

Vulnerable Youth in Alberta and the Law

An Overview of Needs, Challenges,
and Supports Available



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Introduction

The Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLA) received funding from the Alberta Law Foundation (ALF) to pilot a two year youth public legal education (PLE) program. This pilot phase built upon the networks, experiences, and resources developed by CPLA in the past. As the project completes its 2nd year this report has been prepared for ALF and other organizations interested in PLE, to provide an overview of needs, challenges, and supports available to vulnerable youth in Alberta. CPLA worked closely with intermediaries to assess the needs of vulnerable youth and to apply current research and best practices. This effort included a review of research on the problem solving behaviour of youth and the need for next step referrals.

Defining Vulnerable Youth

The Calgary United Way Vulnerable Youth Report (2011) defines vulnerable youth as those “falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years old who face significant barriers to achieving or maintaining well-being.” The report highlights groups of youth which are consistently overrepresented within this categorization, such as:

- Youth with mental health issues
- Youth in government care
- Street-involved youth
- Youth who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Aboriginal youth
- Immigrant and racialized youth
- Youth with addictions
- Youth involved in the criminal justice system
- Youth with mental or physical disabilities; and
- Youth who have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and trauma.

Youth and the Legal System

Young people across the province of Alberta face numerous challenges as they prepare for and transition into adulthood. These challenges often transform into problems with the legal system. This appraisal was further confirmed by the Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project (ALSMP) in 2011, which identified youth at risk as being a vulnerable group of Albertans with unmet legal needs. The ALSMP found that:

- Children and youth suffer emotional damage when adult family matters are delayed or go through repeated hearings in the justice system.
- Safe community spaces are essential for vulnerable youth who require assistance when conditions at home are unsafe.

- Support for youth already in the Albertan legal and social systems is crucial, particularly as they transition into adult systems.
- Youth are often ignorant of their rights in the legal system and are thus unprepared to adequately deal with their issues.

Barriers to Solving Problems

There remain a number of barriers to solving the problems vulnerable youth face. For one, youth are considerably more likely to not obtain legal advice and do nothing to solve a legal problem (Buck et al. 2007; Kenrick 2002). Young people are also the least likely to recognize they need advice and to know where to go for help (Kenrick 2002). As a result, youth often have a limited awareness and familiarity with their rights and the operation of the legal system.

For marginalized youth, legal problems are compounded by other social problems. Some of the extra hurdles marginalized youth face include:

- Unmet basic needs which take a greater priority;
- lack of a stable or adequate support network;
- transportation problems; and
- lack of respect from professionals. (Stewart et al. 2010)

The Role of Public Legal Education

Public legal education (PLE) organizations play a fundamental role in helping vulnerable youth populations. “Improving levels of legal capability through the provision of legal education,” attests Lisa Wintersteiger of the Public Legal Education Network, “not only means individuals are better equipped to cope with risks and challenges, but also to recognize and take advantage of the opportunities they encounter” (2008, p. 1). This education “can address age-related inequalities and act as a protective factor against the causes and effects of social exclusion” (p. 11). In this respect, public legal education serves a tool of social empowerment.

Indeed, the various PLE organizations in Alberta can play a strategic role in assisting vulnerable youth navigate through a legal system that often seems unnecessarily complex, confusing, and frustrating. The networks and resources provided by PLE organizations help support and instill greater confidence in Alberta’s vulnerable youth population.

PLE Needs of Vulnerable Youth in Alberta

For public legal education organizations to allocate their resources appropriately, it is first necessary to identify the specific needs of vulnerable youth in Alberta. By focussing on their particular concerns and identifying the means through which legal information is best disseminated, PLE organizations can be more effective in addressing the issues faced by vulnerable youth.

To this end, the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLEA) met and discussed the needs of vulnerable youth with the following organizations:

- EPL Outreach Program
- Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS)
- Boyle Street Community Services
- YOUCAN Youth Services
- Edmonton John Howard Society
- TERRA Centre
- Today Family Violence Help Centre
- Health for Two

Informal feedback has been gathered at EIYSA (Edmonton Inter-Agency Youth Services Association), Calgary Interagency Meeting, and Young Parent Network meetings and events for vulnerable youth and intermediaries. Some of these events include the Making Connections Youth Fair and the Connections Edmonton conference.

Legal Topics

Throughout our discussions with intermediaries we found a recurring theme supported by the literature: youth lacked knowledge and familiarity with the law and their rights, particularly with civil law problems. It is imperative that youth know and exercise their rights to prevent themselves from being exploited.

The section below lists the fields of law and/or questions that youth commonly asked about during the consultation stage:

- Housing Law
 - Living with roommates
 - Living “Common Law”
 - Evictions
 - What is the landlord allowed to do?
 - Damage deposits
 - Can a landlord ever keep your stuff?
 - How much personal information must be provided?
 - What are the minimum health requirements for a rental property?
 - Can a landlord discriminate?
- Public Rights
 - What rights do youth have in public?
 - What can police do?
 - What can security guards at malls do?
- Consumer Issues
 - Pay Day Loans
 - Debt Collection
 - Mobile Phones
 - Contracts
 - Privacy
 - Losing a phone
- Emancipated youth
 - How does the process work?
 - Can emancipated youth legally sign contracts as adults?
 - Age limits and the law
- Family Law
 - Custody and visitation
 - Children in custody
 - Child Support
- Legal Process (How the Legal System Works)
 - Paying fines
 - Going to court
 - What to expect
 - Where to go
 - How to behave
 - *Many youth find the system very confusing and just wait to get arrested to figure out what to do next.
- Employment Law
 - How to prevent youth from being exploited by their boss
- General issues regarding discrimination

Delivery Modes

How then can PLE organizations best inform youth about the aforementioned issues? When creating materials for vulnerable youth it is important that learning materials are written in accessible language with an emphasis on pictures and real life situations. To capture the attention of youth the materials should be bright, colourful, concise, and humorous if possible. The following delivery modes were identified as being useful to vulnerable youth:

- Printed materials
 - Pocket sized formats
- Digital materials
 - Websites
 - Social Media
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - Mobile-friendly materials
 - Apps
 - Mobile optimized websites

Organizations must adapt to and embrace the tools and social media platforms of the twenty-first century to which this generation of youth are most receptive. They must also take advantage of the support systems vulnerable youth use, because secondary networks and intermediaries can provide information to a greater number of individuals than PLE organizations alone. Tools for intermediaries are valuable to youth. Youth may not understand their legal problems and will turn to a social worker they can trust for information.

