

Mapping the Gap



**Linking Aboriginal Women with
Legal Services and Resources**

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Legal Services Society – Nanaimo and Port Hardy
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Native Court Worker and Counselling Association of BC – Vancouver office
North Shore Women's Centre – North Vancouver
Northern Rockies Aboriginal Women's Society – Fort Nelson
Nuxalk Nation Transition House Society – Bella Coola
Prince Rupert Aboriginal Community Services Society – Prince Rupert
Port Alberni Friendship Centre – Port Alberni
Snuneymuxu First Nation – Nanaimo
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Wachiay Friendship Centre – Courtenay
Whe-la-la-u Area Council – Alert Bay



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Note: This report was not intended to provide a comprehensive list of all the legal resources that exist for Aboriginal women in British Columbia. Rather, it is intended as a snapshot of the legal resources that Aboriginal women in BC are accessing. The quotes used in this report reflect the views of the survey and focus group participants. If you would like to add additional resources that may not be mentioned in this report, please complete the “Recommended Resources” form at the back of this publication and return it to West Coast LEAF.

Copies of this resource can be downloaded at no cost:

www.westcoastleaf.org



Introduction

This report was created to capture a snapshot of the legal resources available to Aboriginal women and their advocates across BC. It is a follow-up to West Coast LEAF's 2010 "Mapping the Gap" report, which provided a broad overview of the legal resources available to women in BC in the context of diminishing legal aid services and access to justice concerns. The results of the surveys conducted during the preparation of that report indicated a significant gap in responses from Aboriginal organizations and centers. This gap highlighted a need to better engage with Aboriginal communities in order to learn what legal resources Aboriginal women are using, and what needs remain unmet. The goal of this report is to build on the original Mapping the Gap report, with a specific lens on legal resources and services for Aboriginal women in BC.

The findings of this report are based on survey results, phone interviews, consultations with community organizations serving Aboriginal women, and internet-based research. The focus of this report is to identify legal services and support for Aboriginal women in BC, including community-based legal clinics, representation by lawyers, legal information, summary legal advice and other legal support services. The report documents and describes gaps in legal services for Aboriginal women. It also recommends additional legal resources in the areas of family law and child protection for Aboriginal women.

It was not the intent, nor within the scope of this project to be inclusive of all existing legal services and resources for Aboriginal women in BC. The report instead provides a snapshot of legal services that are being accessed by Aboriginal women based on responses from the survey participants, individual consultations with Aboriginal organizations and a focus group. Aboriginal organizations contacted for this project were identified based on demographics and with a focus on organizations that provide family law and child protection support to Aboriginal women. The target group included Aboriginal legal advocates, community-based advocates, Stopping the Violence Counsellors, court workers, transition house staff, lawyers, and other individuals who work with Aboriginal women in a legal context.

Many of the Aboriginal legal advocates we contacted are the only resource person in their community, with few resources and many demands on their time. One goal of this project was to contribute to dialogue and network-building between advocates, who may be isolated and are often too busy to discuss challenges and share resources. Telephone interviews and an in-person focus group assisted us in gaining information and insight from a number of organizations.

All of our consultations confirmed that there is a grave need for legal resources and support structures for Aboriginal communities to address their unmet legal needs.

A note on language:

During the development of this report, discussions occurred among the survey and focus group participants regarding the use of language to describe or refer to the indigenous peoples of this land. It was acknowledged that "Aboriginal" is a commonly accepted term that is inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Some participants from Northern BC communities emphasized that the most appropriate language to use is "First Nation(s)". West Coast LEAF recognizes the inherent rights of the First Peoples of Canada including Inuit, First Nations, Métis and those labeled non-status. We use the terms Aboriginal and First Nations interchangeably throughout this report.

Survey/Focus group findings

What follows is a break-down of the results of the surveys and focus groups undertaken by West Coast LEAF for this report.

Total surveys sent out: 35 Aboriginal women-serving organizations

Survey responses received in writing or by telephone: 21

Focus group participants: 8 individuals representing 6 organizations

“Having an Aboriginal lawyer would help with trust. There are NO lawyers in some communities, much less Aboriginal ones. We need incentives for lawyers to go work in rural communities.”

