



Oregon  
State  
Bar

# Oregon State Bar's Licensed Paraprofessional Program

RESEARCH REPORT | JANUARY 2022

PRODUCED BY:



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# Executive Summary

The Oregon State Bar has inquired Oregonians whether the State is interested in a new legal assistance practitioner through a new program, the Licensed Paraprofessional Program. This new program will provide a new path for people to help communities in need of accessible legal assistance and more options for seeking legal help.

The Oregon State Bar, a judicial arm of the Oregon Supreme Court, hired Lara Media Service to conduct research to answer the question, Should the Oregon State Bar start the Licensed Paraprofessional Program as a means to bridge the gap of legal help accessible for Oregonians in need?

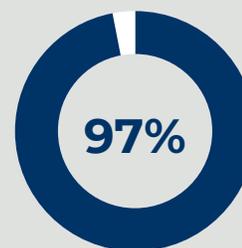
Lara Media Services, a market research firm from Portland, OR, designed a research plan to answer this question by coordinating one conversation with Oregonians who have been historically negatively impacted by the civil legal system (Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and low to moderate individuals). The plan consisted of one conversation with Oregonians who speak predominantly Spanish and a statewide survey of low to moderate earning Oregonians.

The focus group findings concluded that Oregonians want more access to culturally responsive legal assistance professionals and that this program is on the right path to address this gap. The survey results concluded that 97% of Oregonians favor a newly licensed paraprofessional, and 80% would be more open to consulting an attorney after working with this licensed paraprofessional.

Lara Media Services recommends the Oregon State Bar implement this new program with a culturally responsive communication plan as soon as possible. It will be necessary to examine further how these newly licensed paraprofessionals can be leveraged to bridge the gap of legal help accessibility.



Should the Oregon State Bar start the Licensed Paraprofessional Program as a means to bridge the gap of legal help accessible for Oregonians in need?



of Oregonians favor a newly licensed paraprofessional



would be more open to consulting an attorney after working with this licensed paraprofessional

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# Introduction

“Every Oregonian deserves a justice system that is accessible and accountable. The legitimacy of our democracy depends on the premise that injustices can be addressed fairly within the bounds of the law, no matter who you are or where you live. Let us work together in Oregon, to ensure that justice is a right, not a privilege—for everyone.”

– Chief Justice Martha Walters,  
Oregon Supreme Court.  
(Oregon Law Foundation, Portland State  
University Survey Research Lab, 2019)



In late 2021, the Oregon State Bar reached out to Lara Media Services to help them better understand the accessibility issues faced by low to moderate-income Oregonians when seeking legal help. This is a much-needed effort to make legal services more understandable and equitable. This problem is both national and local. The Oregon State Bar has the opportunity to create programming and services that reach the often underserved communities, and they want to understand how to do it better.

The quote below from Jason Solomon and Noelle Smith highlights the current issue in the US.

“It is a shameful irony that the nation with one of the world’s highest concentrations of lawyers does so poorly in making legal services available to its citizens. The U.S. ranks just 109 out of 128 countries in access to justice and affordability of civil legal services, below Zambia, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan. Two-thirds of American adults reported having a civil legal problem in the past year, but only one-third of those received any help. And the access to justice problem is not limited to low-income Americans; [the] access to justice gap is now enveloping an entirely new class of self-represented party—those who are modest and of moderate means.”

(Solomon & Smith, 2021)

The civil legal system has been challenging to navigate without legal assistance. In the report *“Barriers to Justice: A 2018 Study Measuring the civil legal needs of low-income Oregonians,”* 52.8% of surveyed participants sought legal help from an experienced legal problem, but 84.2% of people who needed a lawyer could not obtain one. The current level of legal practitioners met only 15% of the civil legal needs of low-income Oregonians (Oregon Law Foundation, Portland State University Survey Research Lab, 2019).

**84.2%**  
of people  
who needed a lawyer  
could not obtain one.

Source: “Barriers to Justice: A 2018 Study Measuring the civil legal needs of low-income Oregonians”

These accessibility issues are not new, however. In the year 2000, The State of Access to Justice in Oregon report found that low and moderate-income people in Oregon had a great need for civil legal services that were not met by the existing legal services delivery network at the time. The report stated that “Lower-income people obtained legal assistance for their problems less than 20% of the time.” It continued by stating, “People obtaining representation have a much more favorable view of the legal system and are satisfied with the outcome of the case 75% of the time when represented by a legal services lawyer.” In contrast, “Most people who experience a legal need and don’t obtain representation feel very negatively about the legal system, and about 75% are dissatisfied with the outcome of the case.” (Dale, 2000)

There is an unmet need. According to the Legal Services Corporation, 86% of low-income American’s civil legal problems in the United States receive inadequate to no legal help in 2017, 71% of low-income households experience at least one civil legal problem, and low-income Americans do not seek professional legal help for 80% of their civil legal problems (Legal Services Corporation, 2017). With hopes of bridging this gap of inaccessibility, the Oregon Supreme Court is considering creating a new type of legal provision, a Licensed Paralegal, to provide some legal services that, until now, only lawyers may provide. Similar to the introduction of Nurse Practitioners to the medical field, a Licensed Paralegal would be allowed to provide limited legal services [only] in family law cases (divorces, custody, parenting time, etc.) and landlord/tenant cases. These are two of the areas of law with the greatest unmet need for legal assistance in Oregon.

A Licensed Paralegal would have specific requirements for education and experience and would be subject to many of the rules and regulatory requirements that currently exist for lawyers. The intent is to provide access to legal help for those who currently cannot afford a lawyer or who otherwise would go to court with no legal assistance. This is one part of the solution to address the lack of equity and access in Oregon’s legal system, especially for the most marginalized communities that lack trust, understanding, and equity in the justice system.

# Background

The Oregon State Bar (OSB), a public corporation and an arm of the Oregon Judicial Department, licenses and disciplines lawyers, regulates the practice of law, and provides various services to bar members and the public. OSB does not receive any direct financial support in the form of taxpayer dollars from the General Fund, but is funded entirely by licensing fees and revenue from various member service programs. The Oregon Supreme Court has the authority to appoint the Disciplinary Board and the Board of Bar Examiners members. The OSB values are the integrity of ethics and standards, fairness in the justice system for all, leadership among legal professionals and the community, diversity in the community, justice in the rules of law, accountability of its decisions and action, excellence in its programs and services, sustainability through education and advancement, and the well-being of legal professionals for their professional duties and administrative effectiveness. (Oregon State Bar, n.d.)

Lara Media Services (LMS) values OSB's commitment and passion for listening and working within all communities to address Oregon residents' barriers to accessing legal services. We recognize that OSB aims to do so in a just, equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsible manner that reaches and benefits diverse populations, especially those lacking the means of hiring legal assistance providers.

LMS is a certified MBE, WBE, DBE, ESB firm (Certification #7923), and B-Corp. LMS is Latina-owned, and 100% of our team is multicultural and multilingual. Our vision is to create an equitable world where everyone can be seen, heard, and treated as a valuable and necessary member of society. Our ability to listen, respond, develop proven and effective strategies, and design culturally responsible research methods tailored to the underserved and underrepresented communities is unmatched. LMS promotes assertive communication and engagement strategies for organizations aiming to connect with the hearts and minds of communities of color through sustainable and dynamic solutions. We are confident that LMS's unique approach and expertise on similar past projects and objectives will help OSB see and better understand the thoughts and interests of Oregon residents in OSB's Licensed Paraprofessional Program.



# Research Study

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The goal of the OSB is to know whether Oregonians want a new alternative for legal help, a licensed paraprofessional. The licensed paralegal program would offer Oregon residents additional options when they require legal services. In some cases, licensed paralegals may be able to offer assistance to clients at a lower cost than a traditional attorney while still providing high-quality services.

OSB understands that Oregon residents have a high level of unmet legal need. Legal help providers can only serve 15% to 20% of financially eligible clients, and 84% of people with family law cases do not have an attorney. This puts many Oregon residents, especially low-income residents, underrepresented communities, and persons of color, at a disadvantage because they are often forced to represent themselves in court and may be unaware of legal options available to them.

OSB decided to work with an outside expert, LMS, to research two avenues to solicit input from the public, focusing on reaching Oregonians who have traditionally struggled to receive adequate legal representation and whose input may not be adequately captured without this targeted effort. Importantly, this includes Oregonians for whom English is not their native language.

Lara Media Services' research and findings will inform OSB of the public opinion of a new paraprofessional licensure services proposal through community survey results and focus groups. This will help OSB learn about the programs and services that are most important to often underserved community members. OSB aims to understand why community members do not currently hire professional legal help and the legal needs and priorities of people who don't hire lawyers for legal counsel.

Through this research, LMS will provide the public's answer to the question,

*“Should Oregon have a new alternative to legal help  
in the form of a licensed paraprofessional?”*

# Methodology

LMS gathered qualitative and quantitative data by coordinating and facilitating virtual focus groups and implementing a questionnaire shared via community interceptors and social media links.

The following report synthesizes the quantitative and qualitative results from the survey and the focus groups. The findings have been organized into three main topics.

## Experience with the Current Legal System

LMS strives to understand and communicate the current barriers underserved community members face and what channels they use to seek information.



## Understanding of the Licensed Paralegal Program

LMS inquired about the current understanding of Paralegal Professionals and the Paralegal Professional Program to gather initial feedback on the potential benefits and challenges.



## Spanish Group Specifics

LMS will highlight the critical differences that Spanish-speaking participants shared in the language-specific focus group.



## Focus Groups Methodology

Focus groups are an exploratory research method and provide vast amounts of qualitative data. This method is used when there is a need to explore issues in-depth and understand thoughts, feelings, challenges, and aspirations. LMS encourages participants to be fully engaged and empowers them to let their voices be heard. Trust is built throughout the session, as each person's opinion is vital. LMS aimed to have a diverse group of participants to capture the sentiment of multiple perspectives.



## For this project, LMS utilized the following research methodology

- ① LMS engaged OSB project personnel to identify priority audiences and essential considerations when developing the discussion guide. The priority population identified was Oregon residents – residing in urban and rural areas – of low income, who were a part of underrepresented communities, or identified as persons of color.
- ② Once OSB and LMS identified the priority audiences, LMS developed a discussion guide in collaboration with OSB project personnel to define the number of questions, topics, and expected outcomes.
- ③ Priority audiences were invited to participate in the discussion. LMS and OSB identified two (2) focus groups to conduct:
  - a) Spanish speakers with a household income of \$60,000 or less from across the State.
  - b) English Speakers with a household income of \$60,000 or less from across the State, with priority given to under-represented communities or persons of color.
- ④ LMS recruited 12 participants for each group through social media and with the help of LMS trusted community advocates that live and work in rural areas. LMS leveraged the relationships developed with community leaders and the database of Oregonians acquired over the 20+ years of existence to gather participants that met the criteria and needs of this research project. LMS contacted approximately 60 people, of which 40 wanted to participate, and after the screening, LMS registered 24 according to the participant profile needed.
- ⑤ Focus group participants were required to have access to an electronic device with a camera and microphone in order to engage in the conversations. LMS offered to lend tablets to participants in need of electronic devices; none were requested. LMS also offered Zoom Video conferencing training to all participants who requested assistance; two requested training.
- ⑥ LMS virtually hosted, coordinated, and facilitated two discussion groups: One in English and one in Spanish, on December 21, 2021, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm to deeply understand the perceptions, ideas, behaviors, and barriers of the participants with the Oregon legal system.
- ⑦ The discussion guide included fourteen questions about participants' experience with the legal system, their understanding of paralegals, and their interests in having alternatives to lawyers for civil legal counsel.
- ⑧ LMS provided a demographic survey to focus group participants in order to capture participants' demographics.
- ⑨ A summary of the information gathered is included in this report.

