



Helping Clients

WITH LEGAL ISSUES

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 April 2016.

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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.

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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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Helping Clients with Legal Issues

The information in this booklet is intended to help you more proactively identify when your clients have legal issues and more effectively connect your clients with reliable, relevant, and appropriate legal information and services.

The first part of this booklet provides you with tips on how to help clients with legal issues and the last half of the booklet is a guide to the most commonly used legal information sources and services in Alberta.

1. How to Identify Legal Issues

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to determining whether your client has a legal issue. Every client is different and every situation is unique. However, by developing a stronger understanding of our legal system and the most common legal issues faced by Albertans, you will gain greater awareness of when your clients have legal issues and when to probe for further information.

Here are some key tips to help you:

- Be an active, engaged listener – be aware of common signs that indicate your client may have a legal issue.
- Ask open-ended questions to get further information from your client to help you detect whether there are legal issues that need to be addressed.
- Take time to build trust and rapport to make your clients feel comfortable opening up about their personal matters.

Common Signs

When meeting with your clients, be aware of the following common signs that legal issues may exist and need to be addressed. *Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of common signs. You may find it helpful to collaborate with your colleagues to add to this list.*

Your Client Receives Documents

You are a housing first support worker meeting with a client who mentions he recently came home and found some papers under his door.

While this may be a piece of mail or note from a friend, it could be a legal document that requires action. If your client does not respond to a legal document or follow the instructions in it, he or she could face serious consequences. For example, if your client ignores a Notice to Appear in court on a specific date, he or she could be arrested.

What to do?

1. Find out if your client has a copy of the papers or documents received. If so, review the documents with your client. Are they legal documents? See the list on the next page for examples of some of the most common legal documents.
2. If your client doesn't have the documents, ask questions to see if he or she can remember any details such as what the documents looked like, when they were received, who or where they were from, and any information included in the documents. Learning more about any new developments in your client's life may help in trying to determine what documents the client received. For example, did you client recently break up with his spouse? He may have been served with a family court application for custody or financial support.
3. Determine the main area of law the legal documents are related to (i.e. family, criminal, renting, immigration, employment, social benefits, etc.) – this will help you find an appropriate resource or service for your client.
4. Connect your client with further information or legal assistance. See [Section 4](#) in this booklet for a list of the most commonly used legal information sources and services in Alberta.



Legal documents usually need to be dealt with right away, so clients should seek assistance with legal documents as soon as they receive them.



Examples of legal documents

Area of Law	Document	Potential Consequences
Civil	Small claims court application	<p>Failure to respond to an application could result in a judge making a decision without any input from the client.</p> <p>Clients have limited time to respond to an application but extra time can sometimes be requested from the court.</p>
Criminal	Release from police custody documents (i.e. recognizance, appearance notice, promise to appear)	Failure to follow rules in release papers or attend court on specified date could lead to arrest and further criminal charges.
	Bylaw, transit, or traffic ticket	<p>Failure to pay a ticket on time could result in a client being arrested and having to spend time in jail (subject to change pending new provincial legislation).</p> <p>Certain tickets may require clients to appear in court. Failure to do so could result in a default conviction against the client.</p>
	Summons to appear in court as a witness	Failure to appear in court on required date could result in client being arrested and taken into police custody. A client could also face criminal charges.
Family	<p>Family Law Act applications for parenting, child/partner support, guardianship, or contact orders.</p> <p>Divorce Act applications for custody, child/spousal support, divorce.</p>	<p>Failure to respond to an application could result in a judge making a decision without any input from the client.</p> <p>Clients have limited time to respond to an application but extra time can sometimes be requested from the court.</p>
Immigration	Pre-removal risk assessment Citizenship decision	Clients may be required to respond to a government decision regarding citizenship. Failure to perform follow-up steps (i.e. background checks, medical info) may result in denial of application.
Renting	Eviction notice	A client only has 14 days to challenge an eviction notice. After these 14 days have expired, a client has to leave the property.

Your Client is Evicted

You are an intake worker at an inner city drop-in centre and you meet with a client who tells you she was recently kicked out of her house.

There are many legal issues related to housing. It is important to ask questions to get more information to determine if your client needs legal assistance.

Information to collect from your client

- What led to your client having to leave the home?
 - » Was she or he evicted by the landlord? Roommate? Spouse or partner?
 - » If evicted by the landlord, did he or she receive an eviction notice?
- Was there a conflict that led to the eviction? For example, domestic dispute, fight between tenants, verbal argument between landlord and tenant.
 - » Does your client have any safety concerns?
 - » Were police involved at any point?
- Was your client allowed to collect his or her personal belongings?
- Does your client need emergency housing and/or financial support?

Potential legal issues

Illegal eviction: If your client was evicted from a rental property, there are certain procedures that a landlord must follow. If these are not followed, your client may be allowed to stay in the property and/or be eligible for financial compensation. Clients should seek legal advice right away if they think they've been illegally evicted.

Domestic violence: If your client was involved in a domestic dispute that resulted in loss of housing, there could be many legal issues at play depending on whether your client is the complainant or accused. Try to determine the most important and time sensitive legal issue and connect your client with an appropriate service provider as soon as possible. See [Section 5](#) for a list of service providers in Alberta.



Consult the **Renting in Alberta** booklet in this series or visit Laws for Landlords and Tenants in Alberta (www.landlordandtenant.org) for more information about renting law, including the eviction process.

Your Clients Loses Employment

You are an employment skills worker at a local non-profit agency and you meet with a client who is looking for work after losing his job in Northern Alberta.

