



FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE COURT SERVICES LAW INFORMATION CENTRES

VOLUME I – FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Law Information Centres (LInCs) are a new initiative of Alberta Justice to provide information, practical assistance, and referrals to self-represented litigants (SRLs). Alberta Justice required a formative evaluation of its three LInCs and engaged PRA Inc., an independent research firm, to conduct the evaluation. The LInCs had been operating for less than a year prior to this evaluation. The Edmonton and Red Deer LInCs opened on April 2, 2007, followed by the Grande Prairie LInC on June 11, 2007. Conducting the formative evaluation early in the LInCs' operations will provide Alberta Justice with feedback and insight for improving ongoing and future efforts.

The evaluation has the following objectives:

- ▶ to determine the degree to which the LInCs assist users to access information, education, and referrals services
- ▶ to determine the effectiveness of the LInC service delivery model(s) including the collaborative and consultative structure to which government and community partners contribute
- ▶ to identify effective practices and/or any barriers in the implementation of the project that can inform future program implementation
- ▶ to determine the degree to which the LInCs have assisted in enhancing efficiencies in the court system.

Services and resources provided by the LInCs

The three LInC offices were established in the courthouses at each location and provide SRLs with access to resources (computers, printers, etc.) and services to assist them with their legal issue. Services provided include assistance with legal information (but not legal advice), court forms, and appropriate referrals to other service providers. As well, the LInC has a formal partnership with the Alberta Law Line (ALL) which provides LInC clients with phone access to the ALL services.

These activities are expected to assist in meeting the LInC objectives, which are to improve access to justice for individuals acting on their own behalf; increase SRLs' access to appropriate information that will help them prior to, during, and after their day in court; reduce the amount of time needed to deal with SRL cases in court; and encourage ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources.

The LInCs provide SRLs with in-person assistance and will also respond to telephone and email enquiries. The LInCs in Edmonton and Red Deer assist SRLs with civil and criminal matters; Grande Prairie does not have a Family Law Information Centre (FLIC), and therefore also provides services for family matters.

The Edmonton LInC serves the metropolitan Edmonton area; the Red Deer LInC serves Red Deer and region, including Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin; and the Grande Prairie LInC serves Grande Prairie and region, including High Level, Peace River, High Prairie, and Hinton.

Methodology

The evaluation used several lines of evidence as follows:

- ▶ **Site visits to the 3 LInCs.** Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and Red Deer were each visited to conduct stakeholder interviews as well as exit interviews with clients.
 - A total of 48 stakeholder interviews were conducted involving 66 stakeholders (some interviews were conducted by phone after the site visits). Stakeholders interviewed included LInC staff and management; members of the judiciary and masters; personnel from the clerks office for each of Court of Queen’s Bench, Provincial Court, and Court of Appeal; court managers; other Alberta Justice personnel such as from Family Justice services, civil mediation, and the law library; as well as representatives of community organizations and other government departments.
 - A total of 28 exit interviews were conducted with LInC clients immediately after they had visited the LInC to obtain their perspective on the assistance they received.
- ▶ **Review of intake data.** The LInC collects intake data for clients receiving 15 minutes or more of assistance, and provided PRA with 2,267 records (up to early January 2008) of this data with all personal information removed. This information was used to profile the LInC.
- ▶ **Client survey.** A telephone survey was conducted of LInC clients that had agreed to be contacted for survey purposes. A total of 200 responses were obtained, for a 54% response rate.
- ▶ **Survey of community organizations and other government departments.** A mailout survey of other service providers was conducted to gain their perspective of the LInC and to obtain information on their relationship with the LInC. A total of 261 surveys were mailed out and 120 were returned, for a response rate of 46%.

Conclusions and recommendations

Objective 1: The degree to which the LInCs assist users to access information, education, and referrals services

The LInCs are addressing the needs of the increasing number of litigants coming to court without legal representation by providing them with a coordinated service approach where SRLs can obtain the information or referrals they need. Plus, clients can make use of a number of LInC resources while working towards resolving their legal issues.

Assistance provided. The evaluation found that clients are receiving a wide range of assistance in the key areas where SRLs need help, such as information on court procedures, preparing for court, alternatives to court, referrals to other agencies that can assist the SRL, and in particular, help with accessing, completing, and filing court forms. Stakeholders and clients expressed satisfaction that SRLs are getting a better understanding of their legal issue and what they need to do to resolve their issue.

Referrals provided. The evaluation found that referrals given to LInC clients are not wide ranging but targeted. The LInC's ability to make referrals to other organizations is expected to grow as the staff gain knowledge of other resources available. The LInC is proactive in this regard, with coordinators making efforts to visit organizations to discuss LInC services or to learn about the services provided by these organizations.

The LInC has established a close relationship with the ALL, giving LInC clients that qualify direct access to legal advice. However, the LInC may not be taking full advantage of this referral resource, given the relatively low number of clients referred to the ALL, particularly in Red Deer.

There still appears to be some barriers preventing SRLs from contacting other agencies that could assist them, given the number of client survey respondents that did not contact the referral given to them by the LInC. As well, the LInC may need to take steps to ensure that the referrals made are appropriate as the client survey findings indicates that some clients who did contact the referral did not find it helpful. However, stakeholders interviewed believed that any referrals made to them by the LInC had been appropriate.

Recommendations:

- ▶ The LInCs should review their partnership with the ALL to assess the low usage of ALL services, and whether it is associated with the ALL's financial guidelines, a lack of private areas at the LInC for calling the ALL, or other factors.
- ▶ Given that respondents to the client survey do not appear to be taking full advantage of the referrals recommended to them, the LInC should look for ways to obtain further client input on the use and helpfulness of referrals given to them. This could be in the form of client satisfaction surveys or follow-up surveys.

Objective 2: The effectiveness of the LInC service delivery model(s) including the collaborative and consultative structure to which government and community partners contribute

Management structure. The evaluation found that the dual management structure of the LInC, whereby the Grande Prairie and Red Deer coordinators report to both the LInC manager and the courthouse manager, currently works well. Continued operational success of the dual management structure depends upon open and frequent communication between the LInC manager and other LInC staff and courthouse managers. This will become increasingly important as the LInC expands into other areas of Alberta. The dual management structure could be strengthened by a comprehensive set of management policies, as the only formal documentation available that articulates the responsibilities of the LInC manager and the court manager are the broad-based guidelines provided in the LInC’s Service Vision and Program Design.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The LInC should consider developing and implementing a comprehensive set of management policies that would provide the LInC manager and courthouse manager with clear guidelines on their individual responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities of LInC staff. The evaluation found that LInC staff have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities, and that they collaborate and share their expertise between LInC offices.

The one concern expressed by several stakeholders is the risk of coordinators providing legal advice as opposed to legal information, and that the LInC needs to better define the coordinators’ role and tasks as well as establish some mechanisms for quality control. The LInC has made some consideration of this, in that a requirement of the coordinator position is extensive court experience and knowledge of providing legal information versus legal advice.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The LInC should consider taking steps to ensure that staff are not providing legal advice, given the possible consequences. Steps could include monitoring of client files or providing staff with training and guidelines on legal information versus legal advice. Another option is providing the LInC with access to a lawyer to assist clients that need legal advice. This could be in the form of a one-time assessment or a partnership developed for consulting on a longer term basis.

Collaborative efforts and partnerships. For a relatively new service, the LInC has established connections with a number of organizations and has developed strong relationships with organizations that can provide clients with some type of legal advice or legal representation. Other than the ALL, relationships are informal, and mainly involve making referrals to and from these organizations. The evaluation found, however, that there are a number of service providers that have not heard of the LInC, or that do not currently have a relationship with the LInC but are interested in pursuing one. This indicates an opportunity for the LInC for developing further linkages with other organizations.

The LInC has not yet made considerable progress towards one of its objectives, which is to encourage ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources. At this point, given the time and efforts required of implementing the LInCs and that the LInC was without a manager for several months, efforts to date appear to have been mainly to develop the relations with other service providers for the purpose of referrals.

Although the LInC and the FLIC have developed strong relationships in Edmonton and Red Deer, and make referrals to each other, there is some uncertainty about the difference between the services provided by each of these organizations. Further, the evaluation found that all the LInC offices handle a significant number of family law matters, although only the Grande Prairie LInC is formally mandated to assist with family law issues, as no FLIC office exists in Grande Prairie. There may be some potential to develop some efficiencies and integration of these two similar services. As well, several stakeholders identified a need to consider how to integrate the services generally provided to SRLs to make them more efficient and accessible.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Now that the LInC has re-established a LInC manager, they should continue efforts towards achieving the objective of encouraging ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources. To assist in these efforts, the LInC may want to delineate the roles of the LInC manager and the LInC coordinators in fostering relations. For example, the LInC manager could focus on the relations among justice service providers, and the coordinators could focus on developing relations between the LInC and other service providers.
- ▶ It may be useful to conduct an assessment of the FLIC and the LInC services, determining if duplications exist or if there are ways to integrate the services and/or capture efficiencies for both Alberta Justice as well as for SRLs. For example, a suggestion was to combine the two small FLIC and LInC offices in Red Deer and make more efficient use of their combined resources. This could also be a first step in the integration of the SRL services that some stakeholders are recommending.

Objective 3: Identifying effective practices and/or any barriers in the implementation of the project that can inform future program implementation

LInC staffing and training of staff. Alberta Justice has effectively identified the needed skill set for the coordinator positions and has hired employees with the required skills. Qualities identified as necessary for the coordinator position include knowledge of the court process, a willingness to find the information clients require, an outgoing personality, and patience and empathy to listen to clients' concerns and give them the assistance they need. Stakeholders believe the current coordinators all possess these qualities, with all the coordinators having had experience as judicial clerks, and most having 10 years or more of such experience.

However, given the range of issues and clients that coordinators are dealing with, coordinators require knowledge on all the courts, and stakeholders say that even coordinators with court clerk experience have a large learning curve. Professional development opportunities, therefore, are important but challenging to provide and still keep the LInCs open, given that each LInC is

staffed by, at most, two coordinators. Because the LInC is an on-demand service located at the courthouse, the expectation by both clients and other service providers, however, is that the LInCs will be open and available during the same hours as other courthouse services. In addition, as the demand for LInC services are expected to increase, this will further challenge the LInCs' ability to provide staff with professional development opportunities and still keep the LInCs open.

Recommendations:

- ▶ The LInC should continue making ongoing professional development available to staff.
- ▶ As the demand for LInC services grows, the LInC will have to implement strategies for providing professional development opportunities while keeping services open to clients.

Accessibility of the LInC. A major challenge that all LInCs appeared to have experienced during their establishment is in finding the necessary space requirements in courthouses where space is limited. This has created some accessibility issues. Privacy and space is an issue, particularly for the Red Deer LInC, which is a small one-room office that also serves as an information kiosk. Further, neither the Red Deer nor Grande Prairie LInCs have private areas designated for clients to call the ALL. While the Edmonton LInC did have privacy issues, these have been resolved with the addition of a second interview room; Red Deer is apparently considering expansion options.

While some stakeholders said that at times there can be long wait times for clients at the Edmonton LInC, clients themselves are generally positive about their wait times. Wait times do not appear to be an accessibility issue at the Red Deer or Grande Prairie LInCs; however, if the demand for services increases, as is expected, they may also experience similar wait times.

Whether there is a segment of the population that may be in need of the LInC, but for various reasons is facing barriers in accessing the services, is unknown. Certain populations may be reluctant to use the LInC because they are intimidated by the courthouse location and/or the security system where it exists.

The evaluation found that other accessibility issues, such as meeting the needs of persons with disabilities or those whose first language is not English, do not appear to be an issue at present. However, given the increasing population of Alberta, there may be a need to provide some type of interpretation services.

The evaluation found that the LInCs experienced a number of occasions over this first year of operation when they were closed, particularly the Grande Prairie LInC. Because the LInCs are staffed by one to two coordinators they must close if both the coordinators are unavailable (for example, if they are all on training, at meetings, or on holidays), and services to SRLs are disrupted. Although LInC staff appear to place priority on keeping the LInCs open, this disruption of service may be unavoidable at the present staffing levels, while also ensuring that staff are provided with adequate training opportunities.

Recommendations:

- ▶ The LInC should work with organizations to determine if there are certain populations that are not accessing the LInC and to assess the barriers to access and potential solutions for overcoming these barriers. One suggestion made by several stakeholders is the possibility of satellite or mobile LInCs. Given that the Red Deer LInC is already travelling to circuit points within its catchment area, mobile LInCs are a possibility; however, staffing these units could be an issue.
- ▶ There are proactive steps the LInC could take with respect to assisting SRLs with special needs. For clients who have difficulties with English, the LInC could contract with an interpretation service such as CanTalk.
- ▶ In current sites, and as expansion occurs, the LInC needs to ensure that the physical space provides appropriate privacy for clients receiving assistance from LInC staff as well as those clients calling the ALL.

