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## The Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project: Report for the St. Paul Judicial District

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# THE ALBERTA LEGAL SERVICES MAPPING PROJECT

Report for the

**ST. PAUL JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**March 2010**



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**Disclaimer**

This report and its appendices have been prepared by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice and the Alberta Legal Services Mapping Team and represent the independent and objective recording and summarization of input received from stakeholders, service providers and members of the public. Any opinions, interpretations, conclusions or recommendations contained within this document are those of the writers, and may or may not coincide with those of the Alberta Law Foundation or other members of the Research Directors Committee.

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# THE ALBERTA LEGAL SERVICES MAPPING PROJECT: Report for the ST. PAUL JUDICIAL DISTRICT

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The St. Paul Judicial District is the fifth of eleven Alberta Judicial Districts to be mapped as part of the *Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project* (ALSMP). The ALSMP is a large-scale, multi-year endeavour, designed to gain an understanding of the legal needs of Albertans and of the legal services available in Alberta.<sup>1</sup>

The goals of this project are to:

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

The report for the Calgary Judicial District, the pilot region for the ALSMP research, includes a detailed introduction to the project and details of the research methodology and can be accessed from the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (the Forum) website at <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2009/mapping-calgary-en.pdf>. A combined and condensed version of the original Legal Services I and II and the Brief Legal Questionnaires was used in the St. Paul Judicial District (Appendix A). This instrument was created after we reviewed our experiences in the pilot District and were able to condense the questionnaire to those questions that best elicit the information we require.

Team members travelled to the St. Paul Judicial District between February 8 and 11, 2010. We held a Community Working Group meeting in St. Paul. We also conducted interviews with legal and related social and health service providers in Bonnyville, Cold Lake and St. Paul. We provided flyers to service providers to hand out to members of the public, however, have not been contacted for a public interview from this Judicial District.

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

## 1.1 Outline of the Report

In this project we strive to address the following major research questions:

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

In this Report we will first describe the relevant characteristics of this Judicial District, and then discuss the existing legal and related services in St. Paul. We will then discuss the predominant legal needs followed by identified gaps in legal and related services, noting the challenges and the creative approaches some service providers employ to meet the extensive legal and social needs in this District. Following this, we will discuss non-legal factors that are impacting legal services provision. We will conclude by making recommendations designed to support good practices, remove barriers and fill identified gaps in needed services. These recommendations have been suggested in collaboration with Community Working Group members. Suggestions for how they might best be achieved are also provided.

## 1.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

The Project is an ambitious undertaking that involves the collection of valuable quantitative and qualitative data. The result is a combination of facts and figures with qualitative themes to provide context and explanations for the trends that emerge. The strengths of this Project are:

- it produces a large amount of useful data regarding what legal and related services exist,
- it engages people who live and work in the District and gains from their insights and experiences,
- it relies on mixed methodology and can thus provide a more complete picture of the topics that are addressed, and
- it takes a holistic approach to examining legal and related needs.

That said, there are always limitations when conducting research:

- In the St. Paul Judicial District, we were not able to include the perspectives of members of the public due to lack of time to actively recruit participants.
- It was not possible to interview representatives from all of the legal and related services due to time and budgetary constraints, although we did succeed in



including most of the key legal and related service providers.

- Additionally, St. Paul is a unique District in which there is no distinct urban centre, but there are many towns of a significant size and numerous small communities. Despite the restricted time available, we managed to visit three of the larger communities, but were unable to visit others such as Lloydminster, Lac La Biche, Wainwright or Smoky Lake.

### **1.3 Database**

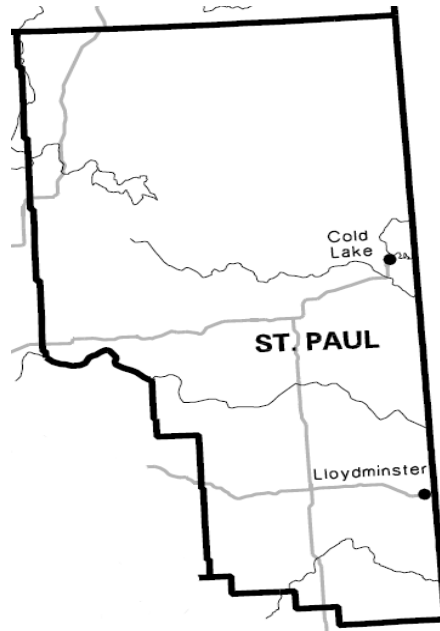
One of the deliverables of this Project is the creation of a database that provides information about all of the mapped legal and related services in Alberta. The database contains basic information about services such as mandates, as well as details about location, eligibility criteria, required documentation and accessibility. The administrative interface for this database can be viewed online by project partners by going to [www.albertalegalservices.ca/admin/](http://www.albertalegalservices.ca/admin/) then entering guest as the user name and mapping data as the password.

Beyond the scope of this project, but very closely related, is the goal to develop a website that will be user-friendly and available to members of the public as well as service providers. There is a significant amount of interest in this next step, and the Team is currently seeking suggestions about where the data should ultimately be housed and how the public interface should be developed.

## **2.0 ABOUT THE ST. PAUL JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

St. Paul, unlike any of the other 10 Judicial Districts, cannot be defined as having one main urban centre, or one community that is home to the majority of the people who are living in that District. This District contains thirteen communities that have populations of 1,000 or more; seven of these have populations of over 2,500. Among communities that have over 1,000 residents are two reserves and one Métis Settlement. Cold Lake and Lloydminster (Alberta side) are the largest communities in this District, and the only communities that have over 10,000 residents.

**Figure 1 – Map of the St. Paul Judicial District<sup>2</sup>**



Because this District does not have a clear urban centre, we will provide basic demographic information about the five largest communities. We will go on to provide information about employment and education for the three communities that we conducted interviews in:

- St. Paul,
- Bonnyville and
- Cold Lake.

## **2.1 Population**

The St. Paul Judicial District spans from Wainwright in the south, east to the Saskatchewan border, north to Conklin and west to Smoky Lake. This District includes the municipalities of Bonnyville and Wainwright, and the counties of Lac La Biche, Smoky Lake and St. Paul.

We were unable to find total population statistics representative of the area covered by this Judicial District. Where municipal population statistics were available, these are reported. There are multiple, sometimes partial municipalities and counties that fall into this District. Additionally, accurate population statistics are currently unavailable for the nine reserves and Métis settlements in this District. We note however, that Statistics Canada acknowledges the difficulty of gaining accurate Census data for Aboriginal populations. The best estimate we can provide based on the information that we could

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, we were unable to identify a more detailed electronic map of this region.

find is that the population of this District is most likely above 65,000 and perhaps as high as 75,000.

### ***St. Paul***

The town of St. Paul is a relatively small community compared with the other communities that will be highlighted in this Report. St. Paul is considered the judicial centre of the District, as the majority of key legal services are based in this town.

The County of St. Paul covers 3,298 square kilometers and includes other communities such as Elk Point, Lindberg and St. Vincent. The total population for this County is 5,925 (County of St. Paul #19, 2010), of which 5,106 live in the town of St. Paul (Statistics Canada, 2007). This County experienced a population decrease of 3.5% between 2001 and 2006.

### ***Bonnyville***

The population of the Bonnyville Municipality is 9,047 (Municipal Affairs, 2009) with 5,832 residents living in the town (Statistics Canada, 2007). The average annual growth rate in this community is 0.4%.

### ***Cold Lake***

The population of the city of Cold Lake was 11,991 as of 2006 with an average annual growth rate of 0.8% (Statistics Canada, 2007).

### ***Lloydminster***

Lloydminster is the largest community in the St. Paul Judicial District. This is a unique community which straddles the Alberta and Saskatchewan border. There are approximately 15,910 residents in the portion of the city that is in Alberta (and a further 11,113 in the Saskatchewan portion). The Alberta side of this city experienced a 21% population increase between 2001 and 2006, averaging a 4.2% annual growth rate.

### ***Wainwright***

The population of Wainwright is 3,558 and the Wainwright Municipal District is 4,113 (Municipal Affairs, 2009). In contrast to most areas of Alberta, Wainwright actually experienced a 16% decrease in its population between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

## **2.1.1 Aboriginal Peoples**

A large portion of both urban and rural populations in the St. Paul Judicial District are Aboriginal. Statistics Canada (2007) indicates that Aboriginal peoples comprise 9 to 10 percent of the urban populations in the St. Paul, Cold Lake and Bonnyville counties. However, the numbers provided by the 2006 Census are highly contested by residents, who view them as being underreported.

There are five Reserves and four Métis Settlements in this District. The Reserves include:

- Beaver Lake
- Cold Lake First Nations
- Frog Lake
- Kehewin Cree Nation
- Saddle Lake

Saddle Lake is the largest Reserve in the District and was the one most spoken about in interviews, mostly due to its close proximity to St. Paul and the recent increase in First Nations people moving into St. Paul from this Reserve.

The Métis Settlements include:

- Two West Settlements
  - Buffalo Lake
  - Kikino
- Two East Settlements
  - Elizabeth
  - Fishing Lake

Aboriginal representatives reported that Statistics Canada had not accepted the numbers that reserves and Métis settlements had submitted so published numbers in the 2006 Census are seriously underreported. In light of this controversy, we elected not to include the published population data in this Report.

### **2.1.2 New Canadians**

The number of New Canadians moving into the St. Paul District is lower than reported by Statistics Canada (2006 census) for other Judicial Districts, including Fort McMurray, Calgary, Edmonton and Medicine Hat. However, study participants (including police services) perceived a recent increase in immigration.

#### ***St. Paul***

According to 2006 Census data, approximately 3% of St. Paul residents are immigrants showing a 0% increase in immigrants for this County between 2001 and 2006. At that time, only 15 people in St. Paul were identified as being visible minorities and they were all South Asian.

#### ***Bonnyville***

Approximately 5% of Bonnyville residents are immigrants but only an estimated 15 people are non-permanent residents. The total visible minority population (excluding Aboriginal peoples) is 4%. The three groups with the highest representation are:

- Arabic,
- Filipino, and
- South Asian.

There are also small numbers of people in this community who self-identify as being Black, Latin and Chinese (approximately 10 each).

### ***Cold Lake***

Approximately 5% of Cold Lake's residents are immigrants and .05% are non-permanent residents. Cold Lake has a visible minority population of approximately 3%. The three groups with the highest representation in this community are:

- Chinese,
- Black, and
- Arabic.

There are also small numbers of people living in this community who self-identify as South Asian, Filipino, Latin, Southeast Asian and Japanese.

### ***Lloydminster***

Approximately 4% of Lloydminster's population are immigrants and a further 1% are non-permanent residents. Visible minorities account for 3% of the population. The three groups with the highest representation in this community are:

- Chinese,
- South Asian, and
- Black.

There are also residents who self-identify as Filipino, Latin, Southeast Asian, Arabic, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

### ***Wainwright***

Wainwright's immigrant population accounts for 3% of residents and there are no non-permanent residents living in this community. Visible minorities comprise only 1% of the population. Everyone who self-identifies as being a visible minority is either Black or Filipino.

## **2.2 Education**

Educational attainment for the general population in the town of St. Paul is considerably lower than provincial averages. More than twice as many people leave school without completing Grade 12 and only half as many people complete college or university (Table 1).

**Table 1 -  
Educational Attainment for Select Communities in the St. Paul Judicial District**

| Education             | Alberta |              | St. Paul |              | Bonnyville |              | Cold Lake |              |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------|----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
|                       | Total % | Aboriginal % | Total %  | Aboriginal % | Total %    | Aboriginal % | Total %   | Aboriginal % |
| Less Than High School | 14      | 26           | 31       | 50           | 34         | 50           | 19        | 25           |
| High School           | 24      | 25           | 29       | 9            | 25         | 18           | 28        | 23           |
| Trade                 | 12      | 18           | 16       | 11           | 15         | 13           | 19        | 13           |
| University/ College   | 48      | 27           | 24       | 30           | 27         | 20           | 34        | 37           |

Sources: Alberta First (2008); Statistics Canada (2007)

Patterns are similar in Bonnyville while residents of Cold Lake are more likely to have completed high school and to have attended college or university. What is particularly interesting is the higher educational attainment for Aboriginal peoples in Cold Lake compared to the other two communities.

## **2.3 Employment & Industry**

### ***St. Paul***

The labour force participation rate in St. Paul is 77% and the unemployment rate is 2.7%. The top three industries by numbers of people they employ are:

- Retail and food services.
- Health care and social services.
- Agriculture and other resource-based industries.

### ***Bonnyville***

The labour force participation rate in Bonnyville is 72% and the unemployment rate is 4.4%. The top three industries by numbers of people they employ in Bonnyville are:

- Agriculture and other resources-based industries.
- Retail and food services.
- Business services.

### ***Cold Lake***

The labour force participation rate in Cold Lake is 80% and the unemployment rate is 3.5% (Statistics Canada, 2007). The three industries that employ the largest numbers of people are:

- Agriculture and other resource-based industries.
- Retail and food services.
- Construction.

The fact that construction is the third largest industry in terms of how many people it is currently employing further suggests that Cold Lake is experiencing more financial prosperity than other communities in this District.

## 2.4 Cost of Living

### ***St. Paul***

The median gross household income for the town of St. Paul was \$51,035 in 2005 (Statistics Canada, 2006). The median monthly rental payment was \$606 (when considering all apartment sizes) and the median mortgage payment was \$757. Participants reported that there is currently a lack of rental units in general and no low income housing available in this community.

### ***Bonnyville***

The median household income in Bonnyville was \$60,260.00 before taxes in 2005. The median monthly rent payment was \$701.00 and the median mortgage payment was \$901.00.

### ***Cold Lake***

The median household income in Cold Lake was \$75,900.00 before taxes in 2005. The median monthly rent rate was \$811.00 and the median mortgage payment was \$1,153.00. In 2006, The *Cold Lake Affordable Housing Society* (CLAS) reported that 60% of residents do not meet the affordability criteria to purchase a home (average cost is \$303,442.00). The average rental rate of 2-3 bedroom apartments were listed at \$1100-1200 (CLAS, 2006). CLAS began a project in 2006 which aimed to build a new apartment complex that will offer affordable housing units to people with low income. This building was to be completed by July 2009, but does not appear to be open yet.

## 3.0 EXISTING LEGAL AND RELATED SERVICES IN ST. PAUL

The Team began research in the St. Paul Judicial District by mapping all legal services that could be found on the Internet and in any directories. Legal services were categorized into one or more of the following categories based on the definitions provided below:

- ***Advice*** – individualized answers about how the law will apply to a person’s particular case, what outcome is likely, 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.
- ***Enforcement*** – the application or regulation of a law, carrying out of an executive or judicial order or ensuring observance of or obedience to laws.
- ***Representation*** – a lawyer, law student or paralegal recognized by the Court, preparing legal documents (pleadings, Affidavit, etc.) or appearing on behalf of a

client. Legal representation includes duty counsel and unbundled legal services such as drafting of pleadings.

- **Support** – services that offer court support programs or any other support/help finding or talking to legal and related services on behalf of clients needing legal assistance.
- **Public Legal Information and Education (PLEI)** – information about the law in general, about the options that are available and about basic court processes. The information can be in the form of written materials (pamphlets, brochures, websites), educational programs, or telephone/in-person services.

Social or health services that provide any kind of formal or informal legal support (eg. advocacy or referrals) or see large numbers of clients with existing or potential legal needs were also mapped.

Six representatives from legal and related services participated in a Community Working Group meeting that was held in the town of St. Paul. These participants were clearly very eager to talk and express their views. The pattern of their feedback and conversations during the meeting suggest that opportunities for them to share their experiences and feedback are rare.

A selection of legal and related social and health services were chosen for in-depth interviews<sup>3</sup>, and the Team conducted interviews with representatives from nine legal and related services. Of these: five were sole-purpose<sup>4</sup> legal services (including one lawyer who is in private practice); one was a cross-over legal and social/health service; and three were sole-purpose social services.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.1 Identification of Legal and Related Services

The Team mapped 59 organizations that offer a total of 173 legal and related services in the St. Paul Judicial District. Based on populations, this District is actually slightly better serviced than Medicine Hat or Fort McMurray Judicial Districts. Of the services mapped:

- 63 are sole-purpose legal services,
- 43 are cross-over legal and social/health services and
- 67 are sole-purpose social/health services.

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<sup>3</sup> The Team has developed a prioritization process, which has been described in detail in the methodology discussion of the Calgary Judicial District Report at page 13, footnote 16. <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2009/mapping-calgary-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> “Sole-purpose” is a term used for the purposes of this Project, to differentiate legal services that do not have any social or health service components and social or health services that do not have any legal service components.

<sup>5</sup> A commitment of the ALSMP is to confidentiality. As we are now only able to include a very small number of participants we are no longer listing service representatives that have been interviewed.



**Table 2 -  
Legal Services Available within the St. Paul District  
by Area of Law & Service Type<sup>6</sup>**

| <b>AVAILABLE LEGAL SERVICES<sup>7</sup></b> | <b>Town of St. Paul</b> | <b>Other Communities</b> | <b>Outside Judicial District</b> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
|   | <b>#</b>                | <b>#</b>                 | <b>#</b>                         |
| <b>Administrative Law</b>                   |                         |                          |                                  |
| <i>Advice</i>                               | -                       | -                        | 2                                |
| <i>Enforcement</i>                          | 2                       | -                        | 9                                |
| <i>Representation</i>                       | -                       | -                        | -                                |
| <i>Support</i>                              | 2                       | 2                        | 1                                |
| <i>PLEI</i>                                 | 5                       | 14                       | 27                               |
| <b>Civil Law</b>                            |                         |                          |                                  |
| <i>Advice</i>                               | -                       | -                        | 1                                |
| <i>Enforcement</i>                          | 2                       | 2                        | 5                                |
| <i>Representation</i>                       | 1                       | -                        | -                                |
| <i>Support</i>                              | 2                       | 2                        | 1                                |
| <i>PLEI</i>                                 | 4                       | 16                       | 24                               |
| <b>Criminal Law</b>                         |                         |                          |                                  |
| <i>Advice</i>                               | 1                       | -                        | 3                                |
| <i>Enforcement</i>                          | 9                       | 8                        | 3                                |
| <i>Representation</i>                       | 1                       | -                        | -                                |
| <i>Support</i>                              | 8                       | 17                       | 3                                |
| <i>PLEI</i>                                 | 10                      | 33                       | 12                               |
| <b>Family Law</b>                           |                         |                          |                                  |
| <i>Advice</i>                               | -                       | -                        | 1                                |
| <i>Enforcement</i>                          | 5                       | 3                        | 6                                |
| <i>Representation</i>                       | 1                       | -                        | -                                |
| <i>Support</i>                              | 8                       | 16                       | -                                |
| <i>PLEI</i>                                 | 9                       | 27                       | 12                               |

As with all Districts that have been mapped thus far, the options for people with needs related to administrative law are quite limited. Additionally, the numbers of mapped services corroborate participants' feedback that there is a lack of legal services in the family law area. Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) is the only local service that provides any legal advice and representation for family matters. This is also the case for criminal matters. Although Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) staff can appear in court, they cannot offer legal representation or advice.

