

A photograph of a sunlit meadow with white flowers and a tree trunk. The sun is in the upper left, creating a bright lens flare. The foreground is filled with green grass and numerous small white flowers with yellow centers. A large, dark tree trunk is on the right side of the image.

SOMEONE OUT THERE HELPING: FINAL REPORT OF THE WELLCOMS MOBILE VAN PROJECT

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Someone Out There Helping¹: Final Report of the WellCoMs Mobile Van Project

A Report Prepared for the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In May 2019 the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County (the Guelph clinic) implemented a project to enhance legal services in rural Wellington County using a mobile service called the WellCoMs van (the van). The project addressed a long-standing need that had been recognized by the Guelph clinic since its establishment in 2002 to provide a good level of service to rural Wellington County.

Providing legal services in rural and remote areas is a universal problem in legal aid. The lessons that have been learned in this project will hopefully not only be of benefit to the Guelph clinic but will contain useful lessons learned for legal services providers in Canada and elsewhere with mandates to provide access to justice services in areas outside main population concentrations. The WellCoMs mobile van project was developed taking into account the principle findings of the literature on unmet legal need. The central problem relating to geographical distance and dispersion is compounded by the basic accessibility problems which are now familiar from the results of legal problems research and clinical experience. The body of legal problems research has convincingly demonstrated that the prevalence of legal problems experienced by the public is high.² Further, these problems largely constitute hidden legal need. People tend to be reactive in the face of problems. They may not deal with them in a timely manner, sometimes waiting until the situation is desperate.³ In addition to the reactive character of experiencing legal problems, people view problems in substantive terms. They do not see their problems as legal issues and therefore do not take appropriate action. Further, they may not be aware that help is available or of where to obtain it. Because a project dealing with rural accessibility must also address these generic problems, the WellCoMs project was developed taking these issues into consideration.

However, somewhat paradoxically, people experiencing legal problems in their everyday lives are also eager and willing to deal with them if given the opportunity to overcome the barriers to accessibility. People know when they have a problem and they almost always want to do something to resolve it. Canadian research has shown that about 85% of people experiencing an everyday legal problem say that want to resolve it and 95% take some

¹ *He said it is good to see someone out there helping, He got the help he needed because of us.* Notes from the follow-up survey, a respondent from Drayton who visited the van in July.

² 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*, Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, Toronto, 2016.

³ Michele Leering, *Paths to Justice: Navigating with the Wandering Lost: Providing Access to Justice to Rural and Linguistic Minority Communities in South-Eastern Ontario*, March 2011.

action to do so.⁴ The van is intended to draw people out, helping them overcome the barriers that prevent them from obtaining timely assistance with their everyday legal problems.

Building service based on outreach is the key to extending the reach of legal aid in order to address unmet legal need, especially having this quality of hidden need. Two basic features of outreach are going out to where people live or spend much of their time and providing assistance to people who would not otherwise receive service. However, going out to one or more places in the community expecting that people will come into these central points may be only part of the solution. To make outreach most effective, it is assumed that the service delivery should become embedded in the community. This requires making legal aid part of the community. This involves making connections with community associations and service agencies in the community to which people turn for help when problems arise. It also involves making people aware of the legal help available by posting information in places where they normally spend time and engage in normal activities. These aspects of outreach build pathways to legal help, reaching out to an extent and into places that the presence of the mobile van in a particular location may not be able to do on its own. This connects the idea of outreach to the concept of embeddedness in the community; making legal aid a presence in the community, creating an awareness of legal issues in people's consciousness and becoming part of the social organization of helping in the community. Obtaining legal help thus becomes as much a part of everyday life as the problems they are experiencing.⁵ Starting with building pathways, collaborative partnering with other organizations in the community can lay the foundation for building a holistic and integrated service, engaging the considerable resources extant in the community to address multiple problems and complex needs.

THE PROJECT

The van began operating in May 2019, visiting 12 communities in Wellington County on a regular basis. The van is pictured in the Infographic shown in Appendix Two. Wellington County covers 2,657 square kilometers and has a non-urban population of approximately 91,000. Table 1 lists the 12 communities that were visited by the van with the population and percentage of the population below the Statistics Canada low income level for each location. The two most distant communities, Puslinch in the southern part of the county and Mount Forest in the North are about 83 Kilometers apart, approximately 1 hour 20 minutes driving time in good weather. The largest city in Wellington County and the location of the Guelph clinic is Guelph, located about 93 kilometers West of Toronto.

⁴ Ab Currie, *Nudging the Paradigm Shift: Everyday Legal Problems in Canada*, Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, 2016

⁵ Ab Currie, *The Legal Problems of Everyday Life* in Rebecca L. Sandefur (ed.), *The Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance*, Vol 12, Access to Justice, Emerald Press, 2009

Table 1: Communities Served by the WellCoMs Van

Community	Population	% of the population below the low-income cut-off
Drayton	2111	7.6%
Erin	2647	7.4%
Clifford	823	13.3%
Hillsburgh	1124	1.3%
Arthur	2333	9.7%
Palmerston	2624	5.2%
Elora	7424	7.2%
Puslinch	7336	5.8%
Mt. Forest	4643	15.3%
Harriston	1797	13.5%
Rockwood	4629	5.8%
Fergus	20,767	7.2%

The van operated between May 1 and October 31, 2019. Two outreach workers were present at the van. Occasionally, a lawyer, paralegal or community legal worker would also attend the van, although the van was staffed only by the outreach workers for the great majority of the time. They provided referrals and legal information, mainly in print form, rather than advice. During the 6-month period, the van made a total of 128 visits to the 12 communities.⁶ On each community visit the van would park in a conspicuous place intended to maximize its visibility for passers-by. An open tent was erected alongside the van with signage indicating that free legal help was available. Before arriving, the outreach workers would post a notice on the community Facebook page. The presence of the van was “tweeted out” with the intention that community organizations would “retweet” the information. Frequently, but not for every visit, an Instagram was posted with video and some interesting commentary about the van. Posters with the schedule for all visits during that month were placed in locations where people go in the normal course of daily activities; coffee shops, the local library branch, the office of the elected representative in the Federal Parliament or the Provincial Legislature, local stores, the local food bank and other places where permission was given. At the beginning of the project news items about the van appeared in the major media in the region. Information about the van was also provided through churches, government services offices and community organizations. Invitations were extended to community leaders to visit the van. Occasionally, pastors of the local churches, town mayors or managers of local service agencies made impromptu visits. A number of community groups were consulted in the planning stages of the project. In July an infographic was prepared based on the first two months experience with the operation of the project.⁷ The infographic was widely distributed throughout the county.

Community partners consulted in the planning stages and throughout the project included the Rural Wellington Community Team, County of Wellington Social Services and Libraries, East Wellington Community Services, Legal Aid Ontario and Community Justice Initiatives.

⁶ A copy of the September schedule is provided in Appendix One.

⁷ See Appendix Two.

Data Sources

The quantitative data presented in this report was collected at the van by the outreach workers. Casual contacts in which the individual did not wish to discuss a problem were tallied on one form per individual. If any conversation occurred the individual was asked how they learned about the van and whether they were aware of the legal aid clinic. A second form recording more detailed information was completed for individuals who identified a problem and requested assistance.

The outreach workers compiled monthly journals recording observations and highlights. There was no predetermined format. The outreach workers provided original comments and observations about situations and events they considered significant and about changes they observed over time. Data collection began on May 15. Therefore, an undetermined number of visitors to the van were not recorded prior to this time.

During the first two weeks of November follow-up telephone interviews were carried out with a sample of people who had been provided with public legal information or a referral. The interviews were intended to learn whether people had used the information or referrals to attempt to resolve their problem, whether this had been useful in working toward a resolution and, overall, if the help they received had made their day-to-day situation easier.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO THE VAN

The van was highly successful in identifying unmet legal need in rural Wellington County.⁸ During the 6-month period from May to the end of October there were a total of 586 visitors to the van. 122 were casual passers-by who did not identify a problem or request any specific information. About 79%, of the total number of visitors, 464 individuals, identified a problem and were provided with some assistance.

