



Legal Aid Alberta

A Just Alberta – one person at a time



SERVICES
for Albertans



Vision

An Alberta where everyone can access justice and achieve fair and lasting resolutions to their legal issues.

Mission

We are a leader in the provision of quality, effective legal advice and representation that enables our clients to resolve their legal issues.

About Us

Legal Aid Alberta assists Albertans facing legal issues by helping them navigate their journey through the justice system and find lasting resolution to their legal challenges. Through professional, effective and accessible services, it is a leader in the provision of quality, effective legal advice and representation.

It is an independent, publicly funded, not-for-profit organization that provides a broad range of services in family law and child welfare, adult criminal law, youth criminal law, immigration and refugee law and civil legal areas.

Legal Aid Alberta makes a difference in the lives of Albertans and delivers value that extends beyond those who receive its services. By supporting better outcomes for its clients, it positively impacts individuals, the communities in which they live, the justice system and the taxpayer.

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Legal Services Centre

The Legal Services Centre is most often the first contact point for individuals requiring assistance in resolving legal issues.

When you call or go to a Legal Services Centre, a Legal Services Officer will work with you to complete an assessment and determine if you are eligible to receive representation through Legal Aid Alberta.

For Albertans who qualify under the eligibility guidelines, a lawyer may be appointed to provide legal representation. **Not all services provided by Legal Aid Alberta are free**, which will be explained by a Legal Services Officer.

We're Here to Help

You can reach us by phone or by visiting one of our offices:

Phone: 1.866.845.3425 Monday to Friday

The phone service enables Albertans across the province, and in the most remote areas, to access Legal Aid Alberta.

In person:

Edmonton

Revillon Building
300, 10320 102 Avenue
T5J 4A1

Calgary

Dominion Centre
1100, 665 8 Street SW
T2P 3K7

Red Deer

AEI Building
200, 4802 51 Avenue
T4N 4H3

Lethbridge

Lethbridge Centre
244, 200 4 Avenue
T1J 4C9

Information can also be found on our website at www.legalaid.ab.ca



Family Law & Child Welfare

Legal Aid Alberta may provide representation for the following areas of family and civil law:

Children

- custody, access, parenting orders, contact orders;
- child maintenance;
- guardianship;
- child protection/child welfare;
- representation of children;
- grandparent contact orders; and
- Hague Convention applications (a method to return a child internationally abducted by a parent from one member country to another).

Spousal/Common-Law

- spousal support;
- separation and divorce; and
- matrimonial property disputes.

Family Law Office

With offices located in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Wetaskiwin, Legal Aid Alberta's Family Law Offices specialize in assisting clients who have a family law legal problem and who have been referred through the Legal Services Centre.

Once a Family Law Office lawyer is appointed, clients may be offered the assistance of Family Resource Facilitators. These individuals work as part of a legal team to provide services to clients engaged in family law related matters. Family Resource Facilitators help clients to address personal problems by identifying options and developing strategies to cope with their issues. They also help ensure the client understands the legal process for their matter and what is expected of them. Under the direction of a client's lawyer, this may include:

- advocacy;
- information; and/or
- crisis intervention;
- referrals.

Emergency Protection Orders & Domestic Violence

Sometimes it is hard to recognize family violence, especially when you are being victimized.

Family violence is:

- an injury to family members or damage to property that is intended to intimidate or harm a family member;
- any act or threat that causes a family member to be afraid for their safety or their property, and which is intended to intimidate or harm a family member;
- forced confinement;
- sexual abuse; and/or
- stalking.

Family members are persons who are:

- or have been married to one another;
- or have been adult interdependent partners of one another;
- living together or have lived together in an intimate relationship;
- the parents of one or more children, regardless of their marital status or whether they have lived together at any time;
- related to each other by blood, marriage, adoption or by virtue of an adult interdependent relationship;
- residing together where one of the persons has care and custody over the other pursuant to an order; and
- children under the care and custody of a person in any of the circumstances listed above.

We can help you by:

- providing information about your options, regardless of your income;
- providing support services, such as safety planning;
- providing referrals to supporting agencies; and
- helping you to apply for an emergency protection order, and assisting you with documents and court procedures.

