

# THE ALBERTA LEGAL SERVICES MAPPING PROJECT

Report for the

CALGARY JUDICIAL DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October, 2009



Canadian Forum on Civil Justice  
110 Law Centre, University of Alberta  
Edmonton AB T6G 2H5  
Ph. (780) 492- 2513

## **Acknowledgements**

The Alberta Legal Service Mapping Project is a collaborative undertaking made possible by the generous contributions of many Albertans. We are grateful to the Alberta Law Foundation and Alberta Justice for the funding that makes this project possible. The project is guided by Research Directors representing the Alberta Law Foundation, Alberta Justice, Calgary Legal Guidance, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, Edmonton Community Legal Centre, Legal Aid Alberta, and the Alberta Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Security. We are also indebted to our Advisory Committee which is made up of a wide group of stakeholders, and to the Calgary Working Group for their valuable input and support. We also thank all members of the Research Team and everyone who has dedicated their time as a research participant in order to make this report possible.

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Many justice community stakeholders in Alberta and across Canada recognize the importance of systematic evidence-based research to improving legal service delivery and developing effective policies, programs and facilities. The *Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project (ALSMP)* is a large-scale, 4.5 year endeavour, designed to gain an understanding of the legal needs of Albertans and of the legal services available in Alberta.<sup>1</sup> The purpose is to provide a province-wide “map” of legal services that offer Albertans legal information, education, advice, representation, and/or other supports relating to legal problems. The map will extend to civil, family, criminal and administrative justice programs and services. The collaborative process employed will also reveal strengths to build upon in current programs as well as barriers and gaps in services that need to be addressed in order to improve access to legal services for all Albertans.

The goals of this project are to:

- Collect and share information about existing legal services in Alberta.
- Gain a better understanding about the characteristics of people and communities across Alberta and their legal needs.
- Identify strengths and gaps in current legal service delivery and resources.
- Strengthen relationships between legal service providers through the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

The main research questions are:

1. *What programs, services and facilities relating to the administration of justice, public access and public understanding, are available in each Alberta judicial district?*
2. *What do we know about the users of current legal education, information, advice, representation, and support services?*
3. *How can current legal services be enhanced to better meet client needs and how can service gaps be effectively filled?*

Calgary was selected as the pilot Judicial district because it is Alberta’s largest urban centre and had not previously been included in mapping research. Additionally a Law Information Centre (LInC) was scheduled to open in the Calgary Court Centre and preliminary mapping data for the region would be made available to this service.

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANTS

A community-based mapping research was employed. This approach is a form of collaborative needs assessment or environmental scan that recognizes, includes and values local knowledge as essential to understanding communities. Data were collected in multiple ways, including mining existing information sources, interviews and researcher observations. A wealth of rich

---

<sup>1</sup> Full details of the ALSMP, including the full proposal, research questions, instruments and reports are available at: <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/research/mapping-en.php>.

data has been collected and analysed. Details are provided in the full report and all research instruments are available at <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/research/mapping-en.php> .

In total, 226 interviews were completed with legal, social and health providers (175); public (31); lawyers (11); judiciary (4); and tribunal members (5). Of the service provider interviews, 80 were with sole purpose legal services and 38 were from mixed legal/social services (of these, 76 were in the City of Calgary and 42 were in the surrounding communities); 57 interviews were with sole purpose social services (30 in the City of Calgary, and 27 in the surrounding communities). This information was supplemented by key informants and Research team observations.

A full range of income and educational demographics were represented by 31 public participants, who collectively reported 50 legal problems that spanned criminal, family, civil and administrative matters. Effort was successfully made to involve people not usually well represented in survey research. Seventy-one percent were involved in a court case; 89% had some involvement in criminal or quasi-criminal matters; 48% were homeless; 26% identified as Aboriginal and another 23% as other minorities.

### **3. ABOUT THE CALGARY JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

The Calgary Judicial District spans from Olds, east to Strathmore, south to High River, and West to Banff. Services were mapped and interviews conducted in the city of Calgary and 18 rural communities. The overall social context of the Calgary region is important to optimum understanding of the mapping findings. In recent years Calgary has experienced significant growth and a high rate of migration and immigration, resulting in an ethnically diverse population of over one million. Rates of employment are among the highest in Canada, but housing costs are high and homelessness has increased sharply. Low income and low educational attainment tend to go together and in some areas of the city as many as 10% of residents have education below the grade 9 level and high school completion rates are 7-8% lower than the city average.

