

# State Bar of Arizona Member Survey

## Balance, Stress, Top Attorney Concerns

Balancing family and work while managing stress are the greatest personal challenges of Arizona attorneys. On the professional side, there's a concern about the lack of ethics within the legal profession.

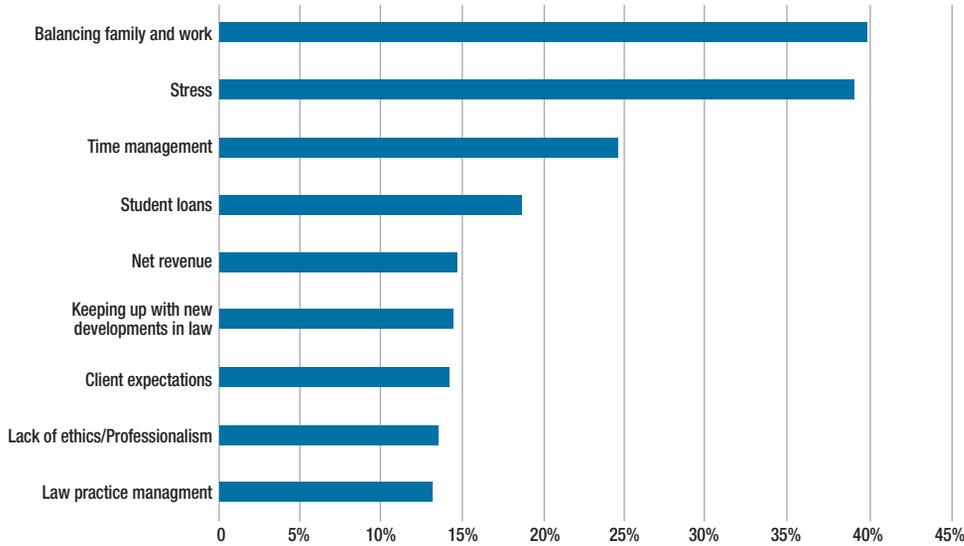


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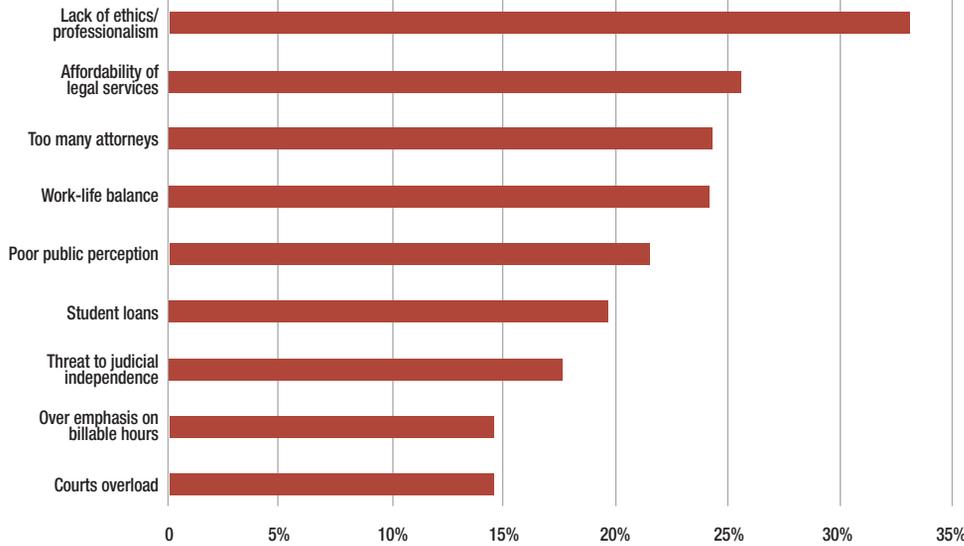
That's the information that came out of the 2017 State Bar of Arizona member survey. During the month of March the survey was emailed to 23,296 State Bar members. A total of 3,499 individ-

uals completed the survey, which was a response rate of 15.6 percent. According to the company that managed the survey, Research USA, that response is strong and statistically valid.