Obtaining an Emergency Protection Order

Legal Aid Alberta's Family Law Office helps victims of family violence through the Emergency Protection Order Program. Offered in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge (and surrounding areas), there is no cost for obtaining or confirming protection orders and there are no financial eligibility requirements.

If you reside outside of these areas, go to your local courthouse **during regular business hours** or call the courthouse. **After business hours**, contact your local police or the RCMP.

The Emergency Protection Order Program provides clients with information and a lawyer who can help them to obtain and confirm protection orders. They attend court on a daily basis to represent Albertans who have experienced violence in their lives. The Emergency Protection Order Program also provides ongoing information, risk assessment and safety plans to victims of family violence.

An Emergency Protection Order can:

- prevent a family member from contacting you and other family members;
- prevent a family member from coming to your home, school, work or other places;
- remove a family member from your home; and/or
- ensure weapons are seized.

If you or members of your family are victims of family violence, please call the Emergency Protection Order program during office hours:

In Edmonton & area: 780.422.9222

In Calgary & area: 403.297.5260

In Lethbridge & area: 403.388.3162

All areas: 1.866.845.3425 (toll free)

If you have been assaulted or if the threat of danger is immediate, call 911 or your local police department/RCMP detachment.

Adult Criminal Law

Legal Aid Alberta may provide representation for the following areas of criminal law:

- indictable offences, whether in the Criminal Code or any other Federal Act;
- summary conviction offences with a likelihood of imprisonment upon conviction or a likelihood of loss of the means of earning a living upon conviction; and/or
- Extradition Act offences.

When you contact Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre, an assessment will be completed to determine if you are eligible for representation through Legal Aid Alberta. A lawyer will be appointed to represent you if you fall within our financial eligibility guidelines and your legal issue is within our scope of service.

Legal Aid Alberta uses a number of criteria when selecting a lawyer to represent you, which may include the severity of the charge and the court location. Legal Aid Alberta appoints lawyers from the private bar and the Criminal Resolution Office.

CRIMINAL RESOLUTION OFFICE

Legal Aid Alberta's Criminal Resolution Office provides early resolution to lower-level criminal offences and serve clients throughout Alberta. Eligible clients are referred to the Criminal Resolution Office through Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre.

In Calgary and Edmonton, Criminal Resolution Office lawyers also provide service as duty counsel in the Drug Treatment Court programs. The lawyers sharing these duties provide assistance in court on a weekly basis and are available to support and help guide drug treatment participants throughout the process. They are also part of Drug Treatment Court teams.

Youth Criminal Law

All youth (12 to 18 years) are eligible to receive representation by a lawyer through Legal Aid Alberta when charged with a criminal offence, as this is mandated under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

When you, or a legal representative, contact Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre, they will explain the process for representation. In Calgary and Edmonton, lawyers from Legal Aid Alberta's Youth Criminal Defence Office are most often appointed. Lawyers from the private bar are appointed throughout the province.

YOUTH CRIMINAL DEFENCE OFFICE

The services of Legal Aid Alberta's Youth Criminal Defence Office are available to young persons facing charges in the Youth Courts of Calgary and Edmonton, and are referred through Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre. The Youth Criminal Defence Office can also assist young persons who may not have criminal charges, but who have hearings for traffic matters or have appearances before school attendance boards or expulsion hearings.

Often there are a number of issues that impact young persons' wellbeing. These may contribute to their involvement with the justice system. Youth Workers can assist young persons with finding housing, accessing treatment, education or work programs and counselling. They may advocate for young persons within the solicitor general, child welfare, health care or education systems. Their role is to work with the youth to address the issues the youth identify as underlying their criminal behaviour in order to assist their rehabilitation.



Immigration and Refugee Services

Legal Aid Alberta assists eligible clients with the following immigration and refugee matters:

- refugee claims;
- judicial reviews of failed refugee claims;
- detention reviews;
- danger opinions (for people who are convention refugees/protected persons);
- admissibility hearings (for people facing criminal deportation/removal); and
- removal appeals to the Immigration Appeal Division.

