



Research Snapshot

Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information Data Collection **Pilot Project 2.0**

What is this about?

The Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information Project (SALI) increases access to legal information for Saskatchewan residents by providing library staff (the respondents) with the skills necessary to find legal information. The SALI Data Collection Pilot Project 2.0 examined the types of legal questions staff are presented with and whether staff have the tools to adequately assist patrons in these requests.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers examined the instances and types of legal-related questions that library staff across Saskatchewan have encountered. Four surveys were administered to inform the study. The first survey looked at library demographics, including: library name, location, hours of operation, total population served, in-person visits per day, print size collection and circulation of law-related materials. The second survey asked library staff about their experience with SALI and how comfortable they felt assisting clients with legal requests. The third survey asked specific information about the date they received the legal question, the time spent on the request and the legal topic the request would fall under. The final survey provided a circulation sheet, which asked for the tally of all law-related materials circulated at each library branch.

What did the researchers find?

The first survey collected data on library demographics, with most responses coming from the West Central area of Saskatchewan. The survey found:

- Hours of operation of respondents' branch ranged from 72 to 810 hours over three months;
- The number of hours worked over three months ranged from 4 to 700;
- The number of visitors per day ranged from 4 to 348;
- Print size ranged from 3,561 to 380,424; and
- Two respondents reported the circulation of law-related materials as 14 circulations and 23 circulations, respectively.

What do you need to know?

Researchers utilized four separate questionnaires to gain an understanding on the first phases of the Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information project from multiple data points.

How can you use this?

This study is helpful in informing what types of legal-related questions are most prevalent within Saskatchewan libraries. It is also useful to know the types of legal information that can be found within the library circulation and whether library staff have the tools necessary to assist in legal-related queries.

The second survey collected data on librarian's experience with SALI and law-related questions from patrons:

- Most respondents were librarians or library service associates;
- 30% of respondents had received a law-related question;
- Half of respondents felt neither comfortable nor uncomfortable with responding to legal-related questions;
- Out of 13 respondents who received legal questions during the project, 69% were somewhat to very comfortable responding to the questions;
- Over 50% of respondents indicated they did not have an issue deciding if a query had a legal component or knowing what type of law it was related to;
- 23% of respondents were most likely to refer a patron to library books or materials, 19% were likely to refer them to a community organization and 14% were likely to refer them to a government organization;
- In terms of answering what would make them more confident in responding to legal queries, respondents requested more training on where they should refer patrons to (65%), online reference materials for patrons (42%) and training about identifying legal issues (40%).

The third survey asked specific questions related to the legal query and found:

- Most library staff spent fifteen minutes or less on each law-related request;
- Legal topics generally involved criminal law (25%), government agency (25%), power of attorney (17%) or other family law related topics (17%).

The fourth survey considered the law-related materials circulated in Saskatchewan and found that the Francis Morrison Central Library (FMCL) hosts the largest law-related collection in the province.

About the researchers:

CREATE Justice is a centre for research, evaluation and action on the topic of access to justice in the areas of access to legal services, dispute resolution, and systemic justice. CREATE Justice was established at the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan in 2016.

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) is a network of nine research laboratories, which assists faculty, staff and students undertaking research in the social sciences by providing access to research infrastructure and research space and providing access to research supports in specific social science research methodologies.

Citation:

[SSRL, Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information Data Collection Pilot Project 2.0 \(May 2019\) \[unpublished, archived at University of Saskatchewan\].](#)

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