There are many legal issues related to loss of employment. It is important to ask questions to try to find out if your client could benefit from seeking legal information or assistance about his situation.

Information to collect from your client

- Where was your client working? What was your client's job?
- How long was your client working there?
 - » Was your client full-time, part-time, casual, day labour?
 - » Was your client contract, salaried, unionized, paid under the table?
- What led to the job loss?
 - » Was your client fired or laid off?
 - » Did the employer say why employment was ending?
 - » Did the employer provide any documentation?
- Did your client receive any termination pay or benefits?
- Had your client been injured on the job?

Potential legal issues

No termination pay: Depending on the situation, your client may be eligible for termination pay, vacation pay, and health benefits for a certain period of time. Eligibility depends on whether your client was laid off or fired, how long he or she worked there, and whether the job falls under the *Employment Standards Code*. It is a good idea for your client to seek legal information or advice if he or she thinks the employer did not follow the rules.

Wrongful dismissal/wrongful termination: Under the *Employment Standards Code*, there are rules about when employees can be fired or laid off and what procedures employers must follow. Your client should seek legal information or advice if he or she thinks the employer did not follow the rules.

Discrimination: All employers are required to follow the rules in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, including accommodating certain health and personal needs (i.e. physical disability, family status, religious beliefs, mental health issue). If your client feels he or she was discriminated against during employment and/or terminated because of a human rights issue, he or she should seek legal information, contact the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and/or follow up with a legal clinic for legal advice.

The following are protected grounds under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression.



The Alberta Human Rights Commission (www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca) operates a Confidential Telephone Inquiry Line that can be accessed by calling 780-427-7661 (Edmonton and Northern Alberta) or 403-297-6571 (Calgary and Southern Alberta). To call toll-free, dial 310-0000 first.



For more information about employment law in Alberta: Visit CPLEA's Rights at Work website (www.cplea.ca/rightsatwork) or call the Government of Alberta's Employment Standards Contact Centre at 1-877-427-3731.

Your Client's Relationship Ends

You are a family program worker at a local non-profit organization. You meet with a new client who tells you she needs help finding housing after leaving her partner.

The breakdown of a relationship can lead to many legal issues and it's important for your clients to think about and address any legal issues they may have in a timely manner.

Information to collect from your client

- What led to the breakdown of the relationship?
 - » Does she have any safety concerns?
 - » Is there a history of abuse?
 - » Were the police involved?

- How long was your client with his or her spouse or partner?
 - » Was your client married or common law / adult interdependent relationship?
- Does your client have children? How old are they?
 - » Are they with your client? Staying with spouse or partner or other family? Or elsewhere?
 - » Does client need help with child care?
- Where was your client living with spouse or partner?
 - » Did they own or rent?
 - » Are your client's belongings still in the home?
- Will your client be able to support herself or himself (and children) financially?
 - » Is your client working?

Potential legal issues

Child custody / parenting order: If your client has left a relationship with his or her children, a child custody or parenting order may need to be sought from the court. This could help prevent your client from facing any negative consequences for leaving with the children. Clients who need to apply for a child custody or parenting order can seek help from their local Family Law Information Centre or legal clinic (see [Section 4](#) for a complete list).



Financial support: Your client may be eligible for child support and/or spousal / partner support after a relationship ends. The Family Law Information Centre or your local legal clinic can provide more information for clients who need to make a financial support application.

If your client fled an abusive relationship, she or he may be eligible for emergency financial support from the Government of Alberta – the Family Violence Info Line (310-1818) can provide further details.

Protection orders: If your client has fled an abusive relationship, she or he may want to consider applying for a protection order if one is not in place. Protection orders are intended to keep an abusive partner away - however, they are not always an ideal solution and your client may find it helpful to speak with a domestic violence service provider to discuss options.

Conversely, your client may be subject to a protection order and need help to understand what it means. Legal Aid Alberta can help clients who have received a protection order and need help with the review process.

Criminal charges: If your client fled an abusive relationship, criminal charges may have been laid against the abusive partner or spouse. These clients can contact their Alberta's Victim Services unit for more information about the criminal process (call 310-0000 then 780-427-3460).

Conversely, if your client has been charged with a criminal offence related to an incident of domestic violence, he or she should seek legal advice as soon as possible about the charge(s). Legal Aid Alberta, criminal courthouse duty counsel, and some legal clinics may be able to assist. See [Section 4](#) for more information.

Immigration consequences: If your client left a relationship, but his or her immigration status is tied to his or her partner or spouse, there could be serious consequences. It is important for your client to seek legal advice as soon as possible. Legal Aid Alberta and local legal clinics may be able to assist in these situations. See [Section 4](#) for more information.

Outstanding contracts: Anytime a client's relationship ends, it is important for him or her to deal with all of the joint contracts signed during the relationship. For example, if both partners signed a rental agreement, both partners will continue to be responsible for paying rent and for any damage caused to the unit. It is important for the partner no longer living in the unit to request his or her name be taken off the lease. Other contracts include joint bank accounts, credit cards, and loan agreements. Clients may need to seek legal advice to determine how to divide property and remove their name from certain contracts.



For more information about family law matters, consult the **Family Law in Alberta** booklet in this series, call your local Family Law Information Centre, visit LegalAve (<http://legalave.ca>) or contact any of the information or service providers listed in [Section 4](#) of this booklet.

