



# Impact of Pandemic on WSBA Members

## 1.0 About the Survey

### 1.1 Why the Survey Was Conducted

The External Washington State Bar Association Coronavirus Response Task Force (ECRTF) and the Internal Coronavirus Response Task Force (ICRT) were created in the Spring of 2020 to help the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) better support its members and the public during the pandemic. Since its formation, the Task Forces have worked together to advise WSBA on matters including electronic notarization, additional continuing legal education programs, and safely reopening law offices.

In continuation of this effort, the Task Forces issued a survey designed to assess the impact of the pandemic on the legal community. The information will be used in the aggregate to help inform WSBA's general planning and discussions. The WSBA may explore areas of organizational focus based upon the findings of the survey.

### 1.2 How the Survey Was Conducted

The ICRT and ECRTF designed a survey consisting of nine questions with pre-populated answers, and two open-ended questions to collect data on the impact of the pandemic on survey respondents. The questions collected data about both business operations, and interactions with clients and the courts during the pandemic. In addition, 10 questions collected demographic data about the survey respondents.

### 1.3 Potential Survey Participants and Respondents

The survey was sent to all active members of the WSBA. The ICRT and ECRTF worked with the WSBA Communication's Staff and the WSBA Sections to get word out to WSBA members to encourage their participation.

The survey was sent out at the beginning of November, and people took the survey throughout the month of November. 616 people responded, which represents approximately 1.5% of the total membership.

Preliminary review of the survey responses shows that even with this response rate, the respondents appear to represent the WSBA membership, in there were responses from most counties, member types, firm sizes, and minority bar membership.





## 2.0 Initial Findings

An analysis of the main questions of the survey are below (please note rounding errors may create totals of more or less than 100% in this summary).

### 2.1 Effect on Business Volume

Approximately 45% of respondents have seen a decrease in their business volume, while almost an equal number have seen business stay the same (22%) or increase (23%). Approximately 11% said the question did not apply to their situation.

### 2.2 Effect on Income

Approximately 48% of respondents have seen a decrease in income, 41% have seen income remain the same, and 12% have seen an increase in income.

### 2.3 Ease of Getting Information About Courts

Generally, 36% of respondents are finding it easy to find information about the hearings, trials, or court operations where they regularly practice, while 31% have found it difficult.

### 2.4 Considering Professional Changes

Generally, the largest number of respondents are not planning to change their practice because of the pandemic (44%), while 16% of respondents are planning to leave the profession and 15% are planning to reduce workload or number of clients.

### 2.5 Changes Caused by Pandemic That Should Continue (Post-pandemic)

Online CLEs were popular (76% of respondents want to see them continue post pandemic), while 73% want to continue to work from home. Using electronic signatures on documents, was equally popular (71%).

### 2.6 Most Frequently Used Remote or Online Communication Solutions

Telephone was the most popular remote or online communication solution, followed by Zoom, although many respondents suggested a solution not included in the pre-populated answers.

### 2.7 Preferred Remote or Online Communication Solutions

Most respondents preferred remote or online communication solution was Zoom (47%), telephone (27%), and Teams (9%).

### 2.8 Ways WSBA Could Support Members During Pandemic

Strong responses for WSBA support include job search support, mental health and well-being resources, and best practices for working with clients in a pandemic. All pre-populated answers were selected among all of the respondents, and as this was a ranking question.





### **2.9 Highest Impact Factors on Ability to Provide Legal Services**

The survey results show respondents are feeling isolated staying and working from home and are concerned about the lack of good and secure technology to support working from home, and having a private workspace to work remotely.

### **2.10 Biggest Challenges Faced During Pandemic**

This was an open-ended question and the following is a general analysis of the comments by respondents:

- **37%** identified challenges related to their practice including: decreases in business and income, appearing at in-person meetings, technology issues, and decreased productivity.
- **10%** identified lack of social and professional networking and isolation as a challenge.
- **9%** identified challenges associated with working from home such as less collaboration with colleagues, inadequate workspace and lack of work life balance.
- **8%** responded that health issues related to burnout, isolation and stress/anxiety were challenges.
- **7%** identified challenges with issues related to family, such as homeschooling and childcare.

### **2.11 Biggest Advantage Because of Pandemic Changes**

This was an open-ended question and the following is a general analysis of the comments by respondents:

- **38%** identified the ability to work remotely from home as an advantage.
- **24%** responded that virtual meetings, hearing and CLEs were an advantage.
- **17%** identified advantages to their practice which included increased productivity, flexible schedule and ability to implement new technology.
- **3%** noted an increase in court efficiency.
- **2.5%** noted an increase in business.

