

The *Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project* (ALSMP) is a province wide project aimed providing an understanding of the public’s legal needs and the current state of legal service provision. <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/research/mapping-en.php>

Lethbridge Judicial District – SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

The goals of the ALSMP are to:

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

The Lethbridge Judicial District

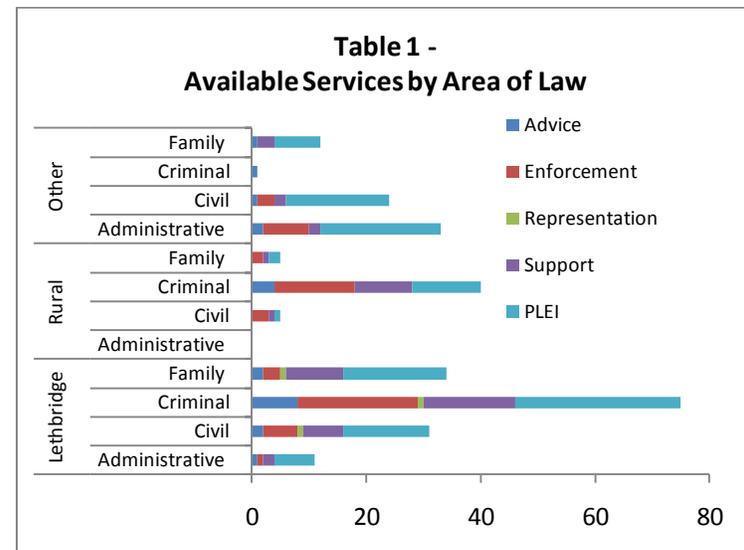
- The population growth has been modest but consistent, averaging 2% a year for the past 10 years.
- The population of Lethbridge is 85,492 and the population of the District is approximately 155,000.
- Educational attainment is lower than provincial averages but the gap between Aboriginals and total population is much more narrow.
- The three industries that employ the most people are retail, education services and business services.
- The unemployment rate of residents of this District is 2.4%.

Existing Legal Services

Of the 210 services that were mapped:

- 67 were sole purpose legal services.
- 22 offered legal as well as social or health components.
- 121 were related social and health services.

The 67 legal services were classified by the types of service available (advice, enforcement, representation, support and PLEI) and area of law (administrative, civil criminal and family). Although there are not more services per capita than Fort McMurray, they have multiple physical locations and are much more evenly dispersed throughout this District.



Gaps and Priorities in Meeting Legal Needs

The gaps in legal service provision in the Lethbridge Judicial District can be grouped into seven categories, all of which are related to limited resources (Figure 1). There does not appear to be a lack of services or initiatives in this District. Almost all gaps are tied to lack of capacity. If existing services had increased funding to increase capacity, virtually all of the existing gaps and barriers would be overcome.

**Figure 1 –
Gaps in Legal Services**



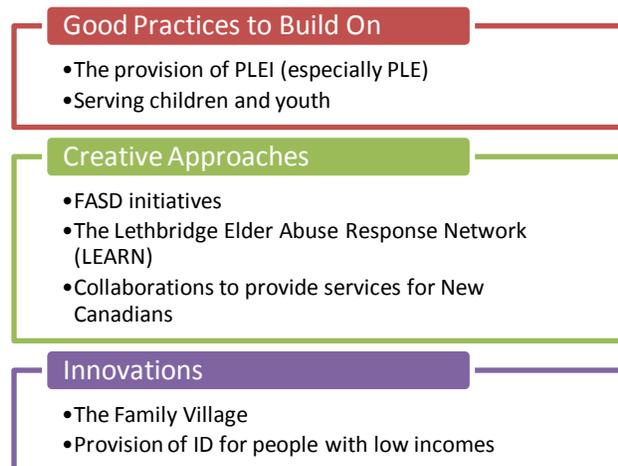
Challenges to Filling Legal Gaps

The most significant challenges that legal service providers face in filling these gaps are:

- lack of funding,
- lack of staff, and
- fragmentation of legal and related services.

All of these challenges combined severely reduce the capacity of services to serve clients' needs.

Improving Legal Service Delivery



Recommendations

Based on research findings we make 13 recommendations aimed at:

- supporting good practices,
- removing barriers, and
- filling gaps in legal services.

These are presented in Section 8 of the Report.

Where to Begin: Suggestions for Funders

Suggestions for legal services funders to focus on in order to have the greatest impact in removing barriers and filling gaps are:

Enable Efforts to Coordinate Legal and Related Services

- Funders could begin by prioritizing proposals (some of which have already been drafted) for initiatives to better coordinate service delivery. There is excellent work being done in this District, which could be improved through consistent coordination.
- Focus on increasing awareness of the LLG and adding to its capacity by funding *pro bono* coordination and the hiring and training of staff to offer specialized legal services that are lacking in this District.

LInC

- A specific project that should be a priority is the creation of a LInC in Lethbridge. One of the strengths in this Judicial District is the PLEI being produced and made available. The LInC will help to make accurate referrals, provide some legal assistance (eg. forms) and strengthen networking.

Core services, ideas and motivation are in place. With financial support, even more can be achieved.