There are no results available from similar mobile legal services projects to compare with the WellCoMs van. However, it is instructive in a general way to compare the results of rural Wellington van project with a highly successful urban outreach project, the Hamilton Legal Outreach Project, carried out by the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic. The Hamilton project provided half and full day outreach clinics at 8 organizations serving disadvantaged people in the city. Over approximately a two-year period between October 2016 and November 2018, 697 people were served by staff lawyers and 1,163 people were served by the community navigator.⁹ The assistance by the community navigator involved referrals to other organizations for assistance. In total, the Hamilton Legal Outreach project served a total of 1,860 people in two years. Keeping in mind that the two projects had different objectives, provided different services and operated in different environments, this compares favourably in terms of numbers with the WellCoMs van project. Projecting the 6-month totals for the van for one year, the van would have served an estimated 928 people (464 x 2). The Hamilton project served about 930 people during a one-year period (1860 ÷ 2).

People Who Might Otherwise Not Have Received Help

It is not easy to determine if people would not have taken some action. However, it appears that most of the people to whom the van provided assistance would not otherwise have received help with their legal problem.

⁸ The results presented in this report are not statistically representative of the population of rural Wellington County. However, because the van provided assistance to people in 12 communities throughout Wellington County, the research can be considered logically representative of the rural population of the county.

⁹ The Hamilton Outreach Project: Going Out to Where People Are At, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, March 2019

Whether the person previously had contact with the clinic in Guelph was used as a proxy for likelihood of receiving assistance. Names recorded at the van were matched with records of previous contacts at the Guelph clinic. Over the entire six-month period, only 12.5% of the 464 people requesting assistance with problems had previously contacted the clinic. This percentage changed over time. Only 7% of people seeking help at the van during the first 3 months from May to July had previously contacted the Guelph community clinic. During the last 3 months from August to October 18% had contacted the Guelph clinic in the past. While much larger than the 7% figure, this still suggests that most people coming to the van for assistance would not have otherwise received help. Slightly less than 30% (29.0%) of the people contacting the clinic from the van using Skype previously had contact with the Guelph clinic. Finally, the 122 casual visitors to the clinic were asked if they were aware of the legal clinic. A minority of the casual visitors, 29.8%, said they knew about the community legal clinic in Guelph.

Number of Contacts with the Van by Community

Table 2 shows the number of visitors to the van by community, distinguishing people with problems and casual visitors.¹⁰ The table is organized around the number of visitors to the van with problems.

Table 2: Number of Visitors to the Van by Community

Community	Visitors Requesting Help			Casual Visitors			Total Visitors		
	Number	Percent	Rank	Number	Percent	Rank	Number	Percent	Rank
Mt. Forest	90	19.4%	1	14	11.6%	4	104	17.8%	1
Arthur	73	15.7%	2	11	9.1%	5	84	14.4%	2
Fergus	43	9.3%	3	9	7.4%	7	52	9.0%	3
Palmerston	39	8.4%	4	6	5.0%	9	45	7.8%	6
Rockwood	37	8.0%	5	10	8.3%	6	47	8.1%	5
Drayton	35	7.5%	6	8	6.6%	8	43	7.4%	8
Erin	33	7.1%	7	19	15.6%	1	52	9.0%	3
Harriston	33	7.1%	7	18	14.9%	2	44	7.6%	7
Clifford	32	6.9%	8	16	13.3%	3	48	8.4%	4
Elora	20	4.3%	9	3	2.5%	11	23	4.0%	9
Hillsburgh	16	3.4%	10	2	1.6%	12	18	3.2%	11
Puslinch	13	2.8%	11	6	5.0%	10	19	3.3%	10
Total	464	100.0%		122	100.0%		586	100.0%	

This is the most meaningful number for examining the assistance provided to visitors or users and is used below for other parts of the analysis. Mount Forest and Arthur are outstanding in terms of numbers of people seeking help from the van.

¹⁰ This distinction was better early in the project. Later on, people began making return visits. By the time this was noticed by the outreach workers it was too late in a very short project to begin collecting detailed data to document this trend more precisely.

Table 3 shows the number of visits to the van by people with problems over the 6-month period in each of the 12 communities, in absolute numbers and per capita. Per capita calculations have to be used cautiously because all of the people visiting the van in a particular location may not live in that community.

Table 3: Number of Visitors to the Van by Community Requesting Assistance, Absolute Numbers and Per Capita

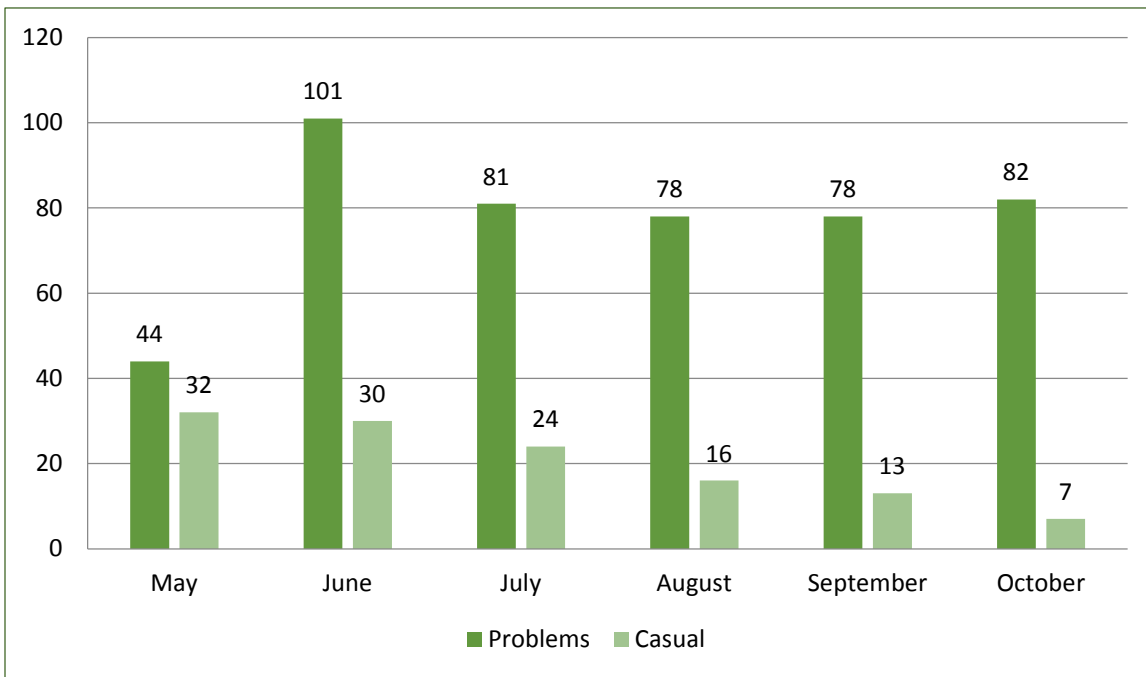
Community	Number of Visitors Requesting Assistance	Per Capita Visitors Requesting Assistance (per 1000)	Percent of the Population Below the Poverty Level
Mt Forest	90	19.4 per 1000	15.3%
Arthur	73	31.3 per 1000	9.7%
Fergus	43	2.1 per 1000	7.2%
Palmerston	39	14.9 per 1000	5.2%
Rockwood	37	8.0 per 1000	5.8%
Drayton	35	16.6 per 1000	7.6%
Erin	33	12.5 per 1000	7.4%
Harriston	33	18.4 per 1000	13.5%
Clifford	32	38.9 per 1000	13.3%
Elora	20	2.7 per 1000	7.2%
Hillsburgh	16	14.2 per 1000	1.3%
Puslinch	13	1.8 per 1000	5.8%

Nevertheless, with that caveat in mind, the per capita data reveal a tendency for the highest number of visits per capita to occur in the communities with the highest levels of poverty. This is a highly positive outcome for the project. The van is meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged people in Wellington County.

Visits over Time

Figure 1 reports the number of visits by month for all communities combined. The peak number of visits was in June. After that the number of people visiting the van overall stabilized at about 80 visits per month.

Figure 1: Visits to the Van by Month, All Communities Combined



The number of visits spiked in June signaling the initial awareness and interest in the van. It was expected that the number of visits might decline during October due to the colder fall weather. The fact that this did not occur is an indication of the extent to which the van is meeting people’s needs. The number of people dropping by the van casually and not identifying a problem declined steadily over the six-month period. The stability of the numbers of people approaching the van seeking assistance with problems is a good indication that the van had become embedded in the community; a place where people in the communities know that help is available.

The van made 12 visits to the various communities. Table 4 shows the range and average number of people visiting the van by order of visit for 9 visits. Attempting to represent a more detailed pattern would be complex, the number of people visiting the van on any given day being dependent on a number of idiosyncratic factors that might be in effect on any particular day, including the weather.

