

RURAL AND REMOTE ACCESS TO JUSTICE



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

Though there is no single, universal definition of rural or remote...

RURAL settings are largely defined by:

Proximity to urban centres

Number of residents per square kilometre

Characteristics of a population eg. age, income, education and language

Dynamics of a population eg. value systems and beliefs



REMOTE settings are usually described in the same way as rural settings

But...

are farther away from services and have less people per square kilometre

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



This is an important issue because....

Nearly 50% of Canadians will experience a legal problem in any given 3-year period

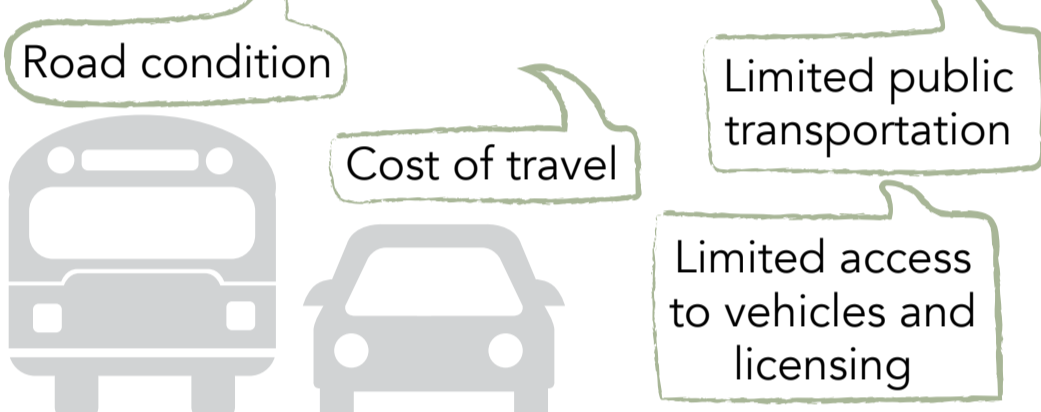
"People in rural [and remote] communities need the same kinds of legal help that people in urban areas need: procedural assistance and legal advice."¹

These are some of the unique access to justice barriers that exist for people in rural and remote communities

GEOGRAPHY

Physical location and/ or an inability to reach services.

Transportation and Infrastructure Challenges



Economies of Scale



SHORTAGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Fewer legal professionals reside in and operate practices in rural and remote settings compared with urban areas

