



Criminal Law in Alberta

ACCESSING JUSTICE SERIES

Legal Information for Frontline Service Providers

This guide was developed for frontline service providers in Alberta who work with vulnerable individuals. It provides general legal information on Alberta law only. This guide does not provide legal advice. Last updated January 2016.

Centre for
Public
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Legal Education
Alberta

The contents of this booklet are provided as general information only. This booklet does not contain legal advice. If your client requires legal advice, he or she should consult a lawyer.

The information contained in this booklet was correct at the time it was produced. Be aware that there may have been subsequent changes which make the information outdated at the time you are reading it. Legal Resource Centre of Alberta will not be responsible for any loss arising from reliance on or action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

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The Legal Resource Centre of Alberta, operating as the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help people understand the law as it affects their everyday lives. We develop plain language booklets, presentations and other learning materials to help people recognize and respond to their legal rights and responsibilities. We have a variety of programs, and provide legal information and referral on many legal topics. For more information, please go to www.cplea.ca.

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Criminal Law in Alberta

1. The Law in Alberta

Federal Laws

Criminal Code

The *Criminal Code* outlines most of the criminal offences in Canada. It also includes information about what sentence individuals may receive if they plead guilty or are convicted of an offence. As federal legislation, the *Criminal Code* applies across Canada.

Courts regularly make decisions that influence how the *Criminal Code* is interpreted. As such, it is particularly important for your clients to seek legal advice if they have been charged with a criminal offence.

Controlled Drugs and Substances Act

The *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* outlines drug-related criminal offences, including possession, trafficking, and production of illegal drugs. It also includes information about what sentence individuals may receive if they plead guilty or are convicted of a drug-related offence. As federal legislation, the Act applies across Canada.

This is another piece of legislation where courts often make decisions influencing how it is interpreted. Further, the Government of Canada is expected to be introducing significant changes to the Act in the near future with the legalization of marijuana and removal of certain mandatory minimums. It is important for clients facing drug-related criminal charges to seek legal advice.

Youth Criminal Justice Act

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act* applies to individuals 12 to 17 years old who are charged with criminal offences. The Act outlines the rights of youth charged with criminal offences as well as sentencing guidelines for youth who accept responsibility, plead guilty or are convicted of a criminal offence. The Act directs courts to consider rehabilitation and reintegration as the primary goals when sentencing youth.

All young adults charged with criminal offences are eligible for legal representation through Legal Aid Alberta's Youth Criminal Defence Office. Youth clients can call 1-866-845-3425 for more information.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* plays a significant role in criminal law in Canada. The *Charter* outlines the fundamental rights of all Canadians, including the following legal rights:

- Right to life, liberty and security of the person
- Right to be free from unreasonable search or seizure
- Right not be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned
- When arrested or detained:
 - » the right to know the reasons for the arrest or detention
 - » the right to a lawyer
- When charged with a criminal offence:
 - » the right to a trial within a reasonable time
 - » the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
 - » the right to bail unless the Crown proves there is just cause for detention
- Right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment
- Right to the assistance of an interpreter for legal proceedings

Clients who feel their Charter rights were infringed or denied after being stopped, detained, or arrested by police, should document the details of their interaction and get legal advice right away. View the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* online at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>.

Provincial Laws

Protection against Family Violence Act

The *Protection against Family Violence Act* outlines how to get certain no contact orders like Emergency Protection Orders and Queen's Bench Protection Orders. The legislation gives police the ability to arrest an individual for breaching these no contact orders and directs the court to impose a fine or term of imprisonment if an individual is convicted.

Gaming and Liquor Act

The *Gaming and Liquor Act* is provincial legislation that prohibits certain behaviours such as public intoxication, drinking in public places, selling alcohol to minors, and allowing minors in casinos. Fines and jail time may be ordered if an individual is convicted of breaking a rule under this Act.

Trespass to Premises Act / Petty Trespass Act

These two laws prohibit individuals from entering, accessing, using property without the owner's permission, refusing to leave when asked to do so by the property owners, or entering premises when oral or written notice has been given not to trespass. Individuals can be arrested and fined for trespassing in Alberta.