Youth Problem Solving and Information-Seeking Behaviour

Although it is useful to identify the needs of vulnerable youth, it is also equally important to understand how youth solve problems and seek information to meet their needs. By considering the behaviour of youth and the sources of information on which they rely, PLE organizations are better able to tailor their services and resources towards vulnerable youth.

The research we reviewed found some general characteristics of youth that make them distinct. Young people seeking information:

- tend to take the easiest path possible to a solution;
- have weak information seeking skills; (Dresang 1999)
- seek immediate gratification and are hesitant to engage in a process that is slow; (McCarron 2004)
- do not have a basic knowledge of where to go for help; (Public Legal Education Network 2009) and
- are more likely to not seek help or delay seeking help. (Michael Bell Associates Research & Consultancy 2007)

Sources of Information

Because of these aforementioned characteristics, youth often turn to alternative sources to obtain information. They are more likely to rely on non-expert sources or the Internet for information, as opposed to mainstream expert sources.

I. Non-expert Sources

Youth generally seek advice from within their social network and “approach non-expert sources of help, often individuals, in preference to professional advice agencies” (Kenrick 2002). Non-expert sources of information include:

- friends;
- parents;
- school counsellors, teachers, and program leaders;
- community members, especially for immigrant youth (Mah 2011) and
- intermediaries like support workers (Kenrick 2002)

However, marginalized youth often lack a strong support system and experience a sense of isolation (Stewart et al. 2010). They may adopt new ineffective social ties (Stewart et al. 2010) that are inadequate to meeting their needs.

II. Internet

It is not surprising given the wealth of information freely available online that the internet is an important tool in youth problem solving behaviour.

- The internet is the most likely source of information on a range of subjects for youth. Youth are most likely to turn to the internet for information on sensitive topics that they are not comfortable discussing with others, especially topics like drugs, sex and alcohol.
- One major challenge is that youth find it difficult to identify reliable and accurate information online. (Di Antonio 2011)

III. Expert Sources

There is considerable research that indicates that youth are not seeking advice from mainstream expert sources. Youth are more likely to use expert advice or services if they are:

- Face-to-face; (Stewart et al. 2010)
- Friendly;
- Non-judgemental;
- Informal; (Kenrick 2002)
- Holistic and address emotional and social problems; (Michael Bell Associates 2007)
- Confidential;
- Age-specific/appropriate; (Kenrick 2002; Michael Bell Associates 2007)
- Honest and objective; and
- Not contradictory to their own life experience (Mah 2011).

Many of the characteristics above were seen to contribute to a relationship of trust, an important factor in a young person's decision to get expert advice (Stewart et al. 2010). Youth may even test a mainstream expert source with a trivial or small inquiry before seeking help for complex and sensitive problems (Kenrick 2002).

Available Legal Supports in Alberta

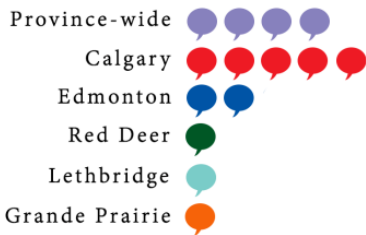
There are various legal support systems which Alberta's youth can access. Unsurprisingly, legal supports in the province are concentrated where the majority of Albertans live. Calgary and Edmonton have significantly more services available than smaller urban centres. Services outside Alberta's two biggest cities are located in Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. There are many province-wide services available but unfortunately these services are physically placed in the major cities. The location of these province-wide services may serve as an additional barrier to youth that lack the ability to travel and are looking for the easiest path to a solution.

The terminology used when describing the different legal support systems is often confused and used interchangeably. A clear understanding of the terms used can assist youth in determining what services they need to access to address their particular issue.

- **Legal information** refers to factual and general information about the law and/or the legal process that is often publically available. Examples include providing an individual with a brochure about their rights as a tenant, explaining court procedures and rules, or a website detailing the current laws and penalties governing drug use.
- **Legal advice**, on the other hand, can only be provided by a lawyer or official licensed in the appropriate jurisdiction. Legal advice is specifically tailored to a client's situation and circumstances, involves an interpretation of applicable laws or statutes, and offers recommendations on the course of action that can be taken.
- **Legal referrals** are services provided by an organization which can help individuals find a suitable lawyer to assist them with their situation. A referral service can provide contact information for lawyers in relevant areas of expertise.
- **Legal representation** is the work that a lawyer performs on behalf of a client by advocating for him or her in legal and court proceedings.