Communication strategy. The LInC implemented an effective communication strategy to other members of the justice system and community organizations. The evaluation found numerous ways in which the LInC communicated their services, both at the implementation phase by engaging NGOs in this process, and through continued communication with NGOs and with other areas of Alberta Justice. As noted, there are still opportunities for promoting the LInC, given the number of organizations that have not heard it.

The LInC has not implemented an ongoing communication strategy to the public after its initial efforts which primarily involved media attention around official openings. LInC clients affirmed that they mainly found out about the LInC through someone at the courthouse. While some stakeholders believe that the LInC could not handle the increased traffic that advertisement to the public would bring, others emphasize that it is important to inform the public of the availability of these services. Given that the LInCs in Red Deer and Grande Prairie serve large areas outside of their immediate centres and do not have the same concerns as the Edmonton LInC about operating at capacity, these areas could benefit from promotional efforts to ensure that organizations and potential clients are aware of the services and their accessibility by telephone or email.

Organizations use various methods for promoting their services, such as signage, brochures, and websites. However, the LInC currently provides minimal information on their website. And the evaluation found there are opportunities for the LInC to increase the visibility of its signage, as well as to improve its brochures/pamphlets.

Recommendations:

- ▶ The LInC should consider developing and implementing an ongoing strategy to promote its service to the public.
- ▶ As part of its promotional efforts, the LInC could look at ways to augment its promotional materials. This could include ways to improve its website and access to the

website, its signage, and its brochures (particularly including contact information in the brochures).

Collection of LInC intake data. Alberta Justice and the LInC took proactive steps to put an intake data collection strategy in place at the outset of the LInCs. However, the current data collection process will not support ongoing evaluation of the LInCs.

The data collection strategy has been an evolving process and has been modified based on client input (data collection moved from a long to a short form). In addition, staff time is limited and the focus is on client service. As a result, data collection is not systematic and numerous intake records are incomplete. This is further compounded by the fact that the current database records a large proportion of the data entry on a “Yes” or “No” basis, and unentered data defaults as a “No,” leading to uncertainty as to whether a “No” answer is actually a “no response”. In addition, some data entry fields do not have standardized data entry methods, making it difficult to aggregate (for example, the city of residence such as Edmonton could be spelled and entered in a number of ways).

There are also some data being collected that the LInC is not fully utilizing. For example, visits to the LInC that are under 15 minutes in duration comprise 80% of total client assists, but data on these visits are recorded either in Word documents or handwritten logs and are not being used.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The LInC’s data collection process should be evaluated and refined. The LInC should conduct a complete review of the data it is collecting, how it is collecting it, and how it is housing and aggregating the data for each in-person assist of over 15 minutes, in-person assists of under 15 minutes, telephone assists, and email assists. The data should be collected in a formalized manner that is least intrusive to the client, is easily collected and entered by the coordinators, and can easily be aggregated. Further, steps should be taken to ensure data is collected and entered consistently between all sites.

Objective 4: The degree to which the LInCs have assisted in enhancing efficiencies in the court system

Access to Justice. The evaluation found that the LInCs are providing SRLs with greater access to justice in that SRLs are given access to resources they might not otherwise have, they are obtaining a better understanding of the justice process, and they are receiving referrals to other services that can assist them. Clients and other stakeholders agree that the LInC is enhancing the SRLs’ experience with the court process, and is giving them a better understanding of what they have to do to resolve their issues. LInC clients that have resolved their legal issues credit the LInC for helping them reach resolution, and which, in some cases, does not require going to court.

Impact on the judicial counters. The LInC is having an impact on the judicial counters. Impacts noticed by some clerks include that SRLs seem happier, the court forms are more complete, the filing process is expedited, clerks have more time to assist other members of the public, and other members of the public waiting for assistance are less frustrated because their wait times are

reduced. Clients confirm that the LInC gave them a better understanding of how to complete their court forms.

As well, the kiosk in Edmonton and the kiosk component of the LInC in Red Deer are helpful additions to the courthouses in that SRLs can make a first stop at the kiosks, and either be directed to other appropriate areas of the courthouse, to other agencies, or into the LInC for more detailed assistance.

Impact on the court process. Most stakeholders are not in a position to know if the LInC services have impacted the amount of court time required to hear SRLs' cases. The judiciary themselves are, for the most part, not in a position to know if an SRL has used the LInC, as they cannot ask questions that would place them at risk of losing their impartiality. A few of the judiciary stakeholders have observed that some SRLs are coming to court with some understanding of the process, with their forms more complete, and are better organized. Clients that had represented themselves in court believed they had been better able to represent themselves as a result of the assistance from the LInC. Given that the LInCs are still relatively new, it may be too soon for a noticeable impact to be observed in the courts, or to attribute the preparedness of SRLs to the LInC. Plus, the court process is complex, particularly for Court of Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal, and the public in general is often nervous about the court process and can find it confusing and difficult even with the assistance provided by the LInC.

Recommendations:

- ▶ The LInC may want to consider implementing a means of obtaining regular follow-up feedback from other Alberta Justice staff over the next few years to assist in assessing the impact of the LInC on the court system.
- ▶ Alberta Justice should conduct a review of the LInC logic model produced for the evaluation in order to formulate a performance measurement strategy for assessing outcomes, and to identify indicators and data sources for measuring outcomes.

1.0 Introduction

Alberta Justice requires a formative evaluation of its three Law Information Centres (LInCs) operating in Edmonton, Grand Prairie, and Red Deer, and has engaged PRA Inc., an independent research firm, to conduct the evaluation. The LInCs are a new initiative of Alberta Justice to provide information, practical assistance, and referrals to self-represented litigants (SRLs). The Edmonton and Red Deer LInCs opened on April 2, 2007, followed by the Grande Prairie LInC on June 11, 2007. Conducting the formative evaluation early in the LInCs' operations will provide Alberta Justice with feedback and insight for improving ongoing and future efforts. The formative evaluation consists of a review of LInC intake data, site visits to each of the three LInC offices, a survey of LInC clients, and a survey of community organizations and other government departments.

The evaluation has the following objectives:¹

- ▶ to determine the degree to which the LInCs assist users to access information, education, and referrals services
- ▶ to determine the effectiveness of the LInC service delivery model(s) including the collaborative and consultative structure to which government and community partners contribute
- ▶ to identify effective practices and/or any barriers in the implementation of the project that can inform future program implementation
- ▶ to determine the degree to which the LInCs have assisted in enhancing efficiencies in the court system.

¹ RFP, p. 5.

2.0 Background on the LInCs

An SRL Advisory Committee established by Alberta Justice in 2005 identified a lack of coordinated services for SRLs, as well as a need to gain a better understanding of what services are available to assist SRLs. This resulted in Alberta Justice consulting with non-government organizations (NGOs) on conducting a mapping process to identify current services and current gaps in service. The Canadian Forum on Civil Justice applied for and received funding on behalf of the NGOs to conduct the Mapping Project that addressed the service gaps for SRLs in Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and Red Deer.² The study compared existing services in each region with unmet needs articulated by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.³ Overall, the study found a number of gaps, including a need for a centralized place for SRLs to get legal and non-legal information, and a need for increased stakeholder collaboration in service delivery.

LInC offices were established in response to the findings of the Mapping Project. The Edmonton and Red Deer LInC offices were launched on April 2, 2007, and the Grande Prairie office was launched on June 11, 2007. The LInCs are located within the courthouses at each location and provide SRLs with:

- ▶ legal information (but not legal advice) about the justice process, including information on court procedures, as well as information on legal advice options and alternatives to court
- ▶ assistance with accessing and preparing court forms, but not assistance on how to phrase responses
- ▶ appropriate referrals to other agencies that could provide assistance to the SRL, including agencies that could assist with legal advice.⁴

The LInCs in Edmonton and Red Deer assist SRLs with civil and criminal matters; SRLs with family matters are referred to the Family Law Information Centres (FLIC), located at the courthouses in both locations. Grande Prairie does not have a FLIC office, and therefore the LInC also provides services for family matters.

The areas served by the three LInC sites include:

- ▶ Edmonton – Edmonton metropolitan area
- ▶ Red Deer – Red Deer and region, including Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin
- ▶ Grande Prairie – Grande Prairie and region, including High Level, Peace River, High Prairie, and Hinton.

² Armstrong, C. (2007, July 12). *Service Vision and Program Design for the Law Information Centres (LInC) in Edmonton and Red Deer*. Court Services Division, Strategic Initiatives Branch. pp.4-5.

³ Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. (2007). *Alberta Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project*. Retrieved September 11, 2007, from <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2007/mapping-en.pdf>.

⁴ Armstrong, op.cit., p. 6.

The LInCs provide SRLs with in-person assistance at the courthouse offices, and at the Red Deer circuit points on specified days. The Grande Prairie LInC does not offer in-person assistance outside of Grande Prairie. SRLs can also receive assistance through telephone and email enquiries. LInC offices provide SRLs with access to various resources, including:

- ▶ computers for accessing information and for research purposes
- ▶ printers and faxes
- ▶ brochures and pamphlets
- ▶ access to the law library resources
- ▶ a direct line to the Alberta Law Line for free legal advice to clients within certain financial eligibility guidelines.

These activities are expected to assist in meeting the LInC objectives, which are to:⁵

- ▶ improve access to justice for individuals acting on their own behalf
- ▶ increase SRLs' access to appropriate information that will help them prior to, during, and after their day in court
- ▶ reduce the amount of time needed to deal with SRL cases in court
- ▶ encourage ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources.

⁵ RFP, p. 6.

3.0 Methodology for the formative evaluation

The formative evaluation is guided by an evaluation framework, which began with the development of a logic model for the LInCs. Both the evaluation framework and logic model are provided in Appendix A. The methodology included stakeholder interviews, exit interviews with LInC clients, a review of LInC intake data, a survey of LInC clients, and a survey of community organizations and other government departments. Site visits were conducted at each of the Edmonton, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie LInCs to observe the LInCs and to conduct the exit interviews and some of the stakeholder interviews.

Stakeholder interviews. Alberta Justice provided a list of potential interviewees and made initial contact to verify their willingness to participate. As the target was to interview approximately 15 stakeholders per site, PRA compiled the interview list from the initial list of potential interviewees and in consultation with Alberta Justice. This included adding several additional community organizations, in order to interview 4-5 community organizations per site.

PRA conducted 48 stakeholder interviews involving 66 interviewees. These include three exploratory interviews that were conducted early in the evaluation to assist with developing evaluation instruments. Table 1 summarizes the groups interviewed and the number of stakeholders interviewed.

	Edmonton	Grande Prairie and area	Red Deer and area	Total
LInC staff (including one former staff)	4	1	2	7
Judiciary and Masters	4	2	2	8
Alberta Justice clerks office:				
Court of Queen's Bench	7	1	1	9
Provincial Court	5	2	2	9
Court of Appeal	2			2
Court managers		3	1	4
Other Alberta Justice personnel	5	2	2	9
Community organizations and other government departments	10	5	3	18
Total stakeholders interviewed	37	16	13	66
Total interviews	24	14	10	48

Note: One Edmonton interview and one Grande Prairie interview were conducted after the Interim reports were prepared.

After the initial contact by Alberta Justice, PRA contacted stakeholders by telephone or email, asking them to take part in the interview, and scheduled interviews. PRA emailed stakeholders an introductory letter from Alberta Justice explaining the evaluation and PRA's part in the study. Stakeholders were also sent an interview guide before their scheduled interview to give them an opportunity to review the questions and prepare their responses. The majority of the interviews were conducted in-person during site visits to Edmonton, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie, and the remaining interviews were conducted by phone. Site visits took place in February as follows:

- ▶ Edmonton – February 4 to 6, 2008
- ▶ Grande Prairie – February 12 to 15, 2008
- ▶ Red Deer – February 2 to 14, 2008

Interviews were audio-taped when permitted by the interviewees. Interview guides were designed in consultation with Alberta Justice, and are provided in Appendix B. Slight modifications were made between guides for LInC staff and for external stakeholders.

Exit interviews. The LInC collects data on clients receiving assistance, keeping detailed intake data on clients receiving 15 minutes or more of in-person assistance. During the site visits to each of the LInCs, PRA conducted exit interviews with LInC clients receiving 15 minutes of assistance or more. Exit interviews were conducted after the client had completed their visit to the LInC to gain their immediate perspective on the assistance received. The LInC coordinators explained the purpose of the interview to the clients and asked them to participate. We did not observe clients leave any of the sites without receiving assistance, other than several clients that arrived just after the LInC closed and were told to return the next day; those few clients who arrived after closing were not interviewed at that time.

PRA developed exit interview guides in consultation with Alberta Justice. Exit interview guides are also given in Appendix B. A total of 28 exit interviews were conducted, with the distribution by site given in Table 2. Because of the small number of exit interviews conducted, exit interview findings are given in aggregate in the report. The full tables for the exit interviews, showing the findings by site are provided as Appendix C.