Other Common Signs

In some cases, your clients will identify that they have a legal issue right away. Even if the issue seems simple, it's important to consider whether the client has any other related legal issues that could cause problems down the road.

For example, if your client tells you she missed her court date, you will want to find out what the court date was for (i.e. criminal charge, family court application, civil lawsuit) and why she missed it. Maybe she isn't receiving spousal support, which has made it difficult for her to pay for a bus pass to get to court. Maybe she was called into work at the last minute and is in jeopardy of losing her job. Maybe she was recently evicted from her home and has been staying with family on the outskirts of the city. These are all potential legal issues related to the main legal issue identified by your client.



Get together with your colleagues and identify any other common signs your clients may have legal issues. Develop an ongoing list of common signs and make it accessible to all frontline staff. At your monthly staff meetings, share stories of how you have helped clients with legal issues including what resources and services you found most helpful.

2. Connecting Clients with Legal Information Sources and Services

Once you've identified that your client has a legal issue or issues, what should you do?

- Connect your client with an appropriate legal information source or legal service for assistance.
- **Do not** provide your client with advice on how to deal with the legal issue(s) beyond helping them access relevant information sources or referring them to appropriate services.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Finding reliable, relevant, and appropriate legal information sources and services can sometimes be a challenge. This section outlines steps to help you do so effectively.

Identify Relevant Area of Law

Once you've identified that your client may have a legal issue, the next step is to identify the area of law your client's issue falls under. Many legal information sources and service providers specialize in a specific area of law. It is important to try and identify the relevant area of law in order to connect your client with the most helpful and appropriate information and services. A chart of common legal issues and their related areas of law is included on the next page.

If you need help identifying the relevant area of law, try accessing one of the following resources:

- Visit the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta’s portal website Law Central Alberta (<http://www.lawcentralalberta.ca>). All of the information sources on the website have been reviewed by CPLEA’s staff.
- With your client’s permission, contact your local courthouse library (<https://www.lawlibrary.ab.ca/our-libraries.html>) or the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (<http://www.cplea.ca>) and ask for help.

Legal Issue	Area(s) of Law
Client was fired by employer after needing to take time off to attend medical appointments.	Employment » termination Human rights » discrimination
Client wants to deny ex-partner access to children because she isn’t receiving child support.	Family law » child support
Landlord changed the locks on a client’s apartment because client had not paid rent on time.	Residential tenancies » eviction
Client tells you he thinks the police are looking for him after he got into a fight with his ex-partner’s boyfriend. He’s worried he’ll lose his social housing and custody of his children if he’s arrested.	Criminal law » outstanding warrants / charges Residential tenancies » social housing eligibility Family law » child custody and parenting
Client is a temporary foreign worker who has lost her job.	Immigration law » status Employment » termination
Client’s mother passed away without a will and now client needs help dealing with the estate.	Wills and estates

Triage Legal Issues

Often clients have more than one legal issue so identifying all of the issues and relevant areas of law can be challenging and overwhelming.

Start by making a list with your client identifying all of his or her legal issues (and non-legal ones). Once the list is made, classify issues by high, medium, and low priority. Deal with the high priority, urgent issues first.

It can be difficult to know which issues should be considered high priority. Use the following list as a guide to which issues should be considered urgent and high priority:

- Client has an upcoming court date
- If a client has missed a court date
- Client received legal documents (or government documents) that require a response or follow-up action (i.e. family court applications, small claims court applications, Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service applications, immigration applications, social benefits application)
- Clients has outstanding criminal charges or warrants
- Client recently received an eviction notice

If you need further assistance triaging your client's legal issues or you think your client requires immediate legal assistance, consult [Section 4](#) for a list of service providers in your area.

Finding Reliable Legal Information

If your clients do not require immediate assistance, the first step to helping them address their legal issues is to connect them with reliable legal information. In many cases, your clients' legal questions can be answered quickly and easily with an appropriate legal information source. Legal information can also help your clients determine whether to take the next step of seeking legal advice.

Sample Scenario: Your client tells you she needs her fridge fixed but her landlord won't respond to her maintenance requests. She tells you she's going to stop paying rent until the landlord fixes her fridge. You recognize your client has a legal issue related to renting law in Alberta.



You consult the **Renting in Alberta** booklet and recommend your client visit the website *Laws for Landlords and Tenants in Alberta* (www.landlordandtenant.org), so that she can learn more about what to do if repairs aren't being done. After visiting the website, your client learns she cannot legally stop paying rent and that she may risk eviction for doing so. Your client learns she can call HealthLink at 811 and ask to speak with a health inspector who may be able to issue an order requiring the landlord to fix her fridge.

Assessing Online Legal Information: Is it Reliable?

With all of the legal information available online, it's important to make sure your clients are accessing reliable legal information. Use the following checklist to help assess the reliability of online legal information resources:

- Jurisdiction: Does the information apply to the correct geographic area?
 - » Is the information produced for Canadians? Albertans?
 - » If the federal government is responsible for the area of law (immigration, criminal, family law – married couples, etc.), make sure it's Canadian.
 - » If the provincial government is responsible for the area of law (renting, employment, family law – unmarried couples, etc.), make sure it's Alberta-based.
 - » For more on jurisdiction, see **The Canadian Legal System** booklet in this series.
- Is the information up-to-date?
 - » Laws change so it's important to make sure your client is accessing current information.
 - » Reliable information sources will include a last updated or reviewed date. Be cautious if there is no date listed.
- Who is providing the legal information and why?
 - » Trustworthy legal information sources include non-profit organizations, universities, courts, libraries, and government departments.
 - » Commercial information providers are trying to sell their services. Sometimes their information will be incomplete or biased in order to increase business.
 - » Check the "About us" page on a website for more information.
- Is contact information provided?
 - » Reliable legal information providers will include an address, phone number, and/or e-mail address on their website.
 - » Contact information allows you to follow up with the information provider if you or your clients have questions.
- Is there advertising on the information source?
 - » If the information provider's main purpose is selling their services or advertising, there may be less of a focus on reliable, quality information.

