

Community Justice Services

Models From Around The World

Lisa Moore March 2023



The **Canadian Forum on Civil Justice** (CFCJ) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to civil justice reform and access to justice research and advocacy. Established by the Canadian Bar Association and affiliated with Osgoode Hall Law School, the CFCJ envisions an accessible, sustainable, and effective justice system for all Canadians.

Learn more about the CFCJ at: <https://cfcj-fcjc.org/>.



The **Community-Based Justice Research** (CBJR) project (2018-2022) is a four-year study that seeks to compare the costs, benefits, challenges and opportunities of providing and scaling access to community-based justice services in Canada, Sierra Leone, Kenya and South Africa. The CBJR Project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Learn more about the CBJR project at: <https://cfcj-fcjc.org/our-projects/community-based-justice-research-cbjr/>.



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About this document

This document examines community justice services. It highlights approaches and models for local justice outreach and legal assistance effectuated by organizations around the world. The organizations profiled in this document all provide legal assistance in some form to underserved, underprivileged, vulnerable, and/or marginalized populations.

In many cases, geographic location is an important factor determining who can access legal help, but it is not the only factor or necessarily a prerequisite. Across the diverse community justice services included in this document, legal assistance is provided virtually, in-person, by phone, or in hybrid formats to individuals living within or beyond a given catchment area who meet service provider requirements and thresholds.

This generally aligns access to services with several demographic traits, particularly those based in social or economic disadvantage. The populations who fall into these categories commonly include low-income earners and the working poor, immigrants, visible minorities, women, 2SLGBTQ+ members, and other equity-seeking populations. Within these populations, there is often a shared landscape of legal problem experiences and barriers to accessing legal help. Many community justice organizations also provide legal assistance to non-profit groups who lack the financial means to engage professional legal help. Ultimately, while the community justice organizations discussed in this document may differ in the specific populations they serve, the types of services they offer or how those services can be accessed, the overarching objective of these organizations is to meet a need for legal assistance, legal information and legal resources among groups who otherwise may not recognize that need or have access to legal help.

Across jurisdictions, the work being carried out to ensure access to much-needed community justice services takes place by organizations operationally structured as non-profits, paralegal services organizations, pro bono services, lawyer associations, law centres, and other structures. These organizations provide legal assistance at little or no cost, in ways that are tailored to the needs of the communities they serve. There are also several examples of legal services organizations that themselves coalesce around a shared identity or beliefs. In these cases, the organization's mandate generally reflects the role of those shared qualities in the organization's service delivery approach or for their identity. The type and extent of legal assistance provided by community justice organizations might also differ. The organizations discussed in this document provide one or more of the following: legal representation, legal advice, legal coaching, mediation, and other types of legal services aimed at resolving civil legal problems. These community justice organizations also commonly offer legal education and information and non-legal supports or else they connect justice seekers to locally accessible services.

There are several reasons to highlight the work of community justice organizations worldwide. Community justice organizations perform a necessary function in societies. They connect people to the legal help they need, often where alternatives are not readily accessible or viewed favourably.¹ Against the backdrop of a global justice gap which sees an estimated 1.5 billion people unable to access legal help—mostly for civil legal problems—community justice services reach people in difficult situations for whom cost, a lack of faith in formal justice institutions, a lack of understanding about their rights or legal problem, location, or time often present barriers to legal problem resolution.² Whether through grassroots activity or more formal interventions, community justice organizations generally develop from these recognized legal information and service delivery gaps, meeting people where they are at (relative to their location, financially, personally, etc.) with legal and non-legal help. This is all the more impressive considering that many of these organizations are chronically understaffed, underfunded, and under-resourced. Notably, many community justice organizations—in particular, paralegal services organizations—whose staff are members of the communities being served often have an in-depth understanding of the culture, language, gender dynamics, traditions, and history of the place and people that are central to their work. Across studies, a culturally sensitive, informed and agreeable level of service

1 “Accessible” here does not only refer to physical location, but also includes factors that otherwise may be prohibitive or problematic for some justice seekers, such as cost or gender discrimination, but do not exist as barriers to receiving legal help from some community justice organizations.

2 The global justice gap is the difference between legal help that people want or need and the help that they can access. Task Force on Justice, *Justice for All – Final Report* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2019) at 13, online: <<https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/>>.

provided by community justice organizations commonly translates to higher levels of satisfaction with the dispute resolution process and the outcomes of disputes resolved through community justice services relative to other dispute resolution pathways.³

Despite the popularity of community justice services in many jurisdictions, there are research gaps in the extent of the benefits these services provide to people and societies compared to their costs. There is also limited research on the potential to scale access to community justice services. The Community-Based Justice Research (CBJR) project, which is a multi-country initiative, seeks to examine these questions through evidence-based research. This document aims to contribute to the CBJR research collection by highlighting the diverse landscape of community justice organizations worldwide, and their important work connecting to underserved and vulnerable populations. There are many more community justice organizations worldwide than could reasonably be included in one document. In an effort

3 See for example Felix Marco Conteh, Yakama Manty Jones, Sonkita Conteh, Henry Mbawa and Aisha Fofana Ibrahim, *The Costs and Benefits of Community-based Justice in Sierra Leone* (Sierra Leone: CAPRI, January 2022) at 19-29, online: IDRC <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/61131/Costs%20and%20Benefits%20of%20Community-based%20Justice_SierraLeone.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; Katiba Institute and University of Nairobi, *Alternative Approaches to Access to Justice in Kenya: A Cost-Benefit Analysis* (Kenya: Katiba Institute, 15 November, 2021) at 37, online: IDRC <<https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/61056/IDL-61056.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>>; Sophia Mukorera and Winnie Martins, *Brief 5: Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Services Offered by CAOS* (South Africa: CCJD, 2022) at 12-13, online: IDRC <<https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/61139/IDL-61139.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>>; Ab Currie, *The Community Being Helped is the Resource that is Needed to Extend Access to Justice to the Community* (Toronto: CFCJ, August 2020) at 13, online: CFCJ <<https://cfcj-fcjc.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Community-Being-Helped-Is-the-Resource-That-is-Needed-Ab-Currie.pdf>>.

to align this document with other publications from the CBJR Project, community justice organizations are included below based on their work or connection to at least one of the following four themes from CBJR Project research: (i) Customary Systems/Traditional Systems/Religion; (ii) Innovation and Technology; (iii) Housing, Tenancy, Land and Property; and (iv) Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation. These are key themes examined in on-the-ground research and the final reports for the CBJR Project. Importantly, many community justice organizations work with a variety of tools, serve multiple groups, and assist with a range of legal problem types. As such, some community justice organizations could be included in multiple categories. Each organization appears in one category only. The summary information about these organizations seeks to present a clear picture of their mandate, how they provide legal assistance, the type of legal matters they address and, there is also reference to their work in the context of the themes listed.

In reviewing this document, I hope that you will be introduced to new community justice organizations and learn about the important work that these organizations do for the communities they serve. I also invite you to visit the websites provided for more information about these organizations.

Community Justice Services and Customary Systems/ Traditional Systems/Religion

The organizations included in this section engage funding sources, service delivery approaches and—often—legal professionals who work in accordance with a given religious bent or customary or traditional systems. The work of these organizations is presented objectively and reflects the integration of a given belief system into the community justice model.



Catholic Lawyers Society Kuala Lumpur



Where are they located?

Malaysia



How long have they been around?

Since 1992

What's in their playbook?

Catholic Lawyers Society Kuala Lumpur (CLS) seeks to advance social justice and promote peace in ways that align with the rule of law and the spirit of the Gospel. To facilitate access to legal help and fulfill their goal of giving back to the community, volunteer lawyers who are members of CLS provide free legal advice to low-income individuals in the areas served by CLS' legal clinics. Advice is provided in person. People accessing legal help through CLS are generally living in a state of hardship and otherwise would not be able to access legal advice for their problem(s). The CLS clinic often represents the first point of contact with the legal system for low-income persons seeking advice for personal legal problems or disputes related to employment matters, family problems, housing problems, immigration and nationality matters, debt problems, criminal law problems, personal injury problems, public law matters, welfare benefits, community care matters, and other types of legal problems. All members of CLS identify as Catholic and the Catholic faith plays a role in the way that advice is provided by lawyers volunteering with CLS. In organizing legal clinics, CLS coordinates with Catholic parishes. CLS members advocate for peace and social justice matters, and participate in seminars and speaking events to bring attention to important legal issues. CLS welcomes Catholic judges, lawyers, law students and lecturers as members of their non-profit professional society.

How can you find out more?

<http://www.catholiclawyersmalaysia.org/content/free-legal-clinics>

Christian Legal Society



Where are they located?

Virginia



How long have they been around?

Since 1961

What's in their playbook?