<sup>6</sup> Categorizing types of service is not straightforward. For example, the Native Counseling Court Worker Program is classified as "support", although court workers are able to appear on behalf of clients. A service was only counted as providing PLEI if substantive information was offered about laws, rights, responsibilities or procedures. Not all advice and representation services also met the PLEI requirements.

<sup>7</sup> Some services offered multiple types of services in more than one area of law. Therefore numbers are greater than the total number of *different service organizations* mapped and interviewed.

### 3.2 Geographic Location of Services

**Table 3 -  
Physical Locations of Legal and Related Services**

| Location  | Legal Services |                       | Social/Health Services |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|   | Sole Purpose   | Legal & Social/Health |                        |
| Beaver Lake                                     | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Bonnyville                                      | 9              | 4                     | 10                     |
| Buffalo Lake                                    | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Caslan  | 2              | 2                     | 3                      |
| Cold Lake                                       | 9              | 4                     | 14                     |
| Denwood   | -              | -                     | 1                      |
| Elizabeth                                       | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Elk Point                                       | 3              | 2                     | 1                      |
| Fishing Lake                                    | -              | -                     | 1                      |
| Frog Lake                                       | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Kehewin   | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Kikino  | 1              | -                     | 3                      |
| Kitscoty  | 1              | 1                     | -                      |
| Lac La Biche                                    | 11             | 6                     | 23                     |
| Lloydminster <sup>8</sup>                       | 7              | 7                     | 4                      |
| Myrnam  | -              | 1                     | -                      |
| Plamondon                                       | -              | 1                     | -                      |
| Saddle Lake                                     | -              | -                     | 1                      |
| Smoky Lake                                      | 1              | 2                     | 2                      |
| Sputinow  | 1              | -                     | -                      |
| St. Paul  | 17             | 7                     | 17                     |
| Two Hills                                       | 1              | 2                     | 1                      |
| Vermillion                                      | 8              | 1                     | 2                      |
| Wainwright                                      | 6              | 2                     | 6                      |
| Wandering River                                 | -              | 1                     | -                      |
| <b>TOTAL Service LOCATIONS in District</b>      | <b>21</b>      | <b>34</b>             | <b>65</b>              |
| <b>TOTAL Service Locations Outside District</b> | <b>42</b>      | <b>6</b>              | <b>5</b>               |
| <b>TOTAL PHYSICAL LOCATIONS</b>                 | <b>63</b>      | <b>40</b>             | <b>70</b>              |

<sup>8</sup> Services that are located on both the Saskatchewan and Alberta sides of Lloydminster are mapped in the database, however the figures reported here reflect only the Alberta services.

As is the norm for Aboriginal communities in Alberta, there are next to no legal or related services located on any of the reserves or Métis Settlements in this District (Table 3). One health service provider reported that nurses offer public health and home care services in these communities but it appears that most if not all (including the service provider who reported to the Team) live in larger centres and travel out to the Aboriginal communities to work. Additionally, RCMP officers provide services in these communities.

### 3.3 Capacity of Existing Services

*I work 8-4 but am on call 24/7 .... [I]t is my responsibility to carry the emergency phone. It is my duty to dispatch volunteer advocates but I often answer calls myself. I [apply for] grants and supervise two [staff]. I have ten volunteers and five board members .... We also offer mutual help to other units... [Social/Legal Service Provider]*

Participants spoke to the depth of social, health, and legal need across the vast area of the St. Paul Judicial District. Although most of the service providers seemed stretched, few complained directly about a lack of capacity, but did what they could with the resources they have. They were more inclined to note that staff at other services were over-extended than to complain about their own circumstances.

Analysis of interview data indicates that some services cannot meet current demand. For example, LAA report long line-ups for their services at circuit court locations. Court services reported delays in setting trial dates. Also, most locations can only issue Emergency Orders on days when a judge is available and this has to be a matter for concern. The specialized FASD service, which supports clients through legal processes, has a waiting list of between four to six months for diagnostic services.

Service providers expressed frustration with the barriers that are limiting their ability to be proactive and to reduce the “revolving door” interactions many clients have with the justice, social and health care systems. Our analysis of the data combined with the Team observations suggest that although service providers may be used to working with great need and limited resources, they would benefit if some of the existing barriers (Section 4.0) and gaps (Section 5.0) were addressed. There is a need for proactive service innovation to tackle the serious issues in this District but the descriptions of service providers’ numbers and range of duties strongly suggests that staff are overstretched just to meet the most critical of needs.

*The point I wanted to make about this community is they have an abundance of agencies .... All the main regional offices are here in this town. But nothing has changed from the time I worked here when my children were small to now .... Obviously the resources that are available here are not meeting the needs. They are not addressing the core issues .... something is not working. [Social service provider]*

### **3.4 Key Services in the St. Paul Judicial District**

We are unable to state definitively which services the public are most likely to use as entry points in the St. Paul District both because we were unable to interview any members of the public, and due to the low number of social service providers who were able to speak on the public's behalf. The following section provides descriptions of the services that typically serve as public entry points to the justice system. These include:

- Legal Aid Alberta,
- Lawyers,
- Native Counselling Services of Alberta,
- Police Services
- Court Services

#### **3.4.1 Legal Aid (LAA)**

The LAA office is centrally located and within easy walking distance from the Court house in St. Paul. It is a small office with a supervisor and two staff. This is the only LAA office in the Judicial District and the three staff members circuit to Athabasca, Bonnyville, Boyle, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, Lloydminster, Wainwright, Vegreville and Vermillion. Some days they need to cover two circuit Courts.

Most participants mentioned LAA as a common referral but very few offered extended commentary on the certificate service. There was some concern that LAA was not visible enough in this District; that people did not know that it was an option. There was also recognition that LAA staff are overtaxed and cannot meet the public need. For instance, they are not currently accepting criminal cases unless the person has a lengthy criminal record and/or is facing possible incarceration.

#### ***Duty Counsel***

The St Paul Legal Aid Region does not currently have any staff lawyers to provide Duty Counsel service. Private practice lawyers on the Legal Aid roster take turns to provide this family and criminal service in St. Paul and on Court circuit days in Athabasca, Boyle, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche, Lloydminster, St. Paul, Vegreville, Vermillion and Wainwright. There are twenty-three lawyers that perform the Duty Counsel role in this Judicial District.

A six-month duty counsel rotation is drafted by Legal Aid for the ten circuit towns, with several local lawyers taking turns to participate at each location. Understandably, some proposed dates are not possible for some lawyers, and adjustments must be made.

### **Law Line**

Interestingly, of the Districts that we have mapped thus far, people in St. Paul are the most aware of the Law Line and refer to it very positively. A pilot project was underway in the area to facilitate local access. At the time of writing, however, the Law Line is undergoing a major re-organization and we are unable to clarify further the details of this program.

*I'm really, really privileged right now ... We're involved with the Law Line ... we have direct access to a lawyer faster than other people would. Just for now - it's a kind of trial thing going on right now. So what we do is we call the office in Whitecourt, our direct line and then they hook up our clients with a lawyer, and then they can get into Legal Aid a lot quicker. Which is very beneficial ... [for] the ones that do want to go the legal routes ... if they have any questions, because I do what I can but I'm not a professional. Right and I've just kind of learned as I went along.*  
[Social/Legal Service Provider]

*We refer to the Law Line and people say they have good answers.* [Legal Service Provider]

*I refer a lot of people to Law Line even if they have an appointment with us, [for] what can they do in the meantime.* [Legal Service Provider]

### **3.4.2 Lawyers**

The total number of private practice lawyers in this District is 31, which as Table 4 shows, is not a high number to cover this extensive District. It is however, significantly greater than Fort McMurray where there are only 29 lawyers in private practice to serve over 103,000 people.

Service providers frequently mentioned that people could not afford a lawyer and a few said that it was sometimes difficult to find lawyers.

Service providers also reported that practicing lawyers in this District often have to rely on LAA certificates in order to earn a living.

*In provincial court the social issues are lack of money, not well off, they are not good at looking after their money and typically that's why they end up in provincial court because with Queen's Bench (QB) there are a lot more funds involved in trying to file applications or having to have a lawyer. So that's our biggest thing I think is lack of funds to hire lawyers.*  
 [Legal Service Provider]

**Table 4 -  
 Lawyers who are Practicing in the St. Paul District**

| Location        | Bar Members             |            |           |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                 | Registered <sup>9</sup> | Government | Private   |
| Beaver Lake     | -                       | -          | -         |
| Bonnyville      | 4                       | -          | 4         |
| Buffalo Lake    | -                       | -          | -         |
| Caslan          | -                       | -          | -         |
| Cold Lake       | 9                       | -          | 9         |
| Denwood         | -                       | -          | -         |
| Elizabeth       | -                       | -          | -         |
| Elk Point       | -                       | -          | -         |
| Fishing Lake    | -                       | -          | -         |
| Frog Lake       | -                       | -          | -         |
| Kehewin         | -                       | -          | -         |
| Kikino          | -                       | -          | -         |
| Kitscoty        | -                       | -          | -         |
| Lac La Biche    | 3                       | -          | 2         |
| Lloydminster    | 1                       | -          | 1         |
| Myrnam          | -                       | -          | -         |
| Plamondon       | -                       | -          | -         |
| Saddle Lake     | -                       | -          | -         |
| Smoky Lake      | -                       | -          | -         |
| Sputinow        | -                       | -          | -         |
| St. Paul        | 14                      | 6          | 8         |
| Two Hills       | -                       | -          | -         |
| Vermillion      | 5                       | -          | 5         |
| Wainwright      | 2                       | -          | 2         |
| Wandering River | -                       | -          | -         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>38</b>               | <b>6</b>   | <b>31</b> |

<sup>9</sup> In some cases, the total number of registered Bar members may be higher than the sum of those in government and private practice. This is because those practicing in corporate settings have not been included in this Table.

Proportionately, the ratio of lawyers to the population is 1 lawyer to 1,613 people, (based on a population of approximately 50,000). This is slightly higher than in Medicine Hat (ratio 1 lawyer to 1,473 people) where participants perceived the numbers as being at least fairly adequate.<sup>10</sup> In St. Paul however, there is an expressed need for more lawyers. This difference is likely due to multiple factors present in the St. Paul District:

- Higher crime rates.
- Higher poverty rates.
- Population disbursement. In Medicine Hat, the majority of the population is located in the two communities in which almost all of the lawyers are located. In the St. Paul District, the population is widely and sparsely distributed.

Although the reality of a high level of poverty in the area means that hiring a private lawyer is simply not an option, one exception is the Common Experience payments to Aboriginal peoples who had attended residential schools.

*You have heard of the Common Experience payments being issues to people who went to residential schools? .... I feel lawyers have been making a lot of money off the misery of people who have come out of residential schools. It is taking way too long to process. I made my statement in a lawyer's office in 1996 or 1997. My case has never been dealt with .... I tried to partner up with the Residential School Healing Society so that we could address the trauma of disclosing but it seems to me that people just want to make the quick buck. People are not given the info about what to expect in this process. "Exploited," I guess is the word I was looking for. [Social Service Provider]*

Lack of public understanding about the roles of lawyers and what they can and cannot do are also noted as impacting the experiences that clients have working with lawyers.

*Lawyers in the areas try to provide a good service, but can't keep your clientele happy. Some of the [clients] will say "Thank you, that lawyer did a wonderful job for me." And others will say "That lawyer put me in jail." And then I will say "Do you have a record?" "Yeah." "How much time did you do last time?" "I only got three months - why didn't I only get another three months?" "Well, it does increase gradually." [Legal Service Provider]*

Consistent with other Districts, the problem of lawyers not having enough time to spend with individual clients are voiced.

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<sup>10</sup> In the final report we will be able to make these kinds of comparisons for all Judicial Districts.

*Lawyers often don't have adequate time to spend with their clients so the people will come to [the court workers] even though they have legal representation. Sometimes we don't even know they have a lawyer. They also may come to us to ask questions so they don't have to pay lawyers for that time because it is expensive for them. Sometimes they will say, "I have a lawyer but can you appear for me anyway?" .... Sometimes, they have legal aid and we don't know it (sometimes they don't even know!) and we appear in Court and all of a sudden a lawyer jumps up! [Legal Service Provider]*

### **3.4.3 Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA)**

The NCSA District Office, located in St. Paul, supervises services in all of this Judicial District as well as the Fort McMurray Judicial District. There are two court workers who provide services in the St. Paul District: one for family and youth, and one for criminal matters.

In this District service providers reported referring to NCSA and noted the high number of clients the Court Workers serve, stating that that NCSA in St. Paul is "very helpful." One participant expressed concern that NCSA's services are not visible enough out in the community.

*St. Paul has an NCSA office that addresses various aspects of the legal system. NCSA is in the community but is not very visible .... People will often come to us and ask for the service they offer and I will send them there and they didn't even know about NCSA. [Social Service Provider]*

We note, however, that NCSA staff are constantly in Courts across the area they serve. They travel on circuit to the reserves and Métis Settlements in this District, typically spending one to two days a month in each community. One stakeholder from a Métis Settlement reported that they send notes home from school with the children to let their families know when the NCSA staff will be visiting, and that the staff are kept very busy when there.

The Court Workers' workload is time-consuming and their role is a challenging one. This challenge is increased by the dynamics they often face in the legal community.

*There is a very professional dress code at this Courthouse. [NCSA staff] have to look the part. [NCSA staff] tend to be looked down on by lawyers and judiciary already. When [one] first starts [in that role] it is a scary thing. People watch what you do. It is sort of that, "I've been here longer, I know more" attitude. [Legal Service Provider]*



Our data confirm that the Court Workers are not always given the consideration and respect this difficult work deserves.

### **3.4.4 Police Services**

Police services to this District are provided by the RCMP. Currently St. Paul County is served by two Sergeants, four Corporals and 25 Constables. Most participants recognized that the police have a particularly difficult task in this District. There is a high crime ratio and high rates of re-offending. Police are often called repeatedly to the same addresses and have to sort out what happened and who is at fault.

*And I think sometimes its priority. It is a really, really, busy Detachment. So if it's kind of a lower level thing and they've got eight things that are a lot more significant, you know, that one's going to sit. It's going to get lost in the shuffle. [Community Working Group Member]*

*A lot of it too, they have mentioned, they'll spend hours and hours of their time to write up a report and when it goes to the Court it's thrown out for whatever reason. So a lot of it is a frustration ... the RCMP Detachment feel[s] that no matter how much work they put into it the Courts aren't following through .... [Community Working Group Member]*

For the most part Police Services and other participants agreed about the challenges the RCMP face in this Judicial District with its large Detachment areas and many small communities. Input from police service`s reflected a positive impression of community understanding and some service providers also described their positive working relationships with the police.

*We are busy but we have big city problems and we see everything here. But, for the most part, I think it is a well receiving community and I think they understand how busy we are because the other services are busy, too. We are all in the same boat. [Legal Service Provider]*

*We have a working relationship with the police because we are trying to improve the face of this centre. Often, even if people are banned, they will hang out in front of the building. The numbers of homeless are high here. It is us who are trying to meet the needs of the homeless. Everyone else is trying to sweep it under the carpet. [Social Service Provider]*

Police Services also pointed to difficulties with the recruitment and level of experience that exists across Alberta. As senior officers have retired, a significant gap has emerged in on-the-job experience. This is exacerbated in a District like St. Paul, where officers new to the Force may have an early career placement and then choose to transfer to larger communities as soon as they can, taking their acquired experience when they leave.

*We could always use more members. We are very junior right now. It is an exciting time but also very challenging. When I started we had lots of 20 year members but we don't have that any more. Our young members are good but don't have a lot of life experience yet. [Legal Service Provider]*

*We are so busy that we try to be pro-active but the workload is so great that a lot of actions are reactive .... Some people expect a lot. They phone us and think we are the "be all end all" .... The "I pay my taxes, so you work for me" attitude. [Legal Service Provider]*

Lack of public understanding of the limits of the policing role were also noted, with Police Services acknowledging that they are often too busy to do more than react to crisis situations. As might be expected under these conditions, some participants perceived lack of police responsiveness to some crimes in the District, particularly mentioning concerns about how some police handle cases of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and break and enter. Both service providers and police service representatives recognized and expressed concerns that many victims of crime were not even reporting what had happened to the RCMP.

*We see lots of violence. We also see vandalism, thefts, break and enters. For in town, it is often the businesses that are reporting. We are one of the busiest Detachments in Alberta, but I think there are still a lot of crimes that aren't getting reported to us. People aren't reporting. I am not sure why that is. [Legal Service Provider]*

*I know one thing in regards to our community as a whole, the victims of crime are not even reporting it ... this is really a problem .... The victims, like were always kind of a person who the perpetrators were protecting ... Like if you're a victim of crime you don't bother. By the time you've gone through the red tape you are totally alienated and so disgusted with the whole system that you don't even bother anymore .... [Community Working Group Member]*

Issues of ticketing were raised, similar to those reported in the Calgary Judicial District. Concerns about mis-information and the failure of RCMP officers to lay charges in domestic abuse, also mirror those reported for the rural areas of the Calgary Judicial District.

