



ALBERTA SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS MAPPING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Self-Represented Litigants Access to Justice Mapping Project” (hereafter referred to as the Mapping Project) is designed to document the range of government and non-government services and supports currently available to self-represented litigants (SRLs) in Alberta. The mapping process also reveals issues surrounding current service delivery including gaps in present services and possible ways of bringing existing services more closely in-line with the needs of SRLs.

The report begins with an overview of the background, rationale and objectives for the Mapping Project. Details of the mapping research methodology follow. Sections 4 to 6 present the project findings. Section 4 considers which people may be self-representing and Section 5 presents findings about current services to SRLS, including the type, extent, demand, capacity, accessibility and other associated service issues. Section 6 looks at unmet service needs of SRLs on two main levels: 1) what can be done to enhance delivery of currently available services; and 2) what service gaps need to be filled and how this might be achieved. Special attention is paid to the role a self-help centre or kiosk could play in achieving improved SRL services.

Project Background and Rationale

There is concern within Canadian justice systems that an increasing number of people are attempting to negotiate legal matters without legal representation. It is also widely believed that the needs of SRLs are not being effectively met. In 2005, Alberta Justice formed the SRL Advisory Committee to make recommendations to enhance access to justice for SRLs in Alberta. As part of the process of deciding on a course of action to address the needs of SRLs, a delegation from Alberta Justice visited the recently established British Columbia Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre (BCSHIC), located in the Vancouver Law Courts. This project is considered an innovative model of collaboration to identify and address the needs of SRLs.

Alberta Justice also consulted with non-government organizations (NGOs) in Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary about the possibility of conducting a mapping process to document current SRL services and to better understand how to address gaps and shortcomings in those services. As a result of these consultations, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, acting on behalf of the NGOs, successfully applied to the Alberta Law Foundation for \$82,875 to conduct the Mapping Project, which was matched by funding from Alberta Justice.

Project Objectives

The Mapping Project includes a series of specific objectives:

- To meet with government and non-government service providers to determine the range of services and supports currently made available to SRLs.

- To systematically record details about available services and facilitate the sharing of these details in a way that can increase accurate and effective referrals.
- To examine patterns of referral and coordination among existing organizations providing legal and social support services to SRLs.
- To identify and/or confirm the specific service needs of SRLs.
- To determine problems and issues faced by SRLs in accessing services offered.
- To analyze both SRL and service provider needs and perspectives on service to SRLs and what should be done to address service gaps, problems, and challenges in being self-represented.
- To identify priority areas for service delivery to SRLs.
- To gain a geographically specific and appropriate assessment of SRL needs and ways in which these can be effectively met.

The prior consultations with justice and community service agencies established a strong foundation for the conduct of the Mapping Project. This facilitated participation in the research process and is expected to assist in implementing recommendations flowing from the report.

Scope and Time Frame of the Project

The Mapping Project was conducted between July and November 2006. Legal services currently available to SRLs involved in criminal, civil and family matters heard in the Provincial Court of Alberta, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, and the Court of Appeal of Alberta were mapped in the following three regions of Alberta:

1. The City of Edmonton.
2. Grande Prairie and region (specifically, Grande Prairie, High Level, Peace River, High Prairie and Hinton).
3. Red Deer and region (specifically, Red Deer, Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka and Wetaskiwin).

Key social services likely to have involvement with SRLs were also asked to take part in the mapping process.

Methodology

Mapping is essentially a collaborative form of needs assessment research that recognizes multiple, interrelated factors and relationships. The involvement of community members in actively creating the research knowledge builds a sense of ownership of the research findings, which in turn encourages buy-in to recommended action for positive change. The Mapping Project gathered the following kinds of information for inclusion in the regional maps:

- Details of current services provided to SRLs in each region.
- Areas of law where needs and services are concentrated.

- The ability of SRLs to access these services.
- Levels of demand for SRL-related services.
- Identified needs of SRLs that are not met by present services.
- Characteristics and needs of SRLs in each region.
- Viable service options to address unmet SRL needs.

A variety of methods were used to obtain these information components:

- Searches to identify current services to SRLs.
- Interviews with representatives of organizations providing legal and/or important support services to SRLs.
- Interviews with members of the judiciary.
- Interviews with SRLs.
- Researcher observations.
- SRL services information templates.

Profiles of SRLs Emerging from the Mapping Project

Previous research has found that SRLs accessing available services tend to have above average education, even if they fall into a low-income bracket, and that most would prefer to have legal representation. Input into the mapping process from service providers, members of the judiciary, SRLs and the observations of the research team provided a nuanced picture about SRLs. Seven broad groups of SRLs with differing needs are identified:

- SRLs with an overall lack of social resources.
- Low income SRLs with some social resources.
- SRLs living with additional social barriers that interfere with accessing justice.
- SRLs unable to find an available lawyer.
- SRLs who were previously represented.
- SRLs in cases where representation is supposed to be unnecessary.
- SRLs who could access representation but prefer to self-represent.

Current Services Available to SRLs

When considering the findings from the Mapping Project, it is important to remember that the project took place because members of the justice community had already identified a need to improve service to SRLs and wished to better understand the most effective ways to achieve that goal. It was expected that at a systemic level some problems in current service delivery would be identified. How the mapping process was experienced by the research team is extremely relevant to understanding how both SRLs and service providers experience current service delivery. The task of the highly educated, trained researchers was facilitated by many supportive contacts in key organizations. Despite these advantages which are not usually available to SRLs attempting to access legal information and services, team members found the process

of information collection about relevant services to be difficult, time consuming, often confusing and seldom straightforward. That the researchers found the search for information on SRL services so challenging must be considered a major finding concerning the availability and accessibility of current services for SRLs.

The many specific details about the services mapped have been entered into an information template for each region (an example of which is provided in Appendix E of the full report). The following is a very brief overview of the services mapped in each project location.

Edmonton

- In the city of Edmonton, researchers mapped 66 separate services, overseen by approximately 36 organizations. Of these 66 services, 42 reported providing only legal information. Nine information services are web-based and two (Dial-a-Law and Lawyer Referral) are telephone only. Fourteen services offer some assistance beyond information, however, this is almost all limited to low-income clients.
- A number of the services mapped in Edmonton have provincial mandates. Court Services, Legal Aid and Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) are among these and have branch offices in the regional centres and sometimes in surrounding communities. Whenever possible, branch offices were also mapped locally. Two services of Legal Aid (Brydges and the Alberta Law Line) are telephone services available across Alberta. The 11 Internet and telephone-only services are also accessible to all of Alberta.
- In Edmonton, there are a variety of possibilities for obtaining legal information in the broad areas of criminal, family and civil law. Knowing where to go to obtain needed information – or even which information is needed – is, however, a different matter as the experiences of the mapping team underlined. In general, there is a lack of easily understood, step-by-step information that tells SRLs specifically what they have to do and how they should go about doing it.

Grande Prairie Region

- In the Grande Prairie region, 76 services overseen by 44 organizations were mapped. It is important to recognize that a high proportion of these (30 throughout the region) are community organizations rather than direct legal services. Some of these services offer basic information and related support with legal matters, while others provide only referrals to legal services.
- The services mapped are distributed across the region as follows: Grande Prairie, 32 services; Peace River 13 services; High Level, 8 services; High Prairie, 7 services; and Hinton, 14 services.
- Court Registry services, along with law libraries located in the courthouses, are the primary sources of legal information in the region.
- Legal Aid Regional Services and Native Counselling Services of Alberta provide almost all of the little legal assistance available. Small communities only have

direct access to these services on court days. Distances are substantial and transportation, even to the closest town, is often very difficult.

- A number of community services in the area do provide legal advocacy and court support, mostly to Aboriginal clients.

Red Deer Region

- In the Red Deer region, 32 services overseen by 23 organizations were mapped. Of these services, 23 are located in the city of Red Deer.
- Three Information Collection Forms (ICFs) were completed in Wetaskiwin; three in Rocky Mountain House and one in each of the towns of Rimbey, Ponoka and Drayton Valley. No services were mapped for Stettler.
- Outside of Red Deer and Wetaskiwin, only one service was mapped that provides more than legal information. In towns to which the courts circuit, some additional services are available on court days, which tend to occur about once a month. Another 13 community services were listed as of interest, but researchers were unable to arrange interviews.
- The small central Alberta communities lack legal information and assistance services. Furthermore, community service providers reported that transportation into Red Deer is a major barrier for many of their clients.
- Despite its proximity to the city of Edmonton, researchers learned that Wetaskiwin has justice needs that differ from other suburban areas. Wetaskiwin sees a disproportionately high number of serious criminal and volatile family cases and many SRLs may need support in order to effectively access the legal services available to them.

Capacity, Demand, Accessibility and Referral Patterns

Most legal and social support services administered or funded by government reported no capacity to increase current service without additional resources. Some organizations have a philosophical commitment not to turn away anyone in need of assistance and therefore said that they would find the capacity to meet a client increase. At the same time they indicated that they could use more resources to meet present needs as well as increased service demands.

Very few statistics are available relating to the number of SRL clients served, making it difficult to draw concrete conclusions about the relation of demand to capacity. However, qualitative data from legal and social service providers and the judiciary, strongly indicate that current services are unable to meet a high demand from SRLs.

Furthermore, the existence of a service does not mean that it is accessible to potential users. Many factors determine service accessibility. Easily understood information about the service must be available; those seeking the service must be able to afford it or be eligible to receive it; they must be able to get to the location of the service; and they must be able to understand and complete any requirements of the service. After reviewing the findings, one Team Leader summed up the discouraging situation from the perspective of an SRL: "I don't know what I need or where to find it, and I can't

afford to find out. Even if I did find out, there is no one to provide what I need or help me understand what I have to do.”

Most service providers indicated that their staff do everything that they can to assist people with special needs. Few services, however, have specific programs, equipment or training to meet the needs of people with physical or cognitive disabilities. Participants repeatedly pointed out the barriers to accessing justice that people with mental health problems face. There is also a general lack of opportunities for formal cultural awareness training. Transportation to service locations was identified as a significant barrier in all three mapping regions, becoming increasingly significant the further away a community is from a regional centre.

Service providers offer a wide range of legal and social service referrals, especially to people that their own service is unable to help. Essentially, staff will offer whatever information they have about any other service they think might help. Unfortunately, due to a lack of accurate information, service providers tend to offer referrals that are not appropriate and this results in a frustrating and futile circle of inquiries for SRLs.

Conclusions About Current SRL Services

An SRL participating in the Mapping Project made the following comments:

Everyone deserves the right to legal representation. Lawyers are too expensive for low-income individuals to afford. People are too busy keeping themselves and their families afloat to have to go through a convoluted legal information and advice rigmarole. It has been so time consuming that it has cost me money that I didn't have in the first place. For example, being put on hold on phones, stonewalling by [service] gatekeepers, being misled by administrators and sent on a wild goose chase just to find out who I am supposed to talk to. There is a lack of understanding of the emotional despair people are in to begin with without being put off by the legal system as being a pain to deal with. [Edmonton SRL, eventually successful in gaining a Legal Aid lawyer and the legal outcome sought.]

Based on the Mapping Project findings, the most descriptive summary statements that can be made are that:

- There is a *confusion* of services *potentially* offering legal information, assistance and related support to *some* SRLs.
- Availability and accessibility of services varies considerably depending on the geographic location, eligibility criteria, area of law concerned and the information seeking abilities of each SRL.
- There is a lack of accurate detailed and coordinated information about services and SRLs often do not receive helpful referrals.
- *If* SRLs manage to connect with a service for which they are eligible they generally seem to receive assistance that is helpful.

- As many as two-thirds of SRLs are not eligible for low-income services. Beyond Internet-based information and any help that court registry staff can offer, there are very few other forms of assistance available to the majority of SRLs.
- Among SRLs who are eligible for the low-income services, a significant portion have difficulty understanding what their legal rights and needs are and require assistance to access available services.
- There is very little (if in fact any) duplication of current SRL services.
- Outside of the regional centres, there is limited access to lawyers even for those with the financial means to retain counsel.
- Free, or inexpensive, legal advice or assistance from agents with the ability to appear, is very inadequate.
- There are more SRL services in the family law area than in any other area of law but family law also has the highest demand for assistance.
- Legal representation is generally available for people charged with indictable offences, but for adults with summary offence charges or traffic violations there are few sources of information and even less additional assistance.
- Information about areas of civil law is available, but quite basic. There is little additional legal assistance that explains how to navigate the legal process.

Meeting SRL Service Needs

Mapping Project findings confirm that the legal service needs of SRLs are not being sufficiently met. Some service strengths were identified, but also many challenges to be met. Two main approaches to improving services are identified: 1) improving the delivery of existing SRL services to maximize current capacities and effectiveness, and 2) filling service gaps by building on and expanding existing strengths and facilitating innovative new services that address local needs. In both cases, continued collaboration and strengthened partnerships between government and non-government justice and social services will be essential to successfully meeting the needs of SRLs.

Enhancing Current Services

A primary finding of the Mapping Project is that both service providers and SRLs need a clear and accurate understanding of the legal services currently available. Furthermore, evidence refutes the perception that SRLs do not understand legal processes, information and forms simply because they are ignorant about Canadian justice systems and have generally low literacy and comprehension skills. SRLs cannot be expected to understand and negotiate justice related services if service providers do not themselves have a clear and accurate understanding of those services to share with clients. Improving service provider knowledge is crucial to maximizing the effectiveness of current SRL services. The following strategies and actions are suggested:

- Sharing and maintaining the Mapping Project information databases with justice and community service providers.
- Making the collection of factual information and basic statistics about SRL clients a priority.

- Facilitating networking among justice and community services with the purpose of exchanging service knowledge and experience.
- Building on current service strengths identified in this report and via ongoing consultation with SRLs as well as service providers.

Filling Service Gaps

There was extremely strong agreement among participants in the Mapping Project concerning the gaps in services to SRLs. In addition to the need to expand current services that are already successful but under-resourced, participants emphasized the need for the following types of SRL service:

- Affordable legal advice and representation, especially for the many SRLs who cannot afford a lawyer or access current low-income services.
- Friendly, in-person help to understand and navigate legal processes as part of a “one-stop” service that coordinates accurate information and referrals to other available legal information and assistance.
- Assistance with completing legal forms.
- More options for achieving quick and effective resolutions to legal problems.
- Mechanisms to increase access to legal and court services for residents of rural communities.
- Mechanisms and increased awareness to facilitate access to legal services for people with special needs (language, physical disability, cognitive and psychiatric challenges, low literacy).
- Access to representation for disadvantaged accused in summary criminal cases.
- A general increase in services for SRLs in civil matters.
- Increased assistance, legal advice and representation for tenants facing actions in the Court of Queen’s Bench.
- Increased access to legal advice and representation in family law matters, especially those involving the welfare of children.

Advantages and Limitations of a Self-Help Centre

Almost all of the participants in the Mapping Project thought that a self-help centre (SHC) could contribute to meeting SRL needs. The most agreed upon benefit of an SHC is its potential as a centralized place for information that can coordinate referrals to existing services. However, in order to perform this function well, an SHC would need in-person service provided by staff with the following exceptional skills:

- A friendly and helpful manner that makes people feel at ease.
- Knowledge of step-by-step court processes for criminal, civil and family matters and within all three courts.
- A very high degree of cultural and social sensitivity that includes an understanding of Aboriginal, ethnic, disability and poverty issues.
- Ability to locate and convey accurate and appropriate referrals to other services, including assistance in making appointments if necessary.

An SHC must also be easily accessible, welcoming and non-intimidating, have hours that work for clients, provide outreach to those who cannot come to the centre, and be adequately resourced to meet client demand with quality service. Perceived limitations of an SHC generally reflected the practical knowledge of the mapping participants concerning how difficult it would be for an SHC to meet all of the above service criteria. In addition it was pointed out that:

- An SHC will only be able to help those people with sufficient skills to help themselves.
- An SHC in a regional centre does nothing to meet the critical access needs of people in rural communities.
- If the SHC is located within a courthouse it will not be sufficiently accessible because it will not have extended hours and will still be intimidating to approach.

Establishing a pilot Self-Help Centre in the Edmonton Law Courts

There is extremely strong support for providing self-help centre services in Edmonton. While it is recognized that an SHC cannot meet all the service needs of SRLS, there is wide agreement that within the city of Edmonton such a centre can have a beneficial effect. A pilot SHC program in Edmonton would provide valuable information about SRL characteristics and needs and the strengths and weaknesses of such services for other regional centres. Ideally the Edmonton service should:

- Provide in-person, detailed information and referrals for justice processes and services in criminal, civil and family matters.
- Provide a telephone information service, especially if the centre is expected to address needs of SRLs in surrounding communities such as Wetaskiwin.
- Provide assistance with the completion of legal forms.
- Have as part of its mandate the facilitation of networks with justice community and associated social service providers for the purpose of sharing legal information and practice knowledge.
- Have as part of its mandate the updating of a database of information about justice services of use to SRLs.

Developing a proposal for a Self-Help Centre in Red Deer

There was also strong support for establishing an SHC in the Red Deer courthouse. There are, however, several important issues to confront if SRL needs in the Red Deer Region are to be effectively addressed. Extrapolating from the mapping data, it is likely that a lack of legal services outside of Red Deer results in many people from the surrounding communities arriving at the courthouse without any prior knowledge of information and support services available to them. If this is the case, it has implications for a) the role an SHC would fill, and b) the kinds of service it would necessarily have to provide. A significant proportion of demand on the SHC may be from out-of-town clients who require substantial assistance at or close to court appearance times, or alternatively, whenever they can get a ride into town and back home again. Under these conditions, the SHC would be providing a 'band aid' solution for what is really a general

lack of regional legal services. The staff would essentially be providing crisis intervention.

Furthermore the information about regional services in the area is incomplete. A proposal for an SHC in Red Deer will therefore need to include a strong outreach commitment to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure collection and sharing of complete information on community and legal support services available in central Alberta communities served by the Red Deer Court and associated legal services.
- Provide a liaison role between the outlying communities and the SHC and other legal services located in Red Deer.
- Work with key justice and local community stakeholders to ensure that residents in outlying towns have meaningful access to all justice services available to residents of the regional centre.

Although an SHC in the Red Deer courthouse potentially offers a very valuable addition to current services for SRLs, the Mapping Project findings clearly indicate it will not, on its own, be sufficient to meet the needs of SRLs in the surrounding region.

Meeting SRL needs in the Grande Prairie region

Opinions on the usefulness of an SHC in Grande Prairie differ considerably. The city of Grande Prairie is a regional centre serving thousands of square miles. Within this region, each of the smaller towns mapped also provides a central point to even smaller communities. Any service located only in the regional centre is of very limited assistance to these far-flung communities. For the regional towns, the emphasis for service is on increasing the resources of existing programs that work. These include Duty Counsel, Family Court Counsellors, and especially Native Counselling Services.

Service providers in Grande Prairie make an equally good argument for the utility of an SHC in the regional town, especially if it includes a telephone service and engages the interest and collaboration of service providers. Any proposal should consider the outreach needs and possibilities suggested for the Red Deer region. The Grande Prairie region however, differs from the Red Deer region in three important ways:

- The distances to be covered are much larger and even for those with transportation, distances and road conditions do not make accessing centres such as Grande Prairie and Peace River very viable for much of the region.
- Awareness of legal issues and available services is comparatively well developed among local agencies and this strength can be built upon.
- The city of Grande Prairie currently has fewer legal services than either Red Deer or Edmonton. Specifically, the city does not currently have a community legal clinic.

A decision about the most effective new service to address SRL needs in the Grande Prairie region must carefully consider what the priorities should be. It is possible that

establishing a legal clinic in Grande Prairie may be a better medium to fill current service gaps, especially if the information coordination and network facilitation functions were made part of that mandate.

Any new service that is effective will have to also incorporate an outreach component and must build on and increase currently successful outreach programs. Neither an SHC or community legal clinic alone can meet the needs of SRLs in the under serviced rural communities of the region.

Concluding Comments

The Mapping Project data provide much information which will be valuable to meeting the service needs of SRLs. The findings confirm the need for improved services for SRLs, beginning with the provision of better information about existing services to the providers of those services as well as the SRLs themselves. Accurate detailed service information and increased coordination of current services will improve service delivery and help to more clearly define priorities for future services. These conclusions concur with those of the recently released report, "Effective Affordable Justice," from the BC Justice Review Task Force on Civil Justice Reform Working Group, which emphasizes the need for a service "hub" that both coordinates information and existing services and provides access to legal advice and representation.

Central SHCs will not be able to address all the challenges of providing access to justice for SRLs but they can do much to facilitate the very important sharing of information and coordination of currently available assistance. Pilot programs for SHCs in designated areas will provide needed statistics and experiential insights into the most effective future initiatives for improving justice services.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term, “SRL,” which did not exist as a justice system idiom 10 years ago,¹ is now widely understood and used by those who work within our justice systems to describe individuals who are proceeding with legal matters without legal representation. It is generally agreed that the reason for the emergence of this expression is that the number of self-represented litigants (SRLs) has increased significantly in the past decade and can be expected to continue doing so. Given the relatively new emergence of this concern, work is required to understand the reasons for the growth of SRLs and the needs of these individuals.²

The “Self-Represented Litigants Access to Justice Mapping Project” (hereafter referred to as the Mapping Project) is designed to document the range of government and non-government services and supports currently available to SRLs in three regions of Alberta.³ The mapping process also reveals issues surrounding current service delivery including gaps in present services and possible ways of bringing existing services more closely in-line with the needs of SRLs.

This report begins with an overview of the background, rationale and objectives for the Mapping Project. Details of the research methodology follow. Sections 4 to 6 present the project findings. Section 4 considers which people may be self-representing and Section 5 presents findings about current services to SRLs, including the type, extent, demand, capacity, accessibility and other associated service issues. Section 6 looks at unmet service needs of SRLs on two main levels: 1) what can be done to enhance delivery of currently available services; and 2) what service gaps need to be filled and how this might be achieved. Special attention is paid to the role a self-help centre or kiosk could play in achieving improved SRL services.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Project Background and Rationale

There is growing empirical evidence that SRLs often have a difficult time accessing and negotiating the justice system.⁴ Because they lack understanding of the justice system, its processes, and how those processes relate to their legal issues, SRLs tend to use

¹ Gayla Reid and John Malcolmson, *SRL Project Summary*, March 2004, p. 1

² There is an increasing amount of systematically gathered experiential evidence that there is a definite increase in the number of litigants attempting to negotiate criminal and non-criminal justice systems. However, it is important to note that there are very few reliable statistics concerning SRLs.

