

LawMatters Public Library Legal Resources Project

Final Training and Legal Reference Survey Findings

FINAL REPORT



April 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the Report

This final report presents the results of participant assessments of the three types of legal reference training provided by LawMatters from 2007 to 2009 and from the two phases of the Legal Reference Survey. The Legal Reference Survey tracked the volume and type of legal reference questions asked at libraries in BC and the types of resources library staff use to address patron questions. Surveys were held for a seven-day period in January 2009 and 2010.

The LawMatters Public Library Resources Project is funded by the Law Foundation of BC and is coordinated by Courthouse Libraries BC. The purpose of LawMatters is to provide legal reference training, information and advice to library staff and funding to public libraries so that they can maintain and enhance their core legal reference collections.

Earlier training and survey results were reported in the Phase 1 Report (June 2009).

The survey period (seven days) was short in both phases. While this allowed for a complete cycle of opening hours, it is a very limited survey period and likely disadvantaged the smaller libraries. A larger survey was beyond the scope and budget of this project.

Some evidence suggests that not all legal reference questions asked by patrons are identified as legal reference questions by library staff. This means that the number of legal reference questions reported in the survey may be an underestimate of the actual number of questions asked by patrons.

Although the impacts of promotional activities are examined in this report, the scope, intensity and duration of these activities were limited. For this reason it is impossible to ascertain the outcomes of these activities.

Assessment of Training Provided by LawMatters

LawMatters provided three types of training to 407 public library staff between November 2007 and November 2009: *Searching QP LegalEze*, the *LawMatters Introductory Legal Reference Training* and *Legal Information Sources Training*. Twenty-eight workshop webinars, or distance education workshops were provided.

Searching QP LegalEze is a free two-hour webinar that provides training in the use of QP LegalEze, a web-based subscription service that provides access to BC's current laws and legislation. LawMatters has facilitated thirteen QP LegalEze webinars involving 138 library staff.

Findings from the QP LegalEze participant assessments indicate that 90% of the training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives were clearly stated, enough time was available for the webinar, the facilitators were effective, the online component worked well (with a few minor glitches), and the training provided specific time to explore resources and practice handling specific legal reference questions.

The two most useful aspects of QP LegalEze training were considered to be the question and answer sessions, the practice questions and the exposure to the information available through QP LegalEze. In future QP LegalEze training participants would like to have more time to do practice questions.

LawMatters also provided thirteen, free, two to three hour, face-to-face *Introductory Legal Reference Training* workshops that involved 248 participants. This introductory training was designed by LawMatters and includes basic information about the purpose and scope of LawMatters, an introduction to legal reference print and online resources, information on legal information search strategies, how to conduct a legal reference interview and how to address legal reference questions. Introductory Training workshops have been held in all major regions of the province.

Participants felt that the training provided a very good overview of the legal reference area. High ratings were also given for the clarity of the objectives and quality of the facilitation. Participants recommended extending the time for the training in order to add more time for practice questions, to explore online resources or to learn about the specific steps required to address patron questions. (The time available for library staff to participate in training is beyond the control of LawMatters). Participants would also like to see the implementation of refresher or updated training and training related to specific areas of the law, such as family law.

LawMatters also provided two sessions of the distance *Legal Information Sources Training* in 2007 and 2009 that involved twenty-one participants. Although only a limited number of participants from the 2007 session completed assessment forms, ratings of this training were positive.

Gains in Staff Confidence Resulting from LawMatters Training

Library staff who participated in the LawMatters Introductory and the QP LegalEze Training showed a dramatic rise in confidence levels in terms of addressing the legal reference questions of patrons as a result of taking the training. Prior to taking the Introductory Training, almost 60% of the participants said that they had a poor level of confidence; after the training this level dropped to only 17%. Findings were statistically significant for both types of training. Results of a follow-up training survey¹ (not reported in this document) show that staff confidence levels are maintained for at least 6-18 months after training.

Description of the LawMatters Legal Reference Survey

The LawMatters Legal Reference Survey was conducted in a seven-day period (January 2009 and January 2010) at 135 public libraries across the province. The survey collected information from library staff on the number of legal reference questions asked by library patrons, the legal reference topics involved, the online and print resources used by library staff to answer the questions and the degree to which staff made referrals to external community resources.

¹ *LawMatters Training Follow-up Survey*, January 2009

Description of Libraries in the Survey

Libraries from every region participated in the Legal Reference Survey. Twenty-four percent were independent libraries; 76% were libraries within larger library systems. The sample of libraries in the study is a statistically representative sample of public libraries in BC.

Although libraries were located in communities of every size, half were located in small communities. Small libraries generally have fewer opening hours per week than mid-sized or larger libraries and this affected their capacity to receive legal reference questions.

There were no differences in the characteristics of the libraries (e.g. opening hours or number of staff) in 2009 and 2010. Fifty-three percent of the libraries in the survey reported that at least one staff member had attended LawMatters training. Fifty-one percent said that they had promoted their legal reference materials in the past year (the methods used were not explored).

Number of Libraries Receiving Legal Reference Questions

Sixty-four percent of the libraries received one or more legal reference questions during the first phase of the survey. This dropped to 53% in the second phase. This change was not statistically significant and may represent a normal degree of variability.

Forty-four percent of the libraries received questions in both phases of the survey, 28% did not receive questions in either phase and 27% received questions in one phase only. Based on a calculation of the average number of questions received, we estimate that public library staff in BC receive approximately 35,000-40,000 legal reference questions from library patrons each year. This is likely to be an underestimate as it does not take into account reference questions that are legal in nature but that are not categorized as such by library staff. In addition, many library patrons search for legal reference information on their own without the assistance of library staff.

Factors Associated with the Number of Legal Reference Questions Received from Library Patrons

Larger libraries that were open more hours per week and that had greater than three people on staff were more likely to receive legal reference questions in both phases of the survey. Libraries that had a part or full time professional librarian were also likely to receive more legal reference questions as were libraries where one or more staff had received legal reference training provided by LawMatters. Each of these associations was statistically significant.

When these factors were comparatively weighed using a logistic regression analysis, the two most significant factors influencing whether a library received legal reference questions were the library's size and opening hours.

There was no statistical evidence to suggest that libraries that had promoted their legal reference materials received a higher volume of legal reference questions. This is likely because most promotional activities were relatively modest or of short duration. LawMatters training is also unlikely to impact on the volume of legal reference questions asked by library patrons but may affect other variables such as the *quality* of information provided to patrons or the scope and types of resources consulted by library staff.

Legal Topic Areas Addressed by Questions

Although legal reference questions related to civil (non-family) law were predominant in both phases, there were more questions related to family law in Phase 2. Patrons asked questions in a wide variety of topic areas and results indicate that these areas are continually expanding. Topics that consistently saw the most patron questions were in the area of:

- Real estate, property and building codes;
- Housing and landlord tenant issues, strata title and neighbours;
- Will, estates and estate planning;
- Separation, divorce and property division (increase in Phase 2).

Number and Type of Print and Online Resources Used by Library Staff to Address Patron Questions

In Phase 1, 95% and in Phase 2, 90% of the libraries used print and online resources to address the legal reference questions of patrons. Resources were used 513 times in Phase 1 and 326 times in Phase 2. Print resources were used more frequently than online resources. Self Counsel Press material and government websites were used frequently in both phases. There was a rise in the use of legal textbooks to address questions in Phase 2. The use of other resources remained stable.

Most libraries used multiple resources to address their legal questions; however, the proportion of libraries that used only one type of resource increased in Phase 2.

In Phase 2 only one variable was associated with whether a library used multiple resources to address patron questions. This was whether library staff had participated in some type of LawMatters Training. This finding suggests that trained staff are more familiar with and use a wider variety of legal reference resources to answer patron questions.

Referrals of Library Patrons to External Sources of Information and Assistance

In Phase 1, 41% of the libraries that received legal reference questions made a referral to an outside legal resource such as a government agency or community-based service. In Phase 2, 38% of the libraries made a referral. This indicated no statistically relevant change.

There were no library characteristics associated with whether or not libraries made referrals to external resources, including whether or not library staff members had received LawMatters training.

In Phase 1, 60% of the libraries that made referrals referred patrons to a government agency or organization; in Phase 2 the majority of referrals were made to community-based services.

Impact of Promotional Activities on the Volume of Legal Reference Questions

LawMatters assisted libraries in promoting their legal reference materials by providing information and resources, primarily in a one-week period in April 2009. More intensive community forums were held in two communities, both of which participated in the Legal Reference Survey. The objective of these forums was to inform community organizations about library resources and expertise related to legal reference issues.

Only fifty-one percent of the libraries said that they undertook activities to promote their legal reference materials in 2009, despite the fact that LawMatters provided some promotional support to all libraries. Libraries located in small communities were more likely to report having promoted their legal reference materials in 2009.

There was no evidence to indicate that libraries that promoted their legal reference materials received more legal reference questions than those that did not. However, it is not clear how intensive most of these promotional activities were or whether they can be considered as factors in changing library use patterns.

There was also no evidence that community forums resulted in an increased volume of questions at the two libraries in these communities. However, two communities is an insufficient sample size from which to draw conclusions about the impact of this promotional strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT

Eight recommendations, in the areas of training and promotion, are included in the report.

TRAINING

It is recommended that:

1. A small pilot project be undertaken by LawMatters to develop advance or refresher training for librarians who wish or require it. The training could use a workshop or online format.
2. The LawMatters Introductory Training be continued in 2010 with a minimum time for training, whenever possible, of 4-5 hours.
3. Further handouts be developed for the Introductory Training including a fact sheet on “what is a legal question” and templates or flowcharts illustrating ways of conducting different types of searches.
4. An online training course outside of QP LegalEze be considered in order to address the growing and specific interest in online legal reference resources. This course would be conducted online and provide an overview of significant online resources and how to use them.
5. All subsequent LawMatters training include a discussion of the topic areas included in legal reference questions in order to increase library staff understanding of the scope of this area.

PROMOTION OF LEGAL REFERENCE MATERIALS TO EXPAND LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

It is recommended that:

6. LawMatters provide all libraries in BC with a simple fact sheet defining the scope and topic areas covered by legal reference questions so that the scope of this area is better understood.
7. A limited (20-25 respondent libraries) telephone survey be conducted with small and mid-sized libraries that received legal reference questions in both phases to determine “best practices” in terms of promotion of materials that seem to encourage legal reference questions from patrons. This “best practices” guide would be assembled and distributed to all libraries or through LawMatters training.
8. A set of distinctly different promotional strategies be implemented by LawMatters at small clusters of libraries in the next eight months to be followed up with a limited legal reference survey to determine whether the level of legal reference questions has increased. The size of the group would total no more than 30-40 libraries that were involved in the second phase of the Legal Reference Survey and would include small, mid-sized and large libraries that did and did not receive legal reference questions in both phases. Strategies could include community forums.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS REPORT

This report presents the final results of the two-phase province-wide Legal Reference Survey and participant assessments of three types of training provided by LawMatters from 2007 to 2009.

The LawMatters Public Library Legal Resources Project (LawMatters) is funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia and is coordinated by Courthouse Libraries BC. The purpose of LawMatters is to provide legal information and resources to public libraries throughout BC in order to ensure that all BC residents have free, local access to basic legal information.

LawMatters provides legal reference training to library staff, funding to public libraries so that they can maintain and improve their core legal reference collections and additional resources, information, consultation and advice.

This report includes the following components:

- The results of all participant assessments of LawMatters training provided to library staff from 2007 to the end of 2009. Participant assessments of *Searching QP LegalEze*, *The LawMatters for Library Staff Legal Reference Introductory Training* and the *Legal Information Sources Training (Community Library Training Program)* are included.
- Final results from the two-phase Legal Reference Survey that involved a province-wide assessment of the volume and type of legal reference questions asked by patrons in public libraries and the types of legal resources library staff use to answer questions. The reference survey took place during two seven-day periods in January 2009 (Phase 1) and January 2010 (Phase 2). This report compares the results from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the survey. Phase 1 results were published in the First Phase Evaluation Findings Report (June 2009).