*There is something missing here. Look at the Sheriffs and the RCMP – they overlap in some of their jurisdictions. But the Sheriffs, for example, they need more education. They’ll give someone 10 tickets under the Liquor and Gaming Act<sup>11</sup>. Well, come on! Obviously there is a problem. If the person knew their rights they would wait and bring all the tickets to Court at once. If they do that, a lot of them will get thrown out. [Legal Service Provider]*

*I think there’s a number of different potential scenarios where the police are very reluctant to get involved for whatever reason, right down to they will actually give you mis-information about what they can and cannot do, right. And I know that for a fact. “Well we can’t charge that person.” “Why not?” “Well the courts won’t let us.” That’s a flat out lie. We’re talking about somebody who has had multiple complaints about them for assaultive behaviour and there’s multiple victims that have been assaulted. And [the police] don’t want to apprehend them. That’s one example. [Community Working Group Member]*

Dealing with these situations is, however, highly complex. Addictions, FASD and untreated mental illness are acknowledged by participants as particularly common problems across this District, especially in the St. Paul area. These issues, and the demands they place on police and other service providers, are discussed further in Section 4.3 (Specialized Services) of this Report.

The general feeling was that it would be helpful if police were able to take a less cursory and more involved community role. Several service providers spoke positively of their involvement in Safe Communities initiatives, which are relatively new. It will take time to understand the impact of these ventures.

For the most part, participants realize that police in the District are trying to do a difficult job without having all of the tools and resources that are needed. For example, previous ALSMP reports have pointed to a lack of adequate training for police to deal effectively with domestic violence, mental illness, FASD and addictions. In the St. Paul District, in-depth training to assist police and other legal service providers with these widespread problems would be very beneficial.

### **3.4.5 Court House Services**

The Provincial Court in St. Paul has eight full-time staff, as well two resident Judges. One Judge covers circuits in Cold Lake and Bonnyville and the other covers St. Paul and a circuit to Lac La Biche. Court Clerks are typically on the road to circuit courts four days a week. Family Court is held twice a month in St. Paul. A Family Court Counsellor comes to St. Paul from Vermillion and helps with applications.

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<sup>11</sup> Sheriffs are hired to issue traffic violations in this District. These are not the Sheriffs who provide court-related transportation and security services.

Limited court dates are a major barrier. For instance, at the beginning of each month there is no Court on Monday or Tuesday and if someone comes in with a peace bond it is not possible to address it until court is sitting. The current average wait time for trial dates in St. Paul is two to three months and, due to fewer court dates in Bonnyville, people there are waiting up to a year.

The Court of Queen's Bench is located in the Town of St. Paul and the Court sits only in St. Paul - there are no circuits to other communities in this Judicial District. The Court has three fulltime and three part-time staff. There are no resident Justices; they circuit from Edmonton.

As we have found in other smaller communities, the St. Paul courthouse staff are an important and central source of knowledge and reliable general legal information. Participants also reported that, in some cases, exceptions are made for low income people and courthouse staff will waive filing fees (Alberta Justice confirmed that this consideration is made in courts throughout the province).<sup>12</sup> The Law Courts Library is also a source of information for people who are self-representing (SRLs) although it is only open part-time. For security reasons, the library is not directly accessible to the public, but is in a locked area. People must request access and wait for the librarian in the Registry area.

The proportion of Aboriginal peoples passing through the court process was reported as much higher than in the previous Judicial Districts we have mapped, with participants suggesting that it may be as high as 50%.<sup>13</sup> The prevalence of mental health and addictions problems means that court staff must also frequently deal with these issues.

*There was a guy at the front counter who was going to kill himself and we had no resources .... sheriffs can't take people to hospital and it was kind of scary and all I could tell him was to go to the hospital and we called RCMP and nobody would come. He was crying for help and wasn't getting it. [Legal Service Provider]*

Some challenges with the court service process were also reported.

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<sup>12</sup> There is also policy for applying for lost wages for witnesses that is province wide.

<sup>13</sup> There are no actual statistics available. It is likely that the observation that 50% of those attending Court pertains to criminal Court.

*We will pick up disclosures for people but we don't like to do it. The lawyers are only too happy to pass them off to us if they hear we are involved. Also, Courts do make mistakes. People are not told to bring necessary information or not properly notified on dates, etc. People get very angry. I had that happen just this week .... There needs to be more access to the Crown for criminal cases before the court date. Court time could be utilized better if we were given the same access lawyers have. Like now I am running after the opposing counsel as they go to the bathroom, yelling, "wait!!!" We really don't have access to everything. We don't know how bad someone's criminal record is going to be. Is it going to be a fine this time, or incarceration? If we knew it would likely be a fine we could deal with it right away and save Court time. [Legal Service Provider]*

As was the case with Police Services, participants suggested that there was also a need for judges sitting in this area to increase their knowledge about the social context of the District and their sensitivity to the social issues involved.

*That young fella today, you know .... the judge was really talking down to him. There was no need for that. The judge doesn't know about life on the reserve. They need to be more informed. We also need to be able to communicate better with the judiciary. They need to understand life on the reserve; what it is like. I think we should be able to provide more information to the Court about why people behave the way they do. [Legal Service Provider]*

*We were [in court] one day and we were comparing how the Natives were getting higher fines than the Caucasians .... There is a surcharge on fines of 15%. I have nothing against the surcharge for people who can afford it. It should be levied on people who can afford it but that doesn't happen. It depends on the judge. Certain people will ask for it to be waived and get it ... get a year to pay it instead of the three months they are supposed to get. There are no guidelines/criteria - it is subjective and these surcharges are being levied on Aboriginals but not on other people who often have more economic means to be able to pay them .... There is such a variance in judges' decisions about fines. [Legal Service Provider]*

### **3.5 Barriers to Accessing Existing Legal Services**

The contextual and social factors in the St. Paul Judicial District create serious barriers to accessing legal and related services and are acknowledged by the participants as exacerbating legal problems. In this section we briefly address three fundamental conditions: geography, poverty and cultural divides. The social context of this District is

inseparable from understanding legal need and effective service delivery, and is discussed in more detail in Section 7 of this Report.

Other major access barriers in the District are related to a lack of knowledge about legal services, which is a problem common to all five Judicial Districts mapped so far. However, because of the documented social conditions, these barriers are particularly pronounced in the St. Paul Judicial District.

### **3.5.1 Geography of the District**

Participants spoke about the impossibility of serving this District adequately because the population is so widely dispersed. Even the town of St. Paul itself does not really have clear boundaries. Team members observed (and participants mentioned) that there are homes scattered along the roadways for miles outside of the town limits. There are also many small communities with fewer than 1,000 residents located throughout this District.

*They take a day off work to come and do a family application and they get here and the Court says, "Well this is wrong, this is wrong." So they end up in the library trying to get the forms online most of them ... but they have to take another day off work. [Community Working Group Member]*

While regional legal services are mostly located in St. Paul, central social services are more divided among the major communities. While this provides significant access points in more locations, it also increases the difficulty of ensuring widespread and accurate knowledge about the legal and social services for the District. These inevitable access problems are aggravated by an almost total absence in the District of any public transportation (see Section 7).

### **3.5.2 Poverty**

*A lot people who call don't have phones or addresses. You talk about poor people. I think it is very startling to realize how many poor people are in the area and how many homeless people in St. Paul dragging around on the streets and going house-to-house you know, like on the reserves .... I was talking to a young lad. He said "If I go home, I don't know if I have a bed to sleep in or something to eat because of extended family coming in." [Legal Service Provider]*

Poverty is a clear issue in this Judicial District. Research Team members observed that service providers took for granted that most of their clients had few resources. As one participant said, "poverty is part of what you do." Service providers also expect, as a part of local life, that their clients will have multiple legal and social problems.



### **3.5.3 Cultural Divides**

Our research in this District revealed deep cultural divides between and within various population groups and Team members observed that social prejudices in the town of St. Paul in particular, are the most striking they have experienced so far. Cultural divides were evident between English and Franco-Albertans; according to religion; between Caucasians and visible minority immigrants and/or Aboriginal peoples; and among Aboriginal groups as well.

*I think a lot of it too is it's changing so quickly and the people are having a hard time adjusting. The [New Canadians] are wonderful people. They are very friendly, they are kind, polite, so maybe it's just ... I think small communities are just getting overwhelmed, you know. [Social service Provider]*

Participants reported that there had been a very recent increase in visible minority immigrants and Temporary Foreign Workers (TFGs) into the St. Paul area and a recent rise in Aboriginal people moving into the larger urban centres in this District. There is a community perception that crime rates are increasing in relation to these demographic shifts. Interestingly, law enforcement personnel reported that although more Aboriginal people come into contact with the law because more are living in the community now, their involvement is not disproportionate to that of other groups. These dynamics are discussed further in Sections 4.3.4 (Aboriginal Peoples) and 4.3.5 (New Canadians).

*If you take a look at the surrounding communities the supports are non-existent. I think they more or less want these people to become somebody else's problem .... [For example, a woman who] is wheelchair bound. She has alcohol issues and she will often tip her chair. People will just leave her [laying there] until the police come ... I called her community and nobody wants anything to do with her. I was told she didn't complete treatment so they cut off services. I was furious. I invited somebody from her community to come but nobody ever came. I went to AISH and we got her a room for a few days. She was really grateful and we got to have long talks because she was able to sleep and she sobered up. We just don't have the resources here, so we have a group of people who just get ignored. [Social Service Provider]*

These community dynamics likely contribute to the fragmentation in services that was observed and may result in some people falling through the cracks of the justice, social and health care systems.

### **3.5.4 Lack of Public Knowledge about How to Address Legal Needs**

As has been found in the previous four Judicial Districts (and indeed across the country), there is very low public understanding of legal matters or services.

*They don't understand anything. Like I was sitting with a client for four hours yesterday doing one page of a Restraining Order because she just didn't understand. [She said] "but I need to put this in", but [I said] "No if you put that in the Judge is going to throw it out ... you're not going for an ex-parte Restraining Order so you want it within 24 hours - well you have to be specific and you can't write a book and you can't put this in." It took four hours to write one page of the Restraining Order ... I made four photocopies of that page, because she had to keep writing it and rewriting it ... you know she just doesn't understand. [Community Working Group Member]*

*I think the biggest thing with my clients is the lack of knowledge and lack of education. Like with any legal, we refer them to Native Counselling, Legal Services, Legal Aid, the Court House .... They just don't have the life skills to go about and actually go and ask. We sometimes write on a piece of paper what they should say to somebody - you know. [Community Working Group Member]*

*This morning I had lady come in here she did not have a clue what [this organization] was supposed to offer ... She had come in here for me to do her Parenting Order and Child Support Order. I don't mind doing it ... [if someone] doesn't know how to do it, I will sit down and help them ..... [Originally] she was coming in for divorce, custody, access. By the time I talked to her she just wanted a Separation Agreement so I asked her what did she want to separate, "Me from him." I then asked "What else is the Separation Agreement supposed to deal with?" That is when it came out she wanted me to do the forms and she didn't have them with her. I find a lot of the people, if I talk to them on the phone and they are listening, they'll know what they are supposed to do .... I find the poorer the person is the harder they try to meet your expectation. The more money they have ... these are the ones that yell at us. [Legal Service Provider]*

*In the instance of a Restraining Order, they will come here for one and it may be that they just need a Peace Bond or an Emergency Protection Order. It is understanding what service it is that they require first. The police will say, "Go and get a Restraining Order" and they don't understand that there are things that have to be part of their problem before receiving a Restraining Order. [Legal Service Provider]*

Some of the service provider feedback conveyed the impression that people will wander randomly from service to service trying to find help. They also underline problems with people not understanding the criminal process or the consequences of charges, non-appearances, and so forth.



*I say over and over again to the accused, they need to know to call a lawyer. Sometimes people really don't understand the trouble they are in. There are lots of options out there. People will look to us and ask what they could do and that's not our role. We can't tell them that. [Legal Service Provider]*

*A lot of times people figure, "as long as [my Court Worker is going] to Court, I don't have to show up." We sometimes go to Court for people. We don't like to go without them if we can help it. They tend to develop dependencies on us. There are people who never ever end up in Court. We do everything for them. That part I don't like. I feel used .... I always say I won't let it happen again ... but it does. But that is in Criminal Court. In Family, no, because if they don't show up their applications get dismissed. [Legal Service Provider]*

### **3.5.5 Lack of Service Provider Knowledge**

The need to also improve service provider knowledge about legal services is a finding common to most jurisdictions we have mapped. As already pointed out, the fragmentation and dispersment of services across this District makes effective knowledge-sharing especially difficult. Additionally, participants complained that circuiting services they are aware of do not always provide information about dates, times and personnel. Our analysis revealed uncertainties about the roles that other services play and also where services might be located. Such uncertainty became especially clear in terms of knowing how to address the complex needs of vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, providers try very hard to help.

*I can pick up the phone and talk to anyone of [the available services] and they will try to help ... I think everybody honestly tries. I know that probation, NCSA and the [Native] Friendship Centre are trying. [Legal Service Provider]*

*Other than referral to local lawyer, I don't think we have a lot of knowing where to put things. If you don't need lawyer or LAA, we don't know what to do with that. We don't know what other resources would be useful. For example, if someone was on probation I have no clue who to call but would most likely call the probation department. [Social Service Provider]*

However, the service providers here are facing immense social problems and heavy workloads that often involve clients who have multiple inter-related social, health and legal needs. The changing population and high rates of social problems such as addictions and poverty make the need for adequate staffing, information, enhanced training, and networking opportunities, increasingly urgent.

**Referrals**

In keeping with the desire of service providers to give what help they can, all participants reported that they make and receive some referrals (Table 5).

**Table 5 -  
Service Providers' Experiences with Referrals**

| (N=33, numbers are rounded and may exceed 100%) | <b>Always</b><br>% | <b>Often</b><br>% | <b>Sometimes</b><br>% | <b>Never</b><br>% | <b>N/A</b><br>% |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Make Referrals</b>                           | 38                 | 38                | 25                    | -                 | -               |
| <b>Receive Referrals</b>                        | 38                 | 50                | 13                    | -                 | -               |
| <b>Receive Appropriate Referrals</b>            | 63                 | 38                | -                     | -                 | -               |

Despite the commitment to making referrals in an attempt to assist the public, analysis of the referral data indicates that providers have quite limited knowledge of what other services might be available. Regional services are not all located in St. Paul, and participants tend, at best, to know only those services in the town in which they are based (Table 5). Even when they do know of a potential service, they often do not have a full and accurate understanding of what services are offered and may be uncertain of the service locations.

Consequently, participants tend to have a select group of services with which they exchange referrals. Where legal services are concerned, this is at least in part because there is a limited number of options available. In St. Paul, where most regional legal services are located, there is a group of key services that participants reported referring to frequently and for a wide range of needs, as illustrated in the following quote:

*For the most part, any of the referrals we do have, we have good people. NCSA is very helpful for applications. We refer people to the Law Line and people say they have good answers. Until you come across things you don't really know what you need for referrals .... LAA, RCMP, NCSA .... We refer to people who would be able to provide them with more legal information than we could. [Legal Service Provider]*

When service providers do not know who to refer to, or are trying to find out about services they are unfamiliar with, they report that they use their community connections.

*In a rural community if you don't know something you just phone around until you find someone that knows the answer. You don't really think about them as providing that service, you are just calling up your colleagues to see what they know about a particular issue. [Social Service Provider]*

This can, of course have very positive outcomes, as some participants described.

*I remember this fellow came in and his tent had been hit by lightening, and he had a charge here. The Judge gave him a fine and I ended up taking him to the hospital and getting his hands cleansed and re-banded. I got on the phone and managed to get him emergency social services. They paid for his meal and put him on a bus back home. And gave him a voucher to get food on the way home. [Legal Service Provider]*

At the same time, given the limited extent of service knowledge in the District, the exchange of possibly incomplete and inaccurate information tends to become rather circular. Essentially, service providers tend to adopt the same approach as the general public. That is, not knowing where to start, they turn first to someone they already know.

*If their needs are more civil than criminal, we will give them some informal advice and let them know what type of issue they have and suggest where they can go for help .... Sometimes the referral [to us] may not be appropriate and we end up sending them back to the referring source, or referring them on. This is not necessarily about one agency sloughing off. It is more a matter of it not really being a criminal need. As I said before, people will confuse civil and criminal matters. [Legal Service Provider]*

Legal and social service providers in this scattered Judicial District deserve to have comprehensive and effective access to information about the locations and mandates of all the organizations that serve the entire region. Section 6.1.2 (Networking) further develops the positive foundation of community networking that would immediately make good use of improved information.

### **3.5.6 Lack of Coordination of Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI)**

Very little is mentioned in the interviews about PLEI and participants' answers to referral scenarios indicate that they do not have adequate access to PLEI. As is indicated in Table 6, there are sources of PLEI within the District, however people do not seem to know about these sources.

**Table 6 -  
Services That Offer PLEI by Area of Law**

| <b>PLEI Topics</b> | <b>Urban</b> | <b>Rural</b> | <b>Outside District</b> |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Administrative     |              |              |                         |
| Information        | 5            | 14           | 27                      |
| Education          | -            | 1            | 10                      |
| Civil              |              |              |                         |
| Information        | 4            | 16           | 24                      |
| Education          | 1            | 2            | 9                       |
| Criminal           |              |              |                         |
| Information        | 10           | 33           | 12                      |
| Education          | 3            | 6            | 10                      |
| Family             |              |              |                         |
| Information        | 9            | 27           | 12                      |
| Education          | 5            | 4            | 5                       |

One major barrier is that there is currently no central access point or coordinated distribution of PLEI in this District:

*We have had a number of community resources over the years and they are outdated almost by the time they get to print because things change so quickly. [Social Service Provider]*

Service providers also spoke about the difficulties that members of the community have in accessing PLEI. One particular need that participants were very concerned about was the lack of resources to help people find and complete legal forms:

*A lot of people just can't fill out forms. People give consent, but not informed, because they can't understand what they are reading. And knowing what their rights are in a situation, a lot of people are very hazy on that. [Social Service Provider]*

*We introduce our clients to Victim Impact Statements and we give them the forms but we are not allowed to work with them on it. They have to complete it, then we send a notification to the Crown. [Legal Service Provider]*

## 4.0 UNDERSTANDING LEGAL NEEDS IN ST. PAUL

The following section contains a discussion about the types and incidence of legal needs that people have, and the services that are available to address those needs.

