

**Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission**

*Client Discontinuance Survey*

**June 2005**



## Highlights

(For an explanation of the use and interpretation of mean response level on the five-point scales used in the survey, please refer to the “Interpreting Results” section below.)

### Contact and Intake

- Almost all discontinued clients (94%) were looking for legal representation while 63% were seeking information.
- More than one-in-five (22%) were required to apply by another agency, primarily by the Department of Community Resources and Employment.
- Almost all (94%) went personally to a Legal Aid office.
- Legal Aid offices are rated exceptionally high for respecting clients (mean response level = 4.16) and for providing needed information (4.08), and rated very high (3.75) for overall client satisfaction with the office.
- A majority (54%) completed the Family Law Questionnaire.
  - Most clients did not find the questionnaire too difficult.
  - Clients disagreed about whether the questionnaire was too long.
  - Virtually no one attributed his or her discontinuation to the questionnaire.
- Most discontinued clients (87%) contacted Legal Aid by telephone.
  - Clients generally agreed (3.84) that telephone service they received was all right.

### Lawyer Contact

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of discontinued clients met with a Legal Aid lawyer.
- Clients generally agreed (3.54) that the wait time for a lawyer was all right.
- Gender difference with the lawyer (1.15) is not an issue for discontinued clients.
- Clients enjoy an extraordinarily high degree of privacy (4.46) when meeting with a lawyer.
- Getting enough information from the lawyer was very highly rated by clients (3.88).
- Being able to spend enough time with the lawyer was highly rated (3.68).
- Overall satisfaction with service received from the lawyer (3.70) was very high.

## Other Satisfaction Measures

- Distance from a Legal Aid office (1.93) was generally not a problem for discontinued clients.
- Legal Aid staff members are rated extraordinarily high (4.42) in making instructions understandable to discontinued clients.
- Legal Aid was rated very high (3.93) in providing the information clients needed.
- Lack of transportation (1.59) is generally not a barrier to getting service from Legal Aid.
- Overall satisfaction with service received from Legal Aid (3.76) is very high.

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## Background

The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission (Legal Aid) provides legal services to persons and organizations for criminal and civil matters where they are unable to obtain those services from their own resources.

Legal Aid has experienced a substantial drop-off from a team of new clients that contact the Commission but do not follow through with the service. It is important to find out why this is happening, primarily to determine the degree to which service provision factors contribute to the discontinuance.

## Methodology

A telephone survey of 591 discontinued clients was conducted from May 2 to 12, 2005. Since the target population was likely to be more transient, calling was spread out over a relatively long period of time and the numbers were recalled four times.

Field experience confirmed that discontinued clients were difficult to contact. Approximately 55% of the database was made up of people who were no longer associated with the telephone number, primarily because they had moved or because the telephone numbers were no longer in service.

From the remaining telephone numbers that were potential completions, a total of 115 surveys were completed. Eighty refusals were recorded.

Given the challenges presented by the target population, the completion rate is quite high and ought to give a good picture of the discontinued client group.

Only statistically significant demographic relationships are reported (at the 95% confidence level).

Open-ended responses were quite wide-ranging and generally resisted grouping. Open-ended responses were provided verbatim to Legal Aid.

## Interpreting Results

The use of symmetrical, five-point response scales in this survey offers several advantages for interpreting survey results.

For individual questions they provide:

- A method of determining whether responses are generally “positive” or “negative” by comparing the percentage of responses on either side of the midpoint.
- A direct way of identifying whether the response pattern is skewed or polarized.
- A direct way of identifying whether strongly held opinions occur more frequently than expected.

For more in-depth analysis they provide:

- An opportunity to create a single measure for each response scale question by calculating the average of all number responses. The calculated mean response level can be used to assess whether the response pattern is generally “positive” or “negative”.
- The mean response level is a very useful tool for comparing results between response scale questions.

Since the response scales are made up of the numerical options of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, the strongly held opinions are represented by either a 1 on the “negative” side or by a 5 on the “positive” side of the scale. The midpoint of the scale is 3 so, when responses are averaged, an “average” or “neutral” response would be 3.00. Thus, for example, mean response levels above 3.00 suggest a “positive” general response while those below 3.00 suggest a “negative” general response. Mean response levels of, say, 2.50 or 3.50 can be considered representative of substantially “negative” opinions. Mean response levels can be considered exceptionally low or high if they approach values of, say, 2.00 or 4.00, respectively.

Mean response levels are not intended for use as exact estimates of population parameters, rather as a guideline to the strength of response to an individual question or as a convenient way of comparing response levels between questions.

# Survey Results

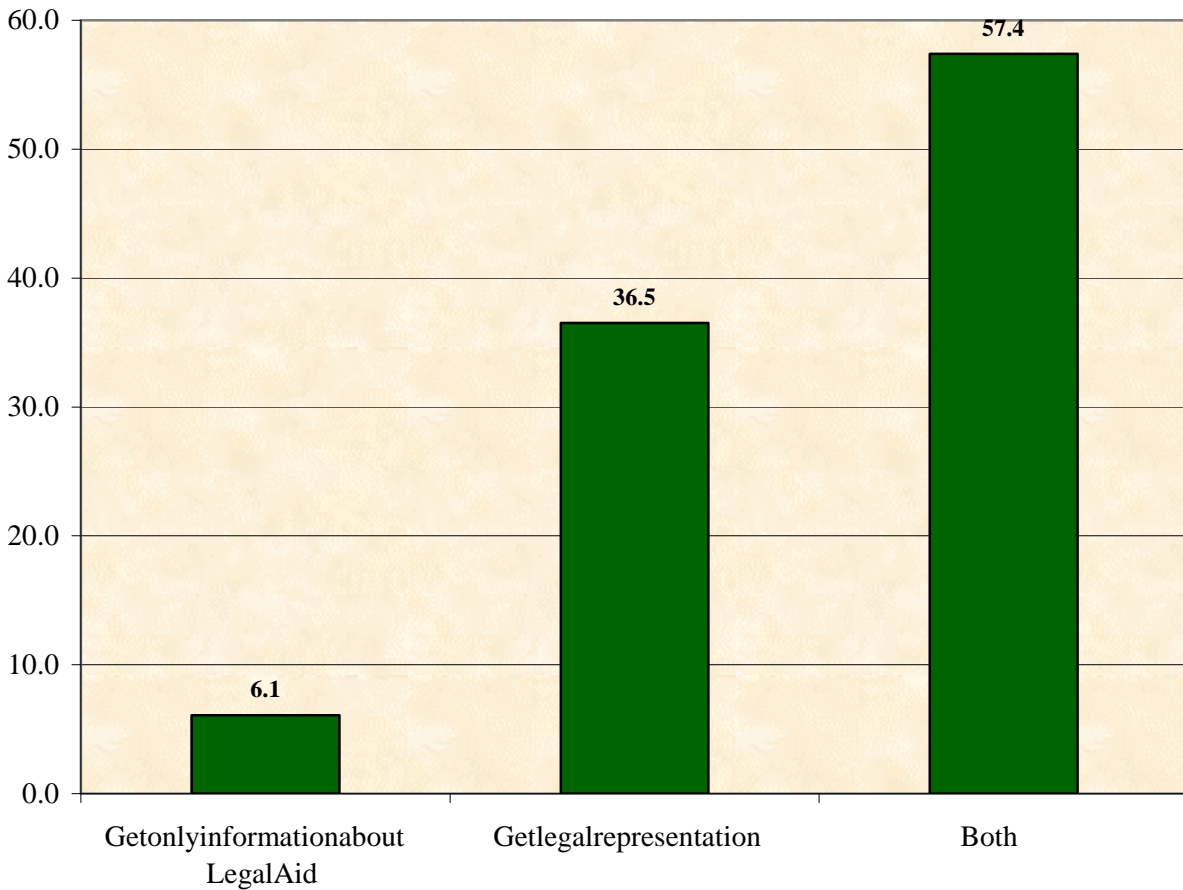
## SECTION A: Contact and Intake

Both legal representation and information were important to discontinued clients when they contacted Legal Aid (chart below).

- While almost all (94%) were looking for legal representation, nearly two-thirds (63%) were seeking information.

### A1. When you contacted Legal Aid was it to...

A1. When you contacted Legal Aid was it to...



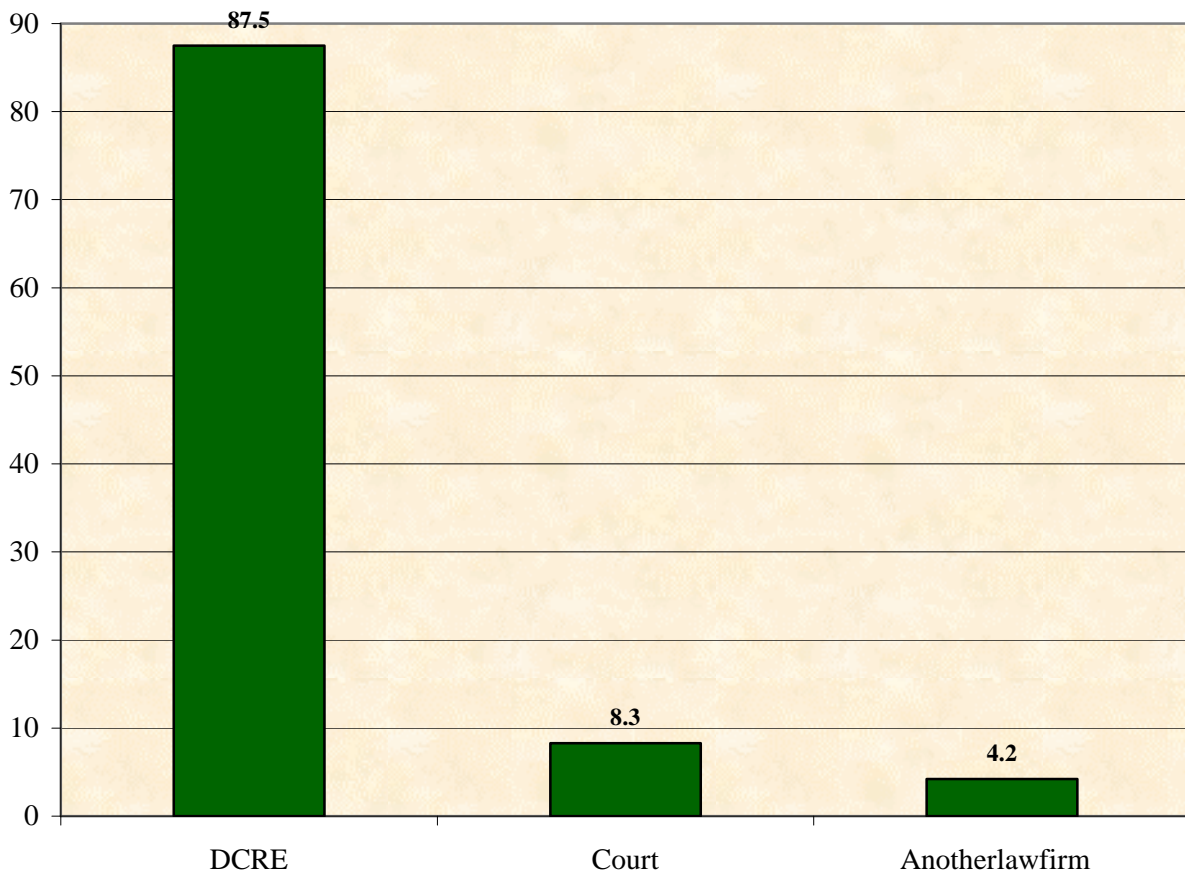
**A2. Were you required to apply for Legal Aid by someone other agency?**

More than one-in-five (22%) were required to apply for legal aid by another agency.