³ For the purposes of this Mapping Project the term SRL is used to include anyone going to court without a lawyer in criminal, civil, or family matters. Distinctions are sometimes made between people who are unrepresented in a civil case because they cannot retain a lawyer (URL), people who choose to represent themselves (SRL), and an accused who is not represented in a criminal case (URA).

⁴ For example, the findings of the *Civil Justice System and the Public (CJSP)* research, indicate that this is the case throughout Canada for SRLs in civil and family cases. A variety of reports illustrating this point can be found at <http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/publications-cjsp.htm>.

more justice system resources than litigants represented by legal counsel. Consequently, it is increasingly recognised that in order to be effective, services for SRLs must be available, accessible, flexible and coordinated to provide different points of efficient entry to the legal process.

Existing evidence suggests that a better understanding of current services is needed among justice service providers as well as SRLs. Accurate information and increased awareness will maximize appropriate referrals and allow effective planning to fill any gaps in SRL services. There is a strong conviction that a more coordinated service is required, as illustrated in the following quote by a justice community participant in the Alberta phase of the *Civil Justice System and the Public* (CJSP) research:

So to me, what you would need, what would be helpful...is gathering together what all the resources are....And then once you know – everyone in the system would then hopefully have access and would know what resources were available in the system. So that would be accomplishing step one. And then step two is, OK, how do you make those available to members of the public? And I would think Legal Aid should head it up. And then to me, in the civil justice system, the ideal situation would obviously be to have a trained person, not a lawyer but whether you would called them trained like a paralegal or something like this, at the court house. And a Legal Aid paid employee at the court house that would field all kinds of questions about, you know, “I've got a Landlord Tenant” or “I've got a Family” or “I've got a Custody”... there must be thousands of potential questions. And then that person, having/knowing, what all the resources are would be able to say well, you're here in [city] and there's a pro bono clinic run through Legal Guidance and here's the phone number and here's the web site....[and] you should go and see the Landlord Tenant Advisory Board and here's their address and here's their phone number and so forth. And then that person would sit there all day long, basically, directing members of the public to the appropriate resource....And how you accomplish that? ...Really - in the end - what you are talking about is government money....And there you go. [87]

As this participant suggests, an important first step in establishing such a resource is to be aware of and document all of the services that are currently available. This process is dually useful in first determining and assuring awareness of existing options that might assist in addressing the unmet needs of SRLs and secondly, in identifying the remaining gaps in service that need to be filled.

In 2005, Alberta Justice formed the SRL Advisory Committee to make recommendations to enhance access to justice for SRLs. Members of this Committee included a wide range of justice and other community partners.⁵ Early in these discussions, it became clear that there is a lack of coordination of the services currently available to SRLs. SRLs are unsure of where to start, where to go, or what to do, and

⁵ In addition to this work of the SRL Advisory Committee, the Alberta Justice Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC) and two JPAC Subcommittees on “Access to Justice” and “Public Confidence,” also considered and discussed issues relating to self-represented litigants. The Canadian Forum on Civil Justice was a member of each of these committees, all of which included wide representation from stakeholders within the justice community and other interested community stakeholders.

their attempts to find out are often frustrated when they are provided with inaccurate information and referrals.⁶

As part of the process of deciding on a course of action to address the needs of SRLs, in 2005, a delegation from Alberta Justice visited the recently established British Columbia Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre (BCSHIC), located in the Vancouver Law Courts.⁷ The initiative for the BCSHIC originated from the BC Law Courts Education Society out of concern over increasing numbers of SRLs attempting to access the courts in civil and family matters, especially in the Superior Court (Queen's Bench in Alberta). Supported by seed funding from the BC Law Foundation, a large collaborative committee of representatives from all aspects of the civil justice community was formed. Under the direction of this committee a clear, three-stage plan of action was developed:⁸

1. A "Mapping Report" of services, gaps and issues was conducted.
2. From this report and the Committee consultations a "Proposed Service Vision and Program Design" was written for "Developing a Coordinated Service Model for Self-Representing Litigants".
3. In the context of an active partnership between the SHIC community-based committee and the Ministry of the Attorney General, the pilot SHIC was put in place and evaluated.

The BCSHIC pilot was a great success and continues in operation. The Centre and the process that brought it into being has become a model of good collaborative planning shared across Canada.⁹

In March 2006, Alberta Justice adopted the BCSHIC process as a good practice model and took the lead in facilitating collaborative discussions about the needs of SRLs among a wider group of stakeholders from non-government organizations (NGOs) and front-line court services in Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary.¹⁰ The NGO sub-committee members supported the creation of a mapping report of SRL services currently available, along with identification of gaps in existing services. They also strongly agreed that increased coordination of services is needed and felt that a self-help centre may be an effective medium to begin addressing both of these needs. It was agreed that on behalf of the NGO committee members, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (CFCJ) would take on the role of applying to the Alberta Law Foundation for funding to conduct the mapping project. Alberta Justice undertook to match any funding received.

⁶ Evidence of this is provided in the findings of the *Civil Justice System and the Public* research and was confirmed by members participating in the SRL Advisory Committee.

⁷ Details about the BCSHIC are available at <http://www.supremecourtselfhelp.bc.ca/> .

⁸ Reports from the BCSHIC mapping process and evaluation can be found at <http://www.lawcourtsed.ca/index.cfm?act=main&call=F0968D6E>

⁹ The BCSHIC was a case study of the CJSP project and a full report is in progress. *Civil Justice System and the Public: Learning From Experience to Find Practices that Work* (pp.57-58) provides a brief overview <http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/CJSPLearningFromExperiences.pdf> .

¹⁰ Appendix A provides a list of the SRL Advisory committee and NGO committee members.

Soon after the initial decision of the NGO sub-committees to apply for funding to map SRL services, members were informed by Alberta Justice that the potential existed within the current 2006 fiscal year to establish between one and three pilot projects, such as self-help kiosks or centres within Alberta courthouses. It was therefore agreed that the mapping process should take place as quickly as possible. It was further decided that the city of Edmonton and the regions of Red Deer and Grande Prairie would be the pilot mapping areas.¹¹

In July 2006, The CFCJ received \$82,875 from the Alberta Law Foundation to conduct the Mapping Project and this was subsequently matched by funding from Alberta Justice. The series of prior consultations with justice and related service agencies served to establish a strong community foundation for the conduct of the Mapping Project. This facilitated knowledge of and participation in the research process and is expected to assist in implementing recommendations flowing from this Report.

2.2 Project Objectives

The Mapping Project directly addresses service issues of concern to SRLs involved in family, civil and criminal matters. Potentially, any citizen of Alberta may become involved in a legal matter. As an increasing number of Albertans involved in legal matters find themselves, at some point, attempting to self-represent, organized and effective support services for SRLs are of potential benefit to all Alberta citizens. The project is also important to justice and social service providers who are concerned with the challenges SRLs face in accessing our justice system. They are aware that the difficulties SRLs experience impact the efficiency of their own organizations and the justice system in general. This project will assist them in their efforts to effectively meet the needs of SRLs.

The Mapping Project includes a series of specific objectives:

- To meet with government and non-government service providers to determine the range of services and supports currently made available to SRLs.
- To systematically record details about available services and facilitate the sharing of these details in a way that can increase accurate and effective referrals.
- To examine patterns of referral and coordination among existing organizations providing legal and social support services to SRLs.
- To identify and/or confirm the specific service needs of SRLs.
- To determine problems and issues faced by SRLs in accessing services offered.
- To analyze both SRL and service provider needs and perspectives on service to SRLs and what should be done to address service gaps, problems, and challenges in being self-represented.

¹¹ These decisions were informed in part by data provided by Alberta Justice. Calgary was not included at this time due to the construction of the new courthouse, which is expected to have a significant impact on both the physical location of some services and the information networks among local services.

- To identify priority areas for service delivery to SRLs.
- To gain a geographically specific and appropriate assessment of SRL needs and ways in which these can be effectively met.

The collaborative approach taken in this project is expected to have the following beneficial impacts:

- It will encourage the development of on-going, collaborative, and consultative relationships, where government and non-government service providers will work together toward enhancing access to justice for SRLs.
- It will provide a foundation of locally specific information, from both client-centred and service provider perspectives that will:
 - ✓ increase knowledge about and encourage better coordination of existing services for SRLs;
 - ✓ allow collaborative, community-owned identification of service priorities to address gaps in meeting the needs of SRLs;
 - ✓ improve SRLs' access to appropriate information that will help them prior to, during, and after their day in court.
- Ultimately, these steps will increase the efficiency of service providers and the justice system as a whole, thus enhancing access to justice for many members of the public.

2.3 Scope and Time Frame of the Project

The Mapping Project was designed and conducted between July and November 2006, with a draft report provided to Alberta Justice and the SRL Advisory and NGO sub-committees at the beginning of December 2006.

Legal services currently available to SRLs involved in criminal, civil and family matters heard in the Provincial Court of Alberta, the Court of Queen's Bench Alberta, and the Court of Appeal Alberta, were mapped in the following three regions of Alberta:

1. The City of Edmonton.
2. Grande Prairie and region (specifically, Grande Prairie, High Level, Peace River, High Prairie, and Hinton¹²).
3. Red Deer and region (specifically, Red Deer, Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka and Wetaskiwin¹³).

¹² Hinton is not geographically part of the Grande Prairie region, but was identified as an area of particular interest to Alberta Justice for future SRL service initiatives. It was assigned to the Grande Prairie Mapping team for field research purposes.

¹³ Wetaskiwin was identified as an area of particular interest to Alberta Justice for future SRL service initiatives. Although geographically closer to Edmonton than Red Deer, jurisdictional responsibilities for Wetaskiwin are currently split between Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary. It was assigned to the Red Deer Mapping Team for field research purposes.

Key social services likely to have involvement with SRLs were also asked to take part in the mapping process, primarily to assist in providing a perspective from outside of the legal community. Some social services also provide legal information, facilitate access to legal advice and representation and offer court support programs.

Information collected as part of the process was organized into searchable electronic templates for each region to facilitate the sharing of this information among organizations providing services, supports and referrals to SRLs.

It was recognized from the outset that the scope of the Mapping Project was ambitious compared to the BCSHIC model from which it was developed.¹⁴ It was further acknowledged that the short timeline available for the completion would influence the design and conduct of the project.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Mapping Approach

Mapping is essentially a form of needs assessment research. The idea of creating a map suggests a process that recognizes multiple, interrelated factors and relationships. It advocates a collaborative network approach to creating a picture of what exists and how it is experienced. A map can be continually added to and adjusted. As an image it does not evoke a necessarily hierarchical relationship of knowledge creation. The involvement of community members in actively creating the research knowledge builds a sense of community ownership of the research findings. A sense of ownership encourages buy-in to recommendations concerning actions needed to bring about positive change. Mapping approaches may include an actual map, usually produced using geographical information software (GIS) that shows the locations of services in relation to each other and to client groups. However, data must first be available and a variety of research methods are employed to capture various kinds of information and perspectives about the issue under inquiry. Typically, mapping will include accumulating and documenting the state and usage of existing resources and community perspectives about those resources. Available facts and figures will be collected, observations will be made and interviews will be conducted to create a map that will also capture the social relations that exist around the research issue.

A mapping process is usually initiated because at least some of the stakeholders involved have pre-identified a need for change. The approach acknowledges the existence of power differentials and aims to actively involve a representation of all those different viewpoints in creating the snapshot of the research issue. A mapping report is not of itself a “judgement” of the situation, but rather a statement of conditions.

¹⁴ The BCSHIC mapping process occurred within a similar time frame, but considered only civil and family services in one geographical location (Vancouver) and related only to the Supreme Court. It also only reported broad overviews of these services. The detail captured in the Alberta project builds on and expands the scope of findings in BC.

This statement almost inevitably reveals points of tension and gaps in service delivery that assist in developing a critical appraisal of the current situation and directions to achieve needed change. Properly conducted, the mapping process will also highlight existing strengths and effective practices that can be encouraged and built upon to better achieve identified goals.

3.2 Methodological Components of the Mapping Project

The Mapping Project aimed to gather the following kinds of information for inclusion in the regional maps:

- Details of current services provided to SRLs in each region.
- Areas of law where needs and services are concentrated.
- The ability of SRLs to access these services.
- Levels of demand for SRL-related services.
- Identified needs of SRLs that are not met by present services.
- Characteristics and needs of SRLs in each region.
- Viable service options to address unmet SRL needs.

A variety of methods were used to obtain these information components:

- ***Identification of current services to SRLs.***

Current information bases and relevant electronic information portals were identified through our community partners and supplemented by Internet searches.¹⁵ Search results were then reviewed and categorized into three groups:

1. Services of clear and important relevance to SRLs.
2. Services that might offer service and support to SRLs.
3. Services that clearly were not relevant to this project.

- ***Interviews with representatives of organizations providing legal and/or important support services to SRLs.***

An Information Collection Form (ICF) was developed to gather the required information from service providers who deal with SRLs or who potentially have services of use to them (an example of the ICF is provided in Appendix B). Because some organizations oversee multiple services of relevance to SRLs but which have distinct criteria and mandates, an ICF was completed for each relevant service. The ICFs collected details of the services provided and also asked about participants' knowledge of SRL clients' characteristics and service needs.¹⁶

¹⁵ Major entry points were: the Edmonton Support Service (211); A-Link; the Alberta Justice web site; community directories; and information and data available from the CJSP and other projects of the CFCJ.

¹⁶ This process was not entirely straightforward and consistent. In smaller centres the same staff person is often responsible for overseeing multiple services operating from the same office whereas in Edmonton

- ***Interviews with members of the judiciary.***

A questionnaire was designed to gain input from members of the judiciary who deal with SRLs in the courtroom (an example of this questionnaire is provided in Appendix C).

- ***Interviews with SRLs.***

A questionnaire was developed for use with people who were, or had recently been, self-represented litigants (an example of the SRL questionnaire is provided in Appendix D). As anticipated, information collected directly from SRLs during the data collection period was limited due to time constraints. Findings are therefore supplemented by other recent Canadian research that included input from SRLs.

- ***Researcher observations.***

In the course of seeking information about SRL services and conducting the mapping interviews, research team members recorded first hand observations about the availability, accessibility and local knowledge of services potentially available to SRLs.

- ***SRL services information templates.***

Details of services of use to SRLs were distilled from the ICFs and entered into regional templates organized by major areas of law (criminal, civil and family) and by subdivisions of types of assistance provided. The templates are created within an MS Word document and use hyperlinks to facilitate searching (a sample of this template is provided in Appendix E).

3.3 Pilot Testing

The timelines for conducting the Mapping Project did not permit full pilot testing of the ICF and questionnaires in the field. The following measures were taken to test the research instruments prior to use in the field:

- A draft of the ICF was reviewed by members of the SRL Advisory Committee, Alberta Justice staff, and all project team members. Feedback from this process was incorporated.
- The revised ICF was tested by the research team during their field training process and some further adjustments were made.
- The questionnaire designed for the judiciary was reviewed by members of the judiciary sitting on the SRL Advisory Committee, Alberta Justice staff, and the Mapping Project Team Leaders.

those services have separate locations and supervisors. So, for example, only one ICF was completed for all Provincial Court services in towns like Wetaskiwin and High Level.

- The questionnaire designed for use with SRLs was reviewed by Alberta Justice representatives and all research team members. It was also tested by the research team during their field training process.

The actual conduct of the Mapping Project serves as a substantial pilot model for any future SRL service mapping initiatives.

3.4 Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

The development of the ICF questions was aided considerably by the availability of both the research instruments and the results of the BCSHIC Mapping Project. Input from the Alberta SRL Advisory NGO sub-committees further assisted in identifying the type of detailed information that would be useful to collect. The research design enabled a systematic collection and documentation of service details and also captured comments and perceptions about the provision of services to SRLs, thus providing an understanding of the context of service provision. The data collected contain much information of value to current service providers and SRLs and also to the planning of new initiatives to meet the needs of SRLs. As discussed in detail in Section 5, the researchers' experiences of the mapping process provide an extremely important element of the findings.

The limitations of the methodology essentially derive from the success of the systematic information collection approach juxtaposed against the constraints of the project timelines. The initial search phase generated more organizations of potential interest than had been anticipated and this had several consequences:

- In order to complete the mapping within the time available, organizations of potential interest had to be prioritized based on information provided by the search process.
- Time was not sufficient to allow any further follow up with organizations designated as "second priority". It is therefore possible that some of these organizations may have services that could provide support of some kind for SRLs. This may particularly be the case with social service organizations, but organizations known to provide legal services had to take priority.
- If key service providers were not available for an interview within the data collection period ICFs could not be fully completed for that service. This was particularly an issue for the teams visiting communities in the Grande Prairie and Red Deer regions.
- The abundance of information collected posed documentation and data analysis challenges for the research teams. Both data entry and analysis took longer than anticipated allowing no time to do further follow up work if information was incomplete or unclear.

A mapping process is, however, essentially an exploration exercise – if we already knew what we would find out, the research would be unnecessary. Methodological

'limitations' are identified within this context and are to some degree a by-product of the research findings and, when appropriate, are further addressed later in this report.

4. SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS: WHO THEY ARE

Understanding who may become an SRL is a first step in assessing the adequacy of current services and any gaps that need to be addressed. Because recognition of the needs of SRLs is relatively recent, systematic research about the issue is just beginning. Most available information is based on the observations and perceptions of service providers, rather than the direct involvement of people who are self-representing. The mandate of many existing services that offer assistance to SRLs is specific to low-income groups, which inevitably impacts the profile of their clients. There is also a tendency at times to assume that people with a low income also necessarily have low education and low levels of literacy and comprehension. Available evidence about SRLs does not support this assumption.

4.1 SRLs in Other Recent Research

Recent research that has involved SRLs suggests that although people with annual incomes below \$35,000 are far more likely to be SRLs, members of any social group may become SRLs once involved in a legal process.¹⁷ Although approximately half of the SRLs involved in the studies had incomes below \$15,000, reported education levels were above average.¹⁸ Between 80- 96% had completed high school and around 60 – 65% had at least some post secondary education.¹⁹ This contrasts with the strong service provider perception that most SRLs have below average literacy and comprehension levels.

¹⁷ Four research projects have been reviewed to provide this background information: The *Civil Justice System and the Public* (various reports available at <http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/publications-cjisp.htm>); *Self-Represented Litigants in Nova Scotia: Needs Assessment Study* (Department of Justice Court Services Nova Scotia, 2004); *A report on the Evaluation of the Alberta Law Line* (Community Services Consulting Ltd., 2006); and *BC Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre Final Evaluation Report* (John Malcolmson & Gayla Reid, 2006). Only the latter report provides statistics on SRLs collected systematically over a six-month period of the operation of the BCSHC pilot. However, these data support the findings of the earlier projects that relied on convenience samples.

¹⁸ Income levels for the Alberta Law Line callers are not reported. Only callers declaring incomes below the Legal Aid cut off levels can receive the legal advice services. Other callers only receive information and referrals and few details about them are recorded.

¹⁹ Educational levels are reported in different categories across the four projects and there was considerable, and unexpected variation geographically. The Nova Scotia report found over 17% of SRL participants had a university degree, 7% at the graduate level. In BC, 60% had some form of completed post-secondary education (sub-categories are not provided). The Alberta Law Line reported the lowest overall average of education, likely impacted by the exclusion of callers with all but very low incomes (the CJSP SRL participants had higher average education). Even so, over 12% of Law Line clients had completed university degrees, and only 20% (roughly the average for the general population) had not completed high school.

Previous research also consistently found that family law is the area with the most predominant SRL participation, accounting for almost 50% of the SRL participants, with the others being distributed across a wide variety of predominantly civil matters.²⁰ There is also a suggestion that SRLs involved in family matters generally require more assistance than others.

There are several reasons why available research still only provides a partial picture of the range of SRLs. First, the few available studies are geographically and methodologically diverse. Most research must rely on the willingness of SRLs to take part, and it is possible that those with higher levels of education are more willing to do so. Similarly, there may be elements of involvement in family matters that also encourage SRLs to engage with researchers.²¹ The BCSHIC and Law Line evaluations provide the most systematically collected statistics based on clients in general, however, both have restrictions on the clients they serve, have been in operation for a relatively short period, and are already operating at full capacity. Law Line staff report that they are turning away callers with incomes above the Legal Aid cut off who need legal advice but who cannot afford a lawyer. BCSHIC staff report being too busy to complete intake sheets for all clients requiring relatively brief assistance and also observe there is a group of potential clients that it is currently hard to assist because of barriers due to language, disabilities, or lack of computer literacy. The BCSHIC does not currently have the resources to address these issues.

A final and important point to be kept in mind is that even if someone with a legal problem does want legal representation, they must represent themselves and explain their problem until they manage to secure legal representation. This point is often overlooked but is an issue that emerged clearly during the Mapping Project research.²² The less resources a person has economically and socially, the more challenging the process of obtaining representation is likely to be.

4.2. Profiles of SRLs Emerging from the Mapping Project

Like most previous available research, the Mapping Project data rely primarily on the observations and perceptions of people involved in providing services to SRLs. However, a range of community based social services as well as organizations specifically providing legal information and services took part. This input combined with insights from members of the judiciary, researcher observations, and interviews with

²⁰ Again, the studies include different areas of law and eligibility criteria, which make any concrete conclusions impossible.

²¹ Observations of the CJSP researchers and of the BCSHIC staff suggest that this may indeed be the case. People who have low levels of literacy are less confident to access services or speak with researchers. The kind of family disputes that end up in court tend to be highly adversarial, continue for extended periods and provide those involved with a lot to say about the experience.

²² This point is also made in CJSP reports, along with the finding that even litigants who do have legal representation still seek information and understanding about the legal process, especially if they do not feel their lawyer is communicating clearly about their case.

four SRLs currently involved in court cases,²³ has facilitated a more nuanced composite portrait of SRLs. One participating SRL, a visible minority, university educated single parent allowed researchers to follow her progress as she sought information and representation related to a family matter. Her experience and observations have been extremely informative.