### 4.1 Statistics

Statistics were provided by the St. Paul Provincial Court. By referring to these, and to national and provincial statistics about the prevalence of legal problems, coupled with the observations of the service providers and researchers, we are able to provide some insight into the primary legal needs in this District.

#### 4.1.1 National Prevalence

National statistics on the prevalence of legal problems among Canadians indicate that the everyday need for legal services is potentially vast (Currie, 2006, 2007, 2009). This research employed a random telephone surveying that presented respondents with 76 carefully designed with legal aspects. Respondents were asked if they had any of these problems within the past three years that they felt were “serious and difficult to resolve.”<sup>14</sup> These surveys have found that between 45% and 48% or around 11.6 million Canadians have at least one legal problem with potentially negative consequences for their everyday lives.<sup>15</sup> Analysis of the data specific to Alberta places incidence at 52%.<sup>16</sup>

This is evidence of a need to effectively address prevalent legal problems. Table 7 provides a breakdown of legal problems by frequency according to type of problem, and compares national and Alberta rates. Participants tended to report more than one legal problem with the average in Alberta and nationally being around three.

As can be seen in Table 7, the general pattern for incidence of problems in Alberta is very similar to the national pattern.<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that family law problems are divided between relationship-related and other matters. When combined, family matters at 7% are the fourth most frequently reported problem in Alberta. When both disability benefits and other social assistance are combined, benefits rank eighth in Alberta, accounting for 2.9% of reported problems.

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<sup>14</sup> Serious was defined as “a large enough problem that you felt it could not be easily answered or solved, and that if you ignored it there would be negative consequences.” (Curry, 2007, p. 92).

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the surveys Currie (2006, 2007, 2009) conducted ask participants to report any legal problems they have had in the past three years, as opposed to only recording legal problems that they currently have.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this research, refer to the ALSMP the Calgary Judicial District Report (pp. 42 - 46), available at <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2009/mapping-calgary-en.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> The small percentage differences that occur cannot be considered significant because the sample sizes are not comparable. While 600 respondents is a sufficient number to make the Alberta results reliable within the province, it is a mere fraction of the total national sample. Percentages were also provided for the number of each type of problem reported by Alberta respondents (a total of 938). While this changes the numbers within each category, the overall frequency pattern is very similar.

**Table 7 -  
Prevalence of Legal Problems in Canada and Alberta**

| <b>Type of Legal Problem</b>   | <b>Frequency of Problems<sup>18</sup></b> |                                |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|                                | <b>National<br/>% (N = 8,873)</b>         | <b>Alberta<br/>% (N = 600)</b> |
| Consumer                       | 22.0                                      | 25.4                           |
| Debt                           | 20.4                                      | 27.0                           |
| Employment                     | 17.8                                      | 19.0                           |
| Wills & Powers of Attorney     | 5.2                                       | 6.7                            |
| Family: Relationship breakdown | 3.6                                       | 5.0                            |
| Personal Injury                | 2.9                                       | 4.3                            |
| Police Action                  | 2.0                                       | 3.0                            |
| Discrimination                 | 1.9                                       | 1.7                            |
| Housing                        | 1.7                                       | 1.0                            |
| Hospital treatment or release  | 1.6                                       | 1.8                            |
| Other family                   | 1.4                                       | 2.0                            |
| Threat of legal action         | 1.2                                       | 1.3                            |
| Social Assistance              | 1.2                                       | 1.7                            |
| Disability Benefits            | 1.0                                       | 1.2                            |
| Immigration                    | 0.6                                       | 0.2                            |

Frequency of a problem does not, however correlate with perceived seriousness. By far, respondents considered social benefit problems, followed by family matters, to be the most serious. In contrast, the more prevalent consumer and debt problems were viewed as the least serious.<sup>19</sup>

The prevalence of legal problems demonstrated by this research reveals the potential need for legal services as an everyday occurrence for a significant portion of the population. In fact, as the survey focuses on problems already perceived as serious, it likely underestimates actual legal need, which would also include many non-problematic everyday matters such as making a Will or formalizing a contract.

The national research concerning the prevalence of justiciable<sup>20</sup> legal problems

<sup>18</sup> Percentages do not add to 100% because some respondents reported more than one problem within each category. Percentages are not rounded because of the extremely large number of Canadians potentially represented by the national statistics (95% confidence ratio), where 1% equals approximately 250,000 Canadians. National percentages are taken, with permission, from Currie (2007, p.12). Alberta numbers provided in a personal communication from Ab Currie, December 7, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> While it seems intuitive that for the most part consumer problems would not have as serious an impact as many others, the same is not true of debt. Based on the CJSP data reported in Stratton & Anderson (2008), we would suggest that debt is seen as manageable until it precipitates or combines with other problems such as family breakdown, loss of job, foreclosure, etc.

<sup>20</sup> Justiciable is defined as “capable of being decided by a court”.

(Currie, 2007), provides a foundation of both national and Alberta-specific data within which to consider the ALSMP findings for all Alberta Judicial Districts. These findings indicate a much greater need for legal services than has traditionally been understood.

#### 4.1.2 Service Statistics

The Team requested statistics from all services where representatives were interviewed. To date, only the Provincial Court has provided information about what statistics are kept. Thus, as had been anticipated might be the case when this project was proposed, it is not possible to draw conclusions about public need and service capacity in this manner. Instead, service providers' interview and Community Working Group responses are used to derive qualitative themes about the public's legal and related needs specific to the St. Paul Judicial District. These data are supplemented by the national data and researcher observations.

**Table 8 -  
St. Paul Provincial Court Volumes**

| Area of Law                             | 2004/05<br>Volume | 2005/06<br>Volume | 2006/07<br>Volume | 2007/08<br>Volume | 2008/09<br>Volume | Average<br>Annual<br>Volume<br>(2004-2009) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Civil</b>                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |  |
| Claims Filed                            | 167               | 143               | 98                | 136               | 138               | 136  |
| <b>Family</b>                           |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |  |
| Actions Commenced                       | 183               | 137               | 257               | 285               | 374               | 247  |
| Child Welfare Actions Commenced         | 837               | 1,093             | 1,254             | 1,060             | 796               | 1,008                                      |
| <b>Criminal</b>                         |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |  |
| Tickets                                 | 10,061            | 8,017             | 8,229             | 8,742             | 13,086            | 9,627                                      |
| Charges Commenced – Adult <sup>21</sup> | 12,109            | 10,488            | 11,081            | 12,217            | 14,545            | 12,088                                     |
| Charges Commenced – Youth               | 2,254             | 2,450             | 2,663             | 2,485             | 2,328             | 2,436                                      |
| Charges Concluded – Adult               | 11,563            | 10,138            | 10,900            | 11,508            | 13,895            | 11,601                                     |
| Charges Concluded – Youth               | 2,273             | 2,335             | 1,676             | 2,398             | 2,406             | 2,218                                      |
| Average Hearings per Month              | 19                | 15                | 26                | 22                | 36                | 24   |
| Average Courtroom Time (hours)          | 1,449             | 1,306             | 1,408             | 1,405             | 1,473             | 1,408                                      |

Participants, including law enforcement personnel, reported that crime rates are high in this District and have risen in recent years. Provincial Court statistics (Table 8) indicate a notable rise in the number of tickets issued and adult charges that were commenced in 2008/09 over previous years. The numbers of charges commenced against youth have not changed significantly since 2004, however. As with the Lethbridge Judicial District, the number of hearings per month rose in 2008/09, yet the average courtroom time did not.

<sup>21</sup> The totals for adult and youth charges commenced include federal, provincial and municipal charges. The figures for hearings and court time are for the total of criminal, family and civil actions.

Family Actions commenced also increased by almost one-third (31%) in the past year, but surprisingly, given the participant feedback, Child Protection actions decreased by 25% in the same period.

A representative for Alberta Justice advises that a number of factors can influence fluctuations in these figures. Many cases commenced are settled prior to a court hearing and more are resolved at first hearing, with only a few proceeding to trial. The more cases that settle early the less court time required. Apparent differences in the 2008/09 numbers may be an anomaly rather than a trend that would affect average annual volumes over the longer term. However, the increase in tickets issued is likely due to an increase (to four) in the number of traffic sheriffs in the area.

## 4.2 Eligibility Criteria

Of the services mapped, 62 legal and related services had eligibility criteria that were listed on either the service web site or in the community directories available to the Team. The most commonly reported criteria were age and residence:

- **Age:** seventeen mapped services show age as a specific criterion. Eleven serve youth and another serves both youth and children; five serve seniors.
- **Residence:** twelve services listed residence as an eligibility criterion. Six concerned residence on reserves or in Métis settlements; the remainder required residence in various service catchment areas.

Few services in this District indicate income criteria. LAA and one other serve only people with low-income. Four others charge for services with varying criteria for subsidies, including the waiving of fees in some cases.

As has been the case in the previous Districts mapped, the reported income criteria and the interview discussions suggest a more complex picture of eligibility requirements. Of the nine service providers who were interviewed, six reported that their services have more complex eligibility. These include combinations of income, age, identification, specific documentation, type of legal matter, involvement in the Court system, diagnosis and referral. In contrast to all previous Districts mapped, participants did not raise identification as a problem and only two services actually reported requiring it.

One other reported condition of service was that of acceptable behaviour. Two participants stated that they do not provide service to someone who is behaving violently or is intoxicated either on drugs or alcohol. However, both services are willing to provide assistance at a later date if the person is no longer dangerous or intoxicated. Another service mentioned that if someone is violent or has homicidal tendencies, they will still work with that client, but will take measures to ensure that their staff member is safe. Most participants raised the issue of having to deal with such incidents.



### 4.3 Specific Populations and Specialized Legal Needs

As documented throughout this Report, the St. Paul Judicial District has an especially high rate of people with specialized social and legal needs. Participants placed particular emphasis on mental health, cognitive disabilities (primarily FASD), addictions, domestic violence and/or sexual assault. As Table 9 reports, there are very few services that offer any legal supports to people who are experiencing these challenges.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 9 -  
Specialization of Legal and Related Services**

| Specialization                         | Legal Services |                       | Social/Health Services |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  | Sole Purpose   | Legal & Social/Health |                        |
| Aboriginal                             | 4              | 5                     | 21                     |
| Accidents/Injuries                     | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Addictions                             | -              | 2                     | 9                      |
| Alternatives to Court                  | 4              | 4                     | -                      |
| Children                               | 5              | 9                     | 20                     |
| Consumer Issues                        | 1              | 1                     | -                      |
| Crisis Intervention                    | -              | 8                     | 15                     |
| Debt Management                        | -              | 1                     | -                      |
| Disabilities                           | 2              | -                     | 3                      |
| Employment                             | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Families                               | 7              | 7                     | 22                     |
| Family Violence/Abuse                  | 2              | 20                    | 10                     |
| FASD                                   | -              | 1                     | 4                      |
| Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Housing & Tenancy                      | 5              | 3                     | 7                      |
| Human Rights & Citizenship             | 11             | 1                     | -                      |
| Immigrants                             | -              | 1                     | -                      |
| Low Income/Poverty                     | 1              | -                     | 2                      |
| Men                                    | -              | 4                     | 12                     |
| Mental Health                          | 1              | -                     | 11                     |
| Pensions & Benefits                    | 4              | 1                     | 1                      |
| Seniors                                | 4              | -                     | 17                     |
| Taxes & Finances                       | 1              | -                     | -                      |
| Victims & Offenders                    | 16             | 12                    | 4                      |
| Wills & Estate Planning                | -              | -                     | -                      |
| Women                                  | 1              | 10                    | 12                     |
| Youth                                  | 8              | 8                     | 30                     |

<sup>22</sup> Some services may specialize in more than one area. With the exception of the nine services that were interviewed, Table 9 is based on publically available information that has been entered into the ALSMP Database and it is likely that not all services fully advertize all service components. It is hoped that as the Database is shared, services will provide additional detail.

#### **4.3.1 People Living with Disabilities and Addictions**

As might be expected in the social context of this District, service providers emphasized the need for more services and resources with specialized components for people who are struggling with mental illnesses, cognitive disabilities such as FASD, and addictions - which are so often interrelated. FASD is a cognitive disability and not *per se*, a mental illness. However, the disability leaves sufferers highly vulnerable to substance abuse and mental illness. The inter-relationship of these social issues with legal service delivery is profound in the St. Paul District.

#### **FASD**

Service providers were particularly concerned with the rates of FASD in this District, indicating that all legal and social services must assist people with this disability, which is often associated (directly or indirectly) with addictions or mental illness.

*FASD is on a spectrum - they can have a range of cognitive, social, emotional problems. [M]ost come with ... social problems as well. So, addictions, poor social network, poverty; those kinds of things .... We would like to prevent people from getting there in the first place. Some recognition prior to charges. We find that youth with FASD get involved with the justice system for stupid things (such as stealing cup hooks). [Someone] was charged and he didn't go to Court. We didn't know about it. It just kind of escalates ... and now it has cost the Court thousands of dollars for cup hooks. He finally gets probation and breaches and doesn't understand and now he has a record ... he ends up in jail for something else, he met new friends and it just keeps escalating and escalating. If we could take him at first point of entry and divert him to have a more permanent youth worker, or identification of his disability it would save the Courts millions of dollars - and the public. [Social Service Provider]*

*A lot with some type of problem, for younger ones, FAS[D] and that causes social and health problems .... [Legal Service Provider]*

National estimates, derived from calculations based on Statistics Canada's 2001 Community Health Survey, are that 37% of babies have been exposed to multiple episodes of binge drinking (5+ drinks per session) during pregnancy. An additional 42% have been exposed to multiple episodes involving 1 to 4 drinks per session during pregnancy. It is probable that about 15% of children are affected significantly enough by prenatal alcohol exposure to require special education. Many children with FASD are born to multi-generational drinkers. Children with FASD are having babies with FASD. Alcohol abuse occurs across all segments of Canadian society, although there can be the perception that alcohol abuse is primarily among the poor, likely resulting because this group is more often under the microscope of social services and other agencies. (Ritchie, 2007). The high incidence of involvement of people with FASD in the criminal and family justice systems, is well documented (FASlink, 2009).

Participants estimated that in the St. Paul District, as many as 75% of people involved with the Courts are people with FASD. They repeatedly underlined how the FASD spectrum tends to lead to a lifetime of involvement with the justice system – often beginning with Child Protection Orders.

*I think that when you look at the volume of people with FASD in the legal system, 60-75% some studies have shown. We have done our own study here (because we tend to know repeats) just going through the Courthouse here we identified 75% of individuals or family member are FAS; that is a huge number. The system was never set up for people with cognitive problems and it doesn't serve this population well. I'm not suggesting that people who have done a heinous crime that they don't pay for it in some way. There are lots of ways for us to save justice billions of dollars by re-directing some of these cases to outreach services or whatever it is not happening through youth justice. I don't care what their stats are. Those programs are not being effective for our youth. [Social Service Provider]*

*Generally there is a fairly even split, 30% Caucasian, 30% First Nation, 30% Métis and this is the split of the overall population [in the area] .... We just don't have enough money right now, but one of the areas that has been identified to look at in more depth to is how to support [FASD] people within the whole spectrum of the justice system. Preventing them from getting in is one thing, but those that are in, how do you better serve them under probationary rules? What kinds of programming could they benefit from within the jail structure? How to keep them from re-offending? I would suspect that as high as 90% with recidivism rates are from people with FASD. They just don't learn from that kind of consequence. Until they have some stability in their life which means housing, employment, finances, good medical care or whatever, you are not going to stop the revolving door. We have lots of work to do. I think that until government and bureaucrats in Justice and SolGen understand the population that they are working with and stop building a system for people they are not serving, I don't think much will change. [Social Service Provider]*

We found only one legal service with any specialization in working with people who have FASD.<sup>23</sup> Given the geographical dispersion in this Judicial District, opportunities for in-depth education and training concerning social and legal issues related to FASD, mental health, addictions, abuse and physical disabilities must be seen as a priority for service providers and the general public.

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<sup>23</sup> The FASD service is described further in Section 6.2.3.

### ***Mental Health and Addictions***

That the incidence of mental illness and addictions in this District has a daily effect on the Courts and legal service providers is repeatedly illustrated throughout the sections of this Report.

*A fellow came in and sat in a corner and he couldn't cope with what was happening and was on methadone. I said "No one in this office is going to hurt you and I need you to sit in a chair." He got up and sat in the chair. He was very frustrated with the justice system. He told people to get off his property and they charged him for uttering threats. If there was a support system for somebody in that condition, it could be worked through. [Legal Service Provider]*

The police are repeatedly called upon to deal with situations connected to mental illness, but their ability to respond effectively is severely restricted by a lack of local assessment services. Police are forced to drive to Edmonton, thus absenting themselves from the District and their duties for the better part of a day – all too often to no avail.

*It means under a warrant to apprehend they're ... taken to the nearest ... facility where they're allowed to admit somebody under a certificate. So it's a non-voluntary admission, right [and] St. Paul doesn't qualify ... [So] they're taken to the city psychiatrist on call who may or may not admit them, right. And that's also been an issue for the police. They go through all that and by the time they get the person there things have gone down and the individual kind of pulled himself or herself together for an hour or so while they're interviewed by the psychiatrist who may recommend admission but doesn't feel he has the grounds to force it. So, the person says, "Thanks, but no thanks, I'm out of here." And in short order they're back and not only are they back but they're pretty ignorant towards whoever relayed the information or made the complaint against them in the first place right. So lots of issues around that. [Social/Legal Service Provider]*

The lack of social services to treat mental illness and addictions is further documented in Section 7.

