



OFFICE OF THE
UTAH STATE AUDITOR

September 2, 2014

Honorable Sean Reyes
Attorney General
Utah State Capitol Complex
350 North State Street Suite 230
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2320

Dear Attorney General Reyes,

At your request, the Office of the Utah State Auditor conducted *A Limited Review of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Client Satisfaction* and presents its findings herewith. This review, which consisted primarily of a 15-question survey of OAG clients, demonstrates OAG client satisfaction levels in addition to identifying areas in which client service could be improved.

In addition to other questions designed to measure current OAG client satisfaction, this survey asked OAG clients to compare the level of service provided in 2014 with service provided in previous years. **Finding 1** shows that while most clients are satisfied with the level of service provided, the OAG can improve service by improving communication and coordination with their clients. **Finding 2** shows that 90 percent of OAG clients are equally or more satisfied with OAG services in 2014 compared to previous years, demonstrating improved service. **Attachment A** shows the aggregated responses from all 15 questions.

Background

Among other duties, the Attorney General is responsible to “prosecute or defend all causes to which the state or any officer, board, or commission of the state in an official capacity is a party, and take charge, as attorney, of all civil legal matters in which the state is interested.”¹ Additionally, “The Attorney General may assign his legal assistants to perform legal services for any agency of state government.”² Therefore, these attorneys work for the OAG and on behalf of their assigned agencies.

¹ **Utah Code** 67-5-1(2)

² **Utah Code** 67-5-3; for purposes of this act, “agency” is defined as “any department, division, agency, commission, board, council, committee, authority, institution, or other entity within the state government of Utah.”

In addition, the Attorney General has the responsibility to “exercise supervisory powers over the district and county attorneys of the state in all matters pertaining to the duties of their offices, and from time to time require of them reports of the condition of public business entrusted to their charge.”³

The OAG mission is, in part, to “to uphold the constitutions of the United States and of Utah, enforce the law, provide counsel to state agencies and public officials, to work with law enforcement and protect the interests of Utah, its people, environment and resources.” In an effort to efficiently accomplish this mission, the OAG consists of the following 15 divisions:

- Child and Family Support
- Child Protection
- Civil Appeals
- Commercial Enforcement
- Children’s Justice
- Criminal Appeals
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Health
- Highways and Utilities
- Investigations
- Litigation
- Natural Resources
- State Agency Counsel
- Tax and Revenue

Finding 1: Most Clients Indicate Satisfaction with OAG Services

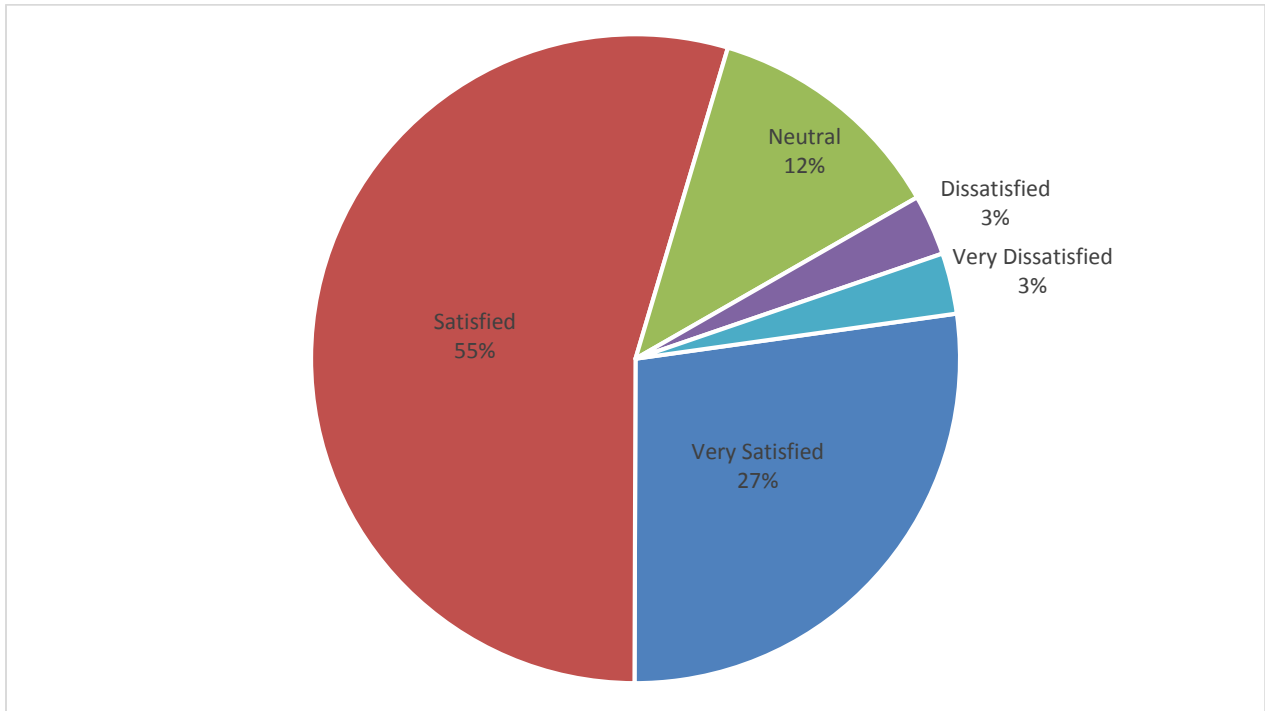
The results of the 15-question survey indicate that most clients⁴ are pleased overall with the OAG’s competence and responsiveness to their needs. Almost 82 percent of clients report being either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with services provided by their assigned attorney from the OAG.

While most clients are satisfied with the level of service provided, the OAG could improve service by applying feedback from the 18 percent of respondents who did not report being satisfied with the services provided. Specifically, the OAG could increase client satisfaction by (1) improving communication with their clients when changes are made to representation, (2) increasing attorney availability, and (3) allowing more client input on attorney assignments. Figure 1 shows client responses when asked to report their overall level of satisfaction with services provided by the OAG.

³ **Utah Code** 67-5-1(6)

⁴ Though a client of the OAG, the State Auditor did not take the survey.

Figure 1 SURVEY QUESTION: Overall, How Satisfied Are you with the OAG?