Seven broad groups of SRLs with differing needs are identified.²⁴

- ***SRLs with an overall lack of social resources.***

Vulnerable people aren't going out and accessing resources. They often show up in court trying to speak for themselves.... they're often intimidated, don't know the town, have issues of transportation and childcare.... They have difficulty understanding how the court system works... [and] they don't receive the same type of service. It is hard to find someone to give them good representation.
[Community Worker, Regional Centre]

This group of people have low income, low education and low levels of literacy. They tend to have poor communication skills and do not understand their social and legal rights or the court process. They may be eligible for Legal Aid or other assistance but they do not know how to access available services without assistance. Members of the judiciary suggest this group are most likely to appear unrepresented in Provincial Court in summary criminal and child welfare cases.

²³ Only four SRLs were formally involved in the Mapping Project. One researcher had an informal conversation with a group of six, all male litigants in the Grande Prairie region. Without a service entry point facilitated by service providers, it is very difficult to identify SRLs. Most service providers are extremely busy and it is time consuming to set up a process that effectively encourages SRLs to volunteer participation. Within the project time frame it proved impossible to organize any focus groups with SRLs, or obtain any referrals via service providers.

²⁴ These composite profiles were obtained by combining analyses of segments of the project data. Team Leaders provided summary tables of the descriptions of SRL clients provided on the ICFs. The Research Director conducted an analysis of the interviews with members of the judiciary. These two analyses were combined with input from SRL participants and research observation notes, and seven distinct types of SRL circumstances emerged.

- **Low income SRLs with some social resources.**

Going to court on your own is very hard to do.... The court counter clerks were very helpful. They are absolutely awesome. They explained to me what needed to be done and they read [the forms] and said 'it looks OK.' I already knew to say 'Your Honour' and not just 'yes or' no'.... The judge was helpful in court and very patient, but it was too late then.... The biggest thing is ignorance. People don't know how to present themselves or their case, or the questions to ask. [SRL, plaintiff, small claims case]

This group of SRLs cannot afford a lawyer but have sufficient education and communication skills to seek out and access any available service. If eligible for Legal Aid or assistance from legal clinics they will usually take advantage of these resources once they connect with them. However, a significant portion of this group do not qualify for Legal Aid or other low income services but have insufficient income to retain a private lawyer. Members of the judiciary suggest this is the group of SRLs that appear before them most often in a wide range of matters in Provincial Court of Alberta and the Court Queen's Bench Alberta, but especially in family and residential tenancy matters.

- **SRLs living with additional social barriers that interfere with accessing justice.**

Most SRLs in this group will also be low-income, although there may be overlap with any of the other six basic groups. In addition to other circumstances and reasons for self-representing, this group experiences additional social barriers to accessing justice, such as physical or mental disabilities, other health barriers, language and cultural barriers, and living in remote locations. These barriers cannot be totally removed by other social resources – not even sufficient income. The degree to which SRLs in this group are able to access legal and social support and effectively represent themselves is dependent on the type of social barrier experienced; the amount of other available social resources (such as education, transportation, friends); and the awareness of service providers about their special needs. Three sub-groups were of specific concern to project participants.²⁵

1. Assisted Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) recipients who are not eligible for Legal Aid²⁶ but who have no spare income to afford a

²⁵ For additional discussions of access to justice barriers faced by people with disabilities see, *Civil Justice System and the Public: Communication and Access Barriers for those with Disabilities*, and for issues related to remote communities and cultural and language barriers see, *Balancing the Scales: Understanding Aboriginal Perspectives on Civil Justice* at <http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/publications-cjsp.htm> .

²⁶ Rules and regulations regarding AISH benefits are complex and affected by such things as spousal support and partial employment, housing costs and special needs. The overall amount can appear to be above the Legal Aid income cut offs. There is also the problem of Legal Aid availability for certain matters, especially in civil, family and administrative areas of law.

lawyer or even transportation, telephone and other costs of self-representing.

2. People who are legally blind.²⁷
 3. People with psychiatric or addictions problems who cannot comprehend their situation or the consequences and are unable to represent themselves effectively.
- ***SRLs unable to find an available lawyer.***

The biggest struggle faced by women dealing with family matters is finding a Legal Aid lawyer. They end up with a lawyer from Edmonton.... I repeatedly hear stories about lawyers showing up in court not having read the person's file. If the client is well educated it might be better for them to represent themselves than to have a lawyer who's not prepared. [Northern Community Worker]

SRLs who wish to hire a lawyer but are unable to find one usually live in small towns or remote areas. The town may have no resident lawyers, those available do not have expertise in the required legal area or may already have too many cases, there can be a conflict of interest, or the case may in some way be locally controversial. Obtaining legal counsel from elsewhere is inevitably more difficult and more expensive making it beyond the means of the SRL, or not viable for the financial amount involved in the case. Generally this group are middle income and have some ability to self-represent. However, even in Edmonton, some people with Legal Aid certificates may be unable to find a lawyer willing to take their case.

SRLs who were previously represented.

There is a sad group of people who were represented at some point but have run out of money with no resolution. There is zero satisfaction with the system among this group. [Member of the judiciary]

²⁷ A representative of an organization concerned with disability issues told a researcher that awareness about the needs of people who are blind seems particularly low. A ruling has raised awareness about providing services to ensure full access to justice for people with hearing disabilities, but it is not uncommon for a blind person involved in a legal matter to be presented with papers to sign, sometimes actually in court and even after informing their lawyer of their disability.

These SRLs began their involvement with legal counsel but are no longer represented. The usual reason is that the legal problem has been lengthy and remains without a permanent resolution. This can occur in complex civil cases of all kinds but family law problems are the most common area. These SRLs may be involved in cases that progress all the way to the Court of Appeal. Some of these litigants have learned much about the process and presentation of their cases and can self-represent quite successfully.

- ***SRLs in cases where representation is supposed to be unnecessary.***

The foundational principle of Small Claims is being a people's court. That people can come to court unrepresented and be comfortable.
[Member of the Judiciary]

Small Claims actions and most cases in Traffic Court are not expected to require legal representation, but people often still require information and assistance to understand and access the legal process effectively. The Small Claims process was specifically designed for self-representation but many litigants (including those with university education) find the legal forms, language and etiquette challenging. Members of the judiciary also point out that since the Small Claims limit has increased to \$25,000, it is more common for one side to retain a lawyer, especially when there is a power differential between the litigants involved. Also, SRLs who self-represent successfully in Small Claims Court may subsequently be involved in an appeal in the Court of Queen's Bench where they find the rules more complex and self-representation much more difficult.

- ***SRLs who could access representation but prefer to self-represent.***²⁸

Some people are playing games with the system... It is more a matter of personality than income and education levels.... They have probably had legal advice at some point but do not want to take it.
[Member of the judiciary]

²⁸ There can be some cross-over between SRLs who say that they prefer to represent themselves and those who have previously been represented, cannot readily find a lawyer, and who believe the case concerned is supposed to accommodate self-representation. This is certainly the case in research where SRLs have been asked to respond by choosing just one reason for self-representing. The CJSP findings suggest reasons for self-representing are complex. For the purposes of this project, those described as preferring not to have a lawyer, is confined to SRLs with no other contributing reasons. Even so, caution is needed as some people perceived to be in this group of SRLs have legitimate reason to distrust the legal process.

SRLs in this group have the resources for legal representation but choose to self-represent because they believe they can do as good or better job than a lawyer. They are usually well educated and distrust the legal profession. They may have received legal advice, which they choose not to accept. Often these SRLs are involved in cases they view as a personal cause. Some may have legitimate cases and be effective at self-representation, but the group includes those often referred to as “vexatious litigants”. Members of the judiciary report this group of SRLs to be particularly time consuming and difficult to deal with, but estimate that they account for 5% or less of all SRLs who appear before them.

5. CURRENT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SRLs

The Mapping Project reviewed the type, extent, demand, capacity and accessibility of services currently available to SRLs. It is important to remember when considering these findings that the project took place because members of the justice community had already identified a need to improve service to SRLs and wished to better understand the most effective ways to achieve that goal. It was expected that at a systemic level some problems in current service delivery would be identified. Stakeholders also wished to better understand the experiences of SRLs who attempt to access the justice system and related services.

Only four interviews with SRLs were completed as part of the Mapping Project. However, few research team members had any prior knowledge and experience of Canadian justice systems. Their experiences in collecting the mapping information, therefore, provide insights that are extremely relevant and important in understanding how both SRLs and service providers experience current service delivery. The discussion therefore begins with a description of the research team and an account of their observations about the mapping process. After reporting the type and extent of current services in each region, details of current service demand, capacity, accessibility and referral patterns are reviewed before offering a summary of conclusions about current services in the three mapping regions.

5.1 The Research Team Experience

The three research teams each consisted of a Team Leader and three assistants. One Team Leader was a lawyer, another had familiarity with the structure of Alberta Justice and court services. The third Team Leader was a trained social researcher, but was not familiar with Canadian justice systems. Two of the research assistants were law students (one at the graduate level). They were placed into the two teams led by non-lawyers to ensure that each team had a member familiar with basic legal terms and areas of law. Of the remaining research assistants, all were university educated and were selected because of their information collection and research experience. Team members received special training specifically related to information collection and

interviewing for the Mapping Project and were involved in the development of the ICF and questionnaires.²⁹ Their task was further aided by many contacts in key organizations having prior knowledge of the project and offering willing participation and assistance in contacting others in their organizations. Without this assistance the project goals could not have been achieved.

The research team had many advantages not usually available to SRLs attempting to access legal information and services, but despite these, team members found the process of information collection about relevant services to be difficult, time consuming, often confusing and seldom straightforward. They encountered the following challenges:

- At the first stage of the search for relevant organizations, the researchers discovered that service names could be misleading and that the basic information provided by referral directories was often insufficient to clearly determine what services were offered.
- The second stage of the search involved directly accessing service information from organization websites or literature. Some organizations provided clear information about service mandate and criteria. Many did not.
- Large organizations offering multiple services posed particular difficulties. Information was often dense, difficult to navigate and unravel, and incomplete regarding eligibility, access and other service details. In order to proceed further, researchers had to first identify and make contact with the key person for each service. In some instances this proved to be an extremely time consuming process.³⁰
- Even at the interview stage, key members of organizations were not always aware of all the service details we asked about and the reporting from branches of the same organization was not always consistent concerning the services provided.
- Some inconsistencies stemmed from differing perceptions about the terms used in the ICFs. Legal terminology was a challenge throughout the mapping process. The ICFs attempt to provide definitions and explanations in language plain enough to be understood by the researchers, social support services and legal service providers (see Appendix B). Nevertheless, a general concern about what counted as general basic information, legal information, legal advice and legal representation still affected the way service representatives answered the ICF questions.
- Another problem related to legal terminology is that larger organizations with multiple services and branches seem particularly prone to providing convoluted

²⁹ As well as training on the conduct of interviews, team members also received a special session provided by a staff person from the Legal Studies Program at the University of Alberta on how to best use the A-Link data base, an information portal for obtaining basic information on legal services.

³⁰ Again, it must be emphasized that the team had many advantages not available to an SRL. The preliminary sorting out of the Legal Aid services was assigned to the Team Leader who is a lawyer; Alberta Justice and the Solicitor General Services were assigned to the Team Leader familiar with Alberta Court Services; the Research Director facilitated the third Team Leader's initial contact with NCSA; and when ever possible, services (such as Aboriginal and women's organizations) were assigned to a research assistant who had some prior knowledge or experience in that social area.

written and verbal descriptions of their service criteria. Furthermore, the hierarchical lines of communication in these organizations appear to interfere with the sharing of accurate details about the various services provided. Researcher observations suggest that frontline service providers may not always fully understand their own services and have inaccurate understandings of how their services relate to others offered by their own organization and other major service providers.

- Mapping Project participants generally had many comments and provisos to make about the services they provided and while this contributed to data, the Team Leaders found the resulting amount of information almost overwhelming to order and analyse.
- Members of the Grande Prairie and Red Deer teams who spent time on the road described the mapping process as “exhausting.”

That the highly educated and articulate mapping researchers found the search for information on SRL services so challenging must be considered a major finding concerning the availability and accessibility of current services for SRLs.

5.2. Type and Extent of Current Services

When Alberta Justice first met with NGO stakeholders and introduced the idea of a mapping project, several organizations such as the Edmonton Support Network (and Edmonton Crisis and 211 Centre) and the Legal Studies Program pointed out that they already had extensive referral databases that included legal information and assistance services. However, discussion among the NGO participants quickly revealed that current databases did not include the kind of detail about services (such as eligibility criteria) that the Mapping Project proposed to collect. Other NGO participants, such as the Alberta Law Line, had already identified a need for better information to be available to service providers and SRLs. Participants at these sessions also learned more about the services each offered and found this particularly valuable. This sharing of information and concerns about current services was very helpful to the researchers in designing the project.

As explained in the description of methodology (Section 3), a first step was to identify all organizations in the mapping locations that might potentially offer legal information, assistance and related support services. Appendix F provides lists for all mapping locations of: a) services that were mapped; b) services assigned to be mapped but unable to be completed; c) services designated as a secondary priority for mapping; and d) organizations that were initially reviewed but deemed not to have services relevant to SRLs.

The many specific details about the services mapped have been entered into an information template for each region. Appendix E provides a template key and an example of the kind of information included. This report provides only a general overview of available services in each region.

5.2.1 Current SRL Services in the City of Edmonton

In the city of Edmonton, researchers mapped 66 separate services, overseen by approximately 36 organizations. A number of the services mapped in Edmonton have provincial mandates. Court Services, Legal Aid and Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) are among these and have branch offices in the regional centres and sometimes in surrounding communities. Whenever possible, branch offices were also mapped locally. Two services of Legal Aid (Brydges and the Alberta Law Line) are telephone services available across Alberta. A further 11 services mapped in Edmonton were Internet or telephone only services accessible to all of Alberta. Details of these provincial services will be included in each regional database. Two other services mapped in Edmonton are overseen by the Yellowhead Tribal Council and only provide services to reserves outside of the city limits, primarily in central Alberta.

The breakdown of the types of services offered is as follows:

- Of the 66 Edmonton services, 42 provide only legal information, although a few do also provide related support such as mediation or counselling.
- Of the legal information services, nine are web-based and two (Dial-a-Law and Lawyer Referral) are telephone only.
- A further 11 services reported providing only basic information and referrals to legal services. However, at least seven of these services also make related support services available to clients.
- Among the services providing only legal information, 17 services provide information in criminal, civil and family areas of law. Five services are for family law only; six combine family with civil law and four give family and criminal law information. Two services offer criminal and civil information; five provide civil only and three services give criminal only.
- The Legal Aid Brydges program is alone in offering information and advice but is limited to brief summary advice to people who have been detained by the police.
- Legal Aid Edmonton Regional Office (and branches elsewhere) provide legal information and are the gateway to legal representation and advice in the form of Legal Aid certificates. After discussion as to the best way to categorize this service it was counted as providing information and representation (the advice being provided by the Legal Aid lawyer).
- Only four other services offer information and some representation in the form of the ability to appear with or on behalf of clients. All were Aboriginal – three services offered by NCSA and one by Métis Child and Family Services. All provide support for criminal and family matters and are generally restricted to Provincial Court.

- Eight services provide information plus summary advice either limited to out of court representation or the ability to appear. Four are services of Legal Aid, mostly restricted to clients who qualify for Legal Aid and with very limited service for civil matters. The remaining four are:
 - The Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice (civil law only, all courts, low income restrictions).
 - Student Legal Services (criminal and civil (no family), provincial court only, low income restrictions).
 - ASSIST (providing a lawyer service to the Chinese community).
 - Edmonton Association of Collaborative Family Lawyers (private Bar fees, providing an alternative to litigation).³¹

As can be seen from the above breakdown of services, in Edmonton there are a variety of possibilities for obtaining legal information in the broad areas of criminal, family and civil law. When the Internet and telephone only information sources are included, at least some degree of information exists for most areas of law. Knowing where to go to obtain needed information – or even which information is needed - is, however a different matter and problems related to this have already been outlined in the earlier discussion of the mapping team experience.

It was beyond the scope of this project to examine the content of available information. However, it can be seen from the subsequent discussion in this report that SRLs also experience barriers to understanding and applying available information. Participants were asked if they provided information specific to the various steps and stages of the criminal, civil and family court processes. Court registries were the most consistent source of detailed information related to the actual process of legal proceedings. Answers were extremely varied because many services specialize in particular areas and may provide considerable related information and support to clients. In general, however, there is a lack of step-by-step information that tells SRLs specifically what they have to do and how they should go about doing it.

Few of the existing services offer more than fairly basic legal information. The majority of legal assistance is available only to very low income groups. Analysis did reveal some gaps in service and some areas where demand is particularly high. These are addressed in the conclusions about current services (Section 5.5) as they apply to all the mapping areas. It should be noted that gaps in service increase with distance from regional centres.

5.2.2 Current SRL Services in the Grande Prairie Region

Overall, 76 services overseen by 44 organizations were mapped by the Grande Prairie team. It is important to recognize that a high proportion of these (30 throughout the region) are community organizations rather than direct legal services. Some of these

³¹ This organization was brought to our attention and it was mapped as it might provide an alternative to the group of SRLs who can afford a lawyer, but who believe lawyers increase the adversarial dynamics and thus the costs of the traditional litigation pathway.

services offer basic information and related support with legal matters, while others provide only referrals to legal services. The comparatively large number of ICFs completed by the northern team is largely due to the high engagement of this group of organizations. Interviews were also completed with two SRLs and a member of the judiciary in the region.

The breakdown of types of services is reported separately for each location visited beginning with the town of Grande Prairie, the regional centre.

Grande Prairie

- ICFs were completed for 32 services in the city of Grande Prairie.
- Twelve services reported providing legal information but no legal assistance. Half of these give information for criminal, civil and family areas of law. Three others provide criminal and family information and two more focus on family law. The remaining service provides criminal information only.
- Six services provide legal information and representation. Four of these are services provided by NCSA; one is the Legal Aid Regional Intake Service and the other is a family court counsellor provided by Family Justice Services.
- The remaining 14 are community support services, 10 of which offer relevant support such as advocacy, counselling and even court support programs.³² Four services offer only referrals to available legal services.
- Unlike Edmonton and Red Deer, Grande Prairie does not currently have a community legal clinic to provide important SRL legal services.

Peace River

- ICFs were completed for 13 services in Peace River.
- Five services reported providing legal information but no additional assistance. Registry services for the Court of Queen's Bench and the Provincial Court, along with the Law Library also located in the courthouse, were the primary sources, providing information in criminal, civil and family law areas. The Peace River Women's Shelter Society also provides criminal, civil and family law information and another community organization provides criminal law information to youth.
- The only services offering additional legal assistance are the local Legal Aid Office, the NCSA court worker program and the Métis Nation.
- Five additional services reported offering basic information and legal referrals, plus some related counselling or support. Three of these services also provide advocacy and court support to their mostly Aboriginal clients.

³² Notably, the John Howard Society is included in this group and offers, among other programs, the Parenting after Separation course for the area. Whereas the Edmonton branch reported offering legal information, other branches did not. The important role of community support organizations is addressed further in Section 6, which looks at how to improve services to SRLs

High Level

- ICFs were completed for eight services in High Level.
- Court Registry services provided information for Provincial criminal civil and family areas and Court of Queen's Bench criminal matters. The law library, located in the courthouse, also potentially offers information in all areas of law to SRLs. There is, however, no law librarian and only limited accessibility which must be overseen by the court registry staff in addition to their regular duties. Safe Home, a community organization, offers limited legal information in all three areas and the Northwest Alberta Child and Family services office reported providing quite extensive family law information and other legal advocacy and support to clients.
- There is an NCSA office staffed by a court worker in High Level. There is also a Legal Aid Outreach Worker who is available for limited hours at the courthouse. Both workers also travel to other smaller communities where court is held. The Legal Aid Outreach Worker can only take applications and decisions must then be made by the regional office. Criminal Duty Counsel also travels with the court. These services were not mapped because the staff persons were unavailable during the mapping period.
- Four community services were mapped. Three provide basic information, referrals and support and one provides only very minimal legal referrals.
- Overall, findings suggest that High Level, a town with a booming population, is seriously under serviced, especially as it is the closest centre for many remote northern communities. Both legal and community services reported finding and retaining staff for current services to be a critical issue. As well, in the last few years a Native Court Worker position has been cut and funding has been lost for several community programs serving families and youth.

High Prairie

- ICFs were completed for seven services in High Prairie.
- Three services provide legal information. The Provincial Court Registry and the Legal Reference Library both offer information for criminal, civil and family areas of law. The Victim Assistance Service provides some criminal law information.
- ICFs were also completed with four community organizations that supply basic information and referrals to legal services. Three of these organizations provide court support to their clients.
- There is an NCSA office in the Public Library building, but no Legal Aid office in High Prairie. A Legal Aid Outreach Worker and criminal Duty Counsel are present only on court days. These services were not mapped as the staff were not available.

Hinton

Geographically Hinton is not really part of either the Grande Prairie or Red Deer Regions, but was identified by Alberta Justice as an area of particular interest. It was assigned to the Grande Prairie Mapping team.

- ICFs were completed for 14 services in Hinton
- Eight services provide legal information and no additional legal assistance. Four provide information in criminal, civil and family law areas; two focus on family; two provide family and criminal information; and one gives only criminal information.
- The Legal Aid office serving Hinton is located in Whitecourt. A Legal Aid Outreach worker and a criminal Duty Counsel are present in Hinton on court days. A Native Court Worker is available to provide information and legal assistance.
- Four community services were mapped. One provides advocacy and court support to clients. The others give only basic information and referrals to legal services.

5.2.3 Current SRL Services in the Red Deer Region

In the Red Deer region, the research team visited Red Deer, Rimbey, Stettler, Ponoka, Rocky Mountain House, and Wetaskiwin. ICFs were completed for 32 local services overseen by 23 organizations. Of these services, 23 are located in the city of Red Deer. Three ICFs were completed in Wetaskiwin; three in Rocky Mountain House and one in each of the towns of Rimbey, Ponoka and Drayton Valley.³³ No services were mapped for Stettler and no SRLs were interviewed. An interview was completed with a member of the judiciary in the region.

