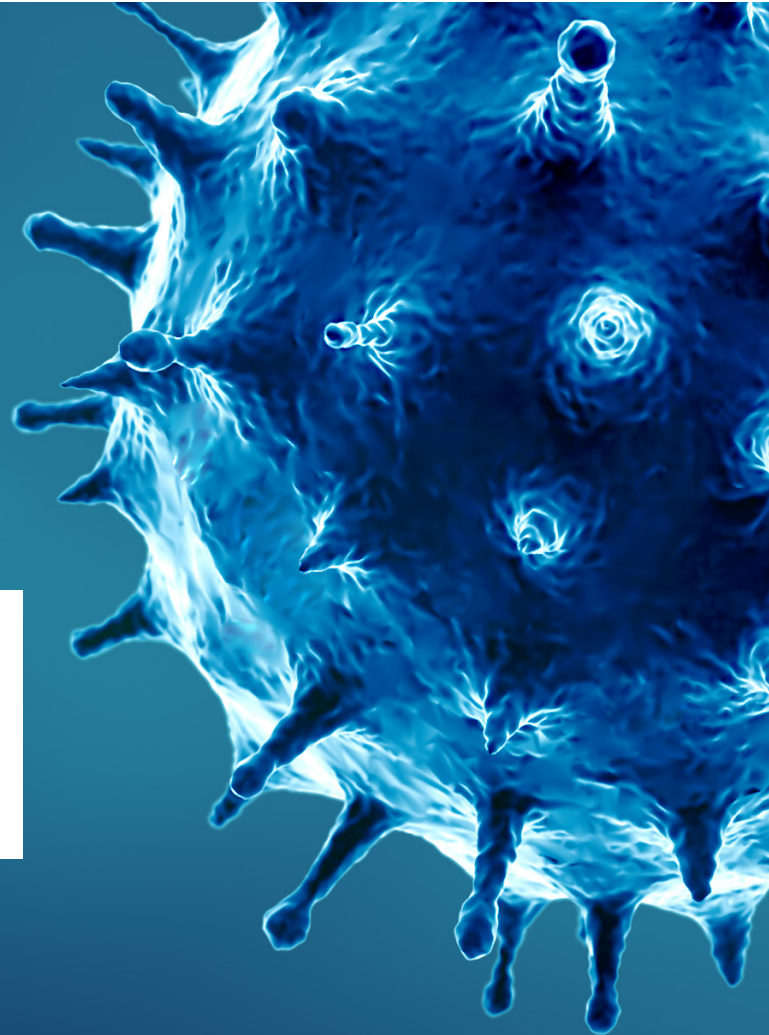


# COVID-19 Impact Report



## HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING LEGAL PRACTICE IN CANADA

LexisNexis Canada conducted research to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting legal professionals in Canada.

Legal professionals from across the country were invited to participate in a confidential survey. The survey was conducted during the months of June and July – a period where Canada confirmed over 25,000 new COVID-19 cases and experienced record unemployment rates between 10.9%-12.3%.

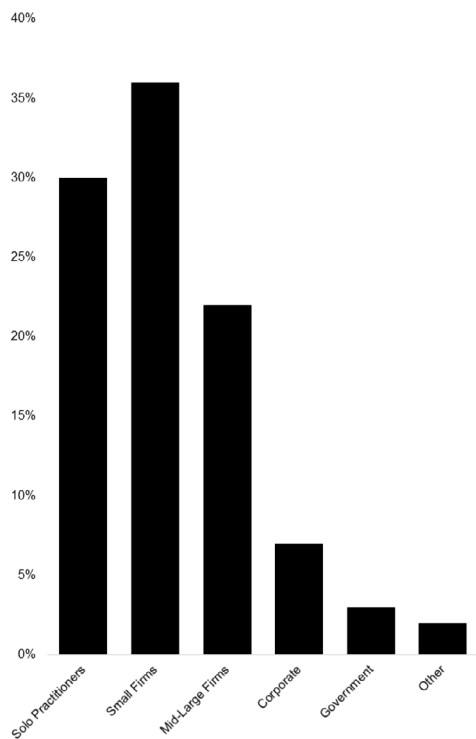
The results detail the significant and widespread effects the pandemic is having on the legal profession in Canada.



**The survey was open to all legal professionals in Canada and was hosted on the LexisNexis Canada website.**



## Survey Basics



# 400+

### RESPONSES ANALYZED

Over 400 legal professionals across Canada were surveyed.

# 22%

### CALLED TO THE BAR AFTER 2016

Respondents had a wide range of experience working as legal professionals in Canada, with 20% called to the bar before 1990, and 22% after 2016.