**A2a. What is the name of the agency?**

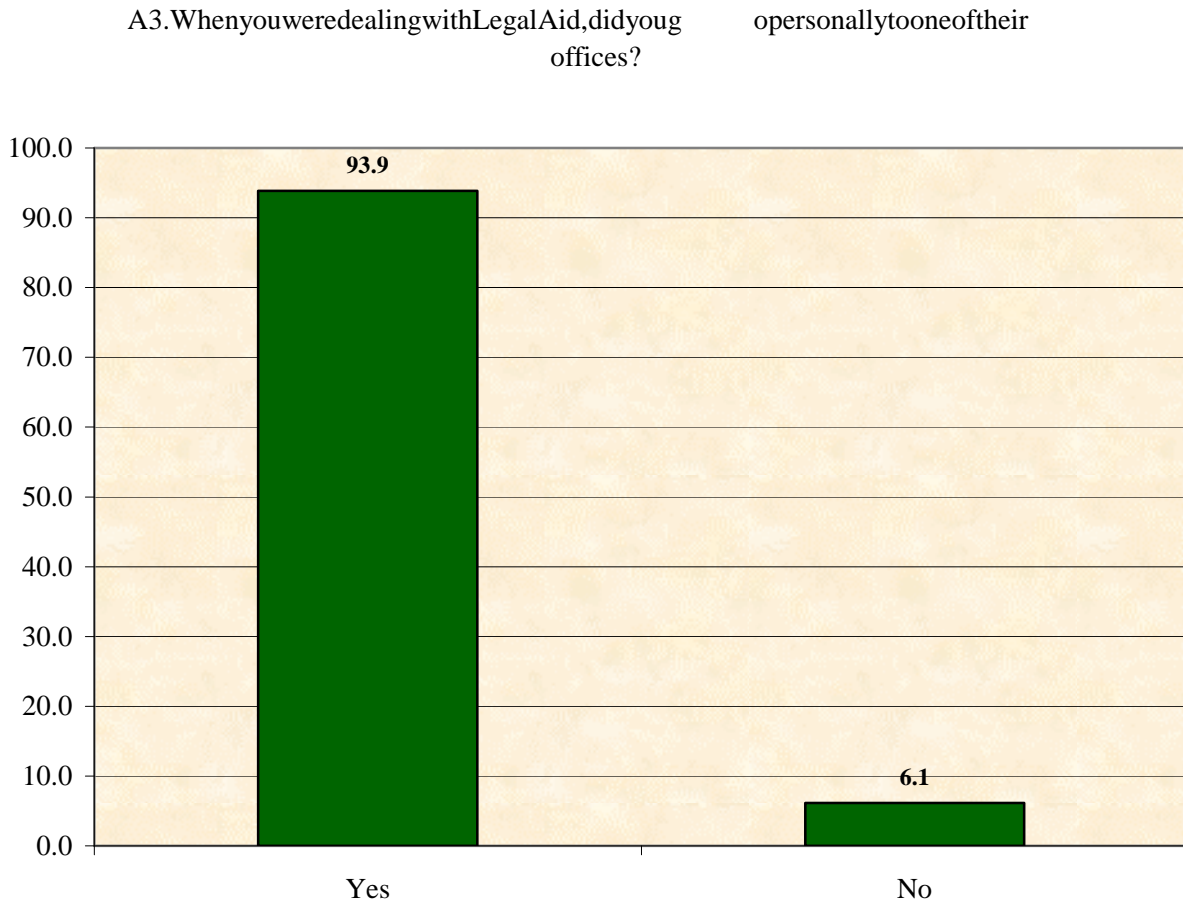
Of those required by an agency to apply for legal aid, most (88%) were directed by the Department of Community Resources and Employment (chart below).

A2a. What is the name of the agency?



**A3. When you were dealing with Legal Aid, did you go personally to one of their offices?**

A very high proportion (94%) of discontinued clients attended a Legal Aid office in person (chart below).

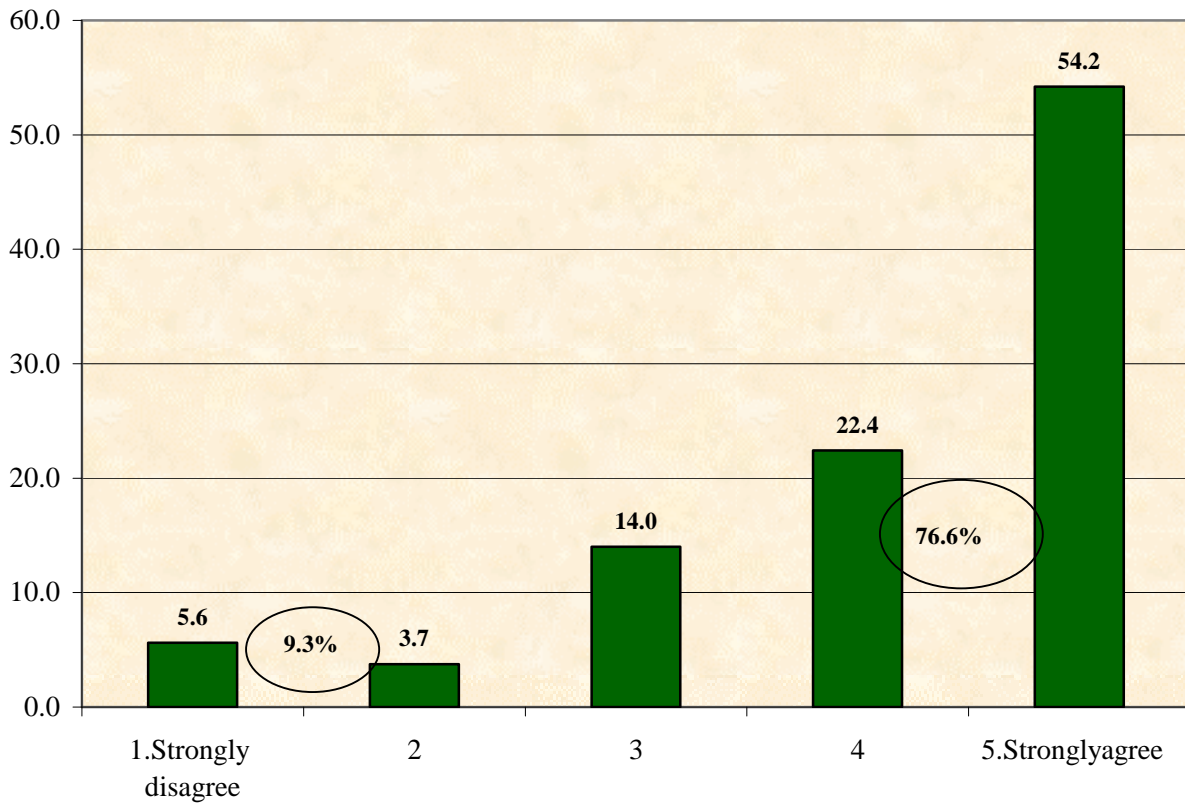


**A4a. I was treated with respect by the Legal Aid office.**

Discontinued clients were definitely treated with respect by the Legal Aid office they attended (chart below).

- More than three-quarters (77%) were on the agree side of the scale, compared to only one-in-ten (9%) on the disagree side.
- The mean response level of 4.16 is exceptionally high.