- How good are the links to other information sources?
 - » Reliable information providers will provide links to other credible information sources.
 - » Outdated or broken links may be a sign the information source is not regularly maintained or updated.
- Are there privacy concerns?
 - » If an information source requires clients to register or provide personal information, check to see what the service provider does with this information.
 - » Clients should not have to provide personal information to access reliable legal information. Any information provided should be kept secure and confidential.

This information was adapted from the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta's tip sheet "Is it Reliable? 7 Clues to Good Legal Information Online" (2012). Available online at www.cplea.ca/publications.



Check the resource guide in the back of this booklet for a list of reliable legal information sources or visit Law Central Alberta at www.lawcentralalberta.ca.

Referring Clients for Legal Advice

After helping your client access reliable legal information, you and your client may decide legal advice is needed to help your client decide on next steps. As a service provider, you cannot give your clients advice about what they should do about their legal issues. For example, you cannot recommend your client file a court application, tell your client what to say in court, or negotiate with the Crown Prosecutor on your client's behalf. More information about the difference between legal advice and legal information is included in the next section.

Determining where to refer a client for legal advice will depend on the area of law, the urgency of the legal issue, and the level of service required. A brief outline of the legal services offered in Alberta is included below. For contact information, consult [Section 4](#) of this booklet.

Legal Aid Alberta

Clients who meet financial eligibility criteria and have a legal issue that falls under the Legal Aid Alberta service umbrella may receive legal representation. Eligibility criteria are available online (www.legalaid.ab.ca) or by calling Legal Aid Alberta at 1-866-845-3425.

Note: Legal Aid Alberta's services are not free and clients are usually expected to pay Legal Aid Alberta for the services they receive.

If a client is eligible for services, he or she will be appointed a lawyer by Legal Aid Alberta (a client can ask for a specific lawyer but Legal Aid Alberta does not have to grant these requests). Legal Aid Alberta no longer provides information and referral services. If a client is not eligible for legal representation, he or she will not receive any further assistance from Legal Aid Alberta.

As of January 2016, Legal Aid Alberta will provide representation for the following matters:

- Criminal charges – serious offences
- Youth criminal charges
- Family law matters (custody, support, divorce)
- Emergency Protection Orders - applications and review hearings
- Child welfare / child protection matters
- Immigration and refugee matters
- Income support applications
- Adult guardianship / trusteeship matters

For the most current eligibility guidelines and services, call Legal Aid Alberta or visit their website.

Community Legal Clinics

In Alberta, clients who meet financial eligibility criteria can access certain services at their local community legal clinic. The most common service offered is a free 20 to 30 minute consultation with a volunteer lawyer who will provide clients with confidential legal advice, information, and guidance on next steps. Volunteer lawyers can review legal documents, help clients fill out court forms, and give advice on whether to pursue further legal action.

Some legal clinics also have the capacity to provide legal representation to a limited number of clients.

Consult [Section 4](#) of this booklet for a list of legal clinics in Alberta.

Student Legal Clinics

Student legal clinics operate in Edmonton and Calgary. Volunteer law students are supervised by lawyers to assist eligible clients with certain legal matters. Students can review legal documents, help clients fill out court forms, and give advice on next steps. Limited representation services are also available.

Duty Counsel

Duty counsel services are available at courthouses throughout Alberta. Duty counsel are lawyers funded by Legal Aid Alberta to provide limited services to unrepresented Albertans appearing in court. Duty counsel can explain court procedures, provide advice about resolution options, and appear in court on behalf of clients to set new court dates. Duty counsel will not provide full legal representation services.

Clients do not have to meet financial eligibility criteria to speak with duty counsel. However, it is recommended clients show up early as duty counsel services are first-come-first-serve and clients may have a long wait time if they show up late.

Duty counsel are available to assist with the following matters, but services may vary by jurisdiction. Call Legal Aid Alberta for more information.

- Criminal (adult and youth)
- Family law (Provincial and Court of Queen's Bench)
- Drug treatment court
- Emergency Protection Orders – applications and review hearings
- Child welfare hearings

3. Helping without Hinderling: Legal Information vs. Legal Advice

As a service provider, it is important for you to understand your limitations when helping clients with legal issues. You can and should help clients access reliable information, but you cannot provide clients with advice about how they should deal with their legal issues. Providing clients with unauthorized advice could lead to your organization being fined by the Law Society of Alberta and could cause your client serious problems, particularly if you provide incorrect advice. Always err on the side of caution if you're unsure of whether you're crossing the line into legal advice.

In Alberta, only people licenced by the Law Society of Alberta can provide legal advice. An individual licensed to provide legal advice can interpret the law for clients, make recommendations on how clients should proceed with their legal matters, and represent clients in court.

As a service provider, you cannot apply the law to your client's specific situation. You can help your client access information about their legal rights and how the legal system works, and you can make referrals to legal service providers.