This report is divided into seven sections: Section 2.0 describes the LawMatters Project; Section 3.0 describes the research and evaluation initiatives undertaken by LawMatters; Section 4.0 describes the issues impacting on research results; Section 5.0 presents the findings resulting from participant assessment of training; Section 6.0 presents the results of the Legal Reference Survey; and Section 7.0 describes key conclusions arising from the data.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE LAWMATTERS PUBLIC LIBRARY LEGAL RESOURCES PROJECT

2.1 PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF LAWMATTERS

LawMatters is funded and supported by Courthouse Libraries BC through the Law Foundation of BC. Courthouse Libraries BC provides legal information services to the general public and the legal profession through BC's thirty-one courthouse libraries and through specific projects such as LawMatters and Clicklaw (a web-based PLEI portal).

The LawMatters Public Library Legal Resources Project was formally launched in March 2007 to provide enhanced legal reference resources, training and funding to public libraries across the province in order to improve public access to legal information. The benefits of public access to legal information and delivery through public libraries are well established.

The need for community access to public legal information has been identified by numerous studies over the past 30 years. Public libraries are also the ideal location for public legal information, given their almost universal accessibility throughout the province. Over 98 percent of BC residents are served by public libraries through 238 different service points, providing more than 424,000 hours of service annually (the Law Society of BC Benchers' Bulletin; March, 2007)

The purpose of LawMatters is to provide public libraries with the following types of resources, information and support:

- Core funding, based on library size, with which to enhance or expand legal reference collections and resources (including online resources);
- Face-to-face training for library staff on the effective use of legal reference materials;
- Computer-based training on the use of Searching QP LegalEze and other online legal resources;
- A recommended core list of legal reference materials;
- Consultation and advice about updating and adding current legal reference materials and resources to the core list and to the library;
- Advice and information about discarding outdated materials;
- General legal reference support and advice;
- Information about legal services and resources external to the library and of relevance to patrons;
- Assistance and advice related to the promotion of legal reference materials to the public.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING PROVIDED BY LAWMATTERS

2.2.1 Description of LawMatters Activities

Specific LawMatters activities in the first year (2007) included:

- The documentation of current legal resources available at public libraries;
- The development of core legal reference material lists for small, medium and large public libraries;
- The identification of web-based teaching tools for public librarians;

- The development of a collaborative implementation model with Courthouse Libraries BC and the Public Libraries Services Branch (PLSB), Ministry of Education, as the primary partners;
- The implementation of a pilot project consisting of one urban, one regional library system and one small public library association. The pilot libraries included Squamish Public Library, all nine branches of the Surrey Public Library System and three branches of the Vancouver Island Regional Library System (Nanaimo, Sidney and Gabriola Island);
- The development of project name, logo and promotional materials for public library staff;
- Consultation with the Advisory Committee and public librarians.

Activities in the second year (2008) included:

- The implementation of the core collection funding program for all public library legal reference collections.
- On-going local meetings with key partners to review materials;
- The planning and implementation of the first phase of the evaluation;
- The development and implementation of a focus group with public library staff (November 2008) to discuss satisfaction with LawMatters activities to date and to plan future promotional activities;
- The aggregation, analysis and reporting of participant training assessment results.

Activities in the third year (2009) included:

- The continuation of the funding and training components. By 2009 all libraries had received their core collection funding;
- The public launch of LawMatters;
- The development of a publicity and promotion campaign to ensure public awareness of legal information resources and information;
- The implementation of strategies to promote and publicize the enhanced legal reference capabilities and collections at public libraries;
- The development and implementation of community forums;
- Ongoing evaluation activities including the analysis and reporting of training assessment reports, the implementation of the Legal Reference Survey, and the Shelving Snapshot Survey;
- The development of a focus group to determine core collection priorities and to discuss future plans for LawMatters;
- The implementation of a Training Follow-up Survey to determine the degree to which library staff retain the skills acquired in training.

Continuing LawMatters activities in 2010 include the following:

- The continuation of the funding and training components and investigation of additional online training tools;
- The development of a publicity and promotion campaign along with the Clicklaw website launch to promote public awareness of legal resources and information;
- The ongoing development and evaluation of community forums, and publication of *Community Legal Information Forums: A Planning Guide*;
- Ongoing evaluation activities including the analysis and reporting of training assessment reports, and the implementation and reporting of the Second Phase of the Legal Reference Survey;

- The development of a focus group to determine core collection priorities and to discuss future plans for LawMatters.

2.2.2 Training Provided by LawMatters

LawMatters provides three types of legal reference training to public library staff. These are briefly described below:

- 1) **Searching QP LegalEze**: This is a free two-hour webinar which was developed cooperatively with Nancy Hannum (Library Consultant), and staff from the Public Library Service Branch (PLSB), Courthouse Libraries BC (CLBC) and the Legal Services Society of BC. The webinar provides training in the use of QP LegalEze, a web-based subscription service that provides access to BC's current laws and legislation and is available at all public libraries in BC. The webinar is offered regularly (approximately about once a month except for summer months) by PLSB as part of their ongoing workshop program. PLSB manages the publicity, registration, software and technical assistance, and the workshop is facilitated and updated by staff from the LawMatters project and Courthouse Libraries BC reference staff.
- 2) **LawMatters Introductory Legal Reference Training**: This in-person training was designed by LawMatters and includes information on the purpose and scope of the LawMatters project, basic information on print and online legal reference resources and materials, legal reference search strategies, how to conduct a legal reference interview and methods for addressing legal reference questions. This two to three hour workshop varies considerably in length and content depending on factors such as the time participants have to attend, their needs and level of legal reference experience and the facilities that are available.
- 3) **Legal Information Sources (Community Library Training Program)**: This is an eight-week, web-based, distance education elective course that is part of the PLSB's Community Library Training Program for BC public libraries. Currently, the course is taught once a year. Students receive credit for completed courses, and receive a certificate for completion of core courses. There is a registration fee for the course, but arrangements can be made through LawMatters for public librarians who cannot afford the registration fee. PLSB manages the publicity, registration, software and technical assistance, and the workshop is facilitated and updated by staff from LawMatters. The training provides information about legal reference resources and search techniques.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF LAWMATTERS EVALUATION AND RESEARCH INITIATIVES

3.1 OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES

LawMatters has undertaken numerous evaluation and research initiatives to reflect all major activities of the project. These have included:

- 1) The analysis and reporting of participant assessments of LawMatters training. Training assessment forms were provided to participants in person or by means of a web-based format and asked participants to assess specific components of training and the impacts on their confidence levels. Training assessment results have been presented in a number of reports including the *First Phase Evaluation Findings Report (June 2009)*.
- 2) A *LawMatters Training Follow-up Survey* to assess the degree to which training participants maintain and use the skills acquired in training (Results of a Training Follow-up Survey, January 2009).
- 3) A small-scale *Shelving Snapshot Survey* to determine shelf use of legal reference materials (reported in the First Phase Evaluation Findings Report (June 2009).
- 4) A focus group to assess librarian response to the initial core funding phase, to determine future direction and make recommendations for the promotion of legal materials (November 2008).
- 5) A province-wide *Legal Reference Survey* involving public libraries to determine the volume of legal reference questions asked by patrons in a seven-day period, the legal topics involved, and the materials used to address the questions (First Phase Evaluation Findings, June 2009).
- 6) A piggyback survey, *Results from a Survey of Legal Advocacy Service Clients, September 2009*, that collected information on the degree to which clients are aware of public libraries as source of public legal information.

This report presents the results of participant assessment of all training provided by LawMatters from late 2007 to November 2009 and the combined results of the two phase Legal Reference Survey (2009 and 2010).

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE LEGAL REFERENCE SURVEY

3.2.1 Description

The first phase of the Legal Reference Survey (January 2009) involved the following steps:

- 1) The determination of the scope and purpose of the survey. This was done in consultation with staff from LawMatters and BC Courthouse Libraries;
- 2) The development, revision and piloting of the draft survey forms;
- 3) The identification of a statistically significant sample of public libraries from the master list of all public libraries in BC;
- 4) The development and transmission of information about the survey to participating single branch libraries and library system chiefs (sent in early December 2008);
- 5) Ongoing revisions to library contact information (to reflect staff changes);
- 6) Electronic transmission of the survey forms and instructions to all participating libraries (early January 2009);
- 7) Transmission of two generic reminders to participants, reminding them to complete the survey;

- 8) Telephone contact with non-responders;
- 9) Troubleshooting of incorrect or incomplete survey forms;
- 10) Data entry, aggregation, analysis and production of data tables;
- 11) Additional analysis involving cross variables;
- 12) The preparation of the draft and final reports.

The following steps were undertaken in Phase 2 (2009 – 2010):

- 1) The review and verification of all libraries participating in the second phase of the survey;
- 2) Discussions with LawMatters to determine survey forms revisions;
- 3) The development and transmission of pre-survey information to participating single branch libraries and library system chiefs (December 2009);
- 4) Electronic transmission of the survey forms and instructions to all participating libraries (January 2010);
- 5) Telephone reminders to 40% of the participating libraries;
- 6) Implementation of the survey;
- 7) Collection of survey forms;
- 8) Contact with non-responders and troubleshooting of incorrect or incomplete data entry with participating libraries;
- 9) Data entry, aggregation, analysis and production of data tables;
- 10) Additional analysis involving cross variables (from data on the Library Profile Form);
- 11) Preparation of the draft and final reports.

3.2.2 Selection of Libraries and Survey Completion Rates

One hundred and sixty libraries were chosen at random from a list of 238 public libraries in the first phase of the survey. All types of libraries were included in the survey, including independent branches and outlets in large library systems. These included small, mid-sized and large libraries.

Small libraries lack the capacity of mid to large sized libraries but were retained in the sample because they receive legal reference funding and other support from LawMatters. In addition, one of the goals of the survey was to reflect the experiences of all types of libraries in the province.

Completion rates were high in both phases of the study. One hundred and thirty-six libraries completed Phase 1 (85% return rate) and one hundred and thirty-three in Phase 2 (98% return rate).² The final sample size reflects a statistically significant sample of libraries across BC using a confidence level of 90% and a confidence interval of 5. The results of the survey can be considered to generally reflect the experiences of all types of public libraries in the province.

² The number of libraries reporting results in both phases was higher (138 in Phase 1 and 135 in Phase 2) because three divisions in one very large library completed survey forms and are considered as separate libraries.

4.0 ISSUES IMPACTING ON SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 SURVEY PARTICIPATION RATES

Without exception, all the libraries participating in the two phases of the Legal Reference Survey were positive about their involvement, undertook extra efforts to collect the data and were open to reviewing their data, if required. There was a 98% survey completion rate in Phase 2 of the survey.

Phase 2 survey respondents submitted results more quickly and there was a somewhat reduced need for follow-up with libraries, suggesting that libraries benefited from their previous experience with the survey. There were still some incorrect or incomplete data entries which the research team addressed by re-contacting libraries and reviewing results.

Public libraries have many responsibilities and specific challenges that make survey participation difficult. They often have large number of part-time staff and may find it difficult to train all staff to consistently collect survey results. The survey was dependent on libraries fully informing all staff about the survey and how to complete the survey forms; however, we were unable to clarify to what degree this took place.

4.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY PERIOD

Due to the scope and budget of the research and concerns about library workload, the two survey periods were each limited to seven days. While this allowed for a complete cycle of each library's opening hours, this is a very limited survey period and while providing a useful "snapshot" it may be insufficient to track patron questions at the smaller libraries which have more limited opening hours.

4.3 ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

There is a concern that the number of questions recorded by library staff on the survey form may be an actual *underestimation* of the total number of patron questions. This may be due to an incomplete understanding, on the part of some library staff, that some patron questions have a legal reference component. For example, in discussions with staff from several libraries to verify survey results, we found staff expressing uncertainty about whether specific questions could be considered to be legal even though most of these (e.g. property assessments and building codes) were listed on the survey form. In one case, a review of all the questions received in the survey week at one mid-sized library led the initial entry of seven questions to be expanded to fourteen questions when these additional questions were included. Although whether or not library staff recorded specific patron questions as falling in the legal reference area may have affected survey results, it had no impact on how the questions were addressed or the quality of services provided by library staff.