The number of ICFs completed in the Red Deer region is less than half the number completed in the other two regions. The Team Leader reports several reasons for this:

- At each stage of the mapping process, from identifying all possible services through to conducting actual interviews, the Central Alberta Region had about half as many options as the other two mapping regions.
- The field visit observations did not identify any relevant services not already captured by the initial electronic and directory searches.
- Participants in the completed interviews confirm that access to services is a major concern for those in need of legal service in this area.
- Key services such as Court Services, Legal Aid and related programs have offices located in Red Deer, Wetaskiwin and Edmonton. At best, staff from these towns travel to the other communities to provide services on specific days.
- This suggests that the Red Deer region appears to be generally under-served, particularly the communities outside of the City of Red Deer.

³³ The interview in Drayton Valley was arranged by telephone because the researchers were informed that people in the towns designated for mapping were accessing services in Drayton Valley.

- In addition, researchers were unable to schedule and complete interviews for 13 services listed as mapping priorities for the region. They were unable to gain interviews with some services in the smaller communities because of the limited hours of service operation combined with the limited time frame of the Mapping Project.
- It is noticeable that the team was unable to complete interviews with several Aboriginal organizations within the mapping communities.
- It will be important to continue attempts to connect with other community-based service providers in the communities surrounding Red Deer to both ensure all useful services are mapped and to raise awareness about services that are available.³⁴

City of Red Deer

- Most of the major legal services available in Edmonton are also available in the City of Red Deer. The breakdown of the 23 service types mapped in the city is as follows:
- Ten services reported providing only legal information. Of these, two give information for criminal, civil and family law areas; three provide family and criminal information; a further three focus only on the family area; of the remaining two services one provides criminal and the other civil information.
- Five of the services are community based support services and provide only basic information and referrals to legal services.
- Both the Legal Aid Red Deer Regional Office and Legal Aid Central Alberta Law Office are located in the city, serving the city and surrounding area respectively.
- There is a Legal Aid Duty Counsel program attached to each of the Legal Aid offices.
- The Legal Aid Central Alberta Law Office also offers a free Walk in Legal Clinic once a week in Red Deer and when resources are available to do so, once a month at the Rocky Mountain courthouse.
- Red Deer has two community legal clinics. The Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic provides legal information, advice and representation to low income clients for criminal, civil and family law matters. The Red Deer Neighbourhood Law Clinic and the associated Landlord and Tenant Information Service, offer information and advice for tenancy and other civil and family law matters.
- Red Deer also has an NCSA office with criminal and family court workers.

The Central Alberta Communities

- The Mapping Project findings indicate that the small communities in central Alberta are under-served.

³⁴ It is perhaps also noteworthy that the CJSP project had twice previously visited High Level and Peace River and that the Grande Prairie Team Leader was part of the CJSP focus group sessions in those towns. Consequently there was two-way familiarity within that region and this may well have facilitated the mapping team in successfully making community contacts.

- Outside of Red Deer and Wetaskiwin, only one service provides more than legal information. Located in Rocky Mountain House, this service is concerned with the needs of families and senior citizens with special needs. This includes assistance with benefits applications and legal applications related to guardianship and trustee matters.
- In towns to which the courts circuit, some additional services are available on court days, which tend to occur about once a month.
- Service providers in the region consistently complained that province wide telephone access services were ineffective and not user friendly.³⁵
- Because of the lack of local legal services, social services in these smaller communities make very few legal service referrals to clients. Participants in the interviews indicated that although the distances between major centres and small communities in central Alberta are not extreme when compared with the vast distances in the northern region, transportation to service centres is a major barrier for many SRLs who need to access justice services. They also suggested that a particularly high proportion of the population in these small communities may have low-income and low education and require assistance to connect with and obtain needed services.
- Alberta Victims Services were mapped in Drayton Valley and Rocky Mountain House. In larger centres the focus of these services is generally confined to victims of crime with little provision of information beyond this focus. However, mapping researchers learned that in the small central Alberta communities, these offices may be the only available place for residents to seek information on an everyday basis. The Victims Services offices in Rocky Mountain House and Drayton Valley have responded to the needs of local residents by providing as much information as they can make available in all areas of law.

Wetaskiwin

Geographically, Wetaskiwin is located closer to Edmonton than to Red Deer. The town is, however subject to some jurisdictional anomalies with justice service administrative responsibilities split between Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary. At the time of the Alberta Law Line Evaluation, the town was the third highest user of this service after Edmonton and Calgary. Wetaskiwin was also identified by Alberta Justice as an area of particular interest. The mapping process revealed the following distinct issues for Wetaskiwin:

- Despite its proximity to the city of Edmonton, researchers heard from a variety of sources that Wetaskiwin has justice needs that differ from other suburban areas of Edmonton (such as Sherwood Park).

³⁵ Complaints about the effectiveness of the Lawyer Referral Service were not limited to the Red Deer region but were widespread. Problems pertain to three issues: a lack of lawyers in the smaller communities; inaccurate referral information; and the service not returning initial inquiries. There were no complaints about the Alberta Law Line service per se, although it is known that it is difficult to get through.

- Members of the judiciary and of court services told researchers that Wetaskiwin sees a disproportionately high number of serious criminal and volatile family cases.
- Researchers were also told that many SRLs in Wetaskiwin are not able to access and effectively use available legal and support services without personal hands-on guidance.
- Researcher appointments in Wetaskiwin were disrupted on two separate occasions by high profile justice related crises at the courthouse.

5.3. Current Services: Capacity, Demand and Accessibility

It's a problem with society – unless our society decides that it's important to make sure everyone can access the system easily, regardless of their income, culture or education, it won't change. The system is set up in such a way that the lawyers write the laws so that regular people need the lawyers to interpret the laws for them... being a self-represented litigant is difficult. You get better results with a lawyer. You need a lawyer even to get through all the paperwork of legal matters... even though people should be able to be self-represented. The [law] library has examples of forms for people to work from, but people run into stumbling blocks, and end up going back and forth – it gets complicated.

[Court Services, Registry Staff]

As well as relating their personal knowledge about SRLs, participants in the Mapping Project were asked to provide statistics or estimates of how many of their clients were attempting to represent themselves in a legal matter. The interviewer also asked if the service had the capacity to increase the current client load. For a variety of reasons, few services were able to provide concrete answers to these questions.³⁶ The information obtained is summarized in Section 5.3.1, followed by a discussion of a variety of issues connected to the accessibility of current services.

³⁶ It would have been helpful to have collected available statistics about the total number of clients served. However, it is unlikely that most interviewees would have had this information to hand. The time frame for this project did not allow the follow up required to collect such data.

Capacity and Demand

SRLs are not going to go away. It is becoming a growing concern for courts. There is an increasing population in Alberta and therefore litigation numbers will increase and the number of SRLs will increase even if the percentage remained the same. But there is an increase in the proportion of SRLs beyond the population increase because of the costs. Legal services are expensive and unaffordable for most lay people.
[Member of the Judiciary]

The purpose of several mapped services is to provide at least some form of legal advice or representation to people who do not have prior legal representation. Legal Aid, Student Legal Services and some others were, therefore, unsure how to answer the mapping question that asked how many of their clients were SRLs. Some chose to say that 100% of the people they accepted as clients were previously SRLs; others estimated that a portion of those accessing information or requesting services, did in fact already have legal representation.

Many participants also experienced difficulty in answering the question concerning the ability of the service to handle an increase in clients. Some organizations, especially Aboriginal organizations like NCSA, have a philosophical commitment not to turn away anyone in need of assistance and therefore answered 'yes' they would find the capacity to meet a client increase. At the same time they indicated that they could use more resources to meet present needs and increased service demands. Some also expressed concerns about the stress placed on front-line workers, especially in smaller communities where demand for assistance was constant and inescapable. Work overload and lack of supports leads to burn out and the loss of valuable staff.³⁷ Other organizations such as Student Legal Services and the community legal clinics rely on volunteers to provide the legal advice and representation services. Their response was that if the client demand increased they would attempt to increase the number of available volunteers to meet the need.

Web-based and recorded telephone services such as those offered by the Legal Studies program, CanLII and Dial-a-Law have essentially unlimited capacity for current services. However, the Legal Studies representatives pointed out that in order to improve or expand what is currently offered, more resources would be required.

Most legal and social support services administered or funded by government, reported no capacity to increase current service without additional resources.

³⁷ Researcher observations were that the staff in Aboriginal and other grass-roots NGO organizations were often extremely busy and had difficulty scheduling interviews, although they were very willing to do so. The CJSP findings concur.

Tables 1-3 present a summary of the demand and capacity information provided by key legal services in each of the three mapping regions. Data are available for all mapped services but are too extensive to include in this report; therefore only primary in-person services are included in the tables. The tables for the Grande Prairie and Red Deer regions are based primarily on the reports from the regional centres. If information differed notably for one of the smaller communities this is recorded within the comments for that service.

The Mapping Project data about demand and capacity must be regarded as a very preliminary estimate at best. A consistent pattern of stretched resources and high SRL demand does, nevertheless, emerge. Researcher observations suggest that if the needs of the smaller communities surrounding the regional centres are fully considered, then the estimates of a capacity to increase services may actually be over-estimated. Legal Aid, Family Justice and Native Counselling services in these communities are currently very minimal.

Table 1: Capacity of Key Services in Edmonton

Edmonton Services	Capacity to Increase Clients	SRL Clients (Est.%)
Court Registry Services		
<i>Appeal</i>	We must serve everyone who comes in, but we need more staff.	Unknown
<i>Queen's Bench Civil and Family</i>	None, need staff and space.	50%
<i>Queen's Bench Criminal</i>	None, need staff and dollars.	Unknown
<i>Provincial Civil</i>	If fully staffed, but at present we are not.	70-80%
<i>Provincial Family</i>	None, need staff, space, courtrooms & judges.	70% family; 30% child welfare; 0-5% youth.
<i>Provincial Criminal</i>	None, need staff and dollars.	Unknown
Family Justice Services	None, need more staff.	90%
Family Law Information Centre	Just add one staff so we can take more clients.	75%
Law Courts Library	Some, but if significant increase would need more staff.	Percentage unknown, but a significant number are SRLs.
Legal Aid		
<i>Brydges (province-wide)</i>	Unlimited	100%
<i>Alberta Law Line (province-wide)</i>	Demand is well above capacity. Only 10% of dialled calls get into the queue and only 50% are answered.	90%
<i>Regional Office</i>	None	90%
<i>Family Law Office</i>	None, need more lawyers.	100%
<i>Duty Counsel</i>	Need resources to run free clinics.	99%
Native Counselling - Court Workers	If there is a need we help. Some programs can increase client capacity a little.	100%
Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice	To increase capacity we need more lawyers and money.	67% open clinics; 100% full services.
Student Legal Services	Unlimited, we have never said no.	100%
John Howard Society	Need more money, staff, volunteers and better referral information.	50%

Table 2: Capacity of Key Services in the Grande Prairie Region

Grande Prairie Region Services	Capacity to Increase Clients	SRL Clients (Est.%)
Court Registry Services (all)	None. Need more staff and cross training between the courts.	About 90% for provincial court. SRLs in civil QB cases used to be few but are increasing.
Family Justice Services	None. Need more services and family court counsellors in the surrounding communities. Also more mediation services.	85% with no connection to a lawyer at all.
Law Library	Need to be more visible and able to open more hours to the public. High Prairie needs additional materials and computer hardware.	Unknown
Legal Aid		
<i>Regional Office</i>	Need more local lawyers and more money. Insufficient current capacity to serve surrounding communities Hinton needs an extra phone line and space in the courthouse.	98%
<i>Duty Counsel</i>	Willing but overworked. Need more staff. Minimal capacity in communities.	98%
Native Counselling – Court Workers	Try not to turn anyone away, but need staff funding.	85-95%
John Howard Society	Need more space, staff and money.	Unknown

Table 3: Capacity of Key Services in the Red Deer Region

Red Deer Region Services	Capacity to Increase Clients	SRL Clients (Est.%)
Court Registry Services		
<i>Queen's Bench</i>	Need more space and staff.	Criminal 5%; civil 10%; family 30-40%.
<i>Provincial</i>	None. Need more space, money and staff in all locations.	Criminal 5%; civil at least 75%; family 97%.
Family Justice Services	100 more clients in Red Deer; 10-15% more per year in Wetaskiwin.	90%
Law Library	Unknown	Unknown
Legal Aid		
<i>Regional Offices</i>	Central Alberta office 150 – 200 more per year. Minimal capacity to serve the communities.	100%
<i>Duty Counsel</i>	25% more.	99%
Native Counselling – Court Workers	Need more staff, space and programming for families.	100%
Central Alberta Legal Clinic	None. Need a staff lawyer, more volunteer lawyers and more funding.	95-100%
Neighbourhood Law Clinic	Not without an increase in volunteer lawyers.	98%
John Howard Society	Unknown	Unknown

5.3.2 Service Accessibility

The existence of a service does not mean that it is accessible to potential users. Many factors are involved in determining service accessibility. Easily understood information about the service must be available; those seeking the service must be able to afford it or be eligible to receive it if there are low-income criteria; they must be able to get to the location of the service; and they must be able to understand and complete any requirements of the service. After reviewing the findings, one Team Leader summed up the discouraging situation from the perspective of an SRL: “I don't know what I need or where to find it, and I can't afford to find out. Even if I did find out, there is no one to provide what I need or help me understand what I have to do.”

As the previous sections of this report already indicate, information about services is frequently difficult to obtain and to understand and both the availability and accessibility of services varies considerably depending on geographic location, income level and a

variety of other individual circumstances. Participants were also asked specific questions about the accessibility of their service, including hours of operation, ease of access by public transportation, and the ability to provide services for people with special needs related to disabilities, language, literacy and cultural needs.

Most service providers indicated that their staff do everything that they can to assist people with special needs. Few services, however, have specific programs, equipment, or training to meet the needs of people with physical or cognitive disabilities. Interpretation is generally available only on an *ad hoc* basis dependant on other languages spoken by staff or volunteers. There is also a general lack of opportunities for formal cultural awareness training. The need for a grounded understanding of Aboriginal cultures was emphasized in the Grande Prairie and Red Deer Regions.

People likely to self-represent are those speaking a different language...who do not know the legal system in Canada. Because [they] are being introduced to a new culture and language they are confused...Even if they can find a lawyer they don't know if the lawyer is doing the right thing because they are ignorant of the new system. They don't know their rights and how to fight.
[Ethnic Community Worker, Edmonton]

Mental health is a huge issue which needs to be addressed. There are not nearly enough services for people with mental illness out there so they are ending up in court time and time again rather than receiving the proper services which would keep them out of the courts.
[Community Support Worker, Edmonton]

Participants repeatedly pointed out the barriers people with mental health problems face when attempting to access the justice system. Many people struggle to cope with psychiatric disorders and severe stress and their vulnerability may not be apparent, but they have extreme difficulty coping with complicated tasks and bureaucratic attitudes. As the ethnic community worker cited above also pointed out, “they may have hidden concerns such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, relationship problems,” and they may also speak a foreign language.

As far as physical access to buildings, major services generally have basic accessibility for people with mobility restrictions.³⁸ Small community organizations, however, operate in whatever space they can find and are generally well aware when offices are not accessible to people with physical disabilities. Justice community workers seldom have the resources to assist people with psychiatric and cognitive disabilities. For these people an advocate is needed to assist them in negotiating the system. Unfortunately interviews with most community mental health services suggested a low level of recognition concerning clients' legal problems.

Transportation to service locations was identified as a significant barrier in all three mapping regions. In Edmonton all services are potentially accessible by public transportation and by taxi. For residents of the central city, who are able to afford the fare, most services are easily accessible by public transportation. It was noted, however, that not all service providers know whether or not their service can be accessed by public transport, which means they are not able to provide clients with this information.

Travel from the city outskirts and from communities outside of the city boundaries is more difficult without a personal vehicle. Lack of transportation becomes an increasingly significant barrier to accessing justice services the further away a community is from a regional centre. In both the Grande Prairie and the Red Deer regions accessing basic legal services can be insurmountable. SRLs often have difficulty attending court on appointed days and travelling back and forth in search of legal assistance prior to a court appearance is simply not possible.

*Most people have to travel an hour or more. Lots of rural areas don't have circuit courts and have very minimal court access...Aboriginal people [often] just go to jail instead of fight it because they can't afford to come into town...With a very rural population many are without transport at all.
[Aboriginal Court Worker]*

In order to effectively meet the needs of all citizens, improvements and additions to current justice services must incorporate measures to address a range of challenging accessibility issues.

³⁸ Basic accessibility is not the same as full and equal access. See the CJSP report, *Communication and Access Barriers for those with Disabilities* for details on difficulties experienced in accessing courthouse facilities by people with physical disabilities.

5.4. Current Justice Service Referral Patterns

As previously mentioned, due to a lack of accurate information, service providers tend to offer SRLs referrals that are not appropriate. Service providers offer a wide range of legal and social service referrals, especially to people that their own service is unable to help. Essentially, staff will offer whatever information they have about any other service they think might help. Unfortunately, most of the time this results in a frustrating and futile circle of inquiries for SRLs. Figure 1 presents a matrix of key justice services and the main referrals they make to each other. The figure has been compiled by combining referral information provided from all three mapping regions and while the matrix underlines the interrelated nature of justice service referral networks, the full picture is far too complex to capture adequately.³⁹

Figure 1: Justice Service Referral Patterns

Justice Service Referrals	CR	FJS	FLC	LA	LL	DC	FLO	LC	NC	JH	DL
Court registries (CR)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Family Justice services (FJS)	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X
Family Law Information Centre (FLC)	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
Legal Aid Office (LA)	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
Alberta Law Line (LL)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Duty Counsel (DC)	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-
Family Law Office (FLO)	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-
Local Legal clinics (LC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
NCSA (NC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
John Howard (JH)	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
Dial-a law (DL)	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-

In considering the information provided in Figure 1, the following points are important to note:

- Participants had only a few moments to relate the referrals they give. The lists provided may not therefore be complete. Also participants in the interviews were not always front-line staff and may not have been familiar with all referrals made. However, gaps in the referral matrix do mean that in all three mapping regions that service did not report providing a particular referral.
- Mapping researchers heard consistently high praise for NCSA services from all providers familiar with these services. They also heard that there is a need for increased awareness of Aboriginal legal needs. However, referrals to NCSA do not

³⁹ Within the Figure 1 matrix a cross (x) indicates that at least one (possibly more than one) branch of the service listed in the left hand column did report making referrals to the agency listed across the top of the matrix. A dash (-) indicates that no branch of that service reported making referrals to the agency indicated.

appear to be consistent among services or across the mapping regions. Notably, none of the court registries in Edmonton reported referrals to NCSA and nor did any of the Legal Aid services in the Red Deer region. Grande Prairie was the only region where Family Justice Service offices reported referring to NCSA. This suggests that it is important to ensure that all services are aware of local services offered by NCSA.

- The Lawyer Referral Service only makes referrals to the private Bar and is therefore not included in the matrix. Many service providers, however, do suggest to clients that they contact a lawyer via the Lawyer Referral Service. The high degree of dissatisfaction expressed about the usefulness of the Lawyer Referral Service is therefore a matter of concern in ensuring SRLs who might wish to engage a lawyer are provided with the opportunity to actually do so.
- Parenting after Separation is also not included in the Matrix because it is a justice related program rather than a legal service. It was, however, highly praised by service providers, SRLs and members of the judiciary familiar with it. It was repeatedly recommended that attendance should be mandatory for everyone – parents involved in family cases in all courts, service providers and all members of the judiciary who hear family matters.⁴⁰

Legal services also make numerous referrals to social service agencies. These vary considerably by location, depending on what is available. It was, however, possible to identify some core referrals. That legal service providers consistently need to provide these referrals to clients suggests that this group of social agencies have high contact with clients who also have legal problems. Interviews with social support agencies show that while some social agencies are well informed and act as vital advocates for clients attempting to access justice services, other organizations are less aware. Justice services frequently make referrals to the following kinds of social agencies:

- Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (and any other locally available mental health service)
- Catholic Social Services
- Child protection services (all that are locally available)
- The Support Network – Edmonton Crisis and 211 Centre (and other local community information services)
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)
- Family Counselling Services (any that are locally available)
- Homeless shelters and services
- Regional Housing Associations
- Native Friendship Centres
- Women's Shelters

⁴⁰ Our SRL informant praised the course content but did feel that the service needed to be more sensitive to the difficulties attendance could pose for a single parent, especially for a low-income working parent.

It will be important to ensure that these agencies are aware that a significant number of their clients need to deal with legal problems and that the agencies have access to accurate and detailed information about legal services to provide to these clients.

5.5 Conclusions about Current SRL Services

Everyone deserves the right to legal representation. Lawyers are too expensive for low-income individuals to afford. People are too busy keeping themselves and their families afloat to have to go through a convoluted legal information and advice rigmarole. It has been so time consuming that it has cost me money that I didn't have in the first place. For example, being put on hold on phones, stonewalling by [service] gatekeepers, being misled by administrators and sent on a wild goose chase just to find out who I am supposed to talk to. There is a lack of understanding of the emotional despair people are in to begin with without being put off by the legal system as being a pain to deal with. I have been trying to get Legal Aid since the beginning of summer and it's already nearly November. That's ridiculous.
[Edmonton SRL, eventually successful in gaining a Legal Aid lawyer and the legal outcome sought.]

Based on the Mapping Project findings, the most descriptive summary statements that can be made are that:

- There is a *confusion* of services *potentially* offering legal information, assistance, and related support to *some* SRLs.
- Availability and accessibility of services varies considerably depending on the geographic location, eligibility criteria, area of law concerned, and the information seeking abilities of each SRL.
- In Edmonton and the regional centres there are a variety of services of use to SRLs *if* they are eligible for these services (which are mostly confined to low income groups).
- There is a lack of accurate detailed and coordinated information about services and SRLs often do not receive helpful referrals.
- *If* SRLs manage to connect with a service for which they are eligible they generally seem to receive assistance that is helpful.
- As many as two-thirds of SRLs are not eligible for low-income services. Beyond Internet based information and any help court registry staff can offer, there are very few other forms of assistance available to the majority of SRLs.