Traffic Safety Act

The *Traffic Safety Act* applies only to individuals in Alberta. It outlines the rules of the road in Alberta including speed limits, distracted driving, and disqualifications from driving. Failure to obey these provincial rules could result in fines, demerit points, suspension or revocation of driver's licenses, or jail time.

Bylaws

In Alberta, every municipality has the right to create its own bylaws to deal with nuisances, public transit, use of public places, the safety, health and welfare of people, and the protection of people and property. Individuals can be ticketed for breaking a bylaw and may face a fine or jail time. For more information on the bylaws in your municipality, visit your local government's website or contact your local bylaw enforcement agency.

2. Police Powers and Responsibilities

Police officers in Canada have certain powers and responsibilities when interacting with the public. This section provides basic information to help you inform your clients about their rights when dealing with police.



If you are working with a client who feels his or her rights were infringed by police, help your client remember what happened by having them document it in writing or through an audio or visual recording and recommend your client speak to a lawyer. See [Section 8](#) for services that may be able to help.

Can police require clients to provide personal information or identification?

Police can ask clients for their name, address, and date of birth, but clients are not required to provide this information unless they are arrested or have broken a municipal or provincial law requiring a ticket to be issued. There is no requirement for clients to carry identification unless they are doing something that requires a license (i.e. driving). Clients should be aware that lying about their name or address could result in their arrest and they could face a criminal charge for obstructing justice.

Clients should exercise caution when interacting with police and always be polite, even if they feel they are not being treated fairly. Becoming defensive or confrontational with police rarely leads to positive outcomes and could result in clients being detained or arrested.

Can police require clients to answer their questions?

Police can approach clients and ask questions but they are under no obligation to answer these questions. Police must let an individual go unless they have grounds to detain or arrest the individual.

Even if arrested, clients are not under any obligation to answer police questions beyond providing their name, address, and date of birth. Clients should tell police they do not want to say anything and want to speak to a lawyer.

Anything a client says to police at any point (pre- or post-arrest) can be used against the client in court. It is not recommended for clients to answer police questions unless they have been told to do so by their lawyer.

What is detention? When can police detain a client? What can police do if they have detained someone?

If police are investigating a crime and have reasonable suspicion that a certain individual is connected to the crime, police can stop that individual and hold him or her in police custody. This is referred to as detention.

Clients who have been detained have not been arrested or charged with a criminal offence, but they still have the same rights as someone who has been arrested. When police detain an individual, they must:

- State that they are police and show identification (particularly important if an officer is undercover)
- Inform the individual that he or she is being detained, explain why, and make sure the individual understands
- Inform the individual of his or her right to a lawyer and free legal advice

Police should stop questioning a detained individual once he or she has asked to speak with a lawyer. However, police can and will continue to question an individual after he or she has received legal advice. Unless otherwise advised by a lawyer, it is never a good idea for a detained individual to answer police questions as everything he or she says could be used as evidence in court.

In the case of a detention, police have limited search powers. They can only perform a pat down search of a detained individual if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the individual poses a safety risk to themselves or the public.



If a client was detained by police but not informed about the detention or given the right to a lawyer, he or she should record what happened and talk to a lawyer as soon as possible.

What obligations do the police have when they arrest someone?

When police arrest an individual, they must:

- State that they are police and show identification (particularly important if an officer is undercover)
- Inform the individual that he or she is being arrested, explain why, and make sure the individual understands
- Inform the individual of his or her right to a lawyer and free legal advice

Police are supposed to stop questioning an arrested individual once he or she has asked to speak with a lawyer. However, police can and will continue to question an individual after he or she has received legal advice. Unless otherwise told by a lawyer, it is never a good idea for an arrested individual to answer police questions as everything he or she says could be used as evidence in court.



If a client was arrested but not informed about the reasons for the arrest or given the right to a lawyer, he or she should record what happened and get legal advice as soon as possible.

What rights do clients have if they are detained or arrested?