## Focus Groups Participants

All participants met the pre-selected criteria, belonging to either low and median-income groups or historically underrepresented communities. Each focus group had residents from multiple counties, including Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Lane, Lincoln, Marion, Multnomah, Umatilla, and Washington county. The Spanish group consisted of ten (10) Oregonians who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x Oregonians. The English group consisted of eleven (11) Oregonians of diverse racial backgrounds.

All participants were compensated \$100 for their time and insights. LMS utilized various methods to compensate focus group participants, including Venmo, Cash App, PayPal, gift cards, and physical checks.

Each participant provided LMS with the following demographic information before the focus group.

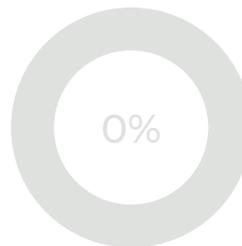
Due to rounding, some totals may differ by  $\pm 1$  from the sum of separate responses or due to participants selecting multiple choices (particularly in the case of races and/or ethnicity).

### Focus Groups Participants Demographic's Outline:

#### 1. Is your combined yearly household income equal or less than \$60,000?



YES

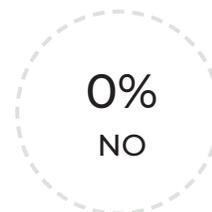


NO

#### 2. Do you live in the state of Oregon?

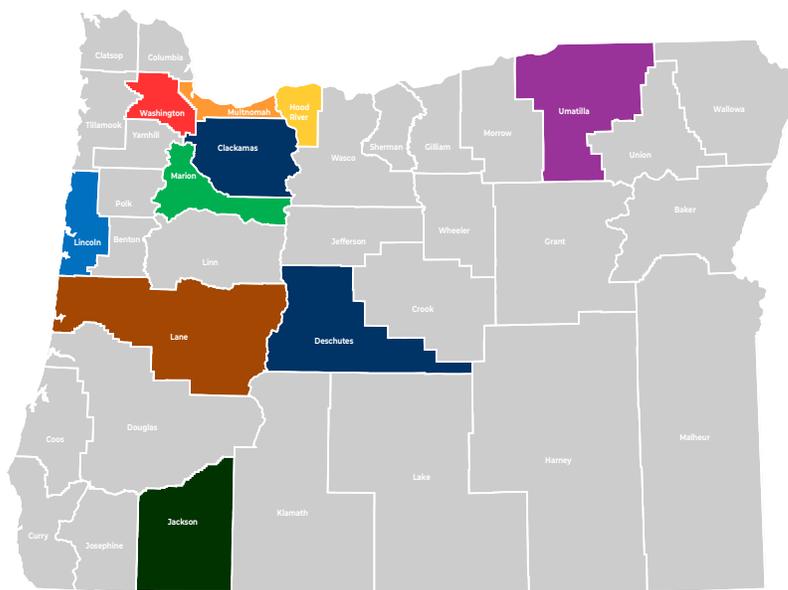
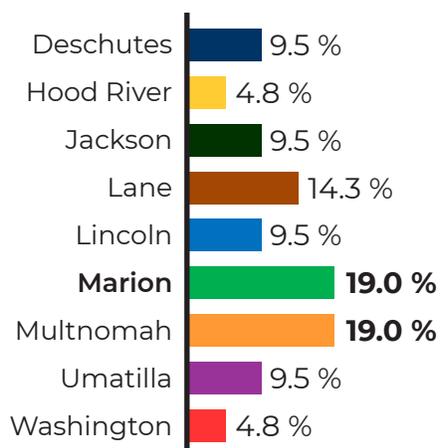


100%  
YES

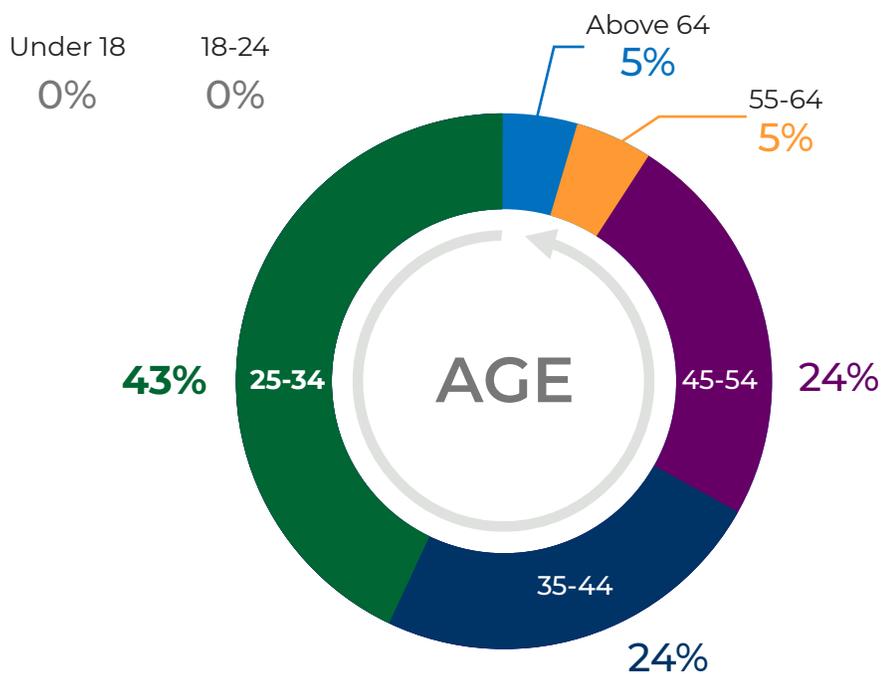


0%  
NO

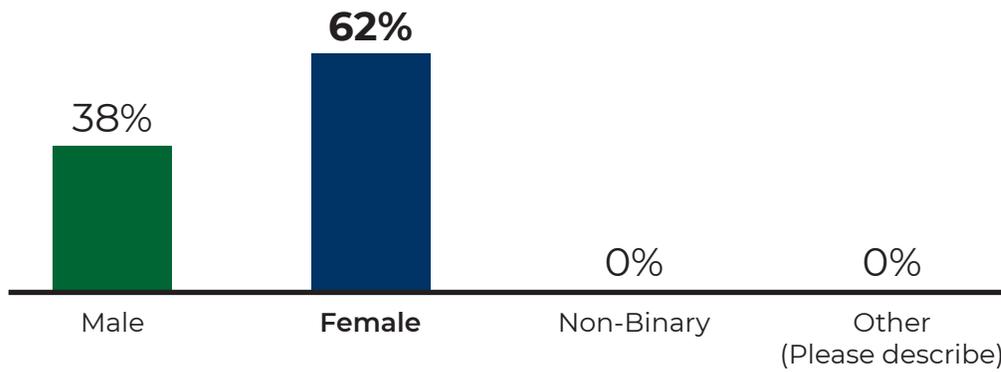
### 3. What county do you live in?



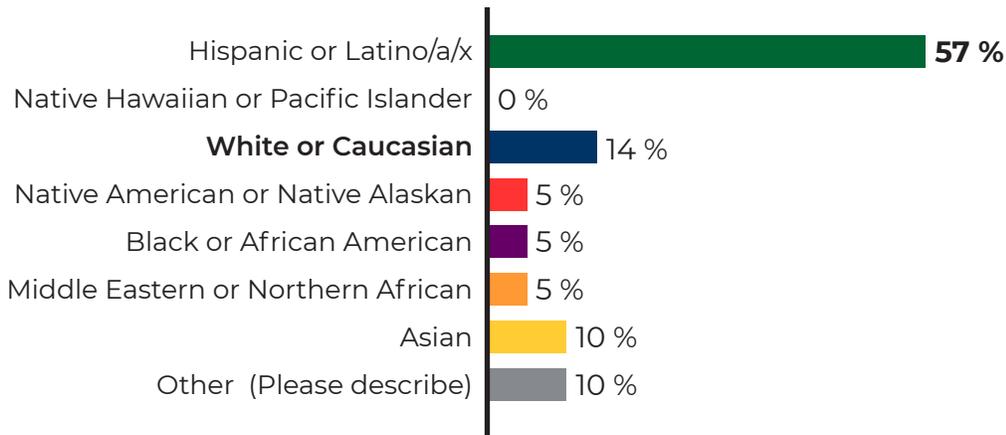
### 4. What is your age?



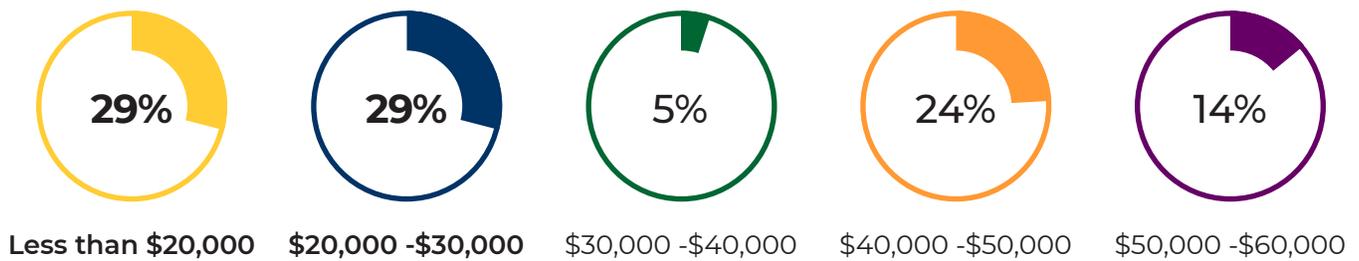
### 5. What gender do you identify with?



### 6. What is your racial identity?



### 7. In 2020, What was your household income?



# Survey Methodology

- ① LMS engaged OSB project personnel to identify priority audiences and important considerations to develop the questionnaire and identify a priority population to survey. The priority population identified was Oregon residents – residing in urban and rural areas – of low income, who were a part of underrepresented communities, or identified as persons of color.
- ② Once OSB and LMS identified the priority audiences, LMS developed a survey in collaboration with OSB project personnel to define the number of questions, topics, and expected outcomes. OSB gave the targets of having a confidence level of 90% and having a margin of error of (+) (-) 5%.
- ③ With OSB direction, LMS calculated the sample size based on the Oregon population and identified priority audience:
  - a) Oregon's population and median income: 4,246,155 and \$62,818 (United States Census Bureau, 2021)
  - b) Moderate: \$50,254 (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2018)
  - c) N=262 unique survey responses.
- ④ LMS recruited participants through social media and through the support of LMS trusted community advocates who live and work in rural areas.
  - a) Two hundred sixty-two (262) unique survey answers were gathered via outreach conducted through the phone, online & social media link and intercepted by community advocates.
- ⑤ The survey campaign began December 22, 2021, and closed January 11, 2022, intending to survey 262 unique participants throughout the state while focusing on rural areas.
- ⑥ Participants received a \$10 compensation after responding to the survey.