Table 2: Exit interviews conducted with LInC clients receiving 15 minutes or more of in-person assistance	
	Exit interviews conducted
Edmonton	18
Grande Prairie	6
Red Deer	4
Total	28

Review of intake data. The LInCs collect a variety of intake data from clients. Clients receiving 15 minutes of assistance or more are asked to sign an intake form consenting to the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information for research purposes. Initially, clients were asked to provide a variety of personal information, and LInC staff would also input information on the services received. However, as a result of concerns by clients of the amount of information requested, this procedure was modified as of October 2007 to ask clients to complete only a short intake sheet with personal contact information, date of birth, marital status, whether they had visited the LInC before, and how they found out about the LInC. Additional information is completed by LInC staff.

PRA received intake data for all LInC sites from the date of opening to January 9, 2008. Data was received as an Excel spreadsheet with all personal information (name, phone number, address, email address) removed. A total of 2,267 records are included in the intake data analysis; 59% of the records are from Edmonton, 26% are from Red Deer (including circuit sites), and 15% are from Grande Prairie (Table 3). Intake data are summarized to provide a profile of LInC clients, and are included as tables throughout the document. Appendix D provides additional intake data tables.

Table 3: LInC intake records by site		
	Number of records	Percent of total
Edmonton	1,333	59%
Grande Prairie	337	15%
Red Deer area		
Red Deer	509	22%
Ponoka	6	<1%
Rocky Mountain House	35	2%
Stettler	7	<1%
Wetaskiwin	34	1%
Total Red Deer area	591	26%
Location unknown	6	<1%
Total	2,267	100%

After the change to the short form intake sheet for clients, coordinators attempt to collect as much of this information as they can over the course of the interview. Additional information collected is written by hand on the short intake sheet and entered into the database at a later time. However, coordinators noted that they tend not to collect the personal information, as clients are mainly concerned with discussing and finding information on their legal issue, and some are not willing to share personal information. As a result, and as can be seen by data provided in Appendix D, there is a high proportion of records where the data is not recorded. Further, a number of the fields are recorded in the database as either “Yes” or “No” answers, and “No” is the default answer (i.e., if an answer is not recorded it defaults to “No”). Therefore, for all of the data based on Yes/No we cannot be certain whether “No” answers are based on hard entries or on the default.

The LInC also collects data on visits of under 15 minutes, telephone enquiries, and email enquiries:

- ▶ Total number of visits under 15 minutes are tracked and recorded into a spreadsheet. Some details on these enquiries are recorded (either in a Word document or in a written log), such as client’s issue, where they are referred to, etc. Edmonton and Red Deer have been collecting details of short visits since April 2007. Until recently, Grande Prairie was only recording the number of client visits.
- ▶ Information kept on telephone enquiries include their name, telephone number, and legal issue. The information is recorded in a written log book, and daily totals are recorded in a spreadsheet.
- ▶ Email enquiries are kept on the LInC email website, and totals are recorded in a spreadsheet.

Client survey. PRA conducted a telephone survey with LInC clients who had received 15 minutes or more of in-person assistance. When LInC clients receiving 15 minutes of assistance are asked to sign an intake form, they are also asked if they would be willing to be contacted to participate in a survey on the LInC. Alberta Justice provided PRA with contact information for those clients who agreed to be contacted, including clients’ names and phone numbers, as well as their city of residence, the LInC at which they received assistance from, and their date of visit to the LInC. No other personal information was provided, such as their addresses, their reasons for visiting the LInC, or the assistance they received from the LInC.

PRA drafted a survey questionnaire in consultation with Alberta Justice. The questionnaire was based on the Research Framework, asking respondents about the information and assistance they received from the LInC. The survey also asked for their perspective on a number of features of the LInC, such as how helpful the assistance was for resolving their legal issue, the accessibility of the LInC, and their satisfaction with the services and assistance received. The questionnaire is also provided in Appendix B. Alberta Justice provided PRA with a sample of 792 records of clients that agreed to be contacted. Correcting for missing information (names or phone numbers) and duplicates left a useable sample of 635 clients. The survey was conducted by telephone over the month of February 2008. Only adult clients (18 years of age or older) were included in the survey.

Table 4 gives the survey call record, indicating a 54% response rate. A total of 200 clients participated in the survey.

Table 4: Call record for client survey		
Outcome	Survey	
	n	%
A Total numbers attempted	635	100%
1. Not in service/Business line/Fax	116	18%
Remaining	519	82%
B Total eligible numbers	519	100%
2. Busy/Answering machines/No answer/language/illness/incapacity	177	34%
Remaining	342	66%
C Total asked	342	100%
3. Refusals	61	18%
Remaining	281	82%
D Co-operative contacts	281	100%
4. Non-qualified	81	29%
5. Completed interviews	200	71%
Refusal rate = 4/C	61/342	18%
Response rate (D/B)	281/519	54%

Of the 200 survey respondents, 67% had visited the Edmonton LInC, 18% the Grande Prairie LInC, 13% the Red Deer LInC, and 3% the Rocky Mountain House circuit point (see Table 5). The distribution of responses according to the LInC site visited differs somewhat from the intake records (as shown in Table 3), with Edmonton clients showing a higher representation and Red Deer clients a lower representation in the survey responses than shown by the distribution of the intake records. However, the survey response distribution by LInC site visited is similar to the useable sample distribution (see Table 5).

Table 5: Client survey – distribution of useable survey sample and survey respondents by LInC site visited

	Useable sample		Respondents	
	Number of clients	Percent of sample	Number of clients	Percent of responses
Edmonton	410	65%	133	67%
Grande Prairie	125	20%	36	18%
Red Deer site	85	13%	26	13%
Rocky Mountain House circuit	11	2%	5	3%
Stettler circuit	1	<1%	-	-
Wetaskiwin circuit	3	<1%	-	-
Total	635		200	

Totals may sum to more than 100% due to rounding.

Responses from the Rocky Mountain House circuit are reported with the Red Deer responses. Also, because of the small number of responses from Grande Prairie and Red Deer, when reporting these results within the text, both the number (the “n” size) and percent of responses are given, and caution should be used when interpreting results. Client survey results are presented throughout the report, and additional tables are given in Appendix E.

Survey of community organizations and other government departments. PRA conducted a mailout survey of community organizations and other government departments to obtain their perspectives of the LInCs. In consultation with Alberta Justice, PRA drafted a list of community organizations and other government departments for each of the LInC sites, as well as their service area, using a variety of sources including:

- ▶ The list of organizations and services listed in the SRL Mapping Project⁶
- ▶ Alberta Justice lists of organizations involved in the SRL Advisory Committee and organizations that had taken part in meetings during the implementation of the LInCs
- ▶ Names of Alberta community organizations and service-based government departments that PRA had previously compiled
- ▶ Searches of community websites for names of relevant service-based organizations.

⁶ Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. (2007). *Alberta Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project*. Retrieved September 11, 2007, from <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2007/mapping-en.pdf>.

PRA drafted a survey questionnaire (Appendix B) in consultation with Alberta Justice. The questionnaire was also based on the Research Framework, asking respondents about their organization’s relationship with the LInC, their clients’ awareness and use of the LInC, and their perspective on the accessibility and effectiveness of the LInC.

A total of 261 questionnaires were mailed out. To encourage responses, PRA conducted follow-up telephone reminders and gave respondents the option of completing the survey over the phone. A total of 120 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 46% (see Table 6). The distribution of questionnaire returns by respondent location is similar to that of the mailout distribution. The response rate for Red Deer (37%) is not quite as high as the response rates for Edmonton and Grande Prairie.

Location	Survey mailout		Survey response		
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Percent response
Edmonton	117	45%	57	48%	49%
Grande Prairie area	79	30%	36	30%	46%
Red Deer area	65	25%	24	20%	37%
Unknown*	-	-	3	3%	-
Total	261	100%	120	100%	46%

Percent distribution totals may sum to more than 100% due to rounding.
*Three surveys returned by mail could not be identified by location.

Because the survey was attempting to gather information from a broad range of organizations on their awareness of the LInC, their relationship with the LInC, and how helpful the LInC is to their clients, there were several points in the survey where respondents could stop if the remaining questions did not apply to them. For this reason the number of eligible respondents is not the same for every question, as shown in the Table 7.

Criteria and point at which respondents ended the survey	Number of respondents
Number of responses	120
Respondents who stopped after indicating their clients do not have legal issues (question 3)	5
Eligible respondents after Question 3	115
Respondents who stopped after indicating they had not heard of the LInC (question 4)	42
Eligible respondents after question 4	73
Respondents who stopped after indicating they currently have no relationship or contact with the LInC and do not make or receive referrals from the LInC (questions 8 and 9)	40
Eligible respondents after questions 8 and 9	33

Also, as with the client survey, when the number of eligible responses is small, both the number (the “n” size) and percent of responses are given in any descriptive reporting, and caution should be used when interpreting results. Survey results are given throughout the report, with additional tables provided in Appendix F.

4.0 Description of the LInCs

4.1 Services and resources provided

Each of the three LInCs are located at their site's courthouse and assist clients by explaining court procedures, finding court forms, assisting with forms (without telling clients what to put in their forms), providing information about legal advice options and alternatives to court, giving referrals, and offering general legal information.

Staff provide assistance to clients in person, by telephone, and by email. In-person assistance is given first priority, then telephone, then email, and assistance is provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Clients have access to computers, a printer, fax, photocopier, telephone, and the law library's research resources. The LInC has a partnership with the Alberta Law Line (ALL), whereby LInC clients can have direct access to the ALL and, if they qualify financially, receive up to three hours of free legal advice.

The three LInCs do vary somewhat in terms of both the scope of the assistance provided and the logistical set-up of their office, with these variations resulting from the needs and available resources of the locales. The services, resources, and physical settings of each LInCs are summarized below.

Edmonton LInC

The Edmonton LInC opened on April 2, 2007 and covers the Edmonton metropolitan area. The main LInC centre is located in the law library on the second floor of the courthouse and has office hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There are two LInC coordinators providing assistance in the library. LInC coordinators will give clients assistance with civil and criminal matters, while those with family matters are directed to the Family Law Information Centre (FLIC), which is also located at the courthouse. The Edmonton LInC also has a kiosk located on the main floor of the courthouse. LInC staff at the kiosk answer general questions, give courthouse directions, and provide some assistance with forms.

At the time of our visit to the LInC, the LInC coordinators had one interview room for seeing clients, although we were informed of plans to expand into the adjacent LInC manager's office, and relocate the manager to another office in the law library. Clients can make use of the computers and photocopiers located in the law library, as well as the library research material. The LInC also has a separate room where clients can call the ALL in private.

The LInC originally had one kiosk close to the one entrance of the courthouse and the Provincial Court counter, and one LInC personnel staffing the kiosk. At the time of our site visit to Edmonton, the LInC was planning to open another kiosk near another courthouse entrance (and we understand it has since been opened), and the LInC had just hired another person to staff the kiosk.

Grande Prairie LInC

The Grande Prairie LInC opened on June 11, 2007 and covers a broad area, including High Level, High Prairie, Hinton, and Peace River. LInC staff do not currently provide in-person services to the other northern base courts and their circuit courts, but will provide services to these areas by responding to telephone or email enquiries or providing in-person services to those who visit the Grande Prairie LInC. The LInC is located on the main floor of the Grande Prairie courthouse, with office hours of from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The office is located at the end of a hallway at the far end of the courthouse, away from the main public area and beside the Family Court Counsellor's (FCC) office. The LInC will give clients assistance in civil and criminal matters and, because there is no FLIC office in Grande Prairie, will also provide assistance in family matters. The LInC is staffed by one coordinator with plans to hire another coordinator in April 2008.

The LInC is a two-room office, with one office for staff and another where clients can work on their court documents, use a computer with Internet access, and read brochures. A printer and telephone are also available. Clients can also have direct access by telephone to the ALL, and are given use of the LInC coordinator's office for phoning the ALL in privacy, as the room for clients to work in is open to the public.

Red Deer LInC

The Red Deer LInC opened April 2, 2007 and covers Red Deer and the surrounding region, including Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin. The Red Deer LInC is staffed by two coordinators, with the coordinators also rotating between the Red Deer site and circuit sites. The LInC is located on the main floor of the courthouse across from the judicial clerks counter, close to the main entrance of the courthouse, and has office hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The LInC office is a small one room office that opens onto the main corridor of the courthouse. The Red Deer LInC office acts as both a kiosk and a centre for providing more detailed assistance to clients. The LInC and clerks counter are the first courthouse services the public sees upon entering through the main courthouse doors. As well, the Red Deer courthouse is currently installing a security system at this entrance, which once operational will be the only public access to the courthouse.

Resources for clients to use include two computers (with Internet access), a printer, fax, photocopier, and two telephones. Clients may also use the telephone to gain direct access to the ALL. The telephone to the ALL is located within the same office as the LInC. The law library is also located within the courthouse.

