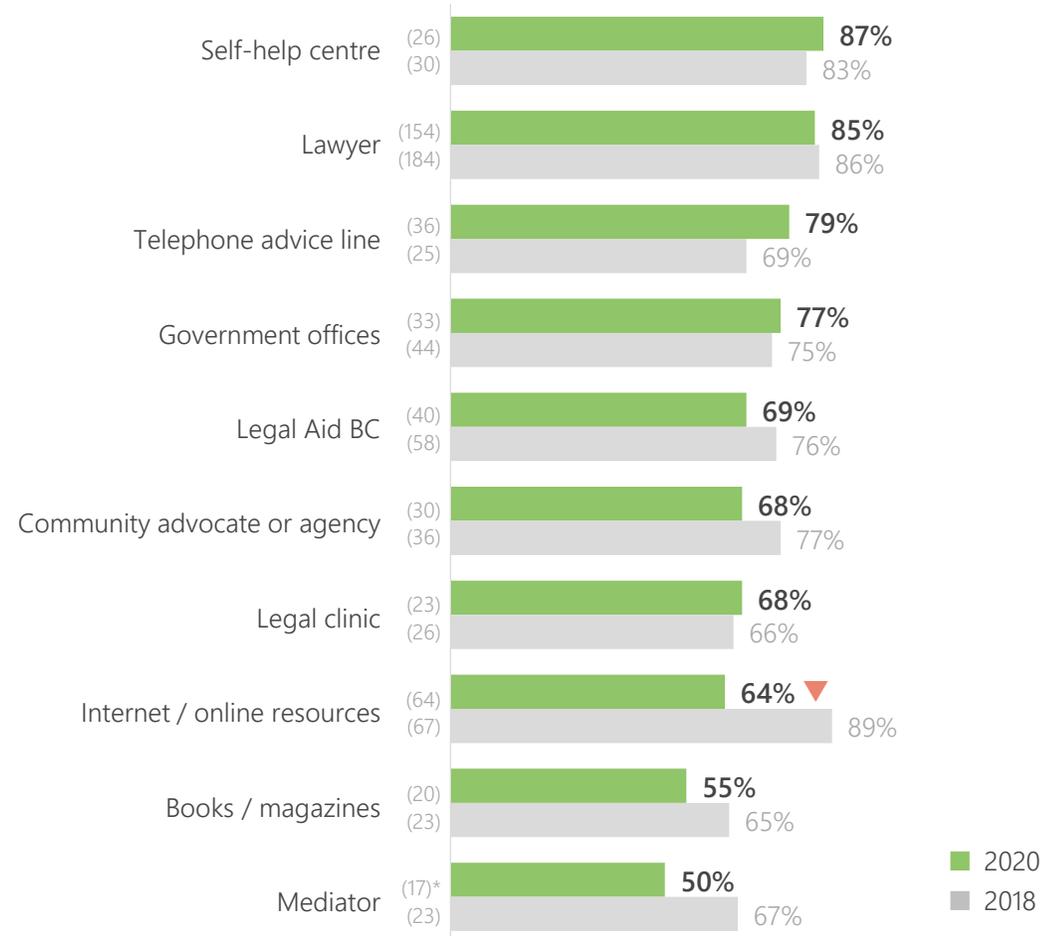
EFFECTIVENESS OF SOURCES OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Self-help centres and lawyers are reported as being the most effective at providing the assistance sought, followed by telephone advice lines and government offices.

Low-income British Columbians found the internet and online resources less effective at providing legal assistance this year.

% Receiving the Legal Assistance Sought

(among those using each source for legal assistance)



*Caution: small base size (n<20).

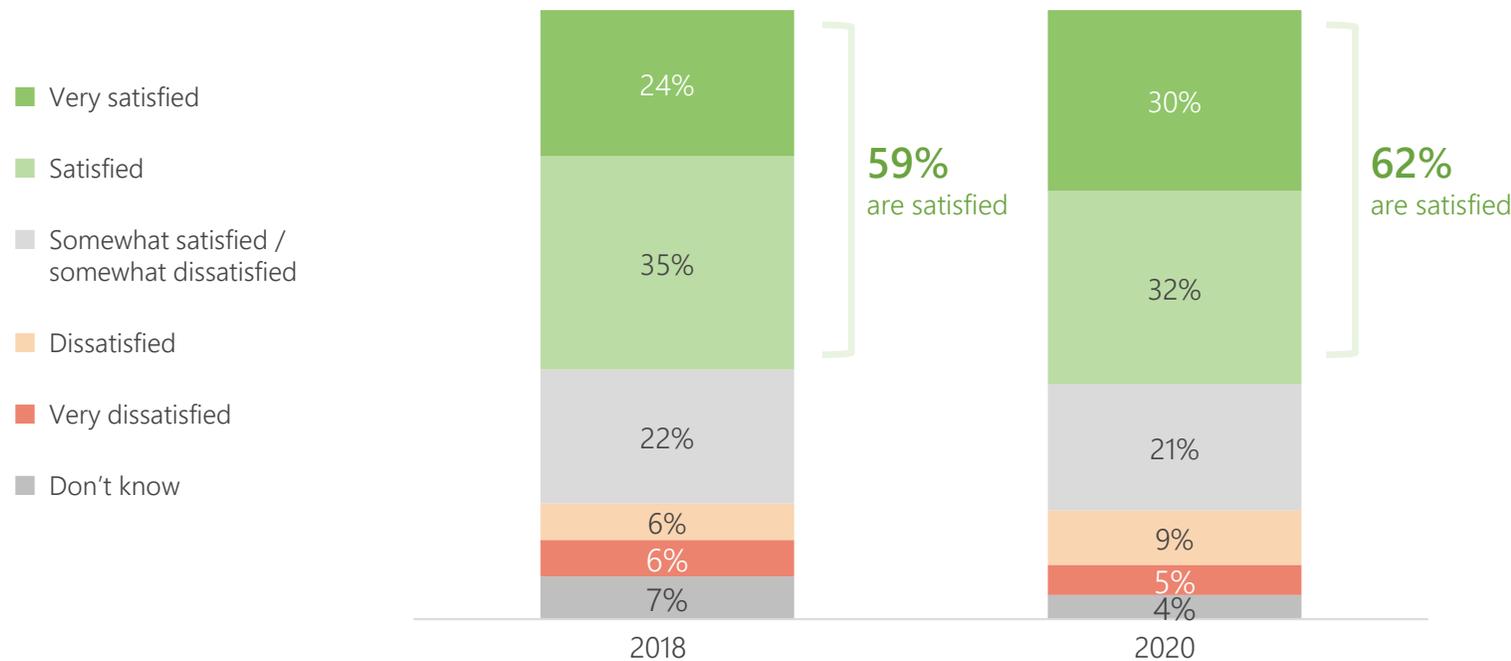
Base: Experienced a problem and sought legal assistance from each source (varies).

Q9. Did you receive the legal assistance that you were seeking/wanting from this/these source(s)?

SATISFACTION WITH LEGAL ASSISTANCE

On par with 2018, six-in-ten low income British Columbians are satisfied with the legal assistance they received. Slightly more residents give top marks this year (30% vs. 24% two years ago).

Satisfaction with Legal Assistance Received



➔ Those older than 55 are especially likely to give top marks to the legal assistance they received (42% are very satisfied vs. 25% among those younger than 55).

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Base: Experienced a problem and sought legal assistance – 2020 (335); 2018 (394).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q10. Overall, how satisfied were you with the legal assistance you received to help solve your problem(s)?