# Survey Participants

Survey participants were required to live in Oregon, have a low to moderate household income and be over 18 years old. Surveys allowed us to obtain data quantified and compared to other research or community engagement methods. LMS administered surveys to participants in various ways, by phone, social media, and the majority by interceptor using tablets where communities shop, entertain and socialize. OSB and LMS agreed upon the list of questions. The questionnaires were sent via email and administered online and in-person with an interceptor.



Participants could answer the survey in different ways depending on their preference.

Options:

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They clicked on a link texted to them and filled out the survey on phones or tablets.

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They answered questions asked by an interviewer while the interviewer filled out the survey.

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They had an interceptor answer or filled out the survey for them.

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The survey averaged five minutes to complete. All survey participants were compensated \$10. LMS utilized various methods to compensate participants, including Venmo, Cash App, PayPal, Starbucks, and supermarket gift cards. LMS did not provide OSB with any materials that include the participants' identity, including video, audio, or transcripts of the round table conversation, surveys, etc. Their anonymity allows them to provide honest answers crucial to the project.

The survey included questions intended to find information about the public's interest in the program, the unmet legal need in the community, and questions that are likely to come from the public. The surveys distributed also included demographic information to determine the level of support within the surveyed groups. LMS administered the surveys in English and Spanish with diverse communities across the state to obtain 262 surveys.

The survey example is attached in the Appendix. Survey participants provided the following demographic information.

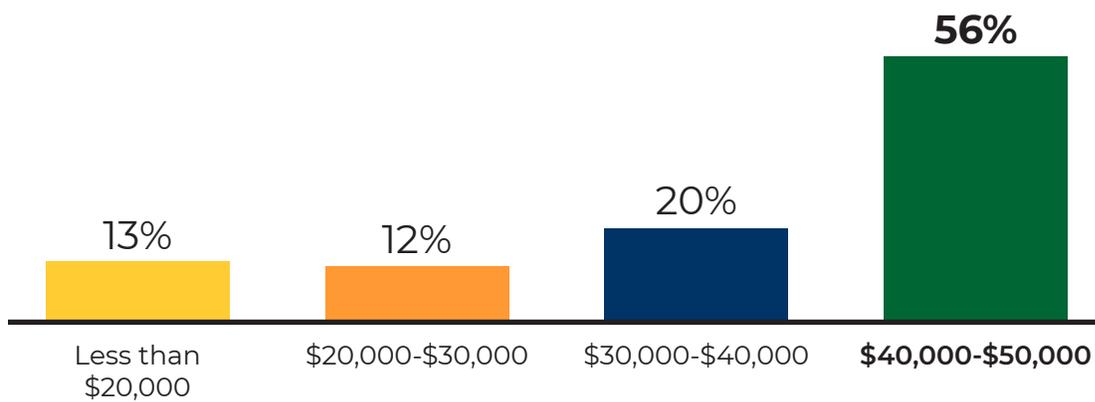
Due to rounding, some totals may differ by  $\pm 1$  from the sum of separate responses or due to participants selecting multiple choices (particularly in the case of races and/or ethnicity).

## Survey Participants Demographic's Outline:

1. Is your combined yearly household income equal or less than \$50,000?



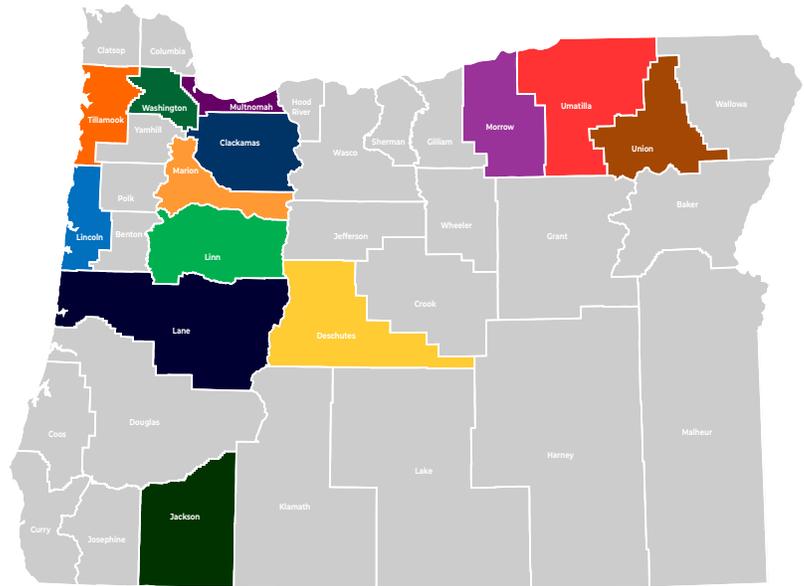
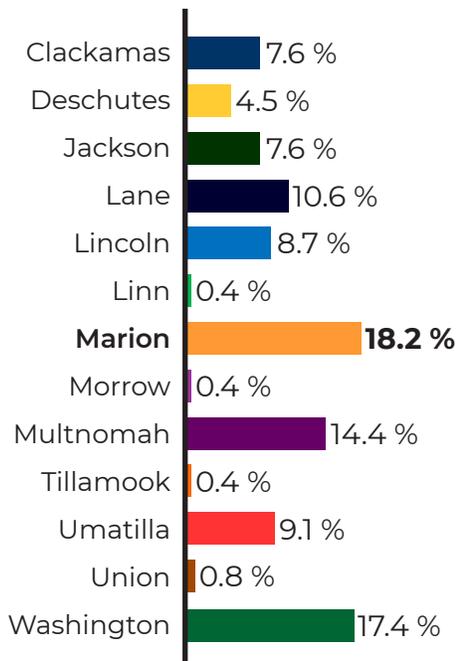
2. In 2020, What was your household income?



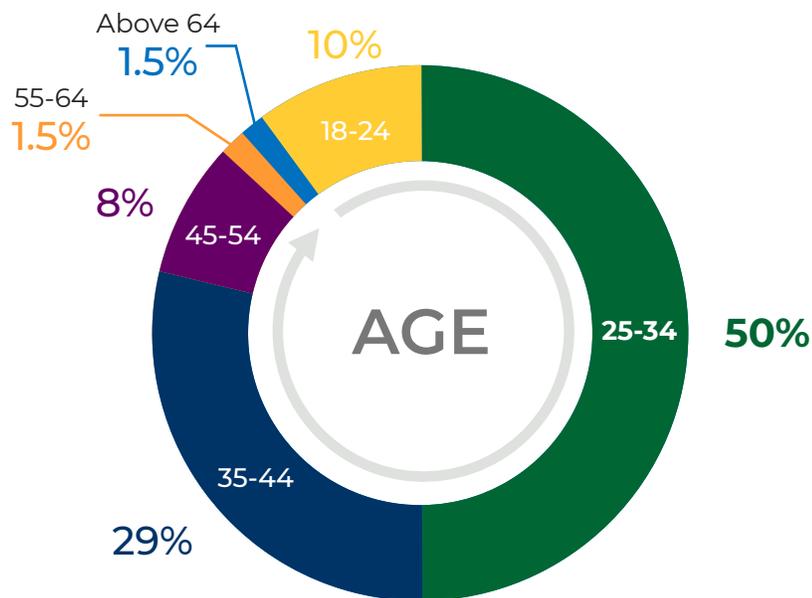
3. Do you live in the state of Oregon?



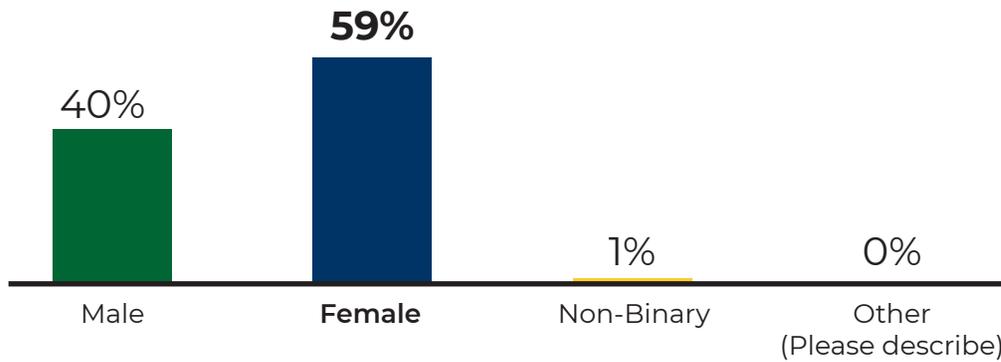
#### 4. What county in Oregon do you live in?



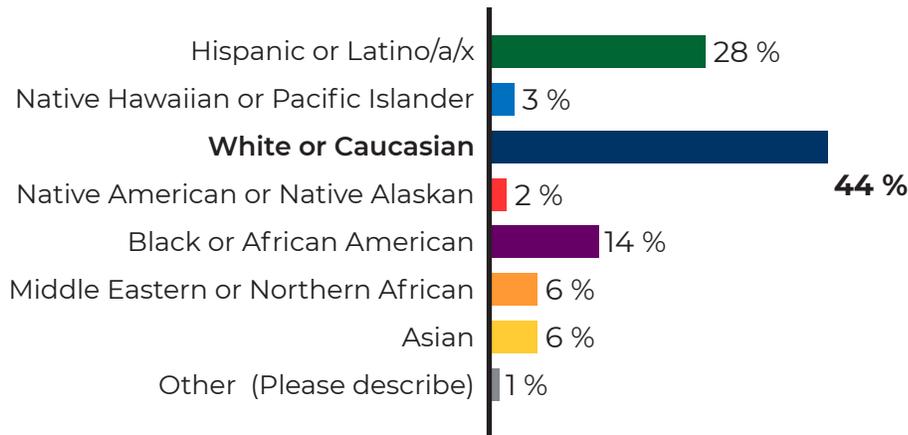
#### 5. What is your age?