Source: OSA survey results

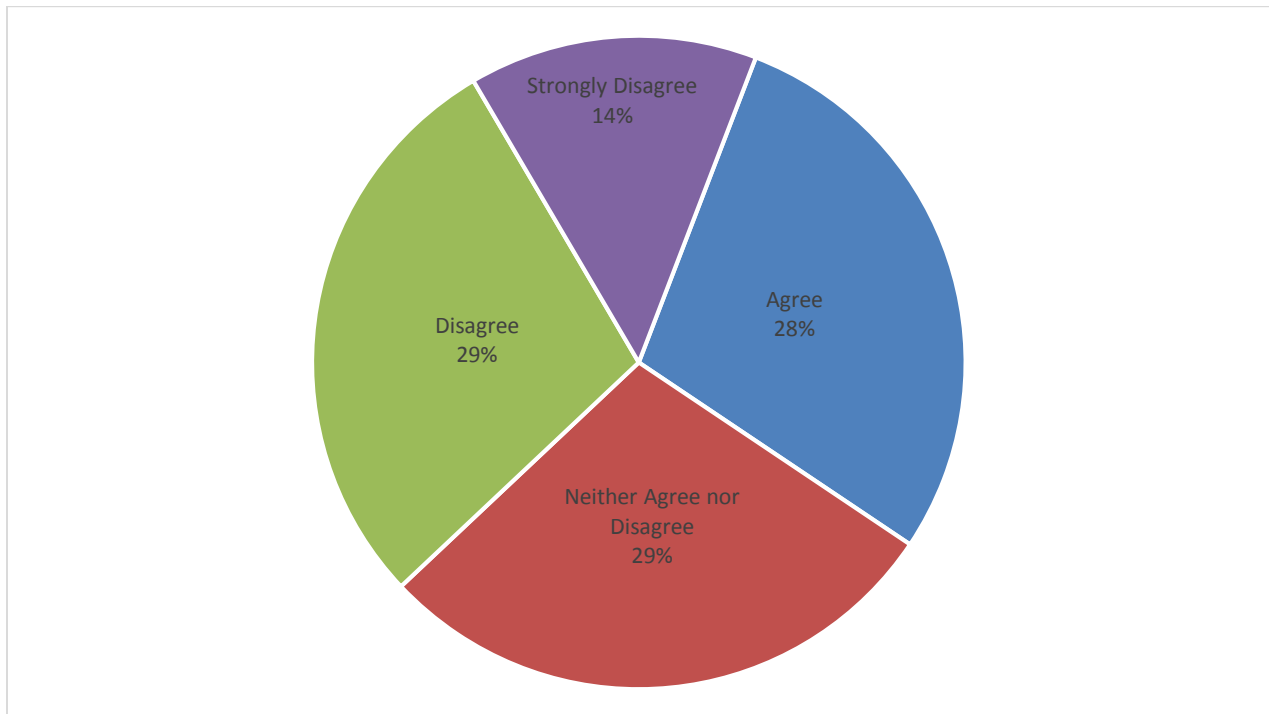
While Figure 1 shows most OAG clients indicate general satisfaction with OAG services, the office could improve customer service by implementing measures suggested by unsatisfied clients.

Improved Communication Would Increase OAG Effectiveness. Several clients who were not satisfied overall with the OAG expressed concern regarding OAG communication, especially when a new attorney is assigned to the organization. Two organizations stated that they were not immediately made aware of assignment changes, and one organization still does not know the identity of its attorney even though the re-assignment occurred several months ago. Though this organization does not rely on OAG services as frequently as other organizations, it is concerning that the organization does not know who to contact when it needs an attorney.

In order to ensure the continuity and reliability of services provided, the OAG should immediately contact and record positive acknowledgement from client management when assignments are changed. Additionally, the OAG should consider the affected organization’s needs prior to altering attorney assignments.

Some OAG Attorneys Are not Always Readily Available During Business Hours. Among clients who did not report overall satisfaction with the OAG, only 28 percent believed that OAG attorneys are conveniently available during business hours. Access to their assigned attorneys is crucial for some clients who rely on OAG services on a daily basis. Figure 2 shows the satisfaction levels regarding attorney responsiveness among the clients who did not report overall satisfaction with the OAG.

Figure 2 **SURVEY QUESTION: OAG Attorneys Are Conveniently Available During our Business Hours** (among clients who did not report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” overall).



Source: OSA survey results

Some clients expressed concern that their assigned attorneys are overworked and stretched too thin as the main reason for their unavailability during regular business hours. In order to resolve such concerns, the OAG could provide alternative points of contact for a client to contact in the event the assigned attorney is unable to respond within a reasonable timeframe.

Client Feedback on Attorney Assignments Would Increase Overall Satisfaction. Directors from some organizations claim they would be more satisfied with services provided by the OAG if they had the ability to choose their OAG representation. For example, one organization claims that its assigned attorney lacks commitment to the organization and has become complacent and unhappy with the attorney’s current assignment. This organization would prefer to have an attorney with a higher level of commitment to the organization.

Another organization claims that its newly-assigned attorney is unresponsive and does not provide the same level of service as the predecessor. This organization director would prefer to participate in future OAG decisions that affect the organization in order to ensure that its assigned attorney contributes to the mission of the organization.

Additional organizations expressed satisfaction with their current attorneys, but also cited concerns with former attorneys that no longer represent their organizations but continue to work in the OAG. These organizations stated that their level of satisfaction would decrease if required to work with such attorneys again in the future. Due to these concerns, we recommend that the OAG consult with client management prior to reassigning attorneys.

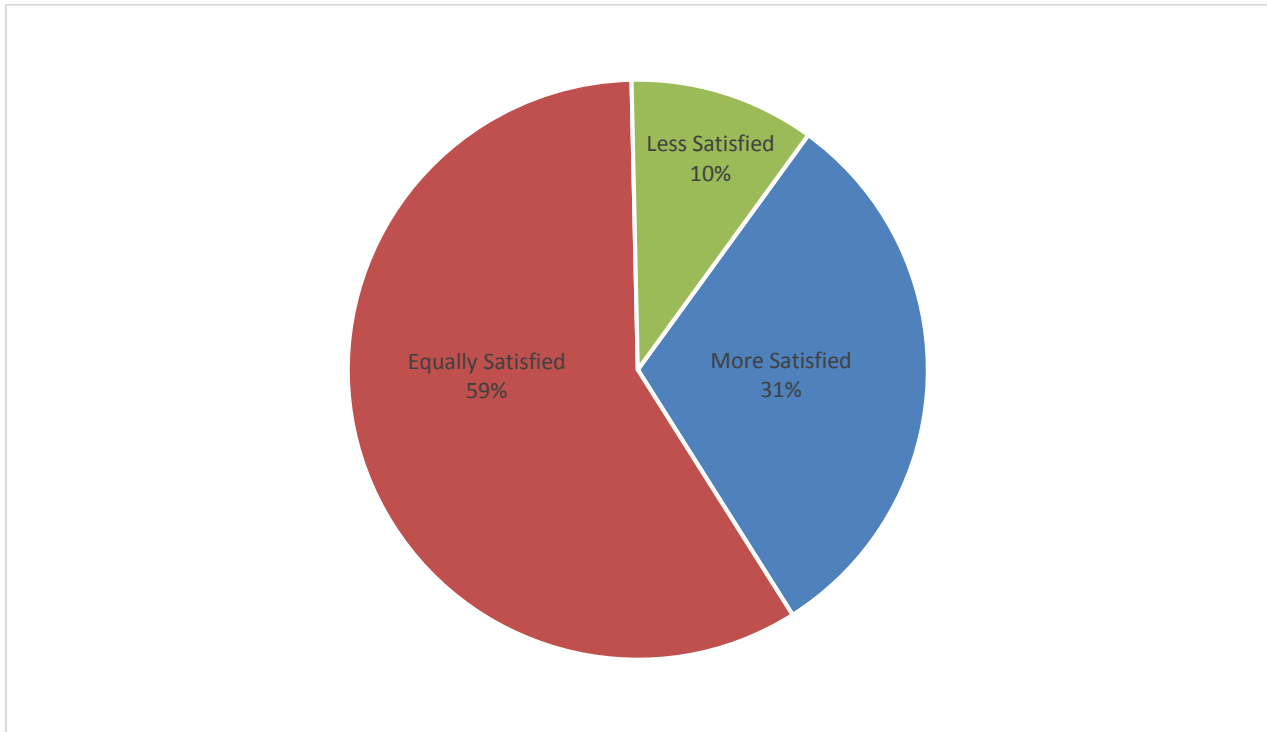
Finding 1 Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Office of the Attorney General immediately contact the director of affected organizations when attorney assignments are modified and record positive acknowledgement from the organization.
2. We recommend that the Office of the Attorney General provide alternative points of contact for a client to contact in the event the assigned attorney is unable to respond within a reasonable timeframe.
3. We recommend that the Office of the Attorney General consult with client management prior to reassigning attorneys.
4. We recommend that the Office of the Attorney General consult with client organization management prior to assigning attorneys to the organization or consider allowing organizations to choose their attorney, as allowed by statute, to ensure a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Finding 2: Clients Suggest OAG Services Have Improved