A4a. I was treated with respect by the Legal Aid office.  
Mean Response Level = 4.16

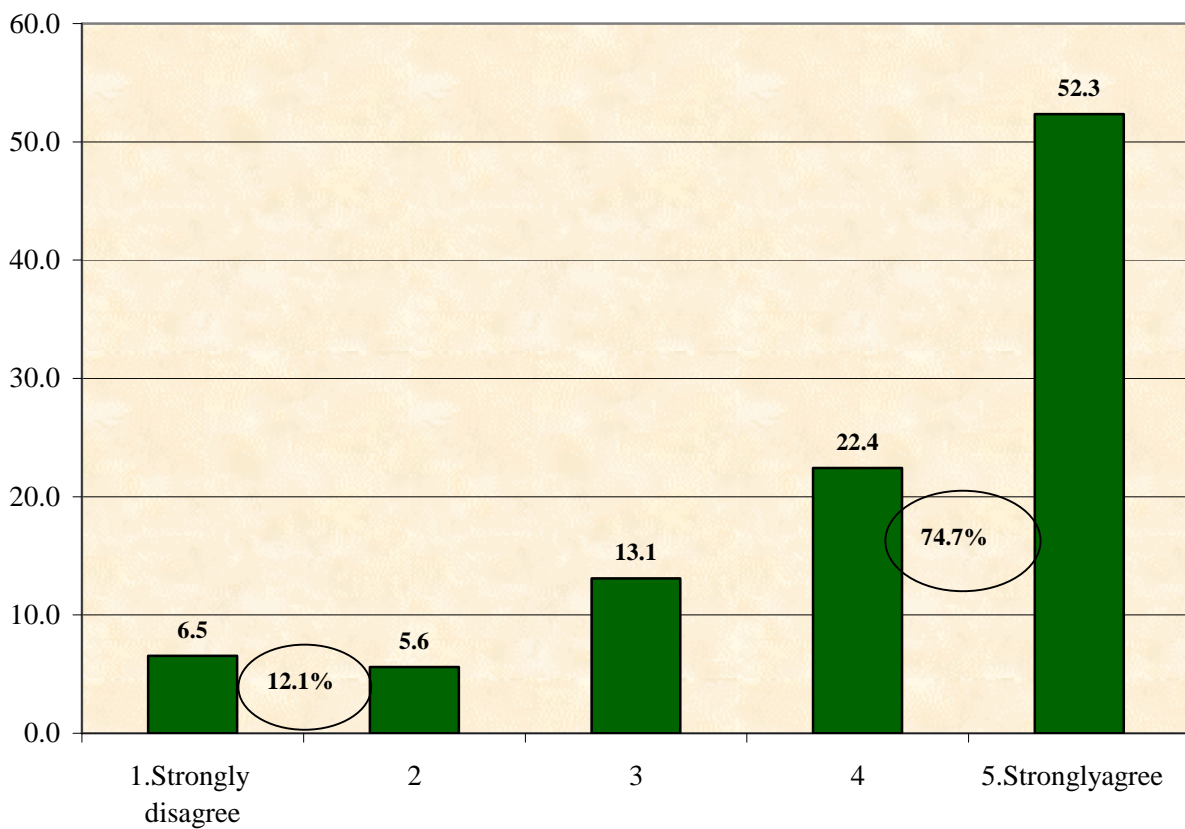


**A4b.TheofficegavemetheinformationIneeded.**

LegalAidofficesaredoingaverygoodjobofprovidinginformation(chartbelow).

- Three-quartersofrespondents(75%)wereontheagree sideofthescale,comparedtoless thanone-in-eight(12%)onthedisagree side.
- Themeanresponselevelof4.08isexceptionallyhigh.

A4b.TheofficegavemetheinformationIneeded.  
MeanResponseLevel=4.08



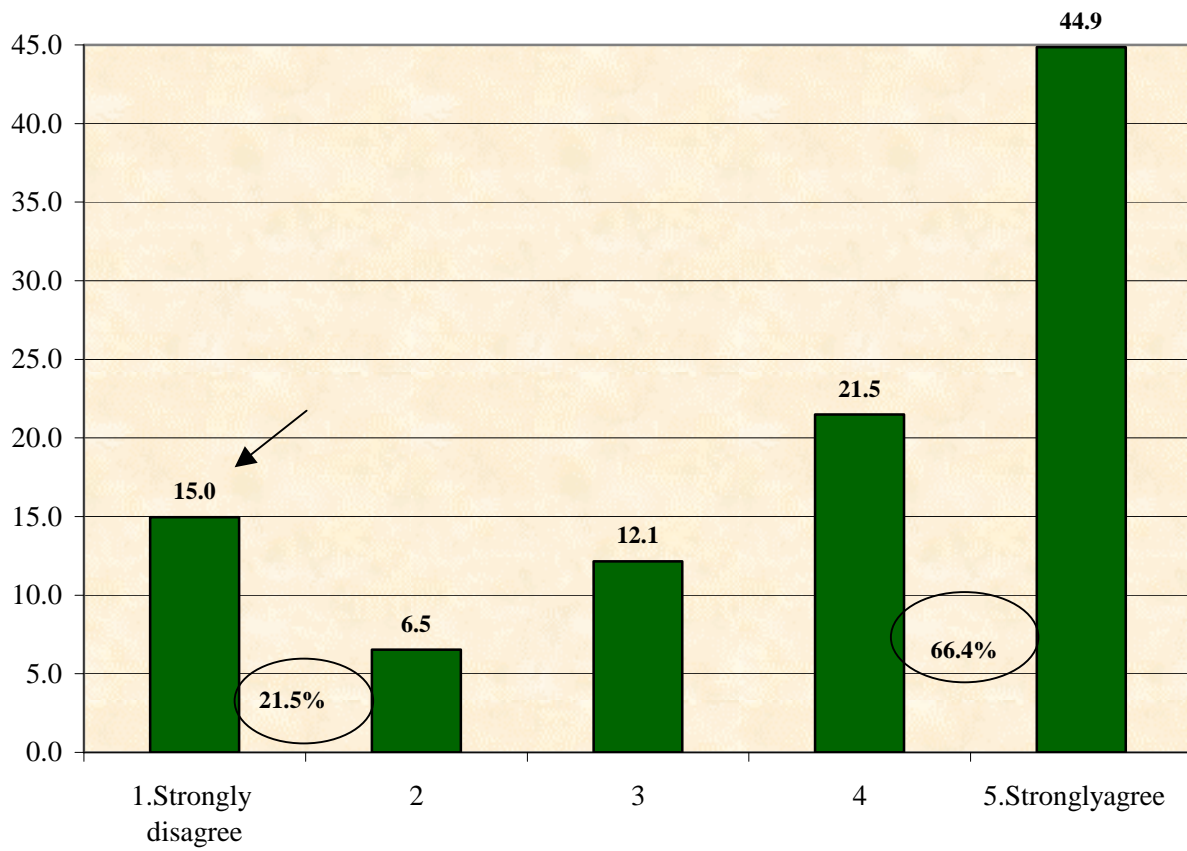
Femalesaremorelikelytoagree(meanresponselevel=4.38)thanaremales(3.76)thatthe officegavethemtheinformationtheyneeded.

#### A4c. Overall, I was satisfied with the service I got at the Legal Aid office.

Generally, discontinued clients were very satisfied with the service they received from Legal Aid offices (chart below).

- Two-thirds (66%) of discontinued clients were on the agree side of the scale, compared to less than one-quarter (23%) on the disagree side, which is reflected in a very high mean response level of 3.75.
- However, the significant proportion (15%) in the 'strongly disagree' category should not be overlooked. For the two service aspects discussed above:
  - The same proportions (38%) of this group ('strongly disagree' at A4c. Overall) were also 'strongly disagree' for either A4a. Respect or A4b. Information.
  - The mean response for this group at A4a. Respect is 2.50, while the mean response for this group is 2.19 at A4b. Information, suggesting that inadequate information may have been a somewhat more important factor in their overall dissatisfaction.
  - For these clients, some other aspect of service or the legal outcome of their contact with Legal Aid may have contributed to their 'strongly disagree' response to overall satisfaction with Legal Aid offices.
  - Note that the sample size for this group is fairly small so conclusions should be drawn with caution.

A4c. Overall, I was satisfied with the service I got at the Legal Aid office.  
Mean Response Level = 3.75



## **A5. Did you complete Legal Aid's Family Law questionnaire?**

A majority (54%) of discontinued clients completed the Family Law questionnaire.

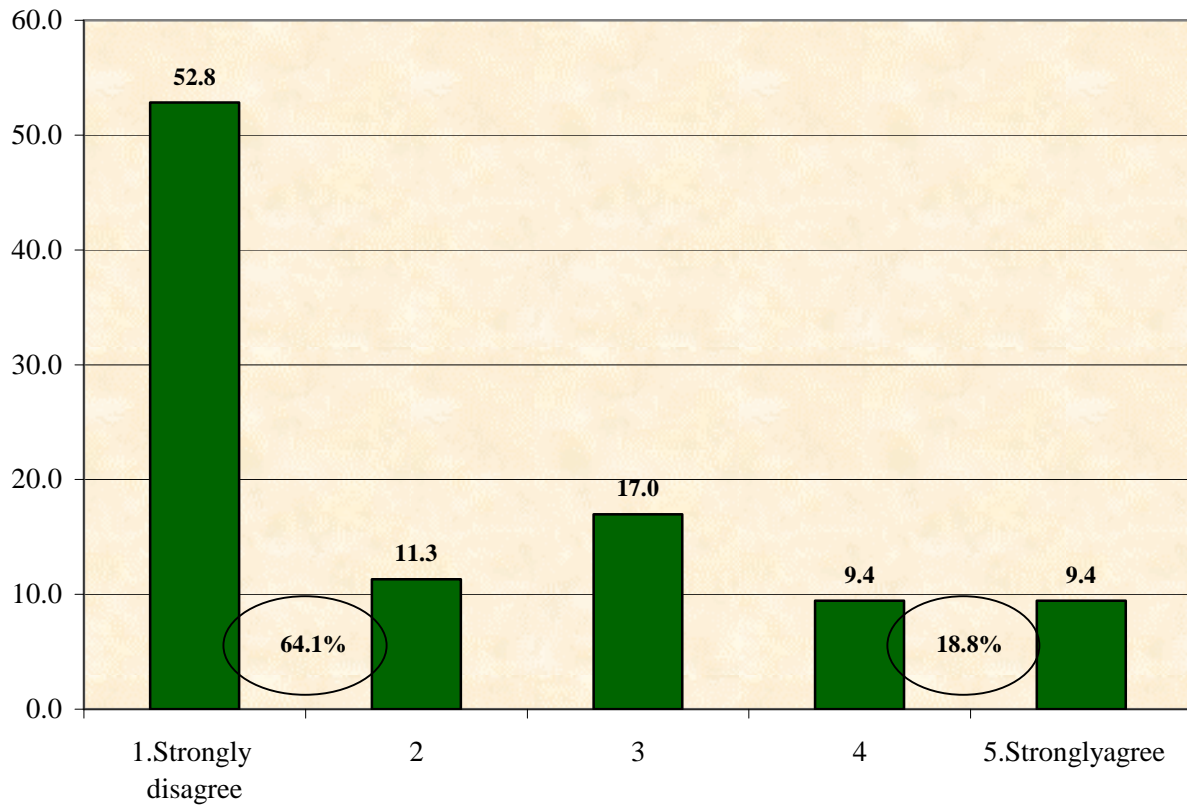
## **A6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Use a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree".**

### **A6a. The questionnaire was too difficult.**

Generally, discontinued clients did not find the Family Law Questionnaire too difficult (chart below).