Legal Support for Alberta Youth

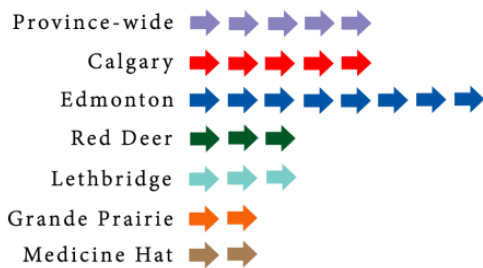
Legal Advice



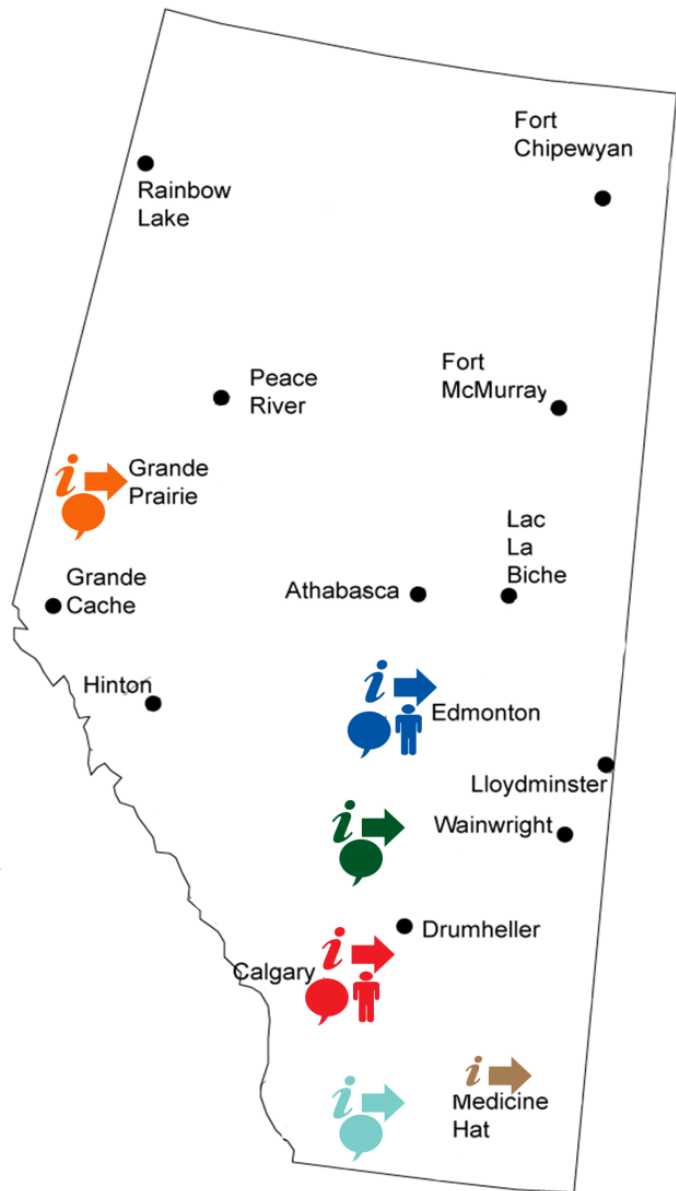
Legal Information



Legal Referrals



Legal Representation



Are Current Supports Sufficient for Vulnerable Youth in Alberta?

CPLEA surveyed intermediaries across the province to determine if the current legal supports available in Alberta are meeting the needs of vulnerable youth. Over 40 intermediaries that work with vulnerable youth in Edmonton, Calgary, and other municipalities were surveyed in person, phone interviews, and via an internet survey. Paper surveys were conducted with the Young Parent Network and the Calgary Interagency Meeting. These surveys were then followed with an internet survey for rural Albertans and further phone interviews provided more detailed responses.

Overall, the survey responses indicate that there remains a pressing need to improve and expand the legal support available to Albertan youth. When asked how often youth are successful in receiving legal help, nearly half of those surveyed responded that youth were only occasionally successful. In addition, the vast majority of intermediaries suggested that there is a continuing need for accessible legal representation and advice. A breakdown of the results can be found in the tables below.

Q: How often do youth successfully receive legal help?

| Response | Chart | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
| Edmonton and Area | | | |
| Almost Never | | 2 | 10.5% |
| Occasionally | | 10 | 52.6% |
| Often | | 1 | 5.3% |
| Almost Always | | 1 | 5.3% |
| Other/Unsure | | 2 | 10.5% |
| No Response | | 3 | 15.8% |
| | Total Responses | 19 | 100% |
| Calgary and Area | | | |
| Almost Never | | 1 | 6.7% |
| Occasionally | | 6 | 40% |
| Often | | 2 | 13.3% |
| Almost Always | | 0 | 0% |
| Other/Unsure | | 1 | 6.7% |
| No Response | | 5 | 33.3% |
| | Total Responses | 15 | 100% |
| Camrose and Stettler | | | |
| Almost Never | | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | | 1 | 100% |
| Often | | 0 | 0% |
| Almost Always | | 0 | 0% |
| Other/Unsure | | 0 | 0% |
| No Response | | 0 | 0% |
| | Total Responses | 1 | 100% |
| Total | | | |
| Almost Never | | 3 | 8.6% |
| Occasionally | | 17 | 48.6% |
| Often | | 3 | 8.6% |
| Almost Always | | 1 | 2.9% |
| Other/Unsure | | 3 | 8.6% |
| No Response | | 8 | 22.9% |
| | Total Responses | 35 | 100% |

Q: Is there a need in your community for more accessible legal representation and advice (from lawyers) for your clients?

| Response | Chart | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
| Edmonton and Area | | | |
| Yes | | 11 | 91.7% |
| No | | 0 | 0% |
| Unsure | | 1 | 8.3% |
| | Total Responses | 12 | 100% |
| Calgary and Area | | | |
| Yes | | 7 | 100% |
| No | | 0 | 0% |
| Unsure | | 0 | 0% |
| | Total Responses | 7 | 100% |
| Camrose and Stettler | | | |
| Yes | | 2 | 100% |
| No | | 0 | 0% |
| Unsure | | 0 | 0% |
| | Total Responses | 2 | 100% |
| Total | | | |
| Yes | | 19 | 95% |
| No | | 0 | 0% |
| Unsure | | 1 | 5% |
| | Total Responses | 20 | 100% |

In follow up interviews it was revealed that there is a major gap in accessible legal representation for civil law. More support is available for criminal law issues, such as through the Youth Criminal Defense Office, but there remains a lack of places to go for information on civil legal issues.

A final observation from the follow up interviews is that knowledge about the legal system greatly varied among intermediaries. This may skew some of the results of the surveys and interviews. Sometimes youth were referred to appropriate locations, such as legal aid organizations, but this was not always the case. For example, one interview suggested that if kids have a legal problem, they were told to talk to the police as soon as possible. Advice such as this is problematic, as sections 11 and 13 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protect an individual against self-incrimination. Providing accurate and accessible information to youth and intermediaries is critical to vulnerable youth.

Conclusions

The transition to adulthood is a tumultuous time for all youth, but marginalized youth face additional problems that make this transition even more precarious. PLE can play an important role in early intervention by catching youth before they fall through the cracks. Youth tend to leave problems unattended until the consequences have become so dire they can no longer be ignored. An early intervention strategy is needed to fight back against this tendency through education and awareness. It is important that youth have access to accurate legal information where they will look for it. Legal information needs to be age appropriate and available online and in the hands of non-expert sources they trust.