If a client has been detained or arrested, he or she has the following rights:

- Right to remain silent and refuse to answer police questions
- Right to speak to a lawyer as soon as possible
- Right to free legal advice (police are obligated to provide the phone number for Legal Aid Alberta's 24-hour legal advice telephone line)
- Right to legal advice in his or her first language (police are required to facilitate interpretation services if required)
- Right to privacy while speaking with a lawyer

If a client has been arrested and is being held in police custody, he or she must be brought before a justice of the peace or a judge for a bail hearing within 24 hours.

If any of these rights were infringed or denied, a client should document what happened and talk to a lawyer as soon as possible.

When are police allowed to search a client?

Police are only allowed to search an individual in limited circumstances.

- Upon detention, police can conduct a pat-down search for weapons if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the individual poses a safety risk.
- After arrest, police can search an individual to ensure their own safety and to find evidence.
- If the client provides informed consent to the search.
- If police believe a client has an illegal weapon or one used to commit a crime and police believe it might be destroyed or moved before a search warrant is obtained, they can search the client.
- If police find a client in a place where they are searching for drugs and believe the client has drugs, they can search the client.
- If police find a client in a vehicle where people are consuming alcohol illegally and they believe the client has alcohol, they can search the client.

Clients who think the police should not have searched them should document what happened and get legal advice as soon as possible.

3. Going to Court

If your client has been charged with a criminal offence, he or she will most likely need to appear in court. This section provides some basic information to help you when you're working with clients who have upcoming court appearances.

How does a client know when he or she needs to be in court?

If your client is unsure of when he or she needs to appear in court, there are a few options to find the court date.

If your client was recently charged (within the last 1-2 weeks)

Check client's the release papers – these are the documents received from the police or the court upon the client's release from jail / police custody. These papers often have a court date listed on them.

If the date listed on the papers has already passed, check with your client to see if they missed this court date. If he or she missed the court date, see the [Missed Court Date](#) section in this booklet. If your client did not miss the court date, the matter was probably set to a new court date.

If your client has already appeared in court

Check with the lawyer: If your client has a lawyer representing him or her, the lawyer can provide your client with the next court date. Most lawyers appear on behalf of their clients and do not require their clients to attend court.



It is unlikely you will be able to get any information from your client's lawyer unless your client has provided his or her lawyer with written permission that information can be disclosed to you. Your client will likely need to contact his or her lawyer directly.

Call the courthouse: In some cases, you can call the courthouse on your client's behalf to find out his or her next court date. If your client has missed a court date, do not call the courthouse – consult the [Missed Court Date](#) section in this booklet.

Visit criminal duty counsel: Legal Aid Alberta operates the duty counsel programs across Alberta. Duty counsel are lawyers located in the courthouse who can provide unrepresented individuals with basic legal advice and information. Duty counsel may be able to help an individual find their next court date by searching the online court scheduling system.



Do not send your client to the courthouse if he or she has missed a court date, consult the [Missed Court Date](#) section in this booklet.

What should a client do before his or her first court appearance?

Ideally, your client should talk to a lawyer before his or her first court appearance. If your client cannot afford to hire a lawyer, he or she should apply for legal representation through Legal Aid Alberta by calling 1-866-845-3425.

If your client has not talked to a lawyer prior to the first appearance, he or she can speak with Duty Counsel at the courthouse on the day of his or her court date. Duty counsel are lawyers funded by Legal Aid who are located in the courthouse. They can provide unrepresented individuals with basic legal advice and information and also help with Legal Aid applications. Duty counsel can also appear in court on your client's behalf in order to give your client time to apply for Legal Aid or to find a private lawyer.

What happens at a client's first appearance in court?

If your client was released after being charged, his or her first appearance will likely be held at the Case Management Office (CMO). This intended to be a less formal, less intimidating process for accused individuals. The CMO is a counter where Justices of the Peace meet with accused individuals and inform them about their charges, including:

- Whether the Crown Prosecutor is proceeding summarily (less serious) or by indictment (more serious)
- If the accused wants to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty (note: your client can ask to “reserve” the decision until he or she has talked to a lawyer)
- How to apply for disclosure (the package of evidence the Crown and police are legally required to provide to every accused person)

In some cases, clients will need to appear in a courtroom in front of a judge. It is highly recommended that anyone who needs to appear in front of a judge go to Duty Counsel for legal advice before appearing in court.