Invoking Micah 6:8 as foundational to their mission, the Christian Legal Society (CLS) seeks to motivate and equip lawyers and law students of Christian faith to study and practice the law, provide legal help to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, and promote human rights and religious freedom in ways that consider, honour, and advance Christian teachings. Among CLS's objectives—each of which connects Christianity to the study and practice of law in some form—CLS encourages lawyers to help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, invites discussions on issues related to Christianity and the law, and promotes justice for the poor, among other objectives. CLS hosts conferences, retreats, and other events and offers member resources on their website, including podcasts, publications, webinars, and a job board. While CLS supports the creation of Christian Legal Aid clinics nationwide, each clinic is independently run and justice seekers will need to contact the clinic in their area to determine if they qualify for free legal help. The Christian Legal Aid Clinic Directory on the CLS site is organized by state. Justice seekers can also access CLS' Christian Lawyer Directory if they are looking for a lawyer affiliated with the organization and they are able to pay for legal assistance.

How can you find out more?

<https://christianlegalsociety.org>

Muslim Community Association Legal Clinic



Where are they located?

Santa Clara, California



How long have they been around?

Since 2005

What's in their playbook?

At the time when they began operations in 2005, the Muslim Community Association (MCA) Legal Clinic was the first clinic of its kind created in the Muslim American community. MCA's legal clinic works with about 25 volunteer lawyers who come together to provide free 20-minute consultations to justice seekers twice every month. Consultations are available for legal matters in the following areas: immigration, family law, business, court appearances/litigation, employment, landlord-tenant matters, small claims, personal injury, consumer law/bankruptcy/debt, civil rights, and wills/estates/trusts. Persons in need of legal assistance are invited to contact the MCA legal clinic via email to schedule an appointment. The MCA Legal Clinic reference library provides self-help materials in various formats related a range of legal problem types. Justice seekers can also access a referral list with legal organizations and lawyers. The MCA Legal Clinic provides legal information through free community legal workshops focusing on different types of legal matters. MCA is a non-profit, religious organization with social services programs, outreach services, youth and women's services, Weekend Islamic School, Islamic Counseling and Education, and other programs aimed at helping the communities they serve.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.mcabayarea.org/legal-clinic>

Christian Legal Aid of Los Angeles



Where are they located?

Los Angeles, California



How long have they been around?

2005

What's in their playbook?

Christian Legal Aid of Los Angeles (CLA-LA) is a non-profit, faith-based charity which seeks to assist veterans, the elderly, homeless families, victims of domestic violence, refugees, low-income families, and other vulnerable groups who qualify understand and resolve their civil legal disputes. CLA-LA provides legal “urgent” care services, limited representation at hearings, referrals to other legal aid organizations, mediation services and education seminars for clients. Across these services, CLA-LA’s efforts are primarily focused on equipping clients with the knowledge to represent themselves. Through their legal “urgent” care service, CLA-LA provides in-person or telephone consultations of up to 90 minutes. Through these meetings, clients can get assistance to address their specific legal issue. Clients are informed about their rights and receive information on how to prepare and file court documents, make pleadings and negotiate. For clients whose circumstances preclude their ability to act on their own behalf during an expungement hearing or civil dispute, CLA-LA lawyers and volunteers make limited appearances at hearings on behalf of clients. For disputes that may be resolved through mediation, CLA-LA makes referrals to Christian and/or free mediation services. CLA-LA also makes referrals to other legal aid organizations and private attorneys in cases where clients require legal assistance/representation beyond the legal help that is available through CLA-LA. Through CLA-LA’s seminars, justice seekers have access to general information about their legal rights and related issues of practical significance. Information about CLA-LA’s free Telephone Legal Clinics is posted on their website. Pre-registration is required for assistance. Assistance is also available in Spanish.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.mcabayarea.org/legal-clinic>

GLIDE



Where are they located?

San Francisco, California



How long have they been around?

Since 1929

What's in their playbook?

The GLIDE Foundation is a centre for social justice—affiliated with GLIDE Memorial Church—offering programs aimed at lifting people out of poverty, fighting systemic injustices, and helping people transform their lives. GLIDE's five values are to be radically inclusive, tell the truth, be loving & hopeful, be for the people, and celebrate life & celebrate together. These values grew out of GLIDE's origins as a spiritual movement. While the GLIDE Foundation was founded in 1929, GLIDE's Unconditional Legal Clinic was founded more recently, in 2014. Individuals with a legal problem or a legal question can visit GLIDE's legal clinic in-person for information and limited legal help for any type of legal matter. The in-person, drop-in Unconditional Legal Clinic also provides referrals to legal service providers. The Unconditional Legal Clinic offers free virtual legal help in the afternoons from Monday–Thursday; attendees are asked to register in advance. Lawyers and volunteers working at the Virtual Legal Clinic assess clients' legal needs but do not enter into attorney-client relationships and are not able to work with clients to address their specific legal matter. In addition to legal assistance provided through GLIDE's Unconditional Legal Clinic and help provided through the Virtual Legal Clinic, the GLIDE Foundation is home to a Walk-In Center, where individuals can receive help with housing, hygiene, and case management services; a Family, Youth & Childcare Center, which helps families by providing childcare, education and developmental services; a Men-In-Progress program that teaches anger management and violence prevention and helps formerly incarcerated men re-enter society; Harm Reduction Services which seek to put in place evidence-based public health measures to curb overdoses and the transmission of certain diseases, and address stigma related to these issues; and, a Daily Meals and Food Program which provides 3 meals/day 364 days/year to the poor, homeless, and hungry.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.glide.org>

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints Legal Clinics



Where are they located?

Utah



How long have they been around?

Since 2016

What's in their playbook?

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has taken on several charitable initiatives and humanitarian causes. Included among these is a commitment to help immigrants. The Church partners with community organizations and provides supports for refugees and immigrants locally. Immigrants and refugees can access free, personal legal advice in English or Spanish related to immigration and family law matters. The legal clinics operating under the Latter-Day Saint Charities division are staffed by volunteer lawyers and law students who provide free consultations. Law students assist with intake while lawyers with expertise in immigration and family law assist individuals based on the order in which they seek assistance from the clinic. Lawyers do not enter into attorney-client relationships with individuals receiving help through the Church's legal clinics or assist clients with filing paperwork. For individuals seeking legal advice from a clinic who do not speak English or Spanish, translation services are available on request.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.latterdaysaintcharities.org/immigrant-services/legal-clinics>

Christian Legal Fellowship



Where are they located?

Ontario, Canada



How long have they been around?

Since 1978

What's in their playbook?

Christian Legal Fellowship (CLF) describes its mission as “the administration, practice, teaching and study of law” and “serving the body of Christ”. CLF seeks to motivate individuals who identify as Christians to become justice advocates. The organization—with its membership of over 700 lawyers, law students, professors and supporters—also works to educate Christian communities about pertinent legal issues. CLF’s activities include: (i) providing supports for lawyers who are Christians; (ii) hosting law-related symposia, seminars and other events; (iii) promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution as a way to address disputes, in keeping with the organization’s understanding of the teachings of the Bible; (iv) intervening in legal matters that provide an opportunity to help vulnerable members of the community, advance justice, and advocate for human rights; (v) providing the Christian community with legal information, including on emerging issues and cases that are deemed to be relevant to the Church and church-goers; (vi) publishing a Christian legal journal and other legal publications; (vii) supporting ministry by matriculating law students across Canada; and (ix) matching students with mentors. CLF also provides referrals to lawyers who are members of CLF and have agreed to receive referrals. Individuals who would like to be connected with a CLF member lawyer can complete the online legal referral request form. CLF aims to match individuals with lawyers with expertise in their problem area, and who are in the same geographic location as the individual seeking assistance. The lawyer and client decide whether to enter into a lawyer-client relationship and on the terms of the relationship. CLF also hosts a Christian Legal Blog on their website.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.christianlegalfellowship.org>

Community Justice Services, Innovation & Technology

The community justice organizations included in this section are varied. They are featured here because some aspect of their work or mandate could be considered innovative, unconventional, or tech-forward relative to other community justice services. Those organizations that rely heavily on technology for their operations are included under the “Technology” sub-heading, while other organizations in this category are included under, “Innovation”.



Technology

This section includes a sampling of community-based clinics, pro bono service firms, paralegal services, and other types of justice organisations that rely on technology or online tools to carry out their core work. For community-based organizations included in this section, technology is a defining feature of the way that they work and the services that they provide, even where some services or information exchange may be available in other ways.

BarefootLaw

 **Where are they located?**
Uganda

 **How long have they been around?**
Since 2012

What's in their playbook?