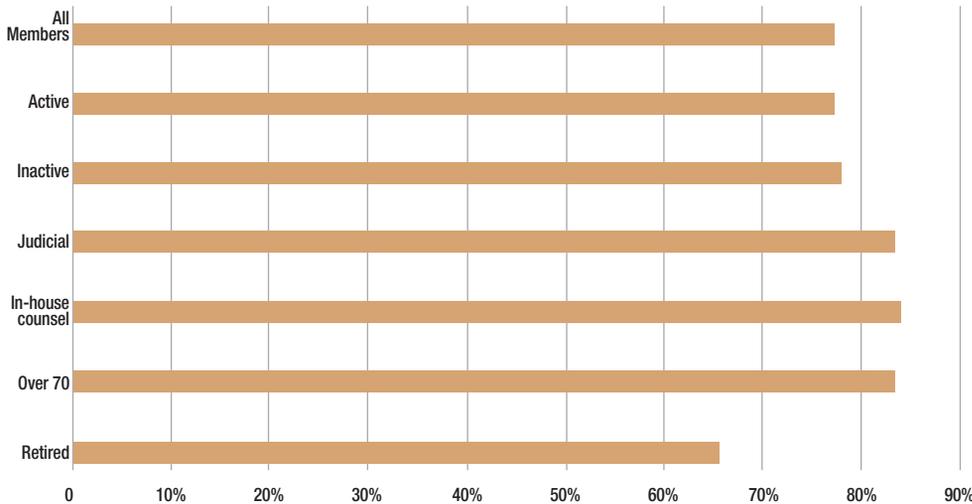
### Leading Challenges/Concerns Personally Facing Attorneys



### Leading Problems Faced by the Legal Profession Today



### Percentage “Very” or “Generally” Satisfied With State Bar Membership



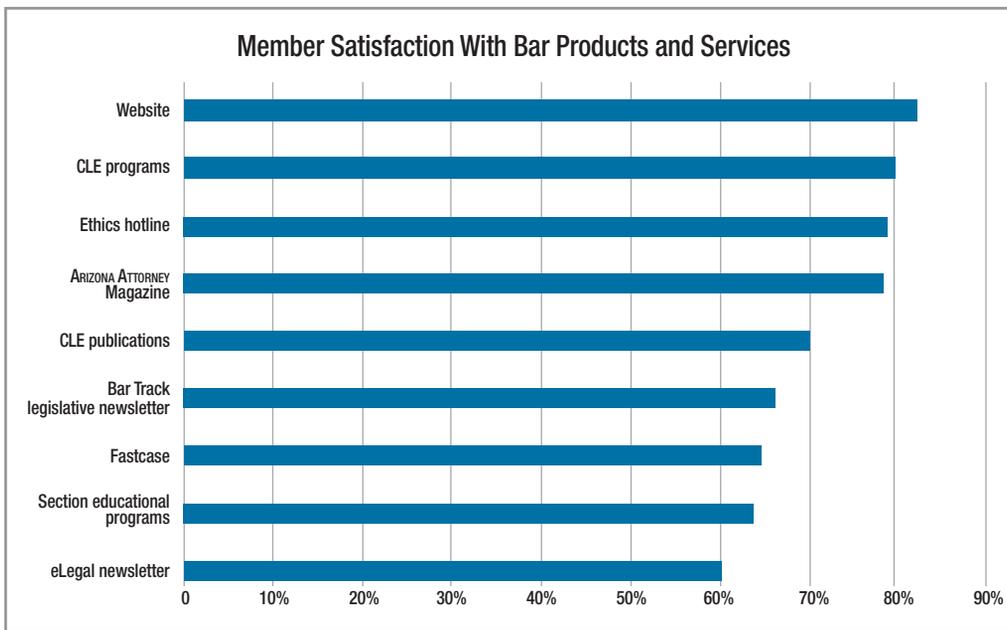
## Why and How We Survey

The purpose of the survey is simple. The State Bar wants to know more about our members so we can help meet their needs. The Bar’s mission, as handed down by the Arizona Supreme Court, says, “The State Bar of Arizona exists to serve and protect the public with respect to the provision of legal services and access to justice.” Helping attorneys increase their skills and overcome obstacles are important parts of serving the public.

