Almost 20% of Canadians live in rural and remote settings.

There are many unique challenges that make access to legal information and legal services very difficult for people in rural and remote communities.

These are some of the main themes highlighted in a Final Report: The East and Central Region Legal Clinic Transformation Project and a Rural and Remote Access to Justice, A Literature Review.

Characteristics of a Rural and Remote Setting

- Transportation and Infrastructure: Limited access to roads and vehicles.
- Limited access to telecommunications technologies.
- Infrastructure is subject to constant change.
- Limited access to legal services and information.
- Transportation costs and travel time make it difficult to access legal assistance.
- Higher rates of poverty and lower incomes.
- Limited access to self-help services.
- Fewer legal professionals reside in and operate practices in rural and remote settings compared with urban areas.
- Higher rates of distance barriers.
- Perception of limited resources and capacity.
- Fewer available positions and opportunities.
- Lower rates of access to legal services.
- Physical location and/or an inability to reach services.

Socio-Economic Factors

- Limited access to relevant legal information.
- Fewer legal professionals in rural and remote settings.
- Lack of diversity in legal education and language.
- Fewer legal professionals reside in and operate practices in rural and remote settings compared with urban areas.
- Higher rates of distance barriers.
- Physical location and/or an inability to reach services.
- Transportation costs and travel time make it difficult to access legal assistance.
- Higher rates of poverty and lower incomes.
- Limited access to self-help services.
- Fewer available positions and opportunities.
- Higher rates of distance barriers.
- Perception of limited resources and capacity.
- Fewer legal professionals in rural and remote settings.

Barriers to lawfully obtaining legal assistance

- Lack of accessibility and affordability.
- Difficulty accessing legal information.
- Limited access to relevant legal information.
- Fewer legal professionals in rural and remote settings.
- Higher rates of travel time and cost.
- Higher rates of poverty and lower incomes.
- Limited access to self-help services.
- Fewer available positions and opportunities.
- Higher rates of distance barriers.
- Perception of limited resources and capacity.

Community interactions and the flow of information

- Legal awareness.
- Collaboration and inter-professional service delivery.
- Incentives for law students.
- Legal staff.
- Legal paralegals.
- Trained legal personnel.
- Promote legal awareness to improve access.
- Systematic and collaborative approaches.
- Legal awareness.
- Collaboration and inter-professional service delivery.
- Incentives for law students.
- Legal staff.
- Legal paralegals.
- Trained legal personnel.
- Promote legal awareness to improve access.
- Systematic and collaborative approaches.

Facilitating access to legal services and information in rural and remote settings

- Increased access to legal services and information through community hubs.
- Increased legal awareness.
- Systematic and collaborative approaches.
- Legal awareness.
- Collaboration and inter-professional service delivery.
- Incentives for law students.
- Legal staff.
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- Promote legal awareness to improve access.
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- Systematic and collaborative approaches.

Rural and remote communities often have communication technologies and the internet as key tools. But infrastructural and other communication and transportation challenges make it difficult for people in rural and remote communities to access legal information and services.