BarefootLaw Uganda applies innovative approaches to assisting the public with their legal needs. On their Legalvation webpage, they advance the idea that, “the right amount of legal information added to technology and innovation will equal to universal access to justice”. Relying on technology, audio-visual tools, and traditional methods, BarefootLaw provides legal information and legal help for free through: BarefootLaw Hive, BarefootLaw Social, BarefootLaw nodes, BarefootLaw SMS, Virtual Counsel, Dial-a-Lawyer, Email-a-Lawyer, Community Outreach and Partnerships. BarefootLaw also collaborates with legal and non-legal services to provide assistance for matters that are beyond the scope of their services. This includes partnerships with medical personnel, law firms and justice enforcement organizations. BarefootLaw assists with matters in many areas of the law, including family law and domestic violence, employment disputes, crime, land and property. Outreach is a central component of BarefootLaw’s work and they use social media, SMS, and other platforms to share information with citizens about their rights and the law. BarefootLaw also partners in and leads projects at the local, national and international levels which seek to improve access to legal information and services through technology and innovative solutions.

How can you find out more?

www.barefootlaw.org

United Legal Access



Where are they located?

London, UK



How long have they been around?

Incorporated in 2018

What's in their playbook?

United Legal Access is a virtual pro bono legal clinic in London offering legal advice for immigration problems, employment problems, consumer problems, housing problems, discrimination, matters related to the Windrush scheme, and contractual disputes. United Legal Access also seeks to make the law more accessible to the public. They work to empower the public to exercise their rights and—with help from their team—make informed decisions about how to move forward with their legal matter. Users can submit tickets online for free legal advice and review information related to their matter through United's online portal at any time, from anywhere for free. Users also have the option to get responses to their legal questions delivered to their phone, tablet, desktop or laptop. While initial legal consultations are free, additional advice is only available for a fee, which the clinic describes as “reasonable”. The clinic's work also includes legal services and information projects, including the now completed “EU Settlement Scheme” project and the “Windrush Compensation Scheme”.

How can you find out more?

www.unitedlegalaccess.com

Pine Tree Legal Assistance



Where are they located?

Maine, U.S.



How long have they been around?

Since June 14, 1966

What's in their playbook?

Pine Tree Legal Assistance is a non-profit organization that provides legal advice and assistance to low-income Mainers with a household income at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. Free civil legal assistance is available to help people meet their needs and enforce their rights related to housing, food, income, safety, education and healthcare. Translators are available free of charge to justice seekers in seven languages. Pine Tree Legal Assistance also works to increase Mainers' understanding of their rights and their ability to advocate for themselves; and they provide community legal education training and activities for legal and non-legal professionals and other individuals. There are various self-help and legal empowerment resources available for free through Pine Tree Legal Assistance, including the interactive [RePresent game](#) (available for download on Apple and Android devices) which teaches justice seekers how to prepare for an eviction hearing, and about going to court as a self-represented litigant. Self-help resources are also available online for matters related to: rental housing; money, taxes & debt; health & public benefits; homeownership & foreclosure; domestic violence, sexual assault & abuse; divorce, custody & family; Indigenous law; farmworkers, work & school; going to court; and veterans affairs. Several of Pine Tree's online resources are available in up to fifteen languages.

How can you find out more?

www.ptla.org

Innovation

Kituo Cha Sheria- Legal Advice Centre



Where are they located?

Kenya



How long have they been around?

Since July 9, 1973

What's in their playbook?

Kituo Cha Sheria-Legal Advice Centre is one of the oldest legal aid providers and human rights NGOs in Kenya. Their network of 8 community centres and 11 prison justice centres across Kenya seeks to meet the legal needs of socially and economically disadvantaged persons through legal aid services, community-based resources, and in other ways. Through their mobile legal aid clinics, Kituo Cha Sheria also engages in outreach to help poor and marginalized people understand their rights and access legal representation and/or mediation for legal problems related to land rights, labour rights, refugee rights, housing and other problems. Kituo Cha Sheria's Legal Aid and Education Programme (LEAP) trains community groups and paralegals and advocates for policy and law reforms in several areas.

How can you find out more?

www.kituochasheria.or.ke

HAKI Africa



Where are they located?

Mombasa, Kenya



How long have they been around?

Since 2012

What's in their playbook?

HAKI Africa works with state and non-state actors and at the community level to protect human rights and improve people's lives. Their Swift Action (SWAT) to Human Rights Violations program manages complaints related to a range of human rights violations and facilitates access to justice—with support from legal aid—in cases of criminal violations, cultural cases and other types of matters. HAKI's database on human rights violations serves as a clearinghouse for the media, human rights organizations, and security professionals working on related matters. HAKI also works on initiatives related to other issues, including: freedom of religion, youth engagement in society, women's empowerment, and countering extremism.

How can you find out more?

www.hakiafrica.or.ke

Legal Resources Foundation (Kenya)



Where are they located?

Nairobi, Kenya



How long have they been around?

Since 1993

What's in their playbook?

Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) liaises with organizations and services in the justice sector, developing partnerships in order to provide holistic, participatory pathways for problem resolution in communities. LRF's efforts span a range of projects, with objectives aimed at addressing issues related to human rights, gender equality, democratic governance, legal empowerment, strengthening the Alternative Care System, interests and rights of children separated from their family, access to legal aid and access to justice, among other themes. LRF has also worked collaboratively with organizations to strengthen connections between community-based justice mechanisms, ADR, and the formal justice system.

How can you find out more?

www.lrf-kenya.or.ke

Legal Resources Foundation (Zimbabwe)



Where are they located?

Zimbabwe



How long have they been around?

Since 1985

What's in their playbook?

Since being founded more than three decades ago, the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) has worked to advance access to justice and human rights protections in Zimbabwe. LRF provides legal advice and help to low-income populations, works to build legal empowerment in communities, conducts research to build an evidence base from which to help strengthen laws and policies, and works with stakeholders on initiatives aimed at improving justice delivery. At the community level, LRF's work involves training for community paralegals, outreach to address legal need related to everyday and life-changing legal matters, training for children and young people as peer legal advisors, building the capacity of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), producing and contributing legal information to community publications, and participating in radio programmes to share up-to-date legal information. LRF also works in partnership with Magistrates' courts on the Help Desk initiative which provides legal assistance to self-represented litigants, and they operate mobile legal aid clinics outside of urban centres where access to lawyers presents challenges.

How can you find out more?

www.lrfzim.com

Legal Resources Centre Ghana



Where are they located?

Ghana



How long have they been around?

More than 20 years

What's in their playbook?

Realizing the dignity of all peoples and building human rights capacities are central to the mission of the Legal Resources Centre (LRC). LRC seeks to advance its mission in several ways, including by establishing “human rights cities” in Ghana and abroad, where human rights education is promoted through innovative community mobilization vehicles and there is access to legal services for women, children and disadvantaged populations. Under their Research, Advocacy, and Advisory Services (RAAS) programme, the LRC manages projects centred on social issues, advocates for law and policy changes on issues identified at the community level, and provides advisory services to stakeholders. LRC seeks to protect rights related to health, education, housing, employment, participatory democracy, personal liberty, criminal justice and civil justice.

How can you find out more?

www.lrcghana.org

Legal and Human Rights Centre



Where are they located?

Tanzania



How long have they been around?

Since 1995

What's in their playbook?

The Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) seeks to educate the public on legal and human rights and promote public accountability, including through innovative programs focused on advancing rights for women, children, and people with disabilities. LHRC manages a team of more than 200 human rights monitors and paralegals across Tanzania, many of whom work within communities at a grassroots level to identify and respond to human rights violations. Other LHRC programs centre on (i) advocacy, law reform, and the law-making process; (ii) empirical research on access to justice; (iii) ensuring that business and stakeholders engaged in economic activities work in ways that respect human rights and the UN Guiding Principles; (iv) changes to the constitution that will more wholly reflect people-centred governance; (v) using traditional and digital media to advance human rights education and access to justice; and (vi) collaborating with organizations in ways that address human rights and justice system challenges. Clinics operated by LHRC engage modern technologies, where possible, to provide legal help to low-income earners for matters related to property, family, employment, criminal law, and other matters.

How can you find out more?

www.humanrights.or.tz

Legal Assistance Centre



Where are they located?

Namibia



How long have they been around?

Since 1988


What's in their playbook?


The Legal Assistance Centre works to facilitate access to the law and legal institutions for disadvantaged and underserved Namibians. The Legal Assistance Centre's diverse efforts to advance human rights and access to justice in Namibia include education/legal empowerment initiatives, work to change to laws/policies, research, litigation, legal advice, legal representation, and lobbying. Recent research by the Legal Assistance Centre focuses on: human rights and socio-economic rights; legal issues related to gender; and land administration, the environment and wildlife crime, and development. The Legal Assistance Centre website houses an extensive and up-to-date clearinghouse for Namibian laws, relevant international laws, and annotated statutes and regulations in Namibia.