Most clients claim that they are equally or more satisfied with services provided by the OAG in 2014 compared to previous years. Additionally, almost one-third of responding clients state that they are *more* satisfied with the OAG since the beginning of the year compared to only 10 percent who claim to be *less* satisfied, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 SURVEY QUESTION: Which Statement Best Describes your Experiences with the OAG in 2014 Compared to Experiences in Prior Years?



Source: OSA Analysis

Note: Clients who selected "not applicable" were excluded from this analysis

Almost 90 percent of clients claim to be at least equally satisfied with services provided by the OAG in 2014 compared to previous years. Reasons cited by the 31 percent of clients who are more satisfied with the OAG in 2014 compared to previous years include advantageous restructuring, greater focus on helping organizations achieve their missions, and increased awareness of client needs.

Reasons cited by the 10 percent of clients who are less satisfied with the level of service provided to their organizations include insufficient attorney understanding of the organization's mission and slow attorney responsiveness to the organization's needs. Implementation of the recommendations cited in Finding 1 of this report will help to alleviate these concerns. Additionally, regular consultation with client management will enable the OAG to better assess the level and quality of service provided.

Finding 2 Recommendation

1. We recommend that the Office of the Attorney General regularly consult with clients to assess the level and quality of service received.

Scope and Methodology

This review provides an independent assessment of the satisfaction levels of OAG clients. The assessment consisted primarily of a client satisfaction survey that was emailed to OAG clients on August 5, 2014. The survey was closed on August 19, 2014. **Attachment A** shows the results of the survey.

OAG clients were identified as “any department, division, agency, commission, board, council, committee, authority, institution, or other entity within the state government of Utah.”⁵ Each organization issued one response regardless of the breadth and depth of OAG services provided to the organization. Organizations include state agencies/offices, higher education, public education, and county attorneys. Though a client of the OAG, the State Auditor did not complete the survey.

The 15 survey questions focused on the OAG’s responsiveness to client needs, OAG competencies, and overall levels of service provided by the OAG. Additional questions allowed clients to cite areas for improvement and areas in which the OAG exceeded their expectations.

Due to the limited scope and nature of this review, the results are provided for informational purposes and are not intended to be conclusive. The purpose of this review was to provide the OAG feedback from its clients in an effort to improve the level of services provided to its clients.

We recognize and appreciate the assistance provided by your staff throughout this limited review. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this review.