Overview of accessible legal services and supports

- Advocates reported that legal information is vastly more accessible than either legal representation or summary advice from a lawyer. Almost all of the organizations contacted by West Coast LEAF offer legal information; fewer than half offer legal advice, and only a small proportion can connect women with full legal representation.
- Participants identified legal advocates, family support workers, Friendship Centers, Native Court Workers, and information from Legal Services Society brochures and websites as accessible sources of legal information.
- The respondents also identified sources for legal representation and legal advice. These included legal aid lawyers, the Canadian Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service, duty counsel, Access Pro Bono, and Aboriginal and community legal advocates.
- Several participants indicated a significant gap in legal representation services for Aboriginal communities. A majority of the survey participants reported easier access to legal information compared to having access to representation services by an Aboriginal lawyer.

An advocate from Northern BC stated:

“More funds and resources are invested in legal information. While this is an important service, from the point of view of an average Aboriginal woman it does not address her critical need for legal representation.”

- Advocates highlighted issues of literacy as a barrier for some Aboriginal women. Many Aboriginal women prefer getting legal information face to face rather than through written materials or websites.
- These findings echo West Coast LEAF’s 2009 report *Rights Based Legal Aid: Rebuilding BC’s Broken System*. That report states: “While access to legal information is very important, it is access to lawyers that has been most under attack in BC. Access to legal information (what some call pamphlet law) is readily available to those who are functionally literate and have access to the internet”.

Access to Aboriginal lawyers who practice family law

- Many survey respondents and focus group participants expressed concerns around the limited number of lawyers with knowledge of the history of Canada's indigenous peoples and the particular issues faced by Aboriginal people today. Advocates working with Aboriginal women reported that due to the history of institutional abuse, discrimination and racism, many Aboriginal women have a general mistrust of non-Aboriginal organizations.
- Participants also reflected on the significant lack of Aboriginal lawyers practicing in family law and child protection matters, especially in rural communities.
- The growing gap of practicing family law lawyers in many BC communities was a major concern for many advocates.
- West Coast LEAF's report *Not With a Ten Foot Pole: Law Students' Perceptions of Family Law Practice* also confirms this reality for many BC communities: "Some organizations identified up to a 50% decrease in the family law lawyers on their lists in recent years; lawyers available to take on legal aid cases were becoming even rarer to find".
- Survey participants highlighted communities with access to lawyers working with Aboriginal women. These communities included Vancouver, Terrace, Fort Nelson, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, North Vancouver, Hazelton, Smithers, Vernon, Burns Lake, Houston, Kitimat, New Aiyansh, Telegraph Creek and Prince Rupert. Advocates also acknowledged non-Aboriginal lawyers working with Aboriginal women who are deeply respected in their communities.

One focus group participant points out:

"Having an Aboriginal lawyer would help with trust. There are NO lawyers in some communities, much less Aboriginal ones. We need incentives for lawyers to go work in rural communities."

- Advocates reported that there are few lawyers working with Aboriginal women in rural communities, and expertise in family law is particularly difficult to find. These lawyers also extend their services to the surrounding isolated communities and are therefore stretched for their time and resources. In addition to the time barrier, lawyers are also bound to do a conflict check. This would mean that if the family law lawyer has already been approached or consulted by one party, the other party cannot access the same lawyer. This further limits the accessibility of lawyers for marginalized Aboriginal women in many rural communities.
- Two of the interview participants reported that they have developed a model of facilitating access to a family law lawyer for their Aboriginal women clients through Skype. The lawyer answers questions women may have around family law via Skype.
- Two respondents also shared that they have access to an Aboriginal family law lawyer who comes from an urban community to present free workshops on child custody matters.

Legal resources sought by Aboriginal women

- Survey participants indicated that the vast majority of the requests for legal resources they receive from Aboriginal women are related to family law and child protection issues. About half as many request assistance with criminal or poverty law matters, and a few request assistance with land claims issues.

“Most women who come for legal advice to our organization have custody concerns or need maintenance enforcement orders.”