How can you find out more?

www.lac.org.na

Nagorik Uddyog (The Citizen's Initiative)

 **Where are they located?**
Bangladesh

 **How long have they been around?**
Since 1995

What's in their playbook?

The Citizen's Initiative aims to increase the public's engagement with, and understanding of their rights, justice, democracy and development. Their programs and projects centre more specifically on interventions in the areas of access to justice, women's rights, Dalit⁴ and excluded rights, and the rights of children. Their overarching goal is to eliminate poverty in Bangladesh and ensure that everyone is treated fairly irrespective of their race, gender, language, ethnicity, status, income, place of birth and religion. Working at the local level, the Citizen's Initiative offers community-based and gender sensitive mediation services—often in the traditional Salish method of alternative dispute resolution—as well as community legal counseling, and litigation. They train staff and community members, host conferences, run awareness campaigns and also campaign for workers and others, lobby for changes to laws and policies for vulnerable populations, carry out grassroots programs to expand women's rights and provide legal aid to women, among other networking, advocacy and programming activities. Citizen Initiative's public-facing resources are varied and include documentaries, booklets, and research reports.

How can you find out more?

www.nuhr.org

⁴ The Dalits are a socially and economically disadvantaged population, who “face discrimination at all levels of social interaction”. Khan Ferdousour Rahman, “The Dalit in Bangladesh”, *The Daily Star* (19 January, 2016), online: <<https://www.thedailystar.net/law-our-rights/rights-advocacy/the-dalits-bangladesh-203845/>>.

MyJustice



Where are they located?

Myanmar



How long have they been around?

Since 2015

What's in their playbook?

MyJustice works in 66 townships in Myanmar to promote legal empowerment, improve access to legal services, facilitate people-centered, holistic legal problem resolution and gather evidence that can serve as a knowledge base to improve the delivery of justice programmes. MyJustice works at the community level with formal and informal justice institutions, civil society organizations, legal professionals and others to advance an agenda based in sharing knowledge and improving access to justice that places people at the centre. MyJustice produces documentaries and short films that seek to engage and educate audiences on topics related to their work and the work of partner organizations. Videos are shared via social media and broadcast in mass media. MyJustice also produces policy briefs, research reports and resources in various formats. Many of their resources, including their videos, are available in bilingual (Burmese and English) formats. MyJustice indicates that the four goals for their work are: (i) strengthen community justice; (ii) build legal knowledge so people know their rights; (iii) work in ways that are responsive to people's justice needs; and (iv) produce and exchange data and information to advance justice policy improvements.

How can you find out more?

www.myjusticemyanmar.org

Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC)



Where are they located?

Philippines



How long have they been around?

Since 1987

What's in their playbook?

Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) seeks to protect the rights of marginalized Indigenous peoples and upland rural poor communities and, in particular, the women who are part of these and other populations. LRC's work spans several areas, including litigation, policy development, research, and advocacy. LRC encourages grassroots activism through their #GreenprintPH campaign, and in other ways that will bring attention and momentum to policies and practices related to Indigenous peoples' rights, the impact of climate change on communities, and gender equality. Their work falls into one of three program categories: (i) Research and Policy Development; (ii) Direct Legal Services; and (iii) Advocacy and Campaigns Support. LRC is bringing about change for the populations they serve in many ways. A major accomplishment has been their work helping to draft the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) in the Philippines. They have also helped to convene several other laws and bills that advance the rights of Indigenous peoples, the communities where they live, and the environment.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.lrcksk.org>

Community Legal Centres Australia



Where are they located?

Australia



How long have they been around?

50 years

What's in their playbook?

As the national body representing the community legal sector in Australia, Community Legal Centres (CLCs) Australia has a broad mandate to ensure the public's access to legal services and related non-legal services for free, advocate for human rights, and work collaboratively to help facilitate holistic problem resolution in communities throughout Australia. CLCs working in conjunction with State and Territory peak bodies represent some 170 community legal centres, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services in Australia. CLCs Australia seeks to streamline data collected by community legal centres. CLCs also maintain a case management and funder database for community legal centres called Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS). They work to fulfill their mandate through their web portal which helps connect people to information about sites for free legal help in their community and provides resources for data-driven approaches to better meet the needs of the public and work more effectively at the community level. CLCs host events and webinars, and publish reports and other materials in furtherance of their goal to support Australia's community legal centres. CLCs' 3-year Reconciliation Action Plan (2012-2015) which sought to engender positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples helped pave the way for the development and inclusion of mandatory cultural safety standards under the National Accreditation Scheme.

How can you find out more?

<https://clcs.org.au>

National Justice Project



Where are they located?

NSW, Australia



How long have they been around?

Since 2016


What's in their playbook?


National Justice Project uses a three-pronged approach to advance their goal of building a more just legal system and society. Their work involves (i) strategic legal action, (ii) education, and (iii) advocacy. Placing the needs of people and communities at the centre of their work, the National Justice Project engages in litigation (including precedent-setting cases) and educational initiatives on issues of health justice, refugee rights, medical care in detention, youth detention, government accountability, inquests and inquiries, and police accountability, with a view to achieving outcomes that represent their clients' perspectives on justice and accountability and advance equality for all before the law. National Justice Project has issued comprehensive statements calling for reforms related to immigration detention, health justice, discriminatory policing and First Nations deaths in custody. National Justice Project makes publicly available: case resources; submissions to government agencies, international bodies and others; statements calling for reform; and resources from partner organizations. To ensure that they are not beholden to policymakers and governments, and instead can act to hold them accountable, National Justice Project does not accept donations from governments. A primary source of funding for National Justice Project is private donations.

How can you find out more?

<https://justice.org.au>

Legal Clinic for Human Rights of the University of Palermo (CLEDU)

 **Where are they located?**
Palermo, Italy

 **How long have they been around?**
Since 2015

What's in their playbook?

CLEDU Legal Clinic for Human Rights at the University of Palermo operates wholly through volunteer support. Their team includes trainee lawyers, lawyers, PhD students and other students, researchers, professors, and other volunteer staff. CLEDU's work centres on immigration and discrimination matters and, more specifically, cases involving highly vulnerable populations. This includes cases involving refugees and new asylum seekers in Italy, residence permit applications and renewals, cases involving indigent populations, matters involving Roma families facing barriers related to regularisation, and similar cases. The CLEDU hosts weekly legal counseling sessions for immigrants and refugees and seminars and training on human rights. Their "street law" legal empowerment program aims to teach justice seekers legal procedures and terminology in a hands-on way. They also engage in clinical education, hosting seminars and training—often in collaboration with other organizations—to teach students and others about migration law. CLEDU is a member of the "Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively ([Raisd](#)) Vulnerable People among the Forcibly Displaced" international network which, among its various projects and initiatives, seeks to advance access to legal solutions for vulnerable populations in ways that are participatory and people-centred.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.unipa.it/dipartimenti/di.gi./clinica-legale-per-i-diritti-umaniz>, (info in English: <https://raisd-h2020.eu/project/cledu/>)

Droit D'Urgence



Where are they located?

Paris, France



How long have they been around?

Since 1995

What's in their playbook?

Droit D'Urgence works to promote access to justice for marginalized populations in France. They assist people in precarious situations by providing legal information and access to free legal advice. A majority of legal problems handled by volunteer lawyers at Droits D'Urgence relate to contractual disputes, immigration/refugee matters, housing problems, employment problems, family law matters and criminal law. Droit D'Urgence runs a legal information and support hotline for socially excluded and vulnerable persons. The hotline assists with issues related to mental health, incarceration, evictions, and domestic violence. Their City of Paris Access Points to Law program provides information about legal rights and offers guidance on navigating the legal system. The Access Points Program seeks to adapt to the needs of the community it serves and provides help to diverse groups, including mothers, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with addictions, people recently released from prison, job seekers and others. Droit D'Urgence also operates a website to support victims of domestic violence. The site is a free, confidential, and uses an anonymous platform that aims to direct victims to the precise legal or social assistance that they need. On a broader level, the organization advocates for legislative changes through petitions, policy papers, and articles. Droit D'Urgence receives funding from the public and private sectors including the national government, the municipal government (Paris) and individual donations.

How can you find out more?

<http://www.droitsdurgence.org>

The Law Corner



Where are they located?

London, UK



How long have they been around?

Since 2019

What's in their playbook?