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of discontinued clients disagreed that the questionnaire was too difficult, compared to 19% that agreed.
- Notably, a majority (53%) of clients strongly disagreed that it was too difficult, suggesting that the wording and structure of the instrument are generally more than adequate.
- Nevertheless, the significant proportion of clients that struggled with the questionnaire should not be overlooked. It is possible that these concerns may not be alleviated by changes to the instrument.
- It appears that the instrument is adequate but that some clients might benefit from some method of assisting in its completion that did not compromise their anonymity or to which they agreed.

A6a.Thequestionnairewastoodifficult.  
MeanResponseLevel=2.11

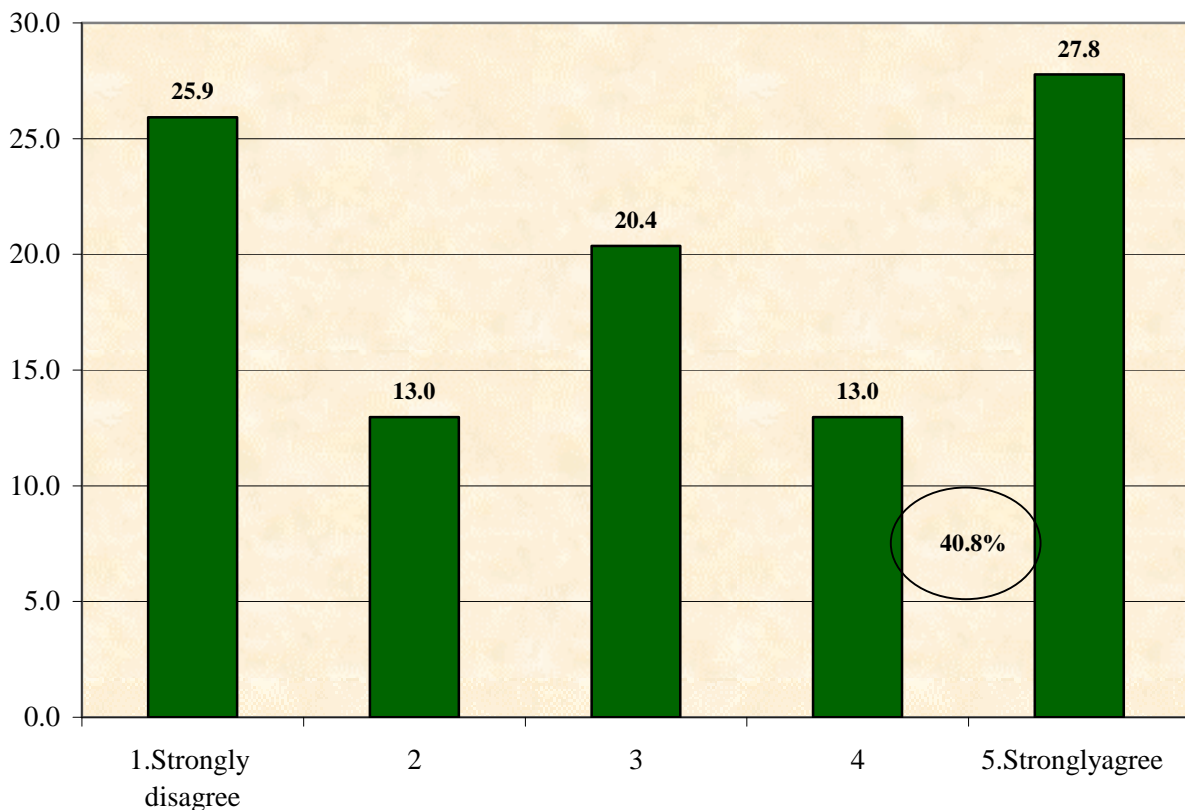


### A6b. The questionnaire was too long.

Discontinued clients were clearly in disagreement about the length of the questionnaire (chart below).

- The response distribution is almost exactly polarized, which is reflected in the neutral mean response level of 3.04.
- While shortening the questionnaire may address the concern among a substantial proportion (41%) that feels it is too long, the value of the scope of information currently being gathered should be strongly considered before any changes are made. This is especially true since the level of comprehension is generally high (A6a above) and because the questionnaire is not a barrier to client service (A6c below).

A6b. The questionnaire was too long.  
Mean Response Level = 3.04

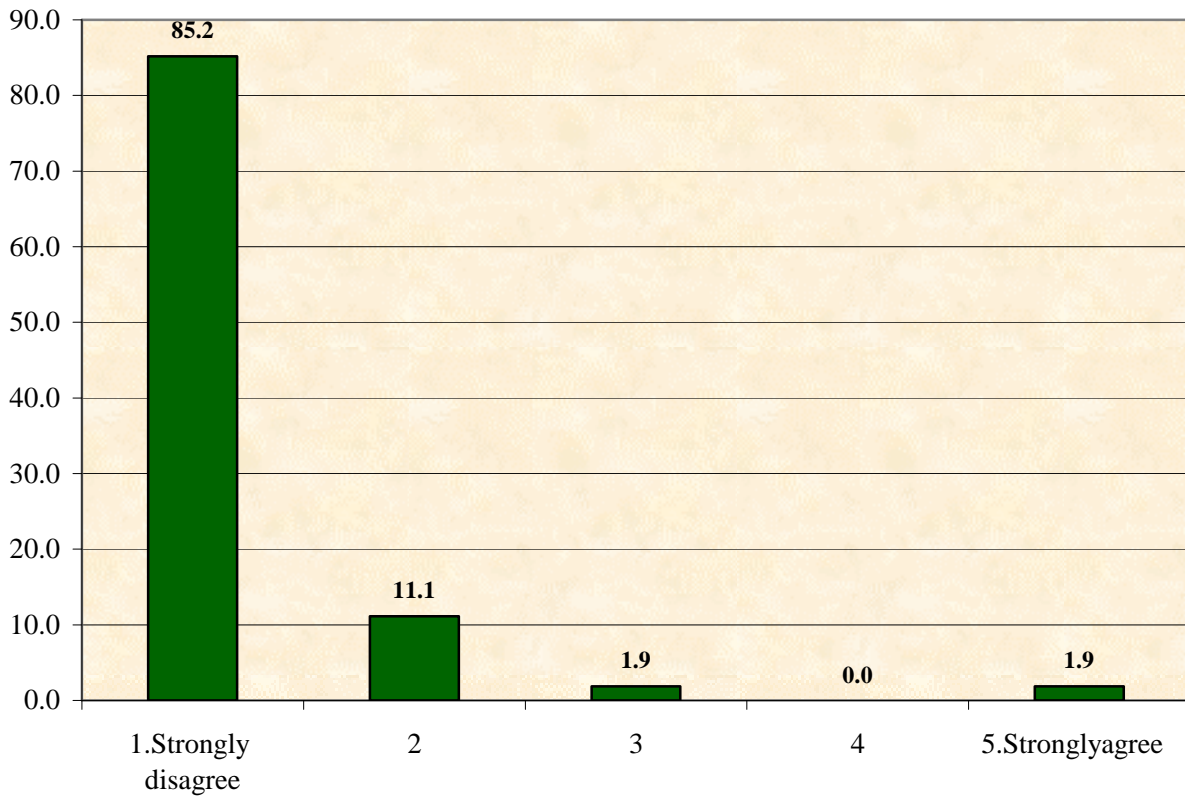


**A6c. I decided not to continue with Legal Aid because the questionnaire was too hard to deal with.**

The Family Law questionnaire is not a barrier to service (chart below).

- Virtually no one attributed his or her discontinuance to the questionnaire.

A6c. I decided not to continue with Legal Aid because the questionnaire was too hard to deal with.  
Mean Response Level = 1.22



**A7. While you were involved with Legal Aid, did you contact them by telephone?**

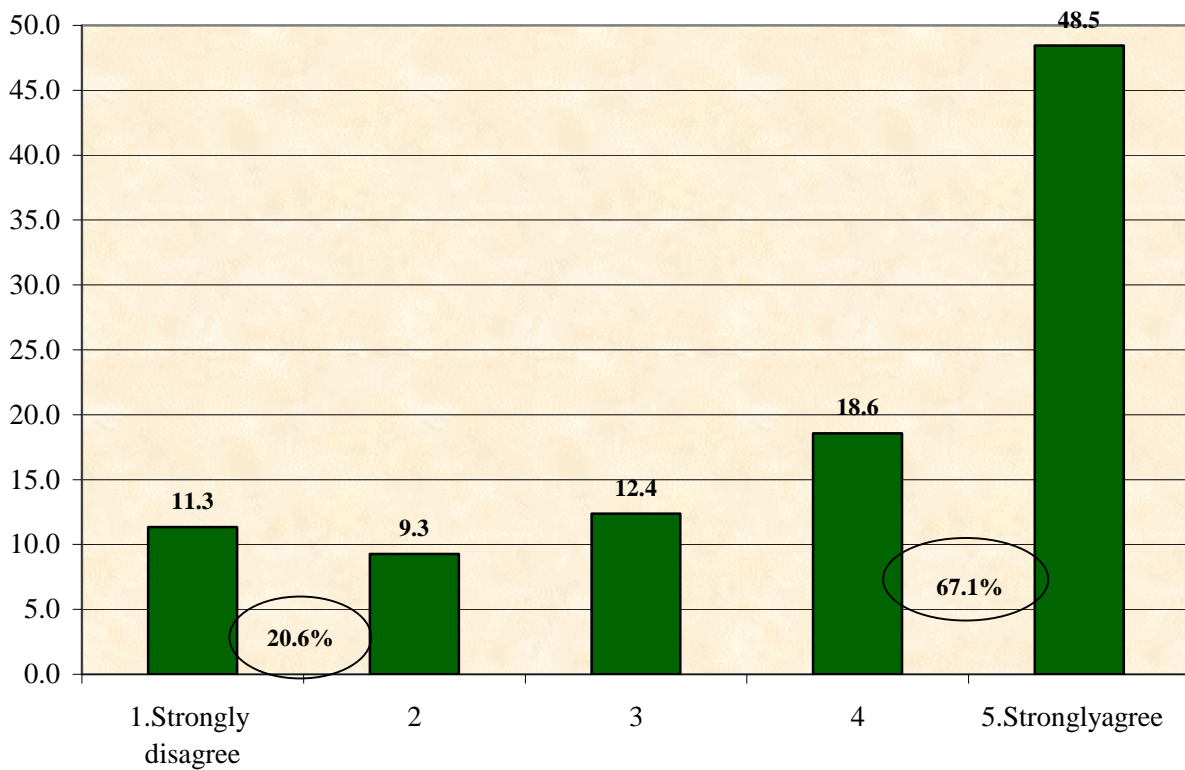
Most discontinued clients (87%) had contact with Legal Aid by telephone.