What does it mean if the Crown is proceeding summarily or by indictment?

Many criminal offences are **hybrid** offences that allow the Crown prosecutor to decide whether to proceed with the charges in a more serious or less serious way.

If the Crown decides to proceed **summarily**, this means the charge is considered less serious. If your client is convicted, the sentence will not be as harsh as it would be if the Crown was proceeding by indictment.

If the Crown decides to proceed by **indictment**, this means the Crown considers the charge to be more serious. It is highly recommended your client get legal representation if the Crown is proceeding by indictment, as the consequences of being convicted are far more serious.

Missed Court Date

What happens if my client misses a court date?

If your client misses his or her court date in criminal court, a warrant will be issued for your client's arrest and your client will most likely face a new criminal charge for failing to appear in court. It is important for your client to deal with a missed court date as soon as possible to lessen the consequences of failing to attend court.

What should I do if my client misses a court date?

You should recommend your client speak to a criminal defence lawyer right away. Your client can call the Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-661-1095 to get the names of three local criminal defence lawyers. These lawyers will provide a half hour free consultation, but usually charge for services after this. If your client cannot afford a private lawyer, he or she should apply to Legal Aid Alberta by calling 1-866-845-3425. When speaking to Legal Aid, your client should indicate that he or she has missed a court date and needs legal assistance right away. The longer your client waits to deal with a missed court date, the worse the consequences will be.

DO NOT tell your client to turn him or herself into the police or courthouse security – your client should speak to a lawyer before taking this step. A lawyer may be able to speak to the Crown prosecutor about the situation and potentially prevent your client from having to remain in jail or go through a bail hearing after turning him or herself in.

DO NOT call the Crown prosecutor or police to try and negotiate a resolution for your client; a lawyer should only do this.

DO NOT send your client to the courthouse for help. It is likely he or she will be arrested by courthouse security or police and held in jail until a bail hearing can be held.

Where can I send my clients for help if they have missed a court date?

Call Legal Aid Alberta at 1-866-845-3425 to apply for low-cost legal representation. Your client should tell the Legal Aid intake office that he or she has missed a court date and needs help right away.

If your client can afford to hire a lawyer, he or she can contact Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-661-1095 to get the names of three local criminal defence lawyers.

If your client lives in a jurisdiction with a legal clinic, the legal clinic may be able to help your client deal with his or her missed court date. A complete listing of clinics in Alberta can be found here: http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals.

4. Outstanding Charges

If your client thinks that he or she has outstanding criminal charges, it is important for your client to deal with them right away. Sometimes police will question or detain individuals, but will not charge them with a criminal offence. Your client may think he or she has an outstanding charge when in fact there is no outstanding charge. A lawyer can help a client determine if there are outstanding charges.

What should I do if my client thinks he or she has outstanding charges?

You should recommend your client speak to a criminal defence lawyer right away. Your client can call the Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-661-1095 to get the names of three local criminal defence lawyers. These lawyers will provide a half hour free consultation, but usually charge for services after this. In some cases, a private lawyer may be willing to help a client determine if he or she has any charges outstanding for free, if the client agrees to hire the lawyer if there are any charges.

If your client cannot afford a private lawyer, he or she should contact Legal Aid Alberta at 1-866-845-3425 or visit the local legal clinic (complete listing of clinics can be found here: http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals). Your client should tell Legal Aid or the local clinic that he or she thinks there may be outstanding criminal charges.

DO NOT tell your client to visit the local police station to see if he or she has any outstanding criminal charges. Your client should speak to a lawyer before taking this step. If there are outstanding charges, a lawyer may be able to speak to police or the Crown prosecutor about the situation and potentially prevent your client from having to remain in jail or go through a bail hearing after turning him or herself in.

DO NOT call the Crown prosecutor or police to try and find out if your client has outstanding criminal charges; a lawyer should only do this.

DO NOT send your client to the courthouse for help. If your client does have outstanding charges, it is likely that he or she will be arrested by courthouse security or police and held in jail until a bail hearing can be held.