### **4. CURRENT LEGAL AND RELATED SERVICES IN THE CALGARY JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

A total of 794 organizations and services were mapped in the Calgary Judicial District. Each of these has been entered into a database that can provide:<sup>2</sup>

- Contact information for each service and where appropriate, for the larger organizations responsible for delivering the service.
- Key contact people.
- Service mandates.
- Eligibility criteria.
- Business hours.
- Additional information useful to both the public and service providers (such as specifics about the areas of law covered).

---

<sup>2</sup> The prototype of the database can be accessed at <http://albertalegalservices.ca/admin/> . The access username/password is guest/mapping data. Private for-profit services are not included in the database.

- Searches that produce lists (and quantities) of services with specific criteria (such as all those that provide legal advice).

#### 4.1 An Overview of Mapped Services

- Of the 794 organizations and services mapped in the Calgary Judicial District, 621 are located within the City of Calgary and 173 are disbursed among the 18 smaller communities within the district.
- For-profit services are not included in the database. Numbers provided by the Law Society of Alberta however list 3,001 lawyers as practicing in Calgary and just 82 practicing elsewhere in the Judicial District.
- Legal services account for 242 of those mapped. The remaining 552 are health and social services, of which 259 provide some kind of legal information or support. The remaining 293 are included because their clients are likely to have legal needs, often of a critical nature. These services provide important public access points and can be expected to make frequent referrals to legal services.
- Some legal services are classified as dealing exclusively with one area of law, but many offer multiple kinds of assistance, often spanning more than one area of law, and offering several different types of services ranging from information through to representation.
- Of the 242 legal services, 72 offer a social component with their service (eg, a service that works with convicted offenders but helps them maintain contact and visitation with family). The remaining 170 are considered *sole-purpose* legal services (they have no social component).
- In Calgary, 196 legal services were mapped, 134 of which were sole-purpose. These 196 services provide a total of 428 types of service, divided among each area of law as follows: 175 criminal, 75 administrative, 93 family and 85 civil.
- In contrast, only 46 legal services (36 sole-purpose) were mapped for all of the 18 communities in the remaining Judicial District. Collectively they provide 138 services divided among each area of law: 93 criminal, 23 family, 15 civil and 7 administrative. Clearly local access to non-criminal services is limited.
- Some types of legal service are more readily available than others. In the City of Calgary, public legal education and information (PLEI) is most frequently offered, accounting for 216 of the identified services. A further 82 services offer legal support of some kind, while 67 are concerned with enforcement, and 45 provide legal advice. Just 18 were identified as offering actual representation.
- In the outlying judicial district there are far more criminal services (93) than any other. These break down into the following types of services: 26 PLEI, 26 support, 20 enforcement, 16 advice and 5 representation.
- Family services are next most frequently found in the small communities (23). Of these, 9 are concerned with enforcement, 4 provide PLEI, 8 representation, 7 advice and 6 support.

- Few civil and administrative services were identified outside of the city of Calgary. Six civil enforcement services were mapped, 4 PLEI, 3 advice, 1 representation and 5 support. There were just 4 PLEI and 3 enforcement services for administrative law. No advice or representation services were found for administrative law matters.
- Although Calgary appears to have numerous legal service options, lack of knowledge or misinformation about many of these services is a barrier to effective public access. Lack of knowledge also hampers access to already sparse legal services in the small communities of the Judicial District.
- Low knowledge of services is not just a problem of poor public understanding. The Team of trained researchers very often found it difficult to locate clear information that accurately described services and related eligibility criteria. Furthermore, service providers often had an incomplete understanding of other services offered by their own organization and were sometimes uncertain of details about their own.
- Eligibility criteria further reduce the number of services available to all members of the public. Most of the advice and representation services are tied to financial criteria considered low or very low by the City of Calgary. Other services are directed to specific populations such as youth, victims of violence, and women among others. Additionally, the mandate of some important services only allows them to assist with court-involved matters in particular courts.
- Examined in detail, services in Calgary might be described as fragmented, but little if any actual duplication was identified. While multiple services may at times serve the same demographic populations, the services either meet different needs or combine to address the total need. The Team is unable to identify even one legal service that has unwarranted duplication.
- Outside of Calgary, only criminal services appear to be even close to adequate for the geographic dispersment involved. Furthermore, 28 of the 138 services mapped are not physically located within the communities but available only via Internet or telephone.
- It is important to understand that services fall into four broad types of organization: *government* (directly funded and administered by a Ministry); *public services* (mandated by governments but organizationally independent); *community non-profit*; and *private for-profit*. The type of organization has implications for how services are funded and delivered and, therefore also for how changes might be brought about.