Table 4: Number of Visitors by Order of Visit, Nine Visits, People Seeking Assistance with Problems

Order of Visit	Range for the Number of Visitors Seeking Assistance with Problems	Communities with Highest Numbers of Visitors	Average Number of Visitors
1 st Visit	1 to 6	Mt Forest – 6 Drayton/Erin - 4	2.8
2 nd Visit	2 to 9	Arthur – 9 Fergus - 8	3.4
3 rd Visit	2 to 14	Clifford – 14 Mount Forest - 11	5.1
4 th Visit	4 to 16	Arthur – 9 Mt Forest - 16	4.9
5 th Visit	2 to 6	Arthur – 6 Mt Forest 6	3.3
6 th Visit	0 to 6	Mt Forest – 6 Harriston - 6	2.7
7 th Visit	0 to 9	Palmerston – 9 Mt Forest - 8	3.1
8 th Visit	0 to 9	Arthur – 9 Mt Forest - 8	4.2
9 th Visit	0 to 10	Fergus – 10 Mt Forest - 9	3.9

The average number of visits by order of visit for the first 9 visits remained high. From the sixth visit on, there were visits to communities that did not produce any visitors seeking assistance with problems. On the other hand, some community visits continued to produce relatively high numbers of visitors with problems. Mt Forest was one of the top two communities in terms of number of visitors in 8 of the 9 visits and Arthur was among the two highest communities with respect to number of visitors in 4 of the 9 visits.

Problem Types

Visitors to the van asked for help with 25 separate problem types. Table 5 shows the problem types with more than 5% of the total. Family law was the largest category of problems identified by people visiting the van. The top seven problem types made up almost 85% of all problems. People asked for assistance with twenty-five problem types overall.

Table 5: Types of Problems Identified

Type of Problem	Percent
Family Law	26.7%
Landlord-Tenant	13.6%
Civil Matters	11.2%
Wills and Powers of Attorney	10.8%
Criminal Charges	8.8%
Employment	7.8%
ODSP	6.0%
Other	15.1%
Total	100.0% (464)

These included a very wide variety of problems, for example; education, assisted dying, police action, identity theft, pensions and information about small claims court. This highlights the versatility and range of knowledge required by outreach or legal workers to meet the expectations and needs of people who come seeking assistance. With a proactive offer of service and, following the famously-stated Australian “no wrong door, no wrong number” approach, people coming to the van for help cannot be told *sorry, we don’t do that*. The Guelph clinic may not provide service in a particular area of law, but by listening and making thoughtful referrals the outreach workers always provided help and suggestions.

Consumer and debt problems are conspicuously absent from the list of problem types. People asked for help with only 1 consumer problem and 8 debt problems. However, consumer and debt problems consistently register as the most frequently occurring problems in national legal problems surveys carried out in Canada and in other countries. According to the 2014 national survey by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, Everyday Legal Problems and the Cost of Justice in Canada the five most frequently reported problems were consumer (22.6% of adult Canadians experienced at least one consumer problem), debt (20.8%), employment (16.4%), neighbourhood problems (9.9%) and family (5.3%)¹¹. This raises the possibility that people may not be identifying certain kinds of legal problems they are experiencing. One possible reason is that they do not see the problem as legal. The signage at the van indicated that help with legal problems was available. Second, people may erroneously feel that there isn’t anything that can be done about certain kinds of problems. Not discounting the success that the van has had in its initial six months of outreach to rural communities, there may be a deep layer of problems with legal aspects and potential legal solutions yet to be uncovered.

Gender

Men and women visited the van in about equal numbers. 46.5% of all visitors were men and 52.6% were women.

Age

Few people visiting the van were under 25 years of age. People were not asked their specific ages. Rather, the outreach workers reported their best guess about broad age categories. Based on this, only about 4.3% of people asking for assistance with a problem were under 25 years of age, about 65.3% appeared to be between

¹¹ Ab Currie, Nudging the Paradigm Shift, Figure 1

25 and 60 and 29.5% were judged to have been over 60. In future planning, some thought should be given to reaching younger people.

Types of Assistance

The outreach workers staffing the van were not legally trained and therefore no legal advice was provided. From time to time a lawyer, paralegal or community legal worker attended the van and were able to provide advice. For one two-week period, a caseworker replaced one of the outreach workers.

PLE was provided to 67.2% (312) of visitors to the van with problems. Generally, the assistance provided was PLE pamphlets produced by Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) or referral suggestions by the Guelph clinic dealing with topics such as family law, workers compensation, courts and tribunals, immigration and wills & powers of attorney (see samples in Appendix Three) including a referral list of county lawyers in each community who prepare wills and powers of attorney and the range of costs. The latter was prepared specifically for the van project.

Referrals to other community supports were provided to 12.9% of the 464 visitors seeking help. Referrals were made to 23 different organizations. These included the John Howard and E Frye societies, Women in Crisis, the Community Resource Centre and the Wellington County Office and Legal Aid Ontario offices. Notably, 13 people were referred to the offices of the Member of the Provincial Legislature and the federal Member of Parliament. Referrals could also be made to the Guelph clinic employment lawyer and case workers.

Skype

An important feature of the van project was the capacity for people to use Skype at the van to speak immediately with a caseworker from the clinic in Guelph at all times. Visitors to the van were informed about this option by the outreach workers and sometimes, on a case-by-case basis were urged to do so when the situation seemed appropriate and for types of legal problems for which the Guelph clinic provides service. Occasionally visitors to the van would decline an offer to connect with the Guelph clinic in this way. About 8.2% (38) of the 464 people who received some form of assistance used Skype to contact the Guelph clinic. Slightly more than one quarter (10) of all Skype contacts occurred in June. Otherwise, the use of Skype occurred in each of the other months, with between 4 and 7 contacts made. People visiting the van in Mt. Forest made the largest number of Skype contacts (10), followed by Harriston and Rockwood with 6 each and Arthur with 4 Skype contacts. The outreach workers observed in their journals that delays in reaching the caseworker in a particular problem area occurred occasionally when the Skype call was made, although connections were always completed. This issue of availability is an issue that should be addressed in subsequent iterations of this project, possibly with additional funding.

The Skype option for advice seems, on the surface, like a good idea. The types of problems for which people most commonly used Skype were disability benefits, 45.5% of people with this type of problem; ODSP, 39.3% of people with these problems and 19.0% of people with landlord-tenant problems. In future iterations of this project there should be consideration about how to optimize the use of Skype. Dedicated funding for a Skype caseworker could be considered.

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITIES

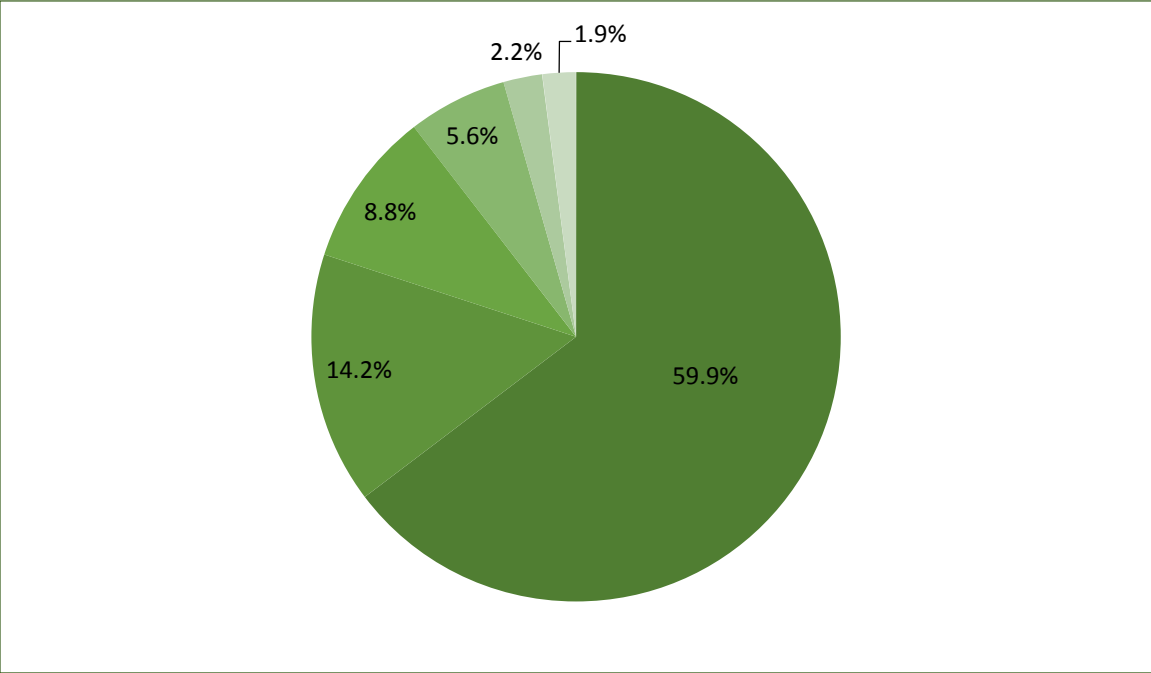
Most people connected with the van on a casual basis simply by passing by the location where the van was parked for the day. Locating the van in conspicuous places in small communities is clearly an important way of

connecting with the community. 59.9% of the people identifying problems and seeking help said they learned about the van from “passing by”. The other methods by which people connected with the van were:

- 14.2% said they learned about the van from the social media posts made by the outreach workers on community Facebook pages.
- 8.8% were referred by 20 different community agencies. These included a variety of organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, food banks in different towns, local MP’s office, family health teams in two towns and a child and family services agency.
- 5.6% of visitors said they had been told about the van by a friend or relative or by a community organization (but not a referral). One source mentioned was a weekly church announcement
- 2.2% had learned about the van from a local newspaper
- 1.9% learned about the van by noticing posters placed in places such as coffee shops, convenience stores, libraries, and other places where people normally go in the course of daily activities.
- 7.4% in total were not sure, did not answer or said they were repeat clients

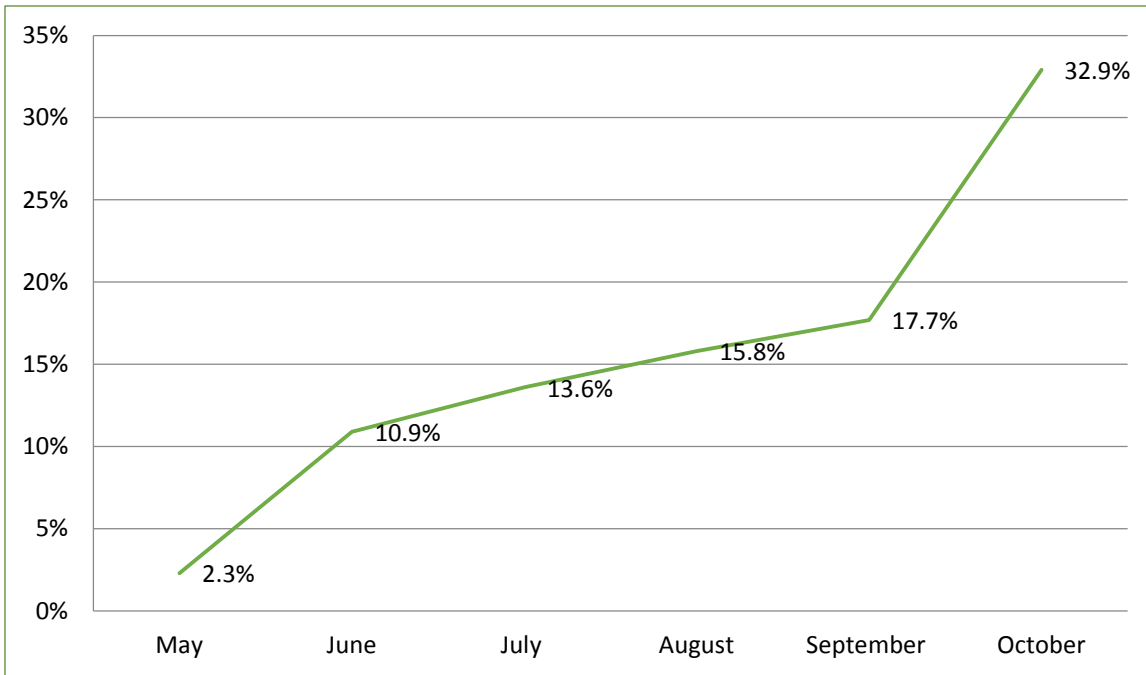
The numbers in Figure 3 are approximate. As the project became more embedded in the community the connection between the van and people in the communities became more complex.

Figure 3: Ways in Which People Learned About the Van



The importance of social media as a way to connect with the van increased over time. The data presented in Figure 4 show social media as a percentage of all ways of learning about the van by month.

Figure 4: Social Media as a Percentage of all Ways of Learning about the Van



As the project developed it became apparent that the ways of learning about the van that had initially been thought of as separate pathways were converging. Visitors to the van were mentioning to the outreach workers with increasing frequency things such as: *my mother or my friend saw you on Facebook and told me I come in*. By the time the more complex patterns of communication involving social media were noticed it was too late to revise the data collection instruments. The impact of tweets (discussed below) that were primarily intended for organizations in the community on referrals or on visits to the van could not be measured or observed. It is possible that, similar to Facebook posts, tweets increased visitors to the van through communications between people in the organizations seeing tweets and re-tweets and their own clients. The increase in the numbers shown in Figure 4 undoubtedly underestimates the growing impact of social media because of the multiple pathways mentioned in which social media was not recorded as the pathway or the primary pathway. The importance of social media bringing people to the van was observed in the journals maintained by the outreach workers.

Three social media platforms were used by the project; Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Twitter and Facebook were used daily. Instagram was used occasionally. Twitter was used primarily to communicate with service providers, government offices, media outlets and other community organizations. Facts about the mobile legal service, schedules and “shout-outs” to supporters could be tweeted out to the community. Short videos could be included to raise interest levels. The tweet sent out on August 15 was retweeted 6 times and recorded 2,100 impressions (the count of the number of times people viewed the tweet) illustrating how effective Twitter can be for engaging community organizations.

Facebook was the primary social media vehicle for engaging with individuals. A very large number of people learned about the van on Facebook. The initial Facebook post on May 1 was viewed by more than 10,000 people. The other nine of the top 10 Facebook posts were viewed by 2,000 to 6,500 people.

Instagram was used only occasionally, compared with Facebook and Twitter. Instagram was used to give the cyber audience some interesting context and to inform them about developments in the project by posting interesting video clips, pictures or telling people about interesting situations that had occurred.

The data about the use of Facebook posts and tweets demonstrates the power of social media to reach the potential client base of an outreach project such as this one. While there is no direct proof, it seems that the power of social media played a major role in the increase in people reporting that social media was the way they learned about the van.

Social media is simply a digital technology set apart from the community. Social media represents the normal patterns through which people communicate. Information passed along channels of social media is the social organization of communication in the community. The van becomes part of the social organization through the use of social media and becomes part of the community it serves. In the future development of this kind of outreach project, expanding the potential of social media for reaching into the community should be a priority.

Connecting with the Van through Patterns of Social Interaction

There are other indications that the presence of the van and the availability of help with everyday legal problems is becoming part of the social fabric of the community. Among the 464 people who identified a problem and obtained some assistance, 21 people volunteered that they were told about the van by another person. This number includes 13 who were informed by a family member; a mother, partner, another family member such as a cousin or a friend. An additional 8 people were told about the van by an individual in an organization, although not a referral. These sources included a weekly church announcement, several family health teams, a Canadian Mental Health worker and the Mayor's office in one town. These people are a subset of the 4.9% of visitors with problems who said they learned about the van through word-of-mouth contact.

42 visitors to the van volunteered that they were asking for information on behalf another person. The others included friends (19), a partner or spouse (5), close family members such as a son, daughter, brother or sister (16) and other relatives (2). Presumably these inquiries led to conversations between the parties involved.

Visitors sent to the van by others and asking for information on behalf of others represent a different level of attachment to the community compared with actions such as passing by, taking note of a social media posting or taking note of a poster. These involve social interactions rather than individual actions. Similarly, the instances where information about the van is passed on by someone in an agency such as a CMHA worker, a parole officer, or in any community assistance centre, but not as a referral, is also a social interaction.

Connecting with Community Organizations

The outreach workers at the van referred 60 people to 28 different community organizations. The 60 people make up 12.9% of the 464 people with problems. The 28 organizations included 2 food banks, 4 family health teams, both the local MP's and MPP's offices, and 3 community legal clinics not including the Guelph clinic. The other referring organizations made up a wide variety from the county. The Elizabeth Fry Society, The John Howard Society, The Canadian Mental Health Association, East Wellington Community Services, The Community Resources Centre, and the Community Literacy Centre represent the variety of organizations making referrals.