Working with intermediaries that support vulnerable youth should be a focus in any approach to provide legal support to youth. Intermediaries have established relationships and are more likely to be a first point of contact for youth with legal problems than other expert sources. It is important that intermediaries have a basic understanding of the legal system and are capable of making appropriate referrals. A PLE strategy for intermediaries can help to prevent situations where intermediaries with good intentions provide harmful information. Outreach to support workers will also ensure that existing services get utilized by youth.

There are many good legal support services available in Alberta but unfortunately they are not sufficient to meet the needs of all of the youth in Alberta. There are major gaps in support available for youth, especially in rural communities. Organizations with a provincial mandate are centred in Edmonton or Calgary and this can create barriers to access. Overall the intermediaries from Edmonton, Calgary, and Rural Alberta agree that there is a need for more accessible legal representation for civil law. Existing legal support services must also work to increase awareness of their services among key stakeholders in the community.

Reference Materials List

Agosto, Denise E., Hughes-Hassell, Sandra. (2006). *Toward a Model of the Everyday Life Information Needs of Urban Teenagers, Part 1: Theoretical Model*. [Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 57\(10\): 1394-1403](#)

This is the first part of a two-part article that offers a theoretical and an empirical model of the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers.

Buck, Alexy, Pleasence, Pascoe, Balmer, Nigel J. (2008). *Do citizens know how to deal with legal issues? Some empirical insights*. [Journal of Social Policy, Vol. 37, Issue 04, October 2008, pp 661-681](#) Cambridge University Press.

Over recent years there has been increasing policy concern in the UK about whether citizens are equipped with sufficient legal 'know-how'. In January 2006, the Department for Constitutional Affairs, now Ministry of Justice, announced a Public Legal Education and Support Task Force to develop and promote the case for a national strategy. This comes after UK government strategies have recently been developed for both consumer education and financial capability. Drawing on empirical data, this article explores whether there is indeed a lack of awareness and confidence among the population of England and Wales in regard to legal issues. The results from the English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey, a large-scale face-to-face survey representative of the population, illustrate the case for targeted as well as general public legal education initiatives.

Connaway, Lynn Sillipigni, Dickey, Timothy J., Radford, Marie L. (2011). *"If it is too inconvenient I'm not going after it:" Convenience as a critical factor in information seeking behaviors*. [Library & Information Science Research 33 \(2011\) 179-190](#) Elsevier Inc.

In today's fast-paced world, anecdotal evidence suggests that information tends to inundate people, and users of information systems want to find information quickly and conveniently. Empirical evidence for convenience as a critical factor is explored in the data from two multi-year, user study projects funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The theoretical framework for this understanding is founded in the concepts of bounded rationality and rational choice theory, with Savolainen's (2006) concept of time as a context in information seeking, as well as gratification theory, informing the emphasis on the seekers' time horizons. Convenience is a situational criterion in peoples' choices and actions during all stages of the information-seeking process. The concept of convenience can include their choice of an information source, their satisfaction with the source and its ease of use, and their time horizon in information seeking. The centrality of convenience is especially prevalent among the younger subjects ("millennials") in both studies, but also holds across all demographic categories—age, gender, academic role, or user or non-user of virtual reference services. These two studies further indicate that convenience is a factor for making choices in a

variety of situations, including both academic information seeking and everyday-life information seeking, although it plays different roles in different situations.

This paper investigates convenience as a major theme in different information-seeking behaviors by analyzing data from two multi-year Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-funded projects

Di Antonio, Elena. (June 2011). *How young people look for information online: A survey of views in six European countries*. London, UK: YouthNet.

The present research has been undertaken as part of the “European Digital Youth information Project (EDYIP), a networking project on the theme of online information for young people.

The aim of the research is to provide insights into the issues that young people face when searching for online information in order to inform the development of good practice on how best to reach young people through the internet.

Dresang, Eliza. (1999). *More research needed: Informal information-seeking behavior of youth on the Internet*. [Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 50 \(12\) 1123-1124](#)

Dresang, Eliza T. *Information-seeking behavior of youth in the digital environment*. [Library Trends, Vol. 54, No. 2, Fall 2005 pp. 178-196](#) Illinois: Board of Trustees, University of Illinois.

The theory of Radical Change, which is based on the digital age principles of interactivity, connectivity, and access, is suggested as a lens to reexamine existing research on youth information-seeking behavior in the digital environment. After a brief review of research meta-analyses, which often point to deficits in youth information-seeking behavior, questions that emerge from this research are suggested. Meta-analyses of gender and information behavior studies find that some recent research disputes former conclusions.

Radical Change is applied to an examination of specific facets of contemporary research in order to demonstrate how new perspectives can be gained. This analysis addresses commonalities between information-seeking behavior related to the handheld book with hypertextual qualities and digital materials, the social nature of information seeking, and emerging issues of access. It is noted that the public library as a setting for research has rarely been used, even though its less structured nature might provide insights that do not surface in schools. A look at directions for youth information-seeking behavior research in the future proposes how brain research might shed further light on behavioral observations.

Goodwin-De Fariaa, Christine, Marinos, Voula. (2012). *Youth Understanding & Assertion of Legal Rights: Examining the Roles of Age and Power*. [International Journal of Children's Rights, Vol. 20, Issue 3, pg 343-364](#) Marinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Young people are entitled to the same legal rights as adults. However past research has questioned the extent to which youth effectively understand their rights and perceive that they can assert them when necessary because of their development and power differences vis-à-vis adult criminal justice professionals. Young people's understanding of their due process rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child were examined. Participants were fifty adolescents ranging in age from 13-17 who received a diversionary response by the Crown prosecutor or were sentenced by the court to probation in a courthouse in Toronto, Ontario. Results of semi-structured interviews conducted with youth indicated that while age plays some role, the lack of power experienced by youth vis-à-vis criminal justice professionals has the most bearing on the inability of youth to exercise their rights. Implications of the study are discussed.

Kenrick, James. (2002). *Rights to access: meeting young people's needs for advice*. [Rights to Access Project](#) Youth Access.

This publication is intended to highlight the unique nature of young people's needs for advice and the inadequacy of current provisions to meet those needs. It contains recommendations for policy makers, planners of services, funders and providers on how to achieve improvements in young people's access to appropriate high quality advice services.