Differences between Legal Information and Legal Advice

Legal Information	Legal Advice
Identifying when there's a legal issue	Telling clients how to deal with legal issues
Explaining the law and legal system in general terms	Applying the law to a specific set of circumstances
Providing information about court procedures	Providing advice about what to say and do during a court appearance
Making referrals to legal information sources or services	Conducting legal research and providing an opinion as to how the law applies
Describing options for dealing with a legal problem, but not providing advice on which one to choose	Recommending how to proceed with solving a legal problem
Printing court forms and instructions. Explaining where clients can go for assistance with filling out court forms.	Filling out court forms and explaining what information needs to be included in certain parts of a form.

Sample Scenario: Your client tells you she needs her fridge fixed but her landlord won't respond to her maintenance requests. She wants to stop paying rent until the landlord makes the repairs and asks you if this is okay.

Legal Information	Legal Advice
Helping your client look up information online about landlord's responsibility to make repairs in rental properties.	Assessing whether your client's situation falls under the Residential Tenancies Act.
Helping your client look up information about if/when tenants can withhold rent in Alberta.	Reviewing the client's lease agreement and Minimum Housing and Health Standards to determine if the landlord is responsible for the repairs.
Going through the Is it Reliable? checklist with your client to assess the reliability of any online information sources you access.	Advising the client that she cannot legally withhold rent from the landlord for repairs that have not been completed.
Providing your client with contact information for service providers who assist with landlord and tenant issues.	Recommending a course of action to get the landlord to complete repairs.
Providing your client with print resources on renting law in Alberta and how to deal with problems with your landlord.	Filing an application with the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service on your client's behalf.

4. Legal Information Sources and Services Guide

Please be advised that the information in this resource guide is current as of April 2016. The legal service providers listed in this guide regularly change the services they provide as well as eligibility criteria. Contact the organization directly for the most current information on services and eligibility.

This information has been organized by jurisdiction. Alberta-wide services are listed first followed by services specific to certain cities and regions.

Provincial Services

The following services are available throughout the province. Services may differ depending on jurisdiction. Call the service provider for more information.

Legal Advice

The following services provide legal advice and representation. Eligibility criteria may apply for free or low cost services.

Legal Advice

Legal Aid Alberta

<http://www.legalaid.ab.ca>

1-866-845-3425

- Clients must meet financial eligibility criteria (available online) and have a legal issue that falls under Legal Aid's service umbrella
- Eligible clients will receive a legal aid certificate for legal representation and will be appointed a lawyer
- Legal Aid Alberta helps with the following legal issues:
 - » Criminal charges – serious offences
 - » Youth criminal charges
 - » Family law matters (custody, support, divorce)
 - » Emergency Protection Orders (applications, review hearings)
 - » Child welfare / child protection matters
 - » Immigration and refugee matters
 - » Income supports
 - » Adult guardianship / trusteeship

Legal Advice

Duty Counsel

(Legal Aid Alberta Service)

Located in courthouses throughout the province. Services may differ by jurisdiction. Call Legal Aid Alberta for further information.

<http://www.legalaid.ab.ca>

1-866-845-3425

- Lawyers (provided by Legal Aid Alberta) located at courthouses across the province
- Clients do not have to meet any financial eligibility criteria
- Duty counsel will provide unrepresented individuals with limited services such as setting a matter to a new court date or explaining resolution options
- Duty counsel may be available to assist with the following matters:
 - » Criminal (adult and youth)
 - » Family law (Provincial and Court of Queen's Bench)
 - » Drug Treatment Court
 - » Emergency Protection Orders – applications and review hearings
 - » Child welfare

Lawyer Referral Service

(operated by the Law Society of Alberta)

1-800-661-1095

- The Service will provide the names of three lawyers who practice in a specific area of law in a specific jurisdiction
- Clients should receive a free half hour meeting to discuss their legal options with each of the lawyers. Note: Charges will apply after the initial meeting.

Children's Legal & Educational Resource Centre

<http://youthlaw.ca>

403-207-9029

clerc@clerc-calgary.ca

- Offer limited legal representation for Alberta youth in family law and civil matters
- Provide youth and parents with information and referral services by phone and e-mail
- Provide plain language legal information online and through workshops

Family Legal Services

Family Justice Services

(located across Alberta)

For locations and contact information, visit: <https://albertacourts.ca/resolution-and-court-administration-serv/family-justice-services/locations>

- Government of Alberta operated
- Eligibility criteria apply to access certain services
- Offer mediation and dispute resolution services, high conflict services, and family court counsellors

LEGAL INFORMATION

The following information services **cannot** provide legal advice or representation but can provide an extensive range of legal information services for clients.

All Areas of Law

Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLA)

www.cplea.ca
info@cplea.ca
780-451-8764

- Law Central Alberta (www.LawCentralAlberta.ca) - Links to reliable legal information sources and legal service providers
- Canadian Legal FAQs - www.law-faqs.org
- CPLA Publications (www.cplea.ca/publications) - Free plain language publications available for viewing online and printing
- Information and Referral Service: CPLA staff can help point you to the right service or information provider

Alberta Law Libraries

www.lawlibrary.ab.ca

Located in Calgary, Edmonton, Drumheller, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Peace River, Red Deer, St. Paul, Wetaskiwin.