## 4.2. Finding and Accessing Available Services

Most legal services use multiple means to make their services known. It nevertheless remains difficult to find accurate information. Overall ALSMP findings indicate that, at best, the public has only a very basic understanding of what services can (or cannot) do for them. Lack of understanding about legal rights and responsibilities was identified as a significant barrier to timely access of appropriate services. Public understanding is particularly confused about the distinctions between general information, legal information and legal advice.

Geographic location, how well services are known, eligibility criteria and mandates for special populations and needs all affect public access to available services. Key findings are:

- *Outside of Calgary there is a clear lack of family, civil and administrative legal services.* Lack of private and public transportation within and between communities further hampers service access. This includes transportation problems in the city of Calgary.
- *Some services are more well-known than others.* Unaided, public participants were most likely to find the court registries, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) and the public library. They were somewhat likely to discover the Alberta Law Line, Calgary Legal Guidance, Family Justice Service (FLIC) and the Law Library. Frequently reported referrals by both public and service providers reflected a similar pattern, except that providers made fewer referrals to the court registries and almost never mentioned the Alberta Law Line.
- *Of the interviewed legal services, 59% reported a variety of eligibility criteria.* Age is most common (primarily being either over or under 18 years). Eligibility criteria are extremely complex and applied with many exceptions. The LAA income cut off and the scope of coverage were raised many times as inadequate to address legal need.<sup>3</sup> It was also discovered that having identification was required by 50% of the services.
- *Most services addressing specific needs in the Calgary Judicial District relate to criminal matters,* followed by issues relating to families and/or their members. Few services report specialized components serving other special needs such as Aboriginals, immigrants, people living with disabilities of any kind, seniors and others.
- *Lack of training to assist with special needs was widely acknowledged by service providers.* Public participants and providers working with vulnerable populations repeatedly pointed to a lack of social context awareness and cultural sensitivity, especially within bureaucratic organizations and police services.
- Other access issues raised and discussed in the full report are a need for services in languages other than English; legal literacy, homelessness and mental health and addictions.

Positive information-sharing and networking among service providers is an essential part of effective, coordinated service delivery. It is indispensable to public success in finding and accessing legal services that are appropriate to their needs. ALSMP findings are that there is considerable room to increase and enhance service provider knowledge of other relevant services and sometimes also of their own. Increased coordination and collaboration among existing services is also needed. Providers value the role that service networking opportunities can play in this. The need for an on-line searchable, detailed and up-to-date source of service information was also identified.

## **5. UNDERSTANDING LEGAL AND RELATED SERVICE USERS**

National research provides us with reliable general population statistics about the incidence of legal problems in Canada. At any given time, approximately 47% (11.6 million) Canadians have a potential legal need.<sup>4</sup> It has, however, proved challenging to obtain answers to even the most basic of questions: “Do you keep statistics about your service?” Of the 175 legal service providers asked, only 30 have provided any statistical information. The following findings are

---

<sup>3</sup> Eligibility issues are complex and referral to the full report Section 4.4.3 is recommended.

<sup>4</sup> Full details and references are provided in the full report, Section 5.1.

therefore based on the perspectives and experiences of public and professional participants in the ALSMP interviews:<sup>5</sup>