## **3.0 How Task Forces Are Using the Recommendations**

Both the ICRT and ECRTS are continuing to review the data, but continuing the actions already taken, such as continuing to provide CLEs, in particular CLEs that guide operating during a pandemic will be appreciated and valued by the membership. In addition, it may be necessary to think about how to keep members connected with each other and the courts as the pandemic continues, and address mental health and well-being of the members and their families.



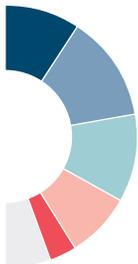


# Impacts Felt by WSBA Members

## ABOUT THE NOVEMBER 2020 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

After taking initial actions to support WSBA members during the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVID-19 Internal task force (CITF) and External task force (CETF) wanted to learn how best to continue supporting members. After reviewing the survey data, the CITF and CETF recommended continuing actions already taken—such as providing relevant CLEs—and planning ways to keep members connected with each other and the courts as the pandemic continues.

### START



**Q. Since Gov. Inslee's first "Stay Home — Stay Healthy" proclamation in March 2020, choose the statement that best describes any change in your business volume:**

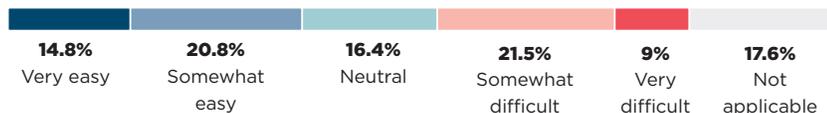
- 18.6% Has substantially decreased
- 26.1% Has somewhat decreased
- 21.8% Has stayed the same
- 15.9% Has somewhat increased
- 7% Has substantially increased
- 10.6% Not applicable



**Q. Since the first "Stay Home — Stay Healthy" proclamation, choose the statement that best describes any change in your income:**

- 21.9% Has substantially decreased
- 25.7% Has somewhat decreased
- 40.7% Has stayed the same
- 8.8% Has somewhat increased
- 2.9% Has substantially increased

**Q. During the pandemic, how easy is it for you to get information about hearings, trials, or court operations where you regularly practice?**



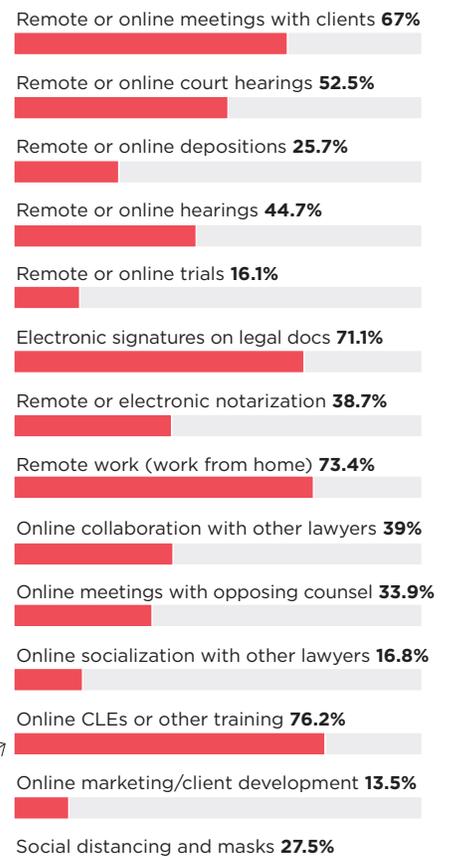
**Q. As a result of the pandemic, I am considering the following professional changes: (Select all that apply)**



**44%**

of respondents would not make any professional changes.

**Q. What changes to your practice brought on by the pandemic would you like to continue in the future: (Select all that apply)**



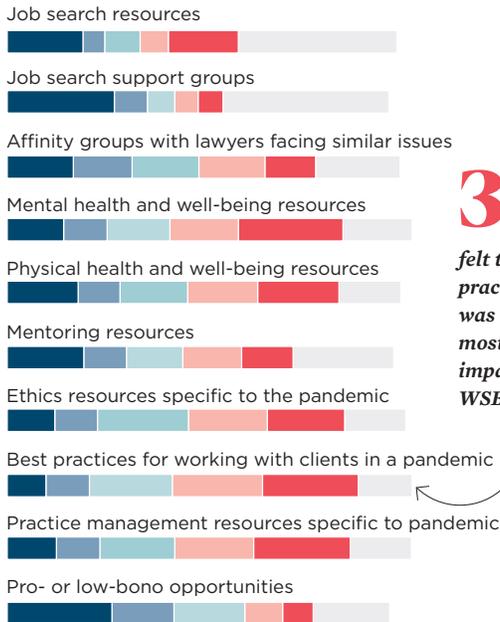
**76%**

would like to see online CLEs continue in the future.