The Law Corner is a community-based legal service that aims to provide free, timely, and high-quality legal advice to low-income residents of the Somers Town and St. Pancras areas of London. In some cases, Law Corner might accept clients living outside of the Somers Town and St. Pancras areas. A means test is used to determine eligibility for legal help from The Law Corner. The Law Corner's team of volunteer lawyers provide assistance in the areas of consumer protection, contract, tort & corporate law, environmental law, employment law, immigration, human rights, and education. Justice seekers are invited to complete Law Corner's contact form to request legal help. Persons who qualify are assigned a legal advisor who will work with the client to schedule an initial in-person or phone consultation. Following the consultation, the assigned legal advisor will make a determination on the need for more comprehensive legal assistance, and whether to enter into a client-lawyer relationship. In addition to providing access to legal assistance, The Law Corner offers opportunities for students and volunteers to engage with the law and lawyers and become part of The Law Corner's network.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.somerstownlegaladvicecorner.org.uk>

Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre



Where are they located?

Dublin, Ireland



How long have they been around?

Since 2002

What's in their playbook?

Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre (The Centre) is a community-based social justice centre working to improve access to justice in several ways. They provide free legal advice over the phone and in person at their clinics. They also provide legal representation for a range of legal matters and offer community mediation services locally to individuals and groups for family matters and other legal problems. The Centre works to make the law more accessible to Ballymun community members through an innovative legal education program that includes seminars, courses and workshops. The Centre also engages in an extensive roster of activities as part of their community outreach efforts. This includes programs with local schools, peer mediation programmes and weekly drop-in advice clinics. The Centre hosts a Law Club for transition year (high school senior cycle) students. There are various audio-visual legal information aids available through The Centre, including videos and podcasts.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.bclc.ie>

Civil Rights Project Sisak



Where are they located?

Croatia



How long have they been around?

Since 1999

What's in their playbook?

Civil Rights Project (CRP) Sisak is a social justice, non-governmental organization that works to provide free primary legal aid through legal clinics located at the Universities of Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka and Split. Legal aid is available to Croatian citizens, unaccompanied migrant children, asylum seekers, foreigners under temporary protection and foreigners with temporary or permanent residence permits. Free legal aid dispensed through university-based legal clinics is available for matters related to status rights, pension insurance, health insurance, social welfare, housing care, workers' rights, and administrative proceedings. For other types of matters (family law, property law, employment law, and other matters), justice seekers can file an application for free legal aid from an attorney (outside of the university legal aid network). CRP Sisak has a broad mandate that includes among its objectives: protecting and promoting human rights; fighting against poverty, violence and social exclusion; and strengthening democracy and humanism. The mandate is matched by an equally impressive list of activities which CRP has taken on to achieve the organisation's objectives. This includes advocacy, monitoring public policies, helping citizens protect their civil and human rights, protecting minorities, stimulating ethnic and religious cooperation, among other activities. CRP Sisak notes the importance of coordination and collaboration with similarly motivated humanitarian organizations in Croatia and in other countries. CPR Sisak has taken part in dozens of projects—many supported by governments and international development agencies—which have sought to bring attention to or address a range of human and civil rights issues. The Centre for Integration of Foreigners is a key initiative at CPR. The goal of the initiative is to protect the human rights of foreigners without status in Croatia, providing integrated legal help, psychosocial help, and other supports. This initiative represents the first such model of broad-based legal support for foreigners being offered through a single program in Croatia.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.crpsisak.hr>

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts



Where are they located?

New York, NY



How long have they been around?

Since 1969

What's in their playbook?

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA) provides free in-house consultations and legal assistance to low-income artists and non-profit cultural organizations in New York. Assistance is available for all types of legal problems that artists might face. Legal matters that are not resolved during the first consultation or clinic visit—which amounts to approximately 50% of all matters—are assigned to a volunteer lawyer in VLA's Pro Bono Legal Services program. VLA also offers innovative courses and programs aimed at educating individuals and organizations in the artistic community, law students, the public, and others about intersecting legal and business matters impacting people and organizations in the arts. VLA's more than 150 courses and programs are offered in a range of formats, including as in-house workshops, private classes, online classes and talks, teaching engagements at local law schools and colleges, art, music and film festivals, among other formats. VLA operates an alternative dispute resolution and negotiation program called, MediateArt. In addition to providing dispute resolution through MediateArt, VLA offers intensive training for lawyers, artists, and other professionals to become a mediator with MediateArt. VLA also offers institutional and individual artist memberships for a fee. Members receive access to free consultations with an attorney, class discounts and other benefits. For senior artists, VLA offers memberships to their Artists Over Sixty program which comes with several benefits tailored to artists over sixty. This includes access to free legal consultations and legal assistance for age-specific legal questions (and other types of legal questions), discounts to VLA classes and events, and counseling on the use of artists' work in online spaces. Other VLA legal clinics and programs include their Patent Pro Bono Program which connects low-income artists with a patent attorney, and their Artist Legacy Project, which provides free legal assistance to artists with HIV/AIDS as well as legal help for estate planning, wills and similar legal services.

How can you find out more?

<https://vlany.org>

California Lawyers for the Arts



Where are they located?

California USA



How long have they been around?

Since 1974

What's in their playbook?

California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA) advocates for and facilitates legal problem resolution for creatives, arts organizations, and artists in all disciplines. The main types of legal assistance accessible through the CLA are alternative dispute resolution and legal representation. CLA fulfills its mandate and works to build legal empowerment for the populations they serve through an array of programs. Some examples include: the regional California Inventors Assistance Program, which assists inventors and small start-ups with legal problems related to patents; the Sacramento Mediation Centre which provides confidential dispute resolution assistance to individuals, families, neighbourhoods, businesses and others; the Lawyer Referral & Information Service that refers artists to a lawyer in their area; and, the Youth Mediators in Schools program, which works to equip students in middle school with the tools to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and productive way. CLA's diverse offerings extend to their events and workshops, many of which focus on legal questions that will be of particular relevance to artists (The Musician's Guide to Copyrights, Contemporary Legal Issues in Screenwriting, Navigating Contracts, Intellectual Property and Music, to name just a few). In addition to toolkits and other resources, CLA also offers Designing Creative Futures, a paid, part-time internship for formerly incarcerated individuals who are interested in working in the arts.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.calawyersforthearts.org>

East Bay Community Law Centre



Where are they located?

Berkeley, California



How long have they been around?

Since 1988

What's in their playbook?

East Bay Community Law Centre (EBCLC) provides legal assistance to low-income earners and engages in policy advocacy aimed at addressing the needs of low-income communities. In partnership with the University of California Berkeley School of Law, EBCLC also offers a clinical education program that trains future lawyers on racial justice issues. EBCLC's work is defined by a holistic approach that seeks to integrate legal services and social services delivery to improve access to justice and improve the lives of under-resourced Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. Their work engages legal and non-legal experts in housing, health, immigration, education, community economic empowerment, organizing, and social work case management. EBCLC provides legal assistance through their Economic Security and Opportunity Program, which also serves as vehicle to break down obstacles to education and employment advancement for the populations they serve. Under the umbrella of their Economic Security and Opportunity Program, EBCLC runs their Clean Slate Clinic, which was created to help people who have had contact with the criminal justice system access housing, jobs, educational opportunities and participate in their community in other ways. EBCLC operates several other programs, clinics, and law projects including the following:

- EBCLC's Education Defense & Justice for Youth Program:
 - Consumer Justice & General Clinic
 - Youth Defender Clinic
- Health & Welfare Project
 - Medical-Legal Partnership Project
 - HIV/AIDS Law Project
 - Public Benefits & Justice Project
- Consumer Justice & General Clinic (part of EBCLC's Economic Security and Opportunity Program)
- Housing Law Program/Clinic
- Immigration Law Program/Clinic
 - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Legal Services

How can you find out more?

<https://ebclc.org>

Volunteer Lawyers Network



Where are they located?

Minneapolis, Minnesota



How long have they been around?

Since 1966

What's in their playbook?

Potential clients can connect with pro bono, non-profit organization, Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN) in-person at a weekly walk-in intake session, by visiting one of VLN's community legal clinics, or by attending one of their local seminars. VLN also carries out intake over the phone. Potential clients' cases are reviewed and their income, assets and the size of their household are assessed before a determination is made about taking on their case and they are assigned a private lawyer. For individuals who qualify—and subject to the needs of their matter—VLN provides a full suite of services, from advice to help completing forms, letters written on a clients' behalf, prep for trial, legal representation in court, and other types of legal assistance. Low-income clients are generally eligible to receive assistance with all aspects of any of the many legal matters covered by VLN (employment problems, debt problems, housing problems, immigration problems, and other matters). VLN's ultimate goal is to improve access to legal assistance for individuals living in poverty. In addition to providing legal help, VLN hosts publicly accessible webinars, workshops and other events. A monthly Chat and Chew event offers a space for VLN staff and volunteers to meet virtually and share stories and experiences on a topic related to housing or other types of cases, with a view to promoting continuing education for volunteers and the opportunity to socialize.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.vlnmn.org>

The Commons Law Center



Where are they located?