A total of 45 people, 9.7% of people receiving help, were referred to the van by a total of 21 community organizations and agencies. The constituency offices of MP's and MPP's, 2 food banks, 4 family health teams were prominent among referring organizations. The Victorian Order of Nurses, The Canadian Mental Health

Association, a parole officer, the Guelph County Courthouse, Family and Child Services, The Community Learning Centre, Women in Crisis illustrate the variety of community organizations and agencies that referred people to the van.

Three observations emerge from the brief examination of referrals. First, in the brief six-month period of the pilot project the WellCoMs mobile van has become widely known throughout rural Wellington County and has been highly effective in connecting with the community. This is clearly illustrated by the number and variety of organizations referring people to the van and to which people were referred by the van.

Second, there is evidence of potential reciprocal relations between the mobile legal service and these community organizations. Food banks, MP's and MPP's offices and family health teams stand out in terms of the numbers of people referred. Women in Crisis and the Community Learning Centre also appear on the lists of organizations making referrals and to which referrals were made. This suggests the potential for building collaborative partnerships and a broad network of access to justice services centered on the outreach services provided by the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County.

Third, reciprocal relationships and collaborative partnerships form the basis for holistic and integrated service. This requires holistic intake at the van for all clients who appear on their own volition or are referred. Having been an early adopter of the legal health check-up informed the approach taken at the van and this should be strengthened in similar projects. The collaborative services among community partners can deal with the legal problems that may in some cases be better resolved by non-legal means and the non-legal problems related to legal issues presented by clients. Often people present with interdependent clusters of legal and non-legal problems that can only be addressed effectively by combining the skills and resources of other professionals and experienced volunteers. This is a first step in identifying the complex cases that require more intensive intervention. The legal clinic can engage the extensive resources available in the community to build a network of access to justice services, extending the reach of legal aid to provide a range and level of service that legal clinics alone cannot provide.

Impact on Users¹²

Telephone interviews with a sample of 67 visitors to the van revealed that slightly over half of respondents, 54% (36 people) followed up on the advice or referrals provided at the van. However, the vast majority of those people who did make use of the assistance provided benefited from it. 82% (55 people) said they found the assistance to have been helpful. Over a quarter of the sample, 28% (19 people) said that as a consequence the problem had been resolved and 48% (32 people) said that the problem was closer to being resolved, 67% overall.

To a large extent the presence of the van encouraged people to overcome barriers to dealing with problems, although the nature of those barriers was not examined. When asked if the problem had occurred recently or whether it has persisted for a longer time, 71% of the sample (43 people) said that the problem was long-

¹² This section is based on telephone interviews with people who visited the van between May 1 and July 1, 2019. A sampling frame of 180 potential respondents was constructed using intakes at the clinic, excluding sensitive intakes, where there was an initial contact at the van. This made it important to obtain telephone numbers. Interviews were carried out between November 4 and 12, 2019. Calls continued until the time available expired, yielding a cumulative sample of 67 individuals. One call-back was made if the first attempt at contact was unsuccessful. The sample completion ratio was 37% (67 completed interviews out of 180 persons called). Interviews were carried out with respondents from all 12 communities served by the van.

standing. Further, 73% (50 people) felt that the presence of the van had encouraged them to get help, or more help, earlier than they probably would otherwise have done.

Less than half of the sample, 47% (32 people) said they had previously taken some action to deal with the problem. Viewed against the finding that 67% said the problem had been resolved or was now closer to being resolved suggests that the van has achieved some success in helping people deal with the legal problems they were experiencing.

It is well-established in the legal problems literature that experiencing legal problems is often related to stress or other consequences that diminish quality of life. In this sample 82% of the 36 respondents who followed up with the advice or referrals (30 people) said that they felt better about their situation overall.

When asked what would improve the service provided to them at the van the largest percentage of the 40 people who responded to the question, 37% (15 people) said they would have preferred to have been given more specific advice about the problem. These volunteered (unprompted) responses were:

- Actual help – 9
- Better help – 2
- Direct advice about the issue – 2
- Given advice - 1
- Help with paperwork – 1

Two people said they would like legal representation.

- Representation – 1
- Legal support in court – 1

This could be a reflection about the range of advice in areas of law available through the van and the clinic versus other service providers such as Legal Aid Ontario and/or the private bar. This represents a possible future expansion for this type of project, to have access to a broader range of providers, possibly through the use of technology.

The other suggestion for improvements in the service were an eclectic mix.

- More advertising – 3
- A broader variety of services – 1
- More tenant's rights PLE material – 1
- Difficult to get through to referrals – 1
- Traffic noise at the location is too loud – 1

A large number of respondents (15 people) said they could think of nothing to improve the service and there was one no answer.

These results are drawn from a very small sample, so any conclusions are tentative at best. Against that caveat, there is some indication that a mobile service can be a way to provide more immediate legal advice, possibly through the use of technology and access to providers in more areas of law: family, immigration, and criminal, for example.

COSTS

The question of what works and at what cost is always important. It must be kept in mind, however, that this project is not simply a pilot but, rather, a first stage pilot. Like good research, good innovations answer questions and raise new ones. This short six-month pilot has raised issues that have to be explored further. A way has to be found to continue the outreach that has been so successfully established from November to April.

For the six-month period that the van was operating, the project costs were \$50,335¹³. Based on the 586 visitors to the van, both casual visitors and people seeking advice, the unit cost of serving each individual was approximately \$86. Based only on the 464 visitors seeking assistance with problems the unit cost was approximately \$108.

These cost figures should not be viewed simply as direct costs per person. The money spent represents the cost of developing a presence in the community. It is not possible to calculate the value of building the presence for legal aid in rural Wellington County communities that has been accomplished during this phase of the project. This will pay dividends in increased access to for years to come if the clinic continues to develop and refine the outreach service, building on the momentum gained in these first six months. As the outreach matures over the next year or more unit costs would likely diminish.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Urban areas create their own efficiencies through population concentration. Rural areas do not. The van project has been successful in overcoming the rural geography of Wellington County. The mobile legal services van has been a highly effective form of **outreach**, attracting a substantial number of people seeking assistance with legal problems. The vast majority of these people had not previously contacted nor been clients of the Guelph legal clinic, suggesting that many of them would not likely have otherwise sought legal help with their problem.

Based on responses to the follow-up survey, most users said they had been experiencing the problem they brought to the van for a lengthy period of time. However, the van did appear to promote **early intervention**. Most of the respondents to the survey said the presence of the van had encouraged them to seek advice earlier than what they might otherwise have done. This type of outreach project has the potential to produce an even greater early intervention effect by creating more extensive community contacts.

The van mainly provided public legal information and referrals and, also, offered users the opportunity to obtain legal advice from the Guelph clinic using Skype. Responses to the follow-up survey suggested that some people would have preferred actual **legal advice about their problem**. This confirms an observation recorded in the journals maintained by the outreach workers. In future projects, the capacity to increase the types of legal advice available should be developed, through more enhanced Skype capacity and access to a broader range of providers in more areas of law.

A key question is how to provide service in different areas for of law for people with multiple problems, at the van and at the Guelph clinic. The clinic currently uses a holistic approach to intake, exploring legal and non-legal problems related to the presenting problem. This was also done to the extent possible at the van during the pilot project. The Guelph clinic does not provide service in all areas of law. However, the referrals made by the

¹³ These costs included salaries of the outreach workers, rental of the van and operating costs such including gasoline and incidentals. The total cost of the project was approximately \$85,000.

van during the pilot project were to the private bar for powers of attorney and wills, to LAO for criminal and family law, to other community clinics and to a number of community services. Going forward, subsequent phases of this project could extend the idea of a fully integrated “one-stop shop” to deal with the complex realities of everyday legal problems faced by the public.

The van **established a strong presence** in rural Wellington County, becoming well-known in the communities that were visited. One of the important accomplishments of the van project was having laid the foundation for **making legal aid part of the community it serves**. The van received referrals from community organizations and made referrals to voluntary organizations and community services. This is the foundation for building a potential **network of access to justice services** in rural Wellington County. **Engaging the resources** within the community extends the capacity of legal aid to deal with problems beyond the limits of the funding available from conventional sources and the skills resident in the clinic. This is the foundation for building a **holistic and integrated** service through collaborative community partnerships, especially including the capacity to identify and assist people with complex needs.