When you contact Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre, an assessment will be completed to determine if you are eligible for representation through Legal Aid Alberta. If your legal issue is eligible to receive the services of a lawyer, Legal Aid Alberta will appoint a lawyer.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada can assist with issues such as: sponsorship and appeals, work permits, visitor visas, humanitarian complaints, pre-removal risk assessments and obtaining Canadian citizenship. You can reach its office at 1.888.242.2100 or at www.cic.gc.ca.



Civil Law

Legal Aid Alberta assists eligible clients with the following civil matters:

- income supports and government benefits;
- adult guardianship/trusteeship – when the client is the subject of the application; and
- immigration and refugee claims.

When you contact Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre, an assessment will be completed to determine if you are eligible for representation through Legal Aid Alberta. If your legal issue is eligible to receive the services of a lawyer, Legal Aid Alberta may appoint a lawyer.



Siksika Nation

Legal Aid Alberta at Siksika Nation commonly provides assistance in the following areas:

- criminal charges;
- child welfare matters;
- family law matters; and
- employment and human rights.

Legal Aid Alberta at Siksika Nation is a joint program of the Siksika Justice Department and Legal Aid Alberta that provides Siksika Nation members (primarily) with a wide range of high quality legal services. Legal services are provided in a manner that gives meaningful consideration to Siksika and/or Aboriginal culture and values.

Legal services provided include: legal information, summary legal advice, representation (a lawyer) and/or brief services and referrals. If Legal Aid Alberta's eligibility guidelines are met, a lawyer will be appointed by Legal Aid Alberta. You can call Legal Aid Alberta's Legal Services Centre for assistance at 1.866.845.3425 or visit the office at Siksika Nation.



Duty Counsel – Legal Assistance at Court

Duty Counsel are lawyers who provide information, guidance and advice to you prior to your court appearance.

Duty Counsel help people who are unrepresented at their court appearance and can offer limited basic services. Depending on the situation, duty counsel may speak to the court on your behalf. There is no financial eligibility requirement for assistance through Duty Counsel. It is free to all Albertans.

Should you require full representation by a lawyer for the remainder of your case, duty counsel may suggest you apply for legal aid or to hire a lawyer privately.

If you are unrepresented for your first court appearance, go directly to the courthouse where the matter is being heard and ask to speak to duty counsel. Legal Aid Alberta assigns duty counsel to the following docket courts in Alberta:

- criminal (adult and youth) courts;
- drug treatment court (Calgary and Edmonton);
- disciplinary hearings at correctional facilities;
- applications for confirmations and breaches of emergency protection orders*;
- Mental Health Review panel hearings*;
- Provincial court — family and child welfare dockets in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, St. Paul, Wetaskiwin, Red Deer and Medicine Hat; and
- Court of Queen’s Bench — family in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, St. Paul, Wetaskiwin, Red Deer and Medicine Hat.

**If you are dealing with one of these issues, call the Legal Services Centre at 1.866.845.3425 prior to attending court. Duty Counsel for these matters only appear as needed.*

Please note that duty counsel’s first priority is to assist accused persons who are in custody and those who are unrepresented at their first court appearance.

Youth Duty Counsel

Legal Aid Alberta's Youth Criminal Defence Office provides duty counsel assistance to unrepresented youth in Youth Justice Court in Edmonton and Calgary. The Youth Criminal Defence Office duty counsel assistance includes:

- providing immediate legal advice;
- making an application for judicial interim release (bail hearings);
- seeking withdrawal of charges;
- entering of guilty pleas; and
- speaking to sentence.

Brydges Duty Counsel Service – in custody or under active investigation

This telephone service is offered on a 24-hour basis and is free to all Albertans (adult and youth) under arrest and in custody or under active investigation by law enforcement authorities who need immediate advice on their charter rights and criminal law. Translation services are available in 110 languages. Telephone numbers for this service are provided by law enforcement authorities.

The telephone number for the toll-free line is reserved for detained persons only, and is posted in police stations and detention centres across the province. If you know someone who is being detained and you are able to speak with them, you may tell him/her:

- That they have the right to immediate, free legal advice from a lawyer.
- To ask for the toll-free number to speak with a lawyer, if they have not already done so.

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