Kenrick, James. (2007). *Understanding young people's needs for advice, information and education on housing and related issues - an overview*. [Rights to Access Project](#) London, UK: Youth Access.

This paper contains information to help service planners to understand:

- root causes for young people's needs for advice, information and education
- extent of young people's needs
- range of young people's need
- common housing advice problems of young people
- clustering of problems
- specific needs of vulnerable groups

Mah, Sharon. British Columbia. Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government. (2011). *Public legal education and information (PLEI) for immigrant youth: A scoping review*. Victoria, B.C. British Columbia. Ministry of Labour, Citizens' services and Open Government. <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public/PLEIImmigrantYouth.pdf>

This Scoping Review describes promising practices in facilitating immigrant youth access to legal information. It includes a thorough, although non-exhaustive, literature review of methods of designing and delivering preventive youth programs that have been evaluated and recognized as promising. A cross-jurisdictional scan was conducted to

identify existing preventive youth programs and information delivery methods for youth in general. The scan section of the Scoping Review is divided into two sections: non-legal programs for youth and legal programs for youth. The first section describes a number of successful youth programs in the fields of health, anti-violence, anti-bullying, and social development. The second section only describes youth programs that provide legal information. If an evaluation of a program was available, a summary of the evaluation's findings are included. Where possible, programs designed specifically for immigrant youth are presented.

McCarron, Kate. (November 2004). *Young adults and information seeking behavior: A review of the literature*. <https://home.comcast.net/~kate.mccarron/INFO511ROL.pdf>

This school librarian, was interested to see what research had been published on the information-seeking behavior of young adults. Do they have the knowledge, as the quote suggests, to find the resource? This knowledge may be helpful in understanding their needs as well as some of their affective and cognitive processes.

The review of the literature is synthesized by scope and categorized into five general areas of focus: 1. Barriers; 2. Information-Seeking Behavior; 3. Imposed Queries vs. Self-Initiated Queries; 4. Perceptions of Library and Librarians; 5. Gender Differences.

The second part of the review is a listing of reference resources that would be appropriate for the Young Adults and the Librarians that serve this user group. It is geared toward the premise that most teens visit the library for a homework assignment, career guidance or general reading. ((Loertscher, 2002; Jones, 2002; Pierce, 2003)

Michael Bell Associates Research & Consultancy. (2007). *Rights to Access Project - Interim evaluation summary report for youth access*. London, UK: Michael Bell Associates Research & Consultancy.

This interim report draws together a comprehensive picture of the available evidence of young people's advice needs. It demonstrates the current gaps and failings of existing policy and structures to recognise young people's need for rights-based advice and to have access to services equipped to meet those needs across the psectrum of generalist and specialist levels of help.

Public Legal Education Network. (July 2009). *Measuring young people's legal capability: Research report*. London, U.K. Public Legal Education Network (Plenet) <http://www.lawforlife.org.uk/data/files/measuring-young-peoples-legal-capability-2009-117.pdf>

In 2008, the Public Legal Education Network commissioned Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) to carry out an exploratory study on young people's legal capability. The study published in 2009 signifies an important new approach to looking at the need for and delivery of public legal education. The research aimed to get a better understanding of the components of legal capability to help develop a conceptual model that could provide the basis for a future baseline survey of the levels and types of legal

capability in the wider population. The study considered young peoples' knowledge, skill and attitudes to legal problems.

Stewart, Miriam, Beutter, Linda, Letourneau, Nicole, Makwarimba, Edward, Hungler, Krista. (2010). *Supporting homeless youth: Perspectives and preferences*. [Journal of Poverty, 14:2, 145-165](#) London, UK:

Homelessness among adolescents and young adults is a growing concern in Canada and other countries, yet little is known about their support needs and support intervention preferences from the perspectives of homeless youth or youth at risk of homelessness. The authors assessed these needs and preferences through individual and group interviews with homeless adolescents and young adults (n = 35) and their service providers (n = 27). The unique perspectives of service providers and homeless youth converged on some issues. Key challenges faced by these youth included social isolation, alienation, low self-worth, lack of resources, and substance abuse. Although some services were available, they did not fully meet existing needs. Participants indicated that interventions should focus on emotional and affirmational support. They recommended face-to-face support that was accessible, flexible, participatory, long-term, and offered choice.