- People usually only look for information about legal issues when they realize they have a legal matter (usually of a pressing nature). They then attempt to gain information via multiple sources, most often beginning with personal contacts and/or the Internet.
- Personal contacts often provide unreliable information and even participants with IT backgrounds found legal service websites confusing, often failing to find the information they sought. When relevant information was found on the Internet, usefulness was highly rated.
- Participants attempted to use information in any available media they could find. Overall they most often accessed and found useful in-person information. Only 10% found videos but all rated these as very or fairly useful. Courses and workshops (PLE) were also found helpful.
- Lack of service statistics make it difficult to identify groups that use services more or less than others. As previously discussed, geographic location and the complexity of eligibility criteria inevitably lead to some distinct user trends.
- Analysis of available data suggests that people with the following kinds of legal need (tempered by geographic location) are more likely to find appropriate services: indictable criminal charges; youth criminal charges; domestic violence; family or civil court proceedings; matters that can be resolved based only on legal information (without advice or representation).
- Providers most often identified the following groups as frequent users of their services: people living in poverty; immigrants/new Canadians; women; self-represented litigants (SRLs). Additionally it is known that governments are significant users of the courts, in-house and private counsel.
- Of the 15 public participants who had self-represented, all but one said that at some point the decision was primarily driven by not being able to afford a lawyer. Of these 81% said they would prefer to hire a lawyer if they could.
- More than 60% of sole service legal providers did recognize a lack of resources and additional social barriers as primary drivers of self-representation. But 57% believed that preferring to self-represent was a primary reason and a few individuals held very negative opinions about SRLs.
- Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately involved in the Canadian criminal system and in child protection actions. Yet, beyond the few Aboriginal specific services, service providers in the Calgary Judicial District observed that Aboriginal groups were less likely than others to use their services. Law relating to Aboriginal peoples is challenging to understand and service providers reflected on their need for more knowledge of “On Reserve” services and jurisdictional issues in general. They frequently reported a lack of training to address the special needs of Aboriginal people. In some cases there may be a lack of awareness that Aboriginal people are present in some communities.

---

<sup>5</sup> In many cases the findings are also supported by previous research, as documented in the full report.

- “New Canadians” include immigrants, refugees and temporary foreign workers (TFWs). These different statuses affect rights and entitlements and contribute to increasing vulnerability for encountering legal problems. At the same time, the greater complexity makes understanding and addressing related legal needs more difficult for both New Canadians and service providers. There is a lack of both information and legal services in languages other than English, in this Judicial District.<sup>6</sup>
- People living with physical, mental or cognitive disabilities and/or with addictions are vulnerable to legal problems but are underserved.
- Thirty services were mapped that have specific components addressing family violence – all within the City of Calgary. There is also an absence of domestic violence services for male victims and for victims who are in same-sex relationships. While specialized services are generally knowledgeable about victims’ experiences, staff at other key services may not be.
- People who are homeless face barriers to accessing justice and related services. Calgary’s current homeless population may be as high as 10,000 with up to 40,000 in housing they cannot afford. Most homeless live in temporary shelter of some kind. Only a minority live on the street, but those who do frequently also have mental health and addictions problems and inevitably face increased interactions with the police.
- Seniors encounter specific legal needs and increased problems addressing them. Elder abuse is a significant problem. Few services focus on seniors’ legal needs and this population group appears to be invisible to most providers.
- Service users reported specific experiences with some services:
  - Seventeen public participants had retained a total of 26 different lawyers; 15 privately and 11 through Legal Aid Alberta (LAA). Six participants said that they had received good service from at least one lawyer, but 13 had been dissatisfied with at least one of the lawyers they had retained.
  - Public participants said that the courthouse staff were among the most helpful they encountered at any service. Seven spoke about their experiences with members of the judiciary. Criticisms related mostly to ambiguity and perceived unfairness of judges’ orders (strongly tied to problems of enforcement), or to procedural messes and complexity.
  - Three participants had used the Dispute Resolution Office; none found it helpful. Two experienced Judicial Dispute Resolution; one found it unhelpful. The other said the service was very good but not successful in getting through to the other party. One person had been to Civil Family Mediation and reported it unhelpful.
  - Eleven participants had applied for a LAA certificate and nine applications were successful. Additionally, two wanted LAA services but did not formally apply because they believed they would not meet the income cut-off. They proffered a range of criticisms about previously identified problems with legal aid:<sup>7</sup> income eligibility; scope of coverage; application process; legal representation - process and quality; and access in rural areas.

---

<sup>6</sup> Details of service languages are provided in Table 12, Section 5.2.5 of the full report.

<sup>7</sup> Most recently by the LAA assessment conducted by PRA in 2008.