- A significant portion of the SRLs who are eligible for the low-income services have difficulty understanding what their legal rights and needs are and require assistance to access available services.
- Despite some perceptions and concerns about possible duplication of services to SRLs, the Mapping Project indicates that there is very little (if in fact any) duplication.
- Outside of the regional centres, there is limited access to lawyers even for those with the financial means to retain counsel.
- Free or inexpensive legal advice or assistance from agents with the ability to appear is very inadequate.
- Other than Internet and phone referral only services, almost all services interviewed reported operating at capacity or near capacity. However, the almost complete absence of actual statistics on SRL clients, makes it difficult to provide concrete information about actual capacity.

In addition to the general conclusions provided above, there are a number of observations that can be made that are specific to services in the criminal, civil and family law areas.

Criminal Services

The Mapping Project researchers learned that Criminal services have several strengths:

- People charged with indictable offences that carry a risk of incarceration have access to legal representation regardless of income. The 24-hour Brydges service is available to give immediate assistance to any person who is detained by police.
- There is relatively good access to criminal legal and social support services for youth throughout the mapping regions. The Youth Criminal Defence Office received high praise from a member of the judiciary who observed “a significant difference in the quality of representation” since the office opened because, “they know how to make a plan for these kids – they announce in Docket Court [everyday] for youth to connect with Duty Counsel, plus occasionally Native Counselling. They even tell [the youth] how to behave. It is a great improvement.”
- On-the-other hand, researchers also found that many service providers assumed all criminal information and representation needs were met. Members of the judiciary and other advocates suggested otherwise. As one judge commented, “of particular concern are people on summary charges such as petty theft who have fallen through the social safety net and have no address, no assets and low communication skills.” This group of SRLs often do not understand their rights or the consequences of a guilty plea.

Homeless women in crisis aren't going out and accessing resources....they often show up in court trying to speak for themselves and are told they need a lawyer. But, because they're transient they're not in a place long enough to connect with someone to give them the supports and referrals. They could be dealing with addictions...[or] be charged in conjunction with a partner for something they're not responsible for, but they often don't realize they can do anything about it because of a lack of knowledge on where they can go and what are the resources.
[Women's Shelter Worker]

- Members of the judiciary and court registry staff also pointed out that even traffic offences involving the loss of a licence can have serious consequences for the economic well-being of individuals and their families. The mapping data suggest, however, that outside of court registry services there is little information on how to understand and manage the process of a summary criminal or traffic court case.

Civil Services

- SRLs involved in a civil court case other than a family law matter have the fewest service resources.
- As already noted, the intent of the Small Claims process is to allow self-representation, but almost everyone requires some assistance in understanding the process.
- SRLs and advocates frequently commend the help provided by court registry staff, especially those in the smaller communities where no other assistance is available.
- In Edmonton and Red Deer, community legal clinics provide some civil assistance to low-income groups, but in general there is very little “hands on” information and even less legal advice available to SRLs with a civil justice problem.
- Community organizations dealing with seniors told the mapping researchers that legal needs of this group are often not addressed, although there is frequent requirement for legal information and assistance pertaining to wills, estates, guardianship and trustee matters.⁴¹

⁴¹ The overlooked needs of seniors were also raised in one of the Alberta CJSP focus groups. It is interesting to note that both the BCSHIC and the Alberta Law Line report low use of their services among people over 60 years of age. The reasons for this need further exploration.

Clients do not know about programs until they need the help.... I would like to see the forms and the information in "plain language" but this idea has not caught up to legal forms as much as is needed.... I have applications that are combinations of guardianship and trusteeship and in these cases court clerks don't agree on how the forms are done. One clerk won't take two sets of forms but wants both applications on one form; another court clerk won't take one set because it is two different issues coming up from two previous judges. To overcome these challenges sometimes forms are completed in three or four different ways. And then sometimes people change their minds... but I'm like a dog with a bone – I help clients stick-handle through the government bureaucracy.
[Community Service Worker, Red Deer Region]

- Members of the judiciary and service providers had particular concerns about the need for legal support to tenants in all mapping areas. The current economic boom has created a tight housing market with sharp increases in rents that low-income tenants cannot afford. As a consequence, eviction cases are increasing. The judiciary report that landlords, especially large property companies, elect to pursue cases in the Court of Queen's Bench where the more expensive and complicated legal process discourages tenants from defending the action. If they do choose to do so as an SRL they are at a disadvantage and have few options for assistance.⁴²

Family Services

- There are several specialized family law services to assist eligible SRLs who manage to connect with them.
- Comments on the ICFs suggest that clients of community organizations that offer advocacy and legal support are more successful in accessing the services available to them. If all legal service providers had a sound understanding of what each family service offers, this would immediately facilitate access for many SRLs with family law matters.

⁴² Student Legal Services provides assistance in Provincial Court, but cannot appear in the Court of Queen's Bench. They told a mapping researcher that although requests for assistance have remained constant their representation cases have fallen dramatically because large landlords are choosing to pursue matters in the Court of Queen's Bench, where tenants not only lose but have costs assessed against them. SLS would very much like to find ways to assist these people. It is extremely difficult to understand the Legal Aid criteria and process associated with any civil matter, although researchers were told that there is some Legal Aid coverage for tenancy matters. Where these services are available, Community Legal Clinics may be able to assist.

Family and child welfare cases are very highly charged emotionally. This makes it hard for the judge to handle and they are difficult to hear. With child welfare there needs to be a duty counsel in court all the time. People show up not knowing what is going on or what the process is. They are told to go to Legal Aid but the process takes a week. Meanwhile the child is apprehended and sometimes it turns out that it is appropriate to return that child, but it doesn't happen for weeks. Also, in Family Docket Court people show up and don't know what is going on or what to do. Matters are put over several times. Family Court Workers do a great job, but there are also some very tricky cases that need lawyers.

[Member of the judiciary]

- Despite the fact that the family law area currently has more programs for SRLs, demand far exceeds availability. Improving knowledge of available services would be likely to quickly exhaust current capacity.
- The legal situation for SRLs involved in family court matters was well expressed by a member of the judiciary who commented; "I cannot imagine being in these situations without advice. They are like layers of an onion. There is often cross-over with criminal family violence or abuse. There is custody and access, young offenders. The family is grinding against the system in every area. To do without advice is like taking out your own appendix."
- Aboriginal and other community services, as well as the judiciary, expressed concern that vulnerable clients in child welfare cases are not well represented and are not getting the assistance to which they are entitled.

6. MEETING SRL SERVICE NEEDS

Mapping Project findings confirm the concerns of the SRL Advisory and NGO Sub-Committees that the legal service needs of SRLs are not being sufficiently met. The mapping process has identified some service strengths on which to build, but also many service challenges to be met.

Participants in the mapping process were asked to identify barriers that SRLs experience in accessing the justice system and to also offer suggestions for meeting the needs that were identified. Most of the barriers to access are apparent within the previous discussions of current services and the accompanying illustrations. Suggestions for improving services to SRLs also tended to reflect existing barriers and this section of the report therefore focuses on what is needed and how this can be achieved.

Two main approaches to improving services are identified: 1) improving the delivery of existing SRL services to maximize current capacities and effectiveness, and 2) filling service gaps by building on and expanding existing strengths and facilitating innovative

new services that address local needs. Project data emphasize the importance of continued collaboration. Strong community partnerships between government, non-government justice services, and related community services are essential to initiatives that successfully meet the needs of SRLs.

6.1 Enhancing Current Services

A primary finding of the Mapping Project is that both service providers and SRLs need a clear and accurate understanding of the legal services currently available.

An associated issue is that more factual information and statistics about SRL clients are required to fully understand their service needs. All available information indicates that current services do not have sufficient resources to significantly increase client capacity. A number of suggestions for meeting these challenges emerge from the mapping data.

6.1.1 Sharing Service Knowledge

The need for increased knowledge about current services to SRLs is clearly underlined in this report. Evidence refutes the perception that the SRLs do not understand legal processes, information and forms simply because they are ignorant about Canadian justice systems and have generally low literacy and comprehension skills.

Right now the court process is cumbersome. The pieces of information people need and the forms they must complete are all over the place. There is no one person who will say, "here is what you need to do from start to finish." And employees within the court system are too busy...to spend time with individuals who need help....[A priority is] more cohesion...more communication so different groups helping SRLs know what each other are doing and what is going on in the legal system generally.

[Duty Counsel]

SRLs cannot be expected to understand and negotiate justice related services if service providers do not themselves have a clear and accurate understanding of those services to share with clients. Improving service provider knowledge is crucial to maximizing the effectiveness of current SRL services. The following strategies and actions are suggested:

- ***Sharing of the Mapping Project information databases***

The databases created as part of the Mapping Project are a first step in providing more detailed and useful information about the range of services currently available to SRLs. These templates are, however only a beginning and ongoing action is needed:

- ✓ The template information must be carefully reviewed for accuracy and completeness.
- ✓ A permanent method of housing, sharing and regularly updating service information must be developed that is widely accessible and easily navigable.⁴³ The process of developing this database should be a collaborative one to ensure that the system designed meets the needs of those who will be accessing it.
- ✓ The availability of the service information must be widely advertised.
- ✓ Sufficient resources must be provided to ensure the above actions are taken. As this report has pointed out, the compilation of vital service information is difficult and time consuming, but is an essential foundation to providing effective service.

- ***Making it a priority to collect factual information and basic statistics about SRL clients.***

- ✓ Many service providers are extremely busy and demands to collect additional information can be experienced as burdensome. Accurate information about SRLs is, nevertheless, essential to providing effective service. Collaboration will be needed to find a system of information collection that is efficient and helpful.
- ✓ Funding of current and new services must require evaluation criteria that request information that is clearly useful and relevant to the services. This can be achieved by a collaborative process to design recording methods that capture important information as simply and quickly as possible.
- ✓ Collaboration among services to standardize the collection of information is desirable.
- ✓ Reasons for requiring information, and the benefits to the service that can flow from it, should be clearly explained to the front-line staff performing the work involved.

⁴³ Several of the stakeholders involved in the SRL Advisory and NGO Committees already operate information databases. The Alberta Law Line, the Legal Studies Program and the 211 Support Service all recognize there is room to improve their current level of information concerning the details of available legal services for SRLs and all citizens seeking to understand Canadian legal systems. Collaboration among these stakeholders will be essential to finding a way to share and maintain service information with the amount of detail necessary to be effective.

- **Facilitating networking among justice and community services**

The BCSHIC and the Alberta SRL Mapping Projects provide strong models of the positive effects of networking and collaboration. The approaches taken in both projects have crossed the traditional boundaries of service hierarchies to propose innovative changes to service delivery. The collaborative process has helped to break down initial misconceptions participants had about each others services, organizations and motives. The collaborative meetings and the mapping process model excellent ways to share service provider knowledge and also provide space for concerns and disagreements to be aired. Negative feedback is always hard for dedicated service providers to face, but as part of a collaboration, stakeholders are able to share the challenges they face and their willingness to work to address shortcomings. Instead of just perceiving service weaknesses, participants learn about the strengths and genuine commitment of other service providers. This creates a 'big picture' view of what already works and can be built upon as well as what remains to be done. In both projects it has been observed that participants reflect on the issues and come back to the table with suggestions for solutions that work for all of the collaborators.

Continued collaboration between Alberta Justice and all stakeholders in assuring access to justice for Albertans must be considered essential. The formation of the SRL Advisory and NGO Sub-Committees provides a good nucleus for future networking, but much work remains to be done on an ongoing basis. It is important to recognize that stakeholders may experience barriers to participating in networks and planning committees. Smaller organizations in particular are often over-extended and field many requests for committee participation. Choosing to participate may take a valuable worker away from clients in need and also incur expenses to the organizations for which they have no budget.

It would be nice if there was an organization with [arranging network meetings] as a mandate and could invest the resources and provide that leadership and support. An organization with paid staff that can provide that and the coordination.

[Edmonton Community Service Provider]

Mapping Project participants also emphasized that network events must be of clear interest, either providing new information of value or working on a project with an outcome of benefit to the network members. Events must also be held at times and locations that allow service providers to attend.

It is important that larger organizations with more resources facilitate networking opportunities by taking the initiative either to go out into the smaller communities or

cover the expenses involved in getting together in a central location. Although meeting in person is the ideal, video conferencing (possibly using simple webcam equipment) is an alternative worth considering, at least for some events.

In some of the locations mapped, active community service networks already exist. Where this is the case it would be advantageous to build upon existing strengths. In Edmonton for example, The Support Network offers monthly service network information meetings that provide a model of success. As a member of the Mapping Project NGO Committees, The Support Network has expressed willingness to include legal information topics of interest.⁴⁴ In Red Deer, the Community Legal Clinic initiated a community network meeting for service providers interested in a local mapping process, and Rimbey and Hinton service providers reported community social service networks that are working well. High Level has an established network of community service providers with a strong access to justice focus. However, this town is currently experiencing high staff turnover and difficulty filling vacant positions and this situation is jeopardizing the continuation of the network.

Some of the other locations that were mapped lack established networks. Despite a limited number of local organizations, service providers in some small towns tend to operate in silos that discourage awareness of other services and client needs.⁴⁵ Establishing new networks can be difficult because as one participant expressed it, “sometimes we fight for our territory...you fight for the dollars.” Also, involvement in providing justice related services can take a toll on workers in small communities who are in the uncomfortable position of knowing everyone’s legal and social problems. New services in these locations will need to find non-threatening ways to liaise with existing services and encourage sharing of information and resources.

6.1.2 Building on current service strengths

Recognizing the strengths of current services to SRLs is an important factor related to establishing and nurturing the collaborative networks necessary to ensure the commitment to change that is required to achieve service improvements. The mapping data suggest that all services providing personal assistance are made use of by SRLs. Services that give step-by step explanations, assist with completing forms, and provide any form of basic advice or representation are generally considered helpful, but in need of expanded services.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that the Support Network is currently looking for new space for the organization. At this time the community network meetings attract so many stakeholders that attendance often exceeds the room capacity and attendance has to be on a “first come” basis.

⁴⁵ Researchers noted this situation as applying particularly to High Prairie and Peace River. The same observation about Peace River has been made by the CJSP researchers. In some of the small towns around Red Deer there may simply be a lack of services with which to network and outreach to these isolated community services will be particularly important in meeting SRL needs.

Native Counselling is great and very well used by the community; it is one of the first stops for anyone with a legal problem. But they are not as well funded as they should be. As a result, they are not very available except on court days in the various communities. Getting to see them can take a long time and new workers don't always have sufficient training. They don't have offices and workers in every town where court sits, so transportation to see the worker located in another town is a problem... for many clients.
[Community worker, Grande Prairie Region]

Duty Counsel, Family Court Workers and Native Counselling Services were all repeatedly given as examples of effective services that should receive more resources, especially to allow workers to provide increased services to small communities. Also frequently raised was a need for augmented Legal Aid coverage, both in terms of raising the financial eligibility limits and expanding the coverage available for family and other civil areas of law. Additionally, mapping researchers observed that some services much praised by users in some mapping areas appeared unknown in others. Notable in this regard is the Alberta Law Line, which was not well known in the Grande Prairie region or the smaller central Alberta communities.

As will be seen in the following discussion related to filling service gaps, there is general support for establishing self-help centres (SHCs) in regional towns. However, this support is coupled with an emphasis on the role such a centre can play in coordinating, promoting and enhancing currently existing services in that region. It was frequently noted that an SHC would need to be established in collaboration with local service providers to ensure it contributed to overall improvement in service and not unhelpful duplication.

6.2: Filling Service Gaps

There was extremely strong agreement among participants in the Mapping Project concerning the gaps in services to SRLs. In addition to the need to expand current services which are successful but under-resourced, participants emphasized the need for the following types of SRL service:

- Affordable legal advice and representation, especially for the many SRLs who cannot afford a lawyer or access current low-income services.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ This is the most mentioned gap in service. Researchers were told that in the Grande Prairie region, available family lawyers charge \$1,000 for an initial consultation and require a \$10,000 - \$15,000 retainer to take on a case. There is a critical shortage of lawyers in the north, while population and demand are increasing. There are also many conflict issues that arise. The need for other SRL services flow from the lack of affordable legal representation.

- Friendly, in-person help to understand and navigate legal processes as part of a “one-stop” service that coordinate accurate information and referrals to other available legal information and assistance.
- Assistance with completing legal forms.
- More options for achieving quick and effective resolutions to legal problems.
- Mechanisms to increase access to legal and court services for residents of rural communities.
- Mechanisms and increased awareness to facilitate access to legal services for people with special needs (language, physical disability, cognitive and psychiatric challenges, low literacy).
- Access to representation for disadvantaged accused in summary criminal cases.
- A general increase in services to SRLs in civil matters.
- Increased assistance, legal advice and representation for tenants facing actions in the Court of Queen’s Bench.
- Increased access to legal advice and representation in family law matters, especially those involving the welfare of children.

6.2.1 The Advantages and Limitations of a Self-Help Centre

There needs to be a place that is devoted to giving people who need help the time and support required and that can efficiently hand out information. What is needed is a one-stop-shop where people could pick up the paperwork they need, fill it out –with help if necessary – and talk to a lawyer.
[Duty Counsel]

The most agreed upon benefit of an SHC is its potential as a centralized place for information that can coordinate referrals to existing services which are currently “disconnected and fragmented”.

In Edmonton and Red Deer, the information coordination function alone is sufficient to make the idea of an SHC welcome, especially with participants who provide service to SRLs at the courthouse. Participants were, however, adamant that an SHC would need in-person service provided by staff with exceptional skills in order to perform this function well. It was suggested that SHC staff would require the following set of skills:

- A friendly and helpful manner that makes people feel at ease.
- Knowledge of step-by-step court processes for criminal, civil and family matters and within all three courts.

- A very high degree of cultural and social sensitivity that includes an understanding of Aboriginal, ethnic, disability and poverty issues.
- Ability to locate and convey accurate and appropriate referrals to other services, including assistance in making appointments if necessary.

There would have to be someone there similar to Native Counselling that could be approached by anyone. The staff would have to be active at first, seeking out clients. Some people will not enter a kiosk even if it is bright. It should be available to anyone with barriers and income should not matter.

[Community worker, Grande Prairie Region]

Participants were concerned that it will be difficult to find staff with this kind of skills set, especially as they anticipate that client demand would require more than one staff person. This apprehension was acute in the north where filling current positions and retaining trained staff is very problematic. Furthermore, even though an information and coordination function would be of value, a majority of participants believed it would also be essential for an SHC to provide assistance with forms. The following list summarizes feedback concerning the kinds of service gaps an SHC might ideally fill:

- The empathetic in-person provision of accurate, plain language, step-by-step information about legal options and processes.
- Assistance with understanding and completing legal forms.
- The provision of summary legal advice.
- Sensitive facilitation of access to other services especially for people facing barriers to access, such as language, literacy, culture or disability.
- The coordination and facilitation of service networks to ensure that accurate knowledge and information are shared.

Mapping data also indicate that an SHC would need to be:

- Easily accessible to everyone (meaning it must be easy to find, allow physical access for people with reduced mobility, welcoming and non-intimidating, have hours that work for clients, and provide outreach to those who cannot come to the centre).
- Be adequately resourced to meet client demand with the promised level of service quality.

Perceived limitations of an SHC generally reflected the practical knowledge of the mapping participants concerning how difficult it would be for an SHC to meet all of the above service criteria. Major concerns are:

- It will be impossible to find staff with sufficient skills. To accomplish essential goals of the Centre, a staff person would require expertise in information handling, extensive legal process knowledge and paralegal status.
- There will be insufficient staffing.
- The Centre will be used as an excuse not to increase resources to Legal Aid, Duty Counsel, Native Counselling, Legal Clinics and other services that provide affordable legal advice and representation.
- An SHC will only be able to help those people with sufficient skills to help themselves.
- An SHC in a regional centre does nothing to meet the critical access needs of people in rural communities.
- If the SHC is located within a courthouse it will not be sufficiently accessible because it will not have extended hours and will still be intimidating to approach.

These concerns are grounded in service provider knowledge and experience and are therefore important to keep in mind in any proposal for a self-help centre or other modes of service to meet the needs of SRLs. Despite these cautions, Mapping Project participants were overwhelmingly supportive of the possibilities SHCs offered for improving services to SRLs. There are, however, important differences to be considered for each of the mapping regions as discussed in Sections 6.2.2 to 6.2.4.

6.2.2 Establishing a pilot self-help centre in the Edmonton Law Courts

In-person services are crucial - people want someone to listen to them. Litigants require interpretations of documents and procedures; illiteracy needs to be addressed – again, this is why personal interaction is important. It would be a good idea to have referrals to lawyers and to mediation and restorative justice.

[Justice Community Worker, Edmonton]

There is extremely strong support for providing self-help centre services in Edmonton. While it is recognized that an SHC cannot meet all the service needs of SRLs, there is wide agreement that within the city of Edmonton such a centre can have a beneficial effect.

It is also recognized that locating an SHC in the Edmonton Law Courts has some drawbacks in terms of accessibility, especially in terms of offering extended hours and a non-intimidating environment. Nevertheless, this site has many advantages. Registry staff and members of the judiciary from all three courts report the need for an in-courthouse location to provide detailed information, referrals and assistance with forms.

Providers of other justice services indicate that an SHC would perform a valuable service coordination function.

A pilot SHC program in Edmonton would provide valuable information about SRL characteristics and needs and the strengths and weaknesses of such services for other regional centres. Ideally the Edmonton service should:

- Provide in-person, detailed information and referrals for justice process and services in criminal, civil and family areas.
- Provide a telephone information service, especially if the centre is expected to address needs of SRLs in surrounding towns such as Wetaskiwin.
- Provide assistance with the completion of legal forms.
- Have as part of its mandate the facilitation of networks with justice community and associated social service providers for the purpose of sharing legal information and practice knowledge.
- Have as part of its mandate the updating of a database of information about justice services for SRLs.