Sincerely,

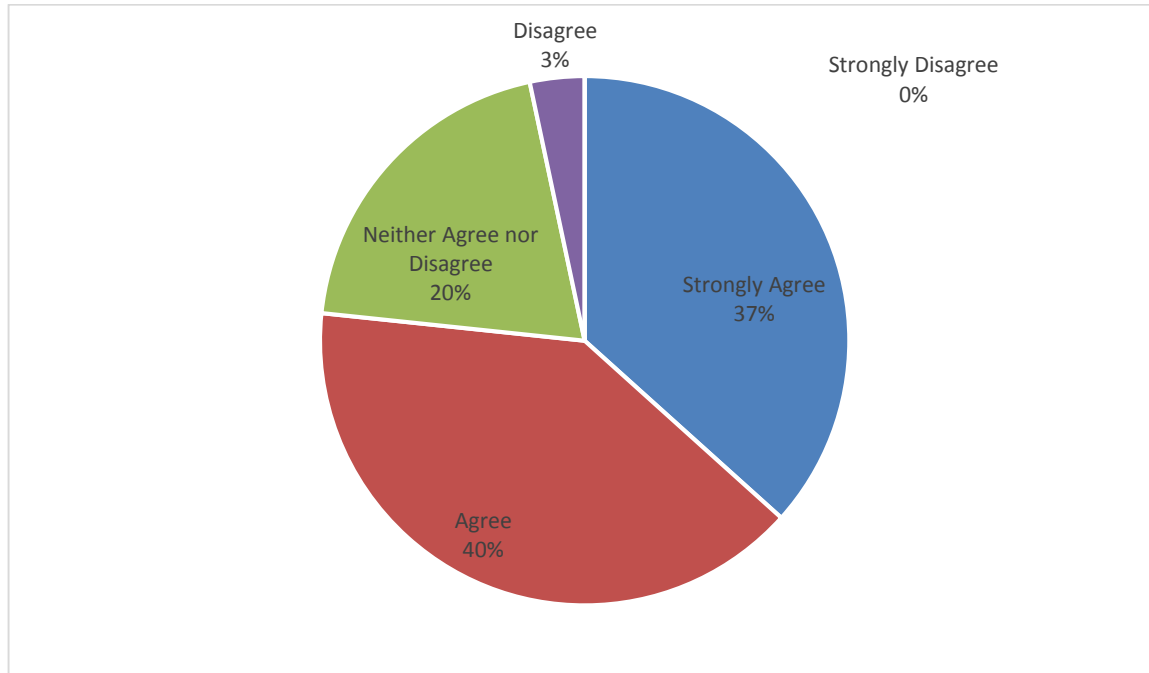


David S. Pulsipher, CIA, CFE
Performance Audit Director

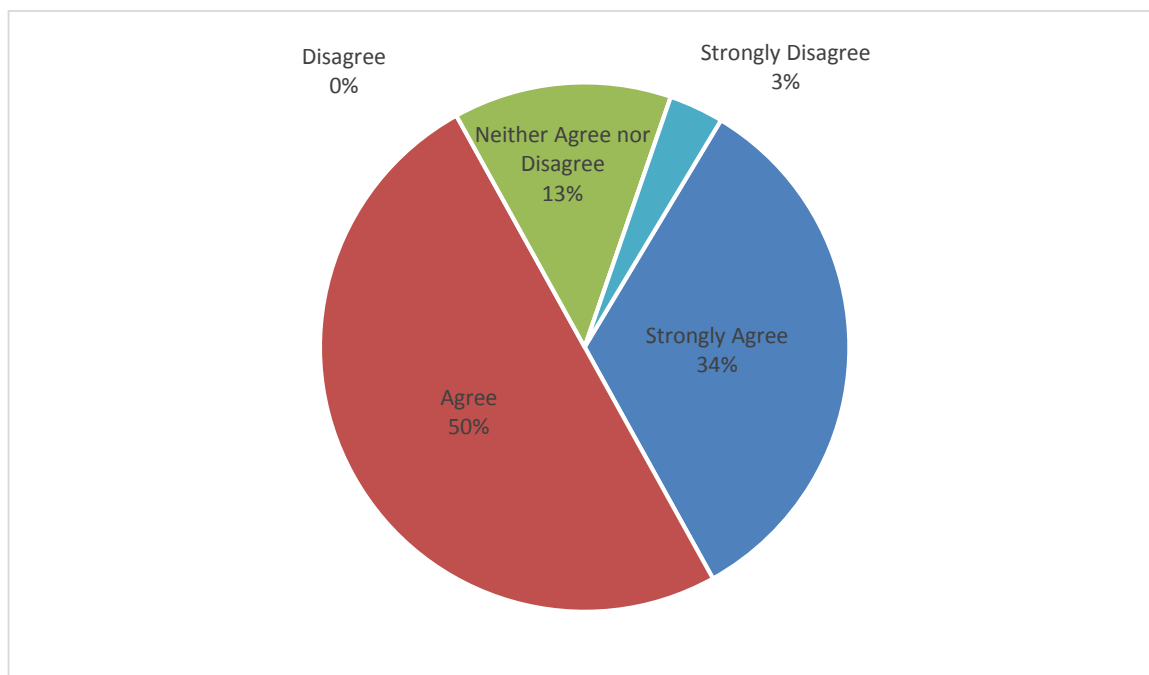
⁵ **Utah Code** 67-5-3

Attachment A: Survey Results

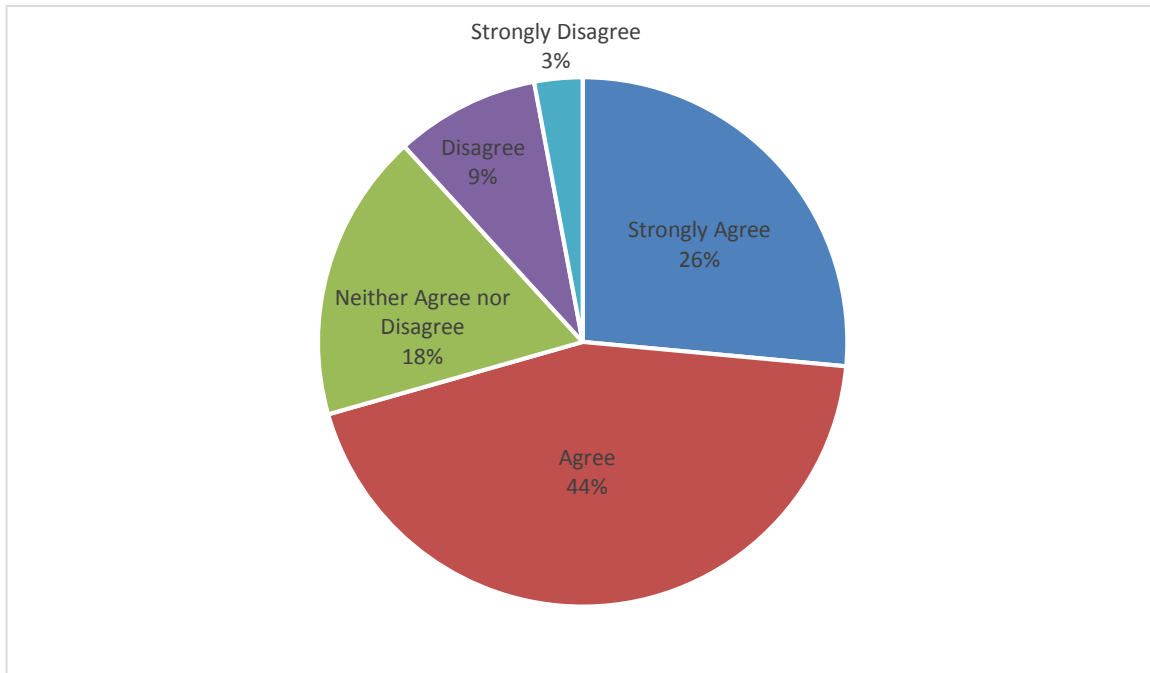
1. SURVEY QUESTION: Our assigned OAG attorney(s) understand our business needs and objectives.



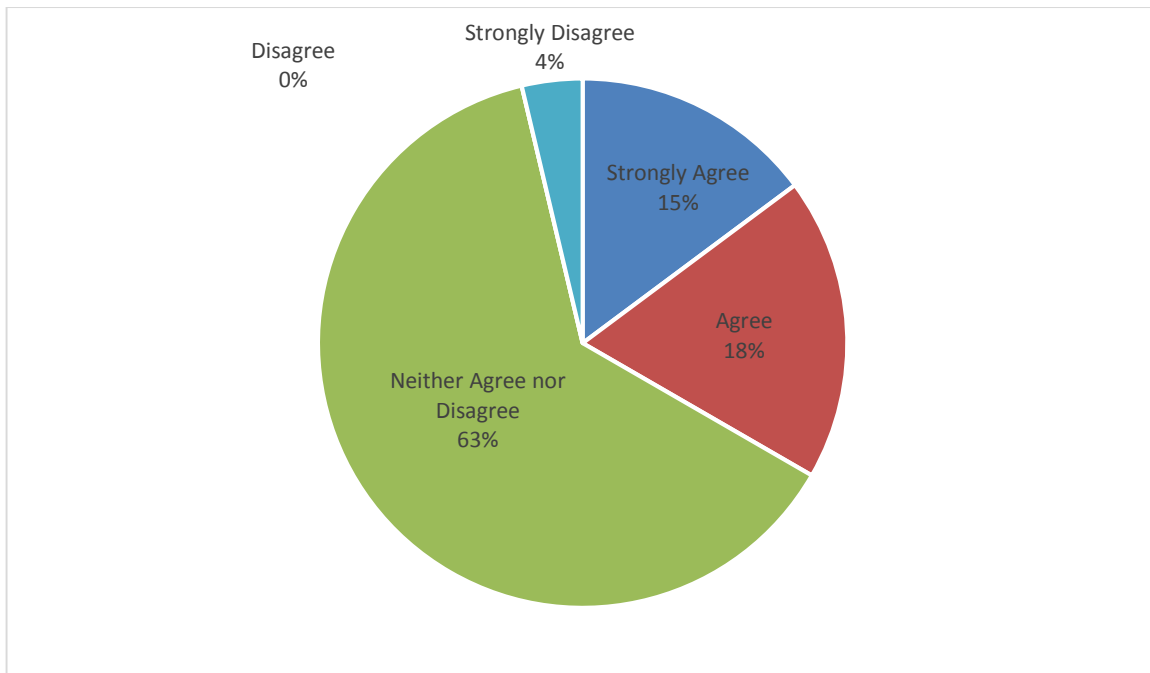
2. SURVEY QUESTION: The assigned OAG attorney acts in my organization's best interest.