## Personal and Professional Challenges

When asked about their personal challenges, 40 percent of respondents said balancing family and work was a key issue. Only slightly behind that was managing stress, which 39 percent of respondents identified as a challenge. Both of those numbers are significantly higher than their counterparts in the previous member survey done in 2014. Three years ago, 29 percent of attorneys reported stress as a concern, and 27 percent said balancing work and family life was an issue.

When we drilled down into the current numbers, we found that Arizona attorneys under age 40 felt the greatest pressure in these areas, with 51 percent saying balancing family and work was a concern. For those over the



the age of 40 rated it a concern, only 7 percent of those over age 50 cited student loans as an issue.

Conversely, attorneys under the age of 40 who responded didn't find keeping up with new technology was an issue. Only two percent felt that was a concern. However, 17 percent of those in their 50s and 22 percent of those in their 60s felt it was an issue.

### Wellness and Ethics

For the first time, the member survey asked whether the Bar should offer resilience, wellness and stress-reduction strategies—57 percent said no, and 43 percent said we should. Breaking down the numbers, we found more than half of women (52 percent) wanted the Bar to offer help in those areas, while only 37 percent of men felt it was needed. Nearly half of the attorneys under age of 40 (49 percent) also felt the Bar should assist. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of those responding felt continuing legal education could accomplish the task, whereas only about a third (34 percent) felt that the Bar should establish a wellness committee.

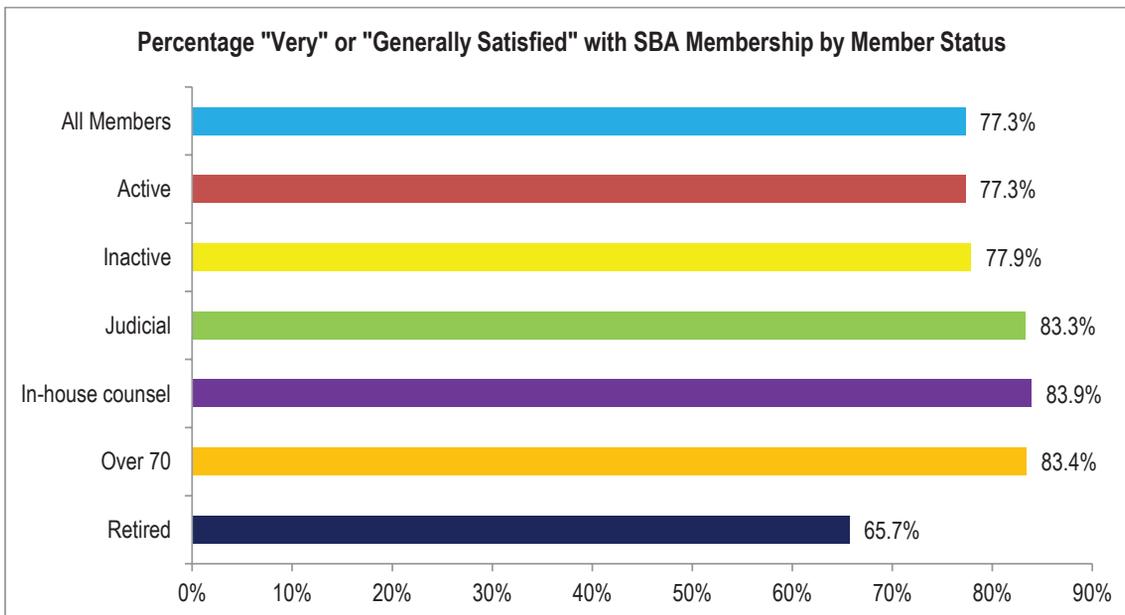
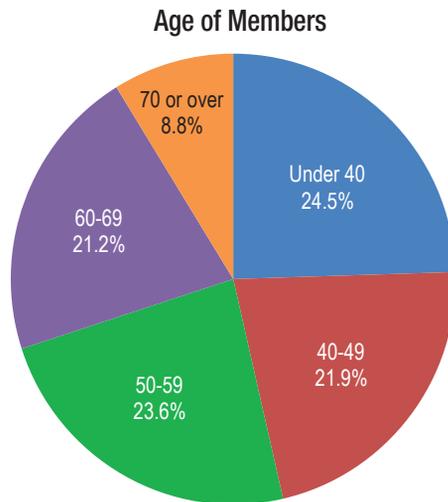
When asked to identify the three most serious problems facing the legal profession today, 33 percent of those responding said lack of ethics/professionalism was a concern. A total of 26 percent cited the affordability of legal services, and 24 percent felt that too many attorneys was an issue.