Oregon



How long have they been around?

Since 2016


What's in their playbook?


The Commons Law Centre is a non-profit law firm offering legal help at an affordable, flat rate and with services priced on a sliding scale. Legal help is also available for free for some eviction matters and estate planning to people who qualify. Clients who pay for legal assistance from The Commons Law Center do not pay a retainer. Offering fixed fee services allows people and organizations accessing legal help through The Commons Law Centre to know the exact cost of the legal help that they will receive. For people who can afford to pay some money for legal assistance, The Commons Law Center's sliding scale pricing option provides access to legal help that is tailored to the client's income and what they can afford to pay. Sliding scale prices includes 6 pricing tier services. Underserved Oregonians with an income at up to 400% of the federal poverty level are eligible for legal help based on sliding scale prices. The Commons Law Center provides legal help for family law problems (divorce, child custody, parenting time, and child & spousal support), evictions (eviction defense, unlawful lease termination, repairs and habitability, and eviction expungements), estate planning (wills & trusts, powers of attorney, healthcare directives, inter-vivos transfers), and probate (executor support, small estate affidavits, trust administration, beneficiary issues). The Commons Law Center also works to empower Oregonians to better understand the legal system and address the simpler parts of their legal problem on their own through client training. For persons requiring help with other types of legal matters, The Commons Law Center provides a resource guide with information on legal service providers, service area, type of legal services provided, and contact information.

How can you find out more?

<https://thecommonslawcenter.org>

Justice Pro Bono

 **Where are they located?**
Montreal, Quebec

 **How long have they been around?**
Since 2008

What's in their playbook?

More than 5,000 volunteer lawyers help Justice Pro Bono fulfill their mandate of providing legal assistance to people in vulnerable situations in Quebec. In order to facilitate better access to justice for these vulnerable and underserved populations, Justice Pro Bono has developed a range of innovative and multidisciplinary programs that work in different ways to address the legal and non-legal needs of justice seekers. These include: medical-legal partnerships in hospitals; mobile volunteer legal clinics in Nunavik; Porte 33, psychosocial legal clinics in family law; ad hoc legal clinics; and a program to match citizens' files with volunteer lawyers. Their Porte 33 family law program hosts weekly clinic sessions via videoconference (by appointment). During these sessions, justice seekers speak with a lawyer or notary and a Family Centre worker. Justice Pro Bono has also created a Porte 33 e-book—available in both English and French—which can be accessed for free online and provides information on the rights of the child in situations that impact them. To be eligible for legal assistance from Justice Pro Bono, justice seekers cannot be eligible for legal aid and cannot be able to afford to pay a lawyer. Legal assistance is also provided to refugees and non-profit organizations who qualify. On Justice Pro Bono Quebec's website, users can access their legal compass/Prix Justice Pro Bono search engine where they can search for free or inexpensive legal resources in Quebec. Searches can be refined by region, area of law, availability of the service for free or at a low cost, and access to the service by phone, online, or in-person.

How can you find out more?

<https://justiceprobono.ca/en>

Young Bar of Montreal



Where are they located?

Montreal, Quebec



How long have they been around?

Since 1898

What's in their playbook?

The Young Bar of Montreal represents thousands of lawyers with ten years or less of call to the Bar who are registered in Montreal. They are a non-profit organization that counts as one of their two missions: improve access to justice by providing free legal services to the public and help communities. Their public service offerings include: free 20-minute consultations to help litigants prepare for a tribunal hearing; legal advice for business start-ups (available by phone); free, confidential legal consultations and referrals to persons 12 to 20 years old with questions related to work, drugs, family, and other topics; a free call-in legal clinic held annually over several days; a bi-weekly small claims court mediation service on Montreal courthouse premises; and a legal information pilot project that offers legal help to self-represented litigants in criminal and penal matters at Montreal's Municipal Court.

How can you find out more?

<https://ajbm.qc.ca/en>

HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario

Where are they located?

Toronto, Ontario

How long have they been around?

Since 1995

What's in their playbook?

The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO) is a community legal clinic and registered charity providing free legal assistance to people in Ontario living with HIV/AIDS. Legal assistance is available for matters related to government income maintenance/income security, housing/tenant law, immigration/refugee law, HIV and criminal law, employment law, human rights (federal and provincial), powers of attorney and wills, regulated health professionals complaints, private insurance law, privacy law, HIV and prison law, consumer and debt, family law, and other areas of administrative law. HALCO hosts public legal education workshops (in-person and via virtual formats), takes part in conferences and other events where they discuss their work and mission, produces publicly accessible materials, advocates for legal reforms, participates in community development activities, and carries out research. Their TRANSforming JUSTICE research project has broken new ground as a mixed-methods project examining the legal needs of transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, gender queer, cross dresser, and transsexual people in Ontario. There is no financial eligibility requirement to access HALCO's legal services, which are provided through summary legal advice, brief legal services, and legal representations. HALCO also provides referrals.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.halco.org>

Everyone Legal Clinic



Where are they located?

British Columbia, Canada



How long have they been around?

Since May 2022

What's in their playbook?

The Everyone Legal Clinic is a first-of-its-kind, virtual, dual public interest law teaching clinic and small firm incubator in British Columbia. The Clinic was launched in 2022 by Access Pro Bono BC, a non-profit organization offering free legal advice, legal representation and lawyer referrals to modest income individuals. The Everyone Legal Clinic seeks to provide culturally-informed legal services to vulnerable and at-risk populations in B.C, including single mothers, low-income individuals, persons with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and seniors. The Everyone Legal Clinic also provides legal assistance to small businesses and non-profit organizations. The Clinic aims to provide services that are inclusive to racialized communities across B.C. Legal services at Everyone Legal Clinic are provided at fixed-rate prices (with the service price list available via the Clinic's [website](#)). In doing so, the Clinic aims to remove some of the price-based barriers that modest income earners may face in resolving their legal disputes. Legal assistance is available through The Everyone Legal Clinic for matters related to starting or restructuring a business, civil disputes involving compensation for damages, consumer transactions, criminal law, document notarization, employment law and benefits matters, family law matters, residential tenancy and strata issues, traffic court, and wills & estates. At the time of its launch, legal assistance was available through the Everyone Legal Clinic in 16 communities across B.C. The Clinic is especially concerned with improving access to legal assistance in B.C.'s rural and remote communities. As a teaching clinic, Everyone Legal Clinic provides opportunities for recent law school graduates, with priority given to recent graduates who are Indigenous, BIPOC, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2S community.

How can you find out more?

<https://everyonelegal.ca>

Community Justice Services and Housing, Tenancy, Land & Property Matters

Problems related to housing, land and property, and tenancy are among the most common civil legal problem types experienced by underprivileged groups.⁵ These legal problem types feature prominently in research carried out as part of the multi-country Community-Based Justice Research Project⁶ as well as in other studies concerned with everyday legal problems. This section presents information on community justice organizations that focus on assisting with legal matters related to housing, tenancy, land, and property. The organizations included in this section might provide legal and non-legal assistance for other types of matters but they are included in this section because their mandate centres on facilitating access to dispute resolution and other supports for this category of problems.

⁵ In the United States, for example, the three most common legal problem types among households with an annual income of less than \$25K are housing problems, domestic violence and abuse, and problems with neighbors. IAALS and Hiil, *Justice Needs and Satisfaction in the United States of America 2021: Legal problems in daily life* (Denver: IAALS, 2021) at 35, online: IAALS <<https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/justice-needs-and-satisfaction-us.pdf>>. The Canadian Forum on Civil Justice's Everyday Legal Problems Survey indicates that housing problems are the 9th most common problem type in the general population at 2.5%. See Trevor C.W. Farrow, Ab Currie, Nicole Aylwin, Les Jacobs, David Northrup and Lisa Moore, *Everyday Legal Problems and the Cost of Justice in Canada: Overview Report* (Toronto: Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, 2016) at 8, online: CFCJ <<https://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/sites/default/files/Everyday%20Legal%20Problems%20and%20the%20Cost%20of%20Justice%20in%20Canada%20-%20Overview%20Report.pdf>>. Among households earning less than \$60,000 annually, however, 4.6% (much higher than the average rate) report experiencing at least one serious problem related to housing in a given 3-year period. This compares with 1.7% of people earning between \$60,000 and \$125,000 who report experiencing a housing-related problem and 0.6% of people earning \$125,000 or more who report experiencing a housing problem. Lisa Moore, *Everyday Legal Problems and the Cost of Justice in Canada - Income* (Toronto: Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, 2018) at 21, online: CFCJ <<https://cfcj-fcjc.org/wp-content/uploads/INCOME-Everyday-Legal-Problems-and-the-Cost-of-Justice-in-Canada.pdf>>.