It should also be noted that the Legal Reference Survey focused only on patron questions directed to library staff. The majority of library patrons requiring legal reference information are likely to search for information by themselves. This may be particularly true if the question involves a personal matter such as separation or divorce.

4.4 MEASURING THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

One of the objectives of the second phase of the Legal Reference Survey was to look at whether promotional activities (by the library or supported through activities of LawMatters) in 2009 had affected whether libraries received legal reference questions in Phase 2.

The study was unable to explore the scope or intensity of these promotional activities. However, it is understood that, in many cases, promotional activities carried out in 2009 were of short duration, minimal in scope or restricted to a small number of libraries. This context should be kept in mind when reviewing the findings in this area.

LawMatters Training Results

5.0 LAWMATTERS TRAINING: PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 5.0 describes the volume and type of legal reference training provided by LawMatters and the results of participant assessments from all training held between November 2007 and November 2009. Participant assessments addressed satisfaction with the training and recommendations for future training. In June 2008 a revised assessment form was introduced that also asked participants to assess the degree to which legal reference training had enhanced their confidence levels in terms of addressing the legal reference questions of patrons.

Recommendations made by participants in the earlier training sessions are included in this report even though many of the recommended changes were later made by LawMatters.

LawMatters Introductory Training workshops are geared to the needs of participants and may vary in terms of structure, organization, content and duration. Specific differences were not taken in to account in the participant assessment results.

5.2 VOLUME AND TYPES OF LAWMATTERS TRAINING AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

LawMatters provided twenty-eight workshops or webinars between November 2007 and November 2009 involving a total of 407 participants. Thirteen of the training sessions involved QP LegalEze webinars, thirteen involved Introductory Legal Reference Training workshops and one was a Legal Sources Training session. Sixty-three percent of the training participants attended the Introductory Training. Most of the training took place in 2008.

Table 1. LawMatters Training Sessions and Participants

Type of Training		Number of Participants
Searching QP LegalEze		
1.	November 14, 2007	15
2.	December 5, 2007	13
3.	February 13, 2008	20
4.	March 12, 2008	22
5.	May 13, 2008	16
6.	June 9, 2008	16
7.	October 30, 2008	6
8.	November 21, 2008	3
9.	February 23, 2009	3
10.	March 11, 2009	13
11.	May 6, 2009	5
12.	November 9, 2009	2
13.	November 12, 2009	4
TOTAL		138 (34%)

Type of Training		Number of Participants
LawMatters Introductory Training		
14.	February 19, 2008	27
15.	March 5, 2008	28
16.	April 19, 2008	9
17.	May 2, 2008	15
18.	June 12, 2008	16
19.	September 22, 2008	20
20.	October 2, 2008	26
21.	October 27, 2008	12
22.	December 2, 2008	25
23.	January 22, 2009	11
24.	March 31, 2009	31
25.	April 7, 2009	16
26.	May 7, 2009	12
	TOTAL	248 (61%)
Legal Sources Training		
27.	Legal Sources Training Workshop (2007)	9
28.	Legal Sources Training Workshop (2009)*	12
	TOTAL	21 (5%)
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN ALL TRAINING	407 (100%)

* No evaluation results were compiled for this workshop.

5.3 RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS OF QP LEGALEZE TRAINING

5.3.1 Number of QP LegalEze Assessments Completed

Section 5.3 provides the results of online participant assessments of the QP LegalEze webinars provided by LawMatters. In September 2008, an expanded version of the Searching QP LegalEze Training Assessment Form was implemented. This improved the response rate; however, overall return rates were low for QP LegalEze (37% - 51/138 - of the QP LegalEze participants returned assessment forms). The new online format included additional assessment questions, resulting in different reporting rates for some questions.

5.3.2 Characteristics of Participants Who Attended the QP LegalEze Training³

Ninety percent (27/30) of the participants in the QP LegalEze training were public library staff; two were library trustees and one was a manager of a regional library system.

Participants were evenly drawn from libraries located in small, mid-sized and large urban communities. Twenty percent (6/30) were from libraries located in small communities (less than 10,000 people); 40% (12/30) were from libraries located in communities from 10,000 to under 50,000, 23% (7/30) were from libraries located in communities of 50,000 to 100,000 people, and 17% (5/30) were from libraries located in cities of over 100,000 people.

³ These questions were added in the revised questionnaire and were completed by thirty QP LegalEze training participants.

5.3.3 Participant Assessment of QP LegalEze Training

Over 75% of the QP LegalEze training participants who were involved in the early training sessions rated the overall training as being very worthwhile.

Table 2. Overall Participant Assessment of the Value of Searching QP LegalEze Training *

Assessment	Number and Percentage of Participants
Not worthwhile	1 (5%)
Moderately worthwhile	4 (19%)
Very worthwhile	16 (76%)
TOTAL	21 (100%)

* This question involved respondents from the first six training sessions.

In the most recent version of the QP LegalEze Webinar assessment form, participants were asked to assess specific elements of the training, such as the time allotted to the training and the effectiveness of the facilitators.

These results indicate that 90% of the training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives of the training were clearly stated, enough time was available for the webinar, the facilitators were effective, the online component worked well and the training provided sufficient time to explore resources and practice handling specific legal reference questions. The highest ratings were given for the effectiveness of the facilitators; a somewhat lower rating was given for the opportunity to practice handling specific legal reference questions.

Table 3. Assessment of the Quality of QP LegalEze Training

Rating Statement	Number Responding	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion or neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Does not apply
The objectives of training were clearly stated	30 (99%)	—	—	1 (3%)	12 (40%)	16 (53%)	1 (3%)
Enough time was available to complete all aspects of the training	30 (99%)	—	1 (3%)	—	18 (60%)	10 (33%)	1 (3%)
The facilitators were effective in transmitting the information	30 (100%)	—	—	—	11 (37%)	19 (63%)	—
The online component of the training worked well	30 (100%)	—	—	2 (7%)	14 (47%)	13 (43%)	1 (3%)
The training provided sufficient opportunity to practice handling specific legal reference questions	30 (100%)	—	2 (7%)	—	18 (60%)	10 (33%)	—
The training provided sufficient opportunity to explore sources of legal information that are useful for addressing legal reference questions	30 (100%)	—	—	3 (10%)	14 (47%)	13 (43%)	—

Twenty-six of the QP LegalEze respondents had comments about the online webinar training format. Most comments (58% or 15/26) were very positive.

(I) love the online environment. It allows me to take the learning online from home. It is harder to do training at the library as there are limited computers and places.

Forty-two percent (11/26) of those who made comments identified small glitches with the online format. These problems included lost communication during the webinar session, time lags, background noise, inability to view some material, audio regulation problems and the loss of the internet connection because of ISP problems.

5.3.4 Aspects of QP LegalEze Training that Were Considered Most and Least Useful

The two most useful aspects of the training identified by the forty respondents who addressed this question were:

- The question and answer sessions and practice questions that simulated searches;
- Specific information about the material accessible through QP LegalEze.

As noted by one training participant,

The online format and being able to watch the actual steps and screens is an invaluable part of training. The explanations of Bills, Acts, Regulations, and the practice questions. The entire program was enough for a beginner to start with.

Table 4. Most Useful Aspects of QP LegalEze Training Identified by Participants

Most Useful Aspect of Training	Number and Percentage Responding (N=40)
Question and answer sessions, hands-on practice questions, simulated searches	13 (33%)
Specific information about the resources and information available on Searching QP LegalEze (e.g. bills, statutes, forms)	13 (33%)
Planning, organization, tone, quality and expertise of the facilitators	7 (18%)
Gaining overall confidence in using Searching QP LegalEze	4 (10%)
All aspects were useful	3 (8%)
Learning about specific search strategies, including advanced search / questions and answers	2 (5%)
Excellent as a refresher course	2 (5%)
The length of the training / time management	2 (5%)

Only seven participants commented on aspects of the webinar that they considered to be “least useful.” Three suggested that the training required more time, three found the background material and PowerPoint component was too long and one wanted repeated training of this type in order to consolidate skills.

5.3.5 Participant Confidence Levels Before and After QP LegalEze Training

Participants were asked to estimate how confident they were in terms of handling legal reference questions from patrons before and after the training. Confidence levels were measured using a 1-7 point scale with 1=low level of confidence and 7=high level of confidence. Results were aggregated into three groups for reporting purposes – low (1-3), moderate (4-5), and high (6-7) levels of confidence. This question was asked on recent versions of the training assessment forms.

Results indicate that there was a dramatic rise in the confidence levels of staff after they had taken the QP LegalEze Training. Prior to the training, 73% of the participants said they had a low level of confidence; after the training only 7% placed themselves in this category. All of these findings were strongly statistically significant. This data suggests that QP LegalEze training is highly effective in increasing the confidence of staff in the handling of legal reference questions of patrons.⁴

Table 5. Confidence Levels of Participants Before and After Participating in QP LegalEze Training

Confidence Levels	Before Training	After Training
Low level	22 (73%)	2 (7%)
Moderate level	8 (27%)	21 (70%)
High level	0 (0%)	7 (23%)
TOTAL	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
Average confidence level	2.5 / 7.0	4.8 / 7.0

5.3.6 Recommendations for Strengthening QP LegalEze Training in the Future

Twenty-five participants had recommendations for strengthening QP LegalEze webinar training in the future. A variety of different suggestions were made. The greatest consensus was around the need to include further practice time working through specific legal reference questions.

⁴ A follow-up survey of participants who attended training, completed in December 2009 showed that the confidence levels of all LawMatters training participants were maintained up to at least 6-18 months after the training.

Table 6. Participant Recommendations for Strengthening QP LegalEze Training

Recommendations	Number and Percentage Responding (N=25)
Increase the time for practice exercises / demonstrations	10 (40%)
Increase training time	3 (12%)
Provide webinar practice questions in advance	2 (8%)
Improve the quality of sound or the use of the mute button	2 (8%)
Spend less time on LSS information	2 (8%)
Provide more detailed search tips	1 (4%)
Do more advanced search practice	1 (4%)
Create a better system for asking questions on the webinar	1 (4%)
Develop a glossary of terms to distribute in advance of the webinar	1 (4%)
Provide access to QP LegalEze to participants at their home computers in advance of the training	1 (4%)
Provide specific search instructions on a written take home sheet	1 (4%)
Add information about government websites that provides up to date information on legislation	1 (4%)
Spend less time on the PowerPoint presentation	1 (4%)
Hold training at the library site	1 (4%)
Use a list of common legal questions for practice	1 (4%)
Use software compatible with MACS	1 (4%)
Simplify training (no further information provided)	1 (4%)

5.3.7 Recommendations for Additional Training

Ten QP LegalEze participants had suggestions about future training related to online legal reference resources. (Table 7) There was no clear consensus on these recommendations.

Table 7. Recommendations for Further Training

Recommendations	Number and Percentage Responding (N=10)
Training related to specific legal topic areas (e.g. employment, tax, small claims, government (legal) forms	3 (30%)
CANLII Electronic Library Training	2 (20%)
Reference / advanced QP LegalEze Training	2 (20%)
Any other legal reference training	2 (20%)
Training that could be completed at the student's own pace	1 (10%)
Training to help the public use QP LegalEze	1 (10%)
Training in Quick Law	1 (10%)

5.4 RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS OF INTRODUCTORY LEGAL REFERENCE TRAINING

5.4.1 Number of Introductory Training Assessments Completed

Two hundred and forty-eight library staff attended the LawMatters Introductory Training and 81% (202/248) completed training assessment forms. The training assessment forms asked participants to assess the training, describe their confidence levels before and after training and make recommendations for future training. The assessment form was expanded in June 2008.

5.4.2 Description of Participants Who Attended the Introductory Training

Introductory Training workshops were held in all regions of BC; almost half were held in the Lower Mainland.