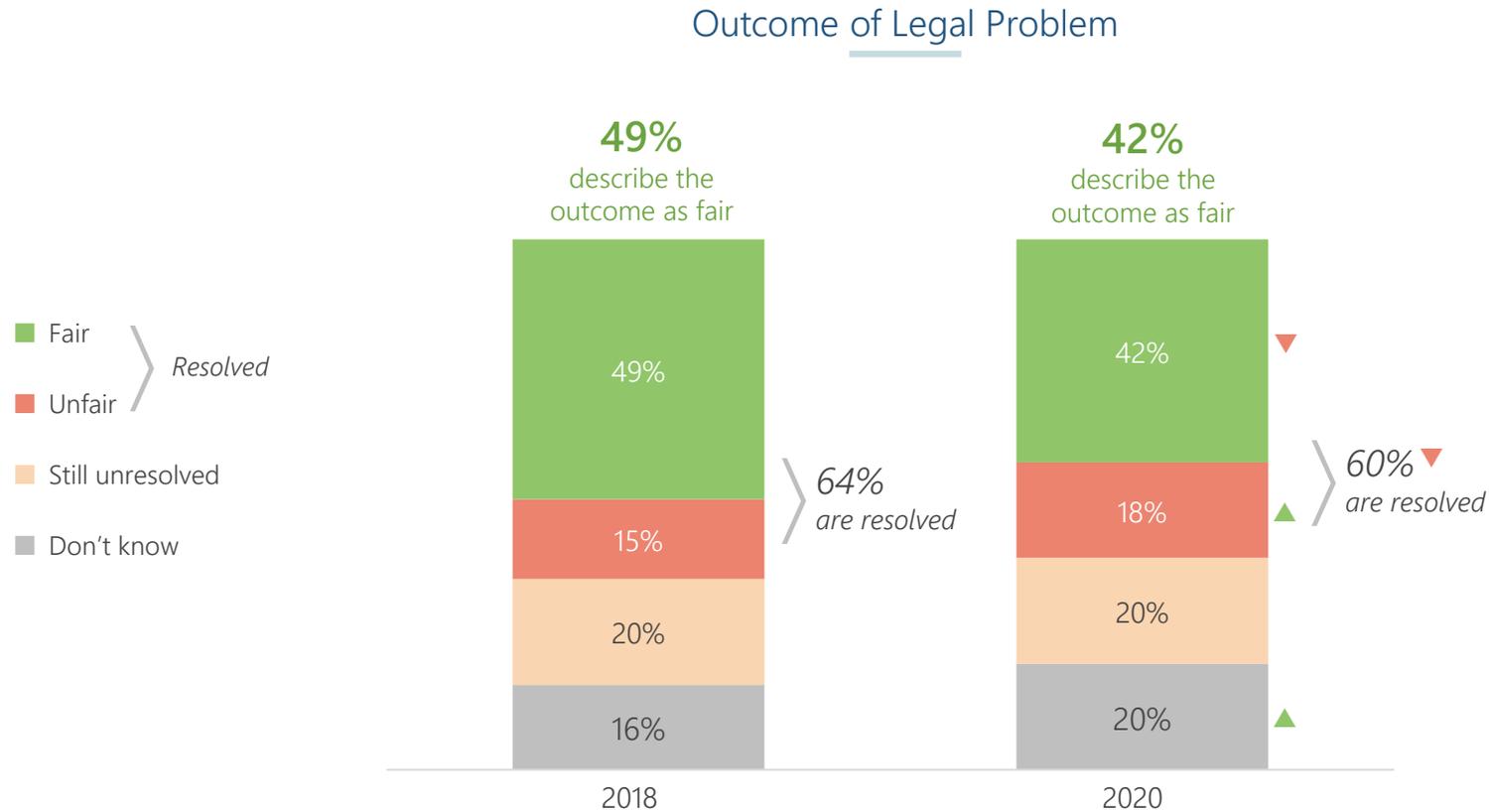
DETAILED FINDINGS

Legal Problem Outcomes



PERCEIVED FAIRNESS OF LEGAL PROBLEM OUTCOME

Low-income British Columbians have somewhat less positive perceptions about the outcome of their legal problem this year, with fewer describing the outcome as fair and more describing the outcome as unfair.



➡ Half of those older than 55 feel the outcome of their problem was fair, compared to 40% among those younger than 55.

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

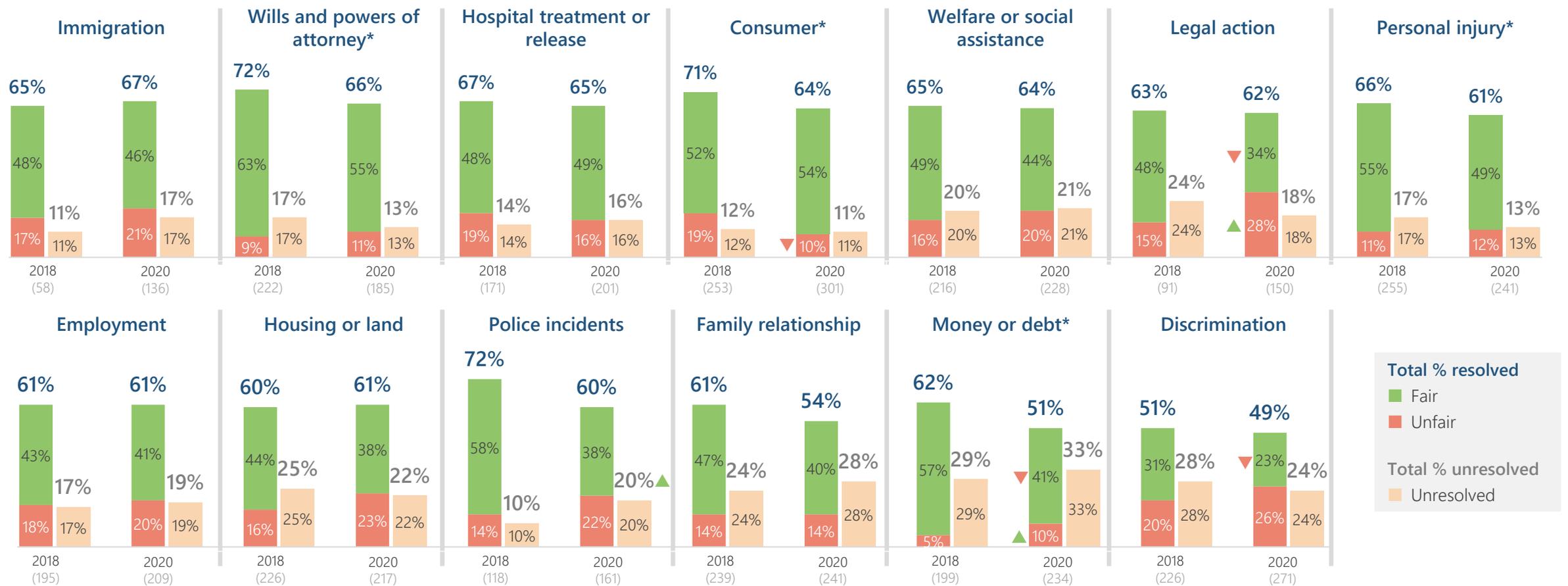
PERCEIVED FAIRNESS OF LEGAL PROBLEM OUTCOME BY PROBLEM TYPE



Problems are resolved at least 60% of the time across all problem types except for family relationship, money/debt and discrimination.

The following differences can be noted compared to 2018: police incidents are twice as likely to be reported as unresolved, and the outcomes of legal action, money/debt and discrimination problems are perceived as less favourable (i.e. less fair and/or more unfair).

Outcome of Legal Problem



Total % resolved
 Fair
 Unfair

Total % unresolved
 Unresolved

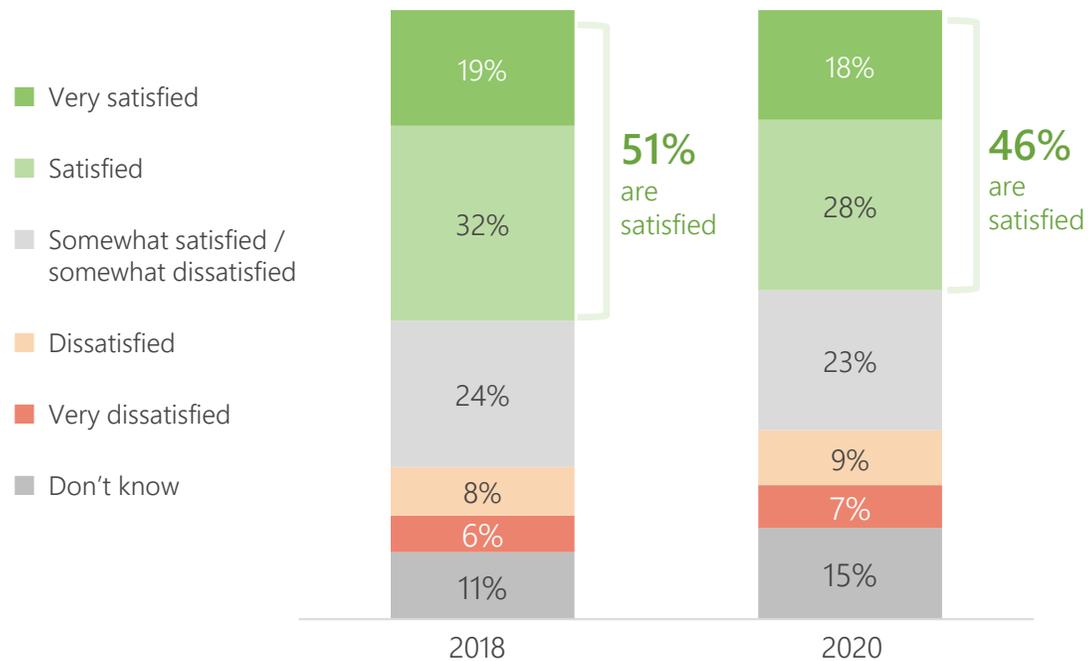
▲ Significantly higher /
 ▼ lower than 2018

Base: Those experiencing each legal problem.
 Note: % "don't know" responses not shown. *Denotes where % don't know responses changed significantly since 2018.
 Q11. Overall, how would you describe the outcome of the problem(s) you experienced in the past 3 years?

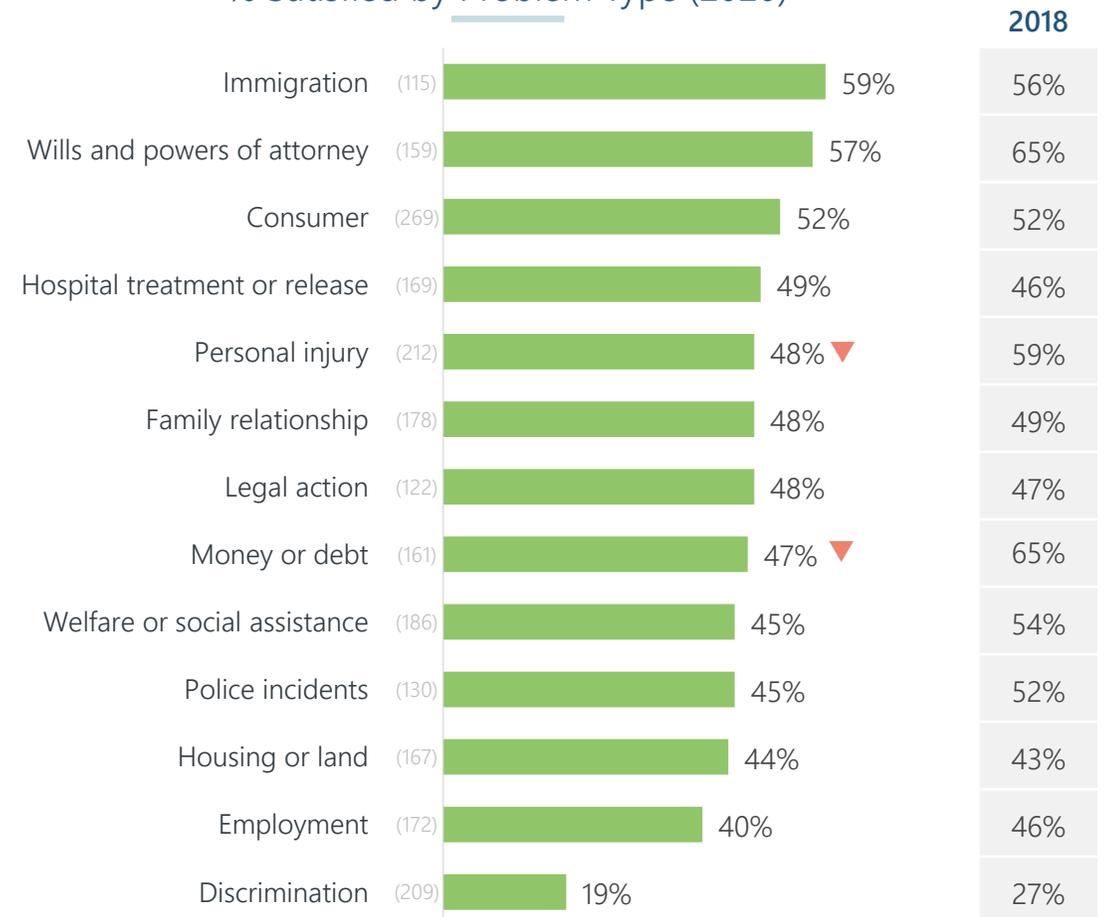
SATISFACTION WITH OUTCOME OF THE LEGAL PROBLEM

Slightly less than half of low-income British Columbians (46%) are satisfied with the outcome of their legal problem, down slightly from 51% in 2018. Personal injury and money/debt problems are the two areas where satisfaction with problem outcomes fell the most.

Satisfaction with Outcome of Legal Problem



% Satisfied by Problem Type (2020)



▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

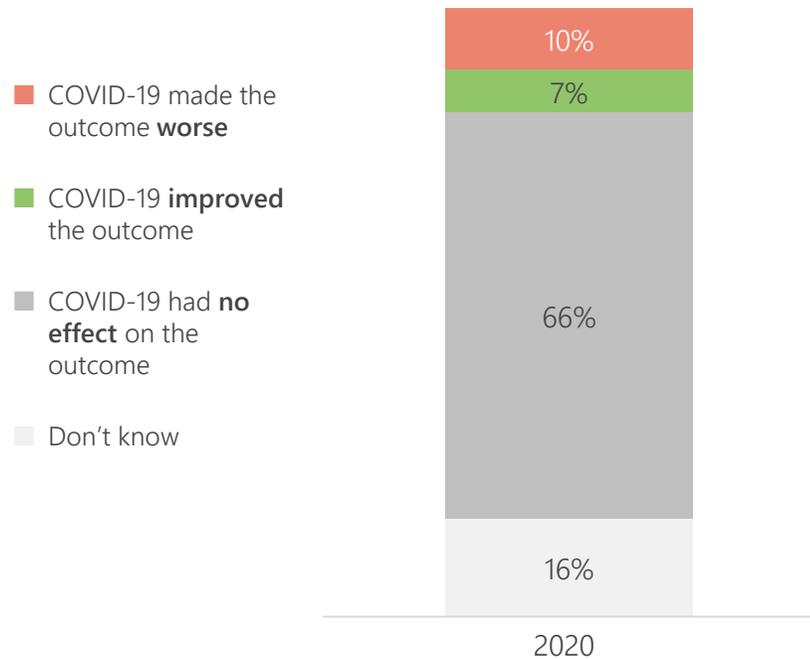
Base: Experienced a problem that was resolved – 2020 (2,249); 2018 (1,986).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the outcome(s) of the problem(s) you experienced in the past 3 years?

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON OUTCOME OF THE LEGAL PROBLEM

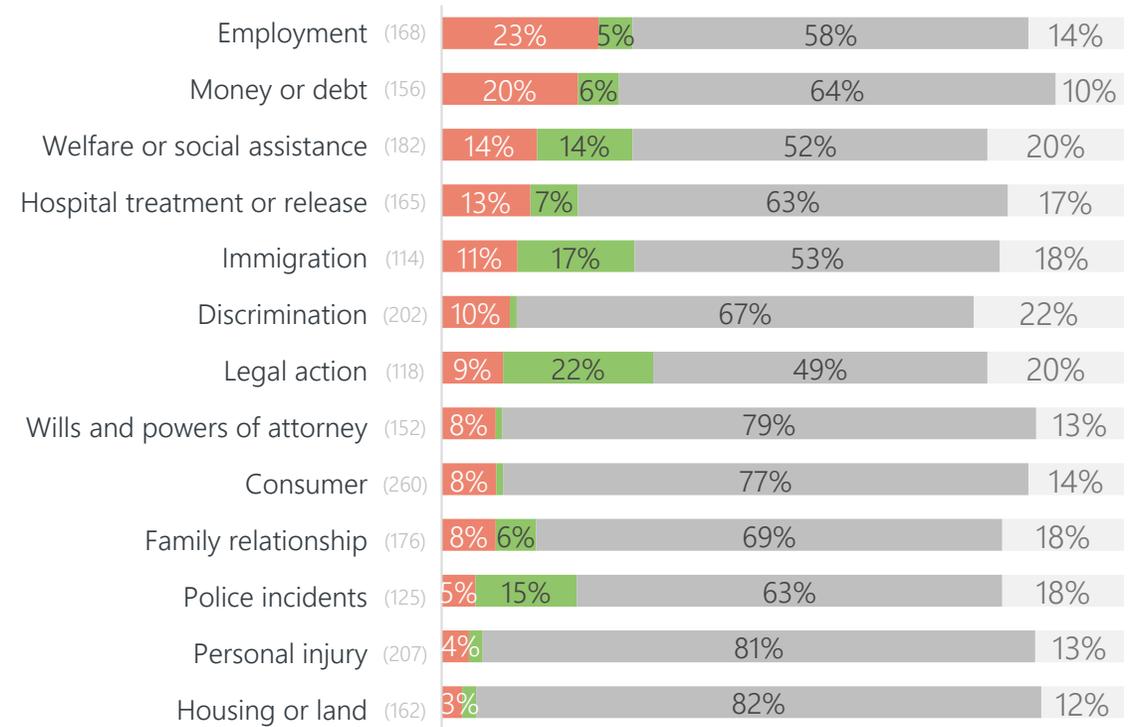


Two-thirds of low-income British Columbians report that COVID-19 did not affect the outcome of their legal problem, and nearly equal proportions report that the pandemic made the outcome worse (10%) or better (7%). Employment and money/debt problems were the most negatively affected by COVID-19. Meanwhile, COVID-19 had a more positive than negative impact when it comes to legal action problems, immigration problems and police incidents.

Effect of COVID-19 on Problem Outcome



By Problem Type



Base: Experienced a problem that was resolved – 2020 (2,187)
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q12b. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the outcome of your problem?

HOW COVID-19 MADE LEGAL PROBLEM WORSE

According to low-income British Columbians who experienced a problem where the outcome was negatively affected by COVID-19, the main reasons were because it affected their employment or finances (because they lost their job, had their hours reduced or had trouble finding a job) or hindered their ability to access resources or medical assistance (services were closed / delayed / had limited hours).

Ways that COVID-19 made the Outcome of Legal Problems Worse	2020
Base: Experienced a problem where COVID-19 made it worse	(138)
Laid off / fired / lost job / no income	20%
Couldn't access help / resources (e.g. no one answering phones / emails)	14%
Couldn't get medical attention (doctor's office / hospitals / treatments / therapists)	10%
Reduced hours at work / less income	8%
Experienced racism / discrimination	8%
Delays / took longer to get help	7%
Difficulty seeking employment / finding a job	7%
Offices / stores were closed / limited hours	7%
Anxiety / stress / negative affect on mental health	5%
Couldn't see family / friends	5%
Strained relationships due to close contact / no alone time	5%
Financial / economic difficulty (general)	4%

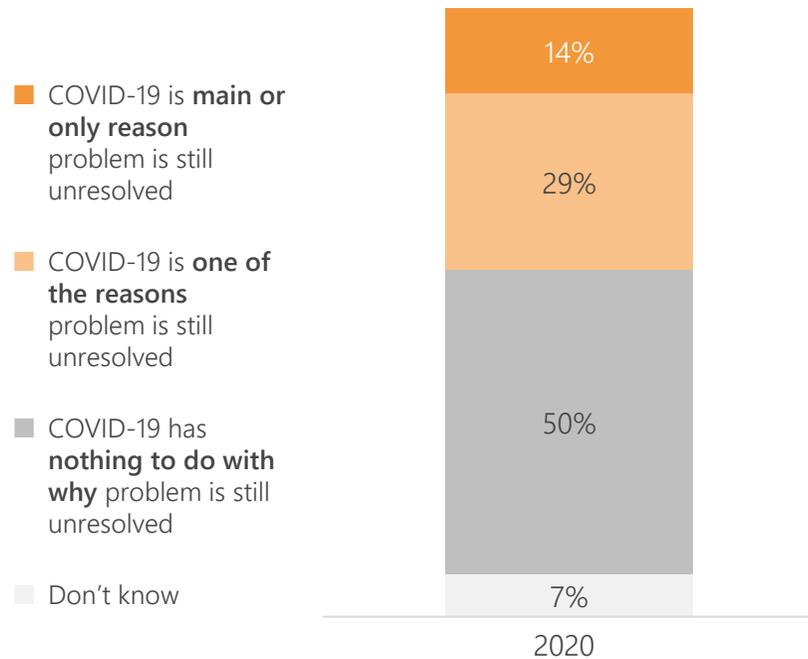
THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON ABILITY TO RESOLVE THE LEGAL PROBLEM



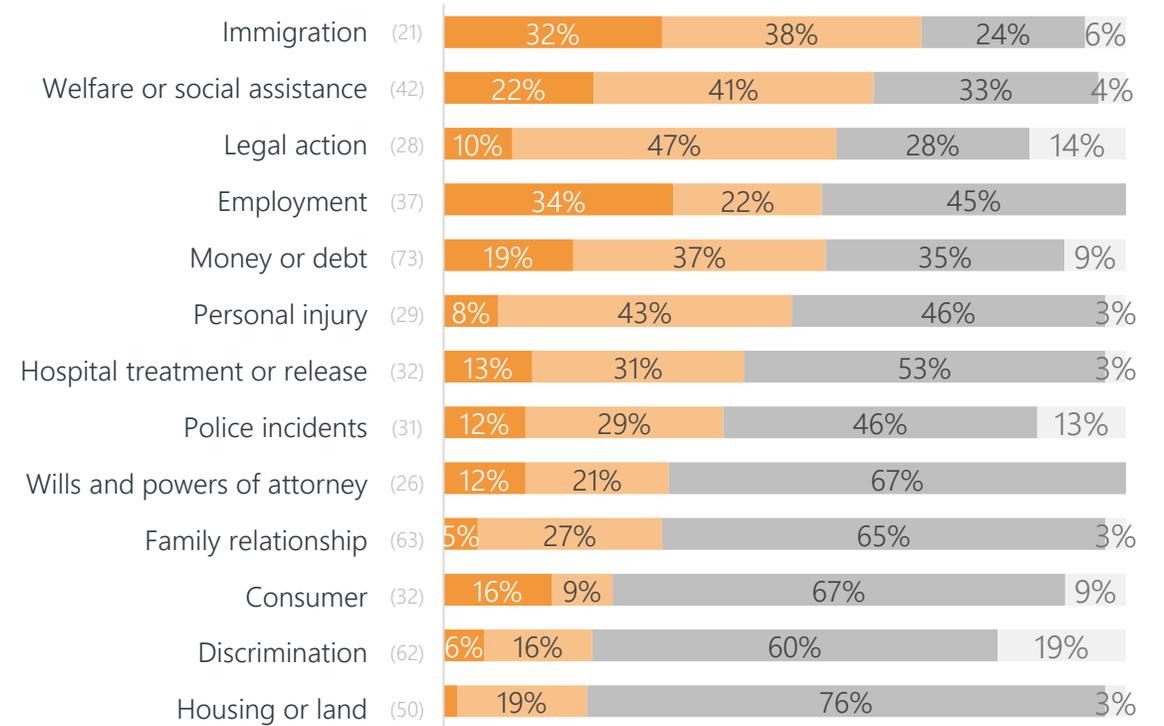
For low-income British Columbians who have a problem that is still currently unresolved, 14% report that COVID-19 is the primary reason, and another 29% report that it is one of the reasons that it is not yet resolved.

COVID-19 is seen as the main or only reason that one-third of immigration and employment problems are unresolved.

Effect of COVID-19 on Ability to Resolve Problem



By Problem Type

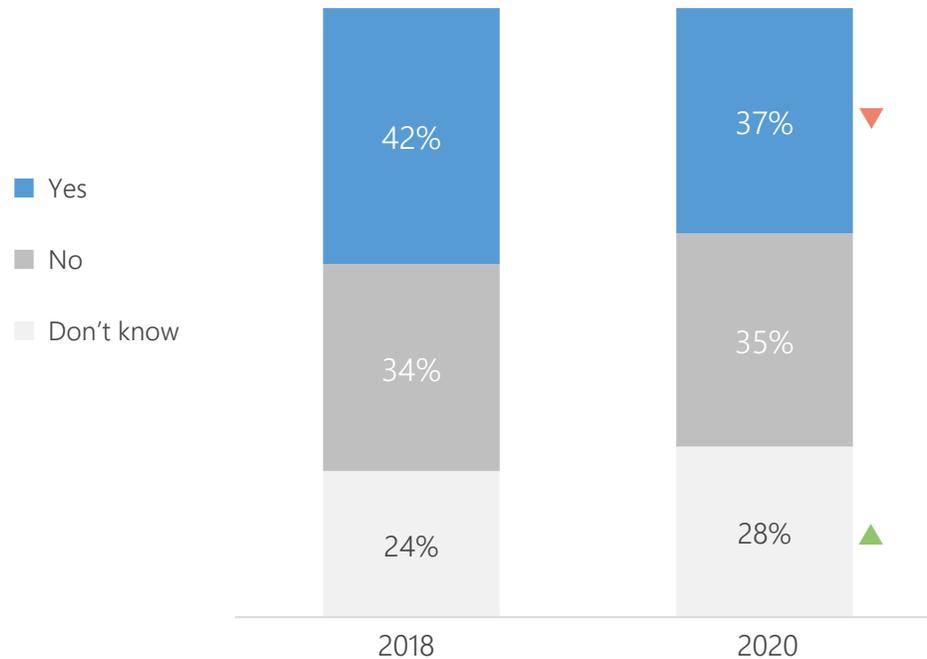


Base: Experienced a problem that is unresolved – 2020 (526)
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q12c. Is the COVID-19 pandemic the reason your problem is still unresolved?

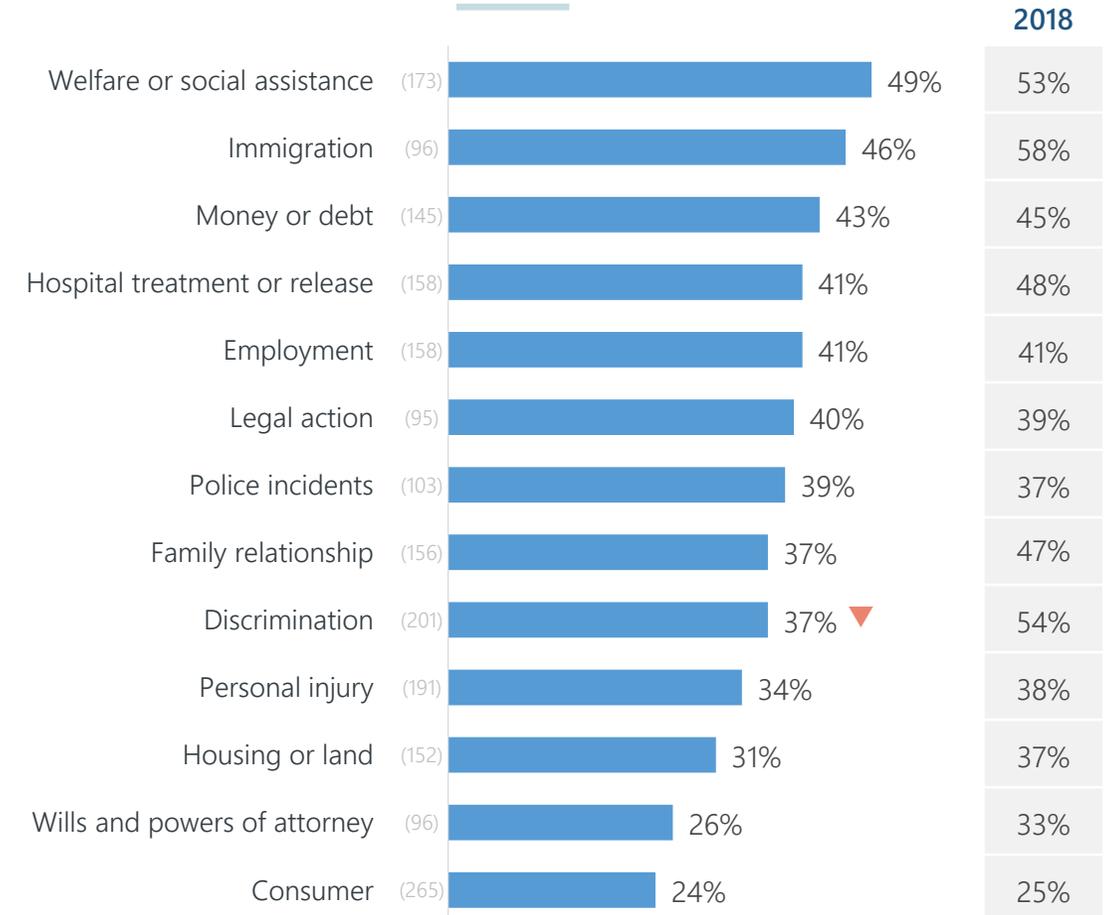
PERCEIVED OUTCOME OF THE LEGAL PROBLEM WITH MORE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

This year, low-income British Columbians who did not seek legal assistance for their problem are less certain that their situation would have worked out better if they had had more assistance. By problem type, those who had a welfare/social assistance problem are most likely to feel that more assistance would have helped (49%). Compared to 2018, fewer individuals who experienced a discrimination problem feel that more assistance would have improved their outcome.

Situation Would have Worked Out Better if had More Assistance



% Yes by Problem Type (2020)



▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

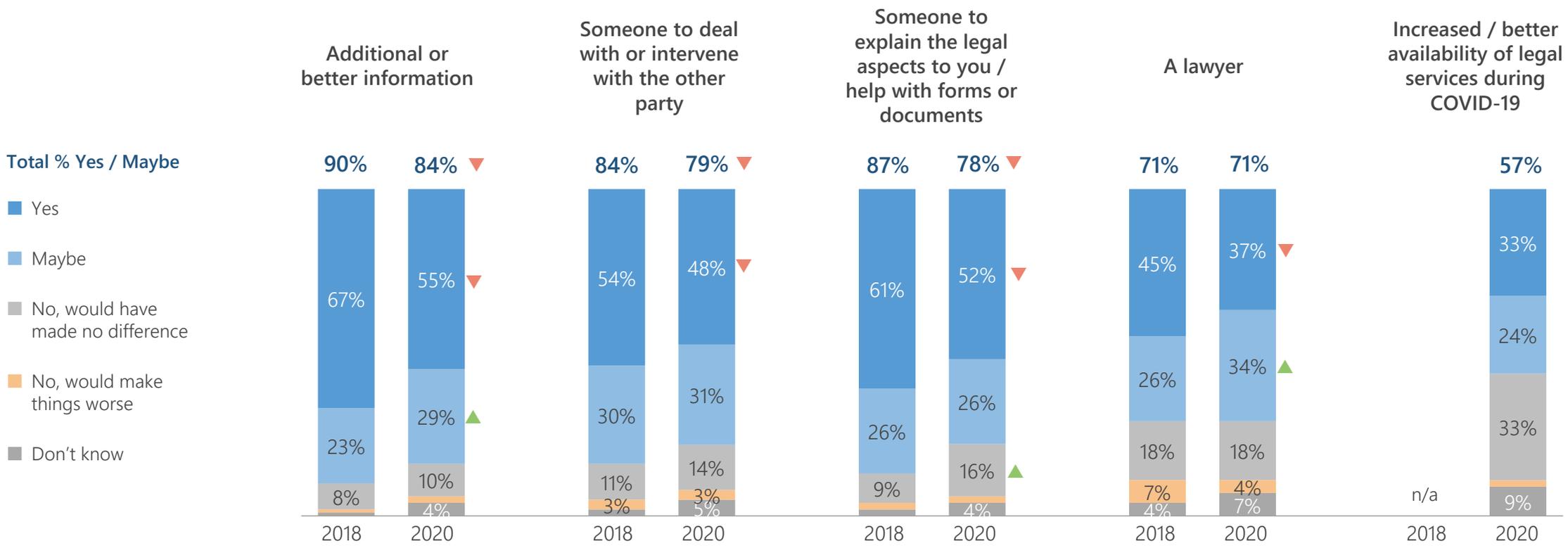
Base: Experienced a problem that was resolved but didn't use legal assistance – 2020 (1,989); 2018 (1,671).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q13. Overall, looking back on the outcome of the following problem(s) you faced, do you feel the situation might have worked out better if you had more assistance?

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF VARIOUS TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

Compared to 2018, low-income British Columbians are somewhat less likely to feel that each of the types of assistance would have helped them achieve a better income, although the majority continue to feel that they might have helped.

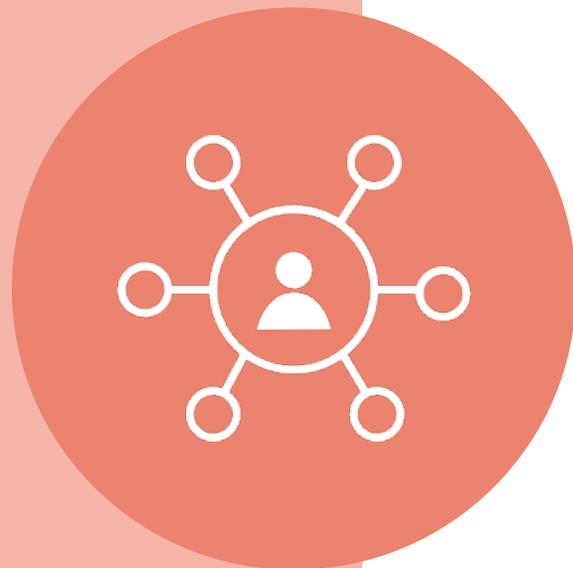
Six-in-ten report that increased availability of legal services during COVID-19 may have helped, including one-third who said it definitely would have helped.

Whether other Types of Assistance Would Have Helped Achieve a Better Outcome



Base: Think their problem would have had a better outcome with more assistance – 2020 (685); 2018 (629).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response)..
 Q14. Do you think that any of the following types of assistance would have helped you to achieve a better outcome for the problem that you experienced?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018



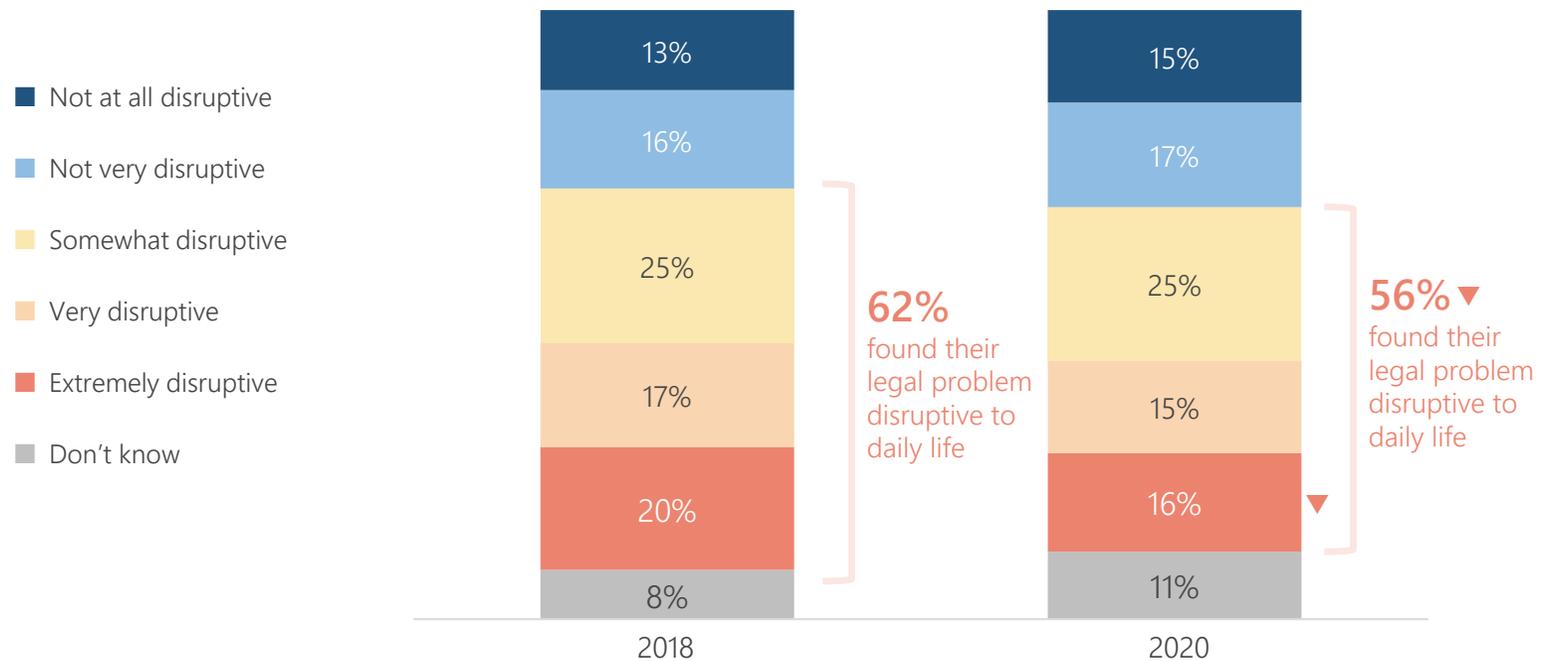
DETAILED FINDINGS

Impact of Legal Problems

IMPACT OF LEGAL PROBLEMS ON DAILY LIFE

The majority of low-income British Columbians (56%) felt their legal problem was disruptive to their daily life when it was at its worst – but this is slightly lower than two years ago (62%). Further, the proportion rating their problem as extremely disruptive is down this year (from 20% to 16% currently).

Impact of Legal Problem when at its Worst



➡ Legal problems tend to be less disruptive for older British Columbians. Half of low-income residents 55 and older felt their problem was disruptive to their daily life, compared to nearly 60% of those younger than 55.

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Base: Total responses – 2020 (2,775); 2018 (2,470).

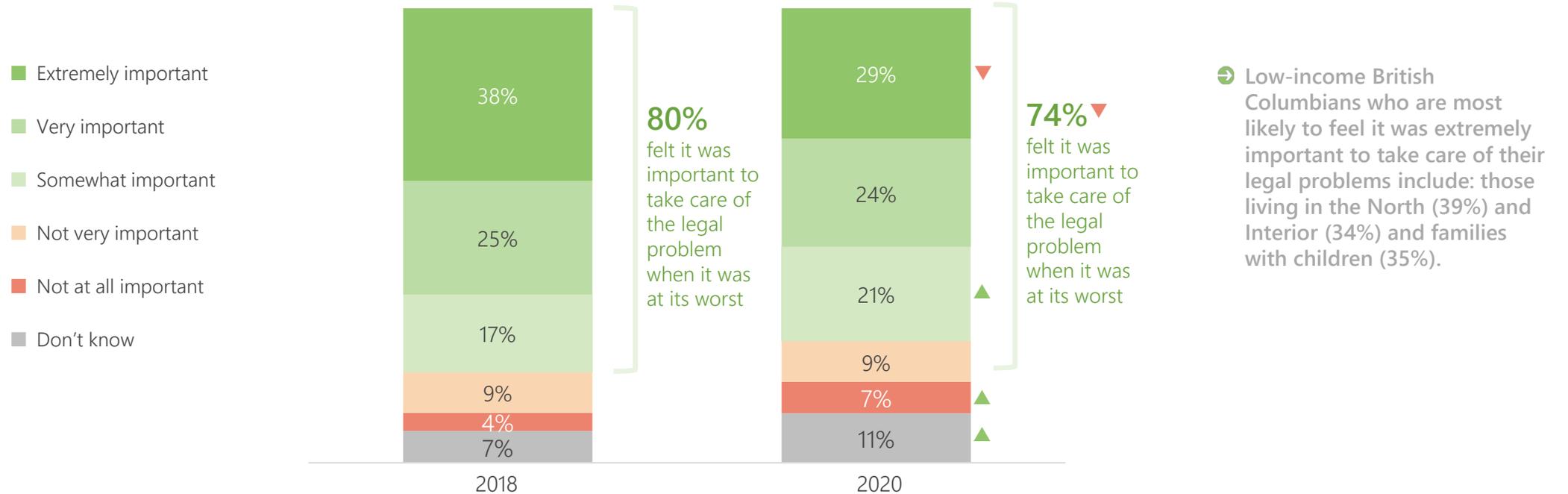
Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q15. Thinking about the problem(s) you experienced within the past 3 years, when it was at its worst, would you say it was generally **disruptive or not disruptive** to your daily life?

IMPORTANCE OF TAKING CARE OF LEGAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED

This year, low-income British Columbians are somewhat less likely to report that it was important to take care of their problems. Specifically, three-quarters felt it was important to take care of their legal problem when it was at its worst, including 29% reporting it was extremely important (down from 80% and 38% in 2018, respectively).

Perceived Importance of Resolving Legal Problem(s) Experienced



Base: Total responses – 2020 (2,775); 2018 (2,469).

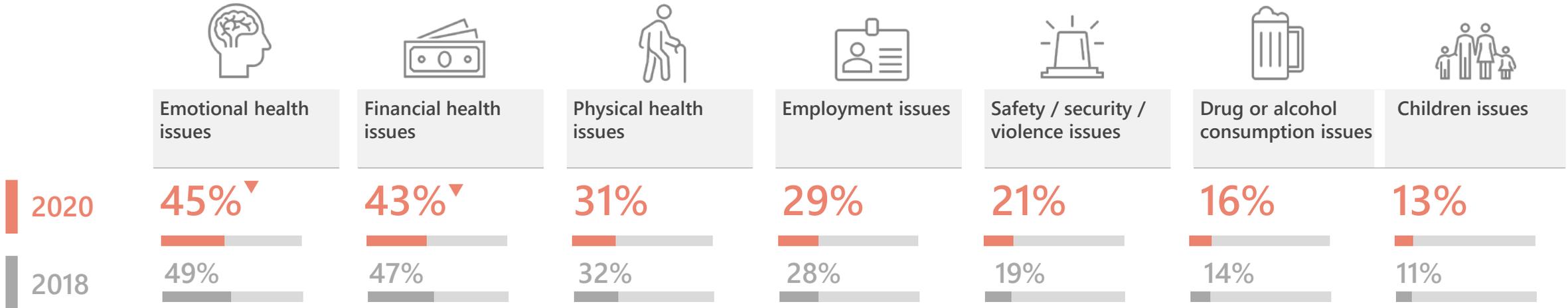
Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).

Q16. Thinking again about your problem(s), when it was at its worst, how important was it to you to take care of the problem(s) so that it was no longer an issue for you?

EXPERIENCED ISSUES AS A RESULT OF THE LEGAL PROBLEM

Broadly in line with 2018, low-income British Columbians are most likely to experience emotional and financial health issues as a result of their legal problem, followed by physical health and employment issues.

% Experiencing the Issue as a Result of their Legal Problem(s)



Types of legal problems that are most likely to result in experiencing each issue (2020)

- > Family relationship (67%)
 - > Hospital treatment or release (56%)
 - > Welfare or social assistance (51%)
 - > Money or debt (52%)
 - > Discrimination (49%)
 - > Employment (49%)
- > Money or debt (75%)
 - > Welfare or social assistance (68%)
 - > Employment (59%)
 - > Legal action (53%)
 - > Family relationship (52%)
- > Personal injury (60%)
 - > Hospital treatment or release (51%)
 - > Family relationship (38%)
 - > Welfare or social assistance (38%)
- > Employment (61%)
 - > Welfare or social assistance (42%)
 - > Immigration (37%)
- > Police incidents (39%)
 - > Immigration (35%)
 - > Legal action (33%)
 - > Family relationship (29%)
- > Police incidents (32%)
 - > Immigration (28%)
 - > Legal action (28%)
 - > Family relationship (26%)
 - > Hospital treatment or release (25%)
 - > Welfare or social assistance (21%)
- > Family relationship (30%)
 - > Immigration (29%)
 - > Police incidents (26%)
 - > Legal action (24%)

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than 2018

Base: Total responses – 2020 (2,775); 2018 (2,469).
 Results presented are based on the total number of responses not respondents (i.e. each problem experienced by a respondent is considered one unique response).
 Q17. Which of the following, if any, did you experience as a result of the problem you encountered in the past 3 years?



DETAILED FINDINGS

Justice System Perceptions

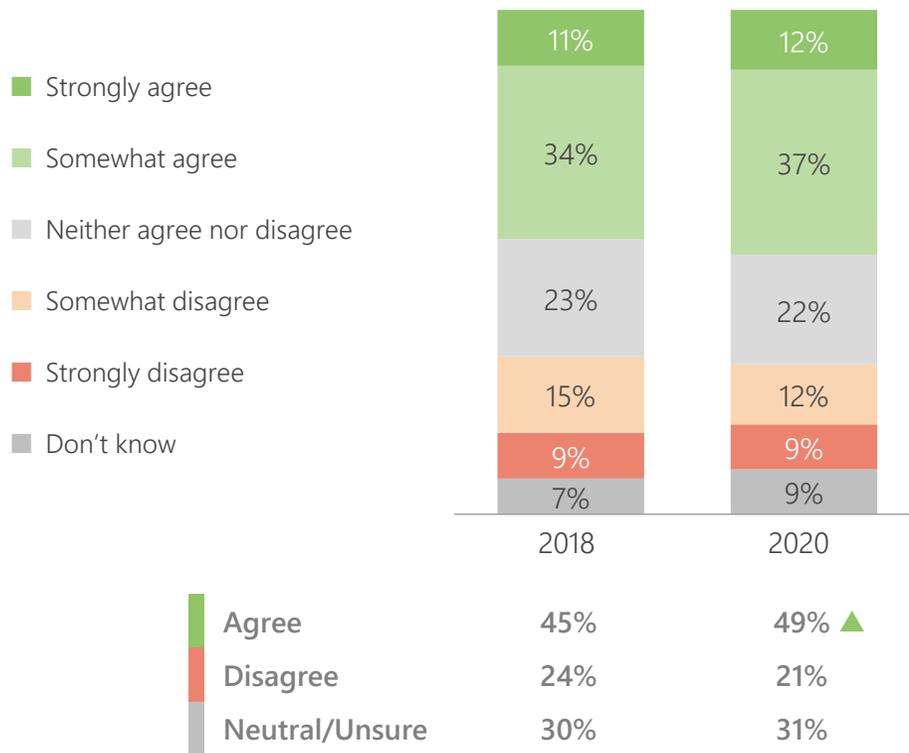
PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS AND CONFIDENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



Compared to two years ago, low-income British Columbians are slightly more likely to agree that the Canadian laws and justice system are essentially fair and that the justice system in BC is effective at resolving legal problems.

The laws and justice system in Canadian society are essentially fair

The justice system in British Columbia is effective at resolving legal problems



- ➔ Interior residents are less likely than their counterparts to agree that the laws and justice system in Canada are fair. They are also least likely to agree – along with residents of the North – that the BC justice system is effective.
- ➔ Residents younger than 35 are most likely to agree that the justice system in BC is effective (47% vs. 38% among those over 35%).
- ➔ Compared to men, women are less likely to agree with both points-of-view.
- ➔ Agreement tends to increase with level of education (i.e. residents who attended university are most likely to agree).



DETAILED FINDINGS

Respondent Profile

RESPONDENT PROFILE

		Experienced at least one Legal Problem (2020)			
		Total 2018	Total 2020	Yes	No
Base		(1,204)	(1,207)	(974)	(233)
	Gender				
	Male	43%	42%	43%	40%
	Female	57%	57%	56%	60%
	Other	0%	1%	1%	0%
	Age				
	18 to 24	11%	15% ▲	16%	8%
	25 to 34	22%	22%	24%	10%
	35 to 44	15%	15%	15%	14%
	45 to 54	16%	15%	15%	14%
	55 to 64	13%	11%	10%	14%
	65+	23%	23%	20%	39%
	Region				
	Metro Vancouver	44%	46%	46%	48%
	Fraser Valley	13%	12%	12%	10%
	Vancouver Island / Coast	17%	18%	17%	18%
	Thompson / Kootenays / Okanagan	20%	18%	19%	17%
	North	6%	6%	6%	7%
	Education				
	High school or less	28%	25%	24%	30%
	Vocational / technical / college	28%	26%	26%	23%
	Some university	16%	14%	14%	12%
	Graduated university	20%	25% ▲	24%	27%
	Post-graduate degree	7%	7%	8%	5%
	Prefer not to answer	2%	3%	3%	3%

■ ■ Significantly higher / lower than Total 2020*
▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than Total 2018

*The colour shading compares the demographics of those who have (or have not) experienced a legal problem to the total sample of low-income British Columbians. For example: those who have not experienced a legal problem in the past three years are older than the average low-income resident.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

		Experienced at least one Legal Problem (2020)			
		Total 2018	Total 2020	Yes	No
Base		(1,204)	(1,207)	(974)	(233)
Household Income					
	Less than \$25,000	25%	21% ▼	21%	20%
	\$25,000 to <\$45,000	39%	39%	40%	37%
	\$45,000 to <\$65,000	21%	22%	22%	20%
	\$65,000 or more	2%	3%	3%	4%
	Prefer not to answer	13%	15%	14%	20%
Household Composition					
	Single with no children at home	-	35%	35%	35%
	Couple with no children at home	-	27%	27%	26%
	Family with children under 18 at home	-	16%	17%	12%
	Family with adult children at home	-	9%	9%	11%
	Other	-	9%	7%	14%
Prefer not to say	-	4%	4%	3%	
Household Size					
	1 person	30%	28%	27%	34%
	2 people	38%	36%	36%	36%
	3 people	16%	14%	14%	15%
	4 people	12%	13%	13%	9%
	5 people	3%	6% ▲	7%	3%
	6 people	1%	2%	1%	3%
	7 or more people	1%	1%	1%	0%

■ ■ Significantly higher / lower than Total 2020
▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than Total 2018

RESPONDENT PROFILE



	Total 2018	Total 2020	Experienced at least one Legal Problem (2020)	
			Yes	No
Base		(1,207)	(974)	(233)
Ethnic / Cultural Background				
Canadian	-	59%	60%	55%
Chinese	-	11%	11%	14%
European	-	10%	9%	11%
South Asian	-	5%	6%	5%
Filipino	-	2%	1%	2%
Indigenous – First Nations, Inuit, Metis	-	2%	2%	1%
African	-	1%	1%	2%
Japanese	-	1%	1%	1%
Korean	-	1%	1%	0%
Southeast Asian	-	1%	1%	%
Another ethnic or cultural background	-	4%	4%	4%
Prefer not to answer	-	4%	4%	5%

■ Significantly higher / lower than Total 2020

RESPONDENT PROFILE BY TYPE OF LEGAL PROBLEM EXPERIENCED



Type of Legal Problem Experienced

	Total 2020	Consumer	Employment	Money/debt	Welfare/social assistance	Housing/land	Immigration	Discrimination	Police incidents	Family relationship	Wills & power of attorney	Personal injury	Hospital treatment/release	Legal action
Base	(1,207)	(574)	(399)	(381)	(237)	(370)	(137)	(347)	(162)	(297)	(241)	(340)	(224)	(152)
Gender														
Male	42%	46%	47%	48%	52%	44%	61%	45%	66%	50%	54%	46%	54%	60%
Female	57%	54%	52%	51%	47%	55%	38%	53%	33%	48%	44%	53%	44%	39%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Age														
18 to 24	15%	18%	21%	18%	23%	21%	21%	22%	14%	17%	13%	19%	20%	18%
25 to 34	22%	28%	34%	27%	36%	31%	49%	33%	44%	33%	26%	31%	38%	44%
35 to 44	15%	12%	14%	15%	14%	14%	14%	14%	18%	14%	10%	14%	13%	11%
45 to 54	15%	17%	15%	18%	13%	13%	7%	12%	12%	17%	12%	16%	14%	8%
55 to 64	11%	9%	8%	8%	7%	10%	3%	7%	4%	7%	12%	8%	7%	7%
65+	23%	16%	8%	14%	7%	12%	6%	12%	8%	12%	28%	13%	7%	12%
Region														
Metro Vancouver	46%	48%	50%	45%	48%	45%	61%	50%	47%	47%	49%	54%	52%	53%
Fraser Valley	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	12%	9%	11%	11%	12%	11%	10%	11%	14%
Vancouver Island / Coast	18%	17%	15%	18%	15%	18%	12%	15%	18%	16%	16%	16%	16%	14%
Thompson / Koot / OK	18%	19%	18%	19%	20%	18%	13%	16%	17%	19%	18%	17%	15%	14%
North	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%	3%	7%	5%
Education														
High school or less	25%	24%	23%	27%	25%	24%	14%	22%	30%	26%	23%	27%	26%	17%
Vocational / technical / college	26%	23%	23%	27%	22%	24%	16%	21%	19%	26%	22%	25%	18%	23%
Some university	14%	15%	16%	12%	16%	15%	11%	16%	7%	14%	14%	13%	13%	15%
Graduated university	25%	26%	25%	23%	25%	26%	37%	28%	29%	22%	26%	23%	27%	27%
Post-graduate degree	7%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	20%	10%	13%	10%	12%	11%	12%	15%
Prefer not to answer	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%

■ ■ Relatively higher / lower than other problem types

RESPONDENT PROFILE BY TYPE OF LEGAL PROBLEM EXPERIENCED



Type of Legal Problem Experienced

	Total 2020	Consumer	Employment	Money/debt	Welfare/social assistance	Housing/land	Immigration	Discrimination	Police incidents	Family relationship	Wills & power of attorney	Personal injury	Hospital treatment/release	Legal action
Base	(1,207)	(574)	(399)	(381)	(237)	(370)	(137)	(347)	(162)	(297)	(241)	(340)	(224)	(152)
Household Income														
Less than \$25,000	21%	20%	24%	24%	29%	25%	20%	23%	24%	22%	19%	21%	23%	18%
\$25,000 to <\$45,000	39%	38%	37%	38%	31%	34%	33%	36%	27%	40%	37%	37%	31%	29%
\$45,000 to <\$65,000	22%	25%	26%	25%	27%	28%	38%	26%	38%	25%	30%	26%	34%	41%
\$65,000 or more	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Prefer not to answer	15%	13%	10%	10%	10%	11%	7%	11%	8%	11%	11%	12%	10%	10%
Household Composition														
Single - no children at home	35%	31%	33%	34%	31%	32%	23%	32%	32%	34%	35%	33%	33%	23%
Couple - no children at home	27%	29%	26%	26%	26%	29%	38%	26%	28%	25%	35%	28%	27%	34%
Family - children <18 at home	16%	16%	18%	18%	19%	18%	24%	18%	22%	20%	14%	20%	20%	25%
Family - adult children at home	9%	11%	11%	10%	12%	11%	9%	11%	8%	7%	6%	10%	10%	8%
Other	9%	8%	8%	9%	9%	7%	2%	9%	7%	11%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Household Size														
1 person	28%	23%	23%	25%	24%	26%	14%	23%	24%	26%	29%	22%	22%	18%
2 people	36%	36%	35%	37%	37%	36%	43%	36%	34%	37%	43%	36%	36%	43%
3 people	14%	16%	16%	15%	14%	15%	15%	13%	17%	17%	11%	13%	16%	15%
4 people	13%	15%	15%	14%	15%	12%	17%	16%	13%	12%	9%	15%	14%	11%
5 people	6%	8%	9%	6%	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	5%	6%	10%	10%	11%
6 people	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
7 or more people	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

RESPONDENT PROFILE BY TYPE OF LEGAL PROBLEM EXPERIENCED



Type of Legal Problem Experienced

	Total 2020	Consumer	Employment	Money/debt	Welfare/social assistance	Housing/land	Immigration	Discrimination	Police incidents	Family relationship	Wills & power of attorney	Personal injury	Hospital treatment/release	Legal action
Base	(1,207)	(574)	(399)	(381)	(237)	(370)	(137)	(347)	(162)	(297)	(241)	(340)	(224)	(152)
Ethnic / Cultural Background														
Canadian	59%	58%	61%	67%	63%	62%	51%	54%	71%	70%	71%	59%	61%	72%
Chinese	11%	11%	9%	6%	7%	9%	7%	11%	7%	5%	6%	9%	8%	7%
European	10%	9%	8%	8%	9%	9%	10%	7%	5%	8%	11%	8%	8%	8%
South Asian	5%	6%	7%	5%	4%	6%	11%	8%	3%	3%	3%	7%	5%	4%
Filipino	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	<1%	1%
Indigenous	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%
African	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Japanese	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%	<1%	0%
Korean	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Southeast Asian	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	<1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Other	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%	9%	6%	4%	4%	2%	4%	5%	3%
Prefer not to answer	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%



Appendix