⁶ See Community-Based Justice Research (CBJR) Project, online: CFCJ <<https://cfcj-fcjc.org/our-projects/community-based-justice-research-cbjr/>>.



Eviction Defense Collaborative



Where are they located?

San Francisco, California



How long have they been around?

Since 1996

What's in their playbook?

Working to address one of the most serious problems affecting low-income earners in San Francisco, the Eviction Defense Collaborative offers legal assistance, rental assistance, shelter client advocacy, and other services and resources aimed at providing support for individuals facing eviction. The Eviction Defense Collaborative is a recognized leader in advocacy and innovative solutions to address the national housing crisis. Their work has, and continues to protect individuals and families from losing their home; preserve affordable housing by educating low-income tenants in the San Francisco area about the San Francisco Rent Ordinance and how they can exercise their rights; protect diversity by working to prevent minorities, disabled persons, the working poor, and others from being forced out of San Francisco because of housing-related issues; negotiate for tenants in disputes with their landlord, teach clients how to represent themselves in court, and (with support from their Trial Project) represent tenants whose case does not settle; and refer tenants to partner agencies and community service organizations for full representation or other assistance. The Eviction Defense Collaborative created several free COVID-19 specific resources, including sample letters to a landlord –available in English, Spanish, or Mandarin– providing notice of an inability to pay rent because of COVID-19. Since the enactment of Prop F, Tenant Right to Counsel in San Francisco, the Eviction Defence Collaborative has been awarded “the Lead Agency role in designing and implementing San Francisco Right to Counsel”.

How can you find out more?

<https://evictiondefense.org>

Tenderloin Housing Clinic



Where are they located?

San Francisco, California



How long have they been around?

Since 1 February, 1980

What's in their playbook?

The multi-service Tenderloin Housing Clinic (THC) provides free legal assistance to low-income tenants, and works to preserve low-cost housing options by securing single occupancy lease units in Tenderloin and other communities in San Francisco. Many of THC's low-income clients are people with disabilities, seniors, minorities, and immigrant families. THC fulfills its mandate through several programs that seek to help people keep their home, transition from temporary to permanent housing, or access long-term housing. These include their Money Management Program, a Master Lease Housing Program, a Transitional Housing Program, and THC's legal program, which is their oldest program. THC provides legal assistance for all matters related to landlord-tenant and housing law, including unlawful rent increases and evictions. THC also partners and coordinates with various community organizations to facilitate access to services that will help people lead more stable lives.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.thclinic.org>

Tenant Resource and Housing Centre



Where are they located?

British Columbia, Canada



How long have they been around?

Since 1984

What's in their playbook?

For more than three decades, the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC) has been advocating for legislative amendments that will improve the lives of tenants in B.C. Through their Housing Law Clinic, TRAC provides free legal representation to eligible justice seekers for matters involving: Supreme Court review of a Residential Tenancy Branch decision; difficulties accessing a Residential Tenancy Branch monetary orders through Small Claims Court; and, housing law matters that are beyond the scope of the *Residential Tenancy Act* (such as co-operative housing). TRAC also operates a free Tenant Infoline on weekdays where tenants can get free legal information and referrals. In addition, TRAC provides legal information via its social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) in response to direct messages. Individuals and groups interested in organizing a workshop or webinar on legal information for tenants in B.C. can submit a request form to TRAC or contact TRAC by phone. TRAC's website offers downloadable and other resources for tenants, including template letters focusing on different problems or questions which tenants may wish to communicate to their landlord. B.C. tenants may also wish to access TRAC's free online *Renting It Right* course for guidance on finding and maintaining a rental unit in B.C., and resolving disputes with a landlord. Tenants can also access a template letter and information for a Roommate Agreement, a Tenant Survival Guide (also available in hardcopy), information about other tenant organizations that may be able to assist with a tenant's problem, and tenant publications and resources from the government and other sources.

How can you find out more?

<https://tenants.bc.ca>

Action-Logement – Action Housing



Where are they located?

Ottawa, Canada



How long have they been around?

Since 1989

What's in their playbook?

Action Housing provides free services to low- and moderate-income individuals and families experiencing housing problems. Action Housing's services fall into the following categories: intervention & prevention; counseling & support; affordable housing applications; facilitating access; paralegal services; partnerships; and advocacy. Through their intervention & prevention service, Action Housing works on behalf of tenants to help resolve issues with landlords. As part of their paralegal services offerings, paralegals provide legal help to tenants in Ontario with matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board, the Internal Review Panel, or another adjudicative body. Other supports and services offered by Action Housing—independently or in collaboration with other organizations—serve to inform tenants of their rights, limit housing instability and homelessness, promote affordable housing and housing loss prevention, and help victims of intimate partner violence access emergency shelters and safe houses. In addition to English, case workers at Housing Help provide help in French, Arabic, Swahili, Lingala, Nyandia, and Somali.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.action-logement.ca/en/housing-help>

Community Justice Services, Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Social and cultural attitudes towards gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation in societies can shape how members of impacted groups respond to and engage with legal systems and, similarly, the response these groups receive to their legal problem experiences and in the dispute resolution process. In choosing whether to seek help for a legal problem or where to go for help, justice seekers may apply their experiences and understandings of the treatment of matters related to gender, gender identity and sexual orientation in weighing the potential for discrimination and the ability to achieve an unbiased outcome. The organizations included below provide a range of curated legal and non-legal services based on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.



Gender

Organizations included in this section provide specialized services to men or women, including in some cases explicitly on the basis of gender self-identification. Through these organizations, legal assistance may be offered for a range of problem types, though many offer assistance for legal problems that disproportionately impact the gender being served by the organization. The gender of the organization's lawyers and professional staff may also mirror that of the population being served.

Association des Femmes Juristes de Côte d'Ivoire



Where are they located?

Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)



How long have they been around?

Since 1986

What's in their playbook?

Association des Femmes Juristes de Côte d'Ivoire operates 12 community legal clinics across the Ivory Coast. Female lawyers, paralegals, and legal experts are the backbone of the association, driving their work to advance access to justice for women and children in rural areas. Their mandate centres on eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence, facilitating youth justice, and removing access to justice barriers. Through one of their main initiatives —Le projet PALAJ—the Association operates local legal clinics, provides legal assistance to vulnerable populations, carries out prison visits to ensure that international human rights standards are met, and provides sensitization training to people working in law enforcement. The Association des Femmes Juristes de Côte d'Ivoire is working to get official recognition, which they believe would allow them to reach more communities. The Association des Femmes Juristes de Côte d'Ivoire is a member of the 22-member, inter-country “Alliance Droits et Santé” which works to improve the health and lives and women and girls in West Africa.

How can you find out more?

<https://alliancedroitsetsante.equipop.org/afjci/>,

<https://www.facebook.com/afjci>

Arusha Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization



Where are they located?

Arusha, Tanzania



How long have they been around?

Since 1998

What's in their playbook?

Arusha Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization (AWLAHURIO) envisions a society that “respects women’s and children’s rights”. They are a non-profit organization that seeks to advance access to justice, good governance and gender responsive policies. AWLAHURIO works to build legal empowerment through legal education initiatives and engages in programs and projects to help underprivileged and marginalised populations understand and address their legal needs. AWLAHURIO relies almost entirely on volunteers for the work that they do. Through their legal clinic, AWLAHURIO trains paralegals to work at the community level to help people in need of legal assistance. Their full suite of offerings includes legal advice, legal coaching, legal representation, consultancy, mediation, reconciliation, drafting wills, child maintenance agreements, case filings, hearings and other appearances, legal training, volunteer training, visa assistance, and human rights training. The most common legal problems handled by AWLAHURIO relate to gender inequality, gender-based violence, child maintenance, land issues, and matrimony issues. The organization also works on large initiatives including, for example, efforts aimed at reducing land conflicts among communities in the region, reducing gender-based violence, enhancing the governance of children’s rights, and increasing lobbying, advocacy, and monitoring of human rights practices. Part of their work includes conducting workshops and seminars to educate women on these legal issues. AWLAHURIO also operates a mobile legal aid clinic.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.arushawomenlegalaidandhumanrightsorganization.com>

Singapore Association of Women Lawyers



Where are they located?

Singapore



How long have they been around?

Since 1974


What's in their playbook?


The Singapore Association of Women Lawyers (SAWL) is a professional body and non-profit organization that works to advance the public's understanding of Singapore's laws, improve opportunities available to women in the workplace, promote the well-being of women and children in communities, and advocate for laws that will better protect women and children. SAWL operates a limited-service legal clinic which provides pro bono legal consultations to persons who meet their eligibility requirements. Services are provided in-person only. The SAWL Scholarship Fund provides financial support to students with mental and physical disabilities at all educational levels. The goal of the scholarship is to close the divide in social disparities resulting from a lack of access to education.