Appendix

| Organization | Service Area | Description and Programs | Services Provided | Legal Services |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|--|--|
| Calgary Elizabeth Fry Society | Calgary | The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary (EFry) offers Pathways to Healing for women in conflict, or at risk of being in conflict, with the law by providing opportunities through supports and advocacy. EFry works from a holistic approach grounded in the values of <i>Integrity, Ingenuity</i> and <i>Advocacy</i> . They hold a vision of equality that promotes a woman's sense of self in her journey through lived experience towards infinite potential. | Youth Court Work Program - The Youth Court Work Program assists youth appearing in First Appearance Provincial Court by providing information on legal and community resources. The Youth Court Liaison works with a team of volunteers to assist any youth, as well as parents, by explaining court procedures and the legal and community resources available to them. Consequently, the youth and their families are able to make educated decisions on how to handle their criminal charges. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Other Support |
| Calgary Immigrant Women's Association | Calgary | CIWA is a culturally diverse settlement agency that recognizes, responds to, and focuses on the unique concerns and needs of immigrant and refugee women, girls and their families. | Civic participation encouragement programs and free legal advice at weekly legal clinics to immigrant women. Services offered include: weekly legal clinic offered in partnership with Calgary Legal Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| Calgary John Howard Society | Calgary | Alternatives for adolescent males project, Calgary Community Conferencing, Child and Youth Empowerment Strategy, Crime Impact Program, Criminal Justice Education, Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program, Youth Aboriginal Outreach. | The Youth Advocacy and Support Program (YAS) assists youth between 13-18 years old who are at risk of and/or involved in the criminal justice system. These youth are assisted with the difficulties they are experiencing in the home, at school and/or in the community that may lead to risk of criminal behavior. Program staff provides one-to-one support, family mediation, crisis resolution and counseling for youth experiencing family breakdown/conflict, substance misuse issues, anger management, mental health and other issues. Youth Advocates can assist with: Accessing services and resources for basic needs, housing, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Referrals |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------|---|---|--|
| | | | employment, education, financial support, child welfare assistance, criminal justice system assistance, legal rights and services , education and recreation | |
| Calgary Legal Guidance | Calgary | Calgary Legal Guidance exists to provide legal assistance and information to disadvantaged persons who would not otherwise have access to such services. | Provide legal information and advice to low-income people who cannot afford a lawyer and don't qualify for Legal Aid. Dial-a-Law (province wide service). Pre-recorded legal information service from a touch tone phone 24 hours per day, and operator assistance if needed during regular business hours. Service offers: operator assistance during open hours to help select recordings, pre-recorded information on legal issues, giving general information on consumer law, criminal law, employment law, family law, real estate law, wills and estate law, youth and the law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Referrals |
| Children's Legal and Educational Resource Centre (CLERC) | Province-wide | Based in Calgary, CLERC provides legal information and education throughout Alberta. Anyone seeking child and youth civil law information in Alberta can contact CLERC. If you are 19 years of age or under, CLERC may be able to assist you with your civil legal problems. | Information, advice, referrals , CLERC has a public legal education mandate and as such provides children, youth and their families with legal education, legal information and legal representation. Partner with Calgary YWCA to provide legal services and host the website Alberta Youthlaw.ca | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Referrals • Representation |
| City of Calgary. Youth Justice Society | Calgary | The Calgary Youth Justice Society, through a community-development approach, contributes to the success of Youth Justice Committees by providing fundamental support through public awareness, resources, training and guidance. They provide support and leadership to communities who are interested in establishing a Youth Justice Committee. | Referrals from Crown Attorney's office. Provide a meaningful alternative to court . Community partners include: MASTT (early intervention initiative); YARD (community-based early intervention program; Calgary Police Services; Gateway (pre-charge extrajudicial measures program - referred by Calgary youth probation officers); Calgary Community Conferencing (collaborative, restorative justice program); New Roads (early intervention program) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Judicial Measures |

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| Student Legal Assistance (Calgary) | Calgary | Student Legal Assistance (Calgary) is a volunteer, nonprofit, registered charity through which law students at the University of Calgary provide year-round free legal assistance and representation to residents of the Calgary area who cannot afford legal assistance. | Legal information and representation. Aboriginal Youth Project - Students assigned to this project will deliver a series of presentations to high school students at Siksika and Morley First Nation Schools. Anticipated lessons may include the Charter and its application to the reserve, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and a lesson on the Indian Act. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Representation |
| Pro Bono Students Canada at the University of Calgary | Calgary | Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) is a national network of law schools and community organizations that match law students with public interest and non-governmental organizations, government agencies, tribunals and legal clinics during the academic year. PBSC is the only national organization of its kind in Canada with over 1600 volunteers spread across all 22 Canadian Law Faculties. | Pro Bono Students Canada – University of Calgary provides free legal information to communities in need by working directly with nonprofit community organizations. PBSC also offers help to unrepresented litigants in family court through its Family Law Project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information |
| Worth Unlimited | Calgary | Streetlight's goal is to reach street orientated youth. This mobile drop-in center in Calgary's downtown core is unique since it is a custom built fifth-wheel trailer featuring a safe and friendly environment for street kids. Streetlight works together with the community and other street orientated agencies. Youth Guidance was founded in 1977 with the purpose of guiding youth who are experiencing problems at home, at school or with the law. | Programs: <i>Streetlight</i> and <i>Youth Guidance</i> . Youth are often referred to the Worth Unlimited program by Alberta Social Services, Youth Probation and other community agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| YWCA - Calgary | Calgary | The YWCA of Calgary is dedicated to breaking the cycles of domestic violence, homelessness and poverty. | The YWCA partners with Calgary Legal Guidance, CLERC who provide free legal advice to families and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice |

| Organization | Service Area | Description and Programs | Services Provided | Legal Services |
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| Boyle Street Community Services | Edmonton | The mission of the Boyle Street Community Services is to build and provide community support for people with multiple barriers to community inclusion. | Intake and Referral Office - assistance with finding professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and counselors; completion of forms; Commissioner of Oaths; advocacy for people who are having difficulty negotiating “the system” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| Chimo Youth Retreat Centre | Edmonton | Programs that provide housing, day programs and training programs to meet the individual needs of youth. Aims to reintegrate youth experiencing a range of challenges back into the community through a variety of supportive programs. | No legal services provided | N/A |
| Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (ECCC) | Edmonton | Kids in the Hall Bistro, work with sexually exploited youth dealing with abuse, poverty, addictions | No legal services provided | N/A |
| Edmonton Community Legal Centre | Edmonton | ECLC provides free legal services to low income individuals (Youth included) | Civil matters only. Traffic related offences are referred to Student Legal Services Hold legal information sessions in partnership with the Edmonton Public Library. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Representation |
| Edmonton Elizabeth Fry Society | Edmonton | EFry fosters the dignity and worth of all women and girls who are or may be at risk of becoming criminalized. Reduce barriers and improve community integration for women and girls who are or are at risk of becoming criminalized. Human Rights. Protect the human rights of women and girls who are or are at risk of becoming criminalized. | Just-Us-Girls - is a Community-Based Initiative Aimed at a Pro-Active, Gender Specific, Restorative Justice Approach for Young Moms, ages 12-24, with a Current Children and Youth Services’ Court Application And / Or a Youth Criminal Court Matter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Support |
| Edmonton John Howard Society | Edmonton | The LOFT (Life Opportunities for Transition) community based residence and independent living experience. The Bridges Treatment Program at Howard House. Youth Program / REE*START. Stop Shoplifting. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Referrals • Other Support |