Red Deer LInC coordinators circuit to Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Ponoka, and Wetaskiwin. Rimbey was also originally a circuit site but was closed because of a lack of clients. Coordinators travel to Rocky Mountain House once per week, Stettler every second week, and Ponoka every fourth week. One coordinator visits Wetaskiwin and Rocky Mountain House, and the other Stettler and Ponoka. Circuit points are visited on separate days. Circuit sites are also located in the courthouses in those locations. Clients do not have access to the same resources as they would at the Red Deer site, such as public access computers and the direct line to the ALL, although Coordinators equip themselves with a laptop computer, a printer, and a supply of pamphlets and printed materials.

4.2 Clients assisted

Figures 1 to 4 illustrate the clients assisted by the LInCs by site. The LInC tracks the number of clients assisted in-person, by telephone, and by email. In-person assists are tracked according to those receiving under 15 minutes of assistance and those receiving 15 minutes or more of assistance, with more detailed intake data collected for the latter. As indicated in Figure 1, the average number of clients per day receiving 15 minutes or more of assistance rose steadily at each of the sites in the few months after first opening, as people became more aware of the service. In particular, the number of clients assisted at the Edmonton LInC rose sharply from the initial average of 3 clients per day in April and continued to increase right up to November with an average of 12 clients per day. The average number of clients assisted in both Grande Prairie and Red Deer leveled off after the first few initial months.

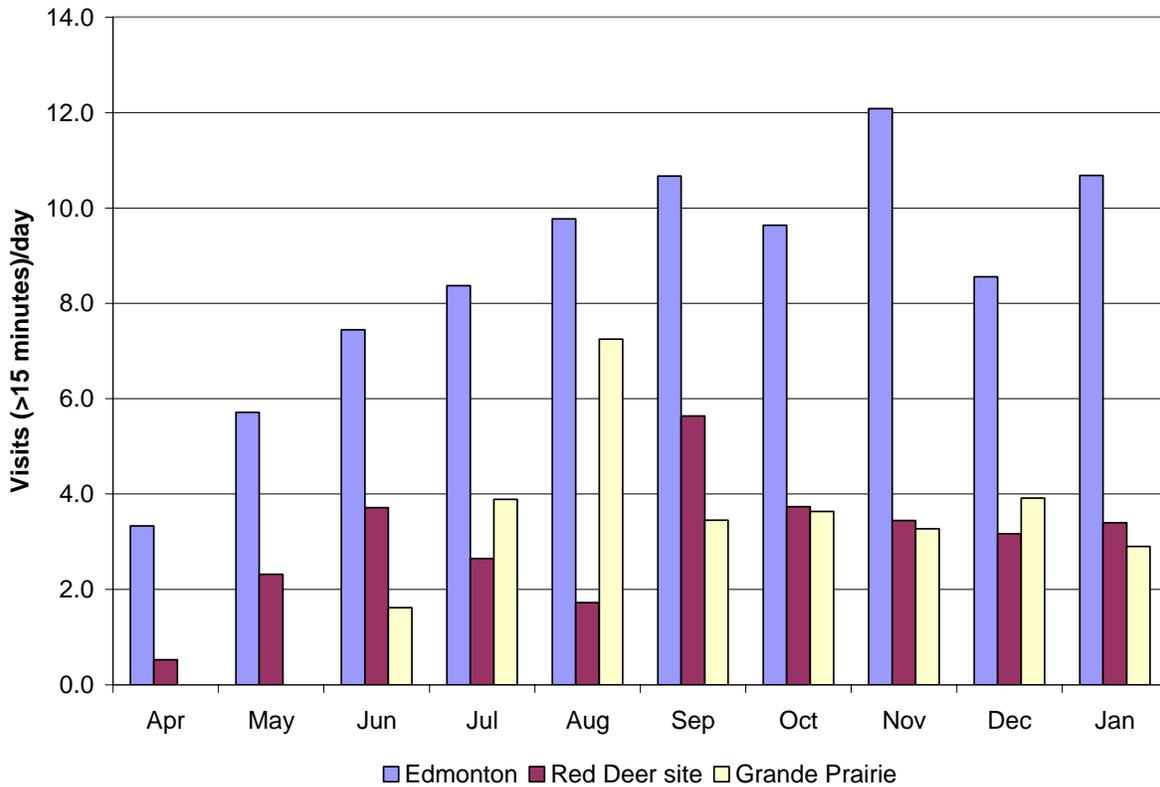


Figure 1
 Average number of clients assisted per day at the LInC for visits of 15 minutes or over, by site
 Source: Law Information Centres Statistical Data, 2007-2008
 Note: Red Deer figures are for the Red Deer site only and do not include visits per day to circuit points

Figure 2 illustrates the sharp difference in average number of clients per day receiving less than 15 minutes of assistance between the three LInCs. Whereas the Grande Prairie LInC averaged from 2 to 3 clients per day who received less than 15 minutes of assistance, the Edmonton LInC assisted an average that was upwards of 60 clients per day for 6 of the 10 months shown, and the Red Deer LInC’s average number of clients assisted has grown to close to 40 clients per day. These differences could be a reflection of several factors, including the physical location of the LInC facilities at each site, the services offered, and the public traffic. The Edmonton LInC offers a kiosk on the main floor of the courthouse, plus given the population of Edmonton, the courthouse serves a large population base. Similarly, the Red Deer LInC provides kiosk services and is located in a busy area of the courthouse, whereas the Grande Prairie LInC is in a more isolated location.

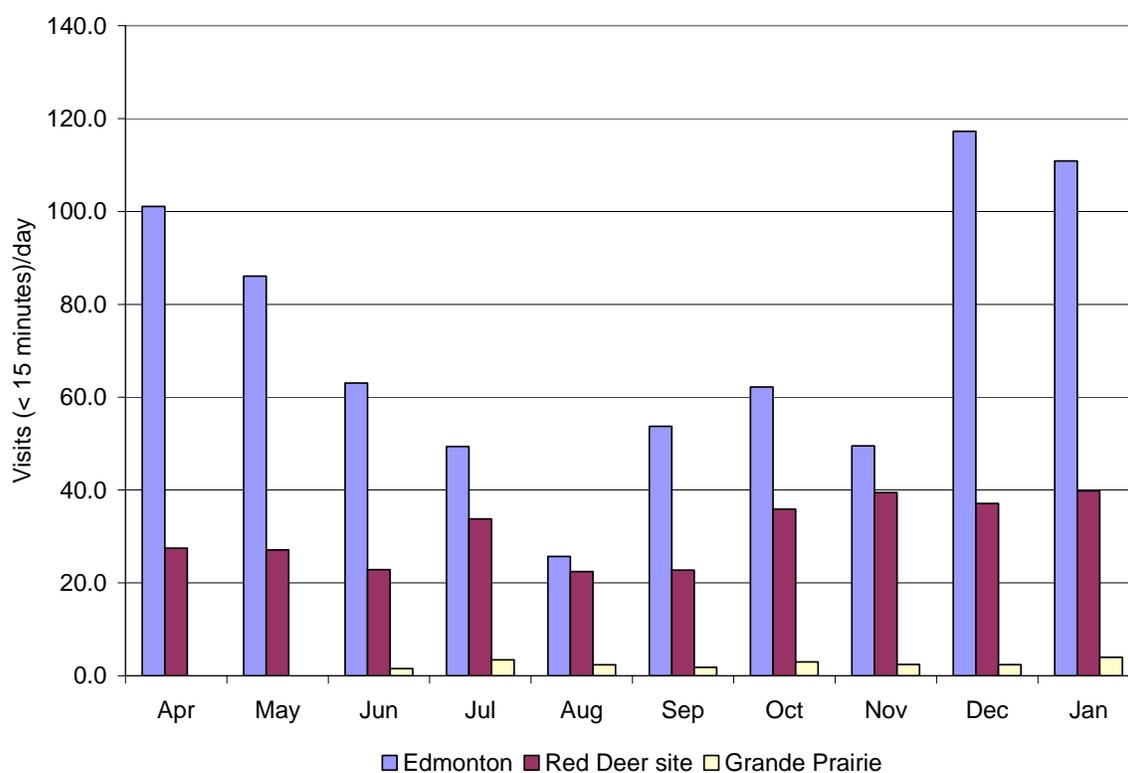


Figure 2
 Average number of clients assisted per day at the LInC for visits under 15 minutes, by site
 Source: Law Information Centres Statistical Data, 2007-2008
 Note: Red Deer figures are for the Red Deer site only and do not include visits per day to circuit points

The number of clients assisted by telephone has also increased at each of the sites since they opened (Figure 3). The Grande Prairie LInC, on average, assisted a similar number of clients per day by telephone as the Edmonton office for most months, which could be a reflection of the large area the Grande Prairie office is serving and the fact that the LInC does not travel to base courts and their circuits. The majority (78%) of the respondents to the client survey said they had never telephoned the LInC for assistance, and in fact 29% said they were not aware that this type of service was available (see Table 4, Appendix E).

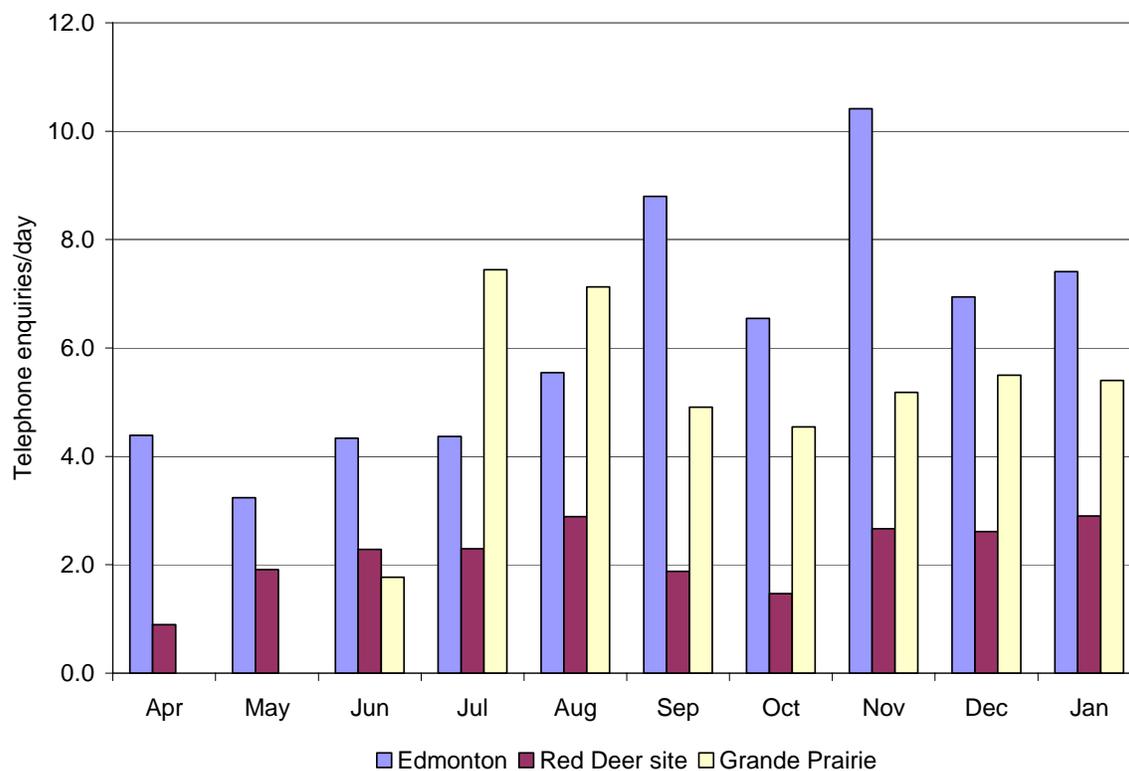


Figure 3

Average number of clients assisted per day at the LInC by telephone, by site

Source: Law Information Centres Statistical Data, 2007-2008

Note: Red Deer figures are for the Red Deer site only and do not include visits per day to circuit points

Email enquiries answered by the Edmonton LInC ranged from 12 per month to over 25 per month (Figure 4). Clients with email enquiries appear to be directing their emails mainly to the Edmonton LInC. This could be the result again of the large population base in Edmonton, and that the public in southern areas of Alberta that are not served by a LInC may have a greater tendency to direct their email enquiries to Edmonton. As with telephone enquiries, most (95%) respondents to the client survey had not emailed the LInC for assistance, with 39% saying they were not aware this service was available (see Table 4, Appendix E).