How can you find out more?

<https://sawlsgp.org>

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

 **Where are they located?**
Hong Kong

 **How long have they been around?**
Since 1981

What's in their playbook?

The Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres (HKFWC) promotes gender equality in Hong Kong. HKFWC works in three key ways to serve, support, and improve the lives of women. They provide legal services, promote gender education, and engage in local advocacy. With a view to helping women address their legal disputes and realize their full potential as active, independent, competent and confident members of society, HKFWC provides women-oriented counseling, legal assistance, community networking, volunteer development, training and employment support, gender education, childcare and after-school care, and social participation services to women. Under the umbrella of HKFWC's Counselling & Legal Support program, HKFWC provides women with information about the law, referrals to community services, and crisis management for problems related to marriage, parenting, family relationships, employment, health, sexual violence, domestic violence and other problems. In providing these legal information and referral services, HKFWC seeks to empower women to better understand their problems and build their capacity to resolve them. HKFWC formed its free advice legal clinic in 1992 to assist women resolve marriage-related family law problems. For women who do not have the resources to hire a lawyer to assist with their divorce, free legal advice is available through HKFWC under The Duty Lawyer Service. In addition to legal advice, counsellors help women experiencing legal problems form support networks and engage with community supports. HKFWC's legal clinic follows up with women after each consultation session, providing additional legal and other supports based on their situation. HKFWC also hosts legal information events and carries out research on questions related to their work.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.womencentre.org.hk/En/Services/counselling/lac>

Both Parents Matter Cymru



Where are they located?

Cardiff, Wales



How long have they been around?

Since 2009

What's in their playbook?

Both Parents Matter Cymru (BPM) advocates for keeping men in the family during the dissolution of a family and facilitates access to legal help and other supports to achieve that goal. BPM provides help with applications for family court hearings, assists with applications for legal aid, and facilitates access to free legal advice from solicitors across Wales. BPM also offers several other services for men experiencing family problems, including assistance for socially isolated fathers and support for male victims of domestic abuse. BPM aims to provide clients with help with the practical aspects of their problem(s) as well as with emotional support. Most people who access legal assistance through BPM or access other BPM supports belong to underprivileged groups, with approximately half unemployed and approximately one-third living with a disability. BPM has also been involved in consultations on legislative changes, including the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 and the national reconstruction of the Minister of Housing. BPM carries out research, engages in campaigns, holds face-to-face support meetings and other events, and runs a helpline.

How can you find out more?

<https://bpmuk.org>

Guyana Legal Aid Clinic



Where are they located?

Guyana



How long have they been around?

Since March 1994

What's in their playbook?

Guyana Legal Aid is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization offering free legal assistance to people who qualify, and referrals for assistance with non-legal problems. They work to fulfill their access to justice mandate in several ways, including by helping poor and vulnerable populations understand their legal rights, providing legal representation and legal advice, and collaborating and coordinating with NGOs and the government to address the legal and non-legal needs of the populations they serve. Guyana Legal Aid Clinic notes that a majority of the people who they serve are women and a majority of their cases relate to civil matters. Many of the Clinic's online resources are directed towards women and include various publications from the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL) and the Women's Development Organisation. The Clinic also provides access to various plain language publications aimed at making laws and the Constitution more accessible. On the Clinic's website, visitors will also find client stories, which provide details on actual legal problem experiences of clients and how legal help from Guyana Legal Aid impacted the client's situation.

How can you find out more?

<https://legalaid.org.gy>

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic



Where are they located?

Toronto, Ontario



How long have they been around?

Since 1985

What's in their playbook?

Since opening their doors in 1985, the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic has expanded their service offerings to now provide free legal services, trauma-informed counselling services, and multi-lingual interpretation and translation (including over-the-phone interpretation and remote interpretation by video through a Deaf interpreter). The Clinic's services are available to women who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual assault, and for child sexual abuse. Legal help is also available for family matters and immigration matters. Increasingly the Clinic has also taken on cases related to forced marriage, honour-related violence, and gender persecution from state- and non-state actors. Lawyers at the Clinic provide summary advice, represent clients in court, make referrals to lawyers with specific expertise, advocate on justice seekers' behalf for Legal Aid Ontario certificates, help justice seekers draft applications (e.g. permanent residence applications, and family law applications where representation is not possible), and provide legal information on other matters in the areas covered by the Clinic. Their Independent Legal Advice (ILA) pilot program provides free, confidential legal advice over the phone or in person to survivors of sexual assault in Toronto, Ottawa, and Thunder Bay who are over the age of 16. The Clinic recognizes "woman" to be a term of self-identification and aims to be inclusive to people across the gender spectrum. The Clinic lists the advancement of women's rights as a strategic priority.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.schliferclinic.com>

Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation

The organizations included in this section provide legal assistance for all genders and sexualities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and allied groups. Some organizations provide legal services based both on sexual orientation and gender identity.

National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission



Where are they located?

Kenya



How long have they been around?

Since 2012

What's in their playbook?

The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission advocates for LGBTIQ persons in Kenya and defends their rights in litigation. They are an independent not-for-profit NGO championing the rights of LGBTIQ persons in Kenya, where same sex relationships remain illegal. The Commission also carries out paralegal training and provides civic education throughout the country; conducts sensitization trainings; provides programming, including an annual wellness camp for LGBTIQ women; engages in outreach at the community level; and hosts intervarsity moot court and debate competitions and lectures aimed at promoting anti-discrimination and diversity in Kenya. The Commission works in partnership with various organizations to advance their programs and services.

How can you find out more?

www.glhrc.com

The 519



Where are they located?

Toronto, Ontario

What's in their playbook?

The 519 is a multi-service charity and agency with legal and non-legal community programs aimed at improving the lives of LGBTQ2S people. The legal arm of The 519 operates as multiple legal clinics, with services offered by phone, virtually, and/or in-person. Their legal clinics include: (i) The 519 Legal Clinic, which provides free general summary advice; (ii) The Trans ID Clinic, which provides legal assistance for name changes, gender marker changes, assistance with ID applications and related matters; (iii) The Criminal Law Legal Clinic for criminal law matters, including legal help for victims of crime; (iv) The Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic for LGBTQ+ Individuals, which provides legal advice to LGBTQ+ refugees and newcomers, including for matters related to gender identity and sexual orientation; (v) The Housing Law Legal Clinic, which provides support for matters related to discrimination faced by tenants (and potential tenants), evictions, lease agreements, landlord-tenant issues and support for matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board; (vi) The Notary Clinic, which provides free notary and commissioning services and free one-time consultations; (vii) The Employment Law Legal Clinic, which provides summary advice for matters ranging from wrongful dismissals to employment insurance (EI) matters and legal problems related to health and safety in the workplace; (viii) Family Law Clinic, which provides summary advice for separations and divorce, common-law and cohabitation agreements, adoption, child custody matters, legal questions related to parental recognition, and other family law matters; (ix) The Wills & Estates Legal Clinic, which provides advice on legal matters related to wills, power of attorney, probate matters and executors of an estate; (x) The Document Translation Clinic—one of two specialty clinics operated by The 519—which provides assistance translating documents, including official government documents; and (xi) The Legal Clinic for Muslims—The 519's other specialty clinic—which operates in partnership with the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association and provides summary legal advice for family, housing, employment, immigration and criminal law matters. A majority of the 519's legal clinics provide services by phone or videoconference. The 519 also advances access to justice for LGBTQ2S individuals through regular public legal education workshops and one-on-one mock hearing sessions for LGBTQ refugee claimants.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.the519.org/programs/access-to-justice>

SPECTRUM



Where are they located?

Kitchener, Ontario



How long have they been around?

Since 2012

What's in their playbook?

SPECTRUM provides programs and services to support 2SLGBTQ+ members in the Waterloo region, with some programs and services tailored specifically to the needs of older adults, transgender persons, Indigenous persons, and newcomers to Canada. SPECTRUM works in partnership with Waterloo Region Community Legal Services for SPECTRUM's Legal Aid Clinic. Members of the local 2SLGBTQ+ community who are experiencing civil law problems related to financial support (Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, and Old Age Security), housing (tenancy problems), transgender ID matters, and immigration or refugee claims may be eligible to receive legal assistance from SPECTRUM's Legal Aid Clinic. SPECTRUM's partnership with Waterloo Region Community Legal Services is founded on the delivery of legal help in a way that will be "comfortable and affirming" to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. In addition to legal assistance, SPECTRUM works in partnership with KW Counselling Services to offer mental health services. SPECTRUM provides educational resources, crisis resources, and other directories and online resources.

How can you find out more?

<https://www.ourspectrum.com>