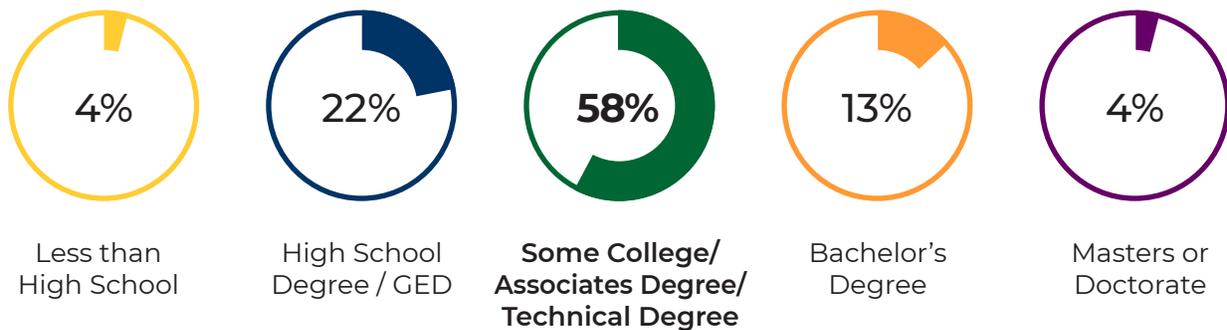
**6. Which of the following best represents your gender?**



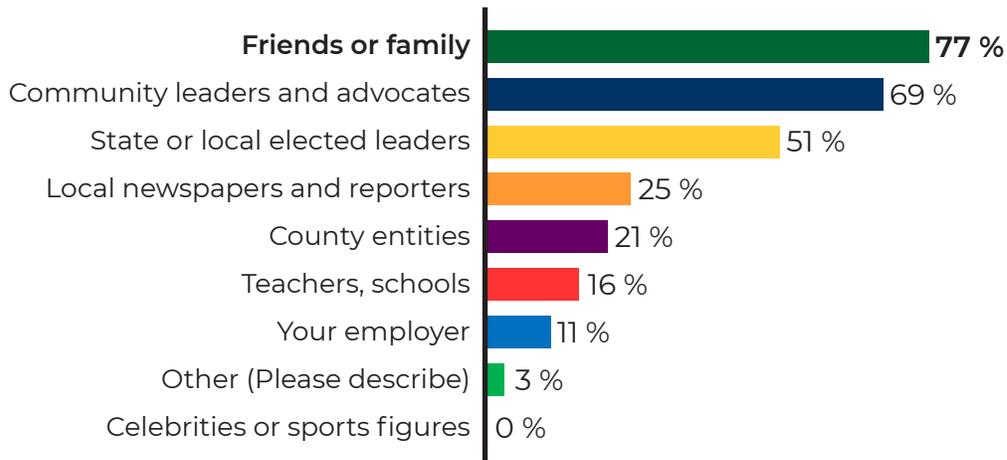
**7. When asked about your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?**



**8. What is your highest level of education?**



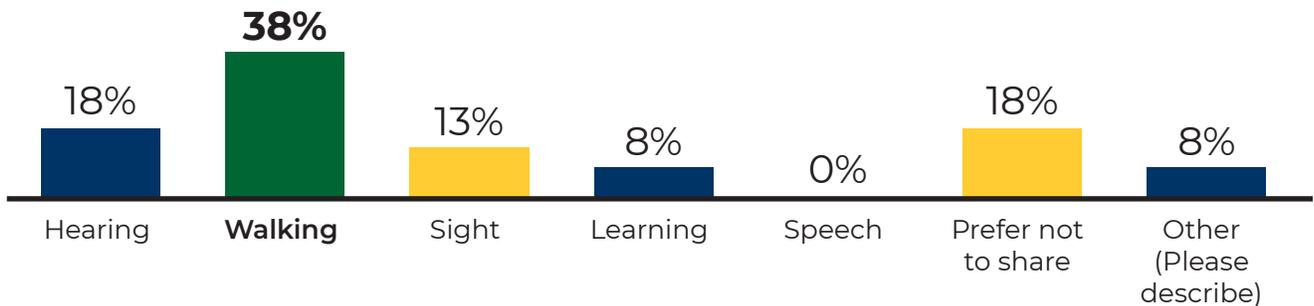
**9. Which of the following messengers would you trust to share important information with you? (Select up to 3)**



**10. Are you impacted by a disability?**



**11. Where are you impacted by disabilities? (Select all that apply)**



# Findings Overview

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In the findings section, we take many of the quotes and themes and attempt to weave them into a narrative that helps the Oregon State Bar see and understand the participants' sentiments, underlying desires, needs, and gaps of legal understanding. Something worth noting is that the line between civil and criminal law was vague, at best, for focus group participants. Many of their comments show they fail to recognize the difference between the two and where this program would fit.

## Experience with the Current Legal System

### Current Barriers

- Participants feel that racial discrimination is embedded in the country's legal system and Oregon. Many stories were shared that exemplified a lack of equity and inclusion.
- There is an urgent lack of finances and information.
- Culturally responsive and appropriate language resources are not readily available.

### Information Channels

Participants use the internet as their first or second source of information. They use social media outlets to look for information. They ask friends and family, and community members they trust. Some have called attorneys advertising on Radio or TV but didn't have a good experience. Many wished there were more self-guided resources available, and the resources were easy to understand, direct, and without using jargon.

## Understanding of the Licensed Paralegal Program

### Defining Paralegal Professionals

There was a lack of understanding of what a paralegal does. Most participants did not understand what a licensed paralegal meant, with some of them having worked with public notaries and confusing the terms. Some had heard the term paralegals prior but did not know the difference and needed certifications or job descriptions.

### Initial Feedback

- **Opportunities** – Many see this program as progress to providing more equitable, accessible, inclusive, and it has the opportunity to bring more diverse professionals with diverse backgrounds and languages. This will potentially create relationships between the paralegals and the underserved communities. Participants think these paralegals will be more open and better able to listen and help them in their legal matters.

## ● Challenges

- ❑ The limitations of licensed paralegals will mitigate the need for legal counsel. Still, it must establish a new equitable system that takes serious measures to address the disparities the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities face when navigating the civil legal system.
- ❑ Participants are either unaware of or unsatisfied with lawyers' current level of oversight, and they worry that licensed paralegals might have a similar problem.

## Participant Recommendations

Participants would like to see additional information regarding the program that needs to be distributed so that it's on the radar of the communities this program will directly impact if it becomes a reality. They also want transparency on the process and vetting to become a licensed paralegal and how they will be held accountable. Lastly, they would like this program to provide gateways for BIPOC and multilingual individuals the opportunity to become paralegals or provide opportunities for them to access the system.

## Spanish Group Specifics

Spanish immigrants that participated had a more significant challenge of protecting their rights from expensive attorney charges and abuse treatment. Police and the legal system highly target the Latinx population; even with close to 400,000 Spanish speakers, getting good quality Spanish translators and language access remains a challenge in the courts of Oregon. Spanish speakers want to communicate appropriately with both the court and their attorney. Attorneys have charged them a considerable amount and haven't resolved their problems or complicated them more. They change the attorney hoping to find a solution but continue to struggle to have their voices heard — and understood — in civil court.

## Current Barriers

The Spanish-speaking community was not given the same level of service as proficient English speakers, saying their voices were not being heard from the lawyers they contracted. The community also faces transportation barriers and emphasizes the proximity of lawyers as necessary to the communities needing service.

## Initial Feedback

Many Spanish-speaking participants saw this program as a gateway for giving migrant farmworkers affordable legal assistance.

# Findings

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## Experience with the Current Legal System

### Current Barriers

Most of the participants have had negative experiences with the legal system, and about half of those have had experience hiring an attorney or lawyer for a legal matter. Many, however, expressed a lack of knowledge of legal matters and difficulty accessing legal assistance as the main reasons they did not seek assistance. Several commented that if they had known where to find assistance or how to hire a good lawyer, they might have been more willing to press charges or go to court. Others said they had sought lawyers recommended to them or had seen online but were told they would not take their cases. Some were charged a lot of money and haven't resolved their cases.

Quote: *"No lawyer wanted to help me with my case because they didn't see any profit in doing it."*

Many of these participants said they were left with nowhere to turn and that lawyers and law firms' strict and unknown policies related to case selection made it difficult for many people to access legal assistance. They believe that this applies especially when dealing with courts outside of the normal sphere of family or criminal cases, such as immigration and housing, where good legal help and resources are even harder to find.

Quote: *"I need help with my problem, but it has been very difficult finding a good lawyer. The ones I have hired so far are very expensive, and they haven't helped me at all."*

Language barriers also played a large part in the lack of accessibility. Participants advocated for more accessible multilingual assistance and resources for the BIPOC communities. They stressed that people often have difficulty finding services in their native languages. Navigating the legal system can be especially difficult for those with low English proficiency, especially when trying to understand the large amount of legal jargon that lawyers and legal assistants often use.

Quote: *"[Finding a lawyer] that speaks my language [is important] because I will be able to communicate better."*

Many legal services also do not direct their resources towards BIPOC and immigrant communities, leaving many with a lack of information on how the legal system works and their rights. This lack of knowledge and resource availability often leaves them vulnerable in legal situations, unwilling to push for legal assistance, and more likely to accept charges. It can also cause confusion, leading to misinformation and challenging interactions with English-speaking police officers or other authorities.

Quote: *“Language can be a huge barrier in terms of access to legal support and advice. In the Asian community, when there is need for legal advice and service, people tend to not want to go that route because they, culturally, do not want to create more trouble and work for themselves, and they end up just paying the ticket or pleading guilty and giving in.”*

Money was also a significant barrier for the majority of participants. Many had been reluctant to push legal matters or seek legal help because they could not afford a defense attorney or lawyer. With a lack of pro bono legal assistance, many find it better to fold and accept the charges against them. Participants shared several examples of how they paid large amounts of money to attorneys who never supported them with their cases.

Quote: *“Most good layers are expensive for immigrants like me and other people that work for minimum wage. For some with low income, it is difficult to find a good lawyer that can help you with your case.”*

Quote: *“Growing up in the black community, you are guilty until proven innocent, and you can’t prove yourself innocent unless you have the money. In the court system, they all work for each other. It is about who you know, it is about what you know, and it is about how much money you have. People like us, when we get in trouble, they are looking to get us time to spend in jail. We have nobody to stand for us unless you have money for a lawyer and to fight the case.”*

While some participants are aware of and have used public defense attorneys in their past, many participants considered them to be of lower quality and doubted their capabilities. Several participants stated that they would only trust a lawyer when seeking legal assistance, and another commented on the low number of discharges in cases involving public attorneys. Participants did recognize that public attorneys are often overworked and underpaid but ultimately believed that this contributes to a poor defense system for those going to court and that better assistance is needed in many cases.

This negative view of the courts was a continuous theme throughout the first part of the discussion. The type of legal matters that participants had experienced varied vastly, from criminal cases and restraining orders to traffic tickets and eviction notices, as well as cases involving either the immigration or family court of law. But the consensus for most participants was that the court rarely works to represent BIPOC communities' rights fairly.

Quote: *"A lot of people in my community don't get treated right in the legal system. So many times, if you are not working with a lawyer, you get a differential treatment."*

Several also believe that the court system sets people up for failure, making it difficult to escape the system once someone enters it. One participant stated, "I had to miss days at work in order to get the services of a lawyer, so I am always missing money due to the legal system." Another commented how the hoops he had to jump through made it difficult to earn money and, therefore, keep a roof over their head after his arrest.

Quote: *"I was arrested in 2015, and having the information on my records has affected me in my hunt for a new job."*

Others felt that personal and racial prejudice played a large part in the court system, saying that BIPOC community members were treated more harshly in courts and not afforded the same opportunities as their white counterparts. One Native American participant emphasized that prejudice is a significant barrier for his community in obtaining fair trials and legal assistance throughout the civil legal system. Another participant believed that "the [legal] system was built on putting black people in prison" and that it is "a system built on racial profiling" that needs to be fixed before it could meet the needs of the people it claims to serve.

Quote: *"Most Native American usually run into a barrier because most of the time there is more than one person in the line of the system that, because of their bias, ends up complicating things down the line, and I don't think that that is really understood as an issue because they don't see their biases as a blanket."*

## Information Channels

Many participants currently obtain their information from the internet, books, acquaintances or friends, and family members who know legal matters well or have gone through a similar experience. Two said their employer offered legal services to employees for a small fee as a work benefit. Meanwhile, others rely on community and nonprofit organizations' services, such as Causa, BLM, churches, PCUN, Mano a Mano, Unete, Next Door, to procure resources, legal advice, legal knowledge, and informational classes. The consensus from both focus groups is that they are very likely to trust a lawyer or other form of legal assistance when they are recommended to them by a person or organization they trust.