Career and Economic Challenges



Lack of Diversity in Specialization



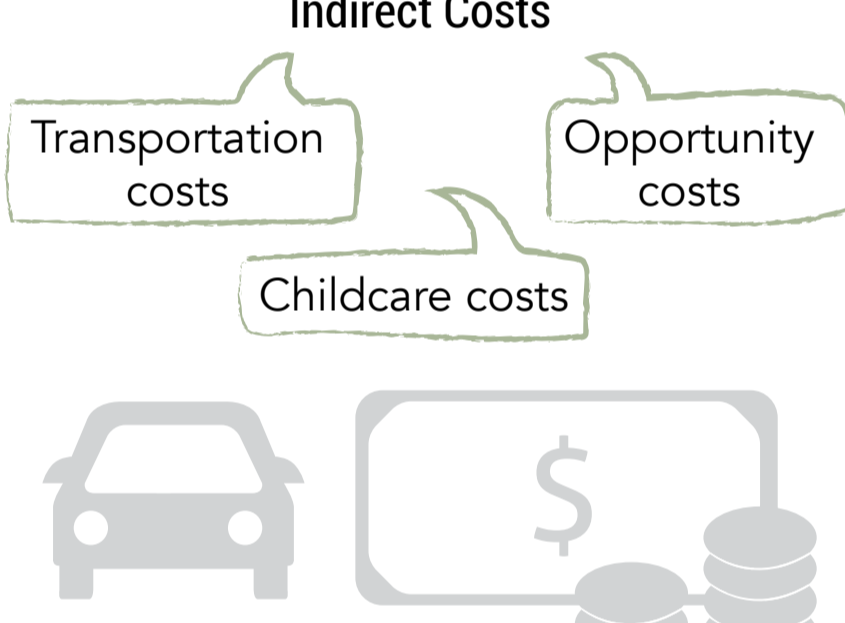
COSTS

High cost and the perceived high cost of accessing legal services

Direct Costs

Costs of obtaining legal representation

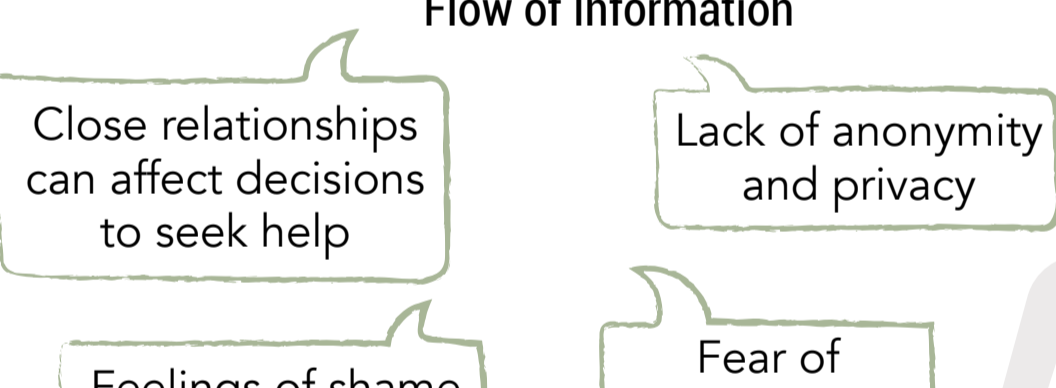
Indirect Costs



SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PLACE

The way that interactions and the actions of residents in rural and remote communities influence help-seeking behavior

Community Interactions and the Flow of Information



Conflicts of Interest

Not enough legal professionals to represent opposing clients with conflicting issues

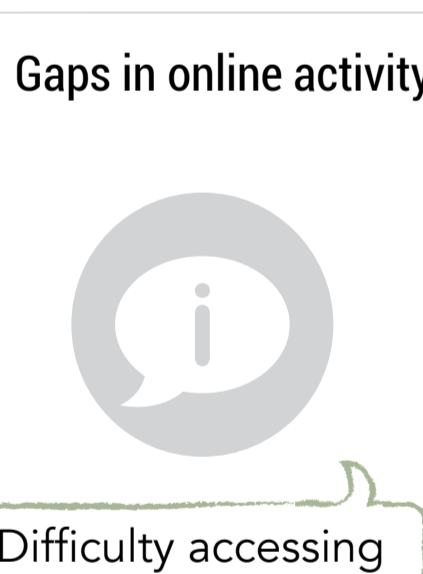
DIGITAL DIVIDE

The level of access that rural and remote communities have to communication technologies and the comfort level using those technologies to obtain info about legal issues