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| Edmonton Youth Justice | Edmonton | The Edmonton Youth Justice is focused on youth and the early community intervention of young offenders or youth who are at risk of offending. They focus on restorative justice measures between the offender and the victim, as well as a focus on extra-judicial measures. They do this through the work of three youth justice committees in the City of Edmonton. | Restorative justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Judicial Measures |
| Inner City Youth Development Association | Edmonton | Provides youth with programs that promote and facilitate positive behaviour, creative expression, and cooperative working skills. Formal education program, literacy, wellness education, community referrals | Referrals to support services, aboriginal youth program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| Kids in Distress Society | Edmonton | Youth group retreats, street education programs, counseling | Youth Criminal Justice Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| Old Strathcona Youth society | Edmonton and Strathcona County | Services include access to resources such as AADAC, Terra, STD Clinic, Child Welfare, housing and employment searches; workshops; and information and referral to community resources; | AADAC; YESS; STI Clinic nurses; Student Legal Services ; John Howard Society; and Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services, Region 6. The Society partners with Student Legal Services to provide legal advice and information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities | Edmonton | The REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities is a community-based non-profit organization, working to make Edmonton a safer city in one generation, by focusing on crime prevention initiatives. | Provide at-risk and vulnerable Edmontonians around-the-clock access to the help they require, ultimately reducing dependence on medical, police and judicial services. It is a model for more coordinated and integrated delivery of support, prevention and intervention services, for vulnerable Edmontonians, by front-line agencies on a 24/7 basis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| Spirit Keeper Youth Society | Edmonton | Provides various training programs to the community, a safe place for Aboriginal youth 12 to 18 years, and delivers a variety of multi-cultural, community-based services in a culturally sensitive manner. | Gang intervention and prevention programs Legal information and referrals in partnership with BearPaw Legal Education and Resource Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Referrals |

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| Student Legal Services (U of A) | Edmonton | Student Legal Services of Edmonton is a nonprofit, charitable organization that provides year-round free legal services to those individuals who are unable to afford a lawyer. | Legal representation is provided under certain circumstances, where the accused or complainant is under 18 years of age. If under 18, accused or complainant has a right to Legal Aid and should contact the Youth Criminal Defense Office. (The one exception where SLS may open a file is when a young person is charged with a non-criminal offence such as a traffic offence, and Legal Aid has refused to represent the young person.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Representation (under certain circumstances) |
| The Today Centre | Edmonton | The Centre's mission is to serve people affected by family violence through collaborative, community wide services. | No legal services provided | N/A |
| YOUCAN Youth Services | Edmonton | YOUCAN Youth Services works with at-risk youth in Edmonton. The organization has several programs to help at risk youth get out of harm's way. | Referrals - not direct service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals only |
| Youth Emergency Shelter Society of Edmonton (YESS) | Edmonton | Provides food, shelter, clothing, counseling, mediation, referrals to youth at risk, Armoury Youth Centre | referrals - problems with the law, Legal Aid workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals only |
| Youth Restorative Action Project (YRAP) | Edmonton | The Youth Restorative Action Project is a Youth Justice Committee sanctioned under the new Youth Criminal Justice Act. It is the first YJC mandated to work in youth court with young people who have caused harm as a result of hate crimes and significant social issues YRAP is also the first such committee to be comprised entirely of Youth Members, and takes a unique approach to achieving the goals of Restorative Justice. YRAP also collaborates on projects promoting justice equality and rights for all youth, particularly youth at risk and new Canadians. | YRAP performs many legal functions including sentencing and extrajudicial sanctions, judicial interim releases, treatment plans, the supervision of community service and probation orders and mediation. <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i> , restorative justice, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Judicial Measures |

| Organization | Service Area | Description and Programs | Services Provided | Legal Services |
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| Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic | Red Deer and surrounding area | Provide legal assistance and information to disadvantaged persons who would not otherwise have access to such services. | The Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic (CACLC) provides legal advice and information to people who cannot afford a lawyer and do not qualify for legal aid about a variety of legal matters including family and civil law. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| Rocky Youth Development Society | Rocky Mountain House, Caroline | Provides after school and summertime programs and activities for the children of residents of Clearwater county, Rocky Mountain House and Caroline. Provides an evening program for youth and a youth employment services program. | No legal services provided | N/A |
| St. Albert Community Justice Society (SAYJC) | St. Albert | A group of volunteers, who in partnership with Alberta Justice System, deal with first and second time young offenders in St. Albert, enabling them to take responsibility for their actions. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Judicial Measures |
| Strathcona Youth Justice Committee (SYJC) | Strathcona County | The Strathcona Youth Justice Committee is comprised of a group of volunteers from the community who are empowered under the Youth Criminal Justice Act to administer a measures program that serves as an alternative to court imposed punishment and a consequent criminal record. | The committee oversees a program that serves as an alternative to court imposed punishment and consequent criminal record | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-Judicial Measures |
| Cool Aid Society of Grande Prairie | Grande Prairie | Drop in centres, guidance and support, recreational activities | No legal services provided | N/A |
| Grande Prairie Interagency Youth Services | Grande Prairie | Youth Interagency provides a monthly forum for local community service agencies and their workers to network and learn more about emerging youth trends and share program updates. | No legal services provided | N/A |

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| Grande Prairie Legal Guidance | Grande Prairie | Provide legal assistance and information to disadvantaged persons who would not otherwise have access to such services. | GPLG offers free legal guidance to low income individuals who have a legal problem and do not qualify for Legal Aid. Legal services at GPLG are offered "pro bono" which means there is no expectation of a fee. Representation in court is not provided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society | Grande Prairie | Sunrise House Shelter Program, counseling, mediations, referrals | Referrals, counseling, mediation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals only |
| John Howard Societies | Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat | The John Howard Society of Alberta is a non-profit agency concerned with the problem of crime and its prevention. It was incorporated in 1949, and today the organization consists of six separately incorporated districts along with the Provincial Office | Operations and services available vary from district to district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Referrals • Other Support |
| Lethbridge Legal Guidance | Lethbridge | Lethbridge Legal Guidance (LLG) is a non-profit society providing free legal advice, information and education to Albertans who are not able to afford access to justice. | LLG provides legal assistance and information to disadvantaged persons who would not otherwise have access to such services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| Streets Alive Family Support Association | Lethbridge | Outreach program to at risk youth | Mobile street unit providing support services to at risk individuals on the street | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to community services only |
| Youth Emergency Shelter's | Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer | Provides food, shelter, clothing, counseling, mediation, referrals to youth at risk | The Criminal Justice Education (CJE) program aims to increase awareness and knowledge of the criminal justice system for both adults and youth, among Calgary and area community members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals only |
| Parkland Youth Homes Society | Parkland County, Central Alberta, Red Deer | Continuum of services is provided to young people and their families that reside in Central Alberta. We have been operating in the Red Deer area since 1987. Youth Counselors are on site to guide and refer youth and offer specific programs | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals only |