- Library staff can explain how to use print and online resources to conduct legal research
- Offer access to subscription-based databases such as Quicklaw and Westlaw – particularly helpful to self-represented litigants
- Information and referral service available online, in-person, and by telephone

Law Information Centres (LInC) (Calgary, Red Deer, Grande Prairie)

Resolution Support Centre (Edmonton)

For contact information, visit:
<https://albertacourts.ca/resolution-and-court-administration-serv/law-information-centres-linc/contact-linc>

- Operated by the Government of Alberta
- Centres provide information about:
 - » Court procedures
 - » What court forms to use
 - » Making a court application
- Referrals to other legal resources

Alberta Legal Information Centre

www.infojuri.ca
780-450-2443

- French language legal information service.
- Provide legal information and referrals on all areas of law.
- Service offered in-person and by telephone.

BearPaw Legal Education

(department of Native
Counselling Service of Alberta)

www.bearpaweducation.ca

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.

Dial-A-Law (maintained by
Calgary Legal Guidance)

<http://clg.ab.ca/programs-services/dial-a-law/>

- Plain language legal information on a variety of topics available online in text and audio formats.

Renting Law

Laws for Landlords & Tenants in Alberta

(operated through CPLEA)

[http://www.](http://www.landlordandtenant.org)

[landlordandtenant.org](http://www.landlordandtenant.org)

780-451-8764

info@cplea.ca

- Extensive collection of legal information for landlords and tenants in Alberta
- Free workshops on renting law
- Staff can answer information and referral questions by phone and e-mail
- Wide selection of free publications available online: www.landlordandtenant.org/resources

Service Alberta Consumer Contact Centre

(Government of Alberta)

<http://www.servicealberta.ca>

1-877-427-4088 or

780-427-4088 (Edmonton)

rta@gov.ab.ca

- Landlord and tenant information and referral questions answered by phone and e-mail
- Plain language publications available online. Some publications available in multiple languages.
- Tenants can file complaints about landlords with Service Alberta

Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service

[http://servicealberta.ca/](http://servicealberta.ca/landlord-tenant-disputes.cfm)

[landlord-tenant-disputes.cfm](http://servicealberta.ca/landlord-tenant-disputes.cfm)

310-0000 then 780-644-3000

- Provincially created service to help landlords and tenants resolve problems. Applications are heard in-person or by phone.
- \$75 application fee can be waived for low income applicants
- Staff will provide information on procedure but cannot give legal advice

Family Law

Family Law Information Centre (Calgary, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer)

Resolution Support Centre (Edmonton)

For contact information, visit:
<https://albertacourts.ca/resolution-and-court-administration-serv/family-law-information-centre-flic>

- Government of Alberta operated
- Excellent resource for any clients looking for assistance with family law matters
- Staff provide:
 - » general information about family law
 - » court form assistance
 - » Child Support Guideline calculations
 - » information about court procedures

Families & the Law Series

<http://www.cplea.ca/publications>

- Plain language booklet series developed by CPLEA and Edmonton Community Legal Centre. Free booklets available online: Child Custody & Parenting; Financial Support; Property Division; Representing Yourself in Court; Young Parents.
- Free family law workshops offered at Calgary and Edmonton Public Libraries

LegalAve.ca

(Maintained by Alberta Legal Information Society)

<http://legalave.ca>

- Extensive online collection of family law legal information and links to family law resources in Alberta

Criminal Law

John Howard Society

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

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

- 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

Victim Services

310-0000 then 780-427-3460

For a complete list of locations and contact information:

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

- Government of Alberta operated. Victim services units are located throughout the province.
- Provide information on the criminal justice process for victims of crime in Alberta
- Can help people apply for protection orders and financial assistance

Employment Law

Employment Standards Contact Centre

<http://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards.html>

1-877-427-3731

780-427-3731 (Edmonton)

- Government of Alberta operated
- Staff will answer employment law questions by phone and online

Your Rights at Work

<http://www.cplea.ca/rightsatwork>

- Legal information on workers' rights in Alberta. Includes infographics, quizzes, videos, and frequently asked questions.

Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline and Advisory Office

<https://work.alberta.ca/Immigration/temporary-foreign-workers.html>

1-877-944-9955

- Government of Alberta operated. Advisory offices located in Calgary and Edmonton.
- Phone line accessible worldwide
- Provide assistance with accessing and completing forms; offer referrals to immigrant-serving agencies
- Workers can submit complaints to helpline staff

New Alberta Workers

<http://newalbertaworkers.org>

1-866-729-4879

info@newalbertaworkers.org

- Provide workplace health and safety information to temporary foreign workers and workers who are new to Alberta
- Offer workshops on health and safety rights of workers

Human Rights

Alberta Human Rights Commission

<http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca>

780-427-7661 (Edmonton)

403-297-6571 (Calgary)

- Confidential telephone line for Albertans to ask questions about human rights and discrimination. To dial toll-free, call 310-0000 first.
- Website includes frequently asked questions and free publications
- Albertans can file complaints about discrimination by phone or in writing

Immigration Law

Citizenship & Immigration Help Centre

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre>

1-888-242-2100

- Government of Canada operated
- Staff can provide information on immigration and citizenship law in Canada
- Clients concerned about their immigration status should contact a lawyer immediately

Calgary and Area Services

The following services are available in Calgary and surrounding areas.

Legal Advice

The following services provide legal advice and representation. Eligibility criteria may apply for free or low cost services.