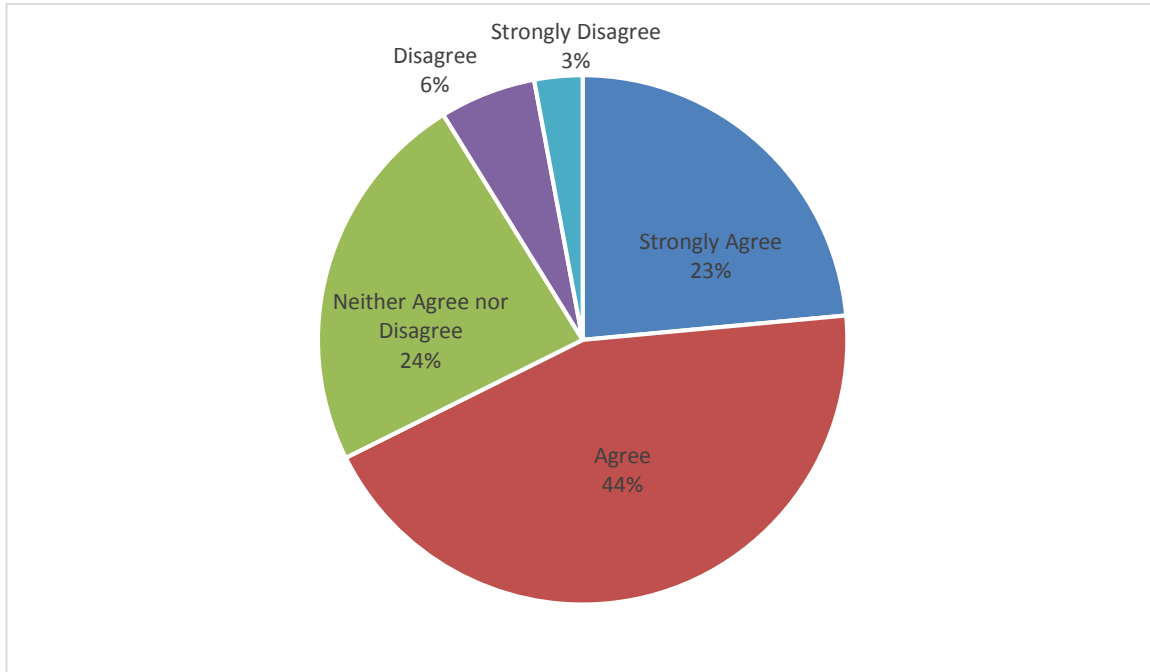
3. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG attorneys are conveniently available during our business hours.



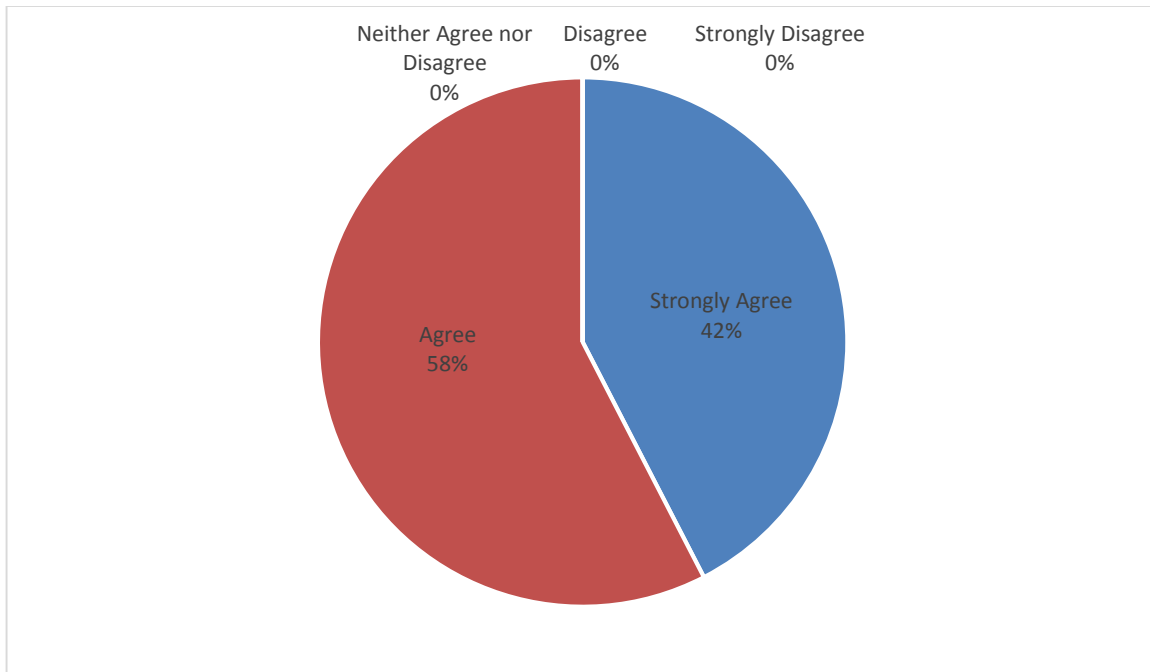
4. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG attorneys are accessible when needed outside normal business hours.



