



## **Advocacy & Legal Resources**

It can be very difficult to find low-cost or free legal assistance, although many organizations and groups offer at least some kind of summary legal advice or advocacy services. This list includes a wide range of groups who may be able to assist you. Not all of these agencies will be relevant to your particular legal issues, so please read the descriptions before deciding which to contact. In addition, this is not a complete list; there are other organizations who offer various kinds of direct assistance as well. If you know of an organization you think should be added to the list, please let us know.

Most of these services, especially the ones that allow you to meet with a lawyer, only schedule short appointments. Given these time constraints, it is best to be as prepared as possible before making contact. Have a clear idea of what questions you need answered and make sure your relevant documents are organized.

### **LEGAL ADVICE, INFORMATION & REPRESENTATION**

#### **Lawyer Referral**

**604 687 3221 or 1 800 663 1919**

Lawyer Referral facilitates a 30-minute consultation with a lawyer for \$25 plus taxes. Inform the lawyer you have gone through Lawyer Referral, keep track of the time, and determine the hourly rate should you extend the consultation.

[http://www.cba.org/bc/Public\\_Media/main/lawyer\\_referral.aspx](http://www.cba.org/bc/Public_Media/main/lawyer_referral.aspx)

#### **Legal Aid**

**604 408 2172 or 1 866 577 2525**

Legal Aid provides subsidized legal services, ranging from legal information and advice to legal representation, in the areas of criminal, family and immigration law. Legal aid is limited to criminal charges, mental health or prison issues, serious family problems or serious immigration problems. Applicants must meet financial guidelines to be eligible.

[http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/](http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/)

#### **Access Pro Bono Society**

**604 878 7400 or 1 877 762 6664**

Access Pro Bono operates free legal clinics at several locations across the Lower Mainland and British Columbia to provide legal advice and assist in the preparation of legal cases. Certain locations specialize in different aspects of law.

<http://www.accessprobono.ca/>

**Community Legal Assistance Society****604 685 3425 or 1 888 685 6222**

CLAS provides legal assistance to those with low income or physical or mental disabilities. CLAS also offers specific legal services for person appearing before a *Mental Health Act* Review Panel.

<http://www.clasbc.net/>

**UBC Law Students' Legal Advice Program****604 822 5791**

UBC law students provide free legal advice and representation on specific areas of law to people who cannot afford a lawyer at clinics located throughout Greater Vancouver. LSLAP also publishes a comprehensive legal advice manual.

<http://www.lslap.bc.ca/>

**UVic Law Centre****250 385 1221**

The Law Centre provides advice, assistance and representation to clients in the Victoria area who cannot afford a lawyer.

<http://thelawcentre.ca/>

**MOSAIC****604 254 9626**

MOSAIC provides legal services for immigrants and refugees in immigration and family law matters. Also provides advocacy in tenancy, welfare and employment matters.

<http://www.mosaicbc.com/settlement-services/legalfinancial/legal-advocacy>

**BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support****604 437 1940 or 1 866 437 1940**

The BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support runs an Elder Law Clinic, which offers free legal advice and representation to older adults. Legal services are provided to clients who are over 55 (or the legal representative of someone 55+), would not otherwise be able to retain a lawyer (usually due to low income) and have legal problems in their service priority areas.

<http://site.bcceas.ca/>

**Pivot Legal Society****604 255 9700**

Pivot publishes a guide to help people sue the police or private security in small claims court and holds weekly clinics to assist people in that process.

<http://www.pivotlegal.org/>

**Justice Access Centre****604 660 2084 (Vancouver) or 250 741 5447 (Nanaimo)**

Assists people with family and civil law issues, including child custody and access issues and employment. The centre does not deal with criminal issues or small claims court forms and filings.

<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/justice-access-centre/index.htm>

**Indigenous Community Legal Clinic****604 684 7334 or 1 888 684 7334**

UBC law students assist Aboriginal individuals, band councils, societies, organizations and groups with a variety of legal issues.

**Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC****604 985 5355 or 1 877 811 1190**

Has offices throughout BC. Assists Indigenous people with the police or courts: assistance preparing for court, accompaniment to court, speaking on behalf of individuals in court. They also offer services related to drug and alcohol addiction.

<http://www.nccabc.ca/index.php/our-services>

**MPA Society Vancouver Court Program****604 660 4292**

The MPA Society supports individuals with mental illness who need help navigating the criminal justice system, finding a lawyer, or other kinds of advocacy and support related to criminal justice proceedings. Although preference is given to those living with mental illness, a diagnosis isn't necessary to access services.

**Prisoners' Legal Services****Call the Legal Services Society Call Centre for a referral at 1 888 839 8889**

A legal aid clinic for federal and provincial prisoners in BC. Can assist with segregation issues, disciplinary hearings, involuntary transfers, parole suspensions, detention hearings and sentence calculation, as well as other issues.

**YWCA Legal Educator (a service for women)****604 734 5517 ext 2235**

The YWCA Legal Educator is not a lawyer and does not offer legal advice, but can offer education, resources, referrals and support to women, particularly related to restraining orders, child and custody access or income assistance and social housing.

<http://www.ywcavan.org/programs/legal-education>

**Jane Doe Legal Advice Clinic (a service for women)****604 684 8772 ext 123**

Offers 30-minute free legal advice appointments on the second and fourth Thursday of each month to women survivors of violence with child welfare and family law issues.