Legal Clinics

Calgary Legal Guidance

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

100, 840 7 Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB T2P 3G2

403-234-9266

- Clients must meet financial eligibility criteria
- At legal clinics held throughout Calgary, volunteer lawyers will provide summary legal advice on any area of law. Call or visit the website for locations and times.
- Provide legal representation to a limited number of clients
- Host ID Clinics and Do Your Own Divorce Clinics
- Legal education presentations at Calgary Public Library locations

Student Legal Assistance

(University of Calgary)

<http://slacalgary.ca>

403-220-6637

(leave voicemail for call back)

- Clients must meet eligibility criteria
- Volunteer law students will provide summary legal advice on the following areas of law:
 - » Criminal – minor offences and bylaws/traffic matters
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Employment
 - » Small Claims Court
 - » Family law
- Students may be able to offer legal representation in certain cases

Women's Centre

www.womenscentrecalgary.org

39 4 Street NE
Calgary, AB

403-264-1155

- Volunteer lawyers will provide free, half-hour legal advice sessions to women on family issues and other types of law, except criminal and immigration law. Call to book an appointment.

Civil Claims Duty Counsel

(Pro Bono Law Alberta)

Calgary Courts Centre
601 5 Street SW
15th Floor, South Tower

Hours of operation:

Monday
12:30–4 pm

Tuesday to Friday
9 am–12 pm, 12:30 pm–4 pm

For more information, visit:
[http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/
item.5602-Help_for_
Individuals](http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals)

- Volunteer lawyers (coordinated by Pro Bono Law Alberta) on-site at the courthouse to provide help with Provincial Court civil matters, including:
 - » Landlord and tenant matters
 - » Employment matters
 - » One party suing another party for less than \$50,000
- Clients do not have to meet any financial eligibility criteria
- Lawyers can provide:
 - » Legal advice
 - » Help with filling out forms
 - » Information on court procedures
 - » Limited help with trials, motions, and other court appearances

Queen's Bench / Masters Chambers Duty Court Assistance Program

(Pro Bono Law Alberta)

Calgary Courts Centre
601 5 Street SW

Court Assistance Program
9th & 10th Floor North
Tuesday to Thursday
9:30 am–12:30 pm

Legal Advice Clinic
Room 8-49, 8th Floor North
Tuesday to Thursday
9–9:30 am, 1–4 pm

For more information, visit:
[http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/
item.5602-Help_for_
Individuals](http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals)

- Volunteer lawyers (coordinated by Pro Bono Law Alberta) on-site at the courthouse to provide help with Court of Queen's Bench matters (not including family or criminal law matters).
- Clients do not have to meet any financial eligibility criteria.
- Court Assistance Program - provides assistance in court with:
 - » Applications
 - » Bankruptcy
 - » Motions
 - » Other appearances in Masters and Justice Chambers
- Legal Advice Clinic - provides advice on:
 - » Bankruptcy
 - » Foreclosure
 - » Other civil matters (over \$50,000 lawsuits)
 - » Preparing for court

LEGAL INFORMATION

Criminal & Family

Elizabeth Fry Society

<http://elizabethfrycalgary.ca>

1731 10 Avenue SW

Calgary, AB

403-294-0737

- Legal Information Program for women, youth, and immigrants. Explain criminal charges and address warrants, provide help completing court forms for family and civil matters.
- Court Support Program helps individuals navigate criminal and family court systems.
- Prison Outreach Program offers bail support in certain cases.

Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter

<https://www.calgarywomensshelter.com>

General Inquiries: 403-290-

1552

- Court Support Program assists women who have or are experiencing family violence and who need to access legal services.
- Explain legal options, provide information on navigating legal system, help women connect with legal advice.
- Accompany women to legal and court appointments, assist with applications and filing of documents.

General

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

<https://www.ccisab.ca>

1111 11 Avenue SW

Calgary, AB

403-290-5755

- Legal workshops are offered on immigration, family and criminal law for service providers, the general public, and new Canadians.
- Notary public services are available.

Edmonton and Area Services

The following services are available in Edmonton and surrounding areas.

Legal Advice

The following services provide legal advice and representation. Eligibility criteria may apply for free or low cost services.

Legal Advice

Edmonton Community Legal Centre

<http://www.eclc.ca>

200, 10115 – 100A Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 2W2

780-702-1725

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- At free evening clinics, volunteer lawyers will provide summary legal advice on the following areas of law:
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Employment
 - » Small claims (suing for less than \$50,000)
 - » Collections & Debt
 - » Human rights
 - » Family law
 - » Immigration
 - » Income supports
- Provide legal representation to a limited number of clients
- Fee waiver program reduces court fees for low income clients
- Offer legal education presentations at Edmonton Public Library

Student Legal Services University of Alberta

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

Criminal Law Office
780-425-3356

Family Law & Civil Law
780-492-8244

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- Volunteer law students will provide summary legal advice on the following areas of law:
 - » Criminal – minor offences and bylaws/traffic
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Employment
 - » Family law
 - » Income supports (CPP/EI/WCB/AISH)
- Students may be able to offer legal representation in certain cases
- Offer an extensive collection of free brochures on various legal topics

Civil Claims Duty Counsel

(Pro Bono Law Alberta)

Edmonton Law Courts
1A Sir Winston Churchill Sq
2nd Floor – Ante Room 262A

Hours of operation:

Tuesday: 10 am–2 pm

Wednesday: 12 pm–4 pm

Thursday: 9 am–4 pm

For more information, visit:

http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals

- Volunteer lawyers (coordinated by Pro Bono Law Alberta) on-site at the courthouse to provide help with Provincial Court civil matters:
 - » Landlord and tenant matters
 - » Employment matters
 - » One party suing another party for less than \$50,000
- Clients do not have to meet any financial eligibility criteria.
- Lawyers can provide:
 - » Legal advice
 - » Help with filling out forms
 - » Information on court procedures
 - » Limited help with trials, motions, and other court appearances