- Survey recipients confirmed that although Aboriginal women present a significant need for legal services and resources in family law and child protection matters, they face many barriers in accessing support services to address these needs.
- Survey respondents highlighted that although there are many Aboriginal women in need of family law support and assistance, there are very few accessible lawyers with an understanding of the unique circumstances of Aboriginal people. There is a lack of understanding of the impact of colonialism, residential schools, the intergenerational cycle of abuse and the discrimination that Aboriginal communities have suffered. This may result in Aboriginal women failing to get the assistance and support they need.
- One advocate explained why, in some situations, Aboriginal women may hesitate to seek support in their family law legal matters:

“Some women feel so helpless or discouraged and do not want additional victimization from court proceedings and ramifications from their ex and his family.”

- Advocates also informed us that often Aboriginal woman who may need family law legal support hesitate to ask for it as they fear that their children may be apprehended for various reasons, such as the fact they may have a criminal record for petty crimes, past addictions or involvement in the sex trade. The scars of residential school abuse are a key factor that contributes to women finding themselves in these vulnerable situations.
- The survey findings indicated that requests for legal resources and information for criminal matters, land claims, and poverty law were comparatively low. Poverty continues to plague many Aboriginal communities; however the cuts to poverty law services are reflected in fewer people requesting support in these areas. As one survey participant stated:

“It’s hard to fault Aboriginal lawyers for not working in poverty law when there are no government funded positions in Aboriginal poverty law”.

Use of online legal resources

- More than half of the survey respondents indicated that they use online legal resources for information around emerging legal issues and to learn about new resources to better support their clients.
- The majority of the advocates acknowledged the work of LSS in producing several useful legal resources and fact sheets. Though online resources are very helpful for advocates, they are reportedly seldom used by Aboriginal women clients, in large part because of obstacles to literacy and resources.

“LSS does a great job with online resources, but only if you are literate and have access to a computer” – Survey participant from a rural community

- Advocates reported that, for some women, online resources are only useful when the legal advocate was able sit with them and assist them to navigate through the online information. It is to be noted that not all communities in BC have a legal advocate.
- Some advocates expressed their own frustrations in navigating through technical legal language which they found difficult to understand.

“Sometimes it’s challenging for us [advocates] to navigate through the web resources and therefore we would not recommend them to women.” – Focus group participant

- In a general sense, Aboriginal women perceive online resources and support as challenging and impersonal.

“Human” support is preferred over “computer” support. Access to human help should be a human right” – Focus group participant

- The phone interviews and survey findings indicated that a growing reliance on phone and computer technologies to disseminate legal information has created further barriers for women resulting in unmet legal needs. LSS acknowledges these barriers in their report *Building Bridges: Improving Legal Services for Aboriginal Peoples*: “ Aboriginal people may not use LSS websites because they are not comfortable with using the technology. They prefer to deal with their legal problems on a personal basis and find web contents not relevant to them.”
- Many advocates expressed that in their experience Aboriginal women prefer to connect in person, face to face. Advocates who use online resources provided a list of resources that they find relevant to their work. Please see the Appendix of this report.

Reported legal resources which exist but are not utilized

- The new Aboriginal Resources section of the Legal Services Society website offers very clear and comprehensive information on many resources and services specifically relevant to Aboriginal communities. We posed the question to advocates who participated in the focus group: Is the new LSS Aboriginal webpage useful? None of the eight participants had seen it yet. This could be due to time pressures and over-stretched staff, as well as the advertising of the website's launch.
- Other resources identified as under-utilized include:
 - Duty Counsel in some communities – people are unaware of when these services are available and how to access them
 - “Social Assistance on Reserve” – This LSS publication explains how social assistance on reserve works, and what social assistance benefits people can get on reserve. This should be a valuable resource; however, several advocates included this resource as one that is not utilized by Aboriginal women. This could be due to literacy challenges as mentioned earlier in this report.
 - Legal information regarding Gladue Rights – LSS publishes materials on Gladue rights, Aboriginal rights that require judges to take a restorative approach to sentencing in criminal matters. Advocates report that these resources are not well-used.
 - LSS Family Law website – Though the website offers good information, advocates say it's not utilized due to the barriers to accessing online materials for Aboriginal women described above.