Where can I send my client for help with outstanding criminal charges?

Call Legal Aid Alberta at 1-866-845-3425 to see if they can help. Your client should tell the Legal Aid intake office that he or she think there may be outstanding criminal charges and needs help right away.

Contact the Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-661-1095 to get the names of three local criminal defence lawyers. These lawyers will provide a half hour free consultation, but usually charge for services after this. In some cases, a private lawyer may be willing to help a client determine if he or she has any charges outstanding for free, if the client agrees to hire the lawyer if there are any charges.

If your client lives in a jurisdiction with a legal clinic, the legal clinic may be able to help your client deal with outstanding criminal charges. A complete listing of clinics in Alberta can be found here: http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals.

5. Alternative Sentencing Options

This section outlines alternative sentencing options that may be available to your clients depending on the criminal charge or ticket they have received. Your client should speak with criminal duty counsel or your local legal clinic for advice on whether these options are right for their situation.

Alternative Measures Program

The Alternative Measures Program is an alternative sentencing program that allows eligible individuals to accept responsibility for a criminal offence, complete a set of assigned tasks (i.e. apology letter, volunteer hours, etc.), and have the criminal charge withdrawn upon successful completion of the tasks. This allows an individual to avoid a criminal record or a further addition to his or her criminal record.

Is my client eligible for the Program?

To be eligible for the Alternative Measures Program, an accused individual must have no criminal record or only one previous conviction. The individual must be charged with a summary conviction (less serious) offence or a hybrid offence where the Crown would proceed summarily (see the [Section 3](#) for information on Summary vs. Indictable Offences). The criminal charge cannot involve family violence or failing to follow a court order (i.e. failing to appear in court).

There are exceptions to these eligibility criteria and your client should speak to a lawyer or criminal duty counsel for more information. Lawyers, including duty counsel, can sometimes speak to the Crown prosecutor and arrange for individuals to enter the Program if they wouldn't otherwise be allowed.

How does my client apply for the Program?

In certain cases, an individual will be pre-screened for entry into the Program. If your client has been pre-screened, he or she will usually be informed at his or her first court appearance.

If your client has not been pre-screened for entry, he or she should speak to criminal duty counsel at the courthouse or speak to a lawyer. Your client will need to explain his or her personal circumstances, as well as the circumstances that led to the criminal charge to duty counsel or his or her lawyer. At this point, duty counsel or your client's lawyer will speak to the Crown on your client's behalf to see if entry into the Program can be negotiated.

What will my client have to do in the Program?

As part of the Alternative Measures Program, individuals may be required to do one or more of the following (note: the list below is not exhaustive). The assigned tasks will depend on the individual's personal circumstances and the nature of the charges.

- Return property or make restitution
- Write an apology to the victim
- Perform community service work
- Make a donation to a charity
- Attend counselling
- Participate in Aboriginal cultural and spiritual activities

Fine Option Program

The Fine Option Program allows individuals to work off a fine by doing community service work, which is paid at minimum wage. The Program can be used to pay:

- Bylaw tickets (i.e. panhandling, transit, graffiti, etc.)
- Provincial tickets (i.e. drinking in public)
- Federal fines

Is my client eligible for the Program?

To be eligible for the Program, the fine your client is facing must be subject to **Days in Default**, which means non-payment of the fine would result in your client having to spend time in jail. Your client must apply to the Program before the due date for his or her fine.

If your client wants to apply after the due date of his or her fine, he or she should speak to a lawyer right away.

For more information about the Program, including the application process, call the Fine Option Program at 780-422-0359 or 403-297-2345.

6. Record Suspensions

Record suspensions (formerly known as pardons) can remove a person's criminal record from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) federal database. This means that when an individual applies for employment or housing, a criminal record check will not show the individual's previous criminal record.

It is important to note that a record suspension does not mean the criminal record is destroyed. It remains on file but is removed from the federal database. Provincial and municipal agencies do not have to seal their records.

Is my client eligible for a record suspension?