Queen’s Bench / Masters Chambers Duty Court Assistance Program

(Pro Bono Law Alberta)

Edmonton Law Courts
1A Sir Winston Churchill Sq
Law Library – Room 2028C
(2nd Floor, South Tower)

Hours of operation:

Wednesday

9 am–12:30 pm

- Volunteer lawyers (coordinated by Pro Bono Law Alberta) on-site at the courthouse to provide help with Court of Queen’s Bench matters (not including family or criminal law matters).
- Clients do not have to meet any financial eligibility criteria.
- Will provide assistance in court with:
 - » Applications
 - » Motions
 - » Other appearances in Masters and Justice Chambers

LEGAL INFORMATION

Landlord & Tenant Advisory Board

8904 118 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
780-496-5959

- Operated by the City of Edmonton
- Information about renting rights, obligations, and legal options
- Mediation services to help landlords and tenants resolve disputes

Elizabeth Fry Society

www.efryedmonton.ab.ca
10523 100 Ave
Edmonton, AB
780-421-1175

- Court Program assists people in criminal court, including explaining court procedure, providing referrals and return to court date cards, and offering emotional support and practical assistance.
- Help women apply for record suspensions.
- Operate Legal Clinic Program at Edmonton Institution for Women.

Southern Alberta

LEGAL ADVICE

Lethbridge Legal Guidance

www.lethbridgelegalguidance.ca

423 5 Street South
Lethbridge, AB

403-380-6339

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- Free legal advice appointments – lawyers will provide summary legal advice on the following areas of law:
 - » Criminal law including traffic / bylaw matters
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Small claims (suing for less than \$50,000)
 - » Employment
 - » Personal Injury
 - » Collections & Debt
 - » Family law
- Provide legal representation to a very limited number of clients
- Fee waiver program reduces court fees for low income clients

Medicine Hat Legal Help Centre

477 3 Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB

403-712-1021

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- Volunteer lawyers provide legal advice during evening legal clinics
 - » Criminal law including traffic / bylaw matters
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Small claims (suing for less than \$50,000)
 - » Employment
 - » Family law
- Legal representation service is not offered

LEGAL INFORMATION

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary

<http://elizabethfrycalgary.ca>

1-877-398-3656

- Court Support Program helps individuals dealing with matters in regional courts in Airdrie, Canmore, Cochrane, Didsbury, Okotoks, and Turner Valley.

Central Alberta Services

LEGAL ADVICE

**Central Alberta
Community Legal Clinic**
www.communitylegalclinic.net
301, 5008 Ross Street
Red Deer, AB
1-877-314-9129

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- Free legal advice appointments – lawyers will provide summary legal advice on the following areas of law:
 - » Criminal law including traffic / bylaw matters
 - » Landlord / tenant (as well as Tenant Support Program)
 - » Small claims (suing for less than \$50,000)
 - » Collections & Debt
 - » Guardianship / trusteeship
 - » Family law
 - » Immigration
 - » Wills, Power of Attorney, Personal Directives
- Provide legal representation to a very limited number of clients
- Fee waiver program, ID Clinic, legal education workshops

LEGAL INFORMATION

Women’s Outreach
www.womensoutreach.ca
4101 54 Avenue
Red Deer, AB
403-347-2480

- Provide clients with legal information and referrals, help clients identify legal issues and prioritize needs.
- Court preparation including explaining court procedures, court support and accompaniment.
- Educate frontline service providers about legal issues facing clients.

**Elizabeth Fry Society of
Edmonton**
www.efryedmonton.ab.ca
10523 100 Ave
Edmonton, AB
780-421-1175

- Court Program assists people in criminal court in Stony Plain, St. Albert, Morinville, Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, Wetaskiwin, Camrose, Ponoka, and Red Deer
- Staff and volunteers explain court procedure, provide referrals and return to court date cards, and offer emotional support and practical assistance.

Northern Alberta Services

LEGAL ADVICE

Grande Prairie Legal Guidance

<http://www.gplg.ca>

780-882-0036

gplg@thecommunityvillage.ca

- Clients must meet eligibility guidelines
- Volunteer lawyers provide summary legal advice during legal clinics in the following areas:
 - » Criminal (summary offences) and traffic/bylaw matters
 - » Landlord / tenant
 - » Small claims (suing for less than \$50,000)
 - » Collections & Debt
 - » Employment
 - » Family law
 - » Wills, Power of Attorney, Personal Directives
- Legal representation is not available
- Offer legal education presentations and workshops

LEGAL INFORMATION

Landlord & Tenant Advisory Board

(Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo)

www.rmwb.ca/page1342.aspx

9717 Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, AB

780-743-7888

- Mediation services to help landlords and tenants resolve disputes
- Educate and advise landlords and tenants about renting rights, practices, and remedies
- Information and referral services offered in-person or by phone

Portage College - Public Legal Education

<http://pleonline.ca>

1-866-623-5551

- Publish Northern Alberta legal resource directory
- Offer workshop on how to find good legal resources

ACCESSING JUSTICE SERIES:

Helping Clients with Legal Issues

Other publications in the Accessing Justice series:

- The Canadian Legal System
- Renting Law in Alberta
- Family Law in Alberta
- Criminal Law in Alberta

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

Centre for Public Legal
Education Alberta
800, 10050 112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J1

Tel 780 451 8764
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