Attorneys who have been practicing more than 15 years

age of 60, that number dropped to 26 percent.

This year's survey gave us the ability to break down the numbers even further. Looking at different practice areas, 43 percent of criminal defense attorneys felt stress caused distress; that number dropped to 28 percent for estate and probate attorneys.

It's probably not a shock that student loans were another concern. It rated fourth behind time management among all the attorneys surveyed. Not surprisingly, while 46 percent of attorneys under



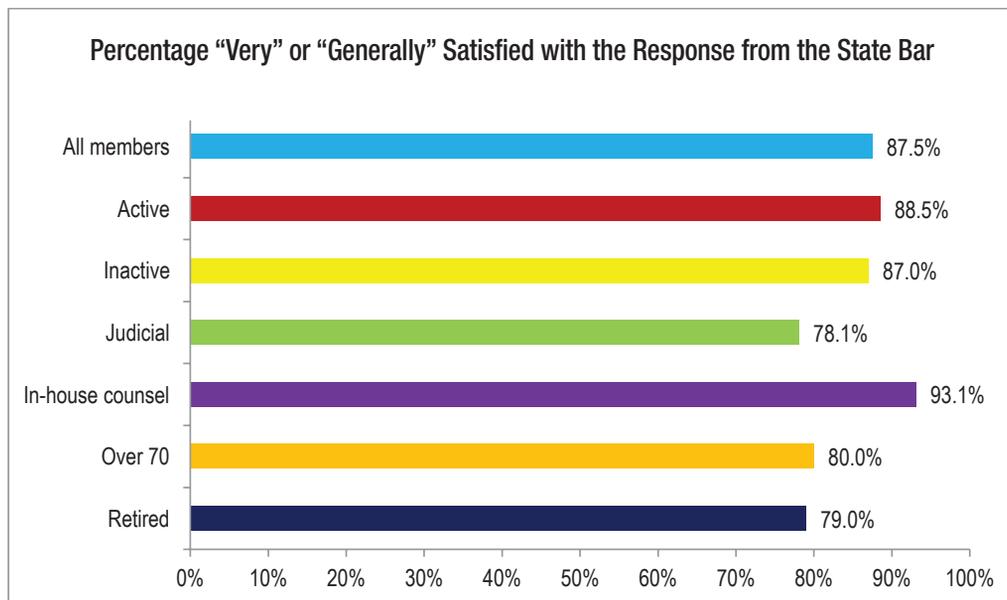
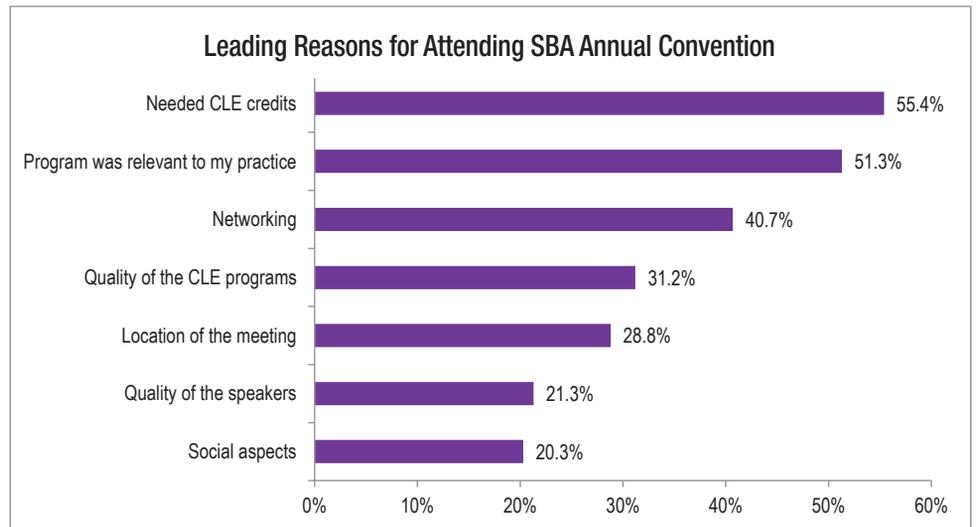
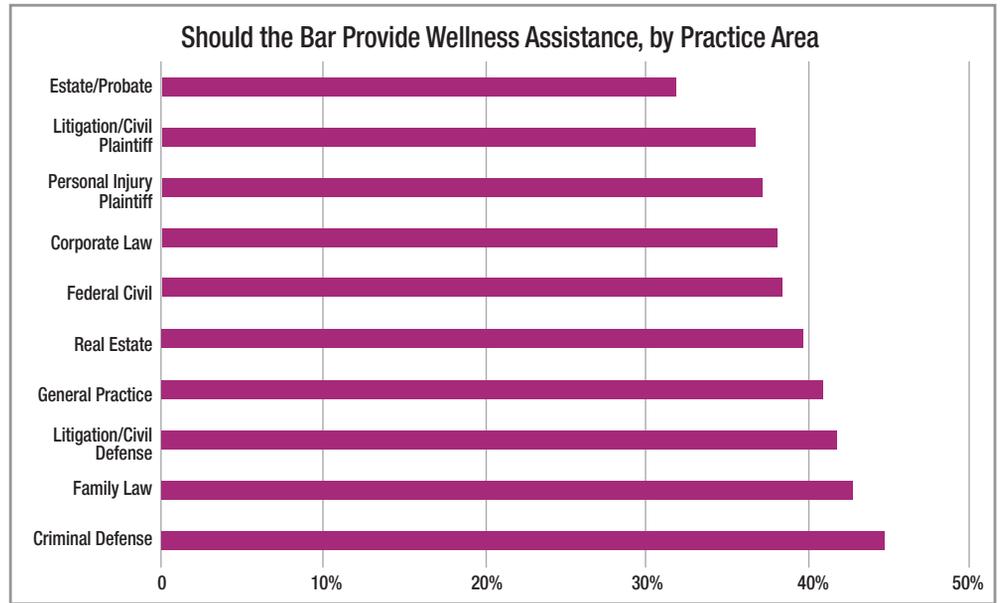
(36 percent) felt the lack of ethics was a concern. Only 29 percent of those who have been practicing less than 15 years said the same.

Looking at specific practice areas, 44 percent of family law attorneys who responded felt that the lack of ethics was an issue, compared to 39 percent of those in general practice. Estate planning (37 percent), criminal defense (36 percent) and personal injury (36 percent) rounded out the top five.