### ***Physical Disabilities***

We note that participants did not raise the issue of physical disabilities. Of the nine service organizations interviewed, seven reported access for wheelchairs and one reported that they routinely went out to meet any client not able to come to the office. Beyond this however, only one provider reported TTY service. No other programs or resources were available for people living with physical disabilities.

### 4.3.2 Domestic Violence

*Well the thing is, you're a victim of a crime and you report it and then well, you know the police take a person away ... and if that person's a part of your family, how are you supposed to deal with that? And then the kids are you know - and then on top of all that, the police are going to be asking the victim to give a statement, and the lawyer of the person that's charged is going to be trying to get the victim to say whatever they think they can about that situation. [Community Working Group Member]*

Participants reported that domestic violence is a concern in this District, often in conjunction with addictions and poverty. The issues are especially complicated as the quote above describes. Furthermore, removing any working adult from a home may result in economic hardship for the family. The police often find themselves placed in situations where it is hard to determine who perpetrated the abuse. In fact, this is the first District the Team has mapped in which law enforcement personnel reported that they are receiving calls about male victims of domestic violence. There is nowhere (other than jail) for men to go as the District has no shelter for men; nor are there available treatment programs.

*P1: I think another issue and certainly some of the time there are lots of abusive women ... [who] provoke them and ... it's push and shove you know and ... the police show up and well, it can't be her the root cause of the problem right and ... it's like "zero tolerance buddy - right you're getting charged" kind of thing, like, and all the stuff that goes along with that you know .... I think it's really hard, and hard for the police ... and hard for men in general. Like, we've got the women's shelter but we don't accept men.*

*P2: In our community, you are right the men, the man is the victim and it's always been the protocol for the women to be helped where there is really not a lot of, I guess resources, for the men.*

*P3: Calling the Crisis Line is about the only support there is for men – either abusers or abused. [Community Working Group Discussion]*

Concerns were also voiced about lack of reporting and perceived inaction by legal services. According to participants, attitudes of social prejudice in this District also extend to single mothers, and this can impact their access to legal and related services:

*P1: I think another thing is the housing but St. Paul doesn't have housing. We're so limited. Like my clients, for them to find a place, there's nothing available ....*

*P2: It's almost as if they come from the shelter they are less likely to get housing than anybody else .... we've just had clients that come back and once they find they are from the shelter they are refused because most likely, the chances of them getting back with their partners is very, very high so they take that into consideration ....*

*P3: The majority of them have, at minimum, two or three kids; tops eleven kids. That's what I've heard of as being an issue. The landlords were skeptical because it was a single mother with three or four kids so they were wondering what impact it would have upon the other residents, you know the negative impact, so ...*

*P2: We've actually had some clients stay [on] at the women's shelter because they just won't get anything else so they're most likely going to go back to their partner because they can't find a job and they can't find a home they've got these kids, they've got no life skills.*

*P3: They'll say she doesn't want to lay charges but what they'll do is ask you right in front of your husband or the perpetrator, "Do you want to lay charges?" Well I don't know ....*

*R: There is supposed to be zero tolerance ... she's not supposed to have a choice.*

*P: In practice I don't think that's true. I think there's discrepancy from one community to another. They are a bit selective. [Community Working Group Discussion]*

Service providers spoke of the challenges of working with victims of domestic violence and the frustrations that come with trying to effectively intervene:

*A very minimal number of them [assaulted women] will actually go and get a Restraining Order, get out of the house, move on. It takes 17 to 20 times until one actually leaves an abusive situation. [Community Working Group Member]*

In these circumstances police services are likely to draw community criticism whatever choice they make about enforcing – or not enforcing – ‘zero tolerance’. Further assistance and viable options for perpetrators are necessary if this situation is to be improved.

### **4.3.3 Sexual Assault**

According to participants, the rates of sexual assaults occurring within and outside of the context of domestic violence are also alarming in this District:

*Rates of sexual assaults are high here. There is no Sexual Assault Centre in the area so possibility there is a lack of education. We have raised some funds. Are currently negotiating to have a sexual assault Counsellor come in from Lloydminster. Right now Lloydminster will send Counsellors down for most critical clients for no fees. [Social Service Provider]*

As with domestic violence, victims of sexual assault under-report and are often reluctant to follow through with the legal process. This can be discouraging for service providers as well as increase their workload, and frequently their work is done to no avail because the individuals they are working with do not complete the legal process. This can result in apathy among service providers and a reluctance to support these victims:

*I [help with] Parenting Orders, Restraining Orders, case fines, Ex-Parte Restraining Orders, Ex-Parte Parenting Orders, what else do we do, I think those are the ones that I've kind of focused on .... Also our Crown Prosecutors in town get so discouraged because they file it, even with Victim Services, they don't show or they drop it or and it's a low percentage that go to Court and go through the entire process. [Community Working Group Member]*

#### **4.3.4 Aboriginal Peoples**

As previously reported (Section 2.1.1) there are five Reserves and four Métis Settlements within the St. Paul Judicial District. With such a large population of Aboriginal peoples in this District, it is important that service providers understand the differences and complexities of on-reserve laws and laws pertaining to the Métis Nation. Few participants felt they had sufficient understanding of these matters, which points to the need for training on these issues.

*We work with so many and we kind of get an on-the-job training. I'm not saying they are different to deal with than anybody else but there are different situations with Aboriginals than we may encounter with anybody else .... Last week a woman wanted to apply ... [She was] living on [a] reserve with her husband and they separated and his family moved her out of the house. And his home is on the reserve and there are different laws that apply to the reserve. The only thing I could do for her, because I don't understand the laws myself, was suggest that maybe she go to LAA and talk to lawyer and maybe go through the divorce process that could maybe help her with the laws of the reserves and what her rights are. [Legal Service Provider]*



There are scant legal and related services that are available on the local Reserves or in Métis Settlements. A stakeholder who works in the Métis Settlements said that the only legal services that are always available in those communities are RCMP officers and Traffic Safety Coordinators. However, there are only two of the latter in this District and they are only employed part-time, due to available funding. Thus they spend, on average, one day in each community per week. NCSA travels to the Reserves and Métis Settlements in this District. For example, they are in Buffalo Lake two days each month.

Participants reported that people from the Reserves and Settlements are increasingly moving into the urban centres, and facing increased discrimination as they do so. They are also vulnerable to homelessness. Having had to come into town for legal or social services, they may remain simply because they have no means of returning home.

A population increase in any community inevitably also increases the total number of people needing to access legal and other services, even if the actual *proportion* of people needing services remains the same. If service capacity does not increase to meet the additional needs, systems and service providers become over-extended.

*I think we are kind of swayed because we have such a large Aboriginal population. If you couple that with lower income and if they are not involved with programs (for example, alcohol dependency) then their chances of having legal problems are higher. But I see that with others as well in this community. It is not only Aboriginals who have legal problems here. It is alcohol and drugs that increase chances of having legal problems. [Legal Service Provider]*

*Health issues such as alcoholism and drug abuse, mental health, poverty, drug issues, lack of parenting skills. Because of my background, I probably have a different slant. I see problems going back to Residential Schools. [Legal Service Provider]*

If newcomers happen to be a visible minority in a community, there is a tendency for more established residents to erroneously perceive this group as “causing” the increased number of social problems and related demands on services. This phenomenon is apparent in St. Paul. Law enforcement personnel and some other participants pointed however to poverty and substance abuse - not ethnicity - as being at the root of most criminal activity and social problems in this community. They estimate that these problems are about equally distributed between Caucasian, Métis and First Nation populations, with few incidents among New Canadians. As a participant comments in the above quote, among Aboriginal people these problems can be traced back to Residential School experiences. Nevertheless, First Nations and Métis peoples are heavily involved in criminal and family matters, and the issue of child protection and Aboriginal children was raised in St. Paul just as it has been in the previously mapped



Districts. Furthermore, the widely documented racism directed at Aboriginal people was also evident in St. Paul.

*Alcoholism and addictions are usually a core factor in people becoming involved in the legal system .... I don't know how many people are being processed in the Courts right now – I worked in the Court system for many, many years – but the majority of Aboriginal people who are coming in were doing so as a result of substances. People with Child Welfare issues/apprehensions are a group we also see more of. Most of the women who come into my groups are involved with child welfare. By the time they come to my program they are scrambling; grasping at straws to save their families. I think what we are missing is that our programs need to become legally viable, mandated by the Courts .... As a place for people who are experiencing legal issues to go work on them. [Social Service Provider]*

*A lot of the crime issues we have here – which are mostly small crimes – are the result of addictions. That is why RCMP are dealing with the Aboriginal people here. They try to get them out of town .... My experience here is that there has been a lot of racism and the majority of homeless people here are Aboriginal. I am not sure why they don't stay in their own communities [as opposed to living on the streets in town]. I have to find that out. [Social Service Provider]*

Participants reported anecdotally that when it comes to Aboriginal respondents, Court Services in St. Paul deal with more people from the surrounding Reserves than from the town itself. As for the total ratio of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal people who are appearing in Court, the perception is that it is “about fifty-fifty” for the District as a whole. One service provider observed that most of the Aboriginal people who are in Court tend to be young and “not established.”

Overall, participants agreed that service providers in the towns need increased training to better understand both the legal issues and the social context of life in Aboriginal communities, including increased cultural sensitivity to the experiences of Aboriginal people when they move to urban centres.

#### **4.3.5 New Canadians**

According to the participants, there has been a recent increase in New Canadians moving to the St. Paul District, particularly the town of St. Paul. They suggest that this is driven by several factors:

- Specifically to work in the food services industry.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It is therefore likely that these individuals have Temporary Foreign Worker status rather than permanent residency.

- Immigrants who have now gained Canadian qualifications and are accepting rural positions as doctors and other professionals.
- New Canadians may be moving to the District - particularly since the onset of the economic recession - because the cost of living is lower than in larger urban centres such as Edmonton. However, Community Working Group members did add that there is a lack of affordable housing in the District.

Because the increase in New Canadians is very recent and the number in this District has previously been negligible, there are no specific legal or social services available.

Participants spoke of a lack of ESL classes beyond the beginner level, noting that most people who are granted entry into Canada are required to have some understanding of English (or French), yet the majority of classes that are offered are at a beginner level which is not sufficient to advance New Canadians' language skills.

As outlined in Section 3.5.4, it is clear from the Community Working Group discussions that New Canadians face considerable prejudice in this District. In saying this, we must note the difference in feedback about New Canadians in the three communities we visited. Participants from St. Paul spoke extensively about the difficulties that the community is having adjusting to its increasing diversity. Conversely, participants in Bonnyville viewed cultural diversity as a non-issue in their community, additionally noting that they had access to interpretation in a range of languages if it was needed.

*We are quite multicultural out here. But this really isn't a problem here. We have many people within this Building/Organization who speak different languages but most people in this area can function in English. We have CanTalk to back us up. [Legal/Social Service Provider]*

Cold Lake is the largest of the communities where we conducted interviews, but in 2006 had a visible minority population that is lower than Bonnyville (3% v. 5%). Only one interview was conducted in Cold Lake but the participant did not report concerns with cultural divides.

#### **4.3.6 Children and Youth**

As with the Medicine Hat Judicial District, an emerging theme in St. Paul is one of life-span interactions with the justice system. Service providers felt that children are not being given the supports they need, and are getting in trouble with the law and becoming involved in substance use and abuse at young ages. They referred to a general lax attitude in the community towards alcohol and even drug use, and went on to note that children are not being made accountable for their actions.

*P1: They start getting younger and younger regards to the crime. They are saying between eight and ten are very active in drugs already. Alcohol, they had done it, so it's kind of scary.*

*P2: They can't be charged right?*

*P1: Yeah exactly and they know that, right. It's so easy for the young to get away with the crime, but there's no accountability. So if the parents know that the kids are stealing but the parents don't - I've been there - I was in Fields when this kid was stealing and the parent was watching her 'cause there's no consequence ....*

*P2: You can't even let the name go out .... I don't think you can be charged if you're under twelve.*

*P1: And there's no accountability for anybody. The kids aren't accountable. The parents aren't accountable you know so they can't even release the names so the community can be aware of this kid. So we've put so many laws and restrictions to protect these kids we're not really protecting them we're actually just maybe encouraging them or you know, making it too easy for them.*

*[Community Working Group Members]*

Community Working Group members noted that many parents are facing problems with addictions and associated criminal activities. While recognizing that the services are not in place to help these adults, they also noted the impact on their children.

*A lot of kids in town, it is surprising that they do as well as they do. And if you go back and research their history over the last year or two, how many sets of relatives and different locations bounced from pillar to post and school to school. And with that level of stability how do you expect them to do well? [Community Working Group Members]*

Participants stated that there is a need for more restorative justice options for children and youth. Additionally, there needs to be more education for children about their legal rights and responsibilities. One participant also suggested that a mentoring program that paired at-risk youth with seniors could be beneficial. It would provide an opportunity for others to benefit from some of the older community members' knowledge and experiences and would provide connections and supports for children who may not have many:

*P1: There's one thing that I've been introducing ... and it's mentorship. Because we do have a lot of senior people, senior citizens in this town with a lot of resources, a lot of knowledge, and a lot to give, and the young people need that. They are not getting it because it's not inter-generational like it needs to be so the supports aren't there for the families. So it's harder for families to do a good job especially when they have to deal with teens. When people are lost teenagers.*

*P2: Absolutely because a lot of time, when I see some people pass away I think what a shame of the knowledge that was just snatched. Is never available again.*

*P1: One senior with one teenager you know and do it that way. They've got to develop a relationship you know because relationships are very, very important and some people don't know how to work on that, you know. [Community Working Group]*

Such a mentoring relationship could go a long way to alleviating the effects of the reported fragmentation of service provision and financial and networking barriers that occur when transitioning individuals from youth to adult services.

#### **4.3.7 Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs)**

Service provider feedback strongly suggests that the majority of people in St. Paul who are going to Court without lawyers, are doing so for financial reasons:

*People who are going to Court on their own tend to be people who cannot afford to pay for lawyers and are borderline with legal aid - don't quite meet the financial criteria. Legal Aid has changed the guidelines regarding what cases they will accept as well. We only really run into people who could afford a lawyer but are unable to find one in the Fort McMurray area. There is also no Family Court in Lac La Biche. LAA won't help with family law cases unless the other party has a lawyer. Sometimes people could afford lawyers but prefer to use [this service]. Sometimes people were previously represented but are no longer, but lawyers have to make an appeal to withdraw from a case. They cannot just withdraw. [Legal Service Provider]*

Service providers are desperate for help for SRLs. The following quote illustrates the positive impact a little basic assistance can have for someone who is self-representing, underlining how useful a LInC or community clinic could be:

*I had a lady from Lac La Biche and the next day was her court date. She couldn't get [to regional Office] and I said "Can you find a fax?" "No, I can't." I said "Have you a parenting order?" She said, "Yes, and I gather my partner is bringing in a lawyer." I said, "Now you are fighting for your life, aren't you?" "Yes, what can I do?" I said, "You go in and talk to the Judge - you don't have to talk to anybody else. You tell him that you require an adjournment in order to find a lawyer, and in the meantime you want interim custody and interim child support. And if the Judge says, "Will you consider access?" say, "Yes, I'd consider access." She got her Order, she got her kids. She came in saying "I got my kids." She said, "I was standing up there and my knees were shaking and all of a sudden somewhere in the background I heard, 'you are fighting for your life'."*  
[Social Service Provider]

Participants also spoke of the types of cases in which people are more likely to self-represent.

*A lot of the family law is self-represented litigants. A lot of civil is typically self-represented. In criminal we usually have Duty Counsel to help out the people who are self-representing.* [Legal Service Provider]

*Men are generally going to represent themselves more than women. Criminal is the area of law people represent themselves most and out here. Family would be the next runner up. Because of LAA I think there is more middle income people that are self-reps, don't qualify for legal aid and can't hire a lawyer. As far as income-based, I think they are the most disadvantaged from that point of view. Low income people are often self-represented but that's by choice because they know the system and could apply for legal aid and just choose not to.* [Legal Service Provider]

*I think we run into under-rep cases when we are supporting women in really dirty custody cases because then quite often the client cannot afford a lawyer and it is civil so they can't always get LAA. This often comes down to not what is best for the child but who can afford the best lawyer. [R: You mentioned civil specifically. Is there a reason?] Civil is not always more difficult to access but is not affordable. Some people have to self-represent because they can't afford a lawyer. I see this in custody cases.* [Legal/Social Service Provider]

Legal service providers reported that people who self-represent often do not fully understand the court process, which can lead to negative outcomes for them and can also impact the other parties involved.

*It makes it more difficult [when the opposing party is self-representing]. It takes more time, there is more emotion involved .... It ends up costing the person who is represented more money because the Court will ask for [the lawyer's] assistance and ... as the only lawyer on the file [s/he] has to hire a process server rather than faxing letters .... [and] for example, the court rules in a family or civil matter that judgment will be given to this person for \$10,000 but that person doesn't know how to do up an Order so the Court will ask the lawyer on file, even though you might be the losing party. Usually it is the winning party that does the Order, then you have to do up the Order and get it to Clerks and get it filed. [Legal Service Provider]*

#### **4.4 Consequences of Not Accessing Legal Services**

While more information is needed in order to understand when, how and why people recognize and seek to address legal problems, the frequency with which the general public has a legal need and the negative costs of not addressing legal needs, are well established. If legal needs are not resolved promptly, overall social problems tend to increase, leading to additional issues which form a “cluster” (Currie, 2007, 2009; Genn, 1999; Pleasence, Balmer & Buck, 2008; Stratton & Anderson, 2008). ALSMP data in the St. Paul Judicial District profoundly underlines the tendency for unresolved legal, social and health problems to cluster.