“Human” support is preferred over “computer” support. Access to human help should be a human right” – Focus group participant

Gaps in legal resources

- The survey and focus group participants identified significant gaps in the legal resources available and accessible to Aboriginal women. The main gap noted was that there is a chronic lack of Aboriginal legal advocates across BC to work directly with Aboriginal women. It was noted that currently there are only two funded positions for Aboriginal advocates across the province. These advocates provide support and services that are not just limited to their own communities, but also assist surrounding communities.
- Several participants highlighted that the lack of legal representation has a negative impact on Aboriginal people, specifically in rural communities where there are wait times for circuit court, which creates additional barriers to accessing a lawyer who can assist throughout the duration of case.
- A gap in legal resources accessible to women on reserve was reflected in participants' comments. It was noted that most Friendship Centres and other legal support resources for Aboriginal women are located off reserve, thus making accessibility an issue for women living on reserve.
- Advocates who participated in our surveys and focus groups provided the following list of resources that are needed to better serve Aboriginal women and their communities:
 - Legal Aid and legal representation
 - Local Legal Aid office in all BC communities
 - Free Family Law legal clinics across BC, with a focus on Aboriginal and rural needs
 - Additional Aboriginal Community Legal Advocates to assist women to navigate through court processes, particularly in remote and rural communities
 - Clear and more accessible plain language materials and fact sheets on issues pertaining to family law and child protection
 - More advocacy support for Aboriginal women dealing with intimate partner violence and child protection services
 - More in person/face to face support around Aboriginal Parenting After Separation
 - Wide distribution of a list of pro bono lawyers/Aboriginal lawyers doing family law and child protection work
 - Improved Aboriginal Victim Services Support in rural communities
 - Greater support for grandparents struggling to gain custody or access to their grandkids
 - Sufficient travel assistance to provide financial assistance to people to enable them to travel to appointments, assistance and court

- Education on Aboriginal history in secondary schools and in legal courses
- Incentives for Aboriginal women to pursue law, such as loan forgiveness programs
- Public Legal Education initiatives on reserves
- Aboriginal advocates in rural communities also pointed out a need for fact sheets and information on:
 - Administrative fairness on reserves
 - Making a human rights complaint against a Band or Aboriginal organization
 - Appealing a band decision to Federal Court
 - Learning about landlord-tenancy rights
 - Challenging a will or estate distribution for First Nations people living on reserve
 - Making a freedom of information request to a Band or Tribal Council
 - Debt and Credit issues
 - Locating legal advocates on reserves
 - Identifying legal resources for Aboriginal women in abusive situations
 - Rights of extended family members involved in a family law cases, such as grandparents
 - Coordinating legal support in rural communities
 - Securing funding for Anger Management/Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Programs

Aboriginal women serving organizations share legal information via:

In response to the question “What are some of the ways your organization shares and discusses legal information and rights?” participants responded and shared the following:

- Talking circles in Aboriginal communities
- By attending court, including community court, on a regular basis to inform potential Aboriginal clients of their rights
- Pamphlets on legal services provided by the organization
- In person, one-to-one workshops on custody and access, divorce and other issues. These workshops bring people together and provide a trusting, sharing environment
- Team meetings with community based advocates, social workers, lawyers and native court workers
- Through pro bono legal clinics for one hour once a week
- Healing Circles
- With the support of Elders
- Staff meeting discussions
- Past experiences
- Advocates sharing information on PovNet Aboriginal list serve.

“Our organization has no funding or time to share and discuss legal resources. Whenever we can, we discuss issues on an ad-hoc basis. ” – Advocate

Recommendations

Based on our discussions with Aboriginal advocates across the province, it was evident that Aboriginal women in BC face significant obstacles in accessing relevant and useful legal resources. Though well-intended initiatives have been undertaken to use web technologies for transmitting legal information, these initiatives reportedly have not adequately benefitted Aboriginal communities due to various cultural, socio-economic, and literacy issues. In light of our consultative process, West Coast LEAF endorses the recommendations contained in the *LSS Building Bridges: Improving Legal Services for Aboriginal Peoples* report, and makes the following recommendations to the BC government:

1. Increase accessibility of legal aid, particularly for family law issues, and strategize to increase Aboriginal family law lawyers' ability to participate in legal aid files by increasing the tariff and number of hours for which they can be compensated for working on a file.
2. Provide funding support to the Legal Services Society to increase training initiatives for family law lawyers specific to the needs of Aboriginal communities.
3. Prioritize expanding services and positions for Aboriginal Community Legal Advocates in BC communities, specifically in remote and rural communities.
4. Provide financial assistance for Aboriginal people living in rural communities who must travel to access services and attend court.
5. Develop incentives for Aboriginal law students to encourage them to pursue careers in law. Offer student loan forgiveness programs to law students who take up work in rural communities after law school.
6. Create a central coordination body for legal advocates working with Aboriginal communities and hold regular meetings to build bridges and lessen isolation for the advocates.
7. Develop more plain language legal materials specifically in the area of family law and child protection, in consultation with advocates.
8. Conduct a regular assessment of Aboriginal women's unmet legal needs through community forums.
9. Identify communities that have a higher Aboriginal population and develop hubs with free legal clinics that employ Aboriginal legal advocates.
10. Create opportunities to share legal information in more culturally sensitive and personal ways. This must include initiatives on reserves.
11. Work closely with Aboriginal community organizations in delivering public legal education specific to issues that are important to Aboriginal communities.
12. Acknowledge the oppressions of Aboriginal people and recognize the barriers they face in accessing justice in order to build trust and transparency.

Appendix: Recommended Legal Resources

Survey respondents, focus group participants and interview consultants provided a rich source of information and recommended legal resources that they use to support Aboriginal women with their family law and child protection matters. If you know of a resource that could assist Aboriginal women in a legal matter and it is not listed in this section please complete the form on the back page with your recommendation and send it to us.

***Recommended by Survey/Focus Group Participants

Organizations and Clinics providing Legal Support, Information and Advocacy to Aboriginal Women in BC

***North Shore Women's Centre Family Law Clinic

www.northshorewomen.ca

info@northshorewomen.ca

604-984-6009

A female family law lawyer provides private legal information and advice consultation for one hour about issues such as separation, divorce, and child custody and access, division of assets, etc. The clinic is held once a month on a Monday and the lawyer will see 6 women for one hour each regarding family law matters.

***UBC First Nations Legal Clinic

604- 684-7334

Suite 101, 148 Alexander St, Vancouver, BC V6A1B5

UBC students provide legal services to First Nations Community

***Pivot Legal Society

www.pivotlegal.org/legal-help

604-255-9700

Two free legal clinics a week at different community agencies. Women only clinics available, as well as drop in clinics. Refer to website for locations, dates and details.

*** Atira Women's Resource Society

www.atira.bc.ca

info@atira.bc.ca

604-331-1407

Women only legal advice clinics located in the Downtown Eastside (by appointment only).

Legal Clinic for Temporary Migrant Workers / MOSAIC and Access Pro Bono

www.mosaicbc.ca

Tel: 604-254-9626 Ext: 226

www.accessjustice.ca

Tel: 604-878-7400

Lawyers are available to provide a 30 minute free legal consultation on issues related to temporary foreign workers including in Family Law, Employment, Human Rights and Immigration.

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca

Tel: 604-872-8212

A free legal clinic for women dealing with legal matters pertaining to any issue of male violence against women. The legal clinic offers free legal advice from a female practicing lawyer.

Howe Sound Women's Centre

www.hswc.seatoskycommunity.org

Tel: 604-892-5748

A free 1/2 hour consultation with a lawyer

The Salvation Army Pro Bono Programs

www.probono.ca/mission.php

604-694-6647

The program offers pro-bono services in communities of Courtney, Parksville, Nanaimo, Duncan, Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Richmond, New West, Maple Ridge, Abbotsford, Penticton, Vernon, Kamloops, Kelowna and Cranbrook. Currently there are no legal clinics available in BC's northern communities. The target group of the program is those persons who are ineligible for legal aid and meet the required eligibility income guidelines.

Access Pro Bono

www.accessprobono.ca

604-878-7400

help@accessprobon.ca

1-877-762-6664

Offers several programs and services to meet the legal needs of individuals and non-profit organizations, ranging from legal advice to full legal representation services. Eligibility criteria is applied to cases.