6.2.3 Developing a proposal for a self-help centre in Red Deer

Self-represented litigants suffer from a lack of information and knowledge...knowing as much as I do...I can only imagine how difficult and overwhelming it is for clients with low income and a lack of education or other challenges to navigate their way through the complexities of the legal process, the papers needed, how to do something.... A kiosk with brochures or a computer terminal would not be enough – people would still be going to the front counter at the courthouse and asking for assistance.... This person [at the SHC] would have to be someone who is not intimidating. There is a stigma attached ...clients say that they think of criminals when they think of the courthouse and they do not like to think of themselves in that fashion.
[Legal Clinic, Red Deer region]

There is also strong support for establishing an SHC in the city of Red Deer. With two community clinics already available close by, the courthouse is considered a good location. Court staff report a high number of inquires at the registry from SRLs in need of information, referrals and additional assistance. It is therefore indicated from the mapping data that establishing an SHC in the Red Deer courthouse could provide a start in improving overall services in the region.

There are however, several important issues to confront if SRL needs in the Red Deer region are to be effectively addressed. First, the city of Red Deer has a smaller population than Edmonton but about the same number of core legal services available. This includes two community legal clinics close to the courthouse that provide quite extensive assistance. These and all other legal services in the city report operating at or close to capacity, so knowledge of the services does not appear to be especially low. The question therefore arises as to the reasons for high demands for assistance at the courthouse. Extrapolating from the mapping data, one possible answer is that many people from the surrounding communities arrive at the courthouse without any prior knowledge of information and support services available to them.

The lack of legal services in the central Alberta communities certainly supports this hypothesis. If this is the case, it has implications for, a) the role an SHC would fill, and b) the kinds of service it would necessarily have to provide. If a significant proportion of demand on the SHC comes from out of town clients, it is likely they will be accessing the centre at or close to court appearance times, or alternatively, whenever they can get a ride into town and back home again. Under these conditions the SHC would be providing a 'band aid' solution for what is really a general lack of regional legal services and staff would essentially be providing crisis intervention. Added to this is the indication that clients from the small towns may be particularly likely to have lower levels of literacy and information-seeking skills and will therefore require substantial assistance.

As pointed out earlier in Section 5.2.3 of this report, information about regional services remains incomplete. A proposal for an SHC in Red Deer will need to include a strong outreach commitment to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure collection and sharing of complete information on community and legal support services available in central Alberta communities served by the Red Deer court and associated services.
- Provide a liaison role between the outlying communities and SHC and other legal services located in Red Deer.
- Work with key justice and local community stakeholders to ensure that residents in outlying towns have meaningful access to all justice services available to residents of the regional centre.

At an absolute minimum this will require that an SHC located in Red Deer provides telephone access to residents outside of the city.⁴⁷ Sufficient resources to begin outreach work to establish the best way to fill gaps in services will also be essential. It is likely that meeting local needs will require an extension of legal services such as Duty Counsel, and Native and other court worker programs.

⁴⁷ It will be important to liaise with existing services. The Alberta Law Line already provides a telephone advice service available to the Red Deer Region. The Mapping researchers found that the service was not that well known in the small communities as yet, however as the service is already above capacity it would need expanded resources to meet a further increase in demand.

Ideally a proposal for an SHC in Red Deer will include mechanisms that provide more extended outreach to the regional communities. Possibilities are:

- Information workshops provided by SHC staff to local community organizations and their clients, preferably in person but possibly by video connection, including the use of web cam technology.
- Regular days on which SHC staff provide services in local communities – preferably ahead of scheduled circuit court visits.

Although an SHC in the Red Deer courthouse potentially offers a very valuable addition to current services to SRLs, the Mapping Project findings clearly indicate it will not, on its own, be sufficient to meet the needs of SRLs in the surrounding region.

6.2.4 Meeting SRL needs in the Grande Prairie region.

A self-help centre would not be useful out here. The space is too great and the demand too large. We need the ability to travel to where people are and fill out forms to really help people.

[Justice Community Worker, Grande Prairie region]

Just having a centralized place for information would be wonderful, so that people don't have to go here and there and here – it would be a resource for staff as well....There needs to be access by telephone and in person, not pre-recorded....They could drop in then if they were here in Grande Prairie. Workers in each agency would have to take care of the transportation and explaining to people the benefit of the service, but having the information available would be wonderful.

[Justice Community Worker, city of Grande Prairie]

As the above two quotes clearly illustrate, opinions on the usefulness of an SHC in Grande Prairie differ considerably and for clear and valid reasons. The city of Grande Prairie is a regional centre serving thousands of square miles. Within this region, each of the smaller towns mapped also provides a central point to even smaller communities at a distance of a one to three hour drive – if there are roads and if there is available transportation. Many citizens in this region simply never go to Grande Prairie – not even

when sentenced to a correctional facility. Any service located only in the regional centre clearly is of very limited assistance to these far-flung communities. For the regional towns the emphasis for service is on increasing the resources of programs that work. These include Duty Counsel, Family Court Counsellor and especially Native Counselling services. Court staff, social services and Aboriginal organizations all argued for the importance of these services in the communities.

On-the-other hand, service providers in Grande Prairie make an equally good argument for the utility of an SHC in the regional centre, especially if it includes a telephone service and engages the interest and collaboration of service providers. Any proposal should consider the outreach needs and possibilities suggested for the Red Deer region.

The Grande Prairie region however, differs from the Red Deer region in three important ways:

- The distances to be covered are substantial and even for those with transportation distances and road conditions do not make accessing centres such as Grande Prairie and Peace River very viable for much of the region.
- Awareness of legal issues and available services is comparatively well developed among local agencies.
- The city of Grande Prairie currently has fewer legal services than either Red Deer or Edmonton. Most significantly, the city does not currently have a community legal clinic.

A decision about the most effective new service to address SRL needs in the Grande Prairie region must carefully consider what the priorities should be. It is possible that establishing a legal clinic in Grande Prairie may be a better medium to fill current service gaps, especially if the information coordination and network facilitation functions were made part of that mandate.

Any new service that is effective will have to also incorporate an outreach component and must build on and increase currently successful outreach programs. Neither an SHC or community legal clinic alone can meet the needs of SRLs in the under serviced rural communities of the region.

6.3 Concluding Comments

The Mapping Project data provide a substantial amount of information valuable for future action to meet the service needs of SRLs. It would be possible to further mine this data for information of use in developing service proposals and effective service components in each of the areas. The findings from the project confirm the need for improved services for SRLs beginning with the provision of better information about existing services – to the providers of those services as well as the SRLs themselves. Accurate detailed service information and increased coordination of current services will

improve service delivery and help to more clearly define priorities for future services. Similar conclusions are expressed in the recently released report, “Effective Affordable Justice,” from the BC Justice Review Task Force on Civil Justice Reform Working Group, which emphasizes the need for a service “hub” that both coordinates information and existing services and provides access to legal advice and representation. Consideration will need to be given to determining which model will be appropriate in each community.

Central SHCs will not be able to address all the challenges of providing access to justice for SRLs, but they can do much to facilitate the very important sharing of information and coordination of currently available assistance. Pilot programs for SHCs in designated areas will provide needed statistics and experiential insights into the most effective future initiatives for improving justice services.

APPENDIX A

Advisory Committee Membership

- a) Alberta SRL Advisory Committee**
- b) Edmonton SRL NGO sub-committee members**
- c) Calgary SRL NGO sub-committee members**
- d) Red Deer SRL NGO sub-committee members**
- e) Research Team**

Advisory Committee Membership

a) Alberta SRL Advisory Committee

Name	Organizations
Barb Hookenson (Chair)	Alberta Justice
The Honourable Marina Paperny	Court of Appeal of Alberta
The Honourable Eric Macklin	Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta
The Honourable A.H. Lefever	Provincial Court of Alberta
Cheryl Armstrong	Alberta Justice – Strategic Initiatives Branch
Lucille Birkett, QC	Canadian Bar Association
Nancy Brown-Medwid	Legal Aid Society of Alberta
Jeanette Fedorak/ Rita Sumka	Alberta Justice
Carol Greenaway	The Support Network and Edmonton Crisis and 211 Centre
John Henderson, QC	Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice
Rod Jerke, QC	Law Society of Alberta
Diana Lowe	Canadian Forum on Civil Justice
Peter Lown, QC	Alberta Law Reform Institute
Dan McKinley	Legal Aid Society of Alberta
Sandra Mitchell	Alberta Justice
Mona Pearce	Alberta Law Society Libraries
Kristine Robidoux	Provincial Court of Alberta
Bart Rosborough, QC	Alberta Justice
Evelyn Schwabe	Alberta Justice
Robyn Scott	Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Diane Shearer	Alberta Justice
Margaret Shone, QC	Alberta Law Reform Institute
Lori Shortreed	Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice
Randy Sloan	Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Sue Stushnoff	Alberta Justice

b) Edmonton SRL NGO sub-committee members

Name	Organizations
Barb Hookenson (Chair)	Alberta Justice – ADM court Services
Cheryl Armstrong	Alberta Justice – Strategic Initiatives Branch
Andrew Bachelder	Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice
Cindy Bentz	Public Trustee (Edmonton Office)
Franca Best	Public Legal Education Network of Alberta
Larry Brown	The Salvation Army
Dennis Callihoo	Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice
Danielle Collins	Métis Child and Family Services
Maureen Collins	John Howard Society
Ed Fox	Catholic Social Services
Carol Greenaway	The Support Network Edmonton
Al Gordon	Catholic Social Services
Brenda Haynes	Alberta Justice – Edmonton Court Operations
Jackie Horejsi	Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton
Milena Jusza	Student Legal Services - University of Alberta
Kelly Klause	Métis Child and Family Services
Elizabeth Liu	Pro Bono Students Canada
Leona Love	Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board
Stephanie Oleksyn	Student Legal Services - University of Alberta
Martin Osternsen	Legal Aid Society of Alberta
Lorna Ross	Alberta Justice – Edmonton Court Operations
Evelyn Schwabe	Alberta Justice – Planning & Business Services
Lori Shortreed	Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice
Randy Sloan	Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Laura Stevens, QC	Criminal Trial Lawyers' Association
Mary Stratton	Canadian Forum on Civil Justice
Ameen Tejani	Pro Bono Students Canada
Katherine Weaver	Legal Aid Society of Alberta
Randy Slone/Robyn Scott	Native Counselling Services of Alberta

c) Calgary SRL NGO sub-committee members

Name	Organizations
Barb Hookenson (Chair)	Alberta Justice – ADM Court Services
Cheryl Armstrong	Alberta Justice – Strategic Initiatives Branch
Suma Balasubramanyam	Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association
Laurie Benwell	Alberta Justice – Family Mediation Services
Vicki Brandt	Alberta Justice – Calgary Court Operations
Catherine Christopher, QC	Calgary Legal Guidance
Janis Clarke	John Howard Society
Lynn Daley	Alberta Justice – Court of Queen’s Bench
Rhoda Dobler	Canadian Bar Association
Antoinette Godbout	Catholic Immigration Society
Basem Hage	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court
Lisa Halcrow	Calgary & Area Family Services
Barb Innes	Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary
Roland Kieken	Inform Calgary
Gary Kirby	Separation and Divorce Resource Centre
Florence Knight	Canadian Grandparents’ Rights Association
Claude Lemieux	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court (Rural)
Gayle MacAdam	Alberta Seventh Step Society
Lise MacKenzie	Alberta Justice – Court of Queen’s Bench
Maureen L. Mallett	Student Legal Assistance
Darleen Monague	Alberta Justice – Family and Youth
Eunice Munro	Alberta Seventh Step Society
Colleen Nicholls	Alberta Justice – FLIC
Evelyn Schwabe	Alberta Justice – Planning & Business
Sandy Shuler	Jewish Family Services
Brian Seaman	Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre
Martin Siller	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court Traffic/Civil
Mary Stratton	Canadian Forum on Civil Justice
Eileen Taylor	Alberta Justice – Court of Queen’s Bench

d) Red Deer SRL NGO sub-committee members

Name	Organizations
Barb Hookenson (Chair)	Alberta Justice – ADM Court Services
Cheryl Armstrong	Alberta Justice – Strategic Initiatives Branch
Suzanne Alexander-Smith	Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
Rick Assinger	Central Alberta Bar Association
Sheila Bannerman	Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
Peggy Birse	Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
Lorrie Cowan	Central Alberta Woman’s Emergency Shelter
Kelly Dodds	Landlord and Tenant Information And Neighborhood Legal Clinic
Beth Ernst	Alberta Law Society Library
Janine Fraser	Central Alberta Women’s Outreach
Darla Gero-Hagel	Alberta Justice – Family Mediation Services
Yogesh Gupta	Alberta Justice – Family Justice Services (Regional)
Betty Hackman	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court, Civil
Pat Hagemann	Central Alberta Woman’s Emergency Shelter
Jennifer (Jenny) Hoffart	Alberta Justice – Court of Queen’s Bench
Sarah Keays	Alberta Justice – Family Justice Services (Regional)
Aileen Lovely	Legal Aid Society of Alberta
Shelley Makowski	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court
Sandra Manning	Central Alberta Bar Association
Ruby Marshall	Native Counselling
Sandra Mitchell	Alberta Justice – Court Services
Peggy Olstad	Children’s Services
Kim Pasula	Public Legal Education Network of Alberta
Kathy Saunders	Alberta Justice – Provincial Court
Evelyn Schwabe	Alberta Justice – Planning and Business
Diane Shearer	Alberta Justice – Family Justice Services
Shelley Simmonds	Alberta Justice – Court of Queen’s Bench
Mary Stratton	Canadian Forum on Civil Justice
Ed Towers	Alberta Justice – Court Operations, Regional
Evelyn Wadey	Alberta Justice – Youth Justice
Katherine Weaver	Legal Aid Society of Alberta (LawLine)

e) Research Team

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APPENDIX B

Information Collection Form (ICF) For use with SRL legal and social service providers

ALBERTA SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT MAPPING PROJECT INFORMATION COLLECTION FORM (ICF)

1. CONTACT INFORMATION	Circle Response N = No Y = Yes And write in other answers as appropriate
Name of Service (official)	
Mailing Address	
Website:	
Main Telephone:	
E-Mail:	
Is your service generally known by other informal names?	Y N
Specify	List of the names:
Have there been any previous official names?	Y N
Specify	
Years of operation?	
Legal Status? For profit Non-profit Government (level?)	
Is your service operated as part of a larger organization?	Y N
If Yes	
Name of Organization	
Mailing Address	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
E-Mail	
Website	

Organization Director (or equivalent – name & title)	
Service Director/Coordinator (or equivalent): Name & title:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
E-Mail:	
Service Contact Information Main Address:	
Telephone:	
Toll Free:	
TDD:	
Fax:	
E-Mail:	
Contact person (Name & title): Position Title:	
Other locations for this service: (add more as necessary) Address:	
Telephone:	
Toll Free:	
TDD:	
Fax:	
E-Mail	
Contact person (Name & title): Position title:	

Which of this contact information can be made available to the general public?			
Which additional contact information can be released to other service providers?			
What is the main mandate/purpose of your service?			
What geographic area do you serve?			
Are there residence restrictions for your services?	Y	N	
If Yes Specify			
Which client groups do you serve?			
Are there eligibility criteria for clients (income level, referral, residence area, age, gender, other?)	Y	N	
Specify			
2. SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY			
Days and hours of operation	Days: Hours:		
Is there a walk-in service?	Y	N	
Is service by appointment only?	Y	N	
Is there a telephone service?	Y	N	
○ In-person	Y	N	
○ By Touchtone (voice prompt) menu only?	Y	N	
○ A combination (specify)	Y	N	
Is your organization accessible by public transit?	Y	N	D/K

○ Easily?	Y	N	D/K
Is transportation an issue for some of your clients?	Y	N	D/K
If Yes, explain			
Is your service accessible to people with disabilities?			
○ Wheelchair/reduced mobility?	Y	N	
○ Hearing impaired?	Y	N	
○ Sight impaired?	Y	N	
○ Cognitive disability?	Y	N	
○ Mental illness?	Y	N	
Do you have services for people with low English literacy skills?	Y	N	
Without access to a computer?	Y	N	
With low computer literacy?	Y	N	
Do you have translation services?	Y	N	
Which languages?			
Do service staff have familiarity with Aboriginal legal issues and cultures?	Y	N	
Which legal issues and cultures?			
Do service staff have familiarity with ethnic/immigrant legal issues and cultures?	Y	N	
Which legal issues and cultures?			

3. LEGAL SERVICES						
Does your service provide: legal information legal advice legal representation or (act as an agent for clients) to self-represented litigants (SRLs – people with legal problems, who do not have a lawyer).	Information		Advice		Representation	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
<p>If No to <u>all three</u> go to section 4. Support Services</p> <p>If Yes: <u>Definitions</u> (if required). Researchers may <u>not</u> need these definitions. Please note in the columns if the participant required the definitions and whether or not they volunteered distinctions between legal information and legal advice. <u>Legal Information</u>: information about the law in general, about the options that are available, about the basic court processes. Can be in the form of written materials (pamphlets, brochures, websites), educational programs, or telephone/in-person services. <u>Legal Advice</u>: involves individualized answers about how the law would apply to a person’s particular case, what outcome is likely in the person’s case, or what option the person should pursue. Legal advice can only be given by a lawyer and a law student or paralegal working under the supervision of a lawyer. <u>Legal Representation</u>: involves a lawyer, law student or paralegal recognized by the Court, preparing legal documents (pleadings, Affidavit, etc) or appearing on behalf of a client. Could include duty counsel and unbundled legal services such as drafting of pleadings.</p>						

Who provides your in-person legal information, advice and representation services (for example, staff or pro-bono lawyers, law students, paralegals, information specialists)?	Information	Advice	Representation
Overall, how many of your clients do not have legal representation?	% Statistics kept	% Estimate only	
What percentage of clients involved in the following types of case do not have legal representation?	% Statistics kept	% Estimate only	
Criminal			
Civil			
Family			
Now I am going to ask you details about the services you provide. I am going to ask separately about legal information, advice and representation for criminal, civil and family cases.			
Do you provide legal information, advice or representation for SRLs (unrepresented accused) in <u>criminal cases</u> ? If No to all three go to civil cases	Information	Advice	Representation
	Y N	Y N	Y N
For what <i>courts</i> do you provide legal information, advice and/or representation?			
○ Provincial Court	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Court of Queen's Bench	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Court of Appeal	Y N	Y N	Y N
In what areas of criminal law (types of cases) do you provide legal information, advice and/or representation to SRLs?			
○ Indictable offences (serious charges)	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Summary offences (minor charges)	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Risk of detention	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Criminal record reviews (requests for a pardon)	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Highway traffic infractions	Y N	Y N	Y N
○ Family violence	Y N	Y N	Y N

○ Sexual assault	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Peace bonds/restraining orders	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other (specify)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
For which steps/stages in the court process do you provide SRLs with legal information, advice and/or representation?						
○ Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation)	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	
○ Alternative resolution options (restorative/community justice)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Completion of forms	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	
○ Plea (provincial court)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Arraignment (Queens Bench)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Bail	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ How to behave in court	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
○ Disclosure	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Preliminary inquiry	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Trial (opening/closing arguments, motions, burden of proof, rules of evidence, witnesses, jury trials).	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Sentencing	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Appeal	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
In what ways do you provide your criminal information, advice and/or representation services?	Information		Advice		Representation	
○ Brochures	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
○ Video	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Internet	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ In-person	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Telephone	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Do you have a detailed list of the criminal legal information and services you provide?	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

(If yes collect a list or record website location. There will likely only be one list for all criminal, civil and family services).			
Are you aware of other organizations offering similar criminal legal information, advice or representation services?	Y	N	Y N
Specify			
Do you provide legal information, advice or representation for SRLs in <u>Civil cases</u> ?	Y	N	Y N
<u>Definition:</u> By “civil case” we mean a non-criminal non-family matter (such as injuries from accidents, contract and property disputes, wills and estates) (if no to all three go to family cases) If Yes: For what courts do you provide legal information, advice, and/or representation?	Information	Advice	Representation
○ Provincial Court	Y	N	Y N
○ Court of Queen’s Bench	Y	N	Y N
○ Court of Appeal	Y	N	Y N
In what areas of civil law (types of cases) do you offer legal information, advice, and/or representation to SRLs?			
○ Consumer and debt (foreclosure, bankruptcy)	Y	N	Y N
○ Contract disputes	Y	N	Y N
○ Wills, estates and trusts	Y	N	Y N
○ Business law	Y	N	Y N
○ Housing and tenancy	Y	N	Y N
○ Personal injury	Y	N	Y N
○ Medical malpractice	Y	N	Y N
○ Charter/constitutional law	Y	N	Y N
○ Adult guardianship/incapacity	Y	N	Y N
○ Judicial review (of administrative tribunal decisions such as welfare, workers compensation, human rights)	Y	N	Y N
○ Understanding/enforcing orders/judgements?	Y	N	Y N

o Other (specify)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
For which steps/stages in the civil court process do you provide SRLs with legal information, advice and/or representation?	Information		Advice		Representation	
o Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation).	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
o Commencing an action	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Defending an action	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o How to complete forms	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	
o Options for resolving legal disputes (mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial).	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Case management	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Pre-trial procedures	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Discovery	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Interlocutory (Interim, provisional, temporary) motions, applications, submissions	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o How to behave in court	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
o Trial (opening/closing arguments, rules of evidence, motions, witnesses)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Costs	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Appeal (grounds and process)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
In what ways do you provide your civil legal information, advice and representation services?						
o Brochures	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
o Video	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Internet	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o In-person	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Telephone	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
o Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Do you have a detailed list of the civil legal information and services you provide? (if yes collect a list or record website location. This list may have been combined in response to earlier question in criminal section).	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Are you aware of other organizations offering similar civil legal information, advice or representation services?	Y	N		
Specify	Information		Advice	Representation
Do you provide legal information, advice or representation for SRLs in Family cases?	Y	N	Y	N
If no to all three go to 4. Support Services. If Yes: For what courts do you provide legal information, advice and/or representation?				
○ Provincial Court	Y	N	Y	N
○ Court of Queen's Bench	Y	N	Y	N
○ Court of Appeal	Y	N	Y	N
In what areas of family law do you offer legal information, advice and/or representation to SRLs?				
○ Divorce and separation	Y	N	Y	N
○ Parenting orders (custody and access)	Y	N	Y	N
○ Child access for non-parents/guardians	Y	N	Y	N
○ Spousal/partner support	Y	N	Y	N
○ Child support	Y	N	Y	N
○ Child protection (child welfare)	Y	N	Y	N
○ Guardianship	Y	N	Y	N
○ Adoption	Y	N	Y	N
○ Parentage (who is the parent?)	Y	N	Y	N
○ Property	Y	N	Y	N
○ Emergency Protection order (civil restraining order)	Y	N	Y	N
○ Understanding/enforcing orders/judgements	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other	Y	N	Y	N
For which steps/stages in the Family court process do you provide SRLs with legal information?				
○ Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation)	Y	N	Y	N
				N/A

	Information		Advice		Representation	
○ Commencing an action	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Defending an action	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ How to complete forms	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Options for resolving legal disputes (mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial).	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	
○ Case management	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Pre-trial procedures	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Discovery	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Interlocutory (interim, provisional, temporary) motions, applications, submissions	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ How to behave in court	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Parenting After Separation	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	
○ Trial (opening/closing arguments, rules of evidence, motions, witnesses)	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
○ Costs	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Appeal (grounds and process)	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
In what ways do you provide your family legal information, advice and representation services?						
○ Brochures	Y	N	N/A		N/A	
○ Video	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Internet	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ In-person	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
○ Other	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Do you have a detailed list of the family legal information and services you provide? (if yes collect a list or record website location) (This list may have been combined in response to earlier question in criminal section).	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Are you aware of other organizations offering similar family legal information, advice or representation services?	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Specify						
4. SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES						
First two questions to be asked of organizations providing legal services as well as social support service organizations Do you have services or programs that offer social support related to clients' legal problems?	Y	N				
If Yes						
Which of the following kinds of services do you offer?						
○ A court support program?	Y	N				
○ Advocacy	Y	N				
○ Counselling	Y	N				
○ Referrals	Y	N				
○ Basic information	Y	N				
○ Other						
What else should we know about the services you offer that may be useful to people with legal problems?						
The following three questions on statistics are for Social service agencies only						
Overall what percentage of your service's clients are involved in court cases? <u>Definition:</u> We include as court cases any legal matter that potentially could go to court, whether or not it is dropped or settled before an actual court appearance.	% Statistics kept		% Estimate only			
Overall, how many of the clients involved in court cases do not have legal representation?	% Statistics kept		% Estimate only			
Criminal						
Civil						
Family						

What percentage of clients involved in the following types of case do not have legal representation?	% Statistics kept	% Estimate only
Criminal		
Civil		
Family		
5. REFERRALS		
Does this service provide referrals to other legal services of any kind?	Y	N
Specify		
Does this service provide referrals to other social support services of any kind?	Y	N
Specify		
Do you receive referrals from other organizations? If Yes Do you know where from?	Y	N
Specify		
Are there other referrals this service would like to make but does not know of any available resource?	Y	N
Specify		
6. IMPROVING SERVICES FOR SRLs		
Does this service currently have the capacity to serve more clients? If Yes How many more clients could you serve?	Y	N
If no What resources would this service need to increase client capacity?		