**Q. Rate the following ways in which the WSBA could support you (and/or your practice) as the pandemic continues:**  
(1 is least impactful, 5 is most impactful)

● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● N/A

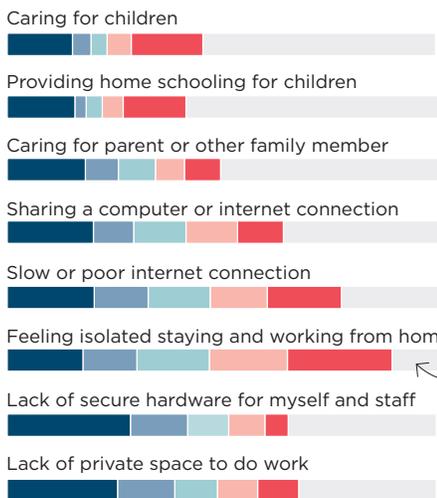


**37%**

*felt that best practices advice was the most/somewhat impactful WSBA support.*

**Q. Rate the impact of the following factors on your ability to provide legal services during the pandemic?:**  
(1 is least impactful, 5 is most impactful)

● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● N/A



**41%**

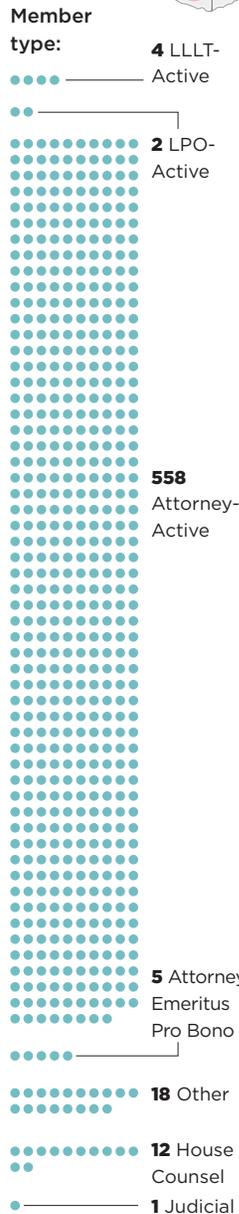
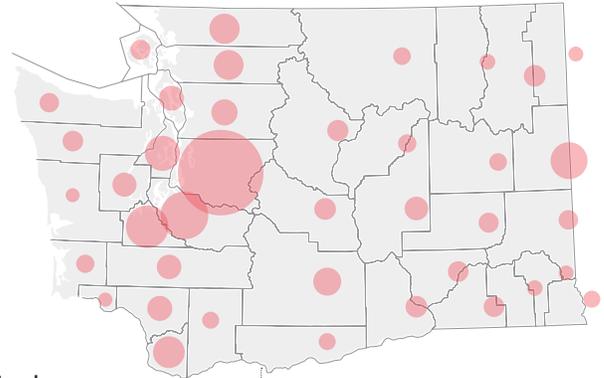
*said that feeling isolated was the most/somewhat impactful factor.*

When asked to choose one remote or online solution to communicate with courts, clients, and other attorneys during the pandemic, 47% of respondents said Zoom (followed by phone at 27%).

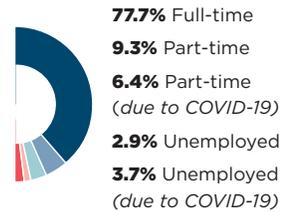


**SURVEY PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

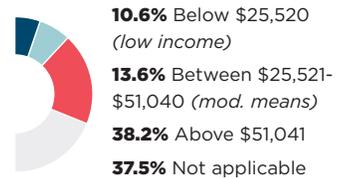
Where respondents practice in the state:



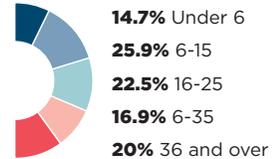
**Current employment status:**



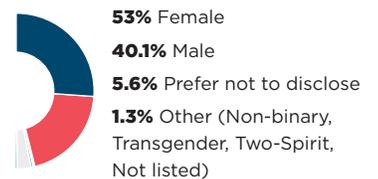
If you work with individual clients, please select the annual income group that best applies to most of your clients:



**Years licensed:**



**Gender identity:**



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