***** Justice Access Centres – Nanaimo and Vancouver**

www.ag.gov.bc.ca/justice-access-centre

The centres offer legal support and legal advice in civil and family matters. Eligibility criteria is applied to cases.

*****Battered Women Support Services**

www.bwss.org

604-687-1868

1-855-687-1868

Legal advocacy, court accompaniment, online resources, resource room.

***** Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Society**

www.vafcs.org

604-251-7200

vatjs@telus.net

Provides offenders and victims with a satisfying and culturally appropriate alternative to the mainstream criminal justice system.

*****Jane Doe Legal Network**

www.janedoelegal.org

604-255-9700 ext. 102

Legal aid, legal advice, workshops, information and advocacy for women who have experienced violence.

Justice for Girls

www.justiceforgirls.org
604-689-7887

Services include supporting homeless and low income girls access to justice in the criminal justice system, outreach, advocacy for teenage girls in prison. Offers public legal education.

*****Native Court Worker and Counselling Association of BC**

www.nccabc.ca nccabc@nccabc.net
604-985-5355 1-877-811-1190

Legal support/advocacy, drug and alcohol counselling, and community outreach for aboriginal people. Native court workers cover 70% of courthouses in BC.

*****Penticton and Area Women's Centre**

www.pawc.org info@pawc.ca
250-493-6822 1-866-493-6822

Support, referral and legal advocacy for tenancy rights, employment assistance (welfare), disability benefits. For people with low incomes CPP, and EI in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

*****Legal Services Society**

www.lss.ba.ca aboriginal@lss.bc.ca
604-408-2172 1-866-577-2525

Aboriginal legal community workers, advice, information, representation and outreach. Aboriginal Community Legal Workers are located in Alert Bay, Duncan, Nanaimo and Port Hardy. Recently Legal Services Society has partnered with several Aboriginal communities and rural communities to facilitate easier access to legal information. For more information please visit their website: www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalaidoffices.asp#community_partners

Family Law Line

www.legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/FamilyLawLINE.asp
604-408-2172 1-866-577-2525

Family LawLINE lawyers give brief advice about family law issues such as custody, access, guardianship, child support, spousal support, property division, family agreements, adoption, and court procedures.

*****Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society**

www.vacfss.com
604-872-6723 1-877-9VACFSS

Guardianship, Foster Care, Family Preservation, Residential Resources, Child Protection.

*****Family Justice Centers**

604-660-2421 1-800-663-7867

Greater Victoria: 250-387-6121

Provide guidance and assistance in matters related to separation, divorce, child custody free of charge, and free legal advice to those who qualify.

*****Dial-a-Law**

www.cba.org/BC/public_media/family.aspx
604-687-4680

1-800-565-5297

Provides general automated scripts on a variety of topics on law in BC, including a section on family law. No legal advice is provided.

*****Justice Education Society**

www.justiceducation.ca
604-660-9870

info@justiceeducation.ca

Provides information, services, and workshops related to family law and aboriginal law. Aboriginal programs and resources at www.justiceeducation.ca/programs/aboriginal-programs

*****Ooknakane Friendship Centre**

www.friendshipcentre.ca
250-490-3504

programs@friendshipcentre.ca

Provide legal information and advice, hearing accompaniment, aid in filling out forms.

*****Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre**

250-949-8044

Box 2065, Port Hardy, BC

Advocacy, mediation, information and referral services.

*****Northern Native Public Legal Education – Justice Education Society**

www.justiceeducation.ca/programs/northern-native-public-legal-education
250-614-2736

northern@justiceeducation.ca

Provides culturally-sensitive outreach services for First Nations communities throughout Northern BC.

Programs available for youth and adults. Not particularly focused on family law.

*****Heiltsuk Restorative Justice Program**

www.bellabella.net/restorativejustice.html

Mary Brown, Supervisor/Coordinator: maryb5sal@hotmail.com

250-957-2381 ext. 2236

Assist in the completion of court applications, family maintenance, legal aid, etc.

Community and provincial court liaison, youth probations, adult probations, alternate measures. Located in Bella Bella.

YWCA - Crabtree Corner

www.ywcavan.org/content.crabtree_corner/258
604-216-1650

enquire@ywcavan.org

Crabtree Corner provides support services for women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. No apparent legal resources.