Are some groups of your clients more likely to be self represented litigants than other groups (e.g. because of where they live, gender, ethnicity, income, education, age, other)	Y	N
If Yes <u>Prompt:</u> Which groups, and in your opinion what are the reasons for this?		
What services are required to meet the legal needs of SRLs? After the Participant has listed needed services Could you rank those services in terms of the highest priorities? (write rank numbers at the side of each need)		Rank
Do you have further observations about barriers and challenges self-represented litigants face?		
Do you think a self-help centre can help to meet the needs of self-represented litigants? <u>Definition if needed:</u> A central place where you can get the information you need about court proceedings.	Y	N
Please explain why you think this?		
Do you think that increased collaborative arrangements among different service providers could be developed that would improve service to SRLs?	Y	N
If No		
Why not?		
If Yes		
Can you suggest some useful arrangements?		
Would regular meetings/workshops among services with self-representing clients be helpful?	Y	N

If No Why not?	
If Yes Are there any current community networks that could be built upon?	Y N
Specify	
All participants (Yes or No) Who do you think should be responsible for organizing network meetings?	
How often should network meetings be held?	
Do you have any further suggestions about holding network meetings/workshops?	
Are there any further comments about services for SRLs that you would like to add?	Y N
Specify	
Researcher Observations	

APPENDIX C
Questionnaire for Members of the Judiciary

ALBERTA SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS MAPPING PROJECT INTERVIEW FOR MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY

INTRODUCTION

As part of mapping what assistance is already available to self-represented litigants and what further resources are needed, we have asked organizations details about the legal information, advice representation and/or social support services they provide. We also want to include a judicial perspective about the needs of self-represented litigants in the courtroom.

I will be asking you what you think the priority needs of self-represented litigants are in relation to areas of law and the steps/stages of the court process. I will ask separately about criminal, civil and family cases as needs may differ in each area.

<p>Would you like your contribution to the Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project to be acknowledged in the report by listing your name as a representative of your court, or would you prefer your responses to be anonymous?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Anonymous <input type="radio"/> Listed
<p>If to be listed: Title and name</p>	
<p>In which court do you sit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Court of Appeal <input type="radio"/> Court of Queen's Bench <input type="radio"/> Provincial Court
<p>In which geographic locations do you sit, including when on circuit? List all</p>	
<p>Do you hear <u>criminal cases</u>? If No go to civil section</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y N</p>

<p>In which of the following <i>areas of law</i> do you find that self-represented litigants (SRLs) in criminal cases need assistance? (After the participant has indicated in which areas SRLs need assistance, the researcher should then ask the following question repeating to the participant the areas where assistance is needed) In your opinion which of these areas of law should be the highest priority for new services? Please <u>rank</u> those you consider most important</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indictable offences (serious charges) ○ Summary offences (minor charges) ○ Risk of detention ○ Criminal record reviews ○ Highway traffic infractions ○ Family violence ○ Sexual assault ○ Peace bonds/restraining orders ○ Other (specify) 	<p>Need Assistance</p> <p>Y N</p>	<p>Rank</p>
<p>At which steps/stages of the criminal court process do you think SRLs would benefit from increased assistance? (After the participant has indicated in which steps SRLs need assistance, the researcher should then ask the following question repeating to the participant the steps where assistance is needed) In your opinion which of these steps should be the highest priority for improved services? Please <u>rank</u> those you consider most important.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation) ○ How to behave in court ○ Bail ○ Completion of forms 	<p>Need Assistance</p> <p>Y N</p> <p>Y N</p> <p>Y N</p> <p>Y N</p>	<p>Rank</p>

○ Wills, estates and trusts	Y	N	
○ Business law	Y	N	
○ Housing and tenancy	Y	N	
○ Personal injury	Y	N	
○ Medical malpractice	Y	N	
○ Charter/constitutional law	Y	N	
○ Adult guardianship/incapacity	Y	N	
○ Judicial review (of administrative tribunal decisions such as welfare, workers compensation, human rights)	Y	N	
○ Understanding/enforcing orders and judgements?	Y	N	
○ Other (specify)	Y	N	
<p>At which steps/stages of the civil court process do you think SRLs would most benefit from increased assistance? (After the participant has indicated in which steps SRLs need assistance, the researcher should then ask the following question repeating to the participant the steps where assistance is needed) In your opinion which of these steps should be the highest priority for new services? Please <u>rank</u> those you consider most important</p>			
	Need Assistance		Rank
○ Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation).	Y	N	
○ How to behave in court	Y	N	
○ Commencing an action	Y	N	
○ Defending an action	Y	N	
○ How to complete forms	Y	N	
○ Options for resolving legal disputes (mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial).	Y	N	
○ Case management	Y	N	

○ Pre-trial procedures	Y	N	
○ Discovery	Y	N	
○ Interlocutory (Interim, provisional, temporary) motions, applications, submissions	Y	N	
○ Trial (opening/closing arguments, rules of evidence, motions, witnesses)	Y	N	
○ Costs	Y	N	
○ Appeal (grounds and process)	Y	N	
○ Other	Y	N	
Do you find that there are particular groups of litigants who are more likely to be self-represented in civil cases (for example due to type of case, income, education, ethnicity, age, other social factors?) [If yes over]	Y	N	
If yes Which groups and in your opinion what are the reasons for this?			
Are there other important concerns or issues you have about SRLs in civil cases?			
Do you hear <u>family law cases</u> ? If No go to referrals	Y	N	
In which of the following areas of law do you find that self-represented litigants (SRLs) in family cases need assistance? (<u>After</u> the participant has indicated in which areas SRLs need assistance, the researcher should then ask the following question repeating to the participant the areas where assistance is needed) In your opinion which of these areas of law should be the highest priority for new services? Please <u>rank</u> those you consider most important			

	Need Assistance		Rank
○ Divorce and separation	Y	N	
○ Parenting orders (custody and access)	Y	N	
○ Child access for non-parents/guardians	Y	N	
○ Spousal/partner support	Y	N	
○ Child support	Y	N	
○ Child protection (child welfare)	Y	N	
○ Guardianship	Y	N	
○ Adoption	Y	N	
○ Parentage (who is the parent?)	Y	N	
○ Property	Y	N	
○ Emergency Protection Order (civil restraining order)	Y	N	
○ Understanding/enforcing orders/judgements	Y	N	
○ Other	Y	N	
<p>At which steps/stages of the family court process do you think SRLs would benefit from increased assistance? (After the participant has indicated in which steps SRLs need assistance, the researcher should then ask the following question repeating to the participant the steps where assistance is needed) In your opinion which of these steps should be the highest priority for new services? Please <u>rank</u> those you consider most important</p>			
	Need Assistance		Rank
○ Introductory (legal rights, principles, procedures, obtaining legal representation)	Y	N	
○ How to behave in court	Y	N	
○ Commencing an action	Y	N	
○ Defending an action	Y	N	
○ How to complete forms	Y	N	

○ Options for resolving legal disputes (mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial).	Y	N	
○ Case management	Y	N	
○ Pre-trial procedures	Y	N	
○ Discovery	Y	N	
○ Interlocutory (interim, provisional, temporary) motions, applications, submissions	Y	N	
○ Parenting After Separation	Y	N	
○ Trial (opening/closing arguments, rules of evidence, motions, witnesses)	Y	N	
○ Costs	Y	N	
○ Appeal (grounds and process)	Y	N	
○ Other	Y	N	
Do you find that there are particular groups of litigants who are more likely to be self-represented in family cases (for example due to type of case, income, education, ethnicity, age, other social factors?)	Y	N	
If yes Which groups and in your opinion what are the reasons for this?			
Are there other important concerns or issues you have about SRLs in family cases?			
REFERRALS			
Do you provide SRLs with referrals to legal services of any kind?	Y	N	
If Yes, which ones?			
If No <u>Prompt</u> (or if this is not mentioned in the course of a 'yes response): What about opposing counsel or other lawyers in court – do you ever ask them to assist an SRL?			

Do you provide SRLs with referrals to social support services of any kind?	Y	N
If Yes, which ones?		
Are there resources you would like to be available to assist the judiciary in dealing with SRLs?	Y	N
If Yes, specify:		
<u>Prompt</u> (if not volunteered): Would an easy to use bench book or database of resources be helpful?	Y	N
Are there specific resources you would like to see made available to SRLs?	Y	N
If yes, which resources do you see as most important?		
Do you think that a self-help information centre would be useful?	Y	N
Please explain why or why not		
If yes to self-help centre: Which services do you think should be the priority for a self-help centre?		
If yes to self-help centre: How do you think the self-help centre services should be delivered? <u>Prompt:</u> Where should the centre be? What should it look like? Should the service be by phone? And/or in person? Mobile?		
Do you have further observations about the challenges of SRLs in the courts?		
Do you have any additional suggestions about meeting the needs of SRLs?		
Researcher comments		

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire for Self-Represented Litigants

**ALBERTA SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT MAPPING PROJECT
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS**

	Circle Response N = No Y = Yes And write in other answers as appropriate
1. YOUR LOCATION	
In what city or town do you live?	
May we have your postal code for possible use in creating geographical electronic maps of where people live in relation to the services that are available?	Y N
If Yes: Postal code	
2. YOUR COURT CASE	
Are you currently involved in a court case in which you are representing yourself (do not have a lawyer)?	Y N
If No: When were you previously involved in a court case in which you represented yourself? Get the approximate dates started and ended if possible or the number of months/years ago the case took place.	
What legal issue (issues) was or is your court case about? Allow participant to explain in his/her own words and record as closely as possible the area or areas of law involved].	
In which kind of court was/is your case being heard? [The participant might not know the answer to this and a case can end up going to more than one court. It may be clear from the type of case which court must be involved. Use the list opposite to provide prompts and circle the appropriate answers if you can. If not leave blank and consult your TL or RD]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Provincial criminal <input type="radio"/> Provincial traffic <input type="radio"/> Provincial small claims (up to \$25,000) <input type="radio"/> Provincial family <input type="radio"/> Queens Bench criminal <input type="radio"/> Queens Bench civil

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Queens Bench family (was a divorce involved?) ○ Appeal criminal ○ Appeal civil or family
<p>Where was the court (or courts) you went to located? If possible get a street address as this may help us determine which kind of court they attended. They may have attended more than one court.</p>	<p>Court 1: Town/city: Street</p> <p>Court 2: Town/city: Street if possible</p> <p>Court 3: Town/city: Street if possible</p>
3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION	
<p>Have you consulted with a lawyer at any time during your court case?</p>	<p>Y N</p>
<p>If Yes: please explain at what stage (or stages) in the case this was:</p>	
<p>Have you actually had a lawyer represent you at any point in your case (appear in court for you, write letters, complete forms, meet with others involved in the case?)</p>	<p>Y N</p>
<p>If Yes: please explain at what stage (or stages) in the case this was:</p>	

<p>What are your reasons for now (or previously) representing yourself? Allow the participant to explain but as far as possible circle the appropriate answers opposite – more than one answer may be applicable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ My case is simple, I don't need a lawyer ○ I prefer to represent myself than have a lawyer ○ I'm not eligible for Legal Aid ○ There is no Legal Aid for my case ○ I can't afford a lawyer ○ I want a lawyer but haven't yet managed to find one ○ There are no lawyers locally that do this kind of case ○ I had a lawyer for a while but wasn't satisfied ○ I had a lawyer for a while but can no longer afford one ○ I use a lawyer for some things but do what I can myself to save money ○ Other reason (specify)
<p>Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the reasons that you are representing yourself in your court case?</p>	
<p>4. LEGAL SERVICES ACCESSED</p>	
<p>We would like to know about the kinds of legal information, advice and/or representation you have been able to find at various stages of your court case. Here is what we mean by legal Information, legal advice and legal representation: For SRLs have these definitions on a separate sheet to hand to them</p> <p><u>Definitions</u></p> <p><u>Legal Information</u>: information about the law in general, about the options that are available, about the basic court processes. Can be in the form of written materials (pamphlets, brochures, websites), educational programs, or telephone/in-person services</p> <p><u>Legal Advice</u>: involves individualized answers about how the law would apply to your particular case, what outcome is likely in the case ,what option you should pursue, exactly what you should say on a form or in court. Legal advice can only be given by a lawyer and a law student or paralegal working under the supervision of a lawyer.</p> <p><u>Legal Representation</u>: involves a lawyer, law student or paralegal recognized by the Court, preparing legal documents (pleadings, Affidavit, etc) or appearing on behalf of a client. Could include duty counsel and unbundled legal services such as drafting of pleadings.</p>	

I am going to ask you about a number of steps and stages in the court process. I would like to know if you received information, advice, or representation for any of these steps. The researcher must remember at this point whether the case is criminal, civil or family and not ask sections that do not apply					
Steps applying to all participants		Information		Advice	Representation
○ Introductory information about how to obtain legal representation; legal rights, principles and procedures: where to go and what to do.		Y	N	N/A	
○ Completion of forms		Y	N	Y	N
○ Alternatives to having a trial to resolve your legal problem (restorative/community justice, mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial)		Y	N	Y	N
○ How to behave in court		Y	N	N/A	
○ Trial (opening/closing arguments, motions, burden of proof, rules of evidence, witnesses, jury trials).		Y	N	Y	N
○ Peace bonds, restraining and emergency protection orders		Y	N	Y	N
○ Making an appeal (grounds and process)		Y	N	Y	N
○ Other					
Criminal Only					
○ Arraignment and plea (first appearance in court to answer to charges)		Y	N	Y	N
○ Bail		Y	N	Y	N
○ Preliminary inquiry (a hearing in a court before an actual trial)		Y	N	Y	N
○ Disclosure (What the prosecutor tells the accused about the case)		Y	N	Y	N
○ Sentencing		Y	N	Y	N
○ Other (specify)		Y	N	Y	N

Researcher should note any comments the SRL makes about the above steps.			
Civil and family			
○ How to begin an action	Y	N	Y N
○ How to respond to an action against you	Y	N	Y N
○ Case management options (<i>ways to handle the progress of a case</i>)	Y	N	Y N
○ Discovery (Before trial, either side may ask the other, under oath, to be able to "discover" evidence from witnesses or documents)	Y	N	Y N
○ Interlocutory (interim, provisional, temporary) motions, applications, submissions	Y	N	Y N
○ Pre-trial conference (<i>a hearing before a judge to evaluate a case before a real trial</i>)	Y	N	Y N
○ Costs	Y	N	Y N
○ Understanding/enforcing orders and judgements	Y	N	Y N
○ Other	Y	N	Y N
Researcher should note any comments SRL makes about the above steps:			
Family only			
○ Parenting After Separation course	Y	N	Y N N/A
Researcher should note any comments SRL makes about the above steps			

<p>In what ways did you receive the legal information that you needed?</p> <p>The Researcher should first ask the ways information was gained. Next ask the participant which of these were useful and place a tick in the Useful/Rank box. Then ask if the participant can rank order of usefulness</p> <p>Which did you find most useful?</p> <p>Can you rank these in order of usefulness?</p>	<p>Information Received</p>	<p>Useful/ Rank</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> Brochures</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Video/DVD</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Internet</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> In-person</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Telephone</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Other</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p>If Yes: Do you remember which sites were most useful? (list any sites mentioned)</p>		
<p>Did you contact the following places when looking for information and assistance in representing yourself in court?</p> <p>The Researcher should first ask the ways information was gained. Next ask the participant which of these were useful and place a tick in the Useful/Rank box. Then ask if the participant can rank order of usefulness.</p> <p>Which of the places you contacted gave you useful information or assistance? Can you <u>rank</u> these in order of the most useful?</p>	<p>Places Contacted</p>	<p>Useful/ Rank</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> Staff at the courthouse counters</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Legal Aid (including the Youth and Family Law offices)</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> A private law firm</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Lawyer Referral Service</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> The Alberta Law Line</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> Elizabeth Fry Society</p>	<p>Y N</p>	
<p><input type="radio"/> John Howard Society</p>	<p>Y N</p>	

○ Police services	Y	N
○ A community legal clinic (researcher should suggest a local name when possible)	Y	N
○ A community information centre (researcher should suggest a local name when possible)	Y	N
○ A law library	Y	N
○ A public library	Y	N
○ Alberta Children's Services	Y	N
○ Aboriginal Children's services	Y	N
○ Native Counselling Services	Y	N
○ Band Council Office	Y	N
○ An elected government representative (MLA, MP, Municipal councillor)	Y	N
○ Other (specify)	Y	N
<p>Please tell me a little more about why some information and assistance was useful and some was not.</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Did you receive some referrals that were particularly helpful? Or some that were not helpful at all?</p> <p>Can you tell me what these referrals were and who gave them to you?</p>		
5. IMPROVING SERVICES FOR SELF- REPRESENTED LITIGANTS		
What has been most helpful to you as a self-represented litigant?		
What have you found the most difficult to manage?		