**West Coast Domestic Workers' Association****1 888 669 4482**

Provides free legal advocacy and other services to live-in caregivers based in British Columbia.

<http://www.wcdwa.ca/>

**Duty Counsel**

The Legal Services Society pays for family duty counsel to assist people with family law issues in both the Provincial and BC Supreme Courts. You may qualify for assistance from duty counsel even if you don't qualify for a legal aid lawyer. Find more information about how to access duty counsel in your community at the websites below:

*Supreme Court:* [http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/whereSupremeCourtDutyCounsel.php](http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/whereSupremeCourtDutyCounsel.php)

*Provincial Court:* [http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/whereProvincialCourtDutyCounsel.php](http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/whereProvincialCourtDutyCounsel.php)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### **BC Human Rights Clinic**

**604 622 1100 or 1 855 685 6222**

The BC Human Rights Clinic assists people across BC with human rights complaints before the Human Rights Tribunal.

<http://www.bchrc.net/>

### **Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition**

**250 382 3012**

VIHRC provides advocacy in Victoria for discrimination issues in employment, facilities and tenancy.

<http://vihrc.org/>

### **BC Human Rights Tribunal**

**604 775 2000 or 1 888 440 8844**

The BCHRT is a quasi-judicial body that deals with human rights complaints covered by the BC Human Rights Code. Resolution can be done through mediation or in a hearing.

<http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/>

## **GENERAL ADVOCACY RESOURCES**

*These organizations can help with things like tenancy, income assistance, employment insurance, WorkSafeBC and other issues.*

### **Povnet's Find an Advocate**

Povnet maintains an online database of organizations that provide advocacy services in all regions of British Columbia. Go to the website below to find an advocate in your area.

<http://www.povnet.org/find-an-advocate/bc>

### **The Advocacy Office (St. Paul's)**

**604 683 4287**

The Advocacy Office in Vancouver provides advocacy for people needing help with housing, tenancy, income and disability assistance (welfare), EI, WCB, food access, immigration, legal, accommodation problems, and access to government services. Also represent clients at tenancy and disability and income assistance (welfare) hearings.

<http://stpaulsanglican.bc.ca/hospitality/st-pauls-advocacy-office>

### **First United Church Advocacy**

**604 681 8365**

The First United Church has been proudly serving the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood for 125 years, and provides assistance with housing, basic toiletries, storage space and general advocacy.

<http://firstunited.ca/what-we-do/justice-social-services/>

### **Downtown Eastside Women's Centre**

**604 681 8480**

Provides a variety of services to women and their children, including advocacy on legal issues, welfare issues, tenancy issues, mental health and child custody.

<http://dewc.ca/>

**Atira Women's Resource Society** 604 331 1407 (Vancouver) or 604 531 9143 (Surrey)

Provides housing, advocacy and support to those who identify as women, including transgendered, queer, two-spirit and intersexed women. Services include legal advocacy.

**Newton Advocacy Group Society (office located in Surrey, BC)** 604 596 2311

NAGS in Newton provides advocacy for low-income people needing help with housing, tenancy, taxes and disability and income assistance (welfare). Also represent clients at tenancy and disability and income assistance (welfare) hearings.

[www.newtonadvocacygroup.ca](http://www.newtonadvocacygroup.ca)

**Together Against Poverty Society** 250 361 3521

TAPS in Victoria provides advocacy for people needing help with tenancy, taxes, EI, income and disability assistance (welfare), and access to food, shelter and health services. Also represent clients at EI, tenancy and welfare hearings. The **Employment Standards Legal Advocacy Project** provides assistance with employment-related disputes to **non-unionised** employees.

<http://www.tapsbc.ca/>

**Peoples' Advocacy Society** 604 682 8727

Peoples' Advocacy Society helps people through the process of obtaining social assistance such as disability benefits, employment assistance and old age pensions.

<http://www.peoplesadvocacy.ca/>

**Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre** 604 255 0546 or 1 800 665 1185

TRAC operates the Tenant Hotline and publishes the indispensable Tenant Survival Guide.

<http://www.tenants.bc.ca/>

**Residential Tenancy Branch** 604 660 1020 (Lower Mainland) 250 387 1602 (Victoria) or 1 800 665 8779

The RTB resolves disputes between tenants and landlords that arise under the Residential Tenancy Act.

<http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/>

## OTHER LEGAL INFORMATION

**BC Courthouse Library Society:** <http://www.bccls.bc.ca/cms/>

**BC Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre:** <http://www.supremecourtselfhelp.bc.ca/index.htm>

**Clicklaw:** <http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/>

- On family court: <http://bit.ly/clicklawpcf>
- On criminal court: <http://bit.ly/clicklawpcc>
- On small claims court: <http://bit.ly/clicklawpcs>

**Canadian Bar Association Dial-A-Law:** [http://www.cba.org/BC/Public\\_Media/dal/default.aspx](http://www.cba.org/BC/Public_Media/dal/default.aspx)

**Canadian Legal Information Institute:** <http://www.canlii.com/>

**Justice Education Society:** <http://www.justiceeducation.ca/>

**People's Law School of BC:** <http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/>

**Multi Lingo Legal:** <http://www.multilingolegal.ca/>

**JusticeBC Criminal Justice Information and Support:** <http://www.justicebc.ca/en/cjis/index.html>

**Legal Rights for Youth:** <http://www.legalrightsforyouth.ca>