# 2 MONTHS

### SURVEY RESPONSES WERE COLLECTED IN JUNE & JULY 2020

Insights reflect the sentiment and outlook between June and July, 2020. During this time frame, Canada confirmed more than 25,000 new cases of COVID-19, while worldwide cases surged with the United States, Brazil and India seeing the highest numbers of confirmed cases globally.





**67%**

of legal professionals surveyed expect to see, or are currently experiencing changes to their practice due to COVID-19.





## Economic Impacts

Canada experienced record unemployment levels in May 2020, which has had a profound impact on nearly every industry across the nation.

Despite stimulus packages, the rapid adoption of technologies, and work from home solutions, the majority of legal practitioners are experiencing less business and stability than before the pandemic started.

**Q: How has COVID-19 impacted your practice?**







## Most Impacted Area of Practice

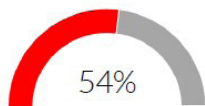
A direct result of the economic impacts of the pandemic, accompanying lockdowns and court closures, civil litigation, family law and employment law are expected to be the most severely impacted areas of practice in Canada.

**Proportion of legal professionals who think there will be extensive changes to the following areas of practice after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides in Canada.**

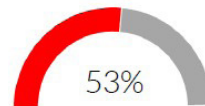
CIVIL LITIGATION



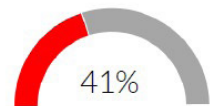
FAMILY



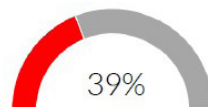
EMPLOYMENT



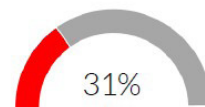
REAL ESTATE



INSURANCE



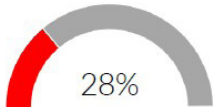
FINANCE



INSOLVENCY



CORPORATE



Sample Size: 404  
Top-3-box on 7 point scale



“It is now common knowledge among lawyers who frequent court, that the court system has been irreversibly changed as a result of COVID-19 closures; in-turn the digitization that has been prompted by their re-opening has propelled the courts into the twenty-first century.

Likewise, the backlog of cases that needs to be addressed may prompt courtroom advocates to supplement their practices with more solicitor-based work.”

**TIMON SISIC**

Lawyer and Practice Area Consultant,  
LexisNexis Canada



**89%**

of legal professionals surveyed believe COVID-19 will lead to long-term changes to legal practices in Canada.







## Pre-Pandemic Area of Practice

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, 32% of respondents worked at firms specialized in a single area of practice. The expected economic downturn has forced many to adapt and diversify their practice by expanding their area of focus or shifting their practice entirely.

The most prominent area of practice among respondents was family law, with 17% declaring it as their primary area of practice. Other prominent areas included civil litigation, real estate and criminal law.

**Q: Before COVID-19, did your firm practice in more than one area of practice?**



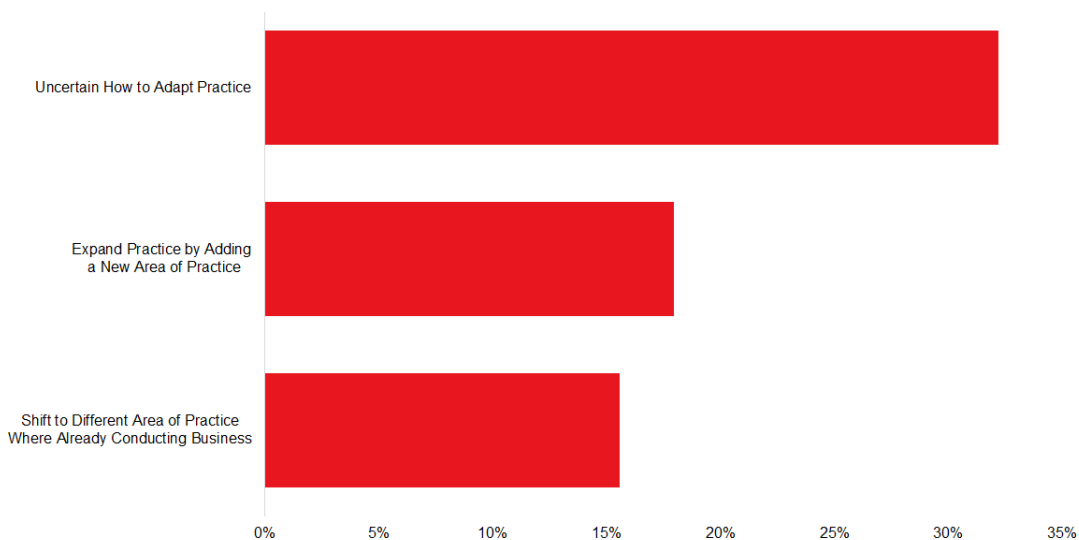




## Adapting Your Area of Practice

Of the 67% of survey respondents who expect their primary area of practice to be impacted by COVID-19, nearly one-third are uncertain of how they will adapt their practice to cope with the changes.