- Police services may be the only services present in a community. Police responsibilities are however, limited and place restrictions on what needs officers can respond to and what actions they can take when responding. They are often unable to address the problems that individuals present. Knowing where to send people for help would be of significant support to front-line officers.
- There were also significant complaints about Calgary police attitudes and behaviours from public participants, concerning police treatment of the homeless, lack of integrity, and unnecessary use of force. Service providers working with vulnerable groups tended to support these complaints. Service providers outside of Calgary suggested that RCMP would benefit from more training on appropriate responses to domestic violence and problems involving people with FASD.
- There was generally little comment from public or provider participants about the various community non-profit legal services available. Calgary Legal Guidance was most often mentioned.<sup>8</sup> Nine public participants used CLG and five found help with their legal need.
- If legal needs are not resolved promptly, overall social problems tend to increase, leading to additional legal issues which form a 'cluster'. The story quoted below is not at all exceptional.

*My court date with a magistrate, that the Duty Counsel had set, came up last week - my court date that was put off for a year. But I got ... mixed up. I arrived too late. I talked to someone from the Calgary Police Service at the courthouse and he said there would be a warrant issued for my arrest and that I would have to turn myself in. There was nothing that I could do to avoid the warrant. The other problem is that ... my whole immigration process ... is in limbo based on the outcome of this .... and now I can't work anywhere because I ... didn't have permission to work in Canada. Even now that I do finally have permission, no one wants to hire someone who might not be able to stay in Canada, who hasn't worked for the last year, and may have a criminal record soon. My husband broke his arm a few months ago and was laid off from his construction job as a result. He has an Employment Insurance claim in right now, but it's taking a while to get sorted out. We are at the mercy of the system. We have no income and with things the way they are in the economy, he can't get hired onto a new job. We have no money and so we just lost our home. We are now living in a homeless shelter. Things just get worse and worse for us. [Member of the Public - Calgary]*

<sup>8</sup> The full report goes into possible reasons for a finding that nevertheless remains somewhat puzzling.

## **6. IMPROVING LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE CALGARY JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

The ALSMP findings for the Calgary Judicial District provide the foundation for identifying ‘gaps’ in current services. After consultation with stakeholders, it was agreed that for the purposes of providing recommendations, ‘gaps’ would be defined as *any unmet legal service need*. There are then, three basic strategies to address gaps that build on the foundation of existing service strengths: cohesion and coordination; enhancement and expansion; new services. These three strategies are considered in relation to the 42 recommendations offered.<sup>9</sup>

### **6.1 Summary of Gaps in Calgary Judicial District Legal Services**

Some areas needing overall improvement and/or an increased level of service are relevant to all legal services. Others are more specific to certain organizations or individual services. The following summary is sub-divided to reflect this.

#### **Gaps generally relevant to all legal service delivery**

- **A need for improved information about legal processes and services**
  - Knowledge about existing services
  - PLEI to ensure an effective foundation
- **More affordable legal advice and representation options**
  - The possibilities of unbundling
  - An increased role for paralegals
- **Increased services outside of Calgary**
- **Enhanced legal services to meet special needs**

#### **Gaps with particular organizational relevance**

- **Coordinating and enhancing government services**
  - Doing better with justice for children and youth
- **Public Services - delivery that meets the public need**
  - Legal Aid Alberta
  - Police Services
- **Community non-profit – building on successes**
- **Private legal services – building client satisfaction**

---

<sup>9</sup> The full report provides explanatory discussion with each sub-set of recommendations indicated in the ‘Summary of Gaps’ provide here. Additionally, Appendix J of the report provides a table of Recommendations associated with suggestions for taking a justice community lead and available models to look at.