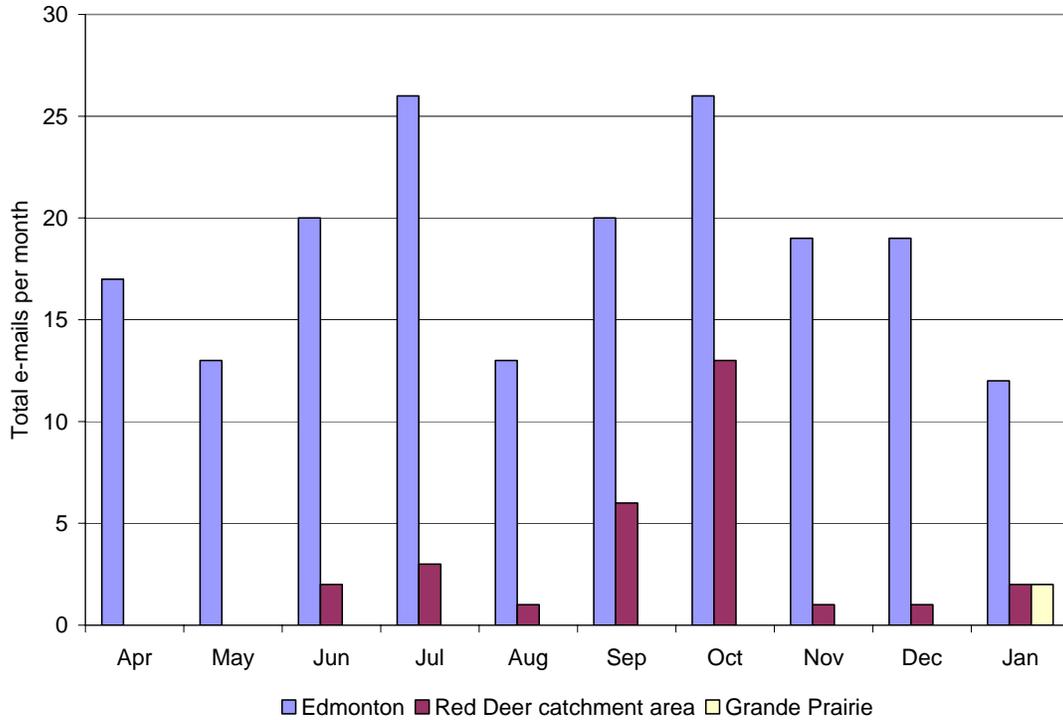


Figure 4

Number of clients assisted per month at the LInC by email, by site

Source: Law Information Centres Statistical Data, 2007-2008

Note: Red Deer figures are for the Red Deer catchment area and includes the Red Deer site as well as circuit points

5.0 Findings

This section summarizes the findings from all lines of evidence, including stakeholder interviews, exit interviews, review of intake data, client survey, and survey of community organizations/other government departments. The findings for all LInC site locations (Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and Red Deer) are synthesized here, including discussion on any variations between sites. More detailed findings for each of the LInC site locations are provided in the interim reports for Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and Red Deer.

5.1 Relevance – needs addressed and services provided

This section considers what needs the LInCs are intended to address and the services and resources provided.

5.1.1 Needs addressed by the LInC

Alberta Justice and other service providers recognized the need to address the increasing number of SRLs coming to court unrepresented. Because these SRLs often do not understand the justice system, they were perceived as using a considerable amount of the justice system resources. Plus, the lack of coordinated services to assist them made it difficult for SRLs to access the system, and contributed to their frustration.⁷ Stakeholders interviewed agreed that the LInCs are intended to address the needs of the increasing number of litigants coming to court without legal representation. And in fact, the intake data analysis, exit interviews, and client survey all indicate that it is mainly SRLs using the LInC, as few of these clients were represented by a lawyer (Table 8).

	LInC clients not represented by a lawyer	
	Number	Percent
Intake data (n=2,267)	2,200	97%
Client survey (n=200)	182	91%
Exit interviews (n=28)	27	96%

Stakeholders pointed to a number of factors that are causing the increase in the number of SRLs. The increasing costs of lawyers is a primary factor, but so too is the difficulty, in some cases, to find a lawyer willing to take on a litigant's case. Grande Prairie stakeholders, for example, noted that the number of SRLs is increasing particularly in family cases, and said that it is difficult to find lawyers in their area that are willing to take on family cases, or that it is difficult to find lawyers in general in certain geographical areas of the province. Some stakeholders also mentioned that there are litigants that self-represent by choice, either because they believe the matter is too small of an issue to hire a lawyer, or they believe they can represent themselves and avoid paying for the services of a lawyer. From the intake data analysis, of the clients that did not have legal representation, most (60%) did not give a reason for this, while 14% said it was because they did not want a lawyer, and another 10% each said it was because either they could not afford a lawyer, or they need more information before they decide what to do (Table 9).

⁷ Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. . op. cit., pp.1-3.

	Number of clients (n=2,200)	Percent of clients
No reasons given	1,319	60%
I do not want a lawyer	316	14%
I need more information to decide what to do	222	10%
I cannot afford to hire a lawyer	216	10%
Legal aid could not help me	30	1%
I do not know how to find a lawyer	8	<1%
Other	89	4%
Totals may sum to more than 100%.		

Stakeholders said these self-represented litigants (SRLs) are often unfamiliar with the justice system and confused with the process. Because of the service gap that existed prior to the LInC, the demands of SRLs had affected the ability of judicial clerks to perform their other duties, plus the SRLs' inexperience and unpreparedness causes unnecessary delays in the courts. SRLs are therefore in need of help in navigating themselves through the system. And by providing them with the assistance, the LInCs are expected to ease the burden on both the judicial clerks and the courts themselves.

The LInC is intended to assist the service gap by providing client's with legal information, appropriate referrals, information on the various options available, and help with understanding the court process. Some stakeholders believed that SRLs in particular need assistance with completing court forms. Further, several stakeholders also said that while there are some services available to assist SRLs, these were not coordinated, and, therefore, SRLs did not know what services are available or where to go. The LInCs, therefore, are intended to provide a coordinated service approach where SRLs can obtain the information or referrals they need from one location without having to be transferred to various organizations in search of one that will assist them.

5.1.2 Services provided

Table 10 illustrates the areas of service for clients receiving in-person assistance of 15 minutes or more. Close to three quarters of all clients (73%) were given general information, while half (52%) were given assistance with forms and one quarter (27%) were given a referral of where else they could go for assistance. The Grande Prairie LInC shows the greatest tendency to assist clients with forms (76%) and to provide them with referrals (56%).

Type of service	Edmonton (n=1,333)	Grande Prairie area (n=337)	Red Deer area (n=591)	Total all sites* (n=2,267)	
	Percent of clients			Number	Percent
General information	75%	66%	72%	1,648	73%
Assistance with forms	50%	76%	46%	1,189	52%
Referrals made	25%	56%	16%	622	27%
Other	2%	1%	12%	109	5%
No service type recorded	21%	1%	2%	302	13%

*Total includes six records where the location was not specified
Note: Multiple responses possible. Column totals sum to greater than 100%.

As mentioned, the LInCs have a variety of resources available for clients to make use of to help them with their legal issue. According to the intake data, the resource most widely used is the interview room (80%) where coordinators see clients. Other resources such as the use of a printer, photocopier, and computer were used by one third of clients or less. Of note from the intake data is that less than 10% of clients at each site are accessing the ALL at the LInC, and in particular, only 1% of Red Deer clients are calling the ALL (see Table 7, Appendix D). Similarly, in the exit interviews, only 3 of the 28 participants had called the ALL (see Table 4, Appendix C).

Compared to the intake date, more of the respondents to the client survey (22%) indicated that they used the ALL while at the LInC (Table 11). Approximately half of the survey respondents (53%) also said they received and/or read brochures and/or pamphlets at the LInC. More of the Edmonton respondents made use of the courthouse library resources (34%; the Edmonton LInC is located within the law library), and again, more made use of the computer (24%).

Table 11: Resources and services used by clients at the LInC – client survey, by site and total

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Received assistance from a LInC staff	133	100%	36	100%	31	100%	200	100%
Received and/or read brochures and/or pamphlets	72	54%	15	42%	18	58%	105	53%
Used the photocopier/fax/printer	58	44%	9	25%	11	36%	78	39%
Used the library resources	45	34%	2	6%	3	10%	50	25%
Used the computer/Internet	32	24%	4	11%	5	16%	41	21%
Used the telephone to call the Alberta Law Line	31	23%	7	19%	5	16%	43	22%
Used the telephone to call other agencies	7	5%	1	3%	5	16%	13	7%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; totals may sum to more than 100%.

Several Edmonton stakeholders expressed concerns that the LInC is exceeding its original mandate and providing services beyond what was originally intended. However, based on the above, it would appear that the services and resources offered align with the objectives outlined in Section 2.0, as well as the service approach stated in the LInC’s *Service Vision and Program Design* document, namely that the LInCs will help clients:

- ▶ “Learn about general civil and criminal procedures”
- ▶ “Locate and fill out court forms (but not assistance with how answers should be phrased)”
- ▶ “Learn about legal advice options”
- ▶ “Find out about alternatives to court”
- ▶ “Get legal information and referrals.”⁸

⁸ Armstrong. op. cit., p.6.

5.2 Design and delivery / implementation

This section considers issues around the design and delivery / implementation of the LInC.

5.2.1 Establishing and implementing the LInC

Many stakeholders interviewed could not speak about the process of establishing and implementing the LInCs and/or were not aware of any challenges that existed during this process. Those stakeholders that could comment mentioned several main challenges and/or requirements that had to be considered in establishing the LInCs.

Finding physical space. Stakeholders most commonly mentioned that finding adequate space for housing the LInCs was a challenge for each of the LInC sites. Indeed, stakeholders said that space at the courthouses in general is limited. Space is an issue not only for providing the LInC with adequate room to house the LInC coordinators and for providing clients with room for using LInC resources, but perhaps even more so in terms of giving privacy to clients with sensitive legal issues or those who need to call the ALL for legal advice. While the Edmonton LInC has a room specifically for clients to call the ALL, neither the Red Deer nor Grande Prairie LInCs do. To address the Edmonton space issues, at the time of the Edmonton site visit, there were plans to add an additional interview room by expanding into the adjacent LInC manager's office, and relocating the manager to another area of the law library.

Gaining acceptance of the community. Many stakeholders commended the initial promotional and communication efforts made by the LInC to inform other Alberta Justice personnel, other government departments, as well as community organizations and other members of the legal system of the LInC and its services. Some also noted, however, that there were challenges that had to be overcome in terms of initial skepticism and uncertainty within the community regarding the LInC's services, as well as in defining NGOs involvement in the LInC.

Dealing with volume and types of assistance needed. As well, because the LInC was a new initiative there was a certain amount of uncertainty as to the volumes of clientele to expect, as well what issues they would be coming to the LInC with and what assistance they would require. For example, the socio-economic conditions in Alberta have apparently resulted in many more clients coming to the LInC with landlord and tenant issues than had been anticipated. Several stakeholders noted that an ongoing challenge of the LInCs will be to keep up with the increasing volumes of SRLs in need of assistance.

Staffing the LInC. Many stakeholders emphasized the need for the LInC coordinators to have knowledge in a broad range of areas in order to effectively assist SRLs. Some stakeholders noted that the LInC coordinators have considerable experience as judicial clerks, which they considered a strong asset to the position. Stakeholders noted, however, that even coordinators with a number of years experience as judicial clerks have a large learning curve if they have not gained that experience in all courts. SRLs come to the LInC with a range of issues that may be heard in various courts, plus processes and forms can vary substantially between courts.

Given the range of knowledge required by the coordinators and that the LInCs are a new initiative, training and professional development opportunities are important to equip staff with the expertise required to effectively assist clients. Several stakeholders noted that finding time for staff to take part in such opportunities can be a challenge, particularly as each LInC site is staffed by only one to two coordinators, and if they are in training there may not be anyone available to staff the LInC. And because the LInCs are new and are still trying to establish a presence in the community, the preference is to keep them open. Further, the increasing volume of clients coming to the LInC is expected to further challenge the ability to provide staff with professional development opportunities.

An unforeseen event that occurred is that the LInC was without a manager for several months after the original LInC manager left the position and until a new manager was in place. Some stakeholders believe this must have presented challenges to the LInC in terms of achieving their goals and objectives.

5.2.2 The LInC management structure and resources

Management structure of the LInC

Current LInC staff include the LInC manager, five LInC coordinators staffing the LInC offices (two in each of Edmonton and Red Deer and one in Grande Prairie), and two LInC coordinators staffing the Edmonton kiosks. The LInC has a dual management reporting structure, in that the Red Deer and Grande Prairie coordinators report to both the LInC manager as well as their courthouse manager.

The management of the LInCs is outlined in their *Service Vision and Program Design* document.⁹ According to this document, the LInC manager is to provide leadership and is accountable for:

- ▶ Establishing the LInCs
- ▶ Strategic planning
- ▶ Financial and management systems
- ▶ Acting as a liaison to the justice community and other stakeholders.