When asked what programs they believed would be helpful for them and their communities, many preferred getting in person or over the phone legal assistance and getting legal assistance in preparing and checking forms that they had filed out.

Quote: *“Having a legal advocate in the court system that can help people navigate would be a good starter, and then everything else listed (in the study question) would be a second option; otherwise, by themselves, they are like a black hole that you are stepping into.”*

“Everyone should have all of these options,” one participant argued; “It would be good to have paralegal services that had a bit more hand-holding,” another agreed, “... and helped walk people through the process.” Participants want to be provided with more information and be listened to and understood by someone who can connect with someone who looks like them and understand them better to remove barriers and address their needs. Many believe that a hotline or in-person help from knowledgeable lawyers or legal assistants would help people handle the legal system cleanly. People often tend to miss a lot of nuances and inside information when self-educating themselves.

Quote: *“I favor some sort of personal interaction to get better answers because by just watching a video or visiting the website, you might miss a lot of nuances of interacting with the court system.”*

They also stated that it was imperative to provide resources for the diverse legal circumstances in their communities, as it can be challenging to find information about how to obtain assistance in different legal fields.

Several, however, also advocated for more accessible self-education resources, such as a website, online video, and legal training. They believe that these would help give people the baseline information when dealing with legal terms and charges and help them better use the knowledge and experience in-person assistance could provide. One participant put the importance of these resources into perspective, talking about a personal experience in which a manager had abused the rights of their employees because they were not English proficient and did not know their rights.

One participant in the other focus group shared similar thoughts, “[I]f you don’t know your rights, you don’t have them. Something about waiting for someone else to educate you on those rights isn’t sitting well with me. It would be better for people to do their own research so that they can learn how to navigate the system themselves.”

The majority agree that having more than one or all of these options readily available and accessible would provide the best experience and assurance of legal help for the majority of people. Several also recommended spreading these resources in multiple languages or providing multilingual options when talking to a legal assistant over the phone or in person for those with low English proficiency.

Quote: *“[I think it would be important to have] a hotline with interpretation services and having information in various languages.”*

Another mentioned the importance of having these benefits available to rural communities or those who may not have access to computer technology as many would not be able to access assistance or resources reliant on online services.

Quote: *“There are people here in rural communities that don’t have access to [the] internet and don’t have email and are not text savvy to communicate.”*

# Understanding the Licensed Paraprofessional Program

## Defining what are Paralegal Professionals

Before presenting the Oregon State Bar’s plan for the Licensed Paraprofessional Program, participants were asked if they had any previous knowledge of a licensed paralegal. About half of the participants had heard of paralegal professionals before, and these previous understandings defined the lens through which they would view the program. One participant defined paralegals as having had “some legal training about how the law works but not as in-depth as to how lawyers would venture. Their training would help them to be able to prepare documents accurately and understand various legal terms and situations to assist lawyers.” Another participant added, “they can also help people independently to process paperwork when there is no battle and only mutually agreed upon terms, [but they] can’t make legal decisions for legal attorneys, rep people in court, or give legal advice.”

Quote: *The Spanish group had a slightly different understanding of a paralegal than the English group. They defined a licensed paralegal as “a person that is recognized by the state to provide legal advice,” or “a person that studies but is under supervision of someone with more experience.”*

## Initial Feedback

### Opportunities:

Quote: *“Knowing paralegals and attorneys who work through that equality and racial lens, who work for and care for the community, those would be things that I would look for. Will this program give us that?”*

Despite earlier reservations, most participants believed that Oregon State Bar’s Licensed Paraprofessional Program was an excellent first step towards helping fill the gap in much-needed legal assistance in their communities and voted for them to implement the program. “I give them credit for the family services,” said one, “but it also needs to reach across the board and help with a lot of further matters.” Many were also eager to see an organization providing more affordable assistance to their communities, with one participant commenting, “if this is low-cost though, I can see it being very accessible to a lot of people.”

Quote: *“I think anything they can do to help the minorities is good; it is a step in the right direction.”*

Multiple participants saw the program as a chance to strengthen the bond between the regular community and the licensed paralegals. The belief that “the courts don’t care, ... they don’t get to know you, [and] don’t take you into account” is prevalent in the BIPOC community. One participant recounted her experience, saying, “I was sent to another city to get my police report, and I didn’t have good service. I felt humiliated... I’m afraid of being ignored again.” They want legal assistance that will obtain results and leave them feeling heard on their issues. Participants hope that Oregon State Bar’s Licensed Paraprofessional Program will help provide the BIPOC community with licensed paralegals who are “more honest and benefit the community” due to their knowledge and previous experience. This program, many argue, could help ease the worry that little to no results would be obtained when getting legal assistance because those providing the legal help don’t care about the people they are helping.

Quote: *“It is better than what we have now. There is a systemic problem with the legal system that needs to be addressed and not just give solutions to these areas, but there need to be more solutions to equity as far as how the system processes people and the accessibility of inaccessibility to our communities.”*

### Challenges:

After being presented with Oregon State Bar’s Licensed Paraprofessional Program, participants were skeptical about the feasibility of such a program. Additionally, many did not believe that it would be adequate to provide the pro bono legal service required by the BIPOC community due to the limited help licensed paralegals can provide. In contrast, they said there is a wide variety of cases for which their communities need legal assistance. “That sounds great for family and tenant cases,” commented one participant, “but for a lot of immigration and other cases for communities of color, it won’t help- not enough to fix the disparity.” One participant added, “it’s a good start, but we need more!”

Quote: *“When we are talking about legal access to minorities and communities of color, I think it should be across the board, and this only touches two pieces. And we talked about fairness in the court system and due process and all those other things, and these don’t even touch that.”*

One of the most pressing concerns for these groups was the lack of accountability they perceived inherent in the system. They worried that this would allow these licensed paralegals to abuse the trust of the communities they claimed to serve, making it harder for people to find quality services. “Lawyers,” one participant commented, “have a possibility of losing their license to hold them accountable for their actions. How will these paralegals be held accountable? Will these [restrictions] be provided for by the legal liability law? [Or will they be provided] by the Oregon [State] Bar?”

Quote: *“I worry about the oversight; a program like that would need a lot of structure... the consequence about it not going about correctly would be deserving parents do not get time with their children or lose out in a divorce.”*

Others worried about the oversight of the educational programs themselves. Many believed that the only way to ensure the quality of a good paralegal was for them to have quality education and prior experience. As stated by one participant; “a class like this would need a lot of structure... [if they] had a class that taught you a lot of the legal process but not how the legal system works it could make it hard for people to get the help they need or the highest form of representation/help they could receive.” “Lawyers charge what they do due to the cost of their education,” another participant commented. “I think it might be better if we made more accessible lawyer education programs that might help the prices and might encourage more lawyers to exist and help the problem that way.”

Quote: *“There is much mistrust because there are many people passing as lawyers and stealing from their clients. I would need more information about their credentials and references to trust someone like that instead of a real lawyer.”*

Several also expressed concerns that too many new benefits for paralegals could take away from people seeking out professional lawyers. They believed that this might cause a shortage of lawyers and hurt people by giving them less than qualified assistance. “Paralegals,” one woman argued, “are not good for criminal cases, not meant to replace lawyers, and not trained to do that either. Putting them in when people have quick amicable cases is fine. Still, for cases where you need a proper lawyer, you need more than a paralegal.”

The majority agreed, expressing concerns that this program would “turn into more of a welfare option” and provide “legal representation of last resort” rather than filling a gap or seeking to help people get a good and accurate representation. “I think,” said one, “that people might be tricked into thinking that paralegals have the same capability as a lawyer when they really do not. That might cause problems with what people expect and the help they actually get in these cases and might do more harm than good.” Another commented, “if you are representing people who are underrepresented, you have to have a higher quality of help or people will turn their noses up at it and it won’t go anywhere.”

Quote: *“In my community, if people don’t get the same results they would with a lawyer, they are not going to trust them in the future.”*

## Participant Recommendations

Participants believe that a better presentation of the program would be to style it as a first step in the legal assistance package and not the entire product. “I think it would be very helpful to have... a great place to get advice and legal help and then move on from there if you need more help,” said one participant.

Quote: *“For the trust [of the community], there should be an understanding that if there is something out of the scope of the paralegal, they disclose that and refer you to a regular lawyer.”*

The majority also argued that getting a second opinion and preliminary legal advice would make people more open to consulting an attorney and help them get a better understanding of how the legal system works. As stated by one participant, “I think it would be a good thing to help fill the role of legal advice and help in open and shut cases, because people sometimes feel that they pay lawyers for very little. If you find through a paralegal that you need more help, then that could help people feel that they are moving in the right direction and be better about getting more help.”

Quote: *“It is a great access point for those who otherwise may not consider getting legal [help] or support.”*

However, many also stressed the need for transparency about the educational backgrounds and the quality of help that clients would be receiving. “[There] needs to be a strong emphasis on the paralegal who went to school for it vs. someone who has a lot of experience versus someone who has a license.” One participant suggested that a vetting system would be better in helping the community get the reliable assistance they need, saying that “just because [licensed paralegals] are available does not mean they are good. [There] needs to be a system that provides that accountability. If not, it’s a gamble who you get. [I] don’t know how that long-term accountability will be put in place.” Many also felt that when receiving legal assistance, clients should be made aware of the role and capabilities of a licensed paralegal in the legal system.

Quote: *“If it is not very clear what they can and can’t do, [it] can be misleading for people to believe that a licensed paralegal can do almost the same thing that a lawyer can.”*

These two clarifications, they believe, will help their communities better trust and understand the assistance they are receiving from the Oregon State Bar. Several participants also recommended that perhaps it would be best to have a new name for licensed paralegals working under this program due to their previous experiences with licensed paralegals' limitations, such as "lawyer practitioner."

Quote: *"Making a clear distinction between a paralegal and a licensed paralegal will make a huge difference in understanding what they are."*

Lastly, participants hope Oregon State Bar's Licensed Paraprofessional Program will provide the community with multilingual services and resources. Having licensed paralegals available for diverse races/ethnicities and developing resources in various languages will make the legal system more accessible for those with limited English proficiency. This is essential to providing more accessible legal help for everyone. One participant who works for a local organization serving the Asian community affirmed, "Representation really matters. I have clients calling all the time calling for Asian lawyers who speak their language."

Quote: *"Racial representation really matters. I have clients calling wanting to talk to lawyers that speak their language. People want to be assured that they are going to get the help they need and be able to help with their particular situations."*

This gap in service is a significant reason why so many people, particularly those with low English proficiency and BIPOC communities, are hesitant to or have trouble seeking legal assistance. Language support will help people trust their legal assistance providers and better understand their services.

# Spanish Group Specifics

## Current Barriers

One barrier particular to the Spanish Focus Group was the ineffective service provided by Law firms and lawyers in diverse types of law. One participant commented that the service provided to her by one lawyer was inefficient and slow and that the lawyer did not do what she had paid her to do.

Quote: *“I have paid two lawyers to obtain my report, and I haven’t gotten it. Lawyers have charged me without serving my needs, and the police didn’t do their jobs. I don’t feel heard.”*

Others also agreed that they had had several experiences procuring legal help that left them feeling dissatisfied and unheard.

Quote: *“The service tends to be slow. It is a frustrating process. [But] since English is my second language, I feel [that] I need their services. So mostly, I feel that my hands are tied.”*

They believe that another step towards making legal assistance more accessible is providing good customer service.