### Future Work Changes

Attorneys also were asked what their plans were for the next three years. While nearly two-thirds don't plan to make a move, 37 percent said they expect some type of change in their legal career. The biggest portion in that group were the 11 percent of attorneys who said they intend to retire. Another nine percent said they expect to leave the practice of law, and six percent said they hope to join a new law firm.

Among those who identify themselves as general counsel, 70 percent said they did not expect any changes in their professional life, which implies more stability than the norm. The largest group of attorneys saying they intended to leave the practice of law (rather than



retiring) were those in general practice.

### The Bar’s Service

As for the Bar’s operations, 77 percent of members say they are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the organization. That is a significant increase from the previous survey (2014), in which 63 percent of members felt the same way.

When asked about which benefits provided by the Bar are valuable, 82 percent of those responding said the website, 80 percent cited the Bar’s CLE

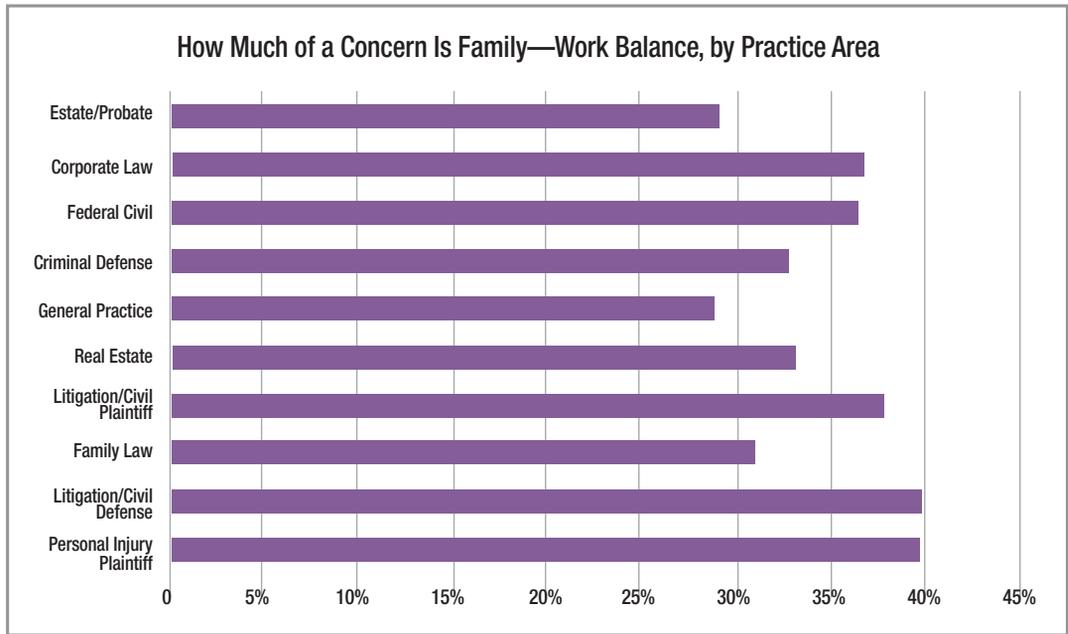
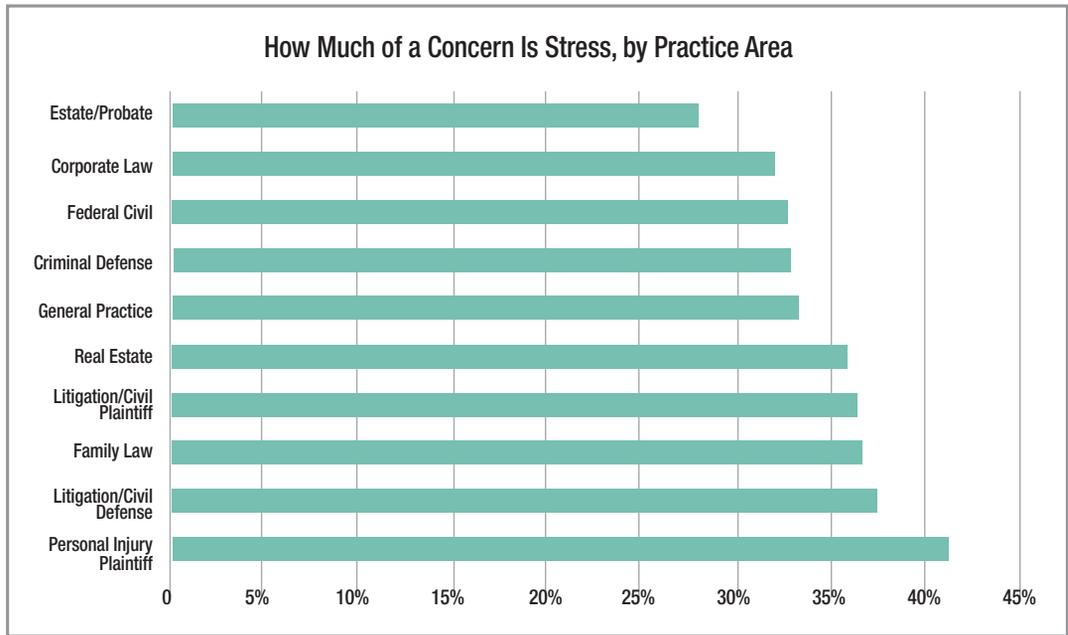
programs, and 79 percent called the Ethics Hotline valuable. ARIZONA ATTORNEY MAGAZINE was identified as valuable by 78 percent of respondents.