*Other problems in the area that you see because of drug induced capacity: they burned their brains out. A lot have dropped out of school at an early age. I know when I'm talking to them no matter how you phrase a question, they are a little bit not sure how to answer. I don't know if it is environmental, home situation, child welfare home apprehension that's caused the problem, or mothers drinking too much when expecting. I've been here 30 years on September 15, 2010. I have talked to young kids 15 years ago and I still talk to them. I can count on one hand the people come talk to me that long ago and are respectable people. [Legal Service Provider]*

*Legal-Intervention Program - people have drug charges, child neglect, trouble with the law because of general alcohol issues, charges for abusing children and spousal abuse. Very diverse. [Social Service Provider].*

It is so much a part of life in this District, that providers expect users to have multiple unresolved problems as is illustrated by the quotes throughout this entire report.



## 5.0 GAPS AND PRIORITIES IN MEETING LEGAL NEEDS

Although service providers reported that this District was fairly well serviced for the most part, their feedback actually highlighted some very crucial gaps in legal and related services.

### 5.1 Gaps in Legal Services

There are two main areas of gaps in legal services in the St. Paul Judicial District. They are:

- Inadequate Access to Legal Services in All Areas of Law.
- Absence of Specialized Services, Resources and Training

#### 5.1.1 Inadequate Access to Legal Services in All Areas of Law

Inadequate access to affordable legal services has been a common finding in all mapped Judicial Districts so far. In the St. Paul District, it is also extremely clear that current services do not have the capacity to meet identified need or to provide accessibility to legal services across this vast District. Participants identified the following areas of concern.

##### ***Limited LAA Capacity***

Participants reported that Duty Counsel currently have limited capacity to handle the demand for service. As described in Section 3.4.1 there are no staff Duty Counsel in this Judicial District. Duty Counsel services are provided by a roster of private lawyers: one for criminal, one for family, who sometimes need to cover two Circuit Courts on the same day. They are only available on the day of Court and there are often line-ups for both Duty Counsel and legal aid intake service on the Court Circuit days. This is not adequate to meet the need. In addition it was suggested that an enhanced capacity is needed for legal aid to also assist in a wider range of family matters and in summary criminal cases.

##### ***Lack of Services for Family Law Related Needs***

There is a high demand for family law services. Current service providers do everything they can to meet the needs, but more capacity is required.

*It's easier for the Family Court Worker to fill out forms. We do end up answering a lot of questions at the counter but we can't tell people ... which questions to fill out and we have to send them back again to re-do. It would be a big help to have a Family Court Worker on a full-time basis instead of once or twice a month. [Legal Service Provider]*

Participants also reported a shortage of lawyers who provide LAA certificate services for people with family law needs, supports for children who have criminal law needs as well

as for their families, and education and supports for families for whom domestic violence is a problem.

### ***Lack of Legal Assistance for People Charged with Summary Offences***

According to participants, LAA certificate services, NCSA and Duty Counsel all offer only limited assistance with summary offences (offences that will likely not result in jail time). However, these offences can result in criminal records that will negatively impact the lives of accused:

*Sometimes I feel sorry for these people who have Summary Convictions and you know somewhere along the line they will not get a job because of that assault. Young students who end up with domestic assault or young women fighting and I ask what career are you going into and a lot of these women are wanting to go into the teaching field, social work field, or early childhood. With an assault record they're not hiring for working with people. [Legal Service Provider]*

Service providers reported that people do not always understand the implications of the situations they are in, or their options. In some cases, they could avoid a criminal record if they had appropriate information and supports. There is a need for accessible legal advice and information for people who are facing Summary Offence charges.

### **5.1.2 Absence of Specialized Services, Resources and Training**

There are many specialized service needs in this Judicial District and very few services that are designed to meet them adequately.

#### ***Mental Health, Addictions, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assaults***

Service providers reported high rates of mental health needs, addictions, domestic violence and sexual assault. They also identified under-reporting by victims, a lack of training about how to provide legal services to victims, a degree of apathy among legal service providers and a lack of resources for victims and offenders.

As noted in Subsection 4.4.1 and Section 7.2, participants reported that resources to address these issues are generally lacking. As might be expected under these circumstances, participants had a number of ideas of what was needed. They suggested services such as a sexual assault centre, and specialized courts for mental health, domestic violence and drugs.

This District could benefit from increased capacity for collaborative service delivery. While it is probably not viable to create separate resources or Courts to address each issue individually, a visible specialized Court and related services that addresses these inter-related issues holistically, would be very beneficial to this District.



### ***Absence of Services for New Canadians***

Growing numbers of New Canadians are moving to this District and there are currently no legal resources that offer specialized programs or resources for this group. Indeed, there are no specialized services of any kind for this group. The numbers are still fairly low but are rising, according to participants. Considering the prejudice that they reportedly face and the legal needs that immigrants and TFWs often experience (eg. landlord-tenant, employment), this need is especially pressing.

### ***Inadequate Victim's Services***

Service providers reported the need for enhanced Victim's Services in St. Paul. There is also the need for existing Victim's Services to have increased connectedness with providers and the public.

## **5.2 Challenges in Filling the Gaps**

There are many barriers and gaps in this District. In order to succeed in filling these gaps, efforts must also be made to address:

- Lack of Service Provider Education and Training.
- Fragmentation of Existing Services.

### **5.2.1 Lack of Staff with Appropriate Education and Training**

As indicated in Section 5.1, there are numerous gaps in legal services in this District. In order to truly fill these gaps, it is not only necessary to provide funding for the respective services, but also to recruit and train staff so they can have the greatest impact in the delivery of the needed services. (This is also underlined by the discussion of the Lack of Service Provider Knowledge in Subsection 3.5.5.)

Participants reported few opportunities for training. They also reported difficulty recruiting professionals to relocate to this Judicial District, due to the largely rural setting and relatively small population. Efforts will have to be made to provide training opportunities for existing service providers as well as incentives for professionals to relocate and remain in the District.

### **5.2.2 Fragmentation of Services**

The geography and regional organization of services creates a serious fragmentation of services which can be very frustrating for service providers and the public. While each of the major communities has some legal and social services, key services are missing from every community (Sections 5.1 and 7.0). In this context, service providers and the public face challenges learning about and accessing those that exist (Subsection 3.5.5). For instance, service providers in St. Paul did not necessarily know what services were available in Bonnyville or other nearby communities, even when their jobs require that they travel between those communities. Service providers in St. Paul also did not always have a high level of awareness about others in the same community.

*It is very frustrating for people who are homeless. They can't get linked to services because they are constantly moving around. They are sleeping on this person's couch and then they move to the next town to sleep on someone else's couch and then they are back. We can't even keep up with them to even determine what they need at this point in time. [Social Service Provider]*

Service providers spoke of their helplessness when it comes to offering supports to members of the community that have complex social and legal needs (eg. domestic violence, addictions). This is really symptomatic of the limited and fragmented services that they have available to deal with such complex needs.

Participants spoke about walls that exist between services that cater to certain groups (eg. homeless people, Aboriginal peoples) and other legal and related services, as well as between certain communities (eg. St. Paul and Saddle Lake).

As well as the need for enhanced services, it is clear that expanded opportunities are also needed to enable service providers to learn about each other and the services they provide.

## **6.0 IMPROVING LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

In a District that is facing many challenges, there is some good work being done, as well as admirable efforts to serve vulnerable members of the population.

### **6.1 Good Practices to Build On**

Service providers in this District are really trying to help their clients and welcomed the opportunity to speak with others and to share ideas for how to improve service delivery. In fact, during the meeting Community Working Group members identified two different possibilities for collaboration. Their desire to help and to learn about other services, are great strengths.

#### **6.1.1 Service Provider Relationships**

*For a town the size of St. Paul we're actually pretty well-resourced in terms of what is available and where to go or choose to access. We've got pretty good resources. We have pretty good ranges you know, whether its formal linkage or even a fairly informal linkage. Pick up the phone and call somebody, right. [Community Working Group Member]*

Service providers reported that they have informal relationships with one another and will often phone around and ask until they find the information they are looking for in order to assist clients. Everyone was also very approachable and accommodating and spoke openly with Team members.

The lack of coordinated information-sharing however, hampers their relationships and ability to provide accurate information and holistic services to clients. The informal service provider relationships provide the foundation upon which coordination and information-sharing can be built.

### **6.1.2 Networking**

Community Working Group members stated emphatically that they have a strong community of services and that networking is good, which underlines the recognition that there is tremendous value in networking.

*Actually I feel we have a very strong community. We have an inter-agency meeting and I believe we're close to probably - well, they're supposed to only give one community member for each agency ... but I'd say there's at least thirty agencies attending these meetings. [Community Working Group Member]*

*Between agencies we are building a very strong support group ... but from community alone we don't get a lot of support just because we deal with more Aboriginal women and we get a lot of stigma that "that's where our tax money goes." And that's the first question that I get: "Oh, well how many natives go there?" [Community Working Group Member]*

While networking is valued Team members observed that siloes exist, creating a series of small networks rather than an integrated, District-wide network.

*We try to work together to assist the public, the Crown, ourselves, and the RCMP. We will phone the RCMP and tell them we have a person at the counter and that we are sending them down to deal with their issue. [Legal Service Provider]*

*We have two constables that are doing what [is called] enhanced-policing. There is funding from the province [for this]. They are on the Safe Communities Committee. [We have] a threat assessment team based in the schools – it is a case-by-case basis and they will call [RCMP] in or Mental Health services if they need ... case meetings. [Legal Service Provider]*

*The Inter-Agency Group in Bonnyville [is good] and we certainly network with FCSS and all other agencies that work with victims. We also network with our neighbouring units. [Legal/Social Service Provider]*

*We do find things like inter-agency meetings very helpful. Each community [in the District] has a different set-up, but basically all human service agencies meet once a month or quarterly and those are very, very helpful. More so than a written document. The actual physical networking is helpful and get to put a face to program and name and then people tend to utilize them much more .... In all the communities it is good; some communities are more closed than others. We try to be a good community partner and try not to push before communities are ready. We will try to get on a committee or project that is relevant that is maybe led by that community and try to build a better relationship. It is all about relationships. [Social Service Provider]*

When it comes to the relationships between on and off-reserve service providers, as well as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services, exceptions to the claim of good networking are acknowledged. This mirrors previous research findings by the Forum in Northwestern Alberta, that found the divisions among Aboriginal peoples, and on-off reserve communities, was as deep as the Caucasian prejudice towards Aboriginal people (Stratton, 2006).

*The White community here has been very supportive of our organization but none of the First Nations communities have lifted a finger .... They say I walk hard on this land. Yes I do; but I don't have any time to be small. I think the non-Aboriginal community feels that the less they have to do with this service, the better. And I understand that relationship-building has not been good in the past. There is a lot of lip service. [Social Service Provider]*

The recognized value in networking provides fertile ground which will yield positive improvements if service providers are able to gain resources to support effective networking, reduce fragmentation, and improve referrals. The ALSMP database will be an important resource to assist with this.

## **6.2 Creative Approaches to Meeting Needs**

The service providers in this District are trying to find ways to support that community members need by collaborating around the resources available to them. There are some promising initiatives underway here.

### **6.2.1 Collaboration to Serve Victims of Violence**

The women's shelter in St. Paul is increasing supports for clients:

*At the shelter [we're] just starting the Women's Support Program .... We've got two co-workers right now who are becoming Victim Services Advocates, so we're getting connected with them. We are trying to get connected with other community agencies and just the community awareness, that's one of our big focuses right now. We've got the bullying prevention as well ... [and service] go and talk about family violence to different schools in the area. Our outreach as well ... with clients who have been in the shelter and ... clients that for whatever reason they don't need health services, but they still have been affected by some kind of abuse and they're still struggling with it and we all provide referrals and counselling, life skills support, all that stuff.*  
[Community Working Group Member]

There are also some really good efforts being made to support victims within the limits of the available resources:

*We have had a seminar with Crown, [Court Services], NCSA, LAA, RCMP, and Children's Service to do with victims' impact statements. We talked about how all of our agencies contributed to the victim impact statement.* [Legal Service Provider]

### **6.2.2 Prevention Initiative for Children and Youth**

Because there is much concern about children and youth engaging in criminal behaviours and substance abuse at early ages, some inventive attempts are currently being made to prevent children from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour:

*Also too, at the Safer Community Task Force we have developed a program or we're trying to .... I guess they've copied a program that was done in Burnaby, B.C. I think it was called the "Positive Ticking Program", where when you see kids doing positive things you reward them. Like you know, so ... there's something positive in the community that's actually going on .... Trying to start looking at the positives instead of just always dwelling on the negatives. How can we make our community better? How can we get the kids more involved with the RCMP?*  
[Community Working Group Member]

There is also the initiative described in Section 4.3.6 to develop mentorship between youth and senior citizens, providing family supports and parenting examples.

### **6.2.3 Supporting People with Needs Related to Mental Illness and Substance Abuse**

The Lakeland Centre for FASD is located in Cold Lake and has satellite offices in St. Paul, Bonnyville and Lac La Biche. Staff have excellent awareness of the legal needs that accompany FASD and good knowledge about existing resources in the District.

*[Lakeland staff] accompany individuals to Court and often the first time they see their lawyer ... and help them advocate for what they need and listen. [Lakeland staff] are their memory bank in a way. [They] often look after the [clients'] legal documents [and] store them [as with] identification, any other important health records because [they are] often lost or missing. [They]ve been in business for 10 years. The knowledge gap is narrowing. I would say that more lawyers and Crown Prosecutors and even Judges are much more aware of what FASD means .... The Chief Crown Prosecutor is on [the] diagnostic team for adults. That is very helpful that there is that cross-training that is going on. We learn more about how Courts work and they learn more about people with FASD. [Social Service Provider]*

As we have seen in other Districts, when an FASD specific service exists, it provides a great legal support model. However, the District is so vast and there seems to be little if any awareness about this service.

### **6.3 Creating Affordable Legal Advice & Representation**

Given the degree of poverty that participants spoke of, the need for affordable legal services in this District is great. Service providers reported trying to help people who cannot afford legal costs, when possible. In fact, participants really seemed to be generally empathetic about the financial hardships that people experience when facing legal problems.

*We do have exceptions for certain applications, like a Civil Claims Action. There is a fee of \$100-200 for that action to begin. For some low-income people there are exceptions to the rules of the fee that can be put before our supervisor and she can waive the fee. Things like that for people with lower incomes. As well in the sense and they are called as witnesses and are having to miss work and it is really going to affect them. Typically we don't pay for wages missed. but in the case for somebody living below poverty line, we would make exceptions in those cases and pay for the lost wages for the day. [Legal Service Provider]*

### **6.3.1 Unbundling Legal Services**

Of all the Districts mapped so far, the participants in St. Paul were the most open to the idea of unbundling legal services, perhaps due to the absolute need in this Judicial District. Service providers suggested that this would be most useful in child custody cases, divorces and with completing legal documents in general.

There were however reservations, particularly among the practicing Bar. Concerns were expressed about the errors that people might still make with the portions of their legal cases that they are handling on their own. There was also concern expressed that lawyers could suffer with regards to their reputation if people retained them for a portion of their cases but did not have successful outcomes or made errors in the portion of the processes that they had not retained lawyers to help with:

*The problem I see with that trend, if it is going to go that way, is often people screw up and it is going to cost them more money to have lawyers fix what they do on their own. And it usually costs them more as they go to one lawyer and “Oh I don’t like what that lawyer did it.” and then they are paying the next lawyer more because they have to review what the previous lawyer did. Overall I don’t think it is beneficial. As a lawyer, I want control of my files. I have no problems if you want to do it, but my name won’t be anywhere on that aspect of it. I won’t let you go serve documents, hire a processor. I think that is a recipe for disaster and for lawyers names to get further tarnished, more than we are now. Our reputation is bad enough. It would not help the profession in general. I think it has its place for certain things, but as a trend I don’t think it’ll benefit our profession. [Legal Service Provider]*

### **6.3.2 Paralegals**

Service providers were also more supportive of the idea of increasing the utilization of supervised paralegals, than in any of the previously mapped Judicial Districts:

*I would say yes, but the Bar would say no! They would be helpful in Family Court. Criminal has Crown, Duty Counsel. In Family, you have the judge, the client and yourself. If the judge wants to put things off they just do. It is so frustrating. [Legal Service Provider]*

*[When] they have to do their own Orders, [for] little things like that it could help a person to complete the process. Or understanding some of the proper ways to fill out forms, and knowing what they need to know. I know because I have worked so much for it. I could probably help somebody fill out an application and getting it together instead of getting it half done. Most people applying for child support don’t have money for a lawyer. [Legal Service Provider]*



There was again some apprehension expressed about the use of paralegals:

*NCSA and Family Liaison Worker positions are made for filling out forms and so on. They are not there to provide legal advice. If they were trained better there would be some use. These [court workers] are not paralegals so maybe paralegal training is proper. ... [Paralegals are] more useful [in community services] than in Courts and tribunals, because it would be cheaper for people and often they just need some direction. I'm thinking seniors or dependent adults, more helpful than in the Court system. [Legal Service Provider]*

## **7.0 RELATED SOCIAL, HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

In this Judicial District, non-legal factors play a profound role in exacerbating the legal problems that residents have. As has been indicated throughout this Report, poverty permeates many of these issues, which in this region cannot be meaningfully separated from public legal needs or the context of legal service delivery. This is illustrated throughout this Report as we have presented findings about legal services and legal needs in this region.

To summarize, the reported non-legal barriers to legal services include:

- Social Prejudice,
- Addictions,
- Mental Illnesses,
- Homelessness, and
- Lack of Public Transportation.

### **7.1 Social Prejudice**

The presence of cultural divides and social prejudice is a theme that runs through the discussions in this Report. As previously mentioned, service providers reported divides between the Franco-Albertans and the rest of the community members. Considerable racism directed at New Canadians was also reported. Distinctions between refugees, immigrants and TFGs do not seem to be recognized. Aboriginal people are often viewed as “troublesome”, creating crime and other social problems. Based on service providers’ feedback however, they are seen more as part of the community than New Canadians and Franco-Albertans. These social divides impede service providers’ ability to provide seamless service delivery to members of the community.