## 6.2. List of Recommendations

1. Enhance the websites of current services to ensure that the site and related services within it:
  - a) can be readily identified in broad searches for related legal information (eg via Google);
  - b) are easy to navigate;
  - c) have up-to-date, clear, accurate, service information that sufficiently explains what the service does, who is eligible to receive it, and how they can do so; and
  - d) to facilitate the above, create templates and guidelines for the content of legal service web pages.
2. Commit resources to maintaining, expanding and enhancing the prototype database containing information collected by the ALSMP and ensuring that it is readily accessible to all Albertans. An informative model is provided by BC Clicklaw.<sup>10</sup>
3. Simplify, clarify and coordinate eligibility criteria within and across legal services.
4. Support and facilitate opportunities, internal and external, for service providers to keep informed about their own and related legal and support services:
  - a) providing internal service information in ways that keep it current accessible and usable;
  - b) encouraging and facilitate effective networking among a broad range of legal and related services in the Calgary Judicial District and elsewhere in Alberta, as is useful; and
  - c) consulting with management and frontline staff to determine the most effective ways to achieve information-sharing and ensure appropriate referrals.
5. Service provider networks (legal, health, social). Encourage all participants to bring information about their services to these events, and provide opportunities for discussion about these services.
6. Identify the most effective advertising media by drawing on studies that evaluate successful for-profit commodity advertising and public sector campaigns (such as those related to health).
7. Parent organizations and local Calgary management take equal proactive responsibility to communicate about PLEI they produce, working together to ensure:
  - a) local services know about and are supplied with all available materials relevant to their service and relevant areas of law, and to other services of the parent organization; and
  - b) responsibility is assigned, throughout the relevant hierarchy, for informing, supplying, displaying and replenishing PLEI materials;

---

<sup>10</sup> Clicklaw is the product of an extensive and long-term collaboration of BC PLEI providers. Details are available at <http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/> and in Reid et al (2009). ALSMP and Clicklaw team members have met and consulted on the two projects. BC has some very strong, well-established PLEI producers and has begun a process of better coordinating these resources by creating a searchable PLEI database. Responses have indicated a need to also provide details about available legal services. The ALSMP has begun at the other end of this overall enterprise, focusing on legal services.

- c) that services with outreach components take the initiative in providing available PLEI to local services that are pivotal information points for Calgary Judicial District communities (see Recommendation 16).
8. Local organizations of all types are proactive in asking legal services to which they refer or receive referrals, to provide to them available PLEI materials so that these can be made available to clients.
9. In collaboration with provincial, and where appropriate national PLEI producers, efforts should be made to identify or create resources in languages that correspond to the ethnic diversity in the Calgary area.
10. The Law Society of Alberta find ways to change practice rules to allow the ethical and effective provision of limited scope retainers in appropriate contexts, and in combination with Alberta Justice and the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals, to determine responsible roles and regulations for paralegal services.
11. Alberta Justice develop policies and staffing to incorporate assessment and triage for partial advice and representation into current LInCs and to develop the role of supervised paralegals within these services.
12. *Pro Bono Law Alberta* work with its members, the Law Society and all stakeholders currently providing partial advice or representation services, to effectively and responsibly enhance and expand this service option.
13. The knowledge of members of the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals is sought and included in the development of limited scope and paralegal services.
14. Current services that are evaluated as providing effective and affordable advice and representation alternatives, are expanded. Most particularly, outreach is established for vulnerable groups and to the Judicial District communities.
15. Enhance advertising of services that are available through the community clinics, the LInC, and Alberta Law Line to other legal and social service providers, as well as the public.
16. Incentives are provided to encourage private lawyers to establish practices, or provide visiting services (including accepting LAA certificates), in communities where there is clearly a lack of practicing lawyers.
17. All existing legal services, especially major stakeholders with provincial mandates, utilize the information provided in the ALSMP database to assist in a review of the services they provide to communities outside of the city of Calgary with a view to:
  - a) ensuring services located in communities, visiting periodically, or electronically available are well-known to residents;
  - b) making the enhancement of outreach services an absolute priority, by expanding capacity and or mandate as indicated by unmet legal need; and
  - c) where community residents must travel to Calgary or other communities for service, finding innovative solutions to transportation barriers (see Section 7.3)
18. Specifically that expansion of existing services should include:

- a) collaboratively developed SafeCom, LInC, FLIC, LAA and CLG outreach services that travel to communities across the Judicial District; and
  - b) sufficient capacity within the Alberta Law Line to manage the volume of calls received both for brief and extended advice services.
19. Collaborative relations are established with health and social service providers at provincial and local levels for the purpose of:
    - a) ensuring exchanges of relevant service information;
    - b) pooling resources to develop and provide, locally situated and outreach services that address interrelated needs holistically.
  20. It has to be made a priority to provide information and training to legal service providers, lawyers and the judiciary that will enhance and increase:
    - a) cultural sensitivity;
    - b) awareness of the social circumstances and physical and mental needs of vulnerable people; and
    - c) awareness of the interrelation of legal and social issues.
  21. Services evaluate the physical accessibility of their services for people with mobility, hearing or sight disabilities.
  22. The development of service/program components to address special needs is encouraged and funded.
  23. Legal services proactively seek ways to reach out to vulnerable groups at high risk for experiencing problems.
  24. Effort is made to meaningfully involve representatives from vulnerable groups in service design and delivery.
  25. Inter-service teams be formed to work with children and their families involved in child protection and legal custody proceedings.
  26. Child protection and custody cases be seized by one judge who is a specialist in Family law, for all matters and hearings.
  27. A lawyer and a social worker be appointed to represent the child directly in any case where guardianship or custody is highly disputed, most especially where multiple adult parties are involved.
  28. Current youth programs (legal and social) do not “cut off” at 18 but develop specific components to assist clients with a transition to adult services and self-support.
  29. LAA is supported with funding to allow enhancement and expansion of certificate coverage to allow:
    - a) raising the income eligibility;
    - b) broadening the scope of representation, especially for family, civil and administrative matters.
  30. Services offered by the Alberta Law Line be enhanced and expanded to:

- a) ensure this service is known and understood by service providers and public in the Calgary and all other Alberta Judicial Districts;
  - b) provide service capacity that can meet demand in a timely way; and
  - c) develop dedicated lines that prioritize calls from legal services such as LInC, community legal clinics and social services providing legal gateways in the absence of local legal services.
31. Reception staff in busy LAA offices include at least one member properly trained to perform a triage service for potential clients that would:
    - a) accurately assess the eligibility of applicants;
    - b) ensure applicants are aware of alternative possibilities to address legal problems;
    - c) ensure applicants understand the terms of LAA certificate coverage;
    - d) assign appointments with an intake worker (giving priority if a client needs to return another day);
    - e) have the ability to assign appointment times to out-of-town clients.
  32. LAA continue to pursue technological options for enhancing the LAA application process, but also seek to increase physical outreach to communities in the Calgary Judicial District.
  33. CPS initiatives to improve relations with the homeless continue to be supported with an emphasis on inter-service collaboration and training.
  34. Enhanced training is developed to assist police to understand and deal safely, effectively, and constructively with special needs populations. This training must recognize the circumstances in which police are expected to interact with these groups.
  35. Special attention is given to providing domestic violence training and related support services for the RCMP in small communities. Rural conditions including the lack of safe shelter, economic dependence, difficulty in complying with protection orders, and personal acquaintance must all be taken into consideration.
  36. Efforts are made to raise awareness about non-profit legal services, especially among other legal service providers.
  37. Both NCSA and other legal services who have (or potentially should have) Aboriginal clients, are proactive in making contact, exchanging information and exploring opportunities for collaboration.
  38. Non-profit organizations are encouraged and funded to conduct assessments/evaluations of their services that explicitly investigate referral patterns including which groups of public do and do not access these services.
  39. The Law Society of Alberta, the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Bar Association, individual lawyers and law firms take seriously the consistent public complaints about the quality and expense of private Bar services and find ways to remedy these problems.
  41. The multi-sector, multi-ministry collaboration providing a holistic program agenda via the *Safe Communities* initiative, continue to be fully supported and developed throughout Alberta.

42. Opportunities are pursued by legal services and supported by funders within the Calgary Judicial District, to establish multi-sector collaborations that jointly address the social and legal problems of people who are homeless and/or have mental health and addictions challenges.
43. Calgary legal service providers attempt to provide in-service assistance for clients with transportation needs, such as:
  - a) providing transit tickets or taxi fares;
  - b) providing volunteer drivers; and
  - c) establishing, in collaboration with other local services, a jointly funded and operated shuttle.
44. Maximize ability and willingness to offer services over the telephone, online, or by sending documents through the mail.
45. Innovative solutions to rural transportation are pursued, such as:
  - a) using school buses in between or in conjunction with school runs between communities;
  - b) providing bicycles on either a loan or permanent basis; and
  - c) creating inter-agency collaborations to share costs of hiring shuttles and to lobby for local subsidies and municipal transportation initiatives.