The manager oversees and makes decisions on the Edmonton LInC's operations and communication matters, and collaborates with the Red Deer and Grande Prairie courthouse managers on the operational aspects and communication matters of these two sites.

The LInC manager's responsibilities at all sites include the following:

- ▶ Set operational policies and procedures
- ▶ Provide direction on travel outside of the main office (in consultation with the courthouse managers at Red Deer and Grande Prairie)
- ▶ Develop employee training plans

⁹ Armstrong, op. cit., pp.14-15. Note that while the *Vision* document refers to management at the Edmonton and Red Deer sites, the management practices for Red Deer are assumed to apply similarly to Grande Prairie.

- ▶ Promote and collaborate with NGOs
- ▶ Deal with all other program performance and reporting issues.

The Red Deer and Grande Prairie courthouse managers' responsibilities (and presumably the LInC manager in Edmonton) include the following:

- ▶ Ensure staff perform their duties, as well as attending to immediate issues
- ▶ Security issues
- ▶ Attendance and vacation of LInC staff
- ▶ A report to the LInC manager on staff performance.

The LInC manager is to coordinate management of staff in consultation with the Red Deer and Grande Prairie courthouse managers. The LInC manager, courthouse managers, and coordinators are to cooperatively develop individual performance plans and training goals for coordinators. The LInC manager reports to the Director of the Alberta Law Society Libraries.

Stakeholder input is the main line of evidence available on the effectiveness of the LInC management structure. This too, however, is based on a limited number of stakeholders, as the majority indicated that they did not know enough about the management structure of the LInC to comment on its effectiveness. Several stakeholders questioned whether coordinators have a clear understanding of the lines of reporting under dual management. They attributed initial confusion with reporting and communication to the dual management structure. These stakeholders said that the LInC has resolved this issue through open communication between the current LInC manager and the courthouse managers. LInC staff themselves did not appear to be confused about the managers to whom they should report.

To ensure that problems do not recur, stakeholders emphasized that dual management requires continued open communication between the LInC manager and the courthouse manager. Similarly, stakeholders believe the smooth operation of the LInCs also requires frequent communication between the Edmonton-based LInC manager and staff in the other sites.

Several stakeholders also suggested that the LInC was somewhat removed from other SRL-related Alberta Justice services because of its reporting structure to the Director of the Law Library. As a result of this reporting structure the LInC may have to go through different approval channels from other similar Alberta Justice service providers. As well, the LInC may not be as well informed as other Alberta Justice service providers that are under a reporting umbrella that differs from that of the LInC and that meet together and keep abreast of occurrences within the courthouse or Alberta Justice.

It would also be expected that successful dual management is dependent on a comprehensive set of management policies to provide both the LInC manager and the courthouse manager with clear guidelines on what their individual responsibilities are to the other LInC staff, to other stakeholders, and to each other. The *Service Vision and Program Design* is the only formalized set of guidelines to date, but this document provides a general description of responsibilities, rather than detailing each manager's responsibilities and accountabilities. As a result, overlapping or conflicting responsibilities could arise. For example, the document states that the courthouse manager is responsible for providing the LInC manager with a report on staff

performance but does not articulate the LInC manager's responsibilities for staff performance reporting for either Red Deer or Edmonton staff.

Given that two of the LInCs have now been operational for almost a year and have had some time to mature and for staff to gain some familiarity with the operational aspects of the LInCs, it may be a worthwhile endeavour to compile a set of management guidelines that outlines responsibilities and accountabilities in detail.

Roles and responsibilities of the LInC coordinators

Again, many stakeholders could not speak on the roles and responsibilities of LInC staff. Some stakeholders expressed concern about whether the coordinators are at times placed in a position of providing legal advice as opposed to legal information. Further, because LInC staff are not lawyers, the potential exists for giving erroneous legal advice, which some believe could place the LInC at risk for being sued.

Edmonton stakeholders expressed more concerns in this area. Other stakeholders, however, did not believe this was an issue. Several stakeholders said that the LInC staff are experienced and are cognizant of the difference between legal information and legal advice, and that anyone working with the public at the courthouse (e.g., court clerks, FLIC) has to be equally cautious. According to others, however, this risk is magnified for LInC staff who are functioning specifically as a resource service to SRLs. Several suggested that a staff lawyer at the LInC could ameliorate this risk, in that the staff lawyer could check forms. Another suggestion was to provide greater definition to the scope of the LInC coordinator's role, and to put in place some mechanisms for quality control, such as manuals documenting what information is appropriate to provide.

Currently, the *Service Vision and Program Design* document outlines the coordinators' responsibilities, which include to "provide legal information services to a variety of clients." This document does not give a detailed description of the exact nature of the information and assistance coordinators provide to clients. However, the LInC coordinator's job description does provide a greater specification of the responsibilities and activities of the coordinators, as well as their expected knowledge, skills, and abilities. The job description states that the "primary mandate of the Centres is to assist unrepresented litigants in the effective and efficient processing of their court cases, while educating them on court statutes, rules, policies and procedures *within legal limitations*, to ensure that their cases are handled properly and expeditiously" (italics added).

Although "within legal limitations" is not defined, the coordinators are expected to have the experience to allow them to make this judgement call. The expected knowledge and abilities include extensive court experience, with preference given to those with senior judicial clerk experience. Coordinators are also expected to have comprehensive knowledge of government statutes and court rules and procedures. In addition, they are expected to have "knowledge, understanding, and application of the principles governing the provision of legal information versus legal advice and how to effectively communicate these limits to clients."¹⁰ While there is some concern amongst stakeholders over LInC coordinators providing legal advice, the LInC has

¹⁰ Government of Alberta. Job description. Point rating evaluation plan. Law Information Centre Coordinator.

taken precautions to ensure that staff are experienced in court procedures and familiar with the distinction between legal information versus legal advice. The current LInC coordinators staffing the LInC offices (i.e., not the kiosks) are knowledgeable on the court process, with most having over 10 years of experience as judicial court clerks.

Staff collaboration/resource sharing

All LInC staff spoke positively about staff collaboration and sharing of resources, saying that staff members will email and telephone each other when they require assistance. In particular, this sharing is important because staff members have differing levels of experience in different areas. Staff have quarterly meetings, which gives them an opportunity to have face-to-face communications.

5.2.3 Target audience, legal issues, and assistance needed

Target audience

Stakeholders interviewed at all sites mainly believed that the intended audience is using the LInC, and that most were SRLs that could not afford a lawyer. Stakeholders also said that in some cases, litigants self-represent because they cannot find a lawyer to represent them, and some self-represent by choice rather than need. Stakeholders in Grande Prairie noted that there is a lack of lawyers willing to take family law cases in their area, as well as a lack of lawyers in general in certain geographical areas like High Level and High Prairie. From the intake data, however, more clients indicated that they did not have a lawyer because they did not want one (14%) than because they could not afford a lawyer (10%), although the majority (60%) of the records did not give a reason for not having a lawyer (see Table 9). Client survey respondents were not asked why they did not have legal representation; however 43% indicated that they have a total gross annual household income of over \$50,000, and 63% indicated they were either college or university graduates or had some college or university, and 21% said they were high school graduates (see Table 12, Appendix E). Respondents to the community organization and other government departments survey were mainly unaware if their clients were using the LInC (n=35, 48%), and the remaining respondents were split between agreeing (n=18, 25%) or disagreeing (n=19, 26%) that their clients are using the LInC (see Table 6, Appendix F).

As well, the general public is using the kiosk component of the LInC in both Edmonton and Red Deer for general direction and information. Because of the location of the Red Deer LInC at the main entrance of the courthouse, it is often the first point of contact for the public, and the LInC will assist by providing direction.

Legal issues

Stakeholders said that SRLs are coming to the LInC with a wide range of issues, and that these are mainly civil issues in Edmonton and Red Deer, with landlord and tenant issues being common, and are mainly family-related issues in Grande Prairie. Stakeholders attribute the latter to the growing population in Grande Prairie and, in particular, growth in the younger population with families. As previously mentioned, Grande Prairie does not have a FLIC office and therefore the LInC also handles family cases. Red Deer does have a FLIC office at the courthouse, but the one FLIC staff does not circuit, and, therefore LInC staff will assist clients with family issues while on circuit, contacting the FLIC coordinator by phone for assistance as required. Further, although the LInCs are to refer clients with family issues to the FLIC where the FLIC is available, the FLIC cannot provide assistance in certain instances (for example, with completing forms) and will refer clients back to the LInC. Several stakeholders questioned whether the large number of family matters that the Grande Prairie LInC deals with will result in that LInC being identified as mainly a family-based service.

The intake data confirms the high proportion of family-related matters that the LInC is handling in Grande Prairie, representing 81% of clients (Table 12). As well, just over a quarter (26%) of the Red Deer clients had a family issue, as did 17% of Edmonton clients. The next most common issue is of an administrative nature, such as notarizing documents, or name changes, with this representing 16% of legal issues overall. Residential/tenancy matters represented 12% of clients' issues in Edmonton, 9% in Red Deer, and 6% in Grande Prairie. While criminal matters were low in both of Edmonton (4%) and Grande Prairie (2%), they represent almost one quarter (24%) of legal issues in Red Deer. It should be noted that in just over a quarter of the intake records for Edmonton (28%) the legal issue was either not recorded or unknown. In the latter case, for example, if clients come in to the LInC to call the ALL, they may not share their legal issue with LInC staff.

Table 12: Clients' type of legal issue – intake data by site and total

Legal issue	Edmonton (n=1,333)	Grande Prairie area (n=337)	Red Deer area (n=591)	Total all sites* (n=2,267)	
	Percent of clients			Number	Percent
Family matters	17%	81%	26%	652	29%
Administrative (Civil, name change, notarizing, legal aid)	22%	2%	11%	371	16%
Residential/tenancy related	12%	6%	9%	230	10%
Criminal law	4%	2%	24%	203	9%
Debt-related	9%	0%	7%	163	7%
Health and estates	3%	2%	2%	61	3%
Emergency Protection Order (EPO)	<1%	<1%	7%	49	2%
Other	5%	6%	8%	129	6%
Legal issue not recorded/unknown	28%	1%	6%	409	18%

*Total includes six records where the location was not specified

Family law matters were also the predominant legal issue of the LInC clients who participated in the client survey, with 45% of respondents overall saying they went to the LInC on a family matter, followed by landlord and tenant issues (18% overall). The majority of Grande Prairie respondents (n=29, 81%) went to the LInC with a family law issue. Again, criminal law matters

were higher in Red Deer (n=6, 19%) than in Edmonton (n=11, 8%) or Grande Prairie (n=3, 8%). See Table 11, Appendix E.

Of the 28 clients participating in the exit interviews, one third (n=9) were seeking information on a family matter and another third on a landlord/tenant matter, with most of the latter from Edmonton (see Table 12, Appendix C). Plus all six of the Grande Prairie participants came to the LInC on a family matter. Further, respondents to the community organization and other government department survey said the most common legal issues that their clients have are in the areas of family law (71%), criminal law (59%), landlord and tenant matters (50%), problems with receiving government benefits (43%), and debt issues (38%; see Table 4, Appendix F).

Assistance/information needed and received

Stakeholders say that clients come to the LInC for a wide range of assistance, although help with court forms is a large part of the assistance provided, including determining which forms are needed, accessing the forms, and showing clients how to complete the forms. Stakeholders also said that SRLs often need assistance with pointing them in the right direction for knowing how to start their legal process, what information will assist them, and where else they can go for help. LInC staff are finding that many clients are not familiar with the Internet and need assistance in accessing forms available online. As was indicated in Table 10, just over half (52%) of all LInC clients included in the intake data received assistance with forms. Some Edmonton stakeholders believe that the LInC is providing assistance to the extent of typing the forms for clients, although LInC staff say they will only do this for clients that have some type of barrier, such as a literacy barrier. Other types of help cited include:

- ▶ determining if they have a legal issue
- ▶ determining which court to go to
- ▶ understanding the court process and protocol
- ▶ what to do after the court process
- ▶ preparing court orders
- ▶ making referrals.

Several stakeholders believe that many clients are looking for someone who will listen to them, to whom they can voice their concerns about their legal issue. Indeed, some believed that having patience and an empathetic ear are necessary qualities for the LInC staff and that the current LInC staff at all LInC sites are well-suited for that role. On the other hand, the potential also exists for getting too drawn into clients' personal issues and losing a certain amount of impartiality.

Confirming what stakeholders said, a large proportion of respondents to the client survey received some type of help with court forms, with close to 80% or more saying they received help with finding the right forms, as well as assistance with how to complete and file court forms (Table 13). In particular, a high proportion of Edmonton respondents said they received help in all three of these areas. Close to two thirds of all respondents (61%) also said they received information on court procedures. Although over one third of respondents at each site received some type of referral, a higher proportion of Red Deer respondents said they received either information/referrals to services that could provide legal advice/representation (n=19, 61%) or alternatives to court (n=16, 52%), or regarding where else they could go for help (n=13, 42%).