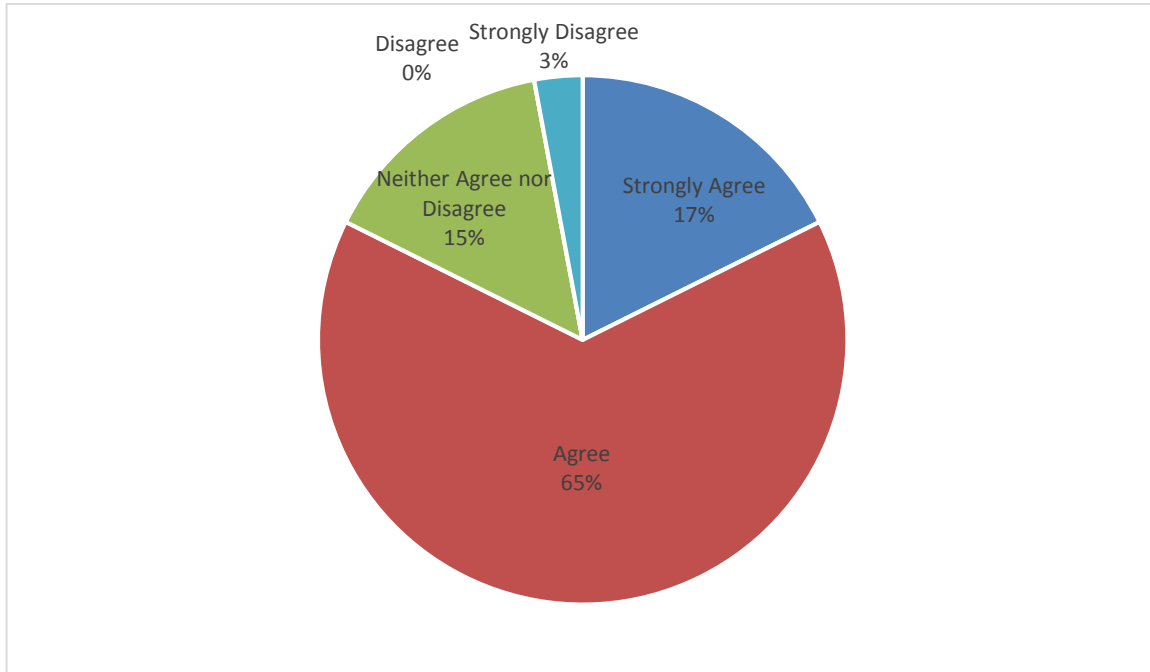
5. SURVEY QUESTION: The OAG provides services in a timely manner.



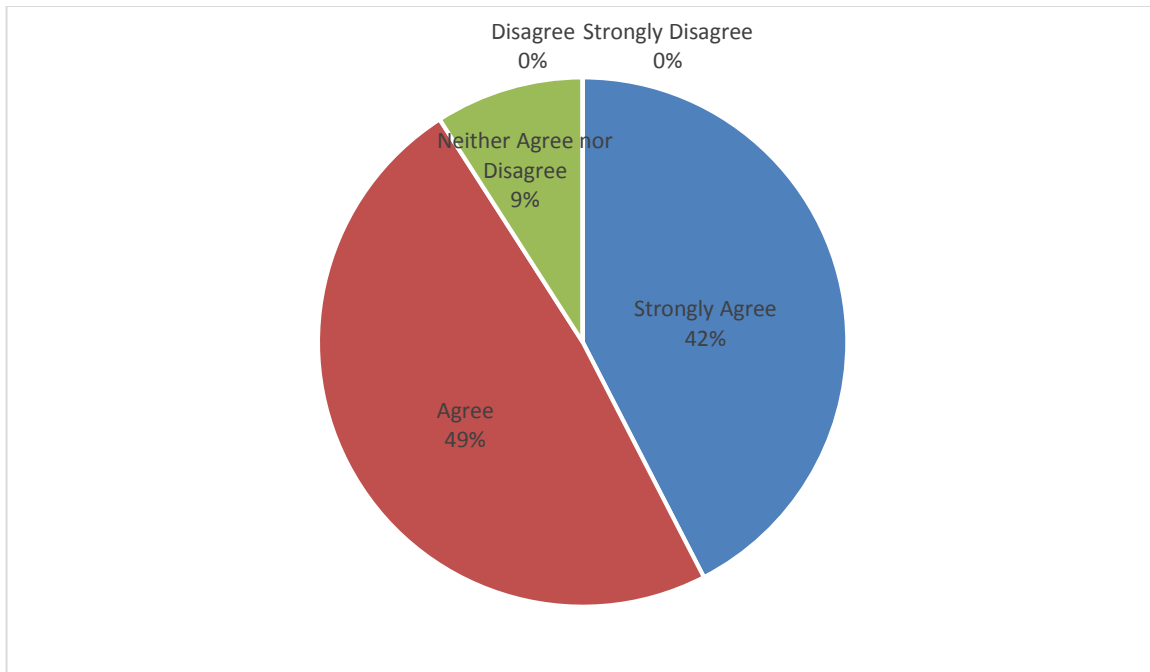
6. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG employees are courteous and professional.



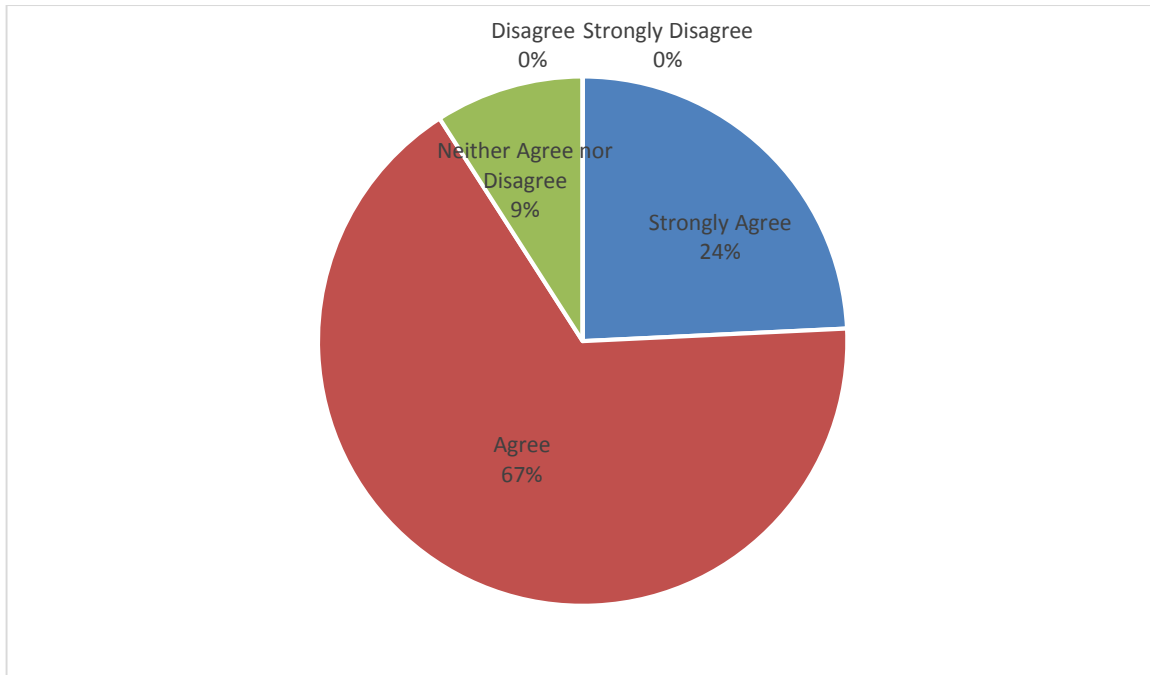
7. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG employees follow through on their commitments.