Legal Print Materials for Aboriginal Women in BC

*****Guide to Free Advocacy & Legal Resources in the South Okanagan-Similkameen**

www.pawc.ca/pawcfreeadvocacy&legal.html

Provides information to advocates, service providers, and people who are advocating on their own behalf about free resources to help resolve non-criminal, administrative or civil law issues

Produced by Penticton & Area Women's Centre, June 2007

Supreme Court of BC Online Help Guide

www.supremecourtbc.ca/family-law

Website providing information about family law matters at Supreme Court level.

Produced by Justice Education Society, 2010

*****Aboriginal Child Protection Process**

www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=342

Step by step guide to Aboriginal child protection process and information on rights of children and families. Produced by Legal Services Society of BC.

Understanding Aboriginal Child Protection/Removal Matters

www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=259

Fact sheet describing what Aboriginal parents and their communities can do in Aboriginal child protection cases. Produced by Legal Services Society of BC.

*****Parents' Rights, Kids' Rights**

www.lss.bc.ca/assets/pubs/parentsrightskidsrights.pdf

A parents' guide to child protection law in British Columbia. Produced by Legal Services Society of BC.

*****Leaving an Abusive Relationship**

www.janedoelegal.org/leaving-abusive-relationship-information-custody-and-access-women-children

Information on Custody and Access for Women with Children. Made Accessible through Jane Doe Legal Network. Produced by YWCA Vancouver, 2008. Available in various languages.

Justice Education Society

www.justiceeducation.ca

604-660-9870

info@justiceeducation.ca

Provides information, services, and workshops related to family law and aboriginal law. Aboriginal programs and resources at www.justiceeducation.ca/programs/aboriginal-programs. Provides fact sheets and information on various legal topics.

Websites – Legal Resources for Aboriginal women

*****Click Law**

www.clicklaw.bc.ca

A website aimed at enhancing access to justice in British Columbia. Features legal information and education designed for the public. There is a specific section on Aboriginal-related legal issues/FAQ.

*****Legal Services Society**

www.lss.bc.ca/publications

A variety of publications and fact sheets on aboriginal and family law including Aboriginal child protection.

*****Family Relations Act**

www.bclaws.ca

Online database of BC legislation. It is organized alphabetically - click the first letter of the Act you are looking for.

*****PovNet**

www.povnet.org

Provides online tools that facilitate communication, community and access to information around poverty-related issues in British Columbia and Canada. Collection of news and resources of use to advocates, community workers, marginalized communities and the general public. Section on aboriginal issues: www.povnet.org/issues/aboriginal-first-nations.

*****Peoples Law School**

www.publiclegaled.bc.ca

Provides free public legal education to the public through programs and publications. Includes family law. No legal advice provided. Upcoming events at www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/events

*****CanLII**

canlii.org

On-line searchable database of case law.

*****Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada**

www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca

Formerly Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Responsible for government's mandate under the Indian Act and subsequent amendments and agreements. Conducts land claim negotiations. Provides social services to reserves.

***** Law Student Legal Advice Program**

www.lslap/bc.ca/main

604-822-5791

Provides free legal advice and representation to clients who would otherwise be unable to afford legal assistance. Does not provide help with family law matters.

***** YWCA Legal Education Services**

www.ywcavan.org/content/legal_education_services_and_resources/266

604-734-5517 ext. 2235

avollans@ywcavan.org

Information on restraining orders, child and custody access or income assistance and social housing.

***** JP Boyd's Family Law Resource**

www.bcfamilylawresource.com

This website offers a comprehensive survey of family law, divorce law and the court process in British Columbia, Canada. Information on family law in plain language.

Additional Recommendations:

Please share with us any additional legal resources for Aboriginal women that may not be mentioned in this report.

Title of the Resource: _____

Author: _____

Produced by: _____

Date: _____

Website: _____

Order information: _____

Brief Description of the resource: _____

Your contact information:

Your Name: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please Fax the form to: West Coast LEAF - Attention Family Law Project
604-684-1543



West Coast LEAF's mission is to achieve equality by changing historic patterns of systemic discrimination against women through BC-based equality rights litigation, law reform and public legal education.

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