<p>Are there other resources, kinds of information, or assistance that you would like to see available to people going to court without a lawyer? If Yes, specify</p>	Y	N
<p>Do you think a self-help centre can help to meet the needs of people representing themselves in court? <u>Definition if needed:</u> A central place where you can get the information you need about court proceedings.</p>	Y	N
<p>Please explain why you think this?</p>		
<p>If there was a self-help centre, what are the most important services it should offer? (Ask even if the participant didn't think a centre was a good idea) <u>Prompts:</u> (if not volunteered) Help knowing where to go and what to do for each stage in the court process? Filling out forms? Explaining what legal terms mean? Being able to talk to a lawyer?</p>		
<p>What would be a good location to have a self-help centre? <u>Prompts</u> Would a courthouse be a useful location? Would it be useful to have one in [Edmonton/Red Deer/Grande Prairie?]</p>		
<p>It will never be possible to have a self-help centre in every town or courthouse: Can you think of ways of providing services to people representing themselves in court that would work? <u>Prompts</u> How about an in-person telephone service?</p>		

Having workers visit towns at specified times? A mobile self-help centre that travelled around?		
Do you have any other thoughts about providing assistance to people representing themselves in court?		
6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION		
You do not have to answer these last few questions about yourself but knowing this information will help us to better understand the kind of services that will most effectively meet the needs of people going to court without a lawyer.		
How much education have you completed so far?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Haven't finished high school <input type="radio"/> Graduated from high school <input type="radio"/> Some college or university <input type="radio"/> College diploma <input type="radio"/> University degree
Which age group are you in?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> 18 – 24 <input type="radio"/> 25 – 34 <input type="radio"/> 35 – 44 <input type="radio"/> 45 – 54 <input type="radio"/> 55 – 64 <input type="radio"/> 65 and over
Do you identify yourself as a member of any minority group (such as Aboriginal, visible minority, disability, any other) ?	Y	N
If Yes: Which one (s)?		
Do you own a vehicle?	Y	N
Do you have access to the Internet at your home?	Y	N

<p>What is your household income group?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under \$15,000 ○ \$15,001 - \$19,999 ○ \$20,000 - \$29,999 ○ \$30,000 - \$39,999 ○ \$40,000 - \$49,999 ○ \$50,000 - \$64, 999 ○ 65,000 – 79,999 ○ 80,000 – 99,000 ○ Over \$100,000
<p>Is there anything else you would like us to know that you think would help us better understand the needs of people like yourself who go to court without a lawyer?</p>	
<p>Researcher Observations</p>	

APPENDIX E

Services for Self-represented Litigants Template Index and Example

TEMPLATE OF RESOURCES FOR SRLs AND URAs

INDEX AND SEARCH KEY

A. CRIMINAL RESOURCES

1. LEGAL INFORMATION

a) Court Services (Information)

(The following sub-categories are repeated for each type of service b-k)

Name of service:

Contact information:

Mandate:

Description of services:

Eligibility criteria:

Accessibility:

Associated support services:

Other information:

b) Legal Aid Services (Information)

c) Private Lawyer Services (Information)

d) Community Legal Centres (Information)

e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Information)

f) Law Libraries (Information)

g) Victim Services (Information)

h) Dispute Resolution Services (Information)

i) Internet-only Legal Services (Information)

j) Community and Government Support Services (Information)

k) Other (Information)

2. LEGAL ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE

a) Court Services (Advice)

b) Legal Aid Services (Advice)

c) Private Lawyer Services (Advice)

d) Community Legal Centres (Advice)

e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Advice)

f) Law Libraries (Advice)

g) Victim Services (Advice)

h) Dispute Resolution Services (Advice)

i) Internet-only Legal Services (Advice)

j) Community and Government Support Services (Advice)

k) Other (Advice)

3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION OR THE ABILITY TO APPEAR

- a) Court Services (Representation)
- b) Legal Aid Services (Representation)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Representation)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Representation)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Representation)
- f) Law Libraries (Representation)
- g) Victim Services (Representation)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Representation)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Representation)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Representation)
- k) Other (Representation)

4. SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- a) Court Services (Social Support Service)
- b) Victim Services (Social Support Service)
- c) Community Legal Centres (Social Support Service)
- d) Community Centres (Social Support Service)
- e) Aboriginal Services (Social Support Service)
- f) Government Social Services (Social Support Service)
- g) Other (Social Support Service)

B. CIVIL RESOURCES

1. LEGAL INFORMATION

- a) Court Services (Information)

Name of service:

Contact information:

Mandate:

Description of services:

Eligibility criteria:

Accessibility:

Associated support services:

Other information:

- b) Legal Aid Services (Information)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Information)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Information)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Information)
- f) Law Libraries (Information)

- g) Victim's Services (Information)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Information)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Information)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Information)
- k) Other (Information)

2. LEGAL ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE

- a) Court Services (Advice)
- b) Legal Aid Services (Advice)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Advice)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Advice)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Advice)
- f) Law Libraries (Advice)
- g) Victim Services (Advice)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Advice)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Advice)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Advice)
- k) Other (Advice)

3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION OR THE ABILITY TO APPEAR

- a) Court Services (Representation)
- b) Legal Aid Services (Representation)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Representation)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Representation)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Representation)
- f) Law Libraries (Representation)
- g) Victim Services (Representation)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Representation)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Representation)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Representation)
- k) Other (Representation)

4. SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- a) Court Services (Social Support Service)
- b) Victim Services (Social Support Service)
- c) Community Legal Centres (Social Support Service)
- d) Community Centres (Social Support Service)
- e) Aboriginal Services (Social Support Service)
- f) Government Social Services (Social Support Service)
- g) Other (Social Support Service)

C. FAMILY RESOURCES

1. LEGAL INFORMATION

a) Court Services (Information)

Name of service:

Contact information:

Mandate:

Description of services:

Eligibility criteria:

Accessibility:

Associated support services:

Other information:

- b) Legal Aid Services (Information)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Information)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Information)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Information)
- f) Law Libraries (Information)
- g) Victim Services (Information)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Information)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Information)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Information)
- k) Other (Information)

2. LEGAL ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE

- a) Court Services (Advice)
- b) Legal Aid Services (Advice)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Advice)
- d) Community Legal Centres (Advice)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Advice)
- f) Law Libraries (Advice)
- g) Victim Services (Advice)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Advice)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Advice)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Advice)
- k) Other (Advice)

3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION OR THE ABILITY TO APPEAR

- a) Court Services (Representation)
- b) Legal Aid Services (Representation)
- c) Private Lawyer Services (Representation)

- d) Community Legal Centres (Representation)
- e) Aboriginal Legal Services (Representation)
- f) Law Libraries (Representation)
- g) Victim Services (Representation)
- h) Dispute Resolution Services (Representation)
- i) Internet-only Legal Services (Representation)
- j) Community and Government Support Services (Representation)
- k) Other (Representation)

4. SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- a) Court Services (Social Support Service)
- b) Victim Services (Social Support Service)
- c) Community Legal Centres (Social Support Service)
- d) Community Centres (Social Support Service)
- e) Aboriginal Services (Social Support Service)
- f) Government Social Services (Social Support Service)
- g) Other (Social Support Service)

D. OTHER RESOURCES

TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

B. CIVIL RESOURCES

d) Community Legal Centres (Advice)

Name of service:

Student Legal Services of Edmonton (SLS)

Contact information:

Student Legal Services (Campus Office)
11011 – 88 Ave.
Edmonton, AB
T6G 0Z4

(780) 492-2226

Student Legal Services (Downtown Office)
#203 - 9924 106 ST.
EDMONTON, AB
T5K 1C7

(780) 425-3356

<http://www.slsedmonton.com/home.html>
info@slsedmonton.com

Mandate:

“Our mission is to enable University of Alberta law students to provide free legal information and assistance to the low income community in Edmonton and to contribute to legal reform and legal education efforts as they impact on poverty law issues”.

Description of services:

Volunteer University of Alberta law students pass on advice to clients after consulting an advising lawyer. Clients seeking advice must have opened a file. No advice is given over the phone.

Courts:
Provincial Court

Types of Cases:

Contract disputes
Housing and tenancy
Charter/constitutional law (Make charter applications in criminal cases only)

Steps/Stages:

Options for resolving legal disputes (mediation, settlement conference, judicial dispute resolution, mini or summary trial).

Trial (opening/closing arguments, rules of evidence, motions, witnesses)

Provided Through:

In person

For other services of SLS see also:

Civil Resources-Community Legal Centre-Information
Civil Resources-Community Legal Centre-Representation
Criminal Resources-Community Legal Centre-Information
Criminal Resources-Community Legal Centre-Advice
Criminal Resources-Community Legal Centre-Representation
Family Resources-Community Legal Centre-Information

Eligibility criteria:

Students and low-income individuals living in Edmonton and the surrounding area.

Accessibility:

Days and Hours:

May - August Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

September - November Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

January - March Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Walk-in service

In person telephone service

Organization easily accessible by public transit

Service accessible to people with disabilities

Wheelchair/reduced mobility

Cognitive disability

Mental illness

Services for people with low English literacy skills

Associated support services:

Other information:

APPENDIX F
Organizations and Services Mapped

ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES MAPPED

EDMONTON 66 ICFs

Alberta Court Services

Court of Appeal
Court of Queen's Bench - Civil
Court of Queen's Bench – Criminal
Provincial Court - Civil
Provincial Court - Criminal
Provincial Court - Family & Youth
Provincial Court – Civil Mediation
Family Law Information Centre
Family Justice Services

Alberta Law Society Library

ASSIST Community Services Centre

CanLII

Dial-a-Law

Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice

Edmonton Police Services

Victim Services Unit
Spousal Violence Intervention (Family Support Services Section)

Elizabeth Fry Society

Edmonton Community Services

Family and Community Support Services Branch (FCSS)

Edmonton Association of Collaborative Family Lawyers

John Howard Society

Family Violence Prevention Centre
Victims Assistance Program

John Weir Library

Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board

Law Society of Alberta

Law Society Referral Service

Legal Aid Alberta

Brydges
Duty Counsel
FLO
Alberta Law Line
Regional Office
YCDO

Legal Studies, Faculty of Extension (University of Alberta)

Access to Justice Net Alberta
Access to Justice Net National
LawNow
Laws for Landlord and Tenants
Legal FAQs Alberta
Legal FAQs National

RoseNet
VioletNet
A-Link
OakNet

**Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre
Native Counselling Services of Alberta**

*Restorative Justice
Criminal Courtwork Program
Family Courtwork Program*

Re-Group Collaboration Inc.

Student Legal Services

Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society

Yellowhead Tribal Services Agency

Youth Advocate Alberta

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

*Edmonton Women's Shelter WINhouse (I and II)
LaSalle Residence
Wings of Providence Second Stage*

Alberta Government Children's Services

*Child Abuse Hotline
Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying*

Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (Alberta Government Services)

Boyle Street Community Services Co-op

Canada Mental Health Association- Edmonton

Catholic Social Services

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Métis Child and Family Services Society of Edmonton

Metro Continuing Education (Law for the Layperson)

Seniors' Association of Greater Edmonton

Sexual Assault Centre

Support Network (includes 211)

Canadian Bar Association - Alberta Branch

Bissell Centre

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION 77 ICFs

HINTON

Alberta Court Services

*Court of Queen's Bench (Civil, Criminal, Family)
Provincial Court (Civil, Criminal, Family Traffic)
Family Justice Services (Family Court Counsellor)
Legal Reference Library*

Hinton & District Victims' Services Society (Alberta Solicitor General with RCMP)

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)
BRIDGES (*Supporting those with Mental Health Needs*)
Circle Resources (*Parenting After Separation*)
Family and Community Support Services Hinton (*Community Development & Information and Referral Services*)
Hinton Friendship Centre Association
Aboriginal Family Visitor
Family Diversion

Legal Aid Alberta Whitecourt Regional Office (*Lawyer Certificate Program & Duty Counsel*)
Native Counselling Services of Alberta (*Criminal Courtworker & Family Courtworker*)
Women & Infant Nutrition Program
Yellowhead Emergency Shelter Society for Women

GRANDE PRAIRIE

Alberta Court Services
Court of Queen's Bench (Civil, Criminal, Family, Incl. Child Welfare)
Provincial Court (Civil, Criminal, Family, Traffic)
Family Justice Services (Family Court Counsellor incl. Family Mediation)

Peace Country Mental Health Office (*Alberta Mental Health Board*)
Alberta Seniors and Community Supports (*Seniors Outreach*)
Grande Prairie & District RCMP Victims' Assistance
Canadian Mental Health Association
North West Region
Willow Place (Canadian Mental Health Association)

Caring Shelter for Elders
Catholic Family Services
Gay and Lesbian Association of the Peace (GALAP)
Grande Prairie Council for Lifelong Learning (*Public Legal Education Sessions*)
Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
Grande Prairie Friendship Centre Drop-In
S.O.S.

Grande Prairie Seniors Outreach
Grande Spirit - Family and Special Purpose Housing
HIV North Society
Immigrant Settlement Services
John Howard Society Alberta - Grande Prairie
Couples Enrichment
Nexus Program for Women
Parenting After Separation Courses
Renaissance

Alberta Law Society Library

Legal Aid Alberta Grande Prairie Regional Office (*Lawyer Certificate Program & Duty Counsel*)

Native Counselling Services of Alberta

Criminal Courtworker Program

Family & Youth Courtworker Program

Second Stage Shelter

Healing Tears Women's Circle

Odyssey House (*Women's Shelter*)

Providing Assistance Counselling and Education (PACE Sexual Assault Centre & Grande Prairie Crisis Line)

Wapiti Community Dorm

HIGH PRAIRIE

Alberta Court Services

Provincial Court (Civil, Criminal, Family, Traffic)

Alberta Justice Legal Reference Library

High Prairie Victim Assistance Society

East Prairie Métis Settlement Community Services

East Prairie Métis Settlement Justice Coordinator Program

High Prairie & District Children's Resource Council (*Brighter Futures Program*)

Alberta Justice High Prairie Legal Reference Library

Peavine Métis Settlement (*Justice & Youth Coordinator Program*)

PEACE RIVER

Alberta Court Services

Provincial Court (Civil, Criminal, Family, Traffic)

Court of Queen's Bench (Civil, Criminal, Family)

Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)

Alberta Solicitor General joint with RCMP (*Peace Regional Victim Services*)

Law Society Library

Legal Aid Peace River Regional Office (*Lawyer Certificate Program & Duty Counsel*)

Métis Indian Town Alcohol Association (MITAA)

Métis Nation of Alberta Region VI

Native Counselling Services of AB (*Criminal Courtworker Program & Family & Youth Courtworker Program*)

Peace River Regional Women's Shelter Society

Sagitawa Friendship Centre Society

Sagitawa Friendship Centre Society Ground Level Youth Drop-In Centre

WJS Alberta/Teens At Risk Program

HIGH LEVEL

Alberta Court Services

Provincial Court (Civil, Criminal, Family, Traffic)

AB Justice Legal Reference Library

Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)
Alberta Mental Health Northern Lights Mental Health Services
Family and Community Support Services Community Development
Family and Community Support Services NW Alberta Child & Family
Services Authority
High Level Native Friendship Centre Society
SAFE Home & High Level Crisis Line

RED DEER REGION 32 ICFs

RED DEER

Alberta Court Services

Provincial Court (Civil)

Provincial Court (Youth, Criminal, Family)

Court of Queens Bench (Civil, Criminal Family)

Family Justice Services – Regional

Family Justice Services - Rural

Manager of Provincial Court and Court of Queen's Bench

Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)

Aboriginal Community Council Society

Alberta Victims Services

Red Deer City RCMP

Red Deer Rural Victims Assistance Society

Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic

Central Alberta Women's Emergency Centre

Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society

Community Information Referral Society (CIRS)

Neighborhood Law Clinic

Red Deer Landlord and Tenant Information Service

Red Deer Native Friendship Society

Crisis Centre

John Howard Society

Legal Aid Central Alberta Law Office

Legal Aid Duty Counsel

Legal Aid Red Deer Regional Office

Native Counselling Services

Region 4 Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority

WETASKIWIN

Alberta Court Services (All Services)

Catholic Social Service

Legal Aid Wetaskiwin Regional Office

DRAYTON VALLEY

Cardium Region Victim Services Unit

PONOKA

Ponoka Neighbourhood Place

RIMBEY

Rimbey Neighbourhood Place Society

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Rocky Mountain House RCMP (*Rocky & District Victims Services Unit Society*)

Clearwater Neighbourhood Place

West Country Family Services Association

LISTED FOR MAPPING – ICF NOT COMPLETED

EDMONTON

Alberta Family Mediation Society

Women's Shelters

Women's Dream Centre

Lurana Women's Shelter Help Line

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION

ALBERTA

Alberta Seniors Information Services Centre

HINTON

Alberta Justice Legal Reference Library

Hinton Friendship Centre Association Hinton Centre

Foothills Ojibway Society

North Central Child & Family Services Authority -Hinton

West Yellowhead Assessment & Referral Service

Wraparound Program

GRANDE PRAIRIE

Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) Grande Prairie Regional Office

HIGH PRAIRIE

Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) High Prairie

Alberta Mental Health Board

Canadian Mental Health Association

Food Bank Society

Gift Lake Métis Settlement Justice Program

High Prairie Native Friendship Centre

Legal Aid Alberta

Native Counselling Services (Criminal Courtworker Program & Family & Youth Courtworker Program)

NW Alberta Child & Family Services Authority
Prairie River Community Education Council
Region 10 Métis Child & Family Services
Salvation Army Family & Community Services

PEACE RIVER

Lubicon Lake Band
Métis Nation of Alberta Local Council #78
NW AB Child & Family Services Authority Peace River
FCSS Pehti'kwe Program
Salvation Army Family and Community Services

HIGH LEVEL

RCMP Victim's Support Unit with Alberta Solicitor General
Beaver First Nation
Legal Aid Alberta
Métis Employment Services
Native Counselling Services of Alberta (Criminal Courtworker Program & Family
& Youth Courtworker Program)
North Peace Tribal Council
North Peace Tribal Council Child Protection
Tallcree Tribal Government

RED DEER REGION

RED DEER

Canadian Mental Health Association
Catholic Social Services
Central Alberta Diversity Association
Central Alberta Refugee Effort (CARE)
Healthy Families
Public Legal Education Network of Alberta (PLENA)

WETASKIWIN

Wetaskiwin Native Counselling Services
Wetaskiwin District Office of Region 4 – Central Alberta Child and Family
Services Authority

PONOKA

Ponoka Victims Services Association

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Rocky Aboriginal Neighbourhood Place
Rocky Clearwater Family Wellness Program
Rocky Native Friendship Centre
Mountain Rose Women's Shelter Association

CONSIDERED FOR MAPPING BUT NOT PRIORITIZED

EDMONTON

Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association
Alberta Government Ombudsman
Youth Restorative Act Project
Alberta Government- Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta
Alberta Network of Immigrant Women
Changing Together: Centre for Immigrant Women
Edmonton Native Friendship Centre
Family Centre, The
HIV Edmonton
Hope Mission
Métis Nation of Alberta
Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations
Orphaned Grandparents Society

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION

HINTON

Alberta Solicitor General - Youth Justice Committee
Burden Bearers
Hinton Crisis Line – at women’s shelter
Hinton Drug Action Committee (H.D.A.C.)
Hinton Friendship Centre Association Community Wellness
Hinton Interagency Council
Hinton Municipal Library
Hinton Youth Centre
Ministerial Association of Christian Churches

GRANDE PRAIRIE

Alberta Solicitor General Grande Prairie Community Corrections Office
Alberta Solicitor General Correctional Centres
Alberta Solicitor General Grand Prairie Young Offender Centre
Burden Bearers
Fetal Alcohol Support Society - Grande Prairie
Grande Prairie Crisis Line (operated by PACE) – included in PACE information
Grande Prairie Public Library
Northern Lakes College: Grande Prairie
Regional Health Authority #08 Peace Country Health – Peace Country Student
Health Initiative Partnership
Red Cross

HIGH PRAIRIE

Alberta Solicitor General High Prairie Community Corrections Office
Alberta Solicitor General Probation Office
Bannabelt Recreation Association

Chamber of Commerce
High Prairie Municipal Library
Métis Indian Town Alcohol Association
Northern Lakes College: High Prairie

PEACE RIVER

Alberta Solicitor General Peace River Community Corrections Office
Alberta Solicitor General Peace River Correctional Centre
Burden Bearers
North Country Power of Work (notes)
North Peace Housing Foundation (notes)
Northern Lakes College: Peace River
Peace River Bar Association
WJS Alberta Family Support Service
Youth Connections

HIGH LEVEL

Alberta Solicitor General High Level Community Corrections Office
Alberta Solicitor General Victims Support Unit
Alberta Solicitor General Youth Justice Committee
High Level Municipal Library
North Country Power of Work (see notes)
Northern Lakes College: High Level
Northwestern Health Services Region
WJS Alberta Teens At Risk Program

RED DEER REGION

RED DEER

Alberta Association of Community Living
Alberta Housing Coalition
Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
Alberta Association of Community Living
City of Red Deer
Red Deer Services Centre Canada

WETASKIWIN

City of Wetaskiwin
Wetaskiwin and District Victims Services Society

HOBBEMA

Erminskin Tribe
Louis Bull First Nation
Montana First Nation
Samson Cree Nation

PONOKA

Town of Ponoka
49 Street Youth Centre

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Healthy Families – Rocky Mountain House
O’Chiese Band
Town of Rocky Mountain House

STETTLER

Guardianship Community Involvement Program
Stettler Information & Referral Centre
Stettler Victims Services
Town of Stettler

Services determined as not relevant to SRLs

EDMONTON

Alberta Arbitration and Mediation Society
Alberta Association for Community Living
Alberta Association of School Resource Officers
Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres
Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission
Alberta Law Reform Institute
Alberta Seventh Step Society
Alberta SPCA
Aboriginal Canada Portal
Aspen Foundation for Labour Education
Boyle McCauley Health Centre
Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton
Centre for Constitutional Studies
Citizen Action Centre
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
COLE’S Kids
Community Support Systems- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
Corrections Service Canada
Edmonton’s Food Bank
Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation
Edmonton Inner City Housing Society
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Environmental Law Centre
Get Web Wise!
Grant McEwan College
Heads Up Fraud Prevention Association
Health Law Institute

Indo-Canadian Women's Association
iHuman Youth Society & Centre
Industry Canada
Inner Cities Agencies Foundation
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women
John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights
Kids Kottage
Learning Centre, The
Meals on Wheels
Métis Settlements General Council
NAIT
Portage College
PovNet
RCMP K Division (Alberta)
Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired
Service Alberta
Society for Safe and Caring Schools
Uncles at Large
Visions-Elder Abuse
Youth Emergency Shelter Society
Youth Options
Youth Workers Awareness
Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family
Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse

GRAND PRAIRIE REGION

ALBERTA

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters – each town's shelter mapped
Alberta Mental Health Board Forensic Psychiatry Program (Edmonton)
Alberta Mental Health Board Patient Advocate (Edmonton)
Alberta Mental Health Board Alberta Mental Health Self Help Network
Alberta Child and Youth Advocate (Edmonton)

HINTON

Economic Development Committee, Town of Hinton
Fish and Game Association, Hinton
Foster Parent Association, Hinton & District
Hinton Friendship Centre Emergency Number
Hinton United Way
Student Support Services/Student Health Initiative Program
Town of Hinton

GRANDE PRAIRIE

Alberta Solicitor General Youth Justice Committee
Grande Prairie & District Multicultural Association DiverseCity Project
Métis Employment Services (Métis Nation of AB Employment Assistance)

Métis Local
Society for Support to Pregnant and Parenting Teens (notes)
Youth Emergency Shelter: Sunrise House

HIGH PRAIRIE

Alberta Solicitor General Youth Justice Committee
Association for Community Living and Lifestyle Choices - Marigold Enterprises
Catholic Women's League
Golden Age Centre
High Prairie Crisis Line - 1-800 number to Edmonton or GP PACE line
High Prairie & District Community Youth Council
Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
WJS Support (family support programs/services)

PEACE RIVER

Alberta Aboriginal Women's Society
Peace River Crisis Line
Critical Incident Response and Suicide Prevention
NAIT Northern Campus Peace River - NAIT Student Counselling

HIGH LEVEL

Alberta Solicitor General Probation Office
Action North Recovery Centre
Women's Support Centre (Christian Counselling Centre)
Youth Connections

RED DEER REGION

RED DEER

WETASKIWIN

HOBBEMA

Hobbema Outreach Site – Service Centre Canada

PONOKA

Ponoka Family and Community Support Services

RIMBEY

Rimby Family and Community Support Services

STETTLER

Stettler Family and Community Support Services