The strong presence of the WellCoMs van in the community was not only built on connections with community organizations and services. Knowledge about **the presence of the van and that help was available there seemed to become part of peoples’ everyday lives**. People visiting the van were asked how they learned about it. They would often say that a friend or family member told them about the van and suggested they should stop by. People would sometimes tell the outreach workers that they were asking for information or a referral on behalf of a friend or family member.

From the outset the deliberate strategy to inform people about the van was to follow one of the basic principles of outreach, to **go out to where people live or normally spend their time**. Posters informing people about the location and the monthly schedule of the van in a particular community were placed in libraries, food stores, coffee shops, garages, food banks and other places where people carry out their normal day-to-day activities. **Social media was used extensively**. Each day, a notice was posted on the community Facebook page. A tweet was sent out each day. Occasionally, an Instagram post with an interesting community-related anecdote, a video or a picture was posted in order to build community knowledge about and interest in the van. The use of social media appears to have been a powerful tool for making the legal aid part of the community. Tweets were retweeted and had thousands of views. Facebook posts were viewed thousands of times. Social media is an important part of normal patterns of communication among people.

Becoming **embedded in the community being served** began to take concrete meaning as the project developed. The patterns of referrals make legal aid part of the social organization of helping in the community. The use of social media was instrumental in making knowledge about available legal help part of the normal patterns of information, generally and among friends and family, circulating in the community. Knowing that help is available when I have a problem and also that I know where to get it are the most basic elements of **legal empowerment**. Learning more about how to make legal aid part of the community should be an important aspect for future projects of this type.

The **momentum** achieved during the first 6 month of the mobile legal help van should not be squandered. The presence in the community that has been developed by the project is extremely valuable. Operating the van in inclement weather during the late fall and winter months is not feasible. However, regular one-day or half-day mobile legal clinics providing access to advice in a wider range of areas of law by different providers could be developed in at least some of the communities, using community facilities such as church halls, food banks or

MP's or MLA's offices. Since continuity and maintaining momentum may be important for the development of this type of project, it should be made clear that this is, in effect, the "winter van".

There was extensive consultation with key partners when the mobile van project was first being planned and throughout the project. Further consultation processes should be undertaken building on the demonstrated success of the van. Emphasis on **building collaborative relationships** focused on problem solving could be a focus. Similar to the basic message underlying the legal health check-up and the legal secondary consultation projects, the problems with which other organizations assist people are the same everyday problems for which a legal clinic provides assistance. They are the normal, and frequently occurring, problems of everyday life. This may help community organizations that are already invested in helping people understand that they have a common and shared interest with legal aid provided by a community legal clinic.

Although the van attracted a substantial number of people seeking help, it is not certain that the outreach process extended into the more remote areas of the county. In a subsequent stage of the mobile legal services project a van, with periodic stops in places other than town centers might be combined with regular stops in fixed locations. Social media might again be a tool to extend the reach of legal aid. A **chat** capability might enable people in more remote areas of the county to access legal help.

Like good research, good innovation answers questions and raises new ones. The Guelph clinic has learned much about and has achieved success in expanding legal services to rural Wellington County. It has also made clear that the clinic should **continue to explore expanding legal aid to hard-to-reach rural populations.**

Cost should not be ignored. Although the unit cost of persons served was high, put in broader perspective the money spent achieved the more basic and valuable objective of building a strong presence in the communities being served, an accomplishment that will lay the foundation for increasing services to individuals experiencing legal problems. The WellCoMs project has been about ways to deliver services to rural areas and connecting rural regions. Continued work will be increasingly complex and costly. An examination of **cost-benefit** should be included in subsequent work, recognizing the special challenges of bringing increased access to justice to rural areas.

Appendix One

September Legal Van Schedule



Legal Clinic
OF GUELPH & WELLINGTON COUNTY

September Legal Van Schedule

The Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County provides free legal services for low income residents in Guelph & Wellington County. The van is visiting communities throughout Wellington County until the end of October. *Ask us how we can help!*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Guelph Office: 519-821-2100; 1-800-628-9205 Email: gwlegalclinic@lao.on.ca Website: gwlegalclinic.ca					
1	HOLIDAY No Van	2 3 Clifford 10-3:30 Parking lot at Allen/Elora	4 Harriston 10-3:30 Mill St. behind Evergreen Variety	5 Palmerston 10-3:30 Lot next to Foodland	6 Mt. Forest 10-3:30 St. Mary's church lot off Queen St	7
8	9 Drayton 10-3:30 Freshmart parking lot	10 Arthur 10-3:30 Parking lot behind Post Office	11 Elora 9:30-12 By the LCBO Fergus 12:30-4 Beside Library	12 Erin 10-12:30 Main/Millwood Hillsburgh 1-3:30 Across from Arena	13 Rockwood 10-3:30 Waterside Park lot off of Hwy 7	14
15	16 Puslinch 10-3:30 Puslinch Community Centre lot	17 Clifford 10-3:30 Parking lot at Allen/Elora	18 Harriston 10-3:30 Mill St. behind Evergreen Variety	19 Palmerston 10-3:30 Lot next to Foodland	20 Mt. Forest 10-3:30 St. Mary's church lot off Queen St	21
22	23 Drayton 10-3:30 Freshmart parking lot	24 Arthur 10-3:30 Parking lot behind Post Office	25 Elora 9:30-12 By the LCBO Fergus 12:30-4 Beside Library	26 Erin 10-12:30 Main/Millwood Hillsburgh 1-3:30 Across from Arena	27 Rockwood 10-3:30 Waterside Park lot off of Hwy 7	28
29	30 Puslinch 10-3:30 Puslinch Community Centre lot					

Appendix Two

Infographic

WellCoMs Wellington County Mobile Legal Service

Meeting the Legal Needs in Rural Wellington County

A project of The Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County



What:

A mobile clinic that travels across Wellington County

When:

We started on May 1st and our project runs until Oct. 31

Where:

Small and large communities in Wellington County

Who:

Max and Rose use technology to connect with the rest of the team back at the Legal Clinic in Guelph



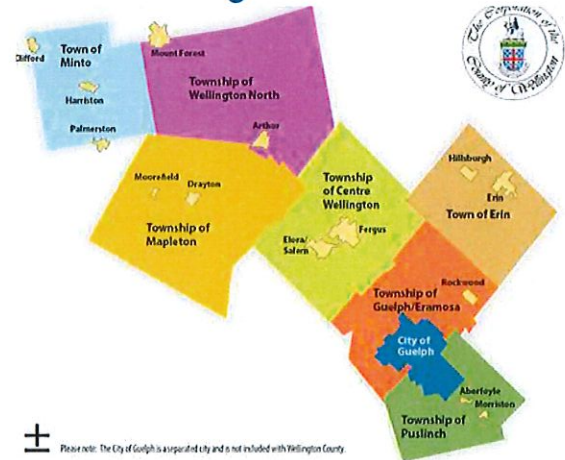
We park the van in the morning and set up a table, chairs, coffee and snacks. People come by and ask us questions, and we do our best to help them!



Photo credit: Alexandra Heck/Tostar

After 8 weeks we have driven over 3000 km, met with over 173 people offering them advice and help with everyday legal issues

Connecting with Community



⊕ Please note: The City of Guelph is a separated city and is not included with Wellington County.

Used with permission from the County of Wellington

The WellCoMs van visits 12 communities throughout Wellington County. We set up in convenient locations in each town, hoping people will notice our van and stop in for a chat.

In addition to social media, we post our travel schedule at different places in each town such as the library, churches, food banks and other community agencies.

We've met some great people in:
Arthur, Clifford, Drayton, Elora, Erin, Fergus, Harriston, Hillsburgh, Mount Forest, Palmerston, Puslinch and Rockwood!

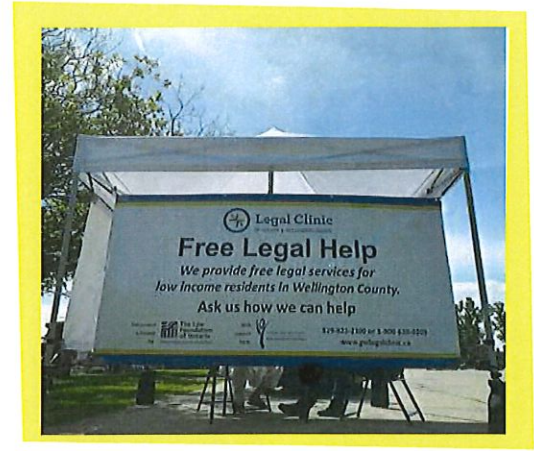
Follow our van travels on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram



The legal workers in the van are great listeners. Once they understand your issues they can refer you to the Legal Clinic in Guelph and other helpful resources. We can even connect you with a caseworker at the Clinic in Guelph using skype on the spot from the van!