**A8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree". The telephone service I received from Legal Aid was okay.**

Generally, discontinued clients were satisfied with the telephone service they received (chart below).

- Two-thirds (67%) agreed the phone service was all right, compared to 21% that disagreed.
- The mean response level of 3.84 is very high.

A8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree". The service I received from Legal Aid on the telephone was okay.  
Mean Response Level = 3.84



## SECTION B: Lawyer Contact

### B1. Did you meet with a Legal Aid lawyer?

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of discontinued clients met with a Legal Aid Lawyer.

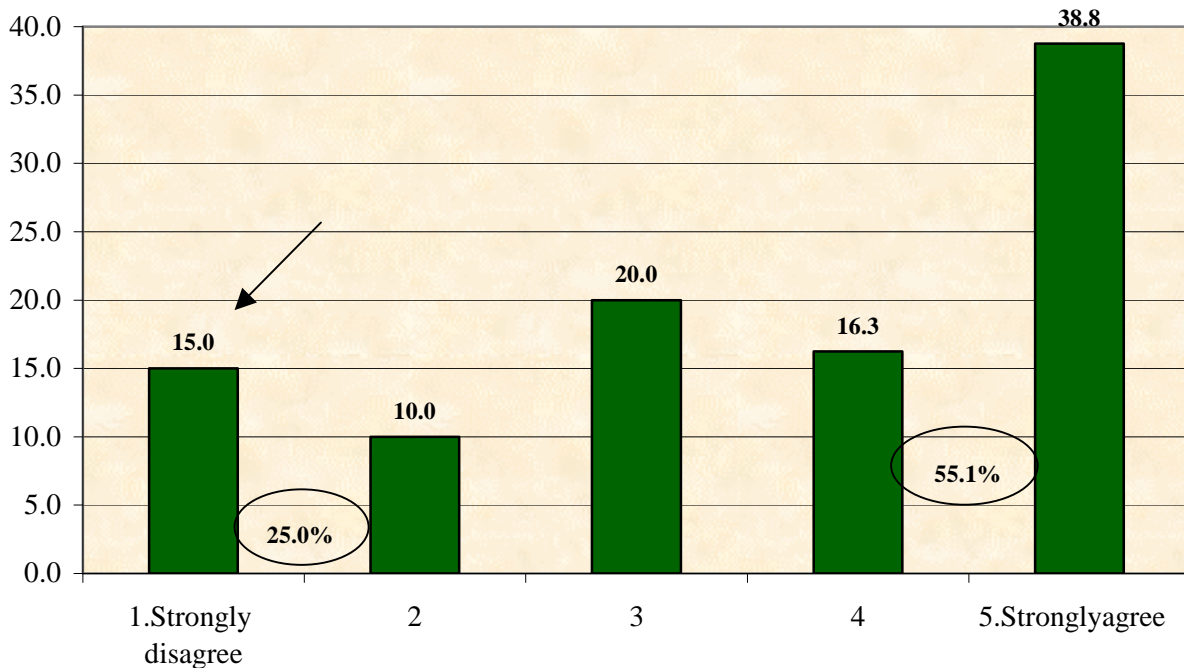
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Use a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree”.

### B2. The length of time I waited for a lawyer was okay.

Discontinued clients were generally satisfied with the length of time they waited for a lawyer (chart below).

- A majority (55%) agreed, compared to one-quarter (25%) that disagreed, which is reflected in a high mean response level of 3.54.
- However, a significant proportion (15%) strongly disagreed, suggesting some inconsistency in being able to respond in a timely manner.

B2. The length of time I waited for a lawyer was okay.  
Mean Response Level = 3.54

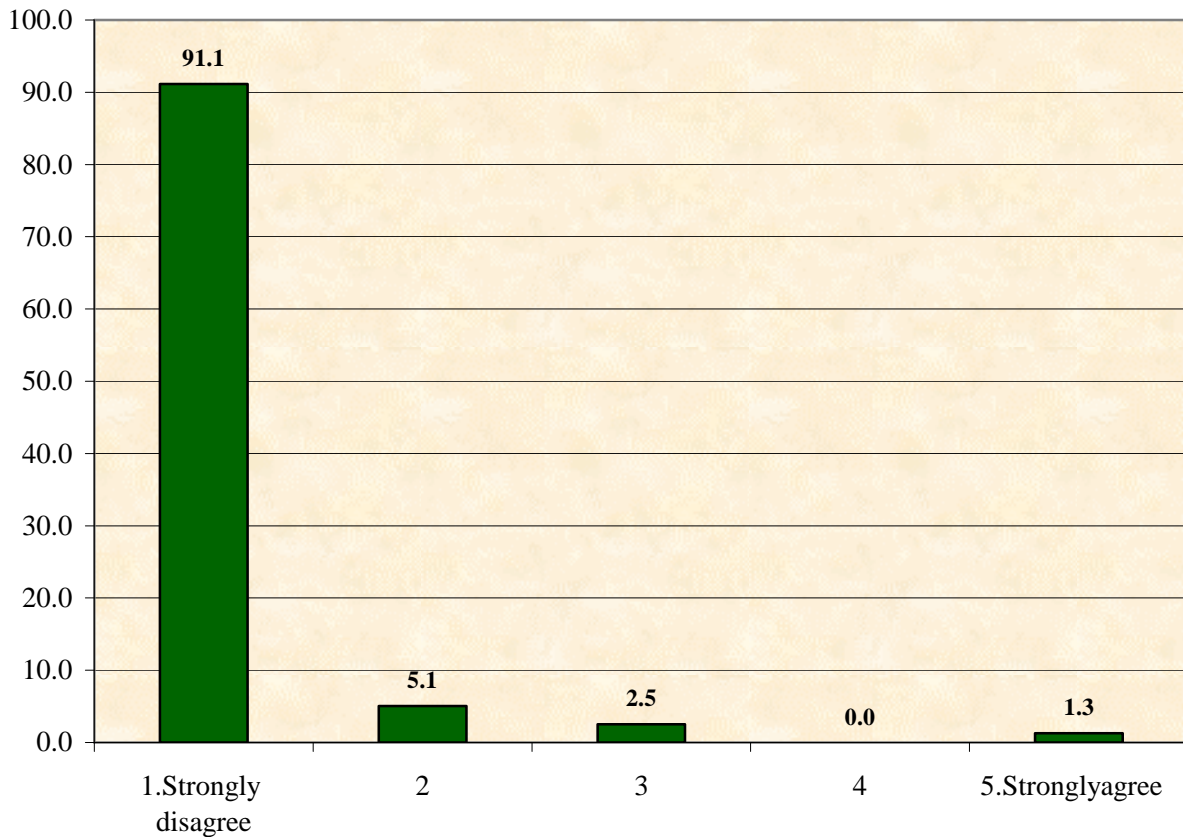


**B3.Iwasuncomfortablewiththelawyerbecausethe ywereadifferentgender.**

Genderdifferencewiththeirlawyerisnotanissue fordiscontinuedclients(chartbelow).

- Virtuallynooneagreedthattheywereuncomfortablebecause theirlawyerwasadifferentgender.
- Almostall(96%)disagreed.Ofcourse,formanyof these,therewouldnothavebeena genderdifferenceonwhichtocomment.

B3.Iwasuncomfortablewiththelawyerbecausethe ywereadifferentgender.  
MeanResponseLevel=1.15

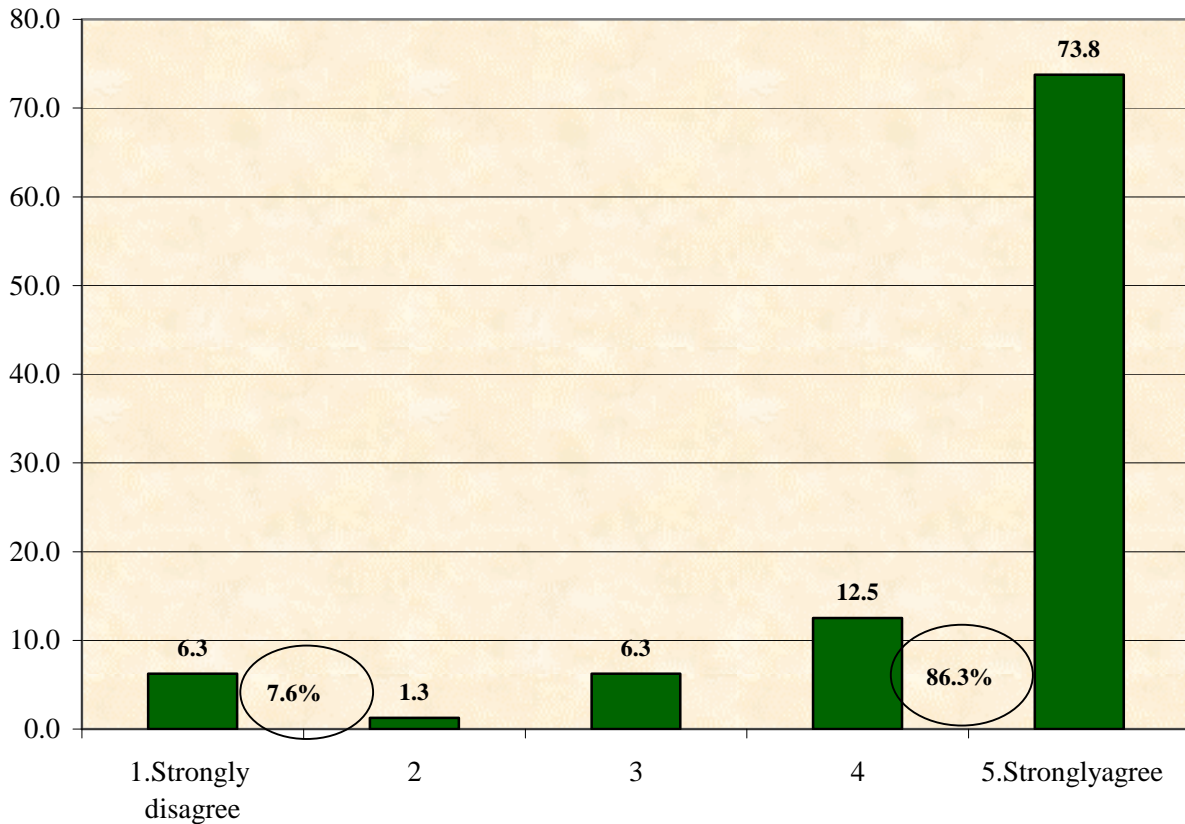


### B4. I was able to speak privately with my lawyer.

Discontinued clients generally enjoy privacy when speaking with their lawyer (chart below).