Quote: *“Lawyers should have a friendly service and be faster and more effective. It feels like they don’t pay much attention in our cases as clients.”*

When lawyers don’t take the necessary time to understand the cases and the challenges of the BIPOC clients and their communities, they are less likely to trust them or seek their help. Lawyers need to be held accountable to the communities they serve, participants advocated. People need a way to voice their concerns and dissatisfaction with the current methods of operation.

Other barriers for this community included the locations of lawyers’ offices. A participant mentioned that a lawyer’s office is usually located in big cities and far away from rural areas. It is harder to find and reach when the office is not near the Latinx community. Another barrier was the challenge of finding good lawyers; “many are simply interested in getting money, not in helping people.”

## Participants Responses and Reaction

Most of the Spanish focus groups' participants' concerns were listed above in the general Participant Feedback section due to their similarities with the general BIPOC and low-income participants' feedback. It is worth noting that the following responses were only mentioned in the Spanish focus group.

As a whole, the group was more open to the idea of using a paralegal as an authorized legal assistant and believed that they would be a reliable option for legal assistance, especially if that legal help were provided in a wide range of languages. Participants' main hopes were that the program would bring farmworkers and other essential workers more opportunities to obtain legal assistance. They often have limited schedules and speak indigenous languages. They also earn low incomes, making it difficult to afford legal assistance. Participants also believed that this program would mutually benefit the community and offer new career opportunities to paralegal participants. The paralegals will help the community find good legal services. While the community helps provide paralegals with more experience in the legal field, which helps paralegals continue their education to become lawyers.

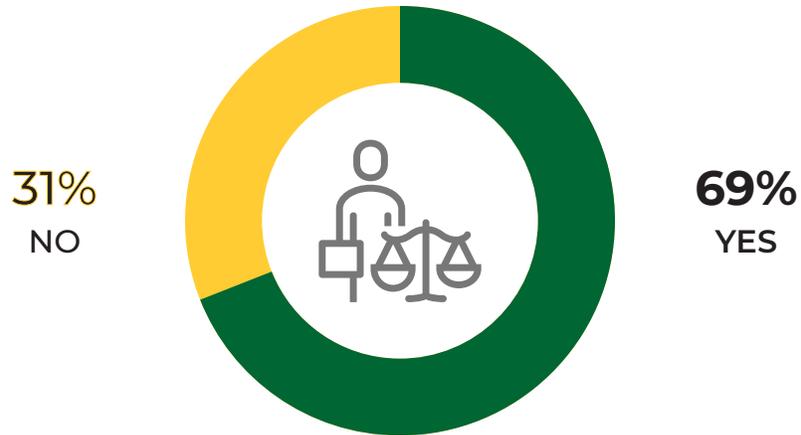
The Spanish focus group defined a licensed paralegal as “a person that is recognized by the state to provide legal advice,” or “a person that studies but is under supervision of someone with more experience.” The general focus group, however, defined licensed paralegals, saying, “they can also help people independently to process paperwork when there is no battle and only mutually agreed upon terms, [but they] can't make legal decisions for legal attorneys, [represent] people in court, or give legal advice.” Overall, the Spanish focus group's definitions differed significantly from that of the English-speaking focus groups and seemed to have directly influenced the differences in their views of Oregon State Bar's Licensed Paraprofessional Program.



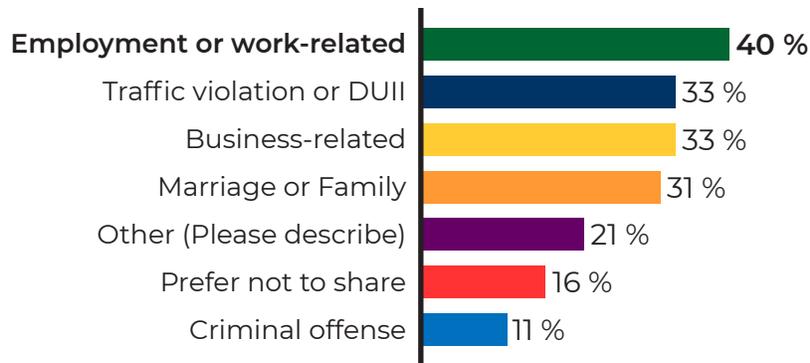
The group was more open to the idea of using a paralegal as an authorized legal assistant and believed that they would be a reliable option for legal assistance, especially if that legal help were provided in a wide range of languages.

## Survey Results

**12.** Have you or a family member ever hired or used the services of an attorney/lawyer?



**13.** What kind of legal matter (consulting or problem) did the lawyer assist you with? (select all that apply)



**14.** Have you ever had a legal problem where you wish you could have hired a lawyer?



**15. Why didn't you hire a lawyer?**



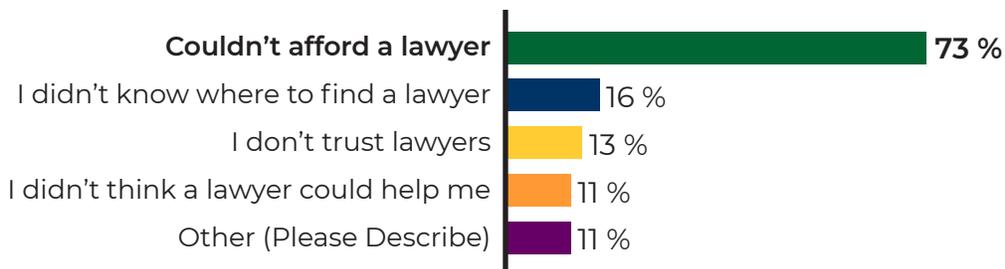
**16. What has been your experience with the civil legal system?**



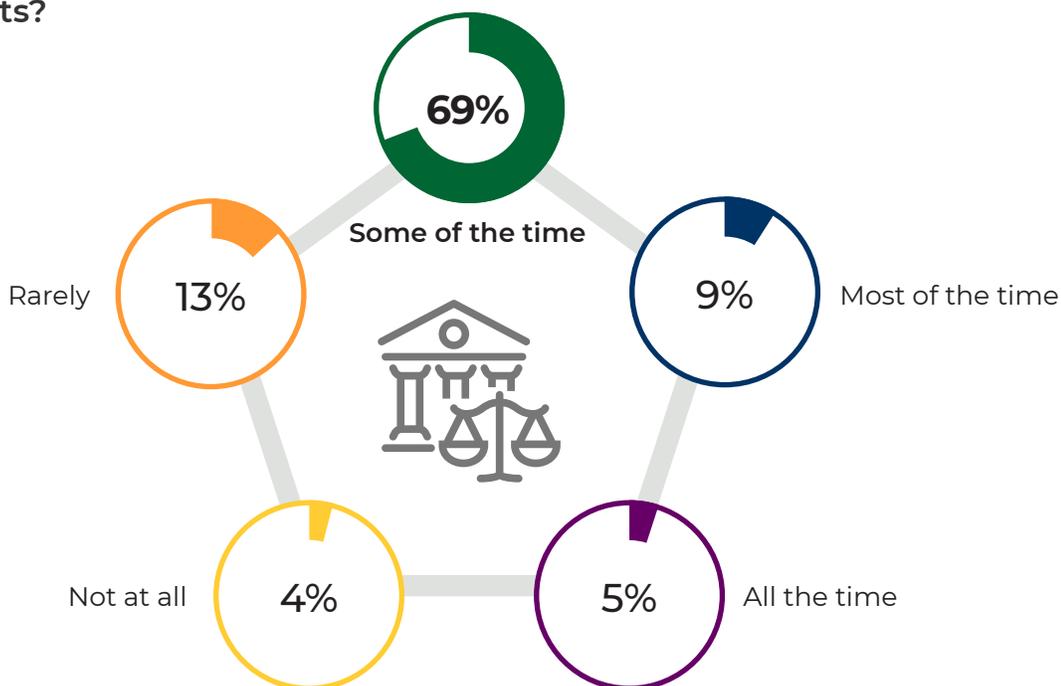
**17. Have you or a family member ever represented yourself in court?**



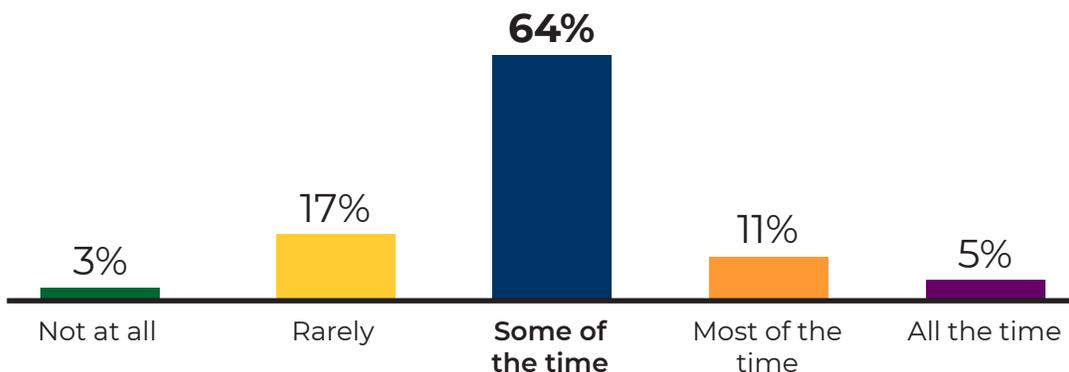
**18. Why did you represent yourself? (select all that apply)**



**19. Do you believe the courts can work for you and your communities' protection and rights?**



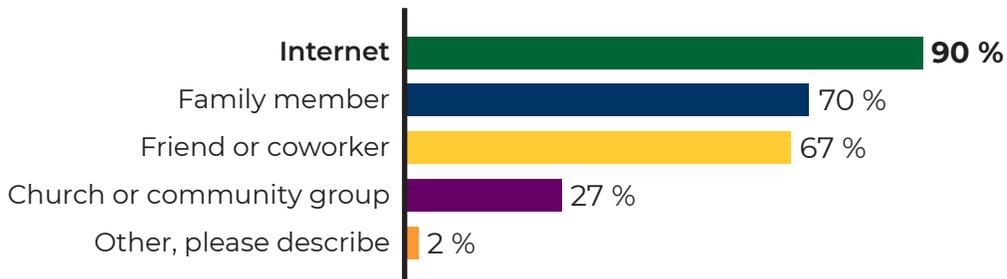
**20. How often do you think you and your family, friends, and neighbors are treated fairly in the civil legal system? (choose one)**