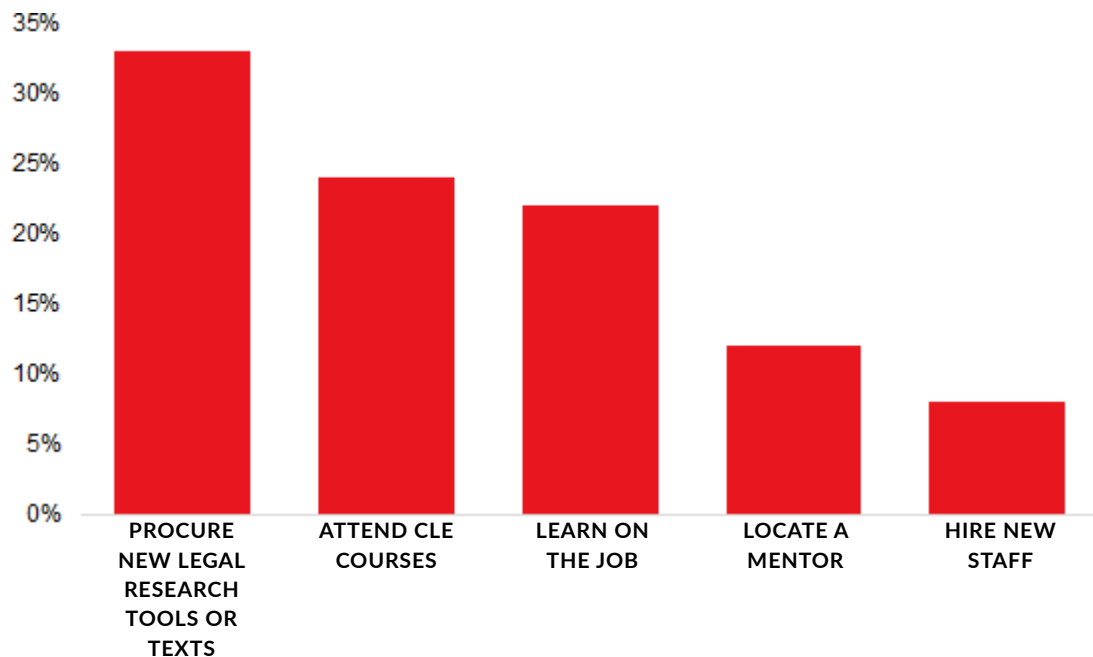
The widespread uncertainty around the future of legal practice in Canada is a reflection of the lack of scientific research on COVID-19 and how it will impact Canadians, and the economy during the fall and winter months when combined with the annual flu season. Additionally, the evolving government policies and lack of clarity around school and business re-openings, travel restrictions and social distancing measures have made it more difficult to navigate strategic long-term business decisions.