Table 8. Regional Distribution of LawMatters Introductory Training Workshops

Regional Location	Number and Percentage of Training Sessions
Vancouver Island	1 (8%)
Fraser Valley	1 (8%)
Lower Mainland	6 (46%)
Northwest	1 (8%)
Northeast	1 (8%)
Kootenays	1 (8%)
Okanagan	1 (8%)
Central Interior	1 (8%)
TOTAL	13 (102%)

Ninety-six percent (127/132) of the Introductory Training participants described themselves as being a library staff member; the five others were a college librarian, a library federation manager, a cataloguer and a student librarian (one – no answer).

Participants in the training came from libraries located in small, mid and large size communities. Most were from libraries in larger urban centres.

Table 9. Size of Community Where Library is Located

Size of Community	Number and Percentage
Small community (under 10,000 people)	20 (15%)
Mid-sized community (10,000 to under 50,000 people)	26 (20%)
Large community (50,000 to under 100,000 people)	32 (24%)
Large urban centre (over 100,000 people)	51 (39%)
No data or respondents staff several libraries in different communities	3 (2%)
TOTAL	132 (100%)

5.4.3 Frequency with Which Patrons Ask Legal Reference Questions

Fifty-six percent of those attending the Introductory Training said that they receive legal reference questions from patrons frequently or very frequently (at least once a week or more). Only 11% said that they rarely received questions (these estimates closely match the results from the Legal Reference Survey).

Table 10. Frequency of Legal Reference Questions Asked at Participant Libraries

Frequency of Legal Reference Questions	Number and Percentage
Very frequent (several times a week or more)	38 (29%)
Frequent (about once a week)	35 (27%)
Occasional (a few times a month)	34 (26%)
Rare (a few times a year)	14 (11%)
Unknown or not applicable	11 (8%)
TOTAL	132 (101%)

5.4.4 Participant Assessment of Introductory Legal Reference Training

Results from Table 11 indicate that the majority of the participants were positive or very positive about all the major aspects of the LawMatters Introductory Training. Ninety-eight percent of the participants agreed that the training provided a good introduction to the legal reference area, suggesting that the overall purpose of the workshop was achieved. High ratings were also given for the clarity of the objectives and the quality of the facilitation.

Participants were somewhat less positive about the length of time allotted for the training which was considered to be too short to sufficiently cover all the topic areas or to allow enough time for practice questions. Only 35% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that “the training provided sufficient opportunity to learn about the steps required to address legal reference questions.”

Table 11. Participant Assessment of Aspects of the LawMatters Introductory Training

Elements of Introductory Training	Number of Participants Rating	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion or Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply
The objectives of the training were clearly stated	132 (101%)	79 (60%)	50 (38%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	—	—
Enough time was available to cover all the training topics sufficiently	131 (100%)	41 (31%)	60 (46%)	14 (11%)	16 (12%)	—	—
The facilitators were effective in transmitting the information	128 (101%)	75 (59%)	42 (33%)	5 (4%)	1 (1%)	—	5 (4%)
The online practice component of the workshop worked well *	122 (100%)	8 (7%)	10 (8%)	3 (2%)	—	—	101 (83%)
The LawMatters workshop provided a good introductory overview of the legal reference area	133 (101%)	89 (67%)	42 (32%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	—	—
The training provided sufficient opportunity to learn about the steps required to address legal reference questions	133 (100%)	46 (35%)	60 (45%)	20 (15%)	7 (5%)	—	—
The training provided sufficient opportunity to learn about a range of legal information and resources useful for addressing legal reference questions	133 (101%)	54 (41%)	62 (47%)	11 (8%)	6 (5%)	—	—

* In most Introductory Training workshops there was no online component.

5.4.5 Most and Least Useful Aspects of the Introductory Training

One hundred and eighty-six respondents identified a wide range of Introductory Training elements that they considered to be most useful. Over a third said that learning about specific websites and online resources was the most useful part of the training. A quarter of the participants said that they particularly appreciated the general overview of all resources provided in the workshop.

Table 12. Most Useful Aspect of the Introductory Training

Most Useful Aspects of Training	Number and Percentage Reporting (N = 186)
Learning about websites and online resources	69 (37%)
Being given an overview of all (current) types of legal reference resources	46 (25%)
Practice questions	28 (15%)
Handouts	24 (13%)
Steps involved in conducting a legal reference interview (including “dos and don’ts”)	19 (10%)
Learning about print resources	15 (8%)
Referral options and information	13 (7%)
Understanding legal forms	8 (4%)
Quality of training and the overall presentation	8 (4%)
Information about QP LegalEze	7 (4%)
Reference materials (including website) on Family Law	5 (3%)
How to locate Bills, Acts, Statutes, Regulations	5 (3%)
Awareness of the potential of legal reference material for the public	5 (3%)
Information about Clicklaw	5 (3%)
Definition of legal terms	4 (2%)
All aspects of training	4 (2%)
Secondary sources of information	4 (2%)
Case law resources	3 (2%)
Legal Jeopardy Game	3 (2%)
Information about Courthouse Libraries	2 (1%)
Group discussions	2 (1%)
PowerPoint introduction	2 (1%)
Resources in multiple languages	1 (1%)
Information about QuickLaw	1 (1%)

Twenty-seven participants identified aspects of the training that they considered to be “least useful.” Spending too much time on introductory or background material and a lack of sufficient time for the workshop were cited most frequently as being problem areas.

Table 13. Least Useful Aspect of the Introductory Training

Least Useful Aspects of Training	Number and Percentage Reporting (N = 27)
Introductory and historical material	8 (30%)
Lack of time for the training	5 (19%)
Reference interview	2 (7%)
Pyramid	2 (7%)
Using tools to answer one question (unspecified)	1 (4%)
Readability of online resources	1 (4%)
Practice questions	1 (4%)
Lack of detail on low cost and free legal services	1 (4%)
Federal data	1 (4%)
Too much detail / amount of information	1 (4%)
Determining the type of law	1 (4%)
Clicklaw (participant was already aware)	1 (4%)
Lack of information about law librarianship	1 (4%)
Lack of time on computer	1 (4%)
Subject matter in general (unspecified)	1 (4%)

5.4.6 Participant Confidence Levels Prior to and After Legal Reference Introductory Training

Participants involved in the LawMatters Introductory Training were asked to assess whether the training had increased their confidence in terms of handling legal reference questions from patrons. Only the participants who completed the revised version of the assessment form answered this question. Confidence levels were measured using a 1-7 point scale with 1=low level of confidence and 7=high level of confidence. Results were aggregated into three groups for reporting purposes – low (1-3), moderate (4-5) and high (6-7) levels of confidence.

Results in Table 14 indicate that the LawMatters Introductory Training had a significant impact on the confidence levels of library staff. Almost 60% of the participants described their confidence level as poor prior to the training, compared to only 17% after the training. By the end of the training 83% of the participants described their confidence level as “moderate” or “high.” These changes were strongly statistically significant.

Table 14. Participant Assessment of Confidence Levels Before and After LawMatters Introductory Training

Participant Confidence Levels	Before Training	After Training
Low level	74 (58%)	21 (17%)
Moderate level	46 (36%)	77 (61%)
High level	7 (6%)	28 (22%)
TOTAL	127 (100%)	126 (100%)
Average Level of Confidence	3.2 / 7.0	4.6 / 7.0

5.4.7 Participant Recommendations for Strengthening LawMatters Introductory Training

One hundred and thirty-five training participants had recommendations for strengthening the training. Expanding the time for the workshop⁵ and increasing the opportunity to explore online resources in more detail and to complete additional “hands-on” practice were the most frequently noted recommendations (Table 15).

Table 15. Participant Recommendations for Strengthening the LawMatters Introductory Training

Participant Suggestions	Number and Percentage (N=135)
Lengthen the time of the training or divide it into two sessions (e.g. a full day session or two half-days)*	46 (34%)
Increase the opportunity to explore online resources in an online environment	25 (19%)
Include more case examples, practice with reference questions and more time for question review	16 (12%)
Include more hands-on practice with search techniques and advanced search	16 (12%)
Add specific types of questions – most common, tougher, more “real world,” and interesting	7 (5%)
Focus on specific areas of the law – e.g. family and child, business law, immigration, labour law, and FOI	6 (4%)
Add more depth and detail to the training	6 (4%)
Improve the readability of the overheads	2 (1%)
Hold training more regularly and add refresher courses	2 (1%)
Have a clearer focus for the training/make it more concise	2 (1%)
Drop the PowerPoint presentation/reduce the introduction	2 (1%)
Expand the training so that more library staff can attend	2 (1%)
Organize websites so that they are in the same order as the handouts	2 (1%)
Increase time for exploring reference resources	2 (1%)
Discuss Searching QP LegalEze and Quick Law in more detail	2 (1%)
Add more group work	2 (1%)
Do practice sessions using print resources	1 (1%)
Use videos to teach some topics – e.g. How to Conduct a Legal Reference Interview	1 (1%)
Shorten the training	1 (1%)
Provide brochures for the public and staff	1 (1%)
Develop a flow chart handout to indicate how to answer sample legal questions	1 (1%)
Add more explanation of the three binders	1 (1%)
Develop a “tip sheet” resource for handling sample questions	1 (1%)
Hold the training on its own – not in relation to another meeting**	1 (1%)
Improve the presentation – make more dynamic	1 (1%)
Include more worksheets	1 (1%)
Provide homework/competition to support skill-building	1 (1%)
Add a practice quiz	1 (1%)
Hold training in the morning	1 (1%)
Show how resources relate to each other	1 (1%)
Define legal terms (e.g. Statutes)	1 (1%)
Identify sources used in the Jeopardy Game	1 (1%)

* The length of the training is determined by the capacity of staff to attend and is beyond the control of LawMatters.

**This occurred in some instances.

⁵ The time available for library staff to participate in training is beyond the control of LawMatters.

5.4.8 Recommendations for Future Legal Reference Introductory Training

Eighty-nine participants described additional types of legal reference training that they thought would be useful. Twenty elements or types of training were described. Three main recommendations emerged. These were to develop:

- More training on the use of *online* resources, particularly Searching QP LegalEze;
- Expanded training of the same type but in a refresher or updated training format with more opportunity to do practice searches, explore resources and consolidate knowledge;
- Training related to specific areas of the law. Areas identified by participants include family law (divorce, separation and child custody), immigration, labour, residential tenancy, ICBC, legal issues related to seniors, employment and small claims.

▪ **Table 16: Recommendations for Additional (General) Legal Reference Training**

Recommended Areas for Future Training	Number and Percentage (N-89)
Expanded or refresher training to enable reinforcement and practice	22 (25%)
Training in the use of online resources, particularly QP LegalEze	20 (22%)
Training related to substantive areas of the law	17 (19%)
More search practice	7 (8%)
Further training in Case Law, Acts, Statutes and Regulations	6 (7%)
Training in the use of Clicklaw	5 (6%)
More localized training or inclusion of more staff	4 (4%)
Emphasis on public education (e.g. community forums)	4 (4%)
Option of accessing training webinars at home (or through live stream videos)	2 (2%)
Further training in codes/bylaws	2 (2%)
More information on the history of the law	2 (2%)
Updates on what is changing	2 (2%)
More practice using frequently asked questions	2 (2%)
More information on community resources and referrals	1 (1%)
Further exploration of resources (general)	1 (1%)
Offer CLTP legal course	1 (1%)
Provide information about CANLII	1 (1%)

5.5 RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS OF LEGAL INFORMATION SOURCES TRAINING

Section 5.5 provides the results of participant assessments of the Legal Information Sources Training provided by LawMatters Evaluation in 2007. The Legal Information Sources Training is an eight-week distance elective course that is part of the PLSB's Community Library Training program. Evaluation data was not compiled for the 2009 workshop. In total, twenty-one library staff attended this training.

Nine participants attended the 2007 training. Six of them completed training assessment forms. These results were originally presented in the first *LawMatters Participant Training Assessment Report* (August, 2008).

