



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://cfci-fcjc.org/research/mapping-en.php>

Wetaskiwin 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.
- 72 were sole purpose legal services,
- 44 offered legal as well as social or health components, and
- 47 were related social and health services.

All legal services were classified by the types of service available (advice, enforcement, representation, support and PLEI) and area of law (criminal, administrative, family and civil). Aside from PLEI providers, there are particularly low numbers of administrative and family law services in this District.

The Wetaskiwin Judicial District

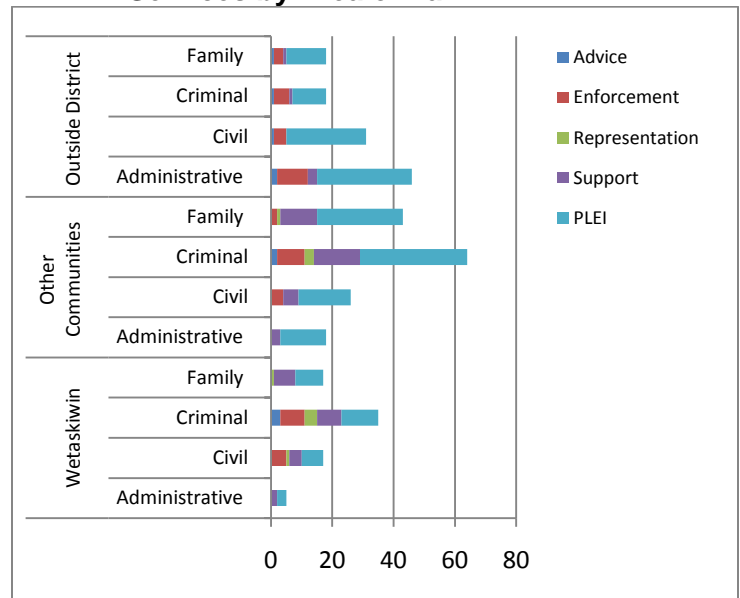
- The total population of this District is approximately 144,167.
- The three largest communities in the Wetaskiwin Judicial District are Leduc, Camrose and Wetaskiwin.
- The city of Wetaskiwin currently has a population of 11,673.
- Aboriginal peoples account for 12% of Wetaskiwin’s population.
- Filipino, South Asian and Black people comprise the largest proportions of the visible minority population in this District.
- High school dropout rates are 50% higher than provincial averages.
- Proportions of people with completed high school or trades are about the same but post secondary completion rates are lower.
- The unemployment rate in Wetaskiwin was 3.1% in 2006 (relative to Alberta’s rate of 4.3%).

Existing Legal Services

Of the 68 organizations and 163 services that were mapped. Of these services;

- Lack of affordable legal services.

Figure 1 – Services by Area of Law



Understanding Legal Needs in the Wetaskiwin Judicial District

The major barriers that were identified in this District include:

- Lack of service provider knowledge about other services.
- Lack of public knowledge about how to address legal needs.
- Lack of coordination of PLEI.
- Transportation.
- Poverty.
- The stigma associated with having legal problems.

Specific Populations & Specialized Needs

Service providers identified legal needs that members of their communities frequently experience. These include;

- adult guardianship,
- administrative law – benefits,
- child protection,
- criminal charges (eg. drug possession/trafficking, driving under the influence and family violence),
- employment related legal issues,
- environments and property (connected to oil industry issues),
- family law – all areas,
- forms – inability to complete any kind of forms (benefits, taxes or other legal),
- immigration,
- power of attorney,
- residential tenancy,
- small business matters, and
- wills and estates.

Gaps and Priorities in Meeting Legal Needs

The main gaps that emerged in this District were;

- inadequate locally accessible legal services,
- lack of services for new Canadians,
- lack of services for people with addictions-related legal problems, and

- lack of awareness and access to PLEI.

Improving Legal Service Delivery

Service providers highlighted some things they think are going well in this District. The Report details:

Good Practices to Build On

- The Wetaskiwin Family Violence Collaboration.
- Initiatives to help local seniors with legal needs.

District Strengths

- Available public legal education and information (PLEI).
- Dedicated and proactive service providers (eg. public and law librarians).

Recommendations

Based on research findings we made 5 recommendations aimed at:

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

Our recommendations are presented in Section 7 of the Report and include:

- Facilitate sharing of existing PLEI among legal as well as social and health service providers.
- Encourage the public to engage in legal education.
- Help service providers keep informed about other existing legal services and their mandates.
- Increase access to free legal supports and general information.
- Increase access LAA.

Suggestions are included in the Report for how to achieve these recommendations.