# Adapting to COVID-19



**Q: Which of the following actions will be part of your plan for expanding into a new area of practice?**



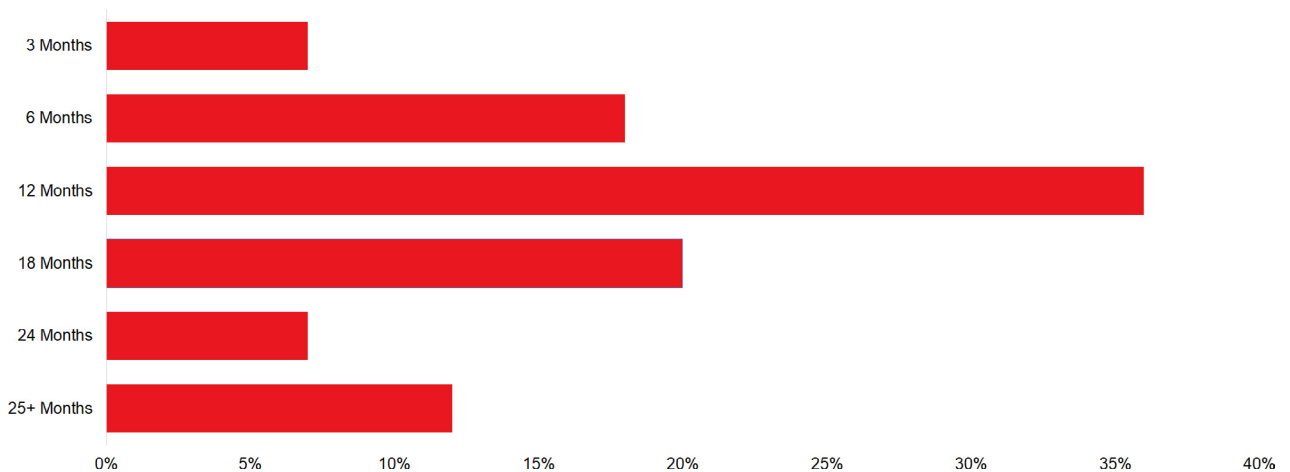


# Stabilization Expectations

The Bank of Canada anticipates economic growth to return to pre-COVID levels in 2022. Similarly, Deloitte's COVID-19 Report forecasts an economic rebound in Q3 of 2020 and expected recovery in Q2 of 2022.

While some survey respondents were more optimistic, 39% of legal professionals believe it will take at least 18 months for their business to stabilize from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

## Q: When do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will subside in Canada, and business will be stabilized?







**20%**

One-in-five legal professionals in Canada expect more business than before COVID-19 after the pandemic subsides.

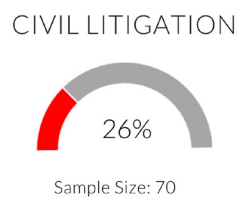
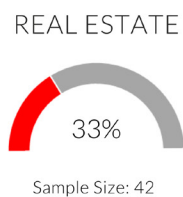
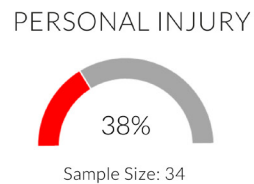
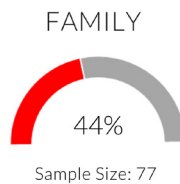
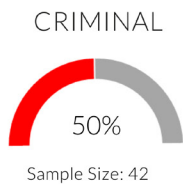




## Stabilization by Area of Practice

All areas of practice depicted in graphs had a minimum of 30 responses.

**Proportion of legal professionals who believe it will take 18 months or more for their area of practice to stabilize after COVID-19 subsides in Canada.**

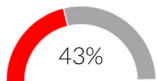


# Stabilization by Firm Type

Similar to other industries across Canada, solo practitioners and small firms are expected to have a more difficult recovery from COVID-19 than larger firms that are more diversified, and have greater access to resources.

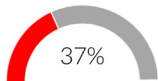
## Proportion of legal professionals who believe it will take 18 months or more for their firm type to stabilize after COVID-19 subsides in Canada.

SOLO  
PRACTITIONERS



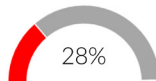
Sample Size: 128

SMALL FIRMS  
2-5 LAWYERS



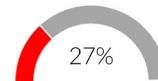
Sample Size: 115

SMALL FIRMS  
6-10 LAWYERS



Sample Size: 40

MID-SIZE FIRMS  
11-49 LAWYERS



Sample Size: 81





“The immediate impacts of COVID-19 on the legal community have forced the rapid evolution of our court systems and changed the way law is practiced in Canada today.

What’s clear from our survey results, is the significant levels of uncertainty around the long-term impacts this pandemic will have on the legal profession.

LexisNexis remains committed to providing free access to COVID-19 updates, research kits, and data to help the legal community make effective and informed decisions as they continue to evolve their practice.”

**ERIC WRIGHT**  
CEO, LexisNexis Canada



## Report Summary

The global COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to significantly impact legal professionals in Canada. While the ramifications of the pandemic are wide-reaching, they are not applied equally across different areas of practice or even firm types.

As is the case with other sectors of the economy, small firms and solo practitioners are expected to face a more difficult recovery path once the pandemic subsides than larger, more diversified firms.

The rapid adoption of technologies into the court system and acceptance of virtual meetings as the norm, is a widely welcomed change seen by many as a silver lining that will improve efficiencies and allow for a speedier recovery.

As the impacts of this pandemic continue to shift and evolve, LexisNexis Canada is committed to providing free and affordable access to key resources, studies and information that benefits the legal community in Canada.





## Thank you for reading our **COVID-19 Impact Report.**

Enjoy complimentary access to our COVID-19 Practical Guidance kit, including practice notes, checklists, forms and more, across a variety of practice areas.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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