**21. If you had a legal problem, which would be helpful to you?  
(select all that apply)**



**22. How do you get legal information? (select all that apply)**

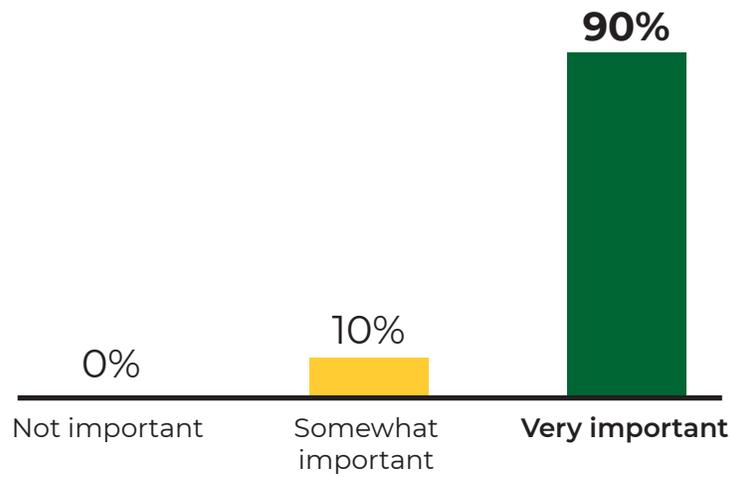


**23. Do you know what a Licensed Paralegal is?**

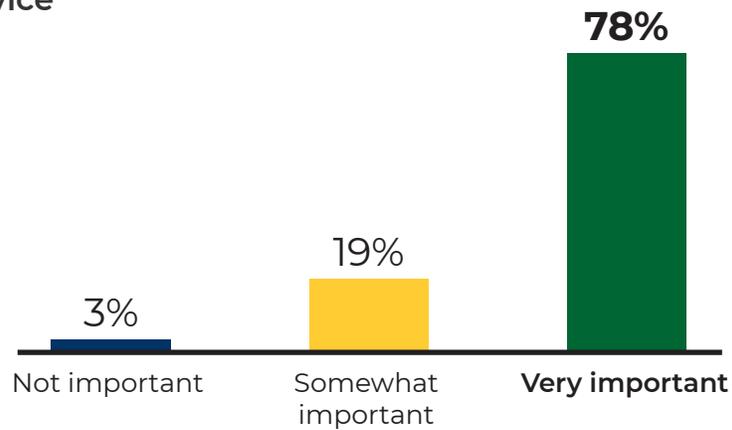


## 24. What factors are important to you in making this decision?

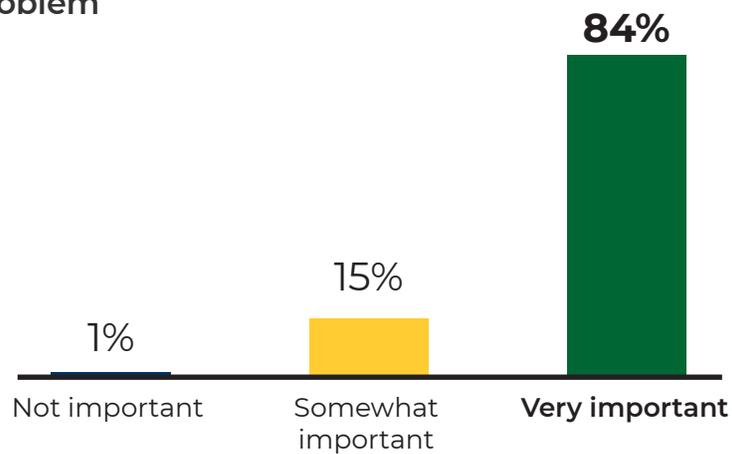
### A. Cost



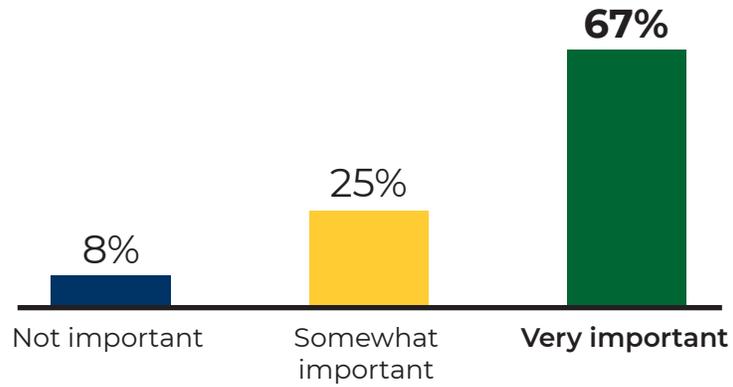
### B. Location of service



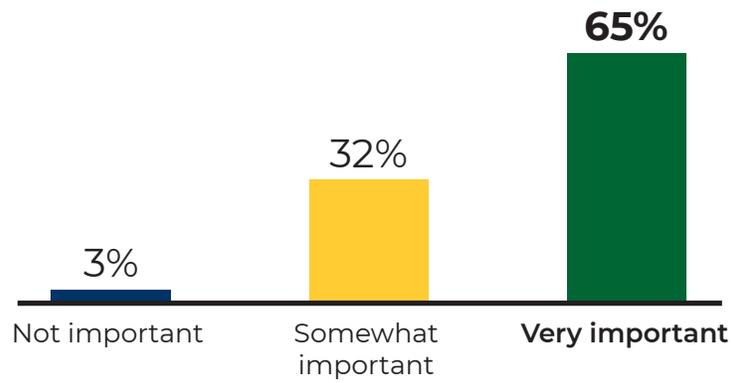
### C. Type of legal problem



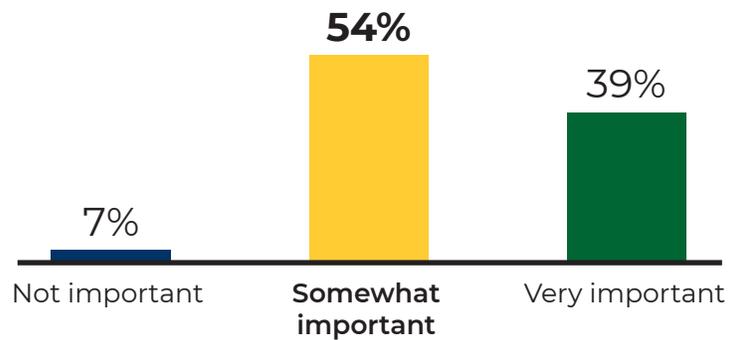
#### D. Firm recognition



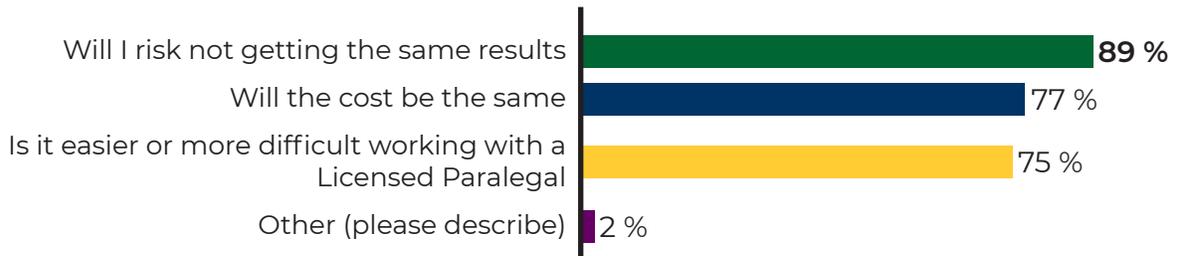
#### E. Good recommendation from a friend or family member



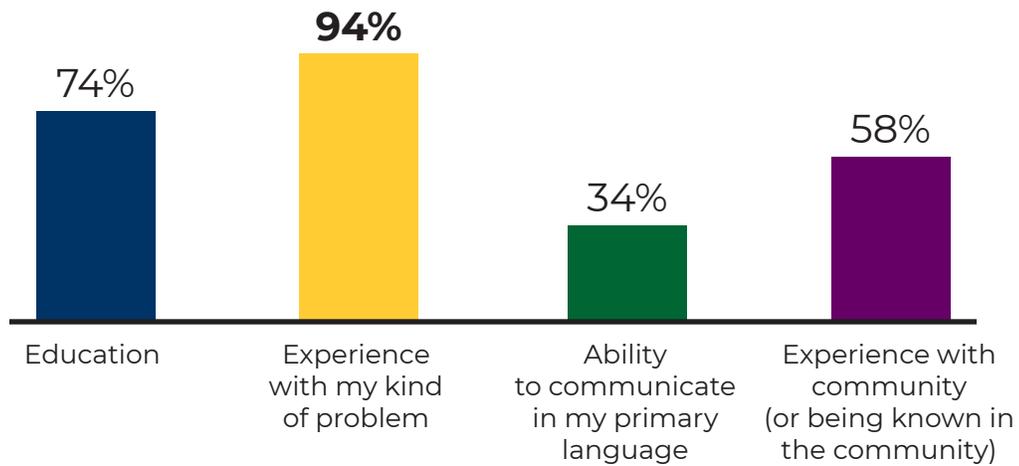
#### F. It was advertised in a way you trust



**25. What concerns would you have about working with a Licensed Paralegal instead of a lawyer? (select all that apply)**



**26. What would you want to know about a Licensed Paralegal's background before a Licensed Paralegal assisted you with your legal problem? (select all that apply)**



**27. Do you think Oregon should implement a program to license paralegals?**



**28.** Would you be more open to consult an attorney after working with a licensed paralegal?



# Closing Remarks and Recommendations

The Oregon civil system has failed its residents. Our society has been woven with deeply racist policies that directly harm Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. These policies have led to an unequal legal system where marginalized communities have been systematically locked out of opportunities in courts, defense, and other legal procedures.

On top of these inequities, Spanish speakers found that deficits in language access are an additional barrier to getting a fair shot in the legal system. Spanish speakers are linguistically disadvantaged; justice is not just blind but deaf. One of the main concerns of these participants was the attorney's actions, the lack of accountability that exists, and the racial discrimination they had suffered. Crucial changes are needed to renew OSB's role of protecting the public. By ensuring competence and integrity by promoting professionalism, understanding, and respect of clients in the legal profession, OSB can reposition itself to protect historically underserved communities.

The OSB Paraprofessional Program can address some of the barriers for low and moderate-income Oregonians, especially for BIPOC and Limited English Proficiency communities. This program can bring access to legal services for diverse communities across Oregon. Providing competent bilingual and bicultural legal services offers the opportunity to increase trust in the legal system in general. It could be a door to justice and equity for all residents.

Beyond serving racially diverse Oregonians, this program will provide expanded legal job opportunities for women and people of color. There are substantial benefits of similar programs in other states, even though these programs have faced intense hostility from many lawyers and various state bars. These programs have provided legal services to many US residents who would have otherwise proceeded without representation, improved legal outcomes for moderate means clients, and empowered them to feel more confident in the courtrooms. Also, it has been proven that the lawyers in states already implementing these programs have expanded their practices by capturing previously untapped and distrustful legal system residents.



In Washington, Limited Licensed Legal Technicians (LLLTs) provided legal services to many Washingtonians who would have otherwise proceeded without representation in their family law cases. LLLTs provided expanded legal services to traditionally underserved communities, including Washington’s immigrant communities. The program “provides access for women and people of color, who are also getting better results in their cases.” LLLTs allowed for more efficient proceedings and better decision-making for family law judges and commissioners by reducing procedural errors, submitting high-quality work products, and preparing clients to present their cases effectively. (Solomon & Smith, 2021)

This program may help OSB drive its mission of improving the quality of legal services and increasing access to justice. It will help you advance a fair, inclusive, and accessible Justice system.

LMS recommends OSB of the following:

- Continue reaching, listening, and learning from underserved communities.
- Create and implement a strategic and culturally responsive communication and engagement plan and prioritize underserved audiences. This should include:
  - Awareness and education for OSB resources.
  - The benefits of the OSB Paraprofessional Program.
  - The development and testing of culturally responsive messages before distribution.
- Resist the pressure of not doing the program. This program will not solve all the injustice and lack of equity. Still, it will provide resources and address some of the injustice, lack of inclusivity, and bias in the Oregon Legal System. It is necessary to provide alternatives to Oregonians since the system has not worked and increased the lack of justice.
- Partner with local law schools and technical schools to implement legal resources and programs.
- Advertise and make it easy for Oregonians to report attorneys and their malpractices.
- Commit funds to collect more data on attorney services and do more with the data collected, such as making public and accessible malpractice claims against attorneys.