- A very large proportion (86%) agreed that they were able to speak privately to their lawyer, compared to relatively few (8%) that disagreed.
- The mean response level of 4.46 is extraordinarily high.

B4. I was able to speak privately with my lawyer.  
Mean Response Level = 4.46

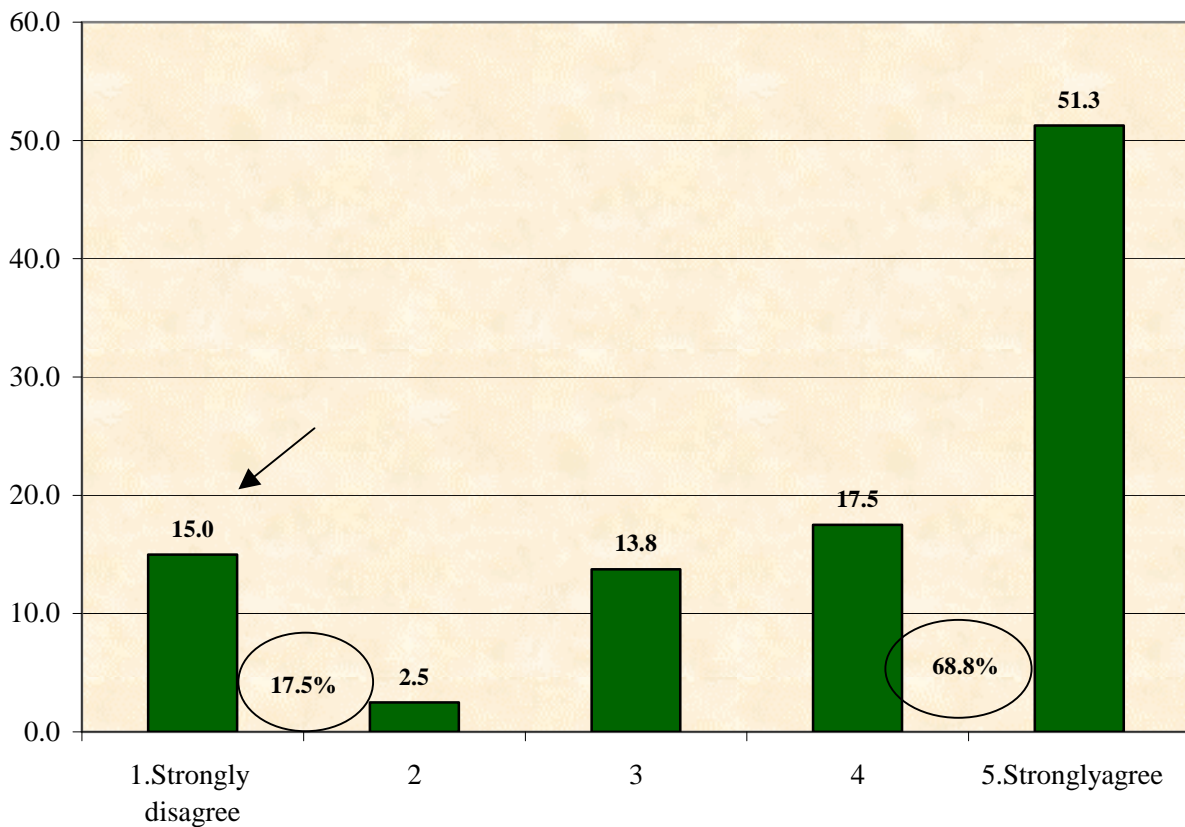


### B5. I got enough information from my lawyer.

Generally, discontinued clients were getting enough information from their lawyers (chart below).

- More than two-thirds (69%) agreed they were getting enough information, compared to 19% that disagreed, which is reflected in a very high mean response level of 3.88.
- However, a significant proportion (15%) strongly disagreed, suggesting some inconsistency in providing information.

B5. I got enough information from my lawyer.  
Mean Response Level = 3.88

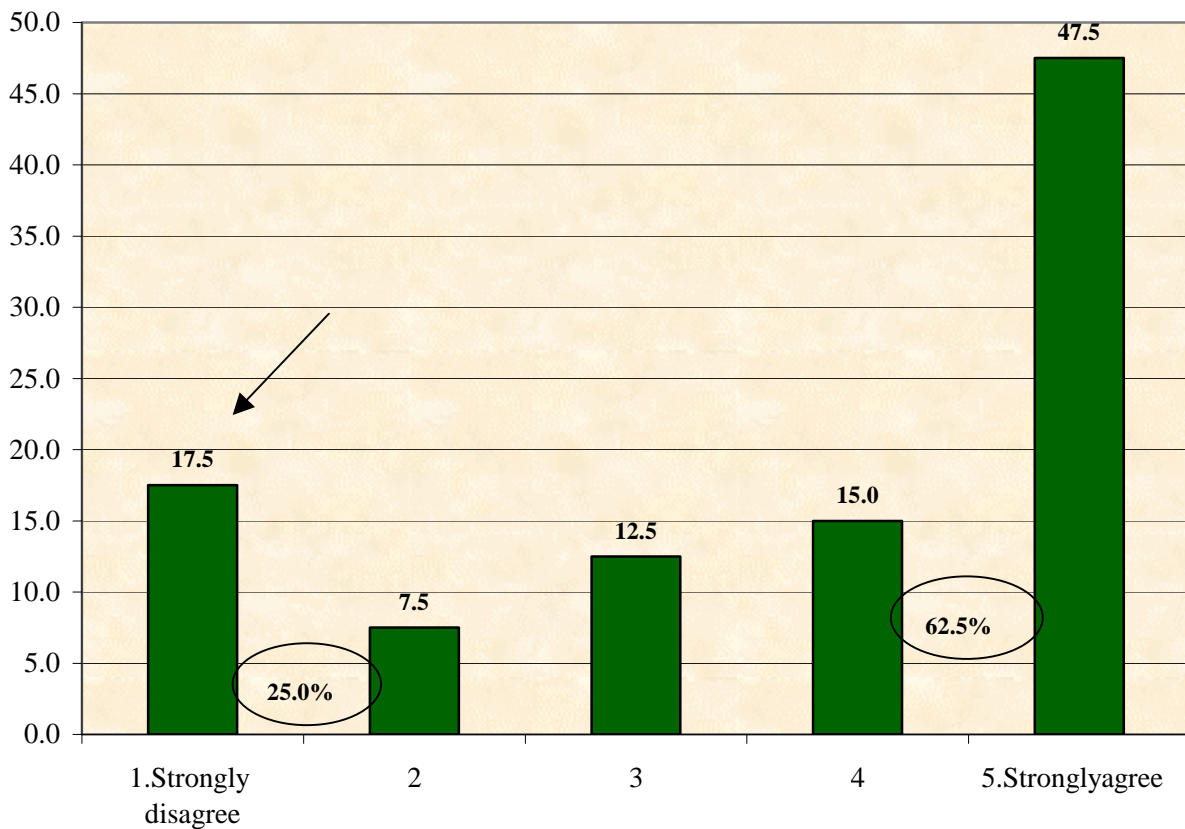


**B6. The lawyer was able to spend enough time with me.**

It appears that discontinued clients were generally getting enough time from their lawyers (chart below).

- A large majority (63%) of discontinued clients agreed that they got enough time from their lawyers, compared to 25% that disagreed, which is reflected in a high mean response level of 3.68.
- However, there is a significant proportion (18%) that strongly disagreed.

B6. The lawyer was able to spend enough time with me.  
Mean Response Level = 3.68

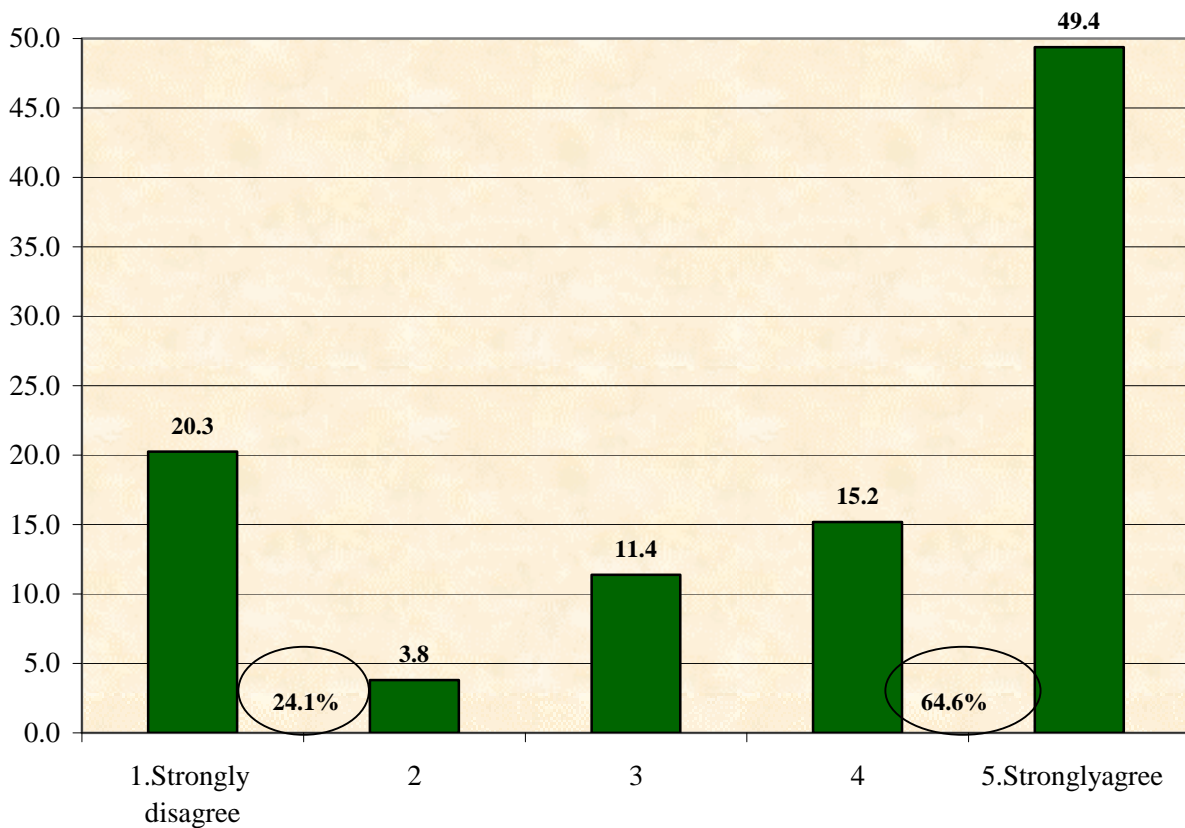


**B7. Overall, I was satisfied with the service I got from the lawyer.**

Generally, discontinued clients were satisfied with the service they got from their lawyer (chart below).