## 7.2 Mental Health

*I know a lot of families with these ticking time bombs. The families have lived for years and years ... just trying to keep quiet about it and hopefully it won't be the day they snap. [Social Service Provider]*

*Nowhere to go for mental health services. They are on the street. In one situation, parents are going away and there is no one who can make sure the daughter gets meds while they are away. [Social Service Provider]*

There is a mental health clinic in St. Paul, but it does not have diagnostic capacity. If someone is apprehended under an Order they have to be taken to Edmonton to see an on-call psychiatrist. This Judicial District is woefully under-resourced to deal with mental illnesses and the service providers do not generally have access to adequate training and supports to deal with either the legal or social problems that arise.

*I think with mental health services [we would like to make more referrals]. I think that is lacking. I don't know if it is anyone's fault. We have a mental health wing at the hospital here but it shut down because of lack of doctors. This has always been a frustrating part of my career. We are always transporting people. Then in a couple of days, they are back out. [Legal Service Provider]*

*When I went to see the new doctor [psychiatrist] and book an appointment for somebody I was advised that they don't see people who have Children Services involvement, and they don't see people with pending charges. This is a program for clients who are enrolled here with us at the clinic and have low level offences [and a] diagnosable condition. [Community Working Group Member]*

The few service providers that do provide legal supports to people with mental illnesses acknowledge problems with stigma and lack of understanding about mental illness and existing services. Currently, service providers and individuals who have mental illnesses are faced with a discouraging lack of options that often result in ineffective interventions and “revolving door” experiences with the justice system. There are repeated indications that people - including some service providers - do not want to get involved when there are mental health issues. Other members of the legal and social service community are working hard to find ways to address steep challenges.

*Yeah I've had on more than one occasion to direct families, "You know what, if you're not getting the cooperation you think you need to get somebody apprehended, go to the Courthouse, see the magistrate, give him the information. See if he thinks it's legit. You know he'll issue a warrant and the police don't get to make that decision and they have to act on the warrant". [Social Service Provider]*

*We've had clients ... from right in town, clients who have been at Saddle Lake and have moved to town, clients who reside in Cold Lake, a client who came from Lloydminster. And they're now ... looking at taking referrals on individuals under 18 and they're talking about this whole huge catchment area and they're supposed to be recruiting another .5 therapist position to do that. To do intake and assessment and the recommendation piece. The plan is to have that person, I think, based at AADAC in Bonnyville, because nobody else has got space for them. And then they would kind of be able to shuttle back and forth between like Bonnyville/Lac La Biche, Bonnyville/Cold Lake kind of thing in terms of referrals. Because the logistics of getting clients to come in from all over the place - like even in Lloydminster, you know, it's minimum a three hour round trip to come for a follow-up appointment. [Community Working Group Member]*

### **7.3 Addictions**

Problems related to addictions and crime are so profound that participants were often unable to shift their focus away from this. FASD is, of course, a disability related to addictions. The participant's feedback seems to indicate that they are treading water, and currently just dealing with the symptoms of addictions rather than the root causes, when they recognize that a lifetime of addictions is disabling. They know the causes should be addressed, but they currently don't have the resources to do so:

*[Addictions services] are not visible. Substance abuse is so high here. It is so obvious but they are not visible. I think [the problem is] the way they give service. They want to do this appointment thing. Come on! We are dealing with addicts here!* [Social Service Provider]

*I have noticed the drugs are a way bigger problem here. This could be due to our closeness to a large urban centre [Edmonton]. I don't think alcohol is a bigger problem out here but the attitude towards alcohol is different. People are more permissible here. Drinking is a popular thing.* [Legal Service Provider]

*Everybody's affected ... It might be more common in low income families or whatever, but I do I know for sure - I know six men that could very well really benefit and their families. They were high profile men, each one of them ... business men in the community and for some reason took a wrong path. They've made some bad choices and they definitely could use a community treatment order or a family treatment order where they have to go into a program and they have to follow through with getting rid of their addictions issues. It's not only destroying them it's destroying their family as well as their community .... [T]he whole community knows these guys.* [Community Working Group Member]

*You've mentioned brain disorder. A lot of my clients don't function properly because they've been addicted since they were .... either crack or whatever else, meth. It's so hard for them to even function every day let alone to find a place to find any kind of legal help, 'cause they don't have that stability but they've tried using PDD but they don't apply for PDD and they don't apply for AISH for whatever reason, and they're just stuck.* [Community Working Group Member]

*By Grade 10 it is drugs – using and selling. Drinking and smoking dope (and cigarettes) at school and on the buses.* [Community Working Group Member]

There is an urgent need for a long term in-patient addictions treatment facility. Some Community Working Group members also suggested that they would like to see mandatory treatment orders being imposed on people who are repeatedly coming into contact with the law as a result of addictions. They illustrated the critical need by reporting two deaths of 12 and 13-year-old children from alcohol poisoning around Christmas of 2009.

## 7.4 Homelessness

Only two social service providers spoke about homelessness without being prompted to do so. One commented that the community in general does not want to face homelessness, and turns a blind eye because they do not know how to address it.

When researchers asked directly, service providers reported that the numbers of people who are living on the streets in St. Paul have increased recently, with specific groups of people being at risk of becoming homeless.

- Women who have completed their maximum time in shelter and can't find housing (although it was also reported that the shelter can and does make exceptions for residents).
- Aboriginal peoples who come into town from a nearby reserve (eg. Saddle Lake) and choose to remain in town rather than travel back to the reserve.
- Children who are neglected and unsupervised.
- People who are travelling from other provinces, looking for work in Alberta.
- Transient people who are travelling through.

Service providers emphasized the need for a shelter for men, both the transient homeless and domestic violence victims. In addition, shelter is needed to support homeless families and keep them together.

*There is a definite need for a men's shelter. We have a lot of transient people in this part of the province. It is not just victims of domestic violence [who need access to shelters]. Sometimes these men are just down on their luck and from another province and have no place to go.*  
[Social Service Provider]

Housing was also mentioned as being crucial for people to become stabilized and to start addressing other legal, social and health problems:

*There are tons of gaps in service. I would say the biggest barrier for reaching a certain level of stability is housing and a whole array of options from group home living, to supported, to home living, to independence with some guidance. People need a place to live and beyond that they need the support to be able to stay there. It is really hard to make people stable if they can't find places to live. We are developing an emergency placement where our adults or homeless people can stay for up to three months so we can stabilize them, to find out what they need.* [Social Service Provider]

## 7.5 Transportation

Transportation is an even greater issue in this Judicial District than in others that we have mapped, because the entire District is essentially rural. Even the town of St. Paul has no public transit and there are no innovative systems like those we captured in some of the rural communities (eg. using deadheaded buses to transport people into Calgary from nearby communities for Court dates). There is a Greyhound that runs once or twice a day, stopping in many of the towns from St. Paul to Cold Lake and in-between on request. However, this is an expensive option:

*[If they live] out of town and don't have a vehicle it is really hard to get here to Court. People hitchhike in from Saddle Lake - a lot of people hitchhike in to get to Court. People phone in. A lot of applications should be in-person, especially with Restraining Orders, and we've had to ease up on typical rules. Restraining Orders should be in Queen's Bench and they should be doing the application here at the Courthouse. But we've made exceptions where ... the person has brought it to the Courthouse in Lac La Biche even though it is only a Provincial Court and the [Clerks] really don't know what they are accepting. If a person can't get here, we shouldn't be not allowing them services. It is really tough - you've only got one Queen's Bench Court .... If you don't drive you have a hard time getting access to QB matters, so if at least a person can access a computer and do this documentation and we can bring it back ... we try to bring it back.. It is very limited. [Legal Service Provider]*

*There is no public transportation except taxis and the Greyhound bus. And the taxi drivers are crooks. They will charge people who are trying to get into town to go to the food bank \$50 each way from Saddle Lake, for example. Poor people in rural communities/reserves are often stuck. This area is different, too. The city isn't centralized; there are houses scattered for miles outside the city limits. [Social Service Provider]*

*Some people do not have access to vehicles. There is no public transit here. Often people cannot afford to pay other people to drive them. [Legal/Social Service Provider]*

*Many of our individuals live in rural areas, either on reserve or Métis Settlement, or rental in country is cheaper than city or town and so getting into town for appointments is almost impossible for them. They are totally reliant on other people for rides or they don't go. Even in the towns, none of the towns are set up nicely that all the services are in walking distance. In Cold Lake for instance, the hospital is 7 km away from here and can't walk there from here. Bonnyville is a long main street, it is 6 km long and you can't walk from one end of main street to the other very easily and not without distraction. [Social Service Provider]*

This lack of public transportation creates an access to justice barrier. Collaborative action to bring about innovations which address the lack of transportation could go a long way to preventing the exacerbation and accumulation of legal problems. One service provider shared insight about how to improve public transportation:

*I have told the MLA that, creating an efficient and affordable public transportation between St. Paul and Saddle Lake would boost sales in local businesses and reduce the numbers of homeless people on St. Paul's streets, because many of them are from Saddle Lake and have family there. They find their way into St Paul and hang around because it is too difficult to get back and forth. [Social Service Provider]*

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations which follow have been developed from a combination of evidence and analysis:

- the demographics of the St. Paul Judicial District (Section 2.0);
- existing legal and related services (Sections 3.1-3.4);
- barriers to accessing existing legal services (Sections 3.5);
- legal needs in this Judicial District (Section 4.0);
- gaps in meeting legal needs (Section 5.0);
- opportunities for improving legal service delivery (Section 6.0);
- the larger context of social, health and infrastructure needs (Section 7.0)

Findings have been based on the mapping of services; the perceptions and experiences of service providers; the observations of the Research Team; the experience of the Research Directors, Advisory Committee and Working Group Members; and the knowledge of other research and models of successful service delivery.

The 17 Recommendations fall into five categories, and are designed to enhance legal service provision in the St. Paul Judicial District.

**Table 10 -  
Recommendations for Improving Legal Service Delivery in St. Paul**

| <b>Recommendations</b>   | <b>Reference Sections of the Report</b>  | <b>How to Achieve the Recommendations</b>   | <b>Justice Community Partners</b>   | <b>Models</b> | <b>Category</b> |
|--|--|---|---|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>In-depth Specialized Training for all Service Providers</b>   |  |   |   |               |                 |
| 1. In-depth, locally focused training that empowers all legal service providers to effectively assist clients with social needs such as mental health, addictions, domestic violence, sexual assaults. | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.1</li> <li>▪ 4.3.2</li> <li>▪ 4.3.3</li> <li>▪ 6.2.1</li> <li>▪ 6.2.3</li> <li>▪ 7.2</li> <li>▪ 7.3</li> </ul> | Inter-ministry collaboration to coordinate and deliver existing training, and/or develop additional training as needed, for government and community service providers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solicitor General</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> </ul>  | Safe-Com      | Fill Gaps       |
| 2. Enhanced cultural sensitivity training for all legal service providers.   | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.3</li> <li>▪ 4.3.4</li> <li>▪ 4.3.5</li> <li>▪ 7.1</li> </ul>  | Collaboration to coordinate and deliver existing training, and/or develop additional training as needed   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solicitor General</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Community based legal/social services</li> </ul> |               | Remove Barriers |
| 3. Resources to assist with District-wide networking and effective, accurate referrals   | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.5</li> <li>▪ 3.5.6</li> <li>▪ 5.2.1</li> <li>▪ 5.2.2</li> <li>▪ 6.1.1</li> <li>▪ 6.1.2</li> </ul>              | The ALSMP database. Utilization, maintenance and sharing of this resource.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General</li> <li>▪ LAA</li> </ul>                    |               | Fill Gaps       |

| Recommendations   | Reference Sections of the Report  | How to Achieve the Recommendations  | Justice Community Partners   | Models | Category                                |
|---|---|---|--|--------|---|
| 4. Enhance understanding about accurate legal service provision for Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal peoples. | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.4</li> <li>▪ 3.5.5</li> <li>▪ 4.3.4</li> <li>▪ 5.2.2</li> </ul>                | Provide legal training to understand differences among legal rights and responsibilities for on and off- reserve First Nations, the Métis Nation and non-Aboriginal people.                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> </ul>  |        | Fill Gaps                               |
| 5. Enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of legal information and service provision for New Canadians.       | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.5</li> <li>▪ 5.1.2</li> </ul>  | Provide legal training to service providers to enable them to better understand the varying residency and legal statuses among New Canadians, and their associated legal needs.                   |  |        | Fill Gaps                               |
| <b>Improve Access to and Coordination of PLEI</b>   |   |   |  |        |   |
| 6. Identify and coordinate existing PLEI.   | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.4</li> <li>▪ 3.5.5</li> <li>▪ 3.5.6</li> <li>▪ 4.3.7</li> <li>▪ 5.1</li> </ul> | Provide regular Judicial District legal and related service information sessions.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ Legal Resource Centre</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General</li> <li>▪ LAA</li> </ul>      |        | Fill Gaps<br><br>Support Good Practices |
| <b>Increase Access to and Capacity of Legal Services</b>  |   |   |  |        |   |
| 7. Enhance LAA's Capacity to Provide Services.  | Section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5.1.1</li> </ul>  | Provide staff Duty Counsel to enhance the current roster services, including providing assistance to people with summary offences<br><br>Law Students to work terms with LAA in turn for credits. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ LAA</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Law Schools</li> </ul> |        | Fill Gaps                               |



| Recommendations  | Reference Sections of the Report   | How to Achieve the Recommendations   | Justice Community Partners  | Models   | Category                                 |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| 8. Provide a coordinated justice access point with services that cover the entire Judicial District. | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.4</li> <li>▪ 3.5.5</li> <li>▪ 3.5.6</li> </ul>                  | Establish a LInC and/or Community Legal Centre with strong outreach/mobile components.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ PBLA</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> </ul>    | LInCs in Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Ventura, California mobile self-help centre CLG, Edmonton Community Legal Center (ECLC), Lethbridge Legal Guidance (LLG) | Fill Gaps<br><br>Build on Good Practices |
| 9. Increase the current circuiting capacity of court-related services.                               | Section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5.1.1</li> </ul>   | Coordinate the provision of circuiting services one day ahead of the arrival of court (as well as on the day of court) for LAA intake, Duty Counsel, and NCSA Court Workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ LAA</li> <li>▪ NCSA</li> </ul>    | Nunavut Court of Justice   | Fill Gaps                                |
| 10. Increase the current capacity of NCSA Court Workers.   | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.4</li> <li>▪ 5.1.1</li> <li>▪ 5.1.2</li> <li>▪ 6.3.1</li> </ul> | Provide resources for additional Criminal and Family NCSA Court Workers across this District and add a civil justice component to present services.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NCSA</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ ALF</li> </ul>    |  | Fill Gaps                                |
| 11. Improve Access to Legal and Related Services for Rural Community Members.                        | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3.5.1</li> <li>▪ 7.5</li> </ul>                                     | Provide regular bus service to the Court House from rural communities.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ SafeCom</li> </ul> | Cochrane's use of deadhead buses to provide affordable transportation to the Calgary Court House.  | Remove Barriers                          |

| Recommendations  | Reference Sections of the Report  | How to Achieve the Recommendations   | Justice Community Partners   | Models  | Category                                |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Increase Specialized Legal Services for Vulnerable Groups</b>   |   |  |  |   |   |
| 12. Create a visible, specialized Court and related services that takes a holistic approach to addressing the inter-related issues of mental health, addictions, domestic violence and sexual assault. | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.2</li> <li>▪ 4.3.3</li> <li>▪ 5.1.2</li> <li>▪ 6.2.1</li> </ul> | Begin with specialized training (see Recommendations 1 & 2)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> </ul>                              | Calgary Court Services  | Fill Gaps                               |
| 13. Increase the capacity of Victims' Services.  | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.2</li> <li>▪ 4.3.3</li> <li>▪ 6.2.1</li> </ul>                  | Ensure expanded capacity to be pro-active in community education and liaison to address the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the District.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General</li> </ul> | Alberta Victims' Services branches with established pro-active components | Fill Gaps<br><br>Support Good Practices |
| 14. Enhance capacity to address and prevent legal problems related to FASD.  | Sections:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.1</li> <li>▪ 6.2.3</li> <li>▪ 7.3</li> </ul>                    | Enhance funding to the Lakeland Centre for outreach services and specialized legal supports.<br><br>Provide <i>pro bono</i> legal services out of the Lakeland Centre.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ALF</li> <li>▪ LAA</li> <li>▪ PBLA</li> </ul>           | Lethbridge Community Justice Program for Youth <sup>25</sup>              | Support Good Practices                  |
| 15. Enhance the use of restorative justice options based on Aboriginal values.   | Section:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.4</li> </ul>   | Increased use of the <i>Gladue</i> decision, which considers all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. <sup>26</sup> |  |   | Fill Gaps                               |

<sup>25</sup> Note that this program wishes to have the diagnostic capacity available at the Cold Lake service.

<sup>26</sup> Refer to [http://www.aboriginallegal.ca/docs/apc\\_factsheet.htm](http://www.aboriginallegal.ca/docs/apc_factsheet.htm) for a full description.

| Recommendations   | Reference Sections of the Report   | How to Achieve the Recommendations  | Justice Community Partners   | Models | Category                                   |
|---|--|---|--|--------|--|
| <b>Enhance Supports for Children and Families</b>                         |  |   |  |        |  |
| 16. Enhance restorative justice options for children and youth.           | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.6</li> <li>▪ 5.1.2</li> <li>▪ 6.2.2</li> </ul>                  | Provide more restorative options for youth that also involve their family members.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General of Alberta</li> </ul>  |        | Fill Gaps                                  |
| 17. Increase supports for families who have children with legal problems. | Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4.3.6</li> <li>▪ 5.1.2</li> <li>▪ 6.2.2</li> <li>▪ 6.3.1</li> </ul> | <p>Provide primary, secondary and tertiary intervention programs for children that educate them and their families <u>before</u> they come into contact with the justice system. Identify and help families to address risk factors and provide intervention, information and support for families of children who already have legal problems.</p> <p>Establish a Youth Justice Committee which children and youth can participate on and identify legal needs and problems in turn for incentives such as scholarships.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ALF</li> <li>▪ Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ SafeCom</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General of Alberta</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Alberta Justice</li> <li>▪ Solicitor General of Alberta</li> </ul> |        | <p>Fill Gaps</p><br><p>Remove Barriers</p> |

## 9.0 CONCLUSIONS

The serious social barriers identified by service providers and members of the community in this District, have been emphasized throughout the Report. As service providers pointed out, this District is not less serviced than any of the others we have mapped; in fact it is proportionately far more serviced than Fort McMurray, for example. However, siloed service delivery and the resulting fragmentation impede effective intervention and prevention.