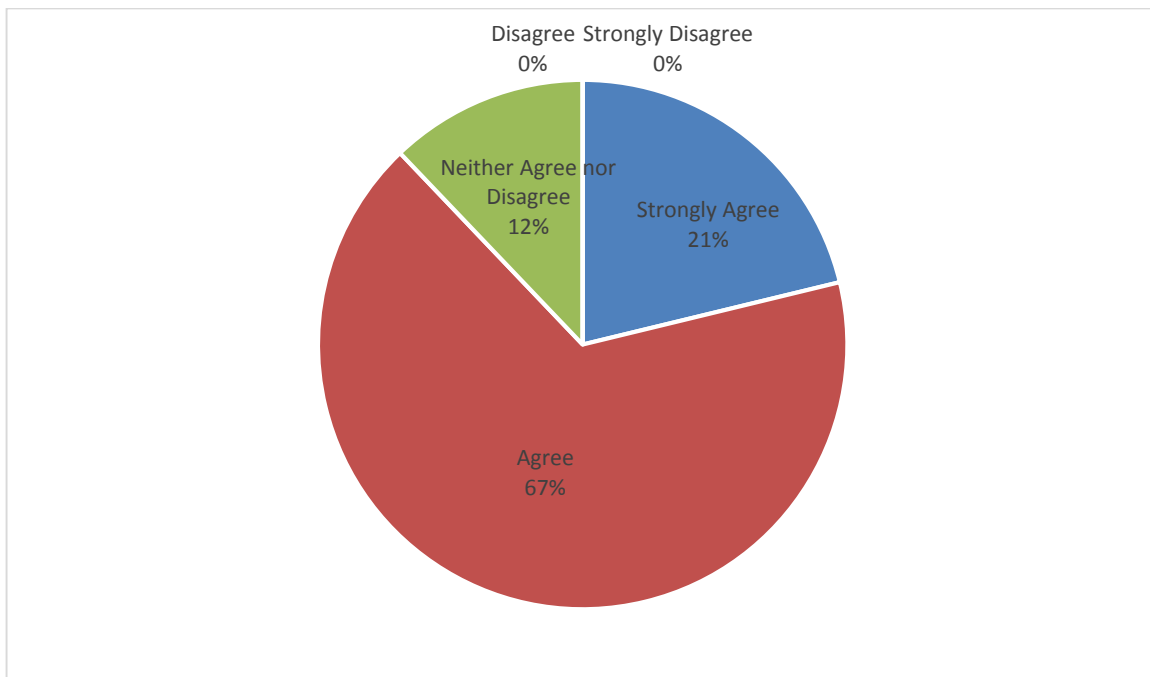
8. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG employees adequately safeguard sensitive information.



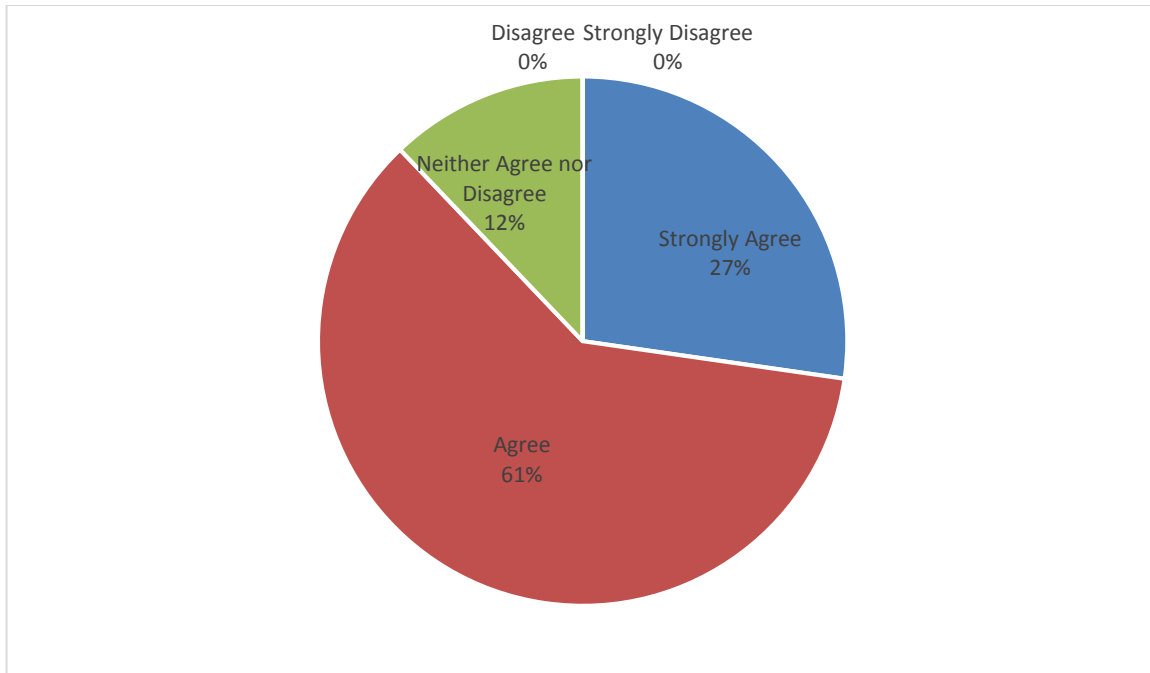
9. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG attorneys are technically competent.