We can also connect you with the support you need through other community agencies like the family health teams, community and social services and the library.

Here to Help



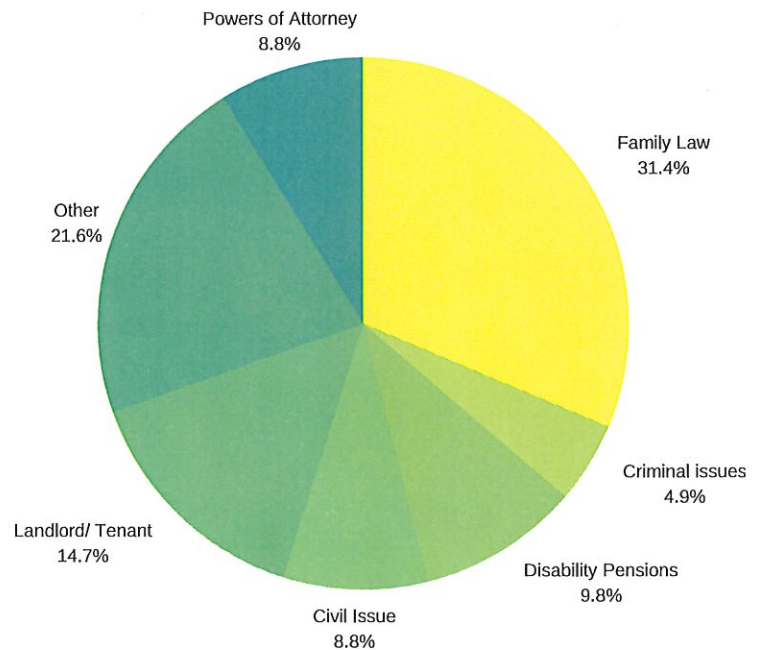
Practical Help

Over 90% of the people served by the WellCoMs van had no previous contact with the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County. Great to meet you!

We give people as much help as we can. This includes really understanding needs and directing people to appropriate legal help. We have a wide range of info sheets to help people access family law, criminal law, civil law and other services.

Making Impact & Finding Solutions

Our friendly team is ready to talk about anything! Between May 1 and June 20, 173 people visited the van. 70% of people wanted to discuss a specific problem. People looking for legal advice wanted information about:



Seeing the Big Picture



Many of life's challenges such as family breakdown, debt, poor housing conditions and health problems are all connected. We know that legal issues can trigger other legal problems and create more non-legal problems. The WellCoMs Wellington County Mobile Legal Service listens to the needs of our community to find legal and non-legal solutions



Our thanks to The Law Foundation for their funding and support of this innovative project

The Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County is funded by Legal Aid Ontario and governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors

Appendix Three

1. Family Law Referral Sheet
2. Workers Compensation Referral Sheet
3. Wills and Power of Attorney Referral Sheet
4. Courts Referral Sheet
5. Employment Law Referral Sheet
6. Immigration Referral Sheet

Family Law

Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) Advice Lawyers

FLIC offers general legal information on family law matters free of charge. You must meet Legal Aid Ontario's financial eligibility requirements to speak with duty counsel.

- Friday mornings from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Courthouse located at 74 Woolwich Street, Guelph.

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO)

<http://www.legalaid.on.ca>

Legal Aid Ontario provides a number of different programs for those who qualify financially, including: (a) certificates to cover the cost of lawyer, (b) summary advice and information from a lawyer for up to 20 minutes; (c) Separation Agreement Certificates which cover the cost of a family lawyer to help negotiate and prepare a separation agreement, for those who qualify financially; (d) legal advice on mediation services; and, (e) expanded certificates for individuals who identify as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. If you self-identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit advise Legal Aid Ontario staff.

Telephone: 1-800-668-8258 (collect calls are accepted) or visit LAO courthouse staff at the courthouse at 36 Wyndham Street South on Monday, Tuesday afternoons, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons for assistance with your Legal Aid application.

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis (WOMEN ONLY)

<http://www.gwwomenincrisis.org>

This organisation provides safe shelter and 24 hour staffing for women and their children experiencing violence and/or abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, verbal and/or financial. Other programs include the Sexual Assault Centre, the Rural Women's Support Program and the Transitional Support Program. Telephone: 519-836-1110 24 hour Crisis Line: 519-836-5710 or 1-800-265-7233

Victim Services Wellington

<http://www.vswguelph.on.ca/>

Victim Services Wellington assists police and emergency services, as well as the community, in providing short-term emotional and practical assistance to the victim(s) of crime, trauma and tragic circumstances.

Telephone: 519-824-1212 ext. 7304 (Guelph) or 519-323-9660 (Wellington County)

Law Society Referral Service

<https://www.lsuc.on.ca/lsrcs/>



Legal Clinic
OF GUELPH & WELLINGTON COUNTY

This has been provided to you as a courtesy by the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County. None of the referral information or internet links provided below should be construed as legal advice. They are provided as a resource to help.

This is an online service for referrals to lawyers or paralegals who provide a free, up to 30 minute consultation. A crisis line is available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The crisis line is intended for people who are unable to use the online service, such as those in custody, in a shelter, or in a remote community without access to the internet. You can ask to be referred to a lawyer or paralegal who speaks languages other than English or French, or a lawyer who accepts legal aid certificates. Toll-Free Crisis Line: 1-855-947-5255

Steps to Justice

<https://stepstojustice.ca/>

Steps to Justice gives reliable, and practical information on common legal problems for residents of Ontario. It gives comprehensive online information on common legal problems that people experience in family, housing, employment and other areas of law.

Family Counselling and Support Services

<http://www.familyserviceguelph.on.ca/>

Provides counselling, education, support and advocacy services.

109 Surrey Street East, Guelph

Telephone: 519-824-2431 or 1-800-307-7078

Couple and Family Therapy Centre: University of Guelph

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/family/couple-and-family-therapy-msc>

The Couple and Family Therapy Centre (CFTC) provides ongoing therapy to individuals, couples and families with a wide range of concerns. We offer a negotiable sliding scale based upon household income and ability to pay. Session fees range from \$5.00 - \$100.00 per session (50-60 minutes).

(519) 824-4120 ext. 56335

Justice Ontario

<https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/>

Legal information is available regarding Family Law issues in different languages.

Telephone: 1-866-252-0104

Family Law Education for Women

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

Legal information on women's rights on family law issues in 11 languages.

Your Legal Rights

www.yourlegalrights.on.ca

Information to help individuals better understand and exercise their legal rights.



Legal Clinic
OF GUELPH & WELLINGTON COUNTY

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Workers Compensation

Law Society Referral Service

<https://lsrs.lso.ca/lsrs/welcome>

This is an online service for referrals to lawyers or paralegals who will provide a free, up to 30 minute consultation. A crisis line is available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The crisis line is intended for people who are unable to use the online service, such as those in custody, in a shelter, or in a remote community without access to the internet. You can ask to be referred to a lawyer or paralegal who speaks languages other than English or French, or a lawyer who accepts legal aid certificates.

Toll-Free Crisis Line: 1-855-947-5255

Ministry of Labour and Employment Standards Call Centre

<https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/>

Advice about your pay, hours of work, overtime, vacation or holiday entitlements and termination or severance pay, if you are not represented by a union.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre

<http://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/welcome>

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre is an independent agency funded by the Government of Ontario to provide legal services to individuals who have experienced discrimination.

Telephone: 1-866-612-8627

Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario (IAVGO)

www.iavgo.org

IAVGO is a Community Legal Clinic that serves the injured worker community in Ontario. They provide free services to injured workers, including legal advice, legal representation, and public legal education. Telephone: 1-877-230-6311

Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT)

<http://www.wsiat.on.ca/>

The Tribunal which hears final appeals in workplace safety and insurance claims.



Legal Clinic
OF GUELPH & WELLINGTON COUNTY

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Office of the Worker Advisor

<http://www.owa.gov.on.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Free services to *non-unionised* injured workers and their survivors, including summary advice, self-help materials, and representation on appeals. If you are a unionized injured worker, the OWA can advise you of any relevant time limits for action in your case, and refer you back to your union for assistance.