| Organization | Service Area | Description and Programs | Services Provided | Legal Services |
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| Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) | Province-wide | The Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) is a family based, non-profit federation that advocates on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. | Legal assistance is available to families and individuals who require legal services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other support |
| Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre | Province-wide | The Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre is a Canadian non-governmental, non-profit organization. Their site provides information about human rights law and civil liberties. They cannot offer legal advice in response to specific problems. | Information/Referral - The Research Centre also responds to members of the public who call with questions about civil liberties and human rights. They receive hundreds of calls every year, and provide information or refer callers to other resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Referrals |
| Alberta Solicitor General - Young Offender Programs | Province-wide | Young offender centres located in Edmonton and Calgary | Young Offender Branch Custody Program - Casework (youth workers assigned to each young offender in custody); Educational/Day Programs (academic and instructional needs); Life Skills Programs, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Support |
| BearPaw Legal Education & Resource Centre | Province-wide | Help Aboriginal people navigate the legal system and gain awareness of their legal rights and obligations. Bear Paw is a department of Native Counseling Services of Alberta | Publications, videos, podcasts for youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information |
| Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLEA) | Province-wide | CPLEA is a public legal education organization guided by the belief that access to information about the laws and legal processes should be the right of everyone in a free society. | Legal information, education, training, research, and consulting services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information |
| Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta (FJA) | Province-wide | Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta's mandate is to incite the French-speaking youth of Alberta to discover their full potential, and to learn the importance of being involved in one's community. | No programs that provide legal services | N/A |

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| John Howard Society of Alberta | Province-wide | The John Howard Society of Alberta is a non-profit agency concerned with the problem of crime and its prevention. It was incorporated in 1949, and today the organization consists of six separately incorporated districts (Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge) along with the Provincial Office. | <p>Programs: The LOFT (Life Opportunities for Transition_, Bridges Treatment Program at Howard house, REE*START</p> <p>Referrals are primarily received from Edmonton and Calgary Young Offender Centres. However, the program is a provincial resource and could also receive recommended referrals from court or probation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Other Support |
| Law Society of Alberta | Province-wide | The Law Society of Alberta is the self-governing association of all practising lawyers in the province of Alberta. The mission of the Law Society is to serve the public interest by promoting a high standard of legal services and professional conduct through the governance and regulation of an independent legal profession. | <p>The Lawyer Referral service is a program operated by the Law Society to assist members of the public in finding a lawyer who will provide the legal services they require. It is an information service and is not connected with Legal Aid - nor does it provide any form of financially subsidized legal service. A member of the public may phone toll free from anywhere in Alberta by dialing: 1-800-661-1095 and a Lawyer Referral Operator will answer. The Lawyer Referral Operator will give the contact information of three lawyers practicing in the applicable field of law. The member of the public can then make an appointment with one, two, or all three of those lawyers, advising that they were referred by Lawyer Referral.</p> <p>There is no charge for the first half-hour interview, after which the member of the public can decide whether or not to engage the lawyer at the full fee rates, and the lawyer can decide whether to accept the engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |

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| Legal Aid Alberta | Province-wide | Legal Aid Alberta exists to provide cost effective legal services for Albertans in need. Their mission is to improve access to justice for Albertans by providing a continuum of quality, innovative, and cost effective services that enable our clients to achieve lasting resolutions to their legal issues. | Legal Aid Alberta can assist youth under the age of 18 if they have been charged with a criminal offence. Legal Services, Brydges Duty Counsel Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Representation |
| Native Counseling Services of Alberta | Province-wide | Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) was established in 1970 with the objective of providing Courtworker assistance to Aboriginal people in conflict with the law. | The delivery of the off-reserve Aboriginal Criminal Youth and Family Court Worker Programs are among these. Court Worker programs offer in- and out-of-court support and advocacy. Court Workers cannot provide advice or representation but will help prepare cases, assist with LAA applications and facilitate inter-service transitions or referrals as well as translation/interpreter services. They may also speak in court on behalf of clients. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Other Support |
| Native Women's Association of Canada - Youth Council | Province-wide | The mission of the Youth Council is to represent, promote, advocate, empower, protect and education young indigenous women of Canada; Encourage unity and the growth of the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of one's self, family and community. | Violence Prevention Toolkit No direct legal representation services only referrals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals |
| Office of the Child and Youth Advocate | Province-wide *offices in Edmonton and Calgary | Legal representation for children and youth (LRCY). The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is responsible for appointing lawyers for children and youth for all matters under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act. Find an advocate webpage | Legal Representation for Children and Youth, more commonly known as "LRCY" or "Legal Say" is a service that is provided to young people through the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information • Representation |

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| Pro Bono Law Alberta | Province-wide | Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) is a charitable organization that promotes access to justice in Alberta by creating and promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide <i>pro bono</i> (free) legal services to persons of limited means. PBLA was formed in 2007 as the legacy project in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Law Society of Alberta. | Duty counsel (Edmonton and Calgary) - Civil matters - forms, advice, etc. PBLA partners with Calgary YWCA to provide legal services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Information |
| Weron2u | Province-wide | Educational website providing tips and advice for teens on how to protect themselves from Internet crime. Site is developed from a youth perspective. | Legal information only | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information |
| Youth Criminal Defence Office (YCDO) | Province-wide | YCDO provides legal services on behalf of youths (under 18 years of age) that have been charged with a criminal offence. The services of the YCDO are available to young persons facing charges in the Youth Courts of Calgary and Edmonton. Staff lawyers are appointed for youths who have qualified for assistance through Legal Aid Alberta or who have had a lawyer appointed by a youth court Judge. | Legal Services, Duty Counsel, Social Workers - Immediate legal advice for Youth under arrest - 24 hours/7 days - Calgary (403)297-4400 Edmonton (780)422-8383 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Representation |