At the root of many of the barriers faced are social divides and lack of exposure or knowledge about different cultural and ethnic groups. Although social issues are, to an extent, beyond the scope of this project, there are some actions that could be taken to

enhance legal service delivery that will also positively impact inter-group interactions and awareness in this District.

## 9.1 Where to Begin: Suggestions for Legal Service Funders

The priority, based on feedback by participants is to enhance knowledge about legal needs and options for services in this Judicial District. A series of **Judicial District Legal and Related Service Information Sessions** would help to enhance knowledge as well as networking opportunities. This collaborative training will improve the awareness of legal and related service providers with this ALSMP report and the accompanying database of services.

While local providers must be involved as collaborators, services from outside of the St. Paul Judicial District need to take an active part to ensure correct information is shared. Given its mandate and activities in the District, combined with the high level of interaction with the RCMP, this might be a project in which *Safe-Communities* takes the lead. In suggesting this, we note that the focus must be broader than criminal justice matters. The involvement of Alberta Justice, court services and LAA are also essential. Information is also needed on Administrative laws and how to access assistance. ALF might take a role in supporting the PLEI aspect of such a project; for example funding someone to gather and make available PLEI materials.

An immediate goal should be to establish a **LinC or Community Legal Clinic**. In either case the service must have a strong outreach component and include information sharing and service coordination as part of its mandate.

*For my clients it has been my experience that the more fragmented the [legal] services are the less likely they will access them. Our clients need a one-stop shop for services and they often don't know what it is that they need and don't know what their choices are to ask for, and they need somebody else to identify for them what it is they need. Most people [who become involved with the] justice system are not seekers of service. They need to go to one place to get all their services. [Social Service Provider]*

The third priority needs to be **increased education and prevention efforts related to FASD**. FASD was repeatedly cited as an important factor related to legal problems in St. Paul. There is a program in Cold Lake that is dedicated to FASD, which is actually complementary to the Lethbridge FASD program. These are both very impressive programs that share a need for enhanced capacity.

*If [Cold Lake] could marry Lethbridge – they need the diagnosis services and [Cold Lake] needs that outreach program .... That youth justice program is awesome and [Cold Lake] just hasn't been able to get the funding across. If [Cold Lake] could have that designated RCMP officer to that diversions program, that is that Alberta Justice could sink their money into and save gazillions of dollars. I don't know if Lethbridge can determine if they have provided a cost savings to the Court but I would bet that they have. The services have been developed hit and miss depending on whether there has been community passion, not that there are more [people with FASD] in one area or in another. Now the province is trying to even out the services and develop them in areas where they are not developed before. In ten years you will probably see a much more even spread across the province in services. We would like to put some dollars into prevention with the Courts. It is very, very frustrating for my staff when they sit in Court every day and with different clients and they see the same people coming forward all the time and you just know if you could have intervention you could just stop that.*

### **9.1.1 Recommendations for ALF to Consider**

The top three priorities for ALF to consider funding are proposals that address:

1. Facilitate Legal Information Sessions for Service Providers (#1).
2. Establish a Community Legal Access Point such as a Legal Centre (#8).
3. Enhance FASD-Related Legal Services (#14).

Although provision of FASD supports is not within ALF's mandate, we propose that ALF could help to meet this need by providing funding for legal professionals to work in collaboration with existing FASD service providers, and perhaps even co-locate. An example could be to provide funding to a lawyer or paralegal to specialize in working with people who have been diagnosed with FASD.

### **9.1.2 Recommendations for Alberta Justice to Consider**

The top three priorities for Alberta Justice to consider facilitating and/or funding are:

1. Facilitate Legal Information Sessions for Service Providers (#1).
2. Increase Supports for Children with Legal Problems and their Families (#16, 17).
3. Establish a Specialized Court – Domestic Violence, Drug and Mental Health (#12).

### ***Additional Findings that are Relevant to SafeCom***

Two participants spoke of the Safe-Communities Initiative but it is unclear how broad the awareness and understanding is about this initiative in St. Paul. There is, however, dialogue that suggests massive issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve safe communities.

Because of the prevalence of addictions, FASD, assault and mental health problems across this District, community members are most likely to enter the justice system via police intervention resulting in charging, bail and sentencing. Service providers,

including law enforcement, indicated that this is not effective and is often making matters worse. They expressed the desire to be able to be more pro-active in helping people, many of whom they are currently watching move towards lives of legal and social system involvement.

The following suggestion for service would be within Safe-Com's interests and with the Ministry level involvement, this could be made to happen:

*I would like to start an outpatient program [for addictions]; to meet with AADAC [to plan]. Right now they are doing 28 day programs, but not with much success. My vision is we do it here, in this centre. With the 28 day program, they do it away from the "Lion's Den" [to community] and give [patients] all this nice treatment but no reality. Then they send them back here. Within one week all of them fall. I am proposing at 48 session (24 week) outpatient program. Intensive with different levels, with drug treatment, run out of this centre. What they don't have now is a support system. With my proposed program, if they relapse, they come back to groups and groups address that. It is based on AA's herding instinct approach. If they don't want to be in the herd any more then the circle closes and they are pushed out. But they need to be allowed back in, if they need that support. [Social Service Provider]*

*I don't know where this will fit in but a lot of people, they get probation. There are currently 9 terms of probation. The one where people get all the breaches is the "no alcohol or drugs." These are alcoholics they are dealing with! And they give them 18 months or two years' probation. They are setting them up for failure. If even the guidelines were changed so that they would not be given breaches for just smelling like alcohol. Maybe if they had to be obviously drunk to get a breach or something. [Legal Service Provider]*

The researchers also draw attention to the repeated indications that many children and youth are at times not adequately supervised and wander the streets without options for safe shelter. Seizure into an over-burdened formal child-protection process (also known to be ineffective in many cases) is not a realistic method of addressing this problem. We suggest instead that the SafeCom collaboration of Ministries looks at establishing 'Safe Havens' to serve as friendly, non-judgmental places for children and youth in need of temporary shelter and support.

Finally we note that as in the Fort McMurray Judicial District, participants raised the issue of prisoners being transported to the Edmonton Remand Centre.

*At one time we did all the jails and took applications. But they are being transported to Edmonton. Edmonton people see them and send them back to us. Because of that rigmarole there may be a delay, 'cause the people won't find legal aid right away .... Some lawyers will go on CCTV with .... It was so much nicer when we could just go to the jail. If there were 8 people in jail cells we would go over interview them and then we would get them a lawyer the next day. Now if they go in and don't sign the form to see legal aid it can take a while. Here police will call and let us know they have people in custody. [Legal Service Provider]*

All of the same concerns were raised; however participants in the St. Paul District did not specifically suggest a local Remand Centre as the solution. The vastness of this District with its scattered population is likely a factor in this – one centre does not really solve the problem for most of the District. Indeed, it is not realistic to expect every Judicial District to have its own Remand Centre. Rather, the quote above suggests that there is local cooperation between the police and relevant services such as LAA, to work within the current system as best they can. At the same time, there is also the suggestion that local space could be better used to facilitate service-access to prisoners before they are transported. Exploring this option might turn up more viable solutions to the Remand problems.

### **9.1.3 Recommendations for LAA to Consider**

1. Increase Duty Counsel Services (#7, 9).
2. Provide Outreach Services/Clinics in the Woman's Shelter (#7).
3. Recruit Law Students to enhance capacity to help people with Summary Offenses (#7).



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## Appendix A

### ALSMP: Legal Services in the St. Paul Judicial District

| <b>Organization and Services</b>  | <b>Funders</b>   |
|---|--|
| 4 Wing Military Resource Centre<br>Family Counselling   | Government of Canada   |
| Alberta Aboriginal Legal Education Centre<br>Workshops for communities,<br>schools and organizations  | Alberta Law Foundation   |
| Alberta Appeals Secretariat<br>Appeals Panel<br>Information & Assistance  | Government of Alberta  |
| Alberta Arbitration & Mediation Society   |  |
| Alberta Children and Youth Services<br>Adoption Records<br>Appeal Panels  | Government of Alberta  |
| Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre<br>(ACLRC)<br>Education<br>Human Rights Education Project<br>Information/Referral<br>Research<br>Research and Education - Not<br>Advocacy | The Alberta Law Foundation, The Sheldon<br>Chumir Foundation, Human Rights,<br>Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education<br>Fund - Affiliated with the University of<br>Calgary |
| Alberta Conflict Transformation Society<br>(ACTS)<br>Conflict Resolution<br>Restorative Justice Workshops   | Edmonton Police Service, Others  |
| Alberta Employment and Immigration<br>Child Support Services  | Government of Alberta  |
| Alberta Justice<br>Provincial Court<br>Civil Court<br>Civil Mediation Program<br>Criminal Court<br>Family & Youth Court<br>Traffic Court  | Government of Alberta  |
| Association des juristes d'expression<br>française de l'Alberta   |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Blue Quills First Nations College<br>Family Group Conferencing   | Government of Alberta  |
| Buffalo Lake Administration and<br>Community Services<br>Buffalo Lake Early Intervention<br>Program and Early Childhood<br>Programs  | Government of Alberta  |
| Catholic Social Services<br>Immigration and Settlement<br>Services   | Government of Alberta, Aboriginal First<br>Nations, Alberta Health Services, Sign of<br>Hope Society |
| Community Corrections - Adult Programs<br>Community Work Service Program<br>Probation and Conditional Sentence<br>Supervision        | Government of Alberta  |
| Community Corrections - Youth Programs<br>Community Service<br>Conditional and Community<br>Supervision<br>Fine Options<br>Probation | Government of Alberta  |
| Correctional Services of Canada<br>Parole Officer  | Government of Canada   |
| Court of Queen's Bench   | Government of Alberta  |
| Crisis Association (St. Paul & District)<br>24 Hour Crisis Line<br>Columbus House of Hope  | Government of Alberta  |
| Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre  | Government of Alberta  |
| Environment<br>Authorization or Approval Viewer  | Government of Alberta  |
| Family & Community Support Services<br>(FCSS)<br>Community Volunteer Income Tax<br>Program<br>Seniors Assistance Program             | Government of Alberta  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Family Justice Services<br>Family Court Counsellors/Intake Assistance<br>Parenting After Separation   | Government of Alberta   |
| Finance and Enterprise<br>Alberta Superintendent of Pensions  | Government of Alberta   |
| Help for Victims of Crime<br>Financial Benefits (Victim's of Violent Crime)   | Government of Alberta   |
| Hope Haven Society<br>Childcare Program<br>Hope Haven Women's Shelter<br>Outreach Program   | Government of Alberta   |
| Justice and Attorney General<br>Crown Prosecutors<br>Justice Education Speakers Centre  | Government of Alberta   |
| Lac La Biche and Area Family Violence Program   | Government of Alberta   |
| Lakeland Library Region<br>Lloydminster Public Library  | Government of Alberta   |
| Law Society of Alberta<br>Alberta Law Society Libraries<br><br>Lawyer Referral  | Self-funded<br>Alberta Justice, Alberta Law Foundation,<br>Law Society of Alberta           |
| Legal Aid Alberta<br>Lawyer Appointment Program   | Government of Alberta, Government of Canada, Alberta Law Foundation                         |
| Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd.<br>A-Link<br>Access to Justice Network (ACJNet)<br>Canadian Legal FAQs<br>LawNow<br>Oak-Net (Older Adult Knowledge Network): Abuse of Older Adults<br>RoseNet: Law & Abused Immigrant Women<br>Training | Alberta Law Foundation, Alberta Real Estate Foundation, Muttart Foundation, Alberta Justice |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| VIOLET: Law and Abused Women   |   |
| Lloydminster Interval Home<br>Interval Home<br>New Perspectives for Men<br>Outreach Program<br>Public Education Program<br><br>Dol-Mar Manor   | The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, Saskatchewan Social Services CFSA, Camrose East Central Health, County Of Vermilion River #24 FCSS, The City of Lloydminster, Town of Vermillion FCSS and more<br><br>Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, Nickle Family Foundation, Motz Foundation, Health Canada and fundraising |
| Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre<br>24-Hour Crisis Line<br>Court Preparation Program<br>Individual Services<br>Public Awareness and Education  | Government of Alberta, Government of Saskatchewan   |
| Métis Settlements General Council<br>Community Justice Workers   | Federal Aboriginal Justice Directorate, Alberta's Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Unit, Alberta Justice and the Alberta Law Foundation   |
| Municipal Government Board<br>Municipal Affairs  | Government of Alberta   |
| Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA)<br>Bearpaw Media Productions<br>Criminal Courtwork Program<br>Family Courtwork Program<br>Family Mediation/Family Group Conferencing   | Government of Alberta<br><br>Alberta Law Foundation<br>Alberta Justice, Justice Canada<br>Alberta Justice<br>Contracted Service with Region 7 Child and Family Services   |
| Northern Lights Library System<br>Alice Melnyk Public Library<br>Bonnyville Municipal Library<br>Cold Lake Public Library<br>Elk Point Municipal Library<br>Myrnam Community Library<br>Plamondon Municipal Library<br>Smoky Lake Muncipal Library<br>St. Paul Municipal Library<br>Stuart MacPherson Public Library | Government of Alberta   |

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Wainwright Public Library<br>Wandering River Public Library  |                               |
| Our Healing Journey  | Aboriginal Healing Foundation |
| Portage College<br>Public Legal Education Program  |                               |
| Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) -<br>K Division<br>Aboriginal Policing Services<br>Auxiliary Police Program<br>Community Policing Services<br>Crime Stoppers  | Government of Canada          |
| Seniors and Community Supports<br>Office of the Public Guardian<br>Protection for Persons in Care  | Government of Alberta         |
| Service Alberta<br>Consumer Complaints<br>FOIP Helpdesk<br>Private Sector Privacy Information<br>Line<br>Queen's Printer<br>Registry Agents - Land Titles<br>Registry Agents - Motor Vehicles<br>Registry Agents - Personal Property<br>Registry<br>Residential Tenancy Dispute<br>Resolution<br>Utilities Consumer Advocate | Government of Alberta         |
| Solicitor General and Public Security<br>Youth Justice Committees  | Government of Alberta         |
| Town of St. Paul<br>Municipal Enforcement  | Town of St. Paul              |
| Victim Service Units<br>Victim Services  | Government of Alberta         |

## Appendix B

### **ALSMP: Legal and Related Services that provide PLEI in the St. Paul Judicial District**

Alberta Aboriginal Legal Education Centre  
Workshops for communities, schools and organizations

Alberta Appeals Secretariat  
Appeals Panel  
Information & Assistance

Alberta Arbitration & Mediation Society

Alberta Children and Youth Services  
Adoption Records  
Appeal Panels

Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (ACLRC)  
Education  
Human Rights Education Project  
Information/Referral  
Research  
Research and Education - Not Advocacy

Alberta Conflict Transformation Society (ACTS)  
Conflict Resolution  
Restorative Justice Workshops

Alberta Justice  
Provincial Court  
Civil Court  
Criminal Court  
Family & Youth Court  
Traffic Court

Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta

Blue Quills First Nations College  
Family Group Conferencing

Catholic Social Services  
Immigration and Settlement Services

Community Corrections - Youth Programs  
Probation

Correctional Services of Canada  
Parole Officer

Crisis Association (St. Paul & District)  
24 Hour Crisis Line  
Columbus House of Hope

Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre

Environment  
Authorization or Approval Viewer

Family & Community Support Services (FCSS)  
Seniors Assistance Program

Family Justice Services  
Family Court Counsellors/Intake Assistance  
Parenting After Separation

Finance and Enterprise  
Alberta Superintendent of Pensions

Hope Haven Society  
Hope Haven Women's Shelter  
Outreach Program

Justice and Attorney General  
Justice Education Speakers Centre

Lac La Biche and Area Family Violence Program

Lakeland Library Region  
Lloydminster Public Library

Law Society of Alberta  
Alberta Law Society Libraries

Legal Aid Alberta  
Lawyer Appointment Program

Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd.  
A-Link  
Access to Justice Network (ACJNet)  
Canadian Legal FAQs  
LawNow  
Oak-Net (Older Adult Knowledge Network): Abuse of Older Adults



RoseNet: Law & Abused Immigrant Women  
Training  
VIOLET: Law and Abused Women

Lloydminster Interval Home  
Dol-Mar Manor  
Interval Home  
New Perspectives for Men  
Outreach Program  
Public Education Program

Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre  
24-Hour Crisis Line  
Court Preparation Program  
Individual Services  
Public Awareness and Education

Municipal Affairs  
Municipal Government Board

Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA)  
Bearpaw Media Productions  
Criminal Courtwork Program  
Family Courtwork Program  
Family Mediation/Family Group Conferencing

Northern Lights Library System  
Alice Melnyk Public Library  
Bonnyville Municipal Library  
Cold Lake Public Library  
Elk Point Municipal Library  
Myrnam Community Library  
Plamondon Municipal Library  
Smoky Lake Municipal Library  
St. Paul Municipal Library  
Stuart MacPherson Public Library  
Wainwright Public Library  
Wandering River Public Library

Our Healing Journey

Portage College  
Public Legal Education Program

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) - K Division  
Aboriginal Policing Services

Auxiliary Police Program  
Crime Stoppers

Seniors and Community Supports  
Office of the Public Guardian  
Protection for Persons in Care

Service Alberta  
Consumer Complaints  
FOIP Helpdesk  
Private Sector Privacy Information Line  
Queen's Printer  
Registry Agents - Land Titles  
Registry Agents - Motor Vehicles  
Registry Agents - Personal Property Registry  
Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution  
Utilities Consumer Advocate

Victim Service Units  
Victim Services