# Appendix

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## A. Additional Quotes:

Quote: *“For us working in the fields, it is hard having to lose a workday to go to court; many times, you prefer to pay the ticket even if [it] is going to cost you more later.”*

Quote: *“I have no trust in them [the justice system]. They look at us as minorities, and they say, ‘you pretty much are already guilty,’ without getting to know who you really are. It should not be based on the color of your skin.”*

Quote: *“I have no trust in them [the justice system]. They look at us as minorities, and they say, ‘you pretty much are already guilty,’ without getting to know who you really are. It should not be based on the color of your skin.”*

Quote: *“Here, in the county [I live in], I have seen the Hispanic kids getting harsher penalties than white kids; the system is very racist and unfair.”*

Quote: *“I believe that if it is going to be a battle, you are better off with a lawyer if it is amicable and everybody is [on] the same page, and it is just a question of filing paperwork for civil stuff and the like, I think a legal paralegal is fine.”*

Quote: *“I would want a very detailed description of what their services would be and perhaps referrals or recommendations from even other law firms.”*

Quote: *“Lawyers should have a friendly service and be faster and more effective. It feels like they don’t pay much attention in our cases as clients.”*

## B. OSB Focus Group Discussion Questions:

### Oregon State Bar Discussion Guide

#### Part 1 - Who are we talking to? (this is part of a survey sent to the participants in advance)

1. Is your combined yearly household income equal or less than \$60,000?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you live in the state of Oregon?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. What county do you live in?
  - a. (Short Text Response)
4. What is your age?
  - a. Under 18
  - b. 18-24
  - c. 25-34
  - d. 35-44
  - e. 45-54
  - f. 55-64
  - g. Above 64
5. Which of the following best represents your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Please Describe:
6. When asked about your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?
  - a. Hispanic or Latino/a/x
  - a. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - a. White or Caucasian
  - a. Native American or Native Alaskan
  - a. Black or African American
  - a. Middle Eastern or Northern African
  - a. Asian
  - a. Please Describe:
7. In 2020, What was your household income?
  - a. Less than \$20,000
  - b. \$20,000 - \$30,000
  - c. \$30,000 - \$40,000
  - d. \$40,000 - \$50,000
  - e. \$50,000 - \$60,000

8. Which of the following messengers would you trust to share important information?

(Select up to 3)

- a. Local newspapers and reporter
- b. Friends or family
- c. Community leaders and advocates
- d. Teachers, schools
- e. Your employer
- f. State or local elected leaders
- g. County entities
- h. Celebrities or sports figures

## Part 2 - What is the respondent's experience with the legal system?

1. Have you or a family member ever hired or used the services of an attorney/lawyer?

- a. If Yes: Q: What kind of legal matter (consulting or problem) did the lawyer assist you with?
- b. If No: Q: Have you ever had a legal matter/problem where you wish you could have hired a lawyer?
  - If Yes: Why didn't you hire a lawyer?

2. What has been your experience with the civil legal system?

3. Have you or a family member ever represented yourself in court?

- a. If Yes: Why did you represent yourself?

4. Do you believe the courts can work for your and your communities' protection and rights?

5. How often do you think you and your family, friends, and neighbors are treated fairly in the civil legal system?

6. If you had a legal matter/problem, which would be helpful to you?

- a. Visiting a website
- b. Viewing online videos
- c. Attending a legal training
- d. Calling a legal information hotline
- e. Getting questions answered online by a lawyer
- f. Talking to a lawyer on the phone or in-person
- g. Having a lawyer check forms/letters/documents you prepared yourself
- h. Having a lawyer prepare forms/letters/documents for you to file or send yourself
- i. Having a lawyer take care of the problem or go to court for you

7. How do you get legal information now?

8. Do you know what a Licensed Paralegal is?

### **Part 3- Would the respondent use an LP? Would a Licensed Paraprofessional Program help address an unmet legal need? Is there a demand for these services?**

Background for the respondent: At this stage, give the respondent background on the proposal. Here is some existing language we use on the OSB website:

The Oregon Supreme Court is considering the creation of a new type of legal provider, a Licensed Paralegal, to provide some legal services that, until now, only lawyers may provide. Similar to the introduction of Nurse Practitioners to the medical field, a Licensed Paralegal would be allowed to provide limited legal services [only] in family law cases (divorces, custody, parenting time, etc.) and landlord/tenant cases. These are two of the areas of law with the greatest unmet need for legal assistance in Oregon.

A Licensed Paralegal would have specific requirements for education and experience and would be subject to many of the rules and regulatory requirements that currently exist for lawyers. The intent is to provide access to legal help for those who currently cannot afford a lawyer or who otherwise would go to court with no legal assistance.

9. If you had a legal problem today, would you consider getting help from a Licensed Paralegal instead of a lawyer?
  - a. Why?
10. What factors are important to you in making this decision?
11. What concerns would you have about working with a Licensed Paralegal instead of a lawyer?
12. What would you want to know about a Licensed Paralegal's background or education before a Licensed Paralegal assisted you with your legal problem?
13. Do you think Oregon should implement a program to license paralegals?
14. Would you be more open to consult an attorney after working with a licensed paralegal?

## C. OSB Survey:

### Oregon State Bar Community Survey

**Hello: This survey is intended for participants who make low to moderate income (up to \$50,000) and live in the state of Oregon.**

1. Is your combined yearly household income equal or less than \$50,000?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (End Survey, not qualified)
2. In 2020, What was your household income?
  - a. Less than \$25,000
  - b. \$25,000 - \$60,000
  - c. \$60,000 - \$75,000
  - d. \$75,000 - \$100,000
  - e. \$100,000+
3. Do you live in the state of Oregon?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (End Survey, not qualified)
4. What county do you live in?
  - a. (Short Text)
5. What is your age?
  - a. 18-24
  - b. 25-34
  - c. 35-44
  - d. 45-54
  - e. 55-64
  - f. 65+
6. Which of the following best represents your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Please Describe:
7. When asked about your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?
  - a. Hispanic or Latino/a/x
  - b. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - c. White or Caucasian
  - d. Native American or Native Alaskan
  - e. Black or African American
  - f. Middle Eastern or Northern African
  - g. Asian
  - h. Please Describe:

8. What is your highest level of education?
- a. Less than High School
  - b. High School Degree / GED
  - c. Some College / Associates Degree / Technical Degree
  - d. Bachelor's Degree
  - e. Masters or Doctorate
9. Which of the following messengers would you trust to share important information?  
(Select up to 3)
- a. Local newspapers and reporters.
  - b. Friends or family
  - c. Community leaders and advocates
  - d. Teachers, schools
  - e. Your employer
  - f. State or local elected leaders
  - g. County entities
  - h. Celebrities or sports figures
  - i. Please Describe:
10. Are you impacted by a disability?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (skip to question 12)
  - c. Prefer not to answer (skip to question 12)
11. Where are you impacted by disabilities? (Select all that apply)
- a. Hearing
  - b. Walking
  - c. Sight
  - d. Learning
  - e. Speech
  - f. Prefer not to share
  - g. Please Describe:
12. Have you or a family member ever hired or used the services of an attorney/lawyer?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (Skip to question 14)
13. What kind of legal matter (consulting or problem) did the lawyer assist you with?  
(select all that apply)
- a. Traffic violation or DUII
  - b. Marriage or family
  - c. Employment or work-related
  - d. Business-related
  - e. Criminal offense
  - f. Please Describe:

14. Have you ever had a legal problem where you wish you could have hired a lawyer?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (skip to question 16)
15. Why didn't you hire a lawyer?
- a. Too expensive
  - b. I didn't think I needed one
  - c. I didn't know where to find one
  - d. Other (please describe)
16. What has been your experience with the civil legal system?
- a. It has been an easy experience with little to no confusion
  - b. It has been a somewhat straightforward experience with some confusion, but was easily resolvable
  - c. It has been somewhat of a challenging experience, but I got through it
  - d. It has been a very challenging experience due to laws feeling like an entirely different language than what I am used to
  - e. Other (please describe)
17. Have you or a family member ever represented yourself in court?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (skip to question 19)
18. Why did you represent yourself?
- a. Couldn't afford a lawyer
  - b. I didn't know where to find a lawyer
  - c. I don't trust lawyers
  - d. I didn't think a lawyer could help me
  - e. Other (please describe)
19. Do you believe the courts can work for your and your communities' protection and rights?
- a. Not at all, Rarely,
  - b. Some of the time,
  - c. Most of the time,
  - d. All of the time
20. How often do you think you and your family, friends, and neighbors are treated fairly in the civil legal system? (choose one)
- a. Not at all, Rarely,
  - b. Some of the time,
  - c. Most of the time,
  - d. All of the time

21. If you had a legal problem, which would be helpful to you? (select all that apply)
- a. Visiting a website
  - b. Viewing online videos
  - c. Attending a legal training
  - d. Calling a legal information hotline
  - e. Getting questions answered online by a lawyer
  - f. Talking to a lawyer on the phone or in person
  - g. Having a lawyer check forms/letters/documents you prepared yourself
  - h. Having a lawyer prepare forms/letters/documents for you to file or send yourself
  - i. Having a lawyer take care of the problem or go to court for you.
  - j. Other (please describe)
22. How do you get legal information? (select all that apply)
- a. Internet
  - b. Family members
  - c. Friends or coworkers
  - d. Church or community groups
  - e. Other (please describe)
23. Do you know what a Licensed Paralegal is?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

**(Background for the respondent)**

*The Oregon Supreme Court is considering the creation of a new type of legal provider, a Licensed Paralegal, to provide some legal services that, until now, only lawyers may provide. A Licensed Paralegal would be allowed to provide limited legal services [only] in family law cases (divorces, custody, parenting time, etc.) and landlord/tenant cases. These are two of the areas of law with the greatest unmet need for legal assistance in Oregon.*

*The intent is to provide access to legal help for those who currently cannot afford a lawyer or who otherwise would go to court with no legal assistance.*

24. If you had a legal problem today, would you consider getting help from a Licensed Paralegal instead of a lawyer?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I need more information to make a decision

25. What factors are important to you in making this decision?
- a. Cost
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
  - b. Location of services
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
  - c. Type of legal problem
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
  - d. Firm recognition
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
  - e. Good recommendation from a friend or family member
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
  - f. It was advertised in a way you trust
    - Very Important
    - Somewhat Important
    - Not Important
26. What concerns would you have about working with a Licensed Paralegal instead of a lawyer?
- a. Will I risk not getting the same results
  - b. Will the cost be the same
  - c. Is it easier or more difficult working with a Licensed Paralegal
  - d. Other (please describe)
27. What would you want to know about a Licensed Paralegal's background or education before a Licensed Paralegal assisted you with your legal problem?
- a. Education
  - b. Experience with my kind of problem
  - c. Ability to communicate in my primary language
  - d. Experience with the community (or being known in the community)
28. Do you think Oregon should implement a program to license paralegals?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
29. Would you be more open to consult an attorney after working with a licensed paralegal?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

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