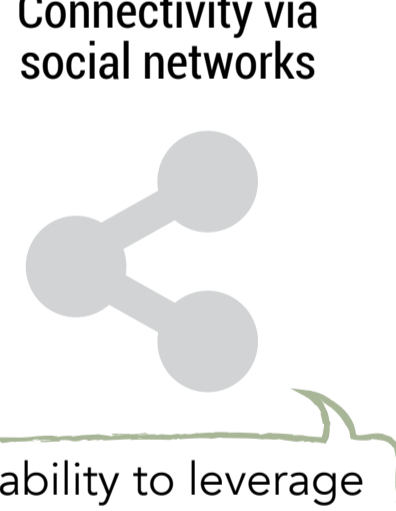
Barriers to physically access services



Gaps in online activity



Connectivity via social networks

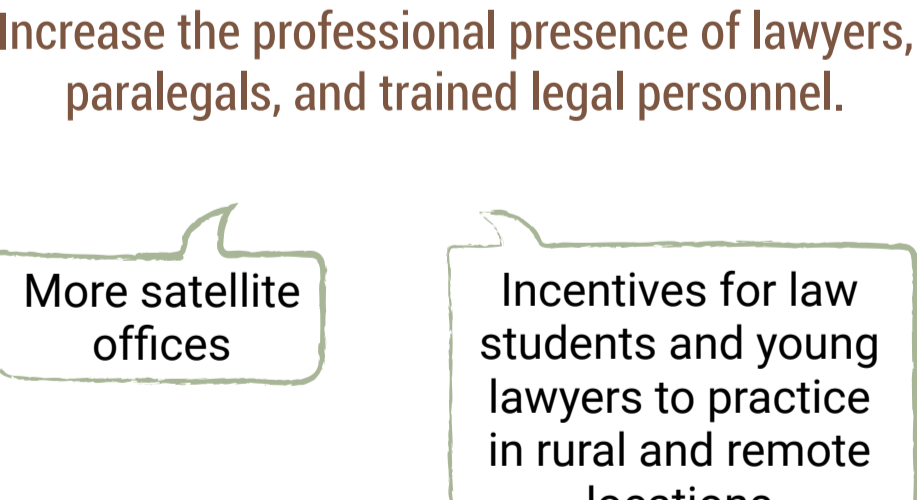


Socio-Economic Factors

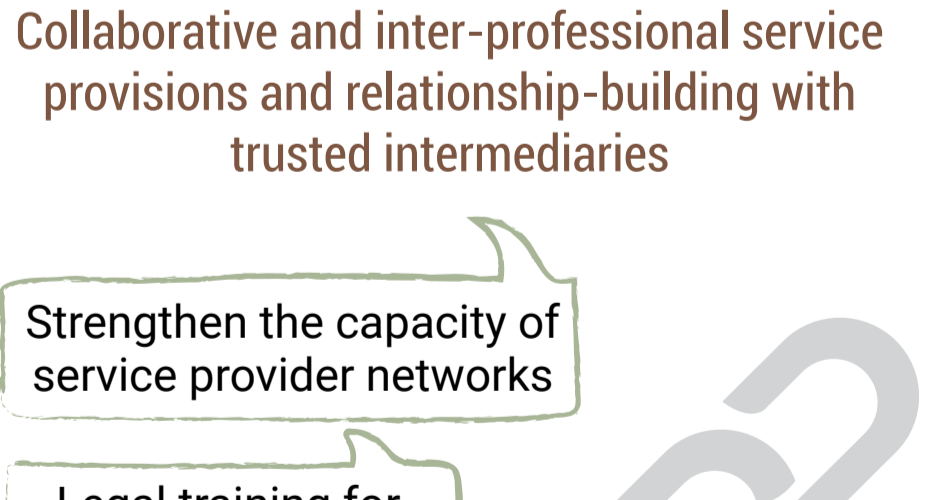


Recommendations for improving access to legal services and information in rural and remote communities

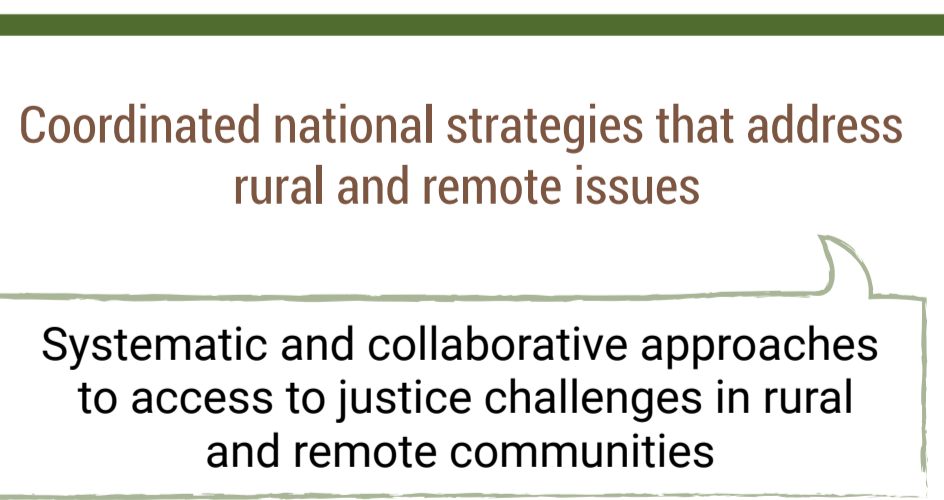
Increase the professional presence of lawyers, paralegals, and trained legal personnel.



Collaborative and inter-professional service provisions and relationship-building with trusted intermediaries



Coordinated national strategies that address rural and remote issues



Programs that harness communication technologies to overcome distance barriers



Promote legal awareness to improve access to legal information



¹ Public Interest Strategies & Communications, Final Report: The East and Central Region Legal Clinic Transformation Project (Toronto: Public Interest Strategies & Communications, Inc., July 2015) at 47 [Public Interest, East and Central Region Legal Transformation Project Report].

These are some of the main themes highlighted in Rural and Remote Access to Justice, A Literature Review. The comprehensive list of topics and the full literature review can be found at www.boldnessproject.ruralandremoteaccessjustice.com

This infographic was prepared by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice for the Rural and Remote Access to Justice Boldness Project.