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) were satisfied with the service, compared to one-quarter (24%) that disagreed.
- The substantial proportion (20%) of clients that strongly disagreed points out a degree of variability in the perceived quality of service.

B7. Overall, I was satisfied with the service I got from the lawyer.  
Mean Response Level = 3.70



Females (mean response level = 4.08) are more likely to be satisfied with the service they got from the lawyer than are males (3.24).

## SECTION C: Discontinuance

### C1. Did you decide to stop dealing with Legal Aid?

A minority (41%) of discontinued clients said they decided to stop dealing with Legal Aid.

Males are more likely to say they decided to stop dealing with Legal Aid than are females. Despite accounting for 49% of the sample, 57% of males said they stopped contact. Conversely, only 25% of females said they decided to stop despite accounting for 51% of the sample.

### C3. Did you tell Legal Aid that you were stopping contact with them?

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who said they stopped, advised Legal Aid they were stopping contact.

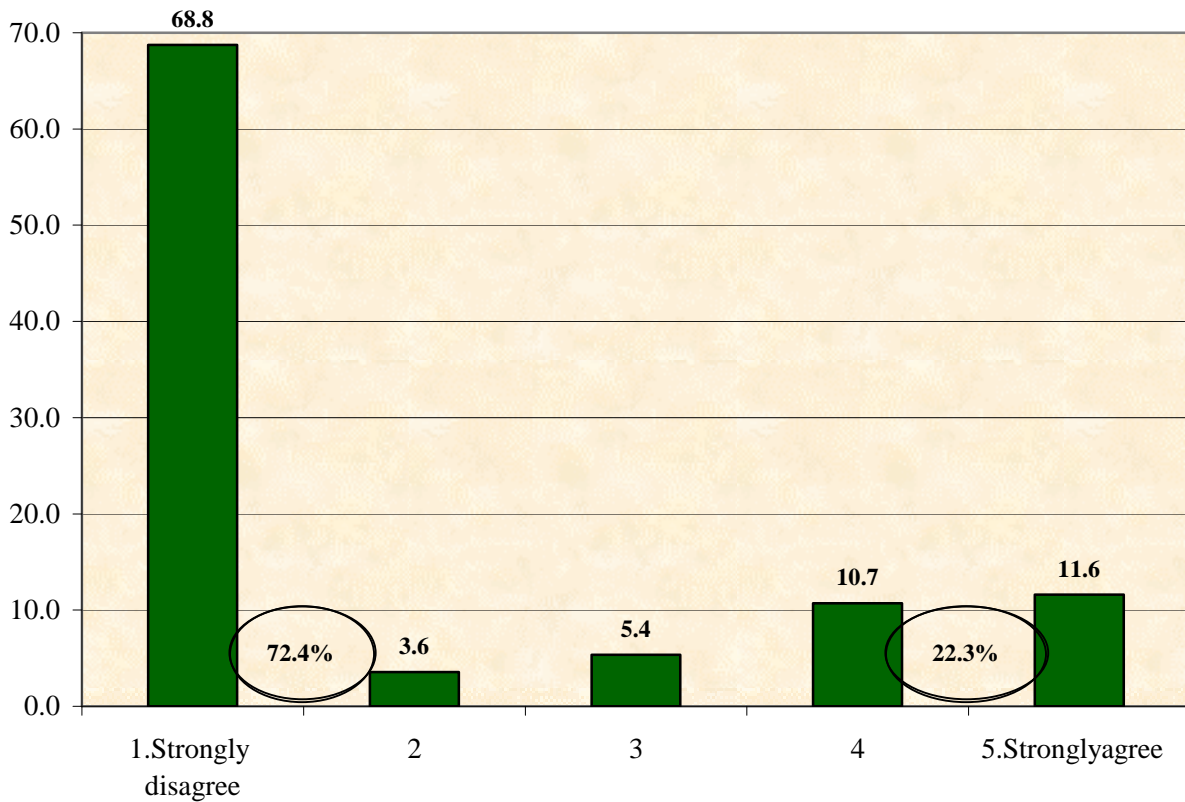
## SECTION D: General

### D1. I live too far from a Legal Aid office to get service.

Generally, distance from a Legal Aid office was not a problem for discontinued clients (chart below).

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) disagreed that it was a problem and more than two-thirds (69%) strongly disagreed.
- Still, distance is a concern for a significant proportion (22%) of discontinued clients.

D1. I live too far from a Legal Aid office to get service.  
Mean Response Level = 1.93

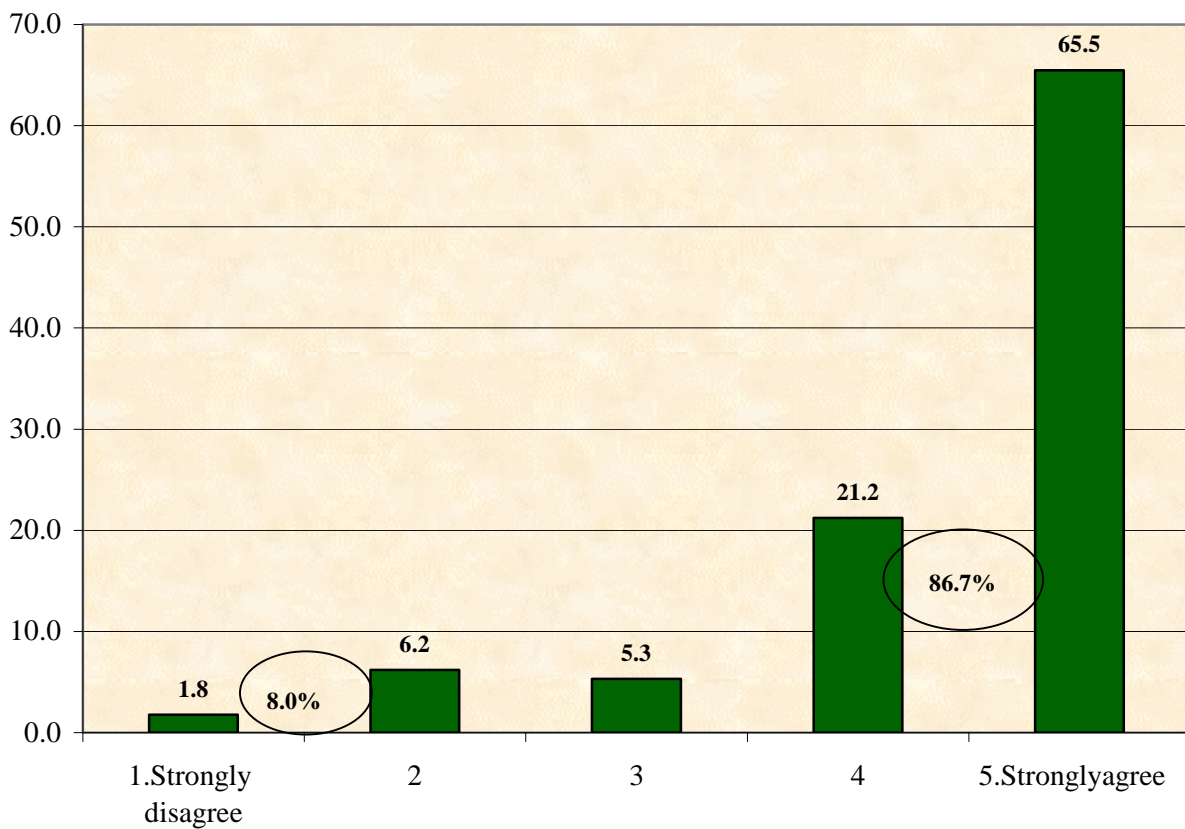


## D2.Iwasabletounderstandtheinstructionsfrom LegalAidpeople.

LegalAidstaffreceivedanexceptionallyhighratingfromdiscontinuedclientsintheirabilityto conveyinstructions(chartbelow).

- Anenormousproportion(87%)agreed,comparedtoarelativelyfew(8%)thatdisagreed.
- Themeanresponselevelof4.42isextraordinarilyhigh.