Telephone: 1-800-435-8980 (English) or 1-800-661-6365 (French)

Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic

www.workers-safety.ca

Free information, legal advice and representation to low-income workers who face health and safety problems at work, including employment standards and wrongful dismissal.

Telephone: 1-877-832-6090

Injured Workers' Community Legal Clinic

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

This is a province-wide specialty Community Legal Clinic dealing with injured worker matters. The IWC provides advice regarding all employment law related issues and can provide representation regarding Workers' Compensation and Canadian Pension Plan related cases. Telephone: (416) 461-2411

Steps to Justice

<https://stepstojustice.ca/>

Steps to Justice gives reliable, and practical information on common legal problems for residents of Ontario. It gives comprehensive online information on common legal problems that people experience in family, housing, employment and other areas of law.

Your Legal Rights

<https://yourlegalrights.on.ca/>

Information to help individuals better understand and exercise their legal rights.



This has been provided to you as a courtesy by the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County. None of the referral information or internet links provided below should be construed as legal advice. They are provided as a resource to help.

Wills and Power of Attorney

Law Society Referral Service

<https://lsrs.lso.ca/lsrs/welcome>

This is an online service for referrals to lawyers or paralegals that will provide, a free, up to 30 minute consultation. A crisis line is available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The crisis line is intended for people who are unable to use the online service, such as those in custody, in a shelter, or in a remote community without access to internet. You can ask to be referred to a lawyer or paralegal who speaks languages other than English, or a lawyer who accepts legal aid certificates.

Toll-Free Crisis Line: 1-855-947-5255

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, Ministry of Attorney General

<https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/>

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee has produced a Power of Attorney Kit. You can obtain this kit by calling the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, or by downloading it from the website:

<https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/poakit.php>

Telephone: 1-800-366-0335

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

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

This Legal Clinic specialises in senior's issues.

Telephone: 1-855-598-2656 (toll free) or 1-416-598-2656

Advance Care Planning Waterloo Wellington

<http://acpww.ca/>

Visit the website for further information on advance care planning, and making decisions regarding your health.

Justice Net

<https://www.justicenet.ca/>

This is a not-for-profit organization that helps people access legal services when their income is too high to qualify for legal aid but too low to afford legal fees. If your net family income is less than \$59,000, they will refer you to a directory of lawyers, paralegals, and mediators who provide help at reduced rates depending on income.

You must register and pay a \$25 fee to use the website. This fee may be returned to you if you do not find a professional to work with.



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Steps to Justice

<https://stepstojustice.ca/>

Steps to Justice gives reliable, and practical information on common legal problems for residents of Ontario. It gives comprehensive online information on common legal problems that people experience in family, housing, employment and other areas of law.

Your Legal Rights

<https://yourlegalrights.on.ca/>

Your Legal Rights is a project of CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario) and is funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario. This is a great online resource that offers a variety of information that will help individuals better understand and exercise their legal rights.

Consent and Capacity

If you have a matter before the Consent and Capacity Board you can contact Legal Aid Ontario at 1-800-668-8258 or the Hamilton Legal Aid office at 1-905-528-0134 ext. 0.

Pro Bono Ontario

<https://www.probonoontario.org/hotline/>

Pro Bono Ontario is committed to helping Ontarians with their everyday civil legal needs. If you can't afford a lawyer, call our Free Legal Advice Hotline for up to 30 minutes of free legal advice and assistance. We currently help with creating Powers of Attorney.

Toll Free: 1-855-255-7256



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Civil Litigation

Ministry of Attorney General – Small Claims Court

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/scc/>

- What is Small Claims Court?
http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/guides/What_is_Small_Claims_Court_EN.pdf
- Guide to Making a Claim
http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/guides/Guide_to_Making_a_Claim_EN.pdf

The Law Society Referral Service

www.lawsocietyreferralservice.ca

This is an online service for referrals to lawyers or paralegals who will provide, a free, up to 30 minute consultation. A crisis line is available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The crisis line is intended for people who are unable to use the online service, such as those in custody, in a shelter, or in a remote community without access to the internet. You can ask to be referred to a lawyer or paralegal who speaks languages other than English or French, or a lawyer who accepts legal aid certificates.

Toll-Free Crisis Line: 1-855-947-5255

Pro Bono Ontario

<https://www.probonoontario.org/>

Pro Bono Ontario assists residents of Ontario who have essential legal needs but can't afford a lawyer. If you are unable to afford a lawyer you can contact their legal hotline to receive up to 30 minutes of free legal advice and assistance.

Legal Advice Hotline: 1-855-255-7256

Justice Ontario

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/justice-ont/>

Legal information in 170 different languages regarding civil law matters. including filing a civil suit, appeals, mediation, and arbitration.

Telephone: 1-866-252-0104



Legal Clinic
OF GUELPH & WELLINGTON COUNTY

This has been provided to you as a courtesy by the Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County. None of the referral information or internet links provided below should be construed as legal advice. They are provided as a resource to help.

Steps to Justice

<https://stepstojustice.ca/>

Steps to Justice gives reliable, and practical information on common legal problems for residents of Ontario. It gives comprehensive online information on common legal problems that people experience in family, housing, employment and other areas of law.

Your Legal Rights

www.yourlegalrights.on.ca

Information to help individuals better understand and exercise their legal rights.



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Employment Law (non WSIB)

Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County

<https://www.gwlegalclinic.ca/>

As a partner in the Mobile Legal and Social Justice Initiatives you can speak to an employment lawyer regarding your employment matter. This service is for people who financially qualify and for non-unionized workers whose workplaces are provincially regulated. For more information contact the Clinic or visit our website. Telephone: 519-821-2100

Human Rights Legal Support Centre

<http://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/welcome>

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre is an independent agency funded by the Government of Ontario to provide legal services to individuals who have experienced discrimination.

Telephone: 1-866-612-8627

Ministry of Labour

<https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/>

Advice about your pay, hours of work, overtime, vacation or holiday entitlements and termination or severance pay, if you are not represented by a union.

Your Guide to the Employment Standards Act

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0>

Information regarding your rights and obligations under the Employment Standards Act. The guide has information regarding minimum wage, hours of work, termination of employment, public holidays, pregnancy and parental leave, and vacation pay.

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Pro Bono Ontario

<https://www.probonoontario.org/>

Pro Bono Ontario is committed to helping Ontarians with their everyday civil legal needs. If you can't afford a lawyer, call our Free Legal Advice Hotline for up to 30 minutes of free legal advice and assistance. If you need legal advice related to any work-related issue in a non-unionized workplace, we offer free legal advice.

Toll Free: 1-855-255-7256



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Immigration

Guelph- Wellington Immigrant Services

<http://www.is-gw.ca/>

Immigrant Services provides new immigrants to Guelph and Wellington County with many services, including translation and interpretation, settlement services and workshops.

104 Dawson Rd #102, Guelph, ON N1H 1A6

Telephone: 519-836-2222

County of Wellington Settlement Services

<https://www.wellington.ca/en/social-services/settlementservices.aspx>

Settlement services assists newcomers to Canada access community services and adjust to life in their new community. Services are available to Permanent Residents, Convention Refugee, or Live-In Caregiver status in the County of Wellington.

138 Wyndham Street North, Guelph-other locations also available in the County

Telephone: 519-823-7887

Refugee Law Office Hamilton

The office provides summary advice and legal representation to those who financially qualify for their services. They provide summary advice and review of permanent residency applications including those based on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds. The office also provides assistance and representation to those participating in refugee hearings, sponsorship and deportation appeals, and detention reviews.

110 King Street West, Suite 780, Hamilton, L8P 4S6

Telephone: 905-528-0134

Legal Aid Ontario

www.legalaid.on.ca

Telephone: 1-800-668-8258

Government of Ontario

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/citizenship-and-immigration>

This Government of Ontario website provides information about immigrating to Ontario.



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Citizenship and Immigration Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html>

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada Call Centre answers questions on all aspects of immigration to Canada.

Telephone: 1-888-242-2100

Settlement

<https://settlement.org/>

This website, funded by the Government of Ontario, contains information about immigrating to Ontario and advice for newcomers on topics such as finding a job, housing, healthcare, English as a Second Language and many others.

Law Society Referral Service

<https://www.lsuc.on.ca/lrsr/>

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Toll-Free Crisis Line: 1-855-947-5255

Your Legal Rights

www.yourlegalrights.on.ca

Your Legal Rights is a project of CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario) and is funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario. This is a great online resource that offers a variety of information that will help individuals better understand and exercise their legal rights.

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