If your client meets certain criteria, he or she may be eligible for a record suspension. However, even if your client meets all of the criteria listed below, it is up to the staff at the Parole Board of Canada to decide whether to grant the record suspension. There is no guarantee that it will be granted.

Clients must meet the following eligibility criteria to be considered for a record suspension:

- Must have been convicted of federal offence
- The sentence has been completed. This means that all fines have been paid, probation has been completed, and/or jail sentence has been served. If your client received a weapons prohibition, this does not have to be expired in order to apply.
- The legislated waiting period is over:
 - » 5 years after completion of sentence for summary offence
 - » 10 years after completion of sentence for indictable offence



If your client is unsure of whether he or she was convicted of a summary or indictable offence, then a copy of his or her criminal record should be obtained. It will state on the record whether it was an indictable or summary offence.

- Client can demonstrate he or she is a law-abiding citizen

The following individuals **are not** eligible for a record suspension:

- Anyone convicted of sexual offence involving a child
- Anyone convicted of more than three indictable offences AND received a sentence of two or more years for each offence

How does my client apply for a record suspension?

Record suspensions are granted through the Parole Board of Canada (PBC). Clients can view the PBC's application guide online at <http://pbc-clcc.gc.ca/prdons/servic-eng.shtml>. It is also available at your local courthouse.

Your client will need to collect a number of documents for the application and will also have to pay the \$631 application fee. If your client cannot afford the application fee, he or she should contact the John Howard Society or Elizabeth Fry Society (women only) to see if there is financial assistance available.

Where can my client go for help with the record suspension application?

Clients should be wary of any agencies promising guaranteed results or faster processing of applications. These are false and misleading claims.

For reliable assistance with the application process, clients should contact one of the following:

Parole Board of Canada - Record Suspension Info Line

Call: 1-800-874-2652

Visit: <http://pbc-clcc.gc.ca/prdons/servic-eng.shtml>

John Howard Society

For a list of locations and contact information, visit: <http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/services>

Elizabeth Fry Society (help for women)

Edmonton and surrounding areas: <http://www.efryedmonton.ab.ca>

Calgary and surrounding areas: <http://elizabethfrycalgary.ca>

7. Youth

In Canada, youth (12 to 17 years old) who are charged with criminal offences are treated differently than adults and appear in a separate court dedicated to youth matters.

What rights do youth have when they are arrested?

Youth have the same rights as adults as well as some additional rights due to their young age:

- Right to know why they're being arrested
- Right to a lawyer and free legal advice
- Right to speak to a lawyer in private
- Police must explain the right to silence and explain that anything said could be used against the young person
- Right to contact parents or guardians AND a lawyer
- Youth have the right to have their parents or guardians with them if they talk to police
- Police are allowed to fingerprint, take photo, and search a young person

What rights do parents have when their child is involved with the criminal justice system?

Parents and guardians have the right to be notified when their son or daughter has been:

- Arrested
- Given a notice to appear in court
- Given a ticket
- Is the subject of a pre-sentence report or medical / psychological report
- Sentenced
- Given a prohibition order

Parents also have the right to be heard at their child's bail hearing or before sentencing.

Parents **do not** have the right to find out what their child tells their lawyer unless their child gives the lawyer permission to disclose this information.

What are extrajudicial measures?

This is an alternative to traditional sentencing that is often used when a young person wishes to accept responsibility for the offence he or she was charged with. It is similar to the Alternative Measures Program that was discussed in Section 5 of this booklet.

A young person who participates in extrajudicial measures will be responsible for performing an assigned task(s), which may include writing an apology letter, performing community service hours, attending counselling, among other things. The charges against the young person will be withdrawn if the extrajudicial measures are successfully completed.

It is recommended that a young person charged with a criminal offence seek legal advice and representation prior to agreeing to any form of sentencing. All youth are eligible for legal representation through Legal Aid Alberta's Youth Criminal Defence Office, regardless of income. Youth can call 1-866-845-3425 to apply.

How long does a young person's criminal record last?

A young person's youth criminal record is automatically destroyed after a certain period of time as long as he or she is not convicted of any additional offences. If the young person commits another crime before his or her youth record is closed, the waiting period for destruction will be longer or the record could become permanent.