Few of the respondents said there was some type of assistance or information that they had wanted to receive from the LInC but did not (11% overall; see Table 8, Appendix E).

Table 13: Information respondents received during the visit to the LInC – client survey by site and total

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Help with finding the right court forms/documents to complete	116	87%	32	89%	21	68%	169	85%
Information or assistance on how to complete court forms/documents	118	89%	27	75%	21	68%	166	83%
Information on how to file court forms/documents	109	82%	26	72%	20	65%	155	78%
Information about court procedures	85	64%	18	50%	18	58%	121	61%
Help with how to prepare for court	60	45%	12	33%	16	52%	88	44%
Information or referrals about services that provide legal advice or legal representation	50	38%	13	36%	19	61%	82	41%
Information or referrals about alternatives to court	49	37%	13	36%	16	52%	78	39%
Information or referrals about where else to go for help	42	32%	13	36%	13	42%	68	34%
Other	8	6%	1	3%	3	10%	12	6%
Don't know/no response	1	1%	-	-	-	-	1	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; totals may sum to more than 100%.

Similarly, the 28 LInC clients that participated in the exit interviews were asked why they came to the LInC that day, with just over half (n=15) saying they wanted to find information to help them represent themselves in court (see Table 3, Appendix C). Exit interview participants were also asked what type of information they received at the LInC that day, with half (n=14) saying they received help on finding the right court forms and three quarters (n=21) saying they received help with completing court forms.

5.2.4 Accessibility of the LInC

Location of the LInC

Most stakeholders interviewed believe the LInC is accessible to clients. They believe that the Edmonton kiosk on the main floor is a good location and is visible to clients, directing clients to appropriate locations, including up to the LInC in the law library. There did not appear to be accessibility concerns with the LInC's location in the library. Advantages to the LInC's library location were that the library is easy to find and serves as a directional landmark, clients have access to the library resources, and library and LInC staff can share their expertise. Similarly, stakeholders consider the location of the Red Deer LInC by the clerks counter at the entrance to the courthouse to be a highly visible location easily accessed by the public. On the other hand, while most Grande Prairie stakeholders believe the LInC is accessible, some did mention that its isolated location away from the main public area of the courthouse entrance makes it difficult to find. Although there are signs directing the public to the LInC, a few stakeholders mentioned that the signage highlights the LInC acronym, with which many people are not familiar. In general for all sites, while some stakeholders were satisfied with the LInC signage, others were of the opinion that the signage is not highly visible.

Respondents to the client survey were in high agreement that the LInC building (the courthouse) is conveniently located (87%) and the LInC is easy to find within the building (84%), with agreement being high for all three sites (Table 14). The 28 LInC clients that participated in the exit surveys were also in high agreement that the LInC building is conveniently located (n=25), that the LInC is easy to find within the building (n=24), and that the hours are convenient (n=25). (See Table 10, Appendix C.)

Table 14: Respondents' agreement on accessibility of the LInC – client survey by site and total								
	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
The building that the LInC is in is conveniently located								
Agree	109	82%	34	94%	30	97%	173	87%
Disagree	24	18%	2	6%	1	3%	27	14%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The LInC is easy to find within the building								
Agree	105	79%	33	92%	30	97%	168	84%
Disagree	27	20%	2	6%	1	3%	30	15%
Don't know/no response	1	1%	1	3%	-	-	2	1%
The LInC hours are convenient								
Agree	98	74%	31	86%	26	84%	155	78%
Disagree	20	15%	5	14%	1	3%	26	13%
Don't know/no response	15	11%	-	-	4	13%	19	10%
The amount of time you waited to get assistance from LInC staff on your most recent visit to the LInC was reasonable								
Agree	118	89%	35	97%	31	100%	184	92%
Disagree	13	10%	1	3%	-	-	14	7%
Don't know/no response	2	2%	-	-	-	-	2	1%
How long did you wait to speak with a LInC staff member for your most recent visit to the LInC?								
No wait	21	16%	10	28%	16	52%	47	24%
1-10 minutes	55	41%	12	33%	13	42%	80	40%
11-20 minutes	24	18%	11	31%	2	7%	37	19%
21-30 minutes	16	12%	1	3%	-	-	17	9%
31 minutes-1 hour	12	9%	1	3%	-	-	13	7%
Over 1 hour	5	4%	1	3%	-	-	6	3%

Note: Category totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents to the community organization and other government departments survey either agreed with questions regarding the accessibility of the LInC or they said they did not know (Table 15). For example, just over half of respondents (n=18, 55%) believed the LInC’s building is conveniently located, and just over one third (n=12, 36%) said they did not know. The high proportion of these respondents that do not know suggests these respondents in general are unaware of the LInC’s facilities.

Table 15: Respondents’ agreement on accessibility and convenience of the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=33)

	Agree		Disagree		Don’t know		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
We know where the LInC is located	19	58%	5	15%	6	18%	3	9%
The LInC’s building is conveniently located	18	55%	2	6%	12	36%	1	3%
The LInC is easy to find within the building	16	49%	3	9%	13	39%	1	3%
The LInC is wheelchair accessible	15	46%	1	3%	16	49%	1	3%
The LInC’s hours are convenient	14	42%	4	12%	14	42%	1	3%
Our clients are comfortable using the LInC	10	30%	2	6%	20	61%	1	3%
The LInC is accessible to people with other disabilities (sight, hearing, etc.)	7	21%	2	6%	19	58%	5	15%
The LInC can effectively assist people whose first language is not English	3	9%	3	9%	26	79%	1	3%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The courthouse is viewed by most as an appropriate location for LInC, given that the courts and other Alberta Justice services are located there. Also, the courthouse is recognized as the location that the public will often first think to come when they are in need of legal information/ assistance. However, the courthouse is recognized as a barrier to some members of the public. Several Edmonton stakeholders believed that the installation of the Edmonton courthouse security system has added an additional barrier. If this is the case, then this would also apply to Red Deer, which was in the process of installing a courthouse security system at the time of our site visit. Stakeholders gave examples of groups that may be reluctant to use the LInC, either because of its courthouse location, the security system, or both, including Aboriginals, immigrants from countries where authority figures are seen as corrupt, and homeless and other marginalized persons. Suggested solutions include some type of mobile LInC unit that could go out to locations where this underrepresented population would be more comfortable with accessing the LInC. The potential exists as well for LInC to partner with other organizations in the provision of such a service; for example, an advocate from an individual’s cultural group could attend the LInC with them to help ease their discomfort in going to the courthouse.

Privacy at the LInC

All the LInC sites were experiencing some privacy issues, which appears to be mainly the result of a general lack of available space in the courthouses. For example, and as already mentioned, the Edmonton LInC had only one room for the coordinators to interview clients. This presented privacy issues if both coordinators were seeing clients at once, as one of the coordinators would have to either see clients within the library itself or look for another unused room. The LInC was

responding to this issue and adding an additional interview room by expanding into the adjacent LInC manager's office, with the LInC manager relocating to another office in the law library.

Lack of privacy is even more of an issue in Red Deer where all of the LInC facilities are located within one small office in a high traffic area. In particular, clients are not given a private area for calling the ALL to speak with a lawyer. During our site visit to Red Deer we were also able to observe that the Red Deer LInC's dual role as a kiosk and resource centre also makes it difficult for the coordinator to assist clients without interruptions from members of the public who are just seeking quick information or courthouse directions. A suggestion apparently currently under consideration is to expand the LInC into an adjacent office used by another service provider, using the main office as the kiosk area and the new office for interviewing clients that need more detailed assistance. However, this would still not address the lack of privacy for clients to call the ALL unless they were given access to the new office, in which case the LInC coordinator would not have private space to see other clients while the client was speaking with the ALL.

Privacy issues at the Grande Prairie LInC are related to the lack of a private room for clients to call the ALL, in which event they are given use of the LInC coordinator's office for making their call in private. The Edmonton LInC has a small room specifically for clients to make calls to the ALL in private.

The LInC hours

Most stakeholders believed the LInC hours are convenient. Although stakeholders recognized that the hours may be a barrier to people working regular workday hours, there was recognition that because the LInCs are located at the courthouses it would be difficult to make accommodation beyond courthouse hours outside of offering services at an off-site location. Some Grande Prairie stakeholders noted that the LInC could be open longer (beyond its current 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. hours) to correspond more with courthouse hours. The hiring of the second Grande Prairie coordinator is expected to enable the LInC to expand its hours to match those of the courthouse. The majority (78%) of respondents to the client survey said that the LInC hours are convenient (see Table 14), as did most of the 28 people who participated in the exit interviews (see Table 10, Appendix C).

Language and disability issues

Stakeholders interviewed were not able to comment in any detail on the accessibility of the LInCs with respect to issues related to language or persons with disabilities; most did not see accessibility issues in these areas. Similarly, respondents to the community organization and other government department survey were mainly unaware of whether the LInC is accessible to persons with disabilities or to those whose first language is not English (see Table 15). Stakeholders interviewed noted that the LInCs were wheelchair accessible, for example, although it was noted that space for maneuvering a wheelchair is difficult at the Red Deer LInC. The LInCs do not provide interpretation services, although stakeholders mentioned having access to Alberta Justice personnel that speak other languages and can assist when needed. Very few of the clients in the intake data (2%), or client survey (6%), or exit interviews (3 out of 28) indicated that service in English only was a problem to them.

Identifiable barriers

The LInC tracks whether clients have an identifiable barrier. From the intake data review, only a small proportion (9%) of the clients had an identifiable barrier (see Table 8, Appendix D). The few identifiable barriers were commonly related to communication or a disability.

Wait times at the LInC

Other accessibility issues noted by stakeholders are long waiting times to receive LInC assistance and instances when the LInC is not open, although long waiting times were only identified in Edmonton. With the high demand for service in Edmonton, there are, apparently, occasions when clients will get backed up and have long wait periods. This can result in some clients leaving without receiving assistance. During our site visit to the LInC, we did not observe any clients leave without receiving assistance. Most respondents to the client survey (92%) agreed that the amount of time they waited to speak with the LInC staff was reasonable (see Table 14). Just over two thirds (64%) of all respondents said that they either had no wait time or their wait time was 10 minutes or less. Edmonton respondents did show a greater tendency to have longer wait times, with 25% of these respondents saying they waited for over 20 minutes. Of the client survey respondents, 13% (n=14) said they had at one time had to leave the LInC without receiving assistance, with almost all of these from Edmonton (n=13; see Table 3, Appendix E). Clients mainly had to leave without assistance because there were either too many people ahead of them waiting for assistance (n=5), or the LInC was not open at the time, including lunchtime closure (n=4), or they had waited too long and decided to leave (n=4).

All of the 28 clients that participated in the exit interviews believed their wait time was reasonable, with 21 of the 28 saying they either had no wait or waited 10 minutes or less (see Table 10, Appendix C).

Days when the LInC is closed

Days when the LInC is not open were mentioned as an accessibility issue at all three LInC sites. Because there are at most two LInC coordinators at each site, if both are unavailable at the same time (either because they are on training, at meetings, or on holidays) then the LInC has to close. A few stakeholders expressed some frustration that the LInC is not accessible to clients on days when it is closed, or that they do not have anywhere to refer clients to on those days.

A few stakeholders also said that the kiosk is not staffed on a consistent basis, and believed there should always be someone available at the kiosk. The opening of the second kiosk should help alleviate such concerns.

Table 16 illustrates the number of days open and days closed for each LInC office.

- ▶ The Edmonton office had closed days in 6 of the 10 months since it opened, ranging from 1 day to 9 days closed per month, for a total of 21 days closed, or 10% of the potential business days.

- ▶ The Red Deer office had closed days in 8 of the 10 months since it opened, ranging from 1 day to 7 days closed per month, for a total of 30 days closed, or 14% of the potential business days.
- ▶ The Grande Prairie office had closed days in 7 of the 8 months since it opened, ranging from 2 to 14 days closed per month, for a total of 54 closed days, or 34% of the potential business days. The Grande Prairie LInC would be more subject to closure given there is only the one coordinator. Again, the planned hiring of the second coordinator for Grande Prairie should assist in decreasing the number of days it is necessary to close the LInC.

Table 16: Number of days open per month for LInC offices to January 31, 2008

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer site	
	Days open	Days closed	Days open	Days closed	Days open	Days closed
April	18	2	n/a	n/a	19	1
May	21	1	n/a	n/a	22	0
June	18	3	13	2	14	7
July	19	2	9	12	17	4
August	22	0	8	14	18	4
September	15	4	11	8	17	2
October	22	0	22	0	15	7
November	12	9	11	10	18	3
December	18	0	12	6	18	0
January	22	0	20	2	20	2
Total	187	21	106	54	178	30

Source: Days open from Law Information Centre (LInC); days closed calculated by PRA by subtracting days open from potential business days (208 for Edmonton and Red Deer; 160 for Grande Prairie).
n/a – not applicable, the Grande Prairie LInC opened on June 11, 2007.