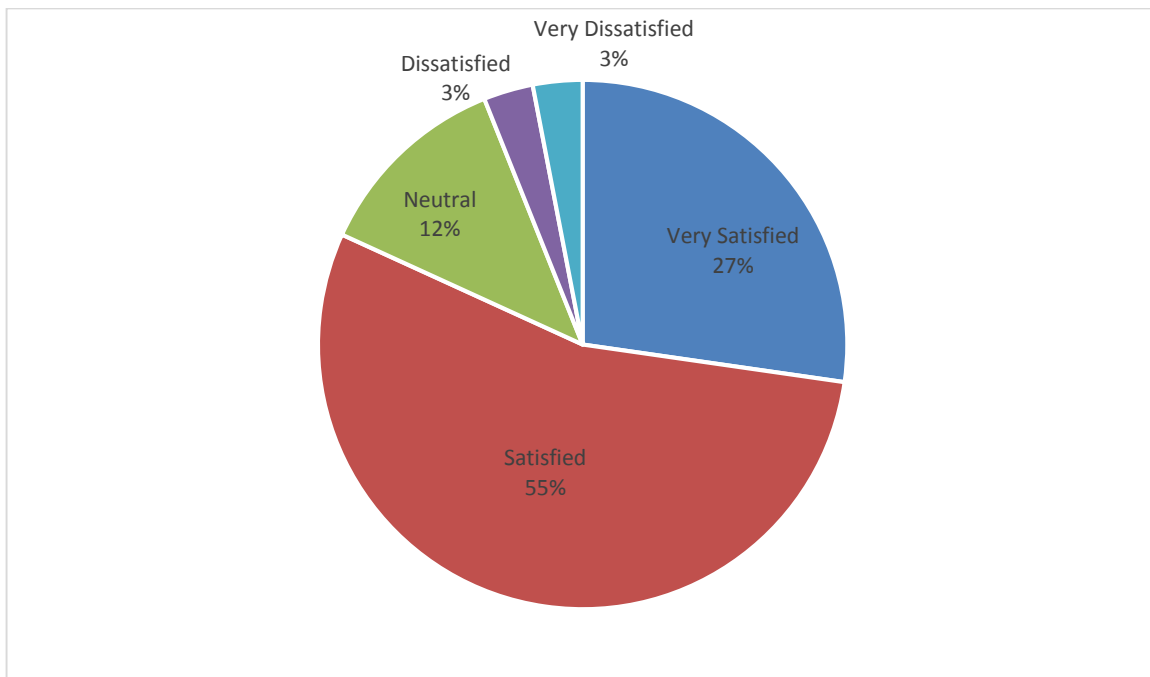
10. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG attorneys do the job correctly the first time.



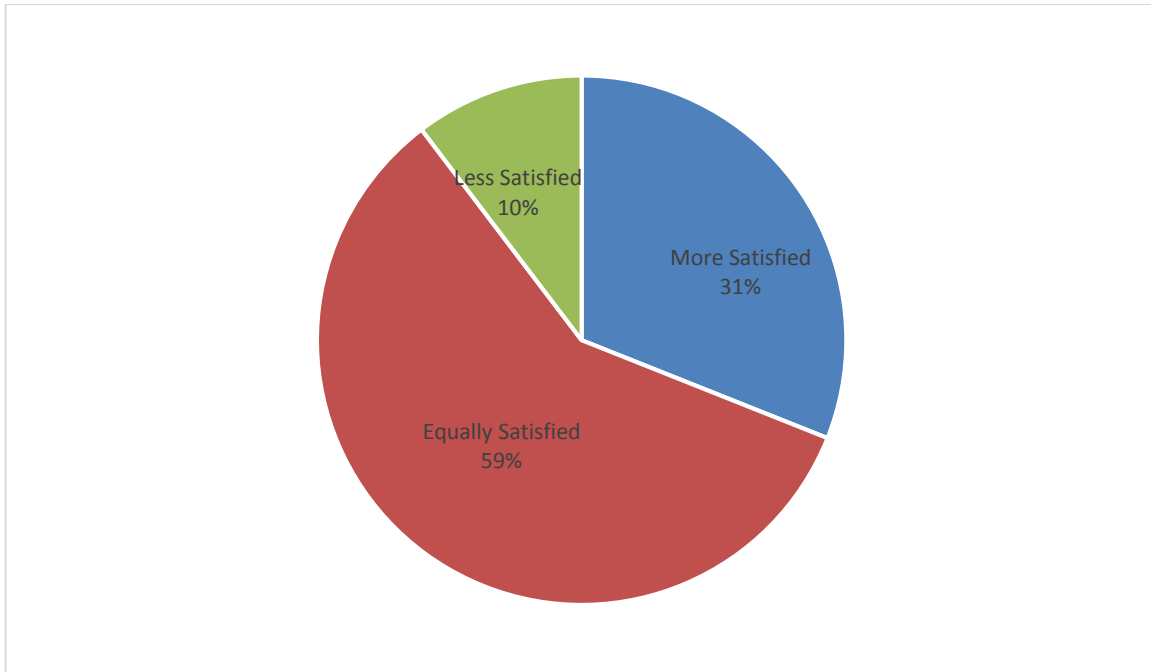
11. SURVEY QUESTION: OAG attorneys clearly explain complex legal issues.



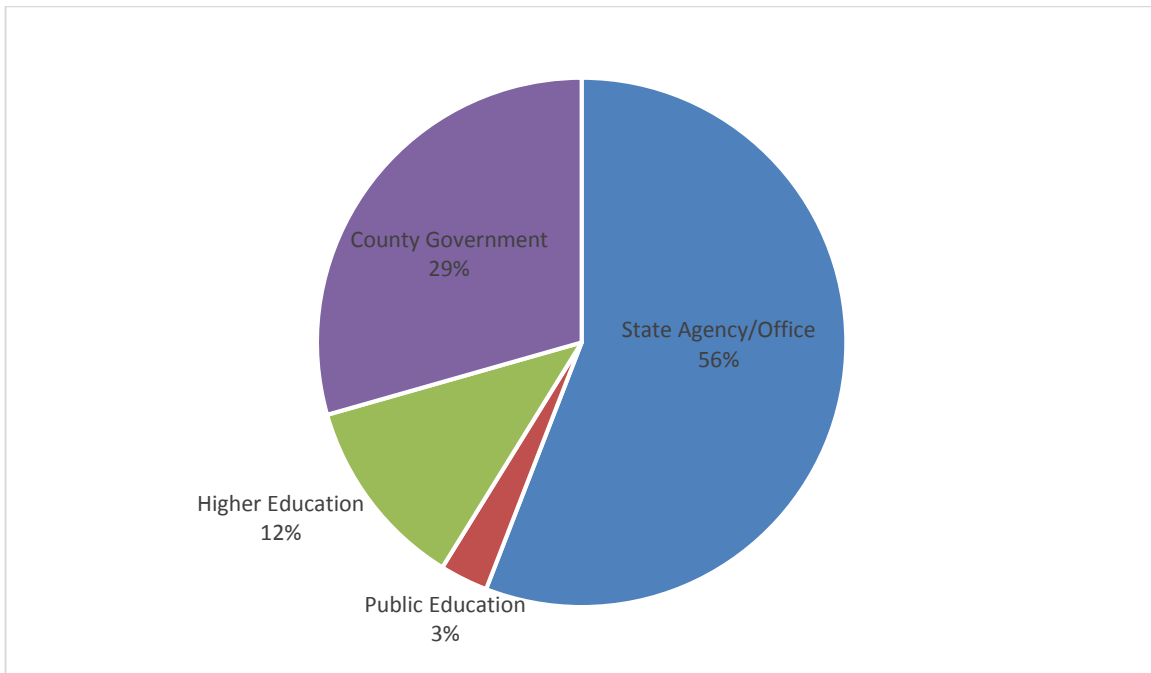
12. SURVEY QUESTION: Overall, how satisfied are you with the OAG?



13. SURVEY QUESTION: Which statement best describes your experiences with the OAG in 2014 compared to experiences in prior years?



14. SURVEY QUESTION: Which category best describes your organization?



15. SURVEY QUESTION: How often do you use services from the OAG?