The survey points out areas for improvement. For example, while 93 percent of those surveyed who had contacted the Bar within the past year felt that the organization responded very or somewhat promptly, 7 percent said it was either not done promptly or that no one got back to them. Because no member should feel that way, that's an area where the Bar needs to do better.

Another area is in discounts offered to Bar members. Based on the results of the survey, it appears that only a small percentage of members take advantage of the discounts. That means we either need to do a better job of getting the word out or find better discount programs.

As mentioned above, the Bar's new mission statement went into effect on January 1, 2017. When asked where the Bar should concentrate its efforts in light of the change, 43 percent felt that the Bar should focus its efforts on preserv-

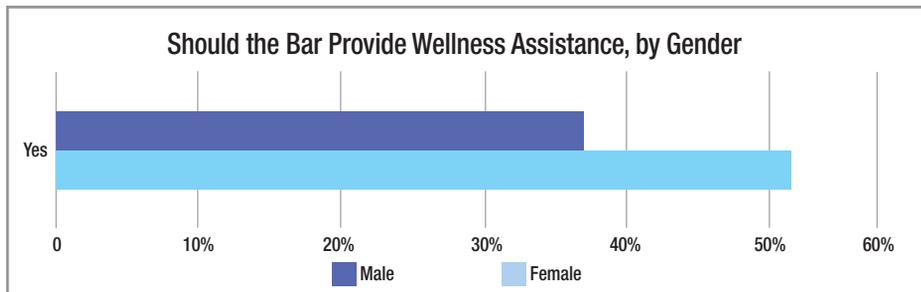
ing a fair and impartial judiciary, 37 percent said the Bar should work to raise awareness of the need for increased civility in the profession, and 37 percent thought improving access to justice should be a priority.



### Conclusion

Overall, the survey tells the Bar several things. We need to find more ways to help attorneys deal with the stresses of the profession. That might result in efforts to help

members keep up with the latest improvements in the law, or to assist attorneys in managing technology. While not everyone wants help with wellness, a significant number of attorneys do. Finally, though we may be doing many things well, there is always room for improvement. That's something the staff and board of the State Bar of Arizona must always remember. [AR](#)



**How We Surveyed**  
 The State Bar of Arizona does a general member survey every three years. This year, Research USA was hired to conduct the survey March 1 through the March 22. The survey was emailed to 23,296 members, and 3,499 members filled out the survey—for a net response of 15.6 percent.