D2.Iwasabletounderstandtheinstructionsfrom LegalAidpeople.  
MeanResponseLevel=4.42

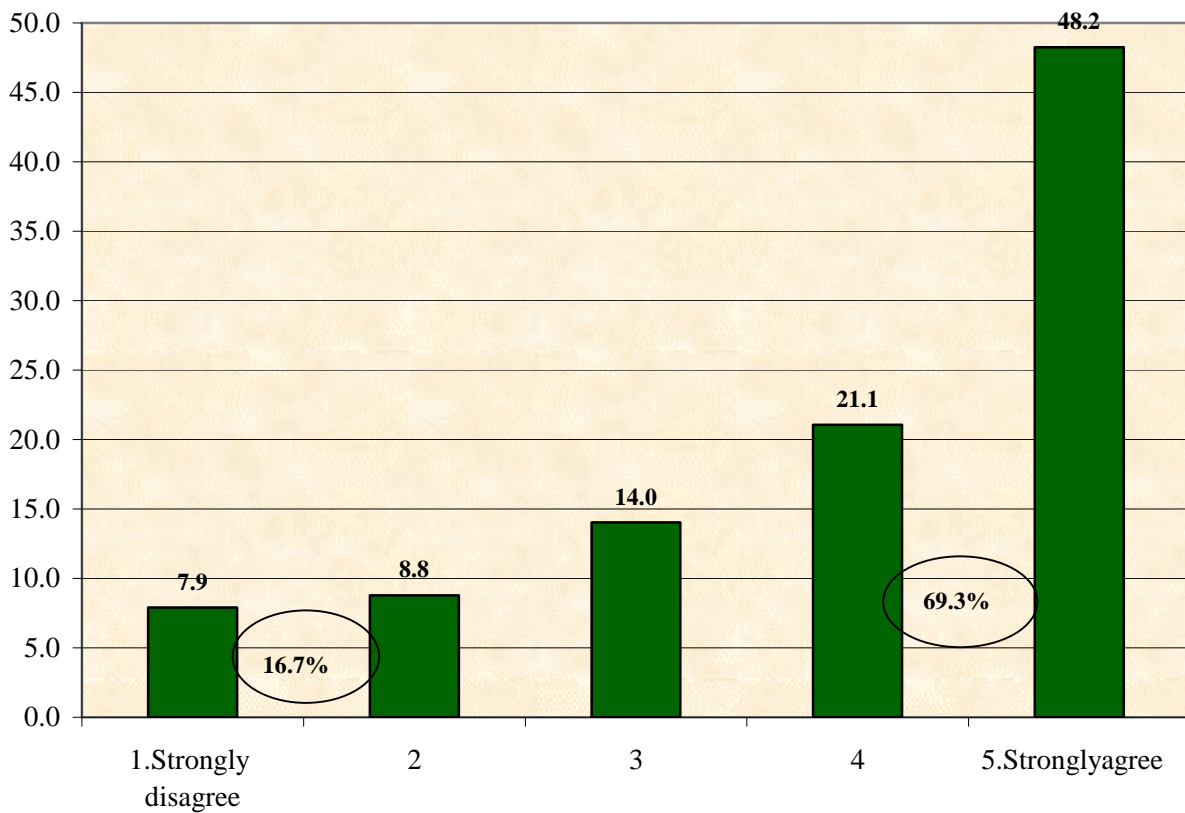


### D3. I got the information I needed from Legal Aid.

Discontinued clients received the information they needed from Legal Aid (chart below).

- More than two-thirds (69%) agreed they got the information they needed, compared to 17% that disagreed.
- The mean response level of 3.93 is very high.

D3. I got the information I needed from Legal Aid.  
Mean Response Level = 3.93

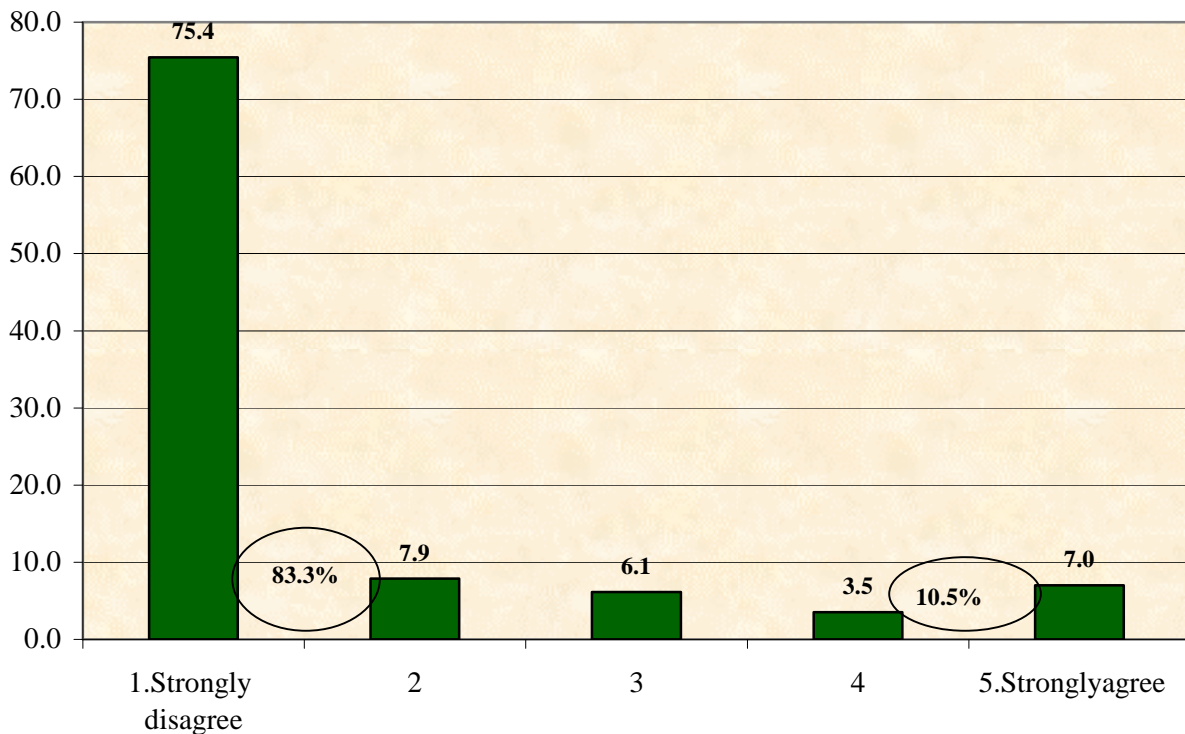


**D4. I couldn't get service from Legal Aid because I didn't have transportation to their office.**

Lack of transportation to Legal Aid offices generally was not a barrier to discontinued clients (chart below).

- A preponderance (83%) of discontinued clients disagreed that it was a problem, compared to a small proportion (11%) that agreed.

D4. I couldn't get service from Legal Aid because I didn't have transportation to their office.  
Mean Response Level = 1.59



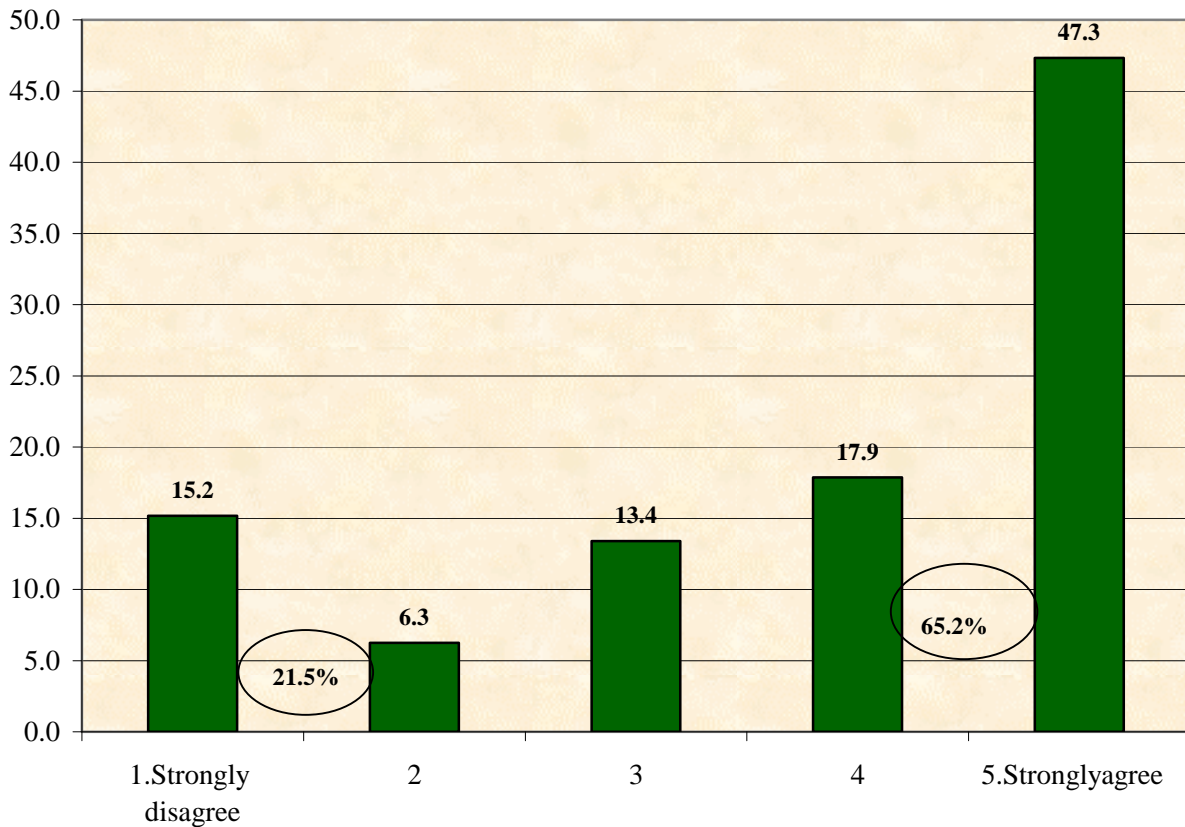
While both groups generally don't see transportation as a barrier, Aboriginal respondents (mean response level = 2.19) were more likely to agree they could not get service because of transportation than were non-Aboriginal respondents (1.30).

**D5. Overall, I am satisfied with the service I got from Legal Aid.**

Discontinued clients were generally very satisfied with the service they received from Legal Aid (chart below).

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) were satisfied with the service, compared to 22% that were not, which reflects a very high mean response level of 3.76.

D5. Overall, I am satisfied with the service I got from Legal Aid.  
Mean Response Level = 3.76



## SECTION E: Demographic Profile

The following table provides a partial demographic profile of respondents to this survey.

Demographic	Category	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49.1%
	Female	50.9%
<b>Constitutional Status</b>	Not Aboriginal	70.9%
	Status	22.7%
	Metis	4.5%
	Non-status	0.9%
	Inuit	0.9%
<b>Region</b>	Saskatoon	19.1%
	Regina	11.3%
	Moose Jaw	12.2%
	Prince Albert	11.3%
	South East	4.3%
	South West	8.7%
	North East	7.0%
	Central	5.2%
	North West	16.5%
	North	4.3%