5.2.5 Communication strategy

Stakeholders believe the LInC implemented an effective communication strategy to other members of the justice system and community organizations. Stakeholders spoke of numerous ways that the LInC communicated their services. In particular, good communication efforts were made with NGOs at the outset through their participation in local implementation committees and in the SRL Advisory Committee. Stakeholders also spoke of the LInC advertising themselves to other areas of Alberta Justice, other government departments, and NGOs through meetings to talk about their services and learn about other agencies' services, and by providing agencies with LInC brochures to distribute to clients. Stakeholders within Alberta Justice also said they have received memos and emails related to the LInC, and have seen mentions of the LInC in internal newsletters. Most Alberta Justice stakeholders were of the opinion that there was an awareness of LInC within the courthouse, although there was some belief that not all judges are aware of the LInC and its services.

Communication efforts to the public appear to have been mainly through some initial efforts to media outlets, such as radio and television, as well as through media attention at official openings. Both Edmonton and Grande Prairie had a grand opening involving the Minister of Justice, NGOs, and media; Red Deer did not have an official opening. There does not appear to be a strategy in place for ongoing advertisement to the public. Some stakeholders said they were

not aware of any promotional efforts to the public. Many stakeholders were of the opinion that the general public is not aware of the LInC, and that often people learn of the LInC only by coming to the courthouse and being informed of the LInC by court clerks, or by learning about the LInC from other organizations or through word-of-mouth. Public awareness at the circuit sites has been mainly through the court clerks.

LInC clients confirmed that they mainly found out about the LInC through someone at the courthouse. Almost half (46%) of the clients in the intake data said they learned about the LInC at a court office (Table 17), although 21% of the records did not indicate where the client had found out about the LInC, with most of these from Edmonton. As well, the majority (70%) of respondents to the client survey also heard about the LInC from someone at the courthouse (see Table 2, Appendix E) as did 19 of the 28 clients that participated in the exit interviews (see Table 3, Appendix C).

Table 17: How clients found out about the LInC – intake data by site and total

	Edmonton (n=1,333)	Grande Prairie area (n=337)	Red Deer area (n=591)	Total all sites* (n=2,267)	
				Number	Percent
	Percent of clients				
Court Office	38%	47%	64%	1,044	46%
LInC Kiosk	6%	<1%	<1%	78	3%
Prior experience with centre	2%	7%	3%	64	3%
Family Court Counsellor	2%	10%	1%	62	3%
Community agency	2%	5%	3%	55	2%
Law Library	3%	1%	<1%	47	2%
Lawyer/duty counsel	1%	4%	3%	45	2%
Internet	2%	1%	2%	42	2%
Judge/Master	2%	1%	1%	40	2%
Legal Aid Alberta	1%	4%	2%	32	1%
Maintenance Enforcement Program	1%	1%	1%	20	1%
Alberta Law Line	1%	<1%	<1%	13	1%
Native Counselling Services	-	1%	1%	7	<1%
Edmonton Community Legal Centre	<1%	-	-	4	<1%
Workshop	-	<1%	-	1	<1%
Other	8%	11%	17%	244	11%
No response	32%	7%	2%	469	21%

*Total includes six records where the location was not specified

Respondents to the community organizations and other government departments survey were asked about their and their clients' awareness of the LInC, and how they found out about the LInC. Over one third (37%) of respondents said they had not heard of the LInC (Table 18), and close to another third (30%) said they had heard of the LInC but did not know about their services. Of those respondents that knew of the LInC, close to one third (n=22, 30%) said they had heard about the LInC through posters, advertisements, or other printed information (see Table 5, Appendix F).

Respondents that had not heard of the LInC varied across organizational types as well as their location. Of the 42 respondents that had not heard of the LInC, 50% (n=21) were from Edmonton, 24% (n=10) from the Grande Prairie catchment region, and 21% (n=9) from the Red Deer catchment area (plus another 2 organizations could not be identified by region). This distribution is similar to that of the overall survey respondents (48%, 30%, and 20% from each of the respective regions). As well, of the 42 respondents, 57% identified themselves as belonging to a non-profit organization, 38% as a government department or agency, 2% as a First Nations Organization, and 2% as other, and which is again similar to the overall survey results (see Table 2, Appendix F). Looking closer at the type of services provided by these respondents, close to two thirds (n=26, 62%) appeared to be providing some type of community support service, with some of these providing services to certain target audiences, such as persons with disabilities or addictions. The remaining respondents provided some type of more specialized services, such as a resolution/decision/mediation service, a victim support service, a shelter, or a child and family service.

Table 18: Organizations' level of awareness of the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=115)

	n	%
We have not heard of the LInC.	42	37%
We know about of the LInC and the services it provides.	39	34%
We have heard of the LInC but do not know about its services.	34	30%

Note: Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Just over one fifth (n=16, 22%) of survey respondents that knew of the LInC also believed that either most or some of their clients are aware of the LInC, while almost one third (n=22, 30%) did not know about their clients' awareness of the LInC (Table 19).

Table 19: Organizations' clients' awareness of the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=73)

Response	n	%
Most are aware	2	3%
Some are aware	14	19%
Few are aware	25	34%
None are aware	7	10%
Don't know	22	30%
No response	3	4%

Also, it appears that ongoing formal meetings with NGOs have not occurred due to lack of time, although the LInC and others do distribute LInC promotional material (e.g., pamphlets, business cards) to other organizations. The LInC appears to have concentrated its communication efforts to other service providers that would have contact with SRLs and who could direct those needing assistance to the LInC. LInC coordinators make efforts to visit other agencies and learn about their services. For example, the Edmonton coordinators spoke of spending time at the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (RTDRS) to observe their operations and gain a better perspective of how to assist people referred to them from the RTDRS.

Stakeholders interviewed suggested that promoting the LInC to the public could be improved through, for example, advertising within local newspapers and through other organizations. Some stakeholders, however, said that the current traffic at the Edmonton LInC is such that they would not be able to handle any growth in demand for service brought about by increased promotional efforts. Others believed that the public should be made more aware of the availability of the LInC, and that periodic advertisement would assist in increasing this awareness to both the public and other social services. Stakeholders spoke of the need for continued efforts to promote the LInC services to both the public and other service organizations, and that it was important for the LInC to maintain visibility and relationships within the community. The loss of the LInC manager early in the developing stages of the LInC is considered to have had some impact on their communication and promotion strategy.

Several suggestions were also made that the LInC could make some improvements to their website and their brochures. Several comments were made on the LInC website, including that it can be difficult to access because entering common search strings in a search tool such as “Google” does not point to the LInC as one of the results. As well, there is currently only basic information on the LInC website: clients cannot access information or forms. Some suggestion was made that the LInC and other access to justice service providers could better integrate their websites. Concerns were expressed that the LInC brochure does not contain the LInC’s location, phone number, or hours of operation. Although the LInC does provide an accompanying business card with this information, some prefer to have minimal documentation to ask clients to handle and keep track of.

5.2.6 Collaborative efforts and partnerships

Partnerships are an important component of the LInCs, as reflected in their objectives, which includes encouraging ongoing and consultative relationships between service providers. Steps were taken during the conception and establishment of the LInCs to engage other government departments and community organizations, get their input into the LInCs, and foster their participation.

Although the LInC has established partnerships with a number of organizations, according to stakeholders they have developed particularly strong relationships with organizations that can provide clients some type of legal advice or legal representation, or that can provide clients with more detailed assistance in family law matters. In the case of legal advice/representation, this would include, for example, the ALL, Legal Aid Alberta, the Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC), the Student Legal Services (SLS), and in Red Deer the Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic and Central Alberta Law Office (a Legal Aid Alberta office). In the

case of assistance with family law matters this would include the FLIC and Family Court Counsellors, particularly the latter in Grande Prairie. Stakeholders there noted that the proximity between the LInC and the FCC enhanced their ability to assist each other on family matters.

Most of the LInC’s partnerships or relationships are informal, except for its partnership with the ALL, which is based on a formalized collaborative agreement. Through this agreement, LInC clients can access a direct line to the ALL, and if they meet the financial criteria receive free legal advice from an ALL lawyer. The ALL also provides the LInC with access to their lawyer referral database and provides LInC staff with training, such as in interviewing. The ALL will also review form templates that the LInC has developed.

Other NGOs that the LInC has established informal relationships with, mainly in the form of referrals back and forth between these agencies, include, for example, the John Howard Society, The Elizabeth Fry Society, the Native Counselling Service, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, the police, and Victim’s Services. Other Alberta Justice partnerships include, for example, the court clerks, the law library, Family Justice Services, and mediation services. While stakeholders thought the relationships established were effective, many could only speak about their own relationship with the LInC.

The respondents to the community organization and other government department survey that had heard of the LInC described their organization’s current relationship with the LInC (Table 20). While over half (59%) of these respondents said they currently have no relationship with the LInC, half (49%) said they would be interested in pursuing a relationship with the LInC. One third (33%) of respondents said they have an informal collaborative agreement in place.

Table 20: Organizations’ current relationship with the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=73)

	n	%
Currently no relationship with the LInC		
No relationship with LInC but would be interested in pursuing one	36	49%
No relationship with LInC and no plans to pursue one	7	10%
Informal collaboration (e.g., make referrals to or receive referrals from)	24	33%
Formal collaborative agreement in place	2	3%
Working on a formal collaborative agreement, or plan to do so in the near future	2	3%
No response	2	3%

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100%

Of the community organizations and other government departments that had heard of the LInC, 44% (n=32) said they make referrals to the LInC and 18% (n=13) said they receive referrals from the LInC (Table 21).

Table 21: Activities that organizations take part in with the LInC – community organizations and other government departments survey (n=73)

Response	n	%
Make referrals to the LInC	32	44%
Receive referrals from the LInC	13	18%
Provide LInC with brochures/pamphlets	8	11%
Meet with the LInC and other service providers for communication/networking purposes	7	10%
Provide expertise to the LInC to assist with developing its resources or services	4	6%
Provide or share other resources/services with the LInC	2	3%
Display/share LInC Information	2	3%
Other	2	3%
None of the above	24	33%
No response	13	18%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; totals may sum to more than 100%

Most stakeholders believe that the LInC complements services offered by other organizations rather than duplicates them. Even where services are similar (e.g., help with legal information), stakeholders believe the LInC offers something that other services could not provide, such as assistance with completing court forms. A few commented that even if some duplication exists, the demand for assistance for SRLs is such that any assistance that can be provided is needed. There were also several suggestions that there should be some type of integration of SRL-related programs. This could facilitate sharing of information and resources and create efficiencies for providing services to SRLs.

There does appear to be some uncertainty about the difference between the services provided by the LInC and the FLIC in Edmonton and Red Deer. Although many stakeholders believe the LInC and the FLIC complement rather than duplicate each other and say that they are clear on what each of these services does, others believe the potential for duplication exists and that some organizations are at times confused over which service to refer clients to. Indeed, the LInC will assist clients with family issues in certain instances. We were told that the FLIC does not provide assistance with forms, and will refer clients to the LInC for this type of assistance, as well as for divorce matters where children are not involved. According to several stakeholders, the LInC and the FLIC are working together to resolve any confusion. Several Red Deer stakeholders spoke of the team work between the LInC and the FLIC, in that the LInC will assist with family matters on circuit and will consult with the FLIC staff. Because of the similarities between the services offered by the LInC and the FLIC and the small offices of both in Red Deer, one suggestion was to combine the offices to make more efficient use of their resources. Further, as some clients will have multiple issues at once, including family issues covered by FLIC and other issues covered by the LInC, combining the resources could make it more efficient for the client as well.

Efforts were made when the Grande Prairie LInC was first established to visit four of the five base courts and their circuit points to introduce the LInC and its services. The size of the catchment area for Grande Prairie and the fact the LInC does not travel to base courts and their

circuits may mean that greater promotional efforts will be required in these sites than for the Edmonton and Red Deer sites to ensure organizations and potential clients are aware of the services and that they can be accessed by telephone or email, and to encourage other justice and service agencies to refer clients to the LInC.

5.3 Effectiveness of the LInC

This section looks at the effectiveness of the LInC in terms of meeting its four objectives (see Section 2.0).

5.3.1 Meeting the needs of SRLs

Most stakeholders interviewed believe the LInC is providing SRLs with the assistance they need for resolving their legal issues, although most said they could only base this belief on either anecdotal information or that they would assume this would be occurring based on the assistance/information provided by the LInC. No statistics or data appear to be kept on SRLs in court. And, in fact, the Mapping Project noted the lack of reliable statistics on SRLs.¹¹ Therefore, any assessment of how well the LInC is meeting the needs of SRLs can only be based on others' observations of the assistance received, how well prepared the SRLs appear, and on the SRLs' feedback on how the information/assistance helped them.

Some stakeholders suggