



LSS 2012 Public Opinion Poll

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Objectives & Methodology



Objectives & Methodology

- Each year, Legal Services Society (LSS) of BC participates in a province-wide poll to measure awareness, knowledge and attitudes about legal aid in BC.
- The study has been in place since 2005, with the questionnaire changing slightly each year to reflect current goals and priorities. Hence, for some questions, trends date back as far as 2005 and on others, only as far back as 2009.
- A total of 602 BC residents were interviewed from Ipsos Reid's fully supervised, in-house CATI facility located in Vancouver, BC. Interviewing for this study took place from February 28th to March 9th, 2012.
- Respondents were screened out if they or anyone in their household was closely related to a Legal Services Society employee or a lawyer who provides legal aid services.
- To ensure the final sample was an accurate representation of the BC population, it was mathematically weighted by age and gender within region.

- The margins of error at the 95% level of confidence for a sample size of 602 is +/-4%.
- When comparing 2012 to 2011, 2010 or 2009 findings (n=602 versus n=562, n=574 or n=753), a maximum difference of +/-6 percentage points is required to be considered significant at the 95% level of confidence.
- When comparing 2012 to 2011 findings among regional sub-groups (such as Metro Vancouver/Southwest, Island and Interior), the following maximum differences are required in order for the difference to be considered significant at the 95% level of confidence:

Metro Vancouver/Southwest	+/-7 percentage points
Island	+/-13 percentage points
Interior	+/-12 percentage points

Highlights



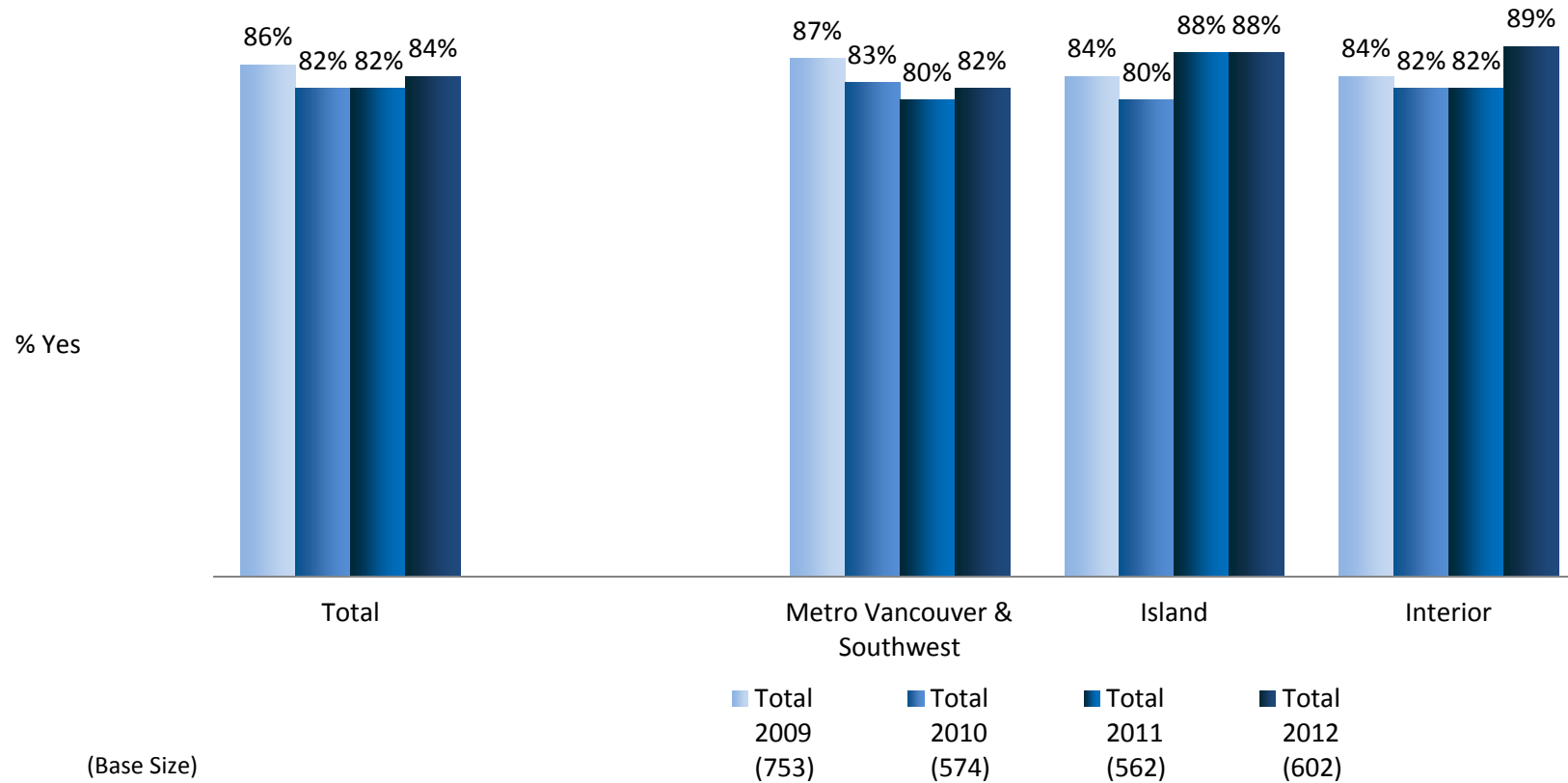
Highlights

- **Awareness levels and public opinions of legal aid in BC remains fairly stable compared to 2011.** Residents continue to get their news or information about legal aid through stories in the media, followed by word of mouth. This year, more residents claim hearing something about legal aid within the past few months.
- **Awareness of BC's legal aid services remains high at 84%**, unchanged from one year ago. Knowledge that legal aid is available for criminal (73%) and family (66%) law matters specifically has increased slightly since 2011 (up 5 percentage points each), while awareness of immigration/refugee legal aid services continues to be less widespread (50%).
- **The vast majority (91%) continue to support maintaining legal aid services for those with low incomes**, including 58% who are strongly in support.
- In addition, **most BC residents maintain the view that everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if it means spending more money to reach those in remote and rural areas** (93% agreeing, including 56% who strongly agree).
- Further, the **large majority of the province continues to feel it is important to ensure fairness in the justice system by providing legal aid services in family court, other civil legal proceedings, criminal court and immigration/refugee hearings.** Of the four areas, legal aid in family court receives the highest priority.
- **BC residents are still divided or uncertain as to whether or not legal aid services receives enough funding.** As in 2011, just over one-third (36%) admit they do not know whether legal aid is sufficiently funded. Among those offering an opinion, 33% believe funding is adequate or more than adequate, directionally down from one year ago. This leaves 67% who feel legal aid is underfunded. Obtaining more funding is also the top suggestion for improving legal aid services in BC (21%), followed by raising public awareness (11%), in line with past trends.
- **Regardless of their views on legal aid funding, three-quarters of residents (74%) maintain that the government should place funding for legal aid and funding for other social services on the same footing.**
- **Consistent with last year, the general public is largely in favour of the Legal Services Society's goal to help clients address other problems related to their legal issues (such as housing problems, debt, health problems, and so on).** Specifically, 76% are in agreement with the approach, 14% are neutral, and just 6% disagree.

Summary of Findings



Awareness of Legal Aid in BC



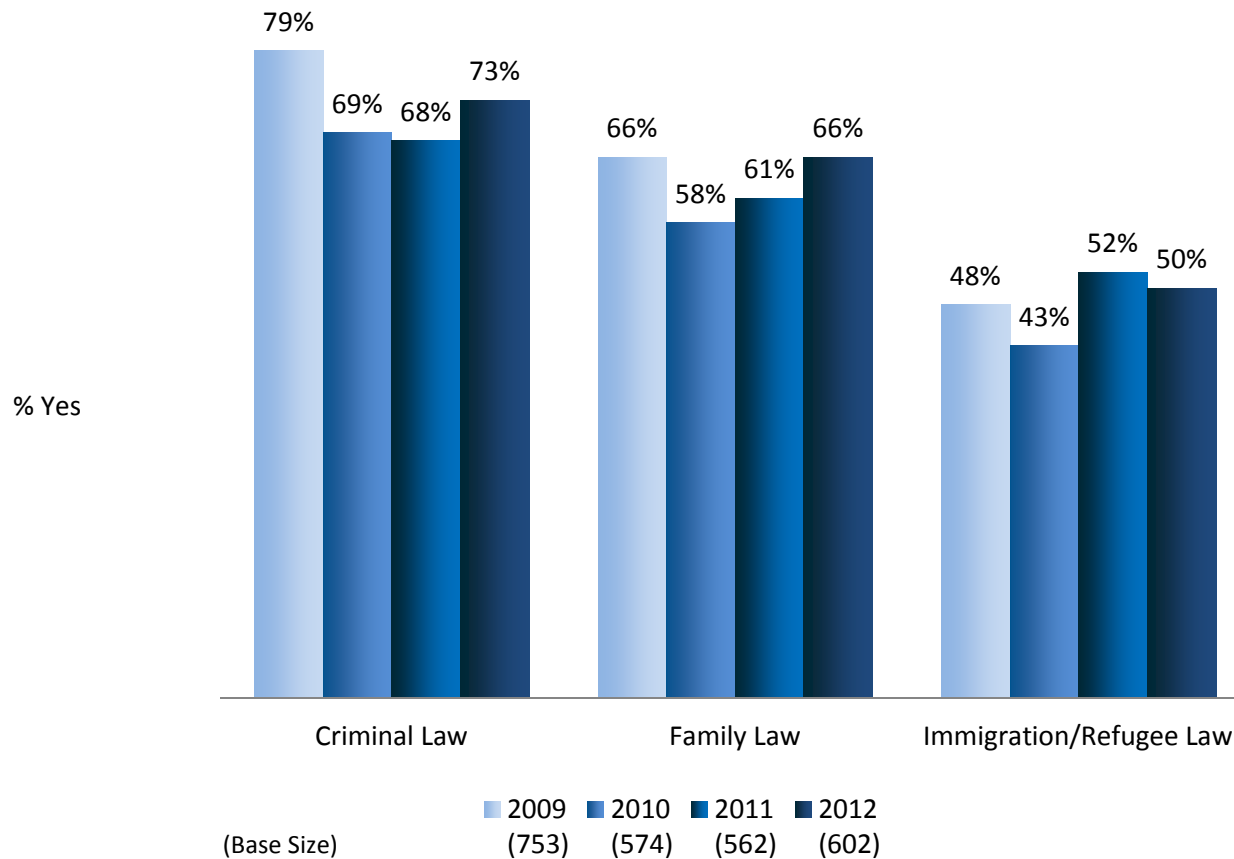
Note: Required differences when comparing 2012 to 2011 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

- The large majority (84%) of BC residents claim they are aware that there are legal aid services available in BC for those with low incomes, in line with previous years.
- Regionally, awareness is higher in other areas of the province compared to the Metro Vancouver & Southwest region (88% vs. 82%).
- Awareness levels are lowest among younger residents and those living in households earning \$25,000 to \$45,000 a year.

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

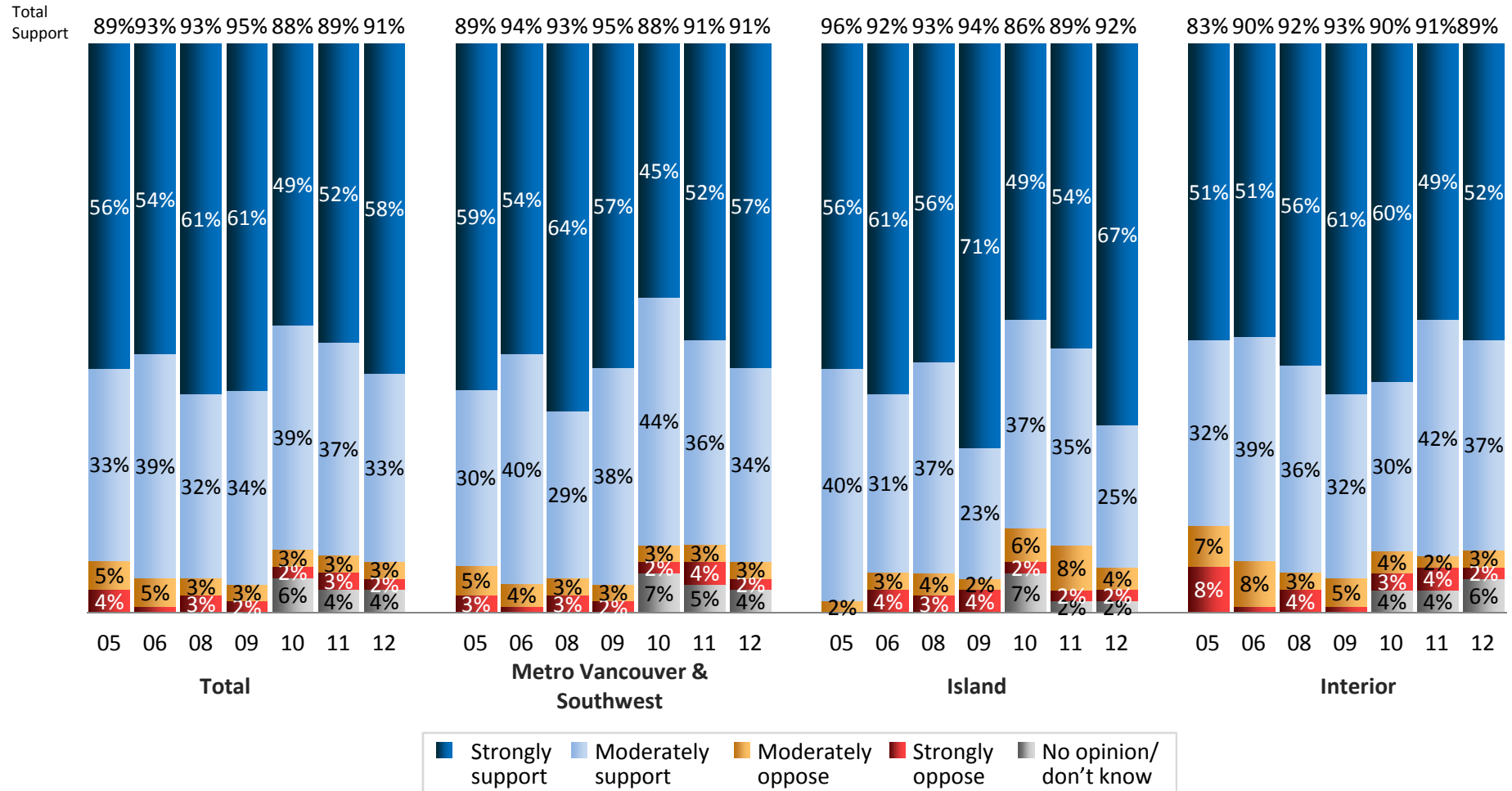


- Awareness of criminal and family legal aid services has strengthened somewhat from one year ago (up by 5 percentage points each). Currently, awareness of the two service areas stands at 73% and 66%, respectively.
- Fewer residents know that legal aid services are available for immigration/refugee law matters (50% aware), consistent with previous waves.
- Awareness of legal aid services for criminal and family law matters tends to be higher among those earning \$45,000+/year compared to their counterparts. Men are more likely to be aware of legal aid services available for criminal matters.

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



Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services



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

Note: Required differences when comparing 2012 to 2011 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

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

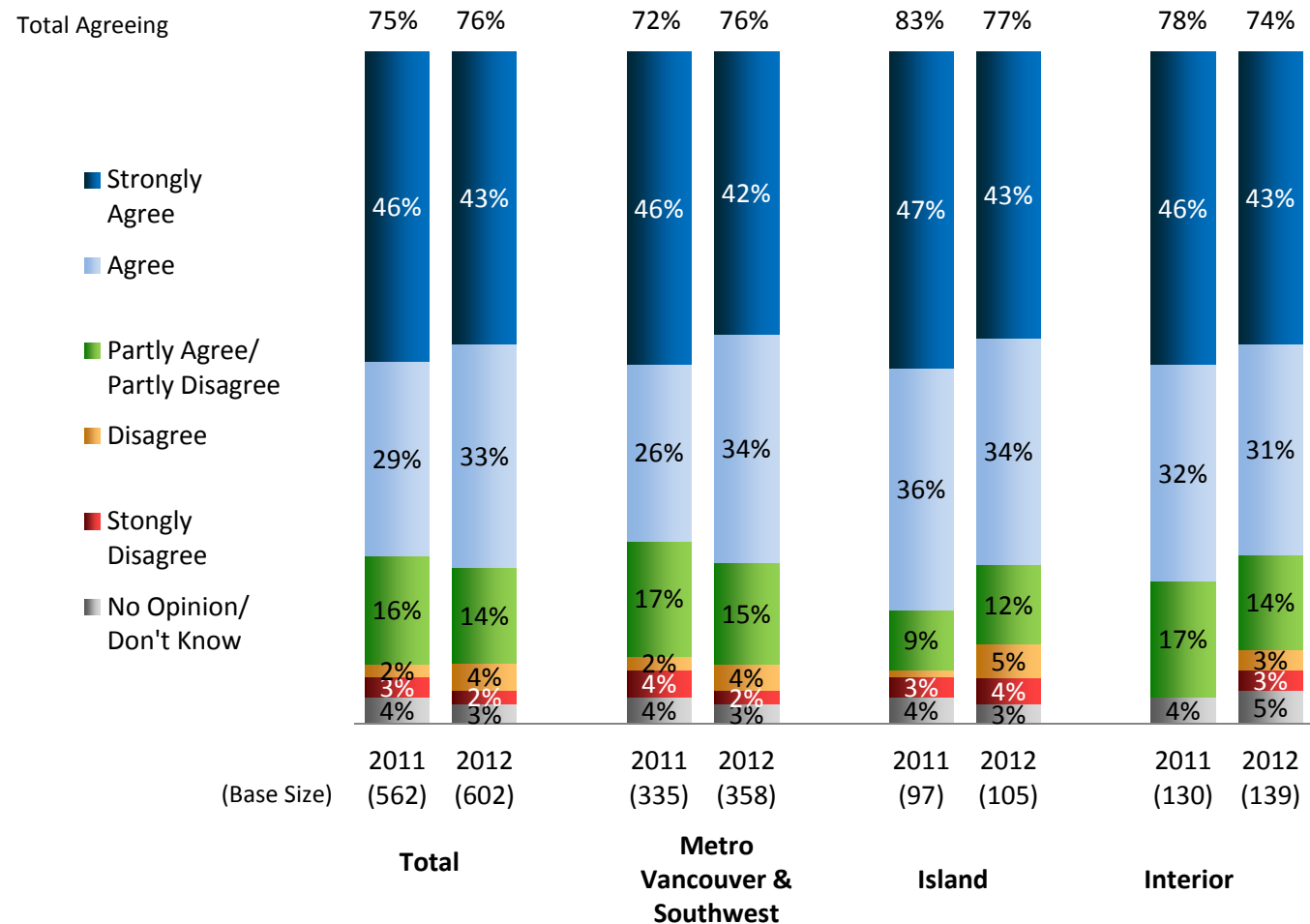


Support/Oppose Legal Aid Services

- Support for legal aid services remains widespread in BC, with 91% in total giving their support. This includes 58% who strongly support legal aid services.
- By region, support levels are fairly consistent, except for among Vancouver Island residents. While total support has not changed, those on Vancouver Island are more likely to be strongly supportive of legal services compared to last year (currently, 67% are in strong support versus 54% in 2011).
- Women are more apt to be in support of legal aid compared to men (63% vs. 53%, respectively).



LSS Priorities



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)

L53.a. 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.)

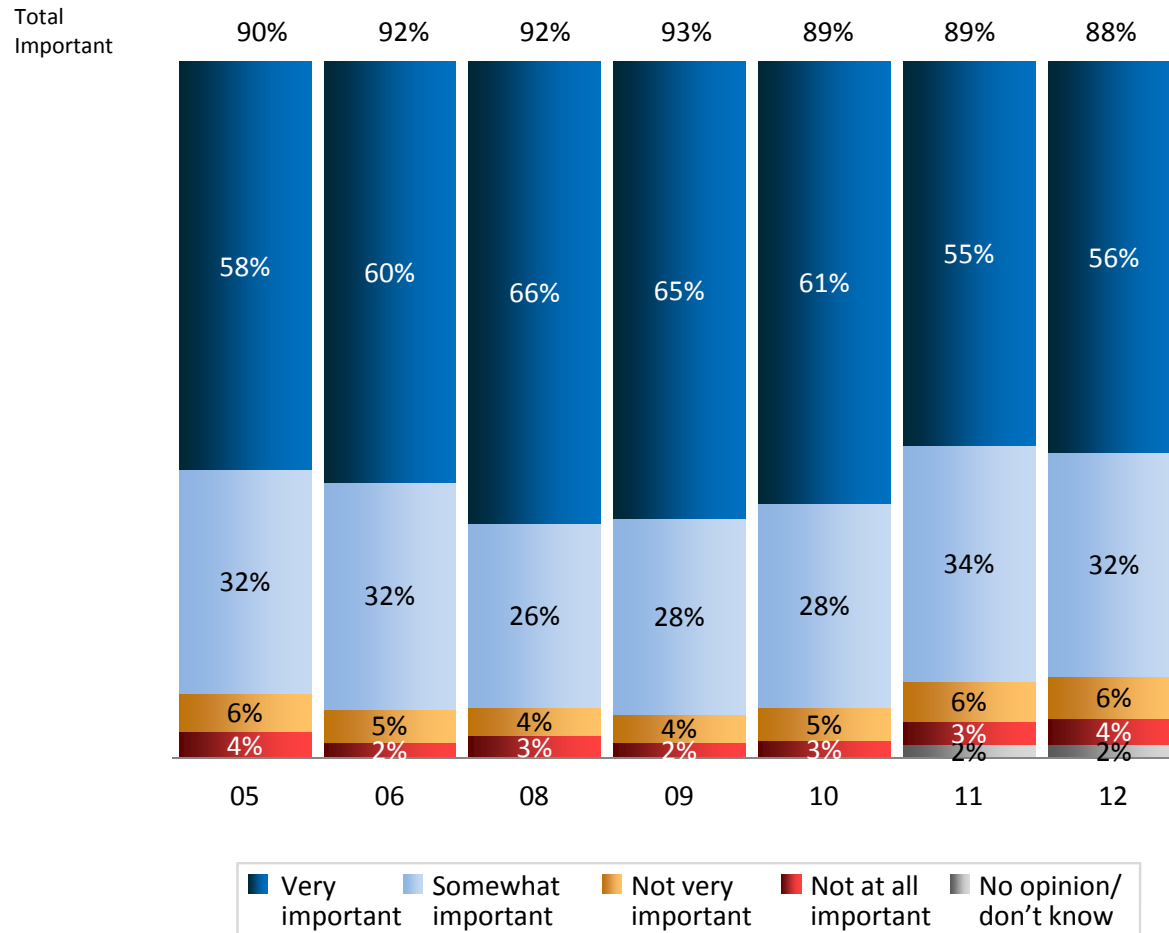


LSS Priorities

- Unchanged from 2011, three-quarters of BC residents agree that legal aid should help its clients address problems that are related to their legal issues. This includes 43% who strongly agree.
- In terms of meeting this objective, 22% of tariff lawyers surveyed in 2010 agree that the LSS helps them to assist their clients in this way, and 48% of LSS clients surveyed in 2011 report being satisfied with the support they received for problems related to their legal issues.



Fairness in the Justice System - Overall



- In line with historical trends, the vast majority of residents feel it is important to fairness in the justice system to provide those with low income with legal aid in various courts, proceedings and hearings.
- Specifically, 88% of BC residents feel this way, including 56% who think it is very important to maintain fairness in the justice system by providing legal aid to those with low income.

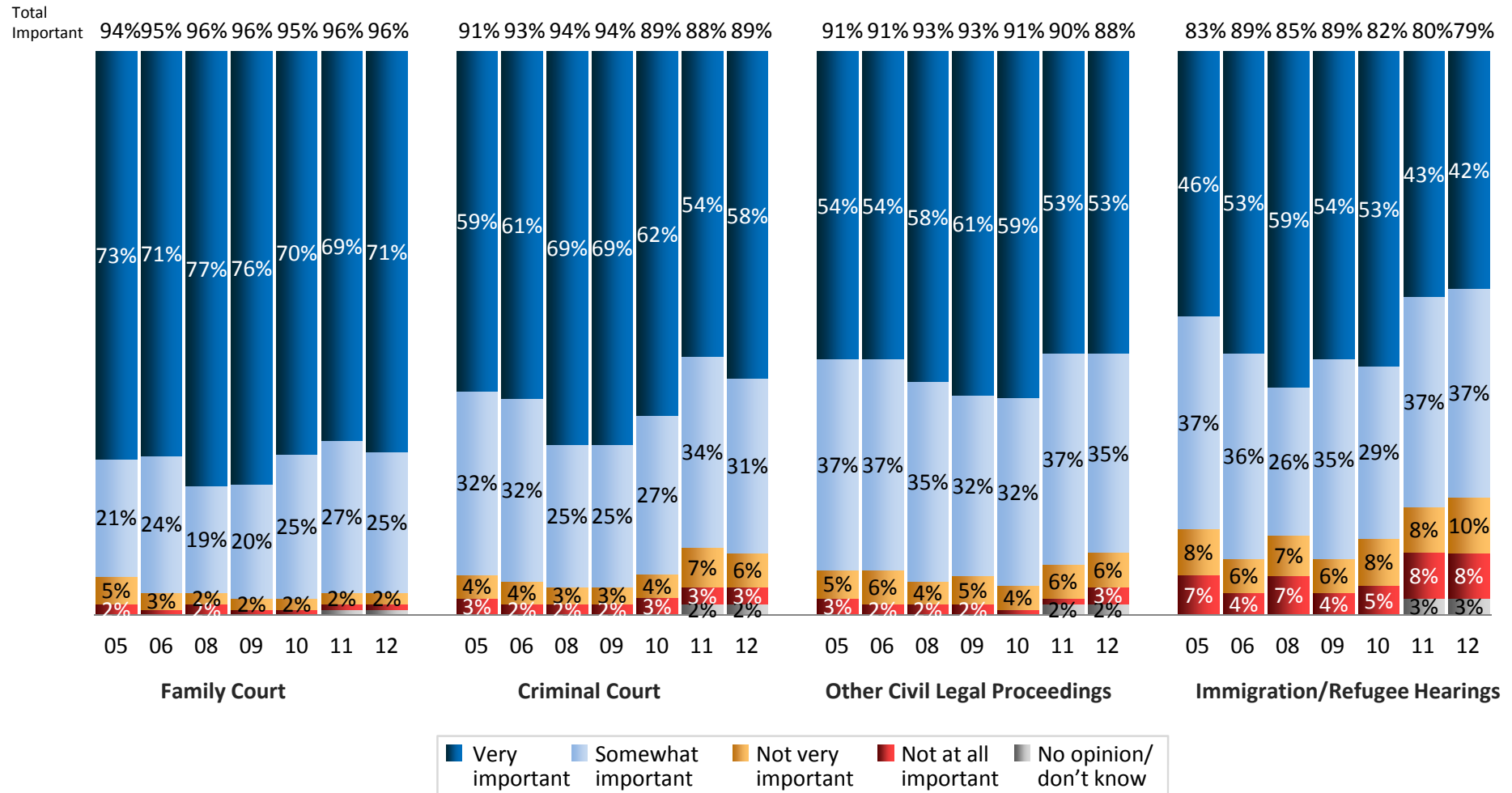
Base: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602
 Note: Don't Know responses not shown prior to 2011, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

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

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



Fairness in the Justice System - By Legal Area



Base: 2005=763, 2006=745, 2008=730, 2009=753, 2010=574, 2011=562, 2012=602
 Note: Don't Know responses not shown prior to 2011, but range from 2% to 4% in 2010.

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



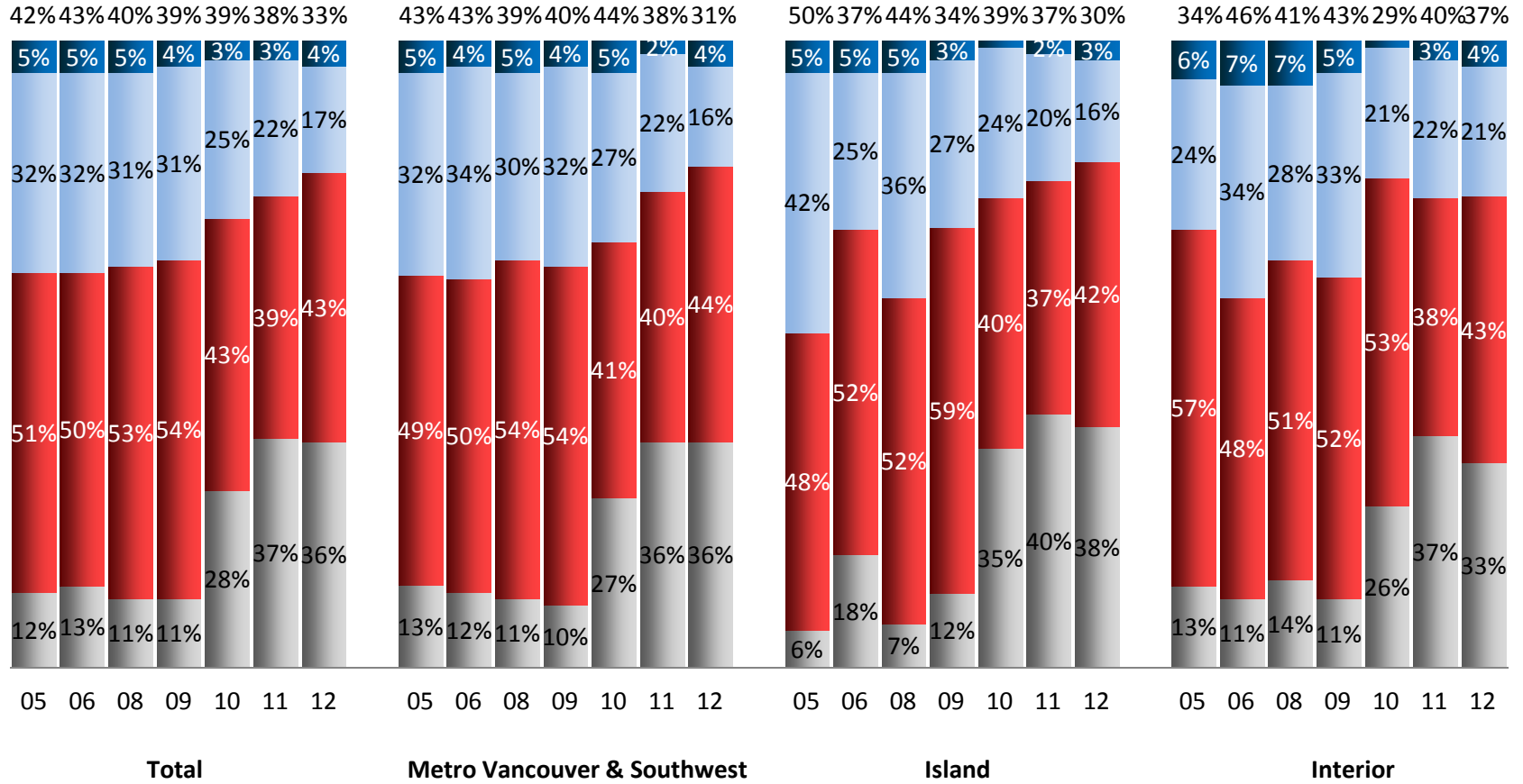
Fairness in the Justice System

- Among the four types of legal areas, BC residents attribute the highest importance to providing legal aid in family court (96%), followed by criminal court (89%), other civil legal proceedings (88%), and in immigration/refugee hearings (79%).
- Priority placed on ensuring legal aid being provided in criminal court has increased slightly after slipping last year. While the total importance attributed remains the same, the proportion of those saying legal aid in criminal court is “very important” to fairness in the justice system has returned close to levels seen two years ago.
- Perceptions of the importance of legal aid in other civil legal proceedings and immigration/refugee hearings to ensure fairness continue to be unchanged from 2011.
- There are certain regional or demographic groups that place particularly high importance on legal aid for each of the four areas:
 - Family Court – Women are especially likely to prioritize providing legal aid services to ensure fairness in the justice system (79% saying it is very important).
 - Criminal Court – 73% of those in the lowest income bracket give legal aid services high importance in criminal court.
 - Other Civil Legal Proceedings – 76% of those earning less than \$25K/year and 63% of Vancouver Island residents feel it is very important to maintain fairness with legal aid (vs. 53% overall).
 - Immigration/Refugee Hearings – Families and residents under 55 years of age are more likely than their counterparts to place a high priority on legal aid for these types of hearings.



State of Legal Aid Services in BC

% believing funding is at least adequate, among those with an opinion



■ More than adequately funded
 ■ Adequately funded
 ■ Not adequately funded
 ■ Don't know

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

Note: Required differences when comparing 2011 and 2010 results are higher for regional samples (see Methodology, slide 4).

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

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



State of Legal Aid Services in BC

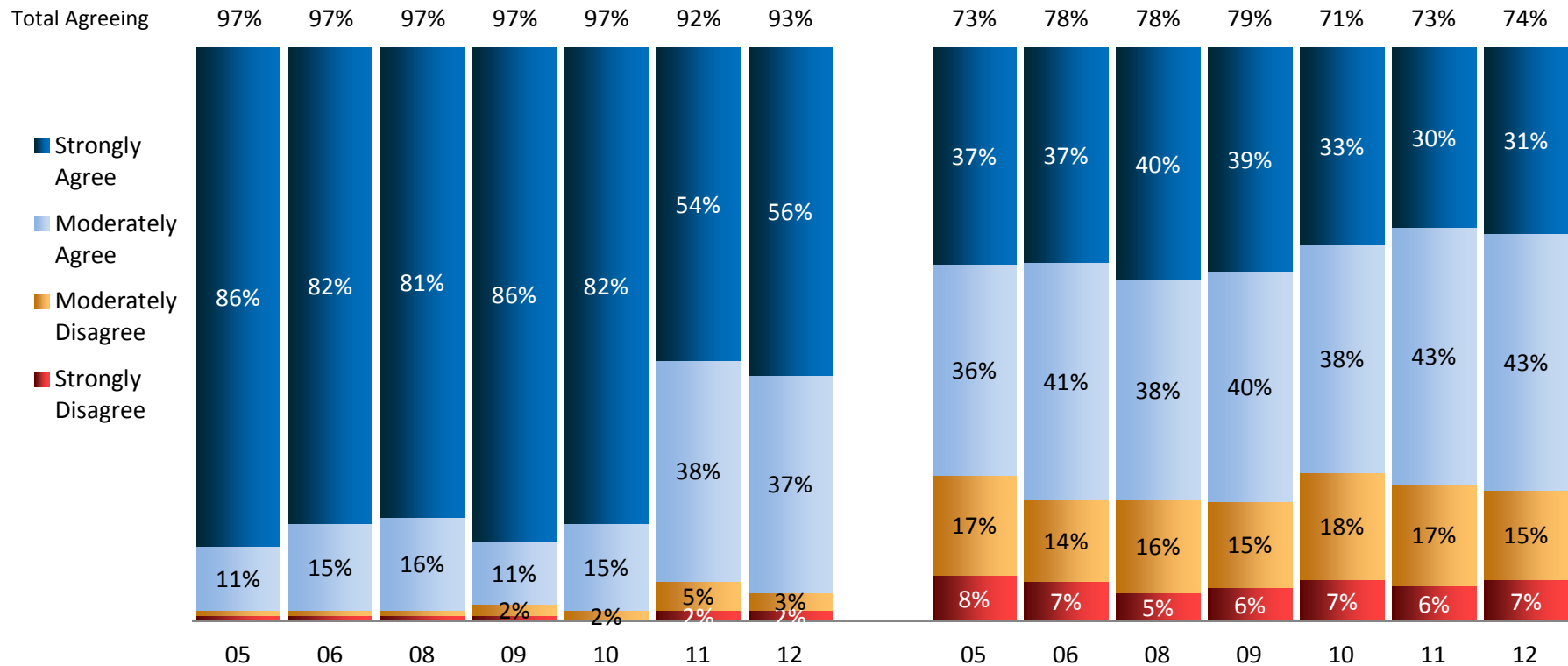
- Residents continue to be divided on whether legal aid services in BC receive enough funding or not.
- Currently, 21% in total think that legal aid services are adequately (17%), if not more than adequately (4%) funded. Another 43% say that there is not enough funding for legal aid services, leaving 36% who don't know or have no opinion.
- Among those with an opinion, 33% feel legal aid services is adequately funded, directionally down from 2011. Residents in Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley are significantly less likely to think legal aid in BC is sufficiently funded compared to one year ago (38% among those with an opinion in 2011 versus 31% this year).



Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid

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)*

Governments should give funding for legal aid the same priority as other social services



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

Note: Don't Know responses not shown, but are 2% for QLS6 and 3% for QLS7 in 2012.

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

LS6. *2011 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.

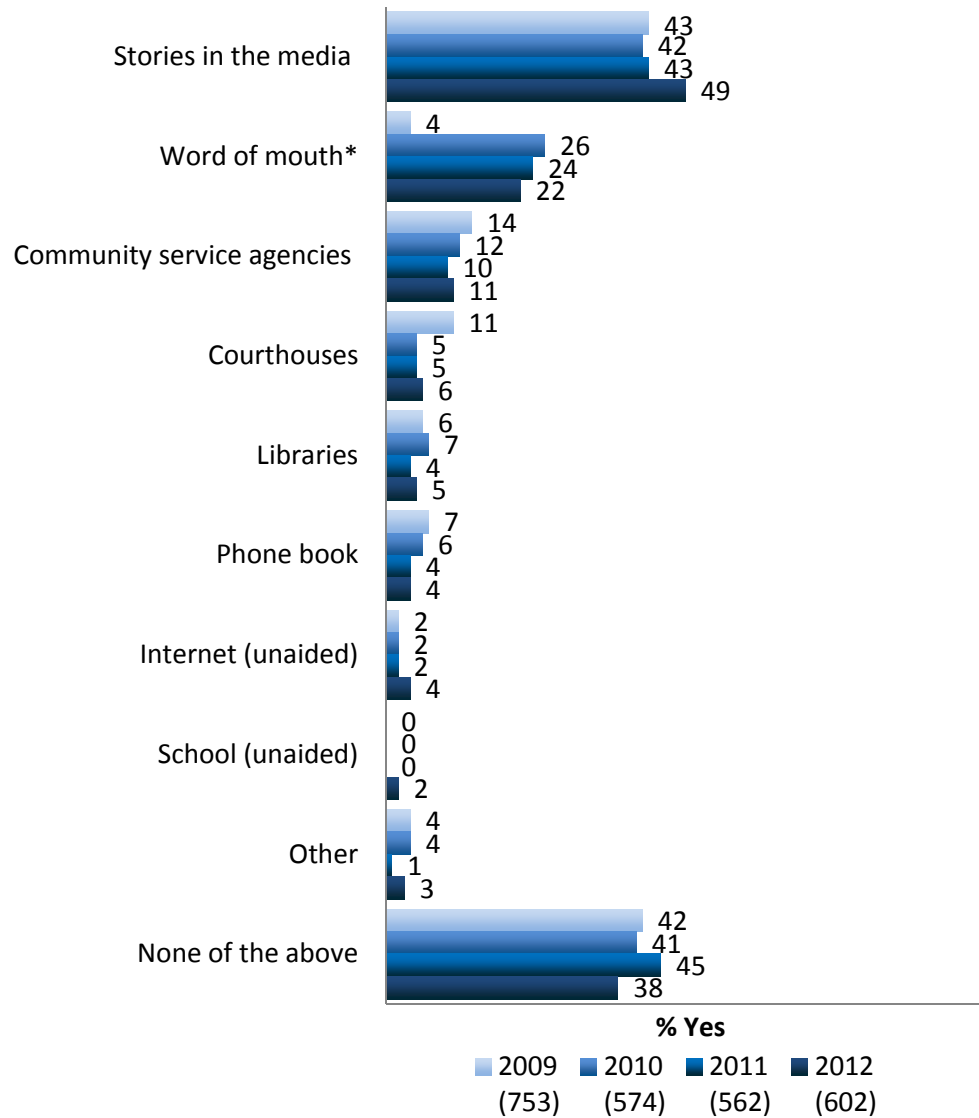


Public Positions on the Justice System & Legal Aid

- Consistent with 2011, the vast majority of BC residents (93%) agree that everyone should have the right to access the justice system, even if it means spending more to reach those in remote and rural areas. This includes roughly one-half (56%) who strongly agree.
- Also unchanged from 2011, three-quarters (74%) agree governments should give legal aid funding the same priority as funding for other social services.
- Residents earning less than \$45K/year are more likely to strongly agree this (that governments should give equal funding priority to legal aid), while those living in households earning \$100K+/year are the most apt to strongly disagree.



Sources of Legal Aid Information



- Up from last year, more residents report hearing something about legal aid in the past few months (62% currently vs. 55% in 2011).
- Consistent with historical trends, stories in the media are the primary source for legal aid news or information (49%), followed by word of mouth (22%) and community service agencies (11%).

*This response was not on the list of possible responses read out to respondents in the 2009 survey. However, it was on list in the 2010 & 2011 surveys.

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



Suggested Improvements for Legal Aid Services

Base	2009	2010	2011	2012
	(753) %	(574) %	(562) %	(602) %
Improved funding	22	18	18	21
More advertising/promotion/public awareness	14	14	15	11
Improved access/availability	18	9	6	7
More lawyers available	8	5	3	5
Better guidelines as to who should qualify for legal aid	5	3	3	5
More lawyers doing pro bono work/who will work for lower fees	-	2	1	4
Make system more efficient (legal/judicial/courts)	3	2	5	3
Improved access/availability for lower income people	4	2	4	3
Expand qualifications for legal aid/raise max. income level	-	2	2	3
More qualified legal representation	2	3	2	1
Improved access/availability in remote areas	-	2	2	1
Better government/a government that supports legal aid	-	-	1	1
Provide service in different languages/more services for immigrants	-	-	1	1
More time/hours of legal aid assistance	-	1	-	1
Provide more information on how to obtain legal aid	2	4	2	-
Provide more services/programs	2	2	1	-
Other	10	3	2	2
None/no improvement necessary	2	24	24	36
Don't know/not stated	32	26	26	15

- Consistent with previous years, the top two suggestions given for improving legal aid services are to improve funding (21%) and to increase advertising/promotion/public awareness (11%).
- Another 11% suggest improving accessibility/availability, whether it be in general, for lower income people, or for those in remote areas.

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

Questionnaire

LSS Public Opinion Poll Questions 2012

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 & TERMINATE**
- 2. No
- 3. Don't Know **THANK & TERMINATE**

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

- 1. Yes
- 2. No **GO TO QN LS3**

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

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

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

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

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

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

LSS Public Opinion Poll Questions 2012

- 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

LSS Public Opinion Poll Questions 2012

- LS4 In your opinion, how important is it to fairness in the justice system for BC to provide low income people with legal aid (**INSERT ITEM & ROTATE**)
- a. In family court
 - b. In immigration/refugee hearings:
 - c. In other civil legal proceedings that deal with foreclosures, bankruptcies, employment insurance collection, disability benefits collection, or other poverty law proceedings?
 - d. In criminal court:

Is it...**READ LIST**

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

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

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

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

Everyone should have the right to access the justice system even if that means spending more money to reach people in remote and rural communities.

- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Moderately agree
 - 3. Moderately disagree
 - 4. Strongly disagree
- DO NOT READ:**
- 5. No opinion/don't know

LSS Public Opinion Poll Questions 2012

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

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

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

DO NOT READ:

5. No opinion/don't know

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

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

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

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

1. Yes
2. No

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