



# Chapter 7

## *Conclusion*

**As a Canadian**, you acquire the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship. You have many rights that exist because of Canadians' commitment to values such as equality, freedom of expression and a respect for other cultures and ways of living. These values are now part of your commitment to our democratic society.

**As a citizen**, you also have new responsibilities to participate in democratic life. There are many ways to live the good democratic life. Of course, you should vote. But, your day-to-day efforts to influence government decision making and programs that concern you are just as important.

This *Handbook*, has introduced you to:

- ✓ how our system of government works
- ✓ how our laws protect citizens
- ✓ your rights and freedoms
- ✓ a few ways in which you can ensure that your voice is heard, and that your rights are respected

It is not possible to detail all the issues regarding citizenship in our democracy in the *Handbook*. But we hope that it provides you with a basic understanding of Canada's democracy and the importance of your participation in democratic life. We also encourage you to contact a local citizens group, like the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, a government agency or your local librarian if you need more information about citizenship or some other specific issue.

***Canada needs the commitment, effort and enthusiasm of all citizens to make our society even more free and democratic.***

Canadians invite you to join all of us together in contributing to Canada's reputation as one of the most desirable places to live in the world.



*New citizens of Canada*

## Free Legal Services in British Columbia

There are many ways to get free or affordable legal assistance. Not all agencies on this list might be relevant to your particular legal issues. Furthermore, this is not an exhaustive list, and many community agencies have advocacy programs that may be able to assist with legal matters. Given the time constraints of each service, it is best to be as prepared as possible before making contact.

### **LawLINE (Legal Services Society)**

LawLINE is a free service that provides answers to very quick legal questions or more substantive legal advice in certain circumstances. Wait times can be lengthy.

- i** [www.lss.bc.ca/general/lawline.asp](http://www.lss.bc.ca/general/lawline.asp)  
Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 604.408.2172  
Outside Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 1.866.577.2525  
(press 1 for English, 7 for Law Line)

### **Legal Aid**

Legal Aid provides subsidized legal services, ranging from legal

information and advice to legal representation, in the areas of criminal, family and immigration law. Legal aid is limited to criminal charges, mental health or prison issues, serious family problems or serious immigration problems. Applicants must meet financial guidelines to be eligible.

- i** [www.lss.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/](http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/)  
Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 604.408.2172  
Outside Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 1.866.577.2525

### **Lawyer Referral Service**

Lawyer Referral facilitates a 30-minute consultation with a lawyer for \$25 plus taxes. Inform the lawyer you have gone through Lawyer Referral, keep track of the time and determine the hourly rate should you extend the consultation.

- i** [www.cba.org/BC/Initiatives/main/lawyer\\_referral.aspx](http://www.cba.org/BC/Initiatives/main/lawyer_referral.aspx)  
Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 604.687.3221  
Outside Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 1.800.663.1919

### **Western Canada Society to Access Justice**

Access Justice can provide legal advice and assist in the preparation of legal cases. Access Justice operates *pro bono* law clinics at 39 locations throughout Metro Vancouver. Certain locations specialize in different aspects of law.

- i** [www.accessjustice.ca](http://www.accessjustice.ca)  
Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 604.878.7400  
Outside Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 1.877.762.6664

### **Community Legal Assistance Society**

CLAS provides legal assistance to those with low income or physical or mental disabilities. CLAS also provides legal assistance through the UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program.

- i** [www2.povnet.org/about\\_clas](http://www2.povnet.org/about_clas)  
Tel: 604.685.3425

### **University of BC Law Students' Legal Advice Program**

UBC law students provide free legal advice and representation on specific areas of law to people who cannot afford a lawyer at clinics located throughout Metro Vancouver.

LSLAP publishes a comprehensive legal advice manual on its website.

- i** [www.lslap.bc.ca/](http://www.lslap.bc.ca/)  
Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 604.822.5791  
Outside Metro Vancouver  
Tel: 1.888.685.6222

### **University of Victoria Law Centre**

The Law Centre provides advice, assistance and representation to clients who cannot afford a lawyer.

- i** [www.thelawcentre.ca/services.html](http://www.thelawcentre.ca/services.html)  
Tel: 250.385.1221


### **Salvation Army Pro Bono Program**

The Salvation Army provides *pro bono* services to those that are ineligible for legal aid and cannot afford a lawyer. To access services, contact the nearest Salvation Army office.

- i** [www.probono.ca/](http://www.probono.ca/)  
Tel: 604.694.6647


### **Pro Bono Law of B.C.**

PBLBC maintains a roster of lawyers interested in *pro bono* casework. Referrals are done through the Salvation Army Pro Bono Program, Access Justice, LawLINE, the UBC Law Students' Legal Advice Program, the UVic Law Centre, private lawyers and advocates. Contact PBLBC or the organizations listed above for referral requirements.

 <http://probononet.bc.ca/public.php>  
Tel: 604.893.8932


### **B.C. Human Rights Coalition**

The BCHR Coalition assists people with human rights complaints before the Human Rights Tribunal.

 [www.bchrcoalition.org/](http://www.bchrcoalition.org/)  
Tel: 604.689.8474  
Toll free: 1.877.689.8474

### **B.C. Human Rights Tribunal**

The BCHRT is an independent, quasi-judicial body that deals with human rights complaints that arise in British Columbia and are covered by the B.C. Human Rights Code. Resolution can be done through mediation or in a hearing.

 [www.bchrt.bc.ca](http://www.bchrt.bc.ca)  
Tel: 604.775.2000 or  
Toll free in British Columbia:  
1.888.440.8844