5.5.1 Assessment of the Legal Information Sources Training

All of the 2007 training participants rated the Legal Information Sources Training as worthwhile or very worthwhile (ratings were 4 or 5 out of a maximum rating of 5). The average rating of the training was 4.8/5.0.

The opportunity to learn more about legal resources was cited as the most useful component of the training. The "most useful" components identified by participants are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16. Most Useful Aspect of Legal Information Sources Training

Most Useful Aspect of Training	Number Reporting (N=6)
The opportunity to learn about legal information and resources	3
Good homework questions and assignments	2
Short, good texts	1
Timely, efficient, and responsive tutors	1
The relaxed pace of the training	1

All of the participants who completed assessment forms felt it was helpful to work online and 4/6 were extremely positive about this option.

All participants gave high ratings to the facilitators. They were described as responsive, able to answer questions in detail, supportive, knowledgeable, thorough, friendly, easy-going, efficient and able to correct mistakes in a sensitive manner.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Improving the Legal Information Sources Training

Three participants from the 2007 training made four suggestions on ways to improve the Legal Information Sources Training. These were to:

- Add slide shows or online videos to the text;
- Lengthen the time for the training and create two training levels (basic and advanced);
- Make it feasible to access Searching QP LegalEze temporarily from home computers;
- Shorten the quiz or let participants know that it may be longer than two hours.

5.6 LAW MATTERS TRAINING: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

LawMatters provided twenty-seven training sessions or webinars between 2007 and 2009 involving a total of 395 participants. Participants were primarily library staff. Participants were positive or very positive about the training provided by LawMatters, including the scope of resources examined, the quality of the facilitation and the opportunity to practice legal reference search strategies.

Thirteen *Searching QP LegalEze* training webinars were facilitated by LawMatters involving 138 participants. Ninety percent of the training participants agreed or strongly agreed that training objectives were well stated, there was enough time allotted for the webinar, the facilitators were effective, the online component worked well and the training allowed for sufficient time to explore resources and do practice questions. The effectiveness of the facilitators was given the highest rating.

The two most useful aspects of the training were considered to be the question and answer sessions and the practice questions that simulated legal reference searches and specific information about the content of QP LegalEze. Participants recommended adding more question practice time in future training.

Two hundred and forty-eight participants attended the Legal Reference Introductory Training which was designed specifically by LawMatters to provide introductory legal reference training to library staff. Thirteen two to three hour workshops were held throughout the province, most in the Lower Mainland. Fifty-six percent of those attending the Introductory Training said that they received legal reference questions from patrons frequently or very frequently (at least more than once a week).

Participants in the Introductory Training were positive or very positive about all aspects of the training and agreed that the training provided a very good introduction to the legal reference area. High ratings were also given for the clarity of the objectives and the quality of the facilitation.

In terms of strengthening the LawMatters Introductory Training, participants recommended lengthening the time for training, providing more opportunities to explore online resources, and including more time for case examples, practice questions and opportunities to use search strategies. Participants would like to see refresher or updated training and training related to specific areas of the law.

LawMatters also provided two series of the distance Legal Information Sources Training in 2007 and 2009. Participant assessments for the 2007 workshops are included in the report. Although only a limited number of participants completed assessment forms for the 2007 workshop, all assessments were positive.

Library staff that participated in the LawMatters Introductory and the QP LegalEze Training showed a dramatic rise in confidence levels in terms of addressing the legal reference questions of patrons as a result of taking the training. For example, prior to taking the Introductory Training, almost 60% of the participants said that they had a poor level of confidence; after the training this level dropped to only 17%. These pre and post training changes were statistically significant for both types of training.

LawMatters Legal Reference Survey: Final Results

6.0 FINAL RESULTS OF THE LEGAL REFERENCE SURVEY

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE LEGAL REFERENCE SURVEY

Section 6.0 presents the combined results of the first and second phases of the Legal Reference Survey. This was a seven-day survey with a randomly selected, statistically representative group of public libraries across the province held in mid-January 2009 and 2010. The survey collected information from library staff on the number of legal reference questions asked by library patrons, the legal reference topics involved, the online and print resources used by library staff to answer the questions and the degree to which staff made referrals to external community resources.

The survey also collected baseline “profile” information on each library including size, hours of opening, the number and type of staff, and whether staff had received LawMatters training or had promoted their legal reference materials. These data were used to help determine the factors influencing the volume of legal reference questions at the libraries.

6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBRARIES PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY

6.2.1 Number of Libraries Completing the Survey and Library Location

The number of completed library survey forms was 138 in Phase 1 and 135 in Phase 2. This represented 135 and 133 libraries respectively. (Three divisions in one large library were treated in the research as separate libraries.) The libraries in Phase 1 that did not complete Phase 2 were eliminated from the final analysis leaving the total number of participant libraries or large library divisions as 135 for both phases. There was a 98% survey completion rate in Phase 2. This represents a statistically significant sample of public libraries in BC, suggesting that the findings are generally applicable to all public libraries in BC.

Libraries from every region of the province participated in the survey. The highest levels of participation were from libraries located in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island.

Table 17. Regional Distribution of Libraries Participating in Both Phases of the Survey

Area or Region	Number and Percentage Reporting
Vancouver/Lower Mainland region	34 (25%)
Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands/Sechelt Peninsula	26 (19%)
Okanagan region	15 (11%)
Fraser Valley region	11 (8%)
Thomson-Nicola region	11 (8%)
Kootenays region	8 (6%)
Northeast region	7 (5%)
Victoria	5 (4%)
Central Interior region	5 (4%)
Cariboo region	5 (4%)
Squamish-Lillooet region	5 (4%)
Northwest region	3 (2%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)

Twenty-four percent (33/135) of the libraries participating in the survey were independent libraries; 76% (102/135) were branches with larger library systems. Twenty-three libraries participated from the Vancouver Island Regional Library system; fifteen from the Okanagan system, eleven from the Fraser Valley Regional Library system; twelve from the Thompson-Nicola system; and nineteen from the Vancouver Library system. There was representation from all the library systems.

6.2.2 Size of the Community in Which the Library is Located

The size of the community in which libraries are located was used as a general indicator of overall library size and capacity. Table 18 indicates that libraries in communities of every size participated in the Legal Reference survey; almost 40% of the libraries were located in very small communities, indicating that there was a strong representation of small libraries in the survey.

Table 18. Size of Community of Libraries Participating in the Survey

Size of Community of Libraries in the Survey	Number and Percentage Reporting
Very small community (under 5,000 people)	53 (39%)
Small community (from 5,000 to under 10,000 people)	18 (13%)
Mid-sized community (from 10,000 to under 50,000 people)	21 (16%)
Large community (from 50,000 to under 100,000 people)	12 (9%)
Very large urban centre (100,000 people or more)	31 (23%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)

6.3 CHANGES IN LIBRARY AND STAFFING CHARACTERISTICS FROM PHASE 1 TO PHASE 2

6.3.1 Library Opening Hours

Results suggest that there were minimal changes within libraries from Phase 1 to Phase 2 in terms of the extent of opening hours and staff levels. Almost sixty percent of the libraries were open 36 or more hours a week; over 20% were open 25 hours or less.

Table 19. Number of Hours Library is Open Per Week and Changes from Phase 1 to Phase 2

Number of Hours Library is Open Per week	Number & Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Under 16 hours per week	19 (14%)	14 (10%)
From 16 – 25 hours per week	14 (10%)	16 (12%)
From 26 – 35 hours per week	15 (11%)	19 (14%)
From 36 – 45 hours per week	24 (18%)	28 (21%)
Over 45 hours per week	63 (47%)	58 (43%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)	135 (100%)

Table 20 shows the *relative* changes in hours at individual libraries from Phase 1 to Phase 2. In 82% of the libraries the opening hours remained at the same level. In Phase 2, findings indicate that increases in the extent of opening hours were more likely to have taken place in the smaller libraries, while decreases occurred in libraries of all sizes. None of these changes were statistically significant.

Table 20. Changes in Hours at Individual Libraries from Phase 1 to Phase 2

Changes to Library Hours	Number and Percentage Reporting
Opening hours have increased	13 (10%)
Opening hours have decreased	11 (8%)
Opening hours have remained the same	111 (82%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)

There is a direct relationship between the size of the library and the extent of opening hours. The libraries that are open 25 hours or less are all located in very small communities, whereas almost 60% of the libraries that are open over 45 hours a week are located in large or very large urban areas.

6.3.2 Library Staffing Levels

All of the libraries participating in the survey had at least one part-time or full-time staff member. There were no significant shifts in overall staffing levels at libraries between Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Table 21. Changes in Staffing Levels Between Phase 1 and Phase 2

Number of Staff	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
1 - 3	42 (31%)	44 (33%)
4 - 8	36 (27%)	32 (24%)
9 - 15	30 (22%)	30 (22%)
16 - 25	15 (11%)	18 (13%)
26 - 35	3 (2%)	5 (4%)
More than 35	9 (7%)	6 (4%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)	135 (100%)

6.3.3 Staff Characteristics

Just over half of the libraries participating in the Legal Reference Survey had at least one part or full time professional librarian on staff. This percentage remained unchanged from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

Table 22 summarizes all of the major staffing characteristics from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

Table 22. Summary of Staffing Characteristics

Staffing Characteristics	Number and Percentage Reporting (N = 135)	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Libraries with at least one part-time or full-time staff member	135 (100%)	135 (100%)
Number of libraries with at least one professional librarian on staff	71 (53%)	71 (53%)
Number of libraries with library technicians on staff	58 (43%)	65 (48%)
Number of libraries with community librarians	61 (45%)	55 (41%)
Number of libraries with volunteers	22 (16%)	20 (15%)

6.4 STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN LAWMATTERS TRAINING

In Phase 2 of the Legal Reference Survey libraries were asked whether one or more staff had attended legal reference training provided by LawMatters. Fifty-three percent (71/135) of the libraries said at least one staff member had received some type of LawMatters training. Twenty-one percent (15/71) said that they didn't remember when the training had taken place; 10% (7/71) took training prior to 2008; 35% (25/71) in 2008 and 34% (24/71) in 2009. Data was not collected on the exact number of staff involved or the specific type of training.

A more detailed discussion of the impacts of LawMatters training on the volume of legal reference questions is presented in Section 6.7.5.

6.5 PROMOTION OF LEGAL REFERENCE MATERIALS AT THE LIBRARY

LawMatters provided support and information to libraries to help them promote their legal reference materials. Legal materials were promoted through the distribution of posters, bookmarks and notepads to all public libraries, training workshops and presentations to librarians, legal advocates and community groups. Reading lists of titles from *Law Books for Libraries* were also distributed to community groups and librarians. Many of the LawMatters promotional activities were concentrated in a one-week period in April 2009.

In 2009 LawMatters also conducted community forums in two communities which helped inform a wide range of service providers about library legal reference resources and capacity.

In Phase 2 of the survey, libraries were asked whether they had promoted legal reference materials to the public through book displays, activities or outreach. Just over half (51% or 69/135) said they had promoted legal reference materials in the past year; 41% (56/135) said they had not and 7% (10/135) said they were uncertain. A further discussion of promotional activities and its impact on the volume of legal reference questions is included in Section 6.12.

6.6 PERCENTAGE OF LIBRARIES RECEIVING LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS IN PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2

6.6.1 Number of Libraries Receiving Legal Reference Questions

In Phase 2, fifty-three percent of the libraries in the survey received at least one legal reference question during the survey week. This represented a drop in the volume of questions from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of just over 10%.⁶

Table 23. Number of Libraries with Legal Reference Questions in Phase 1 and Phase 2

Did the Library Receive a Legal Reference Question?	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
YES	86 (64%)	71 (53%)
NO	49 (36%)	64 (47%)
TOTAL	135 (100%)	135 (100%)

This change was not statistically significant and may reflect the normal variation in a limited time series restricted to only two observations (in two years). Statistically speaking, it would likely require several additional observations to establish a clear pattern or trend.

It should also be noted that the survey lasted only seven days which disadvantages smaller libraries with more limited opening hours.