8. Where Clients Can Go for Help

Legal Advice & Representation

Legal Aid Alberta / Phone: 1-866-845-3425 / Website: <http://www.legalaid.ab.ca>
Legal representation in criminal law matters for individuals who meet financial guidelines

Criminal Duty Counsel / Website: <http://www.legalaid.ab.ca/help/Pages/Duty-Counsel-Legal-Assistance-at-Court.aspx>

Available at select courthouses throughout Alberta. Duty counsel are lawyers who work at the courthouse and are available to provide limited legal advice to people who do not have a lawyer. Contact Legal Aid Alberta for more information including services and locations.

Lawyer Referral Service / Phone: 1-800-661-1095

Run by the Law Society of Alberta. Callers will receive contact information for three lawyers practicing in the area of law and jurisdiction requested. Lawyers will provide a free half hour consultation. Charges will apply after the initial session.

Legal Clinics

Where available, local legal clinics can provide family law legal information and limited legal advice to individuals who meet financial guidelines.

Calgary Legal Guidance

Phone: 403-234-9266

Website: <http://clg.ab.ca>

Student Legal Assistance (Calgary)

Phone: 403-220-6637

Website: <http://slacalgary.ca>

Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic

Serving Red Deer and surrounding areas

Phone: 1-877-314-9129

Website: www.communitylegalclinic.net

Children's Legal & Educational Resource Centre

Provides free legal services to youth 19 and under across Alberta

Phone: 403-207-9029

Website: <http://youthlaw.ca>

Edmonton Community Legal Centre

Phone: 780-702-1725

Website: <http://www.eclc.ca>

**No criminal law services offered*

Student Legal Services (Edmonton)

Phone: 780-492-8244

Website: <http://www.slsedmonton.com>

Grande Prairie Legal Guidance

Phone: 780-882-0036

Website: <http://www.gplg.ca>

Lethbridge Legal Guidance

Phone: 403-380-6338

Website: www.lethbridgelegalguidance.ca

Medicine Hat Legal Help Centre

Phone: 403-712-1021

Legal Information

Victim Services (Government of Alberta)

Staff provide information on the criminal justice process for victims of crime in Alberta. Can help people apply for protection orders and financial assistance.

Phone: 310-0000 then 780-427-3460

For a complete list of locations, visit:

http://www.solgps.alberta.ca/PROGRAMS_AND_SERVICES/VICTIM_SERVICES/

John Howard Society

Provide services for individuals who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

Services vary by location but may include: assistance with record suspension / pardon applications, prison / release reintegration assistance, criminal law education programs.

Locations in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer.

For contact information, visit: <http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/services>

Elizabeth Fry Society

Provide services for women, youth, and immigrants. Services vary by location but may include: explaining criminal charges, helping deal with warrants, navigating the criminal court system, bail support, prison outreach, and helping with record suspension applications. Locations in Calgary and Edmonton.

Calgary: Visit <http://elizabethfrycalgary.ca> or call 403-294-0737

Edmonton: Visit <http://www.efryedmonton.ab.ca> or call 780-421-1175

Canadian Legal FAQs (Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta)

Website: <http://www.law-faqs.org>

Frequently asked questions and answers about criminal law issues.

Law Central Alberta (Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta)

Website: <http://www.lawcentralalberta.ca>

Links to reliable legal information sources on criminal law issues.

Student Legal Services (University of Alberta)

Website: <http://www.slsedmonton.com>

Large selection of brochures on criminal law matters.

BearPaw Legal Education (department of Native Counselling Service of Alberta)

Website: www.bearpaweducation.ca / Phone: 780-451-4002

Offer free legal education workshops throughout Alberta. Wide selection of legal education publications, videos, and podcasts that can be accessed for free online.

ACCESSING JUSTICE SERIES:

Criminal Law in Alberta

Other publications in the Accessing Justice series:

- The Canadian Legal System
- Helping Clients with Legal Issues
- Renting Law in Alberta
- Family Law in Alberta

Publications can be viewed and downloaded for free by visiting www.cplea.ca

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