⁶ Phase 1 results have been recalculated to exclude the three libraries that didn't participate in Phase 2.

When individual library results are compared for the two phases, data showed that 44% of the libraries received questions in both phases while 28% received no questions in either phase. Twenty-seven percent of the libraries received questions in one phase but not the other.

Table 24. Question Results: Both Phases

Question Results	Number and Percentage Reporting
No questions asked by patrons in either phase	38 (28%)
Questions asked in both phases	60 (44%)
Questions asked in Phase 1 – none in Phase 2	26 (19%)
Questions asked in Phase 2 – none in Phase 1	11 (8%)
TOTAL	135 (99%)

6.7 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FREQUENCY OF LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

Six factors were examined to assess the degree to which they contributed to whether libraries received legal reference questions in Phases 1 and 2. The factors were:

- The size of the library (in terms of its location);
- The extent of the library’s opening hours;
- The number of paid staff at the library;
- Whether the library had a professional librarian on staff;
- Whether any library staff had attended LawMatters legal reference training;
- Whether legal reference materials had been promoted at the library.

The analysis compared libraries who received no questions in either year of the survey with the libraries that received questions in both years of the survey. Libraries that had questions in one phase but not the other were not included in the analysis. (These libraries had the same characteristics as libraries that received no questions in either phase.)

The results of the analysis indicate that structural or staffing factors (library size and hours of opening) continue to be the major factors in terms of whether libraries receive legal reference questions.

6.7.1 Legal Reference Questions and Library Size

Larger libraries were more likely to receive legal questions in both phases. Small libraries were more likely to have received no legal questions in either phase or to have inconsistent results. These patterns were statistically significant.

Table 25. Legal Reference Questions and Library Size

Size of Community*	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions in Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
Small or very small communities	13 (22%)	32 (84%)
Mid-sized communities	13 (22%)	3 (8%)
Large or very large communities	34 (57%)	3 (8%)
TOTAL	60 (101%)	38 (100%)

* Size of community was used as an indicator of library size.

6.7.2 Legal Reference Questions and Extent of Opening Hours

Findings also indicate that the libraries that received legal reference questions in both phases were more likely to be open more hours per week. This pattern is also statistically significant. Only 7% of the libraries open for 25 hours or less received legal reference questions in both phases. These constitute the smallest libraries.

Table 26. Legal Reference Questions and Extent of Opening Hours

Library Opening Hours	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions in Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
Under 16 hours per week	0	13 (34%)
From 16 – 25 hours per week	4 (7%)	6 (16%)
From 26 – 35 hours per week	4 (7%)	7 (18%)
From 36 – 45 hours per week	8 (13%)	6 (16%)
Over 45 hours per week	44 (73%)	6 (16%)
TOTAL	60 (100%)	38 (100%)

6.7.3 Legal Reference Questions and Number of Paid Staff at the Library

The number of paid staff was statistically linked to whether a library received a legal reference question in both phases. Libraries with staffs of 1-3 people were far less likely to have received legal reference questions during the survey week. This finding was statistically significant. Staff numbers are linked to the overall size of the library.

Table 27. Question Patterns and Number of Paid Staff

Number of Part-time or Full-time Paid Staff	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions in Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
1 – 3	6 (10%)	24 (63%)
4 – 8	9 (15%)	10 (26%)
9 – 15	18 (30%)	4 (11%)
16 – 25	15 (25%)	0 (0%)
Over 25	12 (20%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	60 (100%)	38 (100%)

6.7.4 Legal Reference Questions and Staffing with Professional Librarians

Libraries that had at least one part or full time professional librarian were also much more likely to have received legal reference questions in both phases. This finding was also strongly statistically significant.

Table 28. Legal Reference Questions and Staffing with Professional Librarians

Professional Librarian on Staff?	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions in Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
YES	45 (75%)	9 (24%)
NO	15 (25%)	29 (76%)
TOTAL	60 (100%)	38 (100%)

6.7.5 Legal Reference Questions and Level of Staff Training

Whether or not library staff participated in LawMatters Training at some point in the past was statistically associated with whether a library had received a legal reference question in the two phases. However, this factor is less important than library size and the extent of library opening hours (see Section 6.7.7).

Table 29. Legal Reference Questions and LawMatters Training*

Attended LawMatters Training	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions in Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
NO	15 (28%)	27 (75%)
YES	39 (72%)	9 (25%)
TOTAL	54 (100%)*	36 (100%)

*Some libraries were uncertain whether they received training. These libraries were excluded from the analysis.

6.7.6 Legal Reference Questions and Library Promotional Activities

There was no statistical evidence to suggest that libraries that promoted their legal reference materials received more legal reference questions than those that did not. Libraries that did not promote their legal reference materials were just as likely to receive legal reference questions.

Table 30. Legal Reference Questions and Promotion of Activities

Promoted Legal Reference Questions	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Received Questions Both Phases	No Questions Either Phase
YES	30 (54%)	19 (53%)
NO	26 (46%)	17 (47%)
TOTAL	56 (100%)	36 (100%)

6.7.7 Relative Weight of the Factors Influencing Whether Libraries Received Legal Reference Questions

Four factors were measured in terms of their impact on whether a library received legal reference questions in both (or no) phases of the study. These factors were:

- The size of the library (as indicated by the size of the community);
- The extent of the library's opening hours;
- Whether there was a professional librarian on staff;
- Whether some of the library staff had received LawMatters legal reference training.

A logistic regression analysis was used to determine the statistical weight of different variables in relation to each other. This analysis indicated that when these four factors were considered, the size of the library and the extent of its opening hours were the most significant factors in determining whether a library received legal reference questions. Whether or not one or more staff had received LawMatters training and whether there was a professional librarian on staff were not major factors on whether or not the library received questions.

LawMatters training is not likely to impact on the volume of legal reference questions asked by library patrons. It is most likely to affect other variables such as the *quality* of information provided to patrons or the scope and types of resources consulted by library staff. The quality of service provided by library staff and its relationship to training provided by LawMatters were not explored in this study.

6.8 TOTAL VOLUME OF LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS ASKED IN PHASES 1 AND 2

Four hundred and fifty-four legal reference questions were asked within the eighty-six libraries where legal questions were asked in Phase 1. Three hundred and twenty-six questions were asked in the seventy-one libraries that had legal questions in Phase 2. The mean number of questions asked at the libraries that received questions dropped from 5.3 to 4.6 in Phase 2.

Table 31 provides an overview of data results related to legal reference questions in Phase 1 and 2.

Table 31. Comparison of the Question Data in Phase 1 and Phase 2*

Status	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Libraries where legal reference questions were asked	86 (64%)	71 (53%)
Number of legal questions asked	454	326
Number of patrons who asked legal questions	404	309
Average number of questions asked at libraries that received questions	5.3	4.6

* The Phase 1 data was recalculated to include only the Phase 2 libraries.

Table 32 shows the number of questions received by each library that received questions. Although this table shows some changes in the volume of questions received at some libraries, none of these changes were statistically significant.

Table 32. Volume of Questions by Individual Libraries in Phases 1 and 2

Volume of Questions	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
1 question	24 (28%)	25 (35%)
2 – 3 questions	27 (31%)	22 (31%)
4 – 6 questions	12 (14%)	10 (14%)
7 – 10 questions	14 (16%)	8 (11%)
11 – 15 questions	5 (6%)	1 (1%)
16 or more questions	4 (5%)	5 (7%)
TOTAL	86 (100%)	71 (99%)

Extrapolating for the averages of question volume in Phases 1 and 2 of the survey, we estimate that library staff in BC received at least 35,000-40,000 legal reference questions each year. This does not include legal reference issues that library patrons research on their own.

6.9 TOPIC AREAS OF LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

6.9.1 Legal Areas Addressed by Questions

Although civil (non-family) questions predominate in both phases, there was a rise in the volume of questions in the family/child area in Phase 2. This change was statistically significant.

Table 33. Broad Areas Addressed by Legal Reference Questions

Broad Topic Areas	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Family and Civil Law	42 (9%)	60 (19%)
Criminal Law	10 (2%)	13 (4%)
Civil, Non-Family	402 (89%)	253 (78%)
TOTAL	454 (100%)	326 (101%)

Findings from both phases of the survey indicate that library patrons ask legal reference questions on a wide variety of topic areas and that topic areas are continually expanding. Although the Legal Reference Survey form listed over forty legal topic categories, many of these involved multiple “sub-topics.” (e.g. real estate, property, building codes OR ICBC/car insurance, motor vehicle traffic tickets.)

There were some shifts in the question patterns from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and new topic areas emerged, grew or lessened in emphasis. These results underscore the fact that providing legal reference information at public libraries involves a changing and expanding landscape.

Phase 1 results indicated that the following legal topics were most frequently addressed by patron questions:

- Questions related to real estate, property and building codes;
- Questions related to landlord/tenant;
- Refugee/immigration;
- Wills and estates.

Areas of the law that resulted in fewer questions in Phase 1 were those related to victims of crime, disabilities and mental health or issues related to human rights and discrimination. There were also relatively few questions related to bankruptcy and foreclosures. In Phase 1, there was also a substantial number of questions where the topic area of the question was not defined.

In Phase 2 a number of additions were made to the topic list to further define and add new topic areas and to reduce the number of uncategorized answers. In Phase 2 the most common types of questions asked by patrons were related to:

- Separation, divorce and property division;
- Real estate, property, building codes;
- Wills, estates, estate planning;
- Housing and landlord tenant issues, strata title and neighbours.

There were far fewer questions that were undefined or categorized in the “general” category in Phase 2. Of the eighteen questions in the “general” category in Phase 2, 61% (11/18) had no legal topic described; 6% (1/18) involved information on commercial issues; 6% (1/18) involved Power of Attorney and 28% (5/18) involved questions about how to contact justice organizations or legal professionals such as Notaries.

Table 34. Specific Topic Areas Addressed by Legal Reference Questions

Legal Question Topic Area	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1 (N = 454)	Phase 2 (N = 326)
Family & Children	42 (9%)	60 (19%)
1. Adoption	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
2. Change of name	2 (0%)	0 (0%)
3. Child custody, access or protection	3 (1%)	10 (3%)
4. Children's rights	2 (0%)	2 (1%)
5. Child support, spousal support	13 (3%)	9 (3%)
6. Separation, divorce, property division	20 (4%)	38 (12%)
7. General family law	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
Criminal Law	10 (2%)	13 (4%)
8. Criminal Law (including impaired driving and assault)	9 (2%)	11 (3%)
9. Victims of crime / compensation	1 (0%)	2 (1%)
Civil Law Matters	402 (89%)	253 (78%)
10. Aboriginal matters	9 (2%)	7 (2%)
11. Business law / incorporation / commercial cases	16 (4%)	14 (4%)
12. Constitutional law issues	4 (1%)	3 (1%)
13. Consumer rights / product safety	6 (1%)	9 (3%)
14. Copyright, patents, intellectual property	6 (1%)	8 (2%)
15. Debt, bankruptcy, foreclosures	7 (2%)	4 (1%)
16. Disability issues	1 (0%)	2 (1%)
17. Elder abuse	Not recorded	3 (1%)
18. Employment / Worker's Compensation	22 (5%)	7 (2%)
19. Environment	4 (1%)	2 (1%)
20. Freedom of Information / privacy	1 (0%)	6 (2%)
21. Housing issues / landlord-tenant, strata title, neighbour issues	41 (9%)	21 (6%)
22. Human rights, discrimination	4 (1%)	5 (2%)
23. ICBC / car insurance / motor vehicle, traffic tickets	14 (3%)	12 (4%)
24. Immigration / refugee	37 (8%)	14 (4%)
25. Income assistance / welfare	8 (2%)	5 (2%)
26. Hospital treatment or release / medical issues	Not recorded	5 (2%)
27. Mental health issues	2 (0%)	3 (1%)
28. Municipal by-laws	Not recorded	6 (2%)
29. Natural resources (forestry, fishing)	Not recorded	3 (1%)
30. Pensions / old age / disability / trustee	5 (1%)	3 (1%)
31. Personal injury	6 (1%)	1 (0%)
32. Police complaints	Not recorded	0 (0%)
33. Property assessment	Not recorded	15 (5%)
34. Real estate, property, building codes	61 (13%)	31 (10%)
35. Small Claims	10 (2%)	2 (1%)
36. Society Act	2 (0%)	4 (1%)
37. Tax Law	8 (2%)	7 (2%)
38. Wills / estate / estate planning	41 (9%)	25 (8%)
39. Insurance liability	Not recorded	1 (0%)
40. Travel documents and rights	Not recorded	2 (1%)
41. Provincial Laws/Acts (e.g. School Act)	Not recorded	4 (1%)
42. Grandparent rights	Not recorded	1 (0%)
43. Other legal areas / general	87 (19%)	18 (6%)

6.10 PRINT AND ONLINE RESOURCES USED BY LIBRARY STAFF TO ADDRESS LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

6.10.1 Description of Legal Reference Resources

One of the primary objectives of LawMatters has been to provide core funding, based on library size, to help libraries enhance, update or expand their print and online core legal reference materials in order to better assist patrons with their questions. LawMatters also provides three types of training that provides library staff with information about print and online legal reference resources that can assist in addressing patron questions.

This section reports on the type and level of print and online resources used by library staff to help answer patron questions.

6.10.2 Degree to which Legal Reference Resources are Used by Library Staff

In Phase 1, 95% of the libraries and, in Phase 2, (90%) of the libraries used print and online resources to address patron questions. In total, print and online resources were used 513 times in Phase 1 and 326 times in Phase 2.

Table 35. Use of Legal Reference Materials and Resources in Phase 1 and 2

Use of Legal Reference Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Used legal reference resources	82 (95%)	64 (90%)
Did not use legal reference resources	4 (5%)	7 (10%)
TOTAL	86 (100%)	71 (100%)

In both phases, print resources were used more frequently by library staff than online resources although there was a slight rise in the proportion of use of online resources in Phase 2.

Table 36. Comparative Use of Print and Online Resources: Phase 1 and 2

Frequency of Use of Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Print resources	313 (61%)	130 (55%)
Online resources	200 (39%)	146 (45%)
Number of times resources used	513 (100%)	326 (100%)

In Phase 1 the following types of resources were used most frequently to address patron questions:

- BC Statutes and Regulations;
- Self Counsel Press materials;
- Other print resources;
- Government websites;
- Other online resources (unspecified).

In Phase 2 the following materials and resources were used most frequently:

- Self Counsel Press materials;
- Legal information booklets and brochures;
- Legal textbooks;
- Government websites.

There was a rise in the use of legal textbooks in Phase 2 and in the use of legal information booklets and brochures. Resources such as Clicklaw were also noted in Phase 2 (this resource was launched in 2009). The use of most types of materials remained stable in both phases.

Table 37. Number of Times Resources Were Used to Address Legal Reference Questions

Legal Reference Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1 N = 513	Phase 2 N = 326
Print Materials	313 (61%)	180 (55%)
Self Counsel Press	77 (15%)	48 (15%)
BC Statutes and Regulations	43 (8%)	19 (6%)
Legal information booklets & brochures	22 (4%)	28 (9%)
Legal information manuals	21 (4%)	3 (1%)
Federal Statutes and Regulations	19 (4%)	4 (1%)
Annotated Acts (e.g. Criminal Code)	15 (3%)	16 (5%)
Legal textbooks	11 (2%)	34 (10%)
Legal dictionary	11 (2%)	2 (1%)
Continuing Legal Education Practice material	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
Other print resources (unspecified)	91 (18%)	26 (8%)
Online Resources	200 (39%)	146 (45%)
Government websites	84 (16%)	46 (14%)
QP LegalEze	27 (5%)	21 (6%)
Family Law in BC website	14 (3%)	6 (2%)
Electronic Law Library	11 (2%)	3 (1%)
Court websites	4 (1%)	5 (2%)
Courthouse Libraries BC	5 (1%)	6 (2%)
Clicklaw	Not recorded	17 (5%)
BC Laws website	Not recorded	12 (4%)
ProvNet	Not recorded	2 (1%)
Other online resources	55 (11%)	28 (9%)

6.10.3 Number of Types of Materials Used

Most libraries used multiple types of resources to address legal reference questions. However, the percentage of libraries using only one type of material increased in Phase 2 as did the percentage of libraries using five or more types of material. These changes in resource use trends were statistically significant.

Table 38. Number of Different Types of Resources Used to Address Patron Questions

Number of Types of Resources Used	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
One type	18 (22%)	25 (39%)
Two types	26 (32%)	9 (14%)
Three types	9 (11%)	8 (13%)
Four types	14 (17%)	5 (8%)
Five or more types	15 (18%)	17 (27%)
TOTAL	82 (100%)	64 (101%)

6.10.4 Number of Times Individual Libraries Used Specific Resources

Another way of looking at the use of legal reference resources is to consider the use *by library* rather than in relation to the total volume of questions. Data in Table 39 indicates that about half of the libraries used Self Counsel Press materials in both phases. There was a high use of government websites by libraries in Phase 1.

Table 39. Number of Libraries that Used Legal Reference Resources

Types of Legal Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1 – 82 Libraries	Phase 2 – 64 Libraries
Print Resources		
Self Counsel Press materials	46 (56%)	29 (45%)
BC Statutes and Regulations	21 (26%)	10 (16%)
Legal information booklets & brochures	11 (13%)	13 (20%)
Legal information manuals	12 (15%)	3 (5%)
Federal Statutes and Regulations	9 (11%)	4 (6%)
Annotated Acts (e.g. Criminal Code)	6 (7%)	7 (11%)
Legal textbooks	8 (10%)	10 (16%)
Legal dictionary	6 (7%)	2 (3%)
Continuing Legal Education practice manuals	2 (2%)	0 (0%)

Types of Legal Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1 – 82 Libraries	Phase 2 – 64 Libraries
Online Resources		
Government websites	42 (51%)	25 (39%)
QP LegalEze	15 (18%)	13 (20%)
Family Law in BC website	5 (6%)	5 (8%)
Electronic Law Library	7 (9%)	2 (3%)
Court websites	4 (5%)	4 (6%)
Courthouse Libraries BC	5 (6%)	4 (6%)
Clicklaw	Not recorded	12 (19%)
BC laws website	Not recorded	8 (13%)
ProvNet	Not recorded	2 (3%)
Other online resources	27 (33%)	21 (33%)

6.10.5 Library Characteristics Associated with the Scope of Resources Used

In Phase 1 larger libraries, libraries that were open more often than forty-five hours per week and libraries with a higher number of paid staff were more likely to use more legal reference resources and these findings were statistically significant.

The same variables were examined in Phase 2 along with whether libraries reported having one or more staff that had attended legal reference training provided by LawMatters. This analysis found that in Phase 2 there was only *one* variable associated with the use of a wider number of legal reference materials to address questions. This was whether libraries had staff that had received training from LawMatters. If a library had one or more trained staff then it was more likely to have used a wider scope of legal reference materials to address patron questions. This finding was statistically significant. The size of the library, number of opening hours, number of paid staff and whether the library had a professional librarian on staff were not associated with the number of resources libraries used.

Table 40. Scope of Legal Reference Materials Used and LawMatters Training

Received LawMatters Training	Number and Percentage Reporting		
	One Resource Used	Two – Three Resources Used	Four or More Resources Used
NO	11 (52%)	4 (31%)	1 (5%)
YES	10 (48%)	10 (69%)	20 (95%)
TOTAL	21 (100%)	14 (100%)	21 (100%)

6.11 REFERRAL OF LIBRARY PATRONS TO EXTERNAL SERVICES AND RESOURCES

6.11.1 Number of Libraries That Made External Referrals

In Phase 1, 41% of the libraries that received legal reference questions made a referral to an outside legal resource such as a government agency or community-based service. In Phase 2 this level of referral remained comparable; 38% of the libraries that received questions made referrals.

Table 41. Number of Libraries Making Referrals to External Resources and Services *

Did Libraries Make an External Referral?	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
YES	35 (41%)	27 (38%)
NO	51 (59%)	44 (62%)
TOTAL	86 (100%)	71 (100%)

* Involved only those libraries that received legal reference questions.

There were no library characteristics associated with whether or not libraries made referrals to outside resources or agencies, including whether or not a staff member received LawMatters Legal Reference Training.

6.11.2 Types of External Services Recommended by Library Staff

In Phase 1, almost 60% of the libraries that made referrals did so to a government organization. In Phase 2, referrals to community services and organizations were more frequently made.

Table 42. Types of External Resources Recommended

Types of External Resources	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Phase 1 / N = 35	Phase 2 / N = 27
Lawyers	5 (14%)	5 (19%)
Legal Aid or Pro Bono Clinic	6 (17%)	10 (37%)
Government office or MLA	20 (57%)	8 (30%)
Community-based service or organization	6 (17%)	16 (59%)
Other library branch	2 (6%)	5 (19%)
No data / not specified	11 (31%)	—
Court	1 (3%)	1 (4%)
Notary	—	1 (4%)

6.12 IMPACT OF LEGAL REFERENCE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

6.12.1 Description of Promotional Activities

One of the objectives of the second phase of the Legal Reference Survey was to assess whether and to what degree LawMatters' assistance to libraries to help them promote their legal reference materials in 2009 had led to an increase in the number of legal reference questions in Phase 2.

Most of these promotional activities were somewhat limited and of short duration. They consisted of the distribution of posters, bookmarks and notepads to libraries in a one week period (in April 2009) and the provision of ongoing advice and support. Further promotional assistance for the libraries is being planned for 2010.

LawMatters also undertook two community forums that provided legal reference resource information to service and legal providers in the community. The two libraries that were involved in the community forums also participated in the Legal Reference Survey. One of the objectives of the community forums was to support the use of libraries as sources of legal reference information and to inform service providers in the community about these resources.

Public libraries also conduct their own promotional activities. These consist of book displays, community events or other activities which publicize library collections.

6.12.2 Degree to Which Libraries Promote Their Legal Reference Material

Just over half of the libraries participating in the second phase of the survey said that they had specifically promoted their legal reference materials to the public through book displays, outreach or other activities in the past year. In 41% of the libraries no promotional activities took place, suggesting that, in these libraries, the support provided by LawMatters was not considered as part of these promotional activities.

Table 43. Degree to Which Libraries Promote Their Legal Information Resources

Did Library Promote Legal Reference Materials?	Number and Percentage Reporting
NO	56 (41%)
YES	69 (51%)
Uncertain	10 (7%)
TOTAL	135 (99%)

6.12.3 Characteristics of Libraries that Promote Legal Reference Materials

Libraries located in smaller communities were more likely to have promoted their legal reference materials and this finding was statistically significant. The reason for this result could not be established.

Table 44. Promotional Activities and Library Community Size

Community Size	Number and Percentage Reporting	
	Did Not Promote	Promoted Materials
Very small or small communities (under 10,000 people)	22 (39%)	44 (64%)
Mid-sized communities (10,000 to under 50,000)	11 (20%)	10 (14%)
Large to very large communities (50,000 and over)	23 (41%)	15 (22%)
TOTAL	56 (100%)	69 (100%)

There was no association between whether or not a library had promoted their legal reference materials and the library's extent of opening hours, level of staff, whether there was a professional librarian on staff, or whether staff had attended LawMatters training.

6.12.4 Do Libraries that Carry Out Promotional Activities Receive More Legal Reference Questions from Patrons?

Phase 2 findings suggest that promotional activities appear to have had limited impact on whether or not libraries received legal reference questions. We do not feel that promotional activities, in general and those supported by LawMatters, are sufficiently intensive or sustained enough to result in an observable impact on the level of legal reference questions asked by library patrons.

There is also no evidence that the holding of forums in two communities resulted in an increased number of legal reference questions at the libraries in these communities. One of these libraries received no questions in either phase of the survey and the other received a comparable number of questions in Phases 1 and 2. As noted previously in this report, two libraries is an insufficient sample size with which to measure the impact of community forums on promotional activities.

To effectively measure the impact of promotional activities, it is suggested that 3-4 types of clearly defined, more intensive methods (including community forums) be implemented at small clusters of libraries over the next year and that these libraries be assessed 6-8 months later to determine whether the volume of legal reference questions has increased.

7.0 KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 KEY CONCLUSIONS

The following constitute the key conclusions arising from the report. They are summarized by theme.

TRAINING

- One of the primary objectives of LawMatters has been to increase the legal reference skills of public library staff and the capacity of libraries to address the legal reference questions of patrons. Training outreach has been extensive. Twenty-eight training workshops or webinars have been provided to 407 library staff located in all regions of the province between late 2007 and late 2009.
- LawMatters training is positively assessed by almost all participants. Aspects that are seen as particularly valuable are the overview provided of print and online resources and the quality of the facilitation. Participants are very positive about the practice questions which allow them to practice legal reference search strategies. They also appreciate specific information about online resources. Many felt that the Introductory Training was not long enough. In another study, participant satisfaction was shown to drop when the Introductory Training was less than three hours in length. A minimum of 3-4 hours is optimal although many participants would like to see day-long training. The time available for library staff to participate in training is beyond the control of LawMatters.
- There is statistical evidence that the confidence levels of library staff in terms of addressing legal reference questions are dramatically improved after participating in training provided by LawMatters. These impacts appear to be long lasting.
- There is interest in having further, more advanced or refresher-type training and more exposure to online resources.

VOLUME OF LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- The proportion of libraries that received legal reference questions in the one-week survey period dropped from 64% to 53% in Phase 2. This decrease was not statistically significant and may reflect a normal annual variation. Comparative results showed that 44% of the libraries received questions in both phases, 28% received no questions in either phase and 27% received questions in only one phase.
- A seven-day period is a limited period of time to allow for smaller libraries with more limited opening hours to be asked legal reference questions. For this and other reasons it is difficult to estimate the volume of legal reference questions that may be asked at all libraries over a one-year period. We estimate that approximately 35,000-40,000 legal reference questions are asked in public libraries each year. This does not include legal reference questions that patrons research without the assistance of library staff.
- There is some indication that some library staff did not consider certain types of questions as being legal in nature even though a detailed list of topics was included on the survey form. For this reason it is likely that the number of legal reference questions recorded for the survey is an under-estimate of all the questions asked at all public libraries.
- When all factors were considered, structural factors, such as the size of the library and extent of opening hours had the greatest impact on whether libraries received legal reference questions in both phases. Whether staff had attended LawMatters training or whether libraries had a professional librarian on staff were less significant factors. LawMatters training is unlikely to be associated with the *volume* of questions directed to staff but with the quality of information provided to patrons. This issue was not addressed in the research.

LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTION TOPICS

- Although civil (non-family) questions predominated in both phases of the Legal Reference Survey, there were more questions related to family law in Phase 2. Other commonly asked questions were in the areas of real estate, property, building codes, wills and estates, housing, landlord tenant, strata title and neighbours. Most question topic areas remained stable in both phases.
- Questions covered over forty separate topic areas indicating that legal reference questions are very broad in scope and continually expanding.

USE OF LEGAL REFERENCE RESOURCES BY LIBRARY STAFF

- Legal reference materials in the library were very frequently used by staff to address legal reference questions. Ninety-five percent of the libraries in Phase 1 and 90% in Phase 2 used these resources.
- Print resources were more frequently used than online resources to address patron questions.
- Self Counsel Press resources and government websites were the most frequently used resources in both phases.
- Most libraries used more than one type of material to address questions. There was, however, a decreased use of multiple types of resources in Phase 2.
- LawMatters training appears to be associated with the increased use of legal resources at the libraries. Libraries that used more types of legal reference materials were more likely to have staff that had received some type of LawMatters training.

REFERRALS TO EXTERNAL SERVICES

- About 40% of the libraries that received legal reference questions also referred patrons to external resources and services.
- Government offices/MLAs were the most frequent referrals in Phase 1 and community-based services were most frequent in Phase 2.
- Whether or not library staff referred patrons to legal resources outside the library did not appear to be associated with whether library staff had attended LawMatters training.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- LawMatters provided a limited degree of promotional information and support to libraries in April 2009 and also conducted more intensive forums in two communities which helped educate service providers about library resources and services. Libraries also conducted their own promotional activities such as book displays.
- Despite these activities, 40% of the libraries reported that they did not promote their legal reference collections in the past year.
- There was no evidence that libraries that promoted their legal reference collections received more legal reference questions although the level of promotional activities was too limited to accurately measure.
- There was also no evidence that the community forums resulted in more legal reference questions being directed towards the libraries although, again, the number of community forums was too small to determine accurate outcomes.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Eight recommendations, in two areas, are included in this report.

TRAINING

It is recommended that:

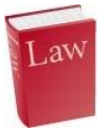
9. A small pilot project be undertaken by LawMatters to develop advance or refresher training for librarians who wish or require it. The training could use a workshop or online format.
10. The LawMatters Introductory Training be continued in 2010 with a minimum time for training, whenever possible, of 4-5 hours.
11. Further handouts be developed for the Introductory Training including a fact sheet on “what is a legal question” and templates or flowcharts illustrating ways of conducting different types of searches.
12. An online training course outside of QP LegalEze be considered in order to address the growing and specific interest in online legal reference resources. This course would be conducted online and provide an overview of significant online resources and how to use them.
13. All subsequent LawMatters training include a discussion of the topic areas included in legal reference questions in order to increase library staff understanding of the scope of this area.

PROMOTION OF LEGAL REFERENCE MATERIALS TO EXPAND LEGAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

It is recommended that:

14. LawMatters provide all libraries in BC with a simple fact sheet defining the scope and topic areas covered by legal reference questions so that the scope of this area is better understood.
15. A limited (20-25 respondent libraries) telephone survey be conducted with small and mid-sized libraries that received legal reference questions in both phases to determine “best practices” in terms of promotion of materials that seem to encourage legal reference questions from patrons. This “best practices” guide would be assembled and distributed to all libraries or through LawMatters training.
16. A set of distinctly different promotional strategies be implemented by LawMatters at small clusters of libraries in the next eight months to be followed up with a limited legal reference survey to determine whether the level of legal reference questions has increased. The size of the group would total no more than 30-40 libraries that were involved in the second phase of the Legal Reference Survey and would include small, mid-sized and large libraries that did and did not receive legal reference questions in both phases. Strategies could include community forums.

APPENDIX: SURVEY FORMS



LIBRARY PROFILE FORM

Please complete this form and fax it back with your completed Library Survey Form by January 31

FAX TO: FOCUS CONSULTANTS (250) 479-2961

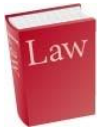
1. Name of your Library or Branch: _____
2. Location of your Library or Branch (city or town) _____
3. Staff Contact Name (in case we have follow-up questions) *Please Print*
_____/_____
4. Staff Contact e-mail: _____@_____ (please print clearly) First / Last
5. Number of hours your library or branch library is *usually* open from Monday morning to Sunday night.
 Under 15 hours per week
 From 16 – 25 hours per week
 From 26 – 35 hours per week
 From 36 – 45 hours per week
 Over 45 hours per week

6. Normally, how many full and part-time staff work at your library or library branch?

Type of Staff Person	Number Part-time	Number Full-time
Professional librarians		
Library technicians		
Community librarians		
Other paid staff		
Volunteers		

7. Have any of your library staff attended training provided by LawMatters? (e.g. Introductory Legal Reference Training workshops, QP LegalEze webinar, or the Legal Information Sources Online Course)
 NO
 Don't know/uncertain
 YES → If YES, when did they attend training?
 2008
 2009
 Don't know
8. In the past year has your library *specifically promoted* legal reference materials to the public, for example, through book displays, activities or outreach?
 NO YES Don't know

THANK YOU!



Please enter all legal reference questions asked by patrons during the week of January 18 – 24

Name of Your Library or Branch: _____

Staff Contact Name (print): _____ / _____ Staff

Phone

No:

(____) _____

- 1) How many library patrons asked legal reference or resource questions each day between January 18 and 24? Enter every question asked, even general resource questions. If one patron asks questions on several legal topics, enter each one separately.

7.3	Monday Jan 18	Tuesday 19th	Wednesday 20 th	Thursday 21 st	Friday 22 nd	Saturday 23 rd	Sunday 24 th	Total
Number of legal reference questions each day								

- 2) **What legal topic areas did patron questions address?** Check off the *specific legal topic areas*. If a question includes several topics, list each one. For topics not on this list see the top of Page 2.

LEGAL TOPIC AREAS OF QUESTIONS	NUMBER OF TIMES TOPIC AREAS ADDRESSED	TOTAL
FAMILY AND CHILD LAW		
Adoption		
Change of name		
Child custody, access or protection		
Children's rights		
Child support/spousal support		
Separation or divorce/property division		
CRIMINAL LAW		
Criminal law (including impaired driving, spousal assault)		
Victims of crime/compensation		
CIVIL AND POVERTY LAW		
Aboriginal issues		
Business law/incorporation		
Constitutional law issues		
Consumer rights/product safety		
Copyright/patents/intellectual property		
Debt/bankruptcy/foreclosures		
Disability issues		
Elder Abuse		
Employment /Worker's Compensation		
Environmental law		
Freedom of Information/privacy		
Housing issues/ landlord/tenant, strata title/neighbours		
Human rights/discrimination		
ICBC/car insurance/motor vehicle/traffic tickets		
Immigration/refugee		
Income assistance/welfare		
Hospital treatment or release/medical issues		
Mental health issues		
Municipal Bylaws		

LEGAL TOPIC AREAS OF QUESTIONS	NUMBER OF TIMES TOPIC AREAS ADDRESSED	TOTAL
Natural resources (forestry, fisheries)		
Pensions (old age, disability)		
Personal injury		
Police Complaints		
Property assessment		
Real estate/property/building codes		
Small Claims Court		
Society Act		
Tax Law		
Wills/estate/estate planning		
If patron questions addressed legal topic areas law <u>not</u> in the list above, the new topics and the number of questions here ▼		
New topic (name):		
New topic (name):		
New topic (name):		

- 3) Please identify all of the specific materials and resources you used to answer the legal reference questions of patrons. If more than one resource was used, please enter all of them. where possible, avoid using the *other* category.

LEGAL REFERENCE SOURCES and MATERIALS	NUMBER OF TIMES USED	Total
PRINT RESOURCES		
BC Statutes or Regulations (e.g. looseleaf volumes)		
Federal statutes or Regulations		
Legal text books (e.g. Canadian Family Law)		
Self Counsel Press Materials		
Annotated Acts (e.g. Criminal Code, BC Residential Tenancy Act)		
Legal Information Manuals (e.g. LSLAP)		
Legal Information Booklets and Brochures		
Continuing Legal Education Practice Materials		
Legal Dictionary		
7.4 OTHER PRINT RESOURCES (E.G. EVERY CANADIAN'S GUIDE TO THE LAW)		
ONLINE RESOURCES		
QP LegalEze		
Court websites (e.g. Supreme and Small Claims Court)		
Government websites		
Electronic Law Library		
Family Law in BC website		
Courthouse Libraries BC Website		
ClickLaw		
BC Laws Website		
PovNet		
Other online resources/websites		

4) **If you referred the patron to a legal service or organization outside the library, what services were suggested? More than one referral can be noted for each patron. Please be specific in terms of the referrals you made and add new types of organizations not already on this list**

TYPES OF REFERRALS MADE	NUMBER OF PATRONS WHO RECEIVED THIS REFERRAL	Total
To a lawyer		
To Legal Aid or a free legal clinic		
To a government office		
To a community organization		
Other resource not listed above (describe here):		
Other resource not listed above (describe here):		
Other resource not listed above (describe here):		
Other resource not listed above (describe here):		

PLEASE FAX THE COMPLETED FORM TO (250) 479-2961 immediately after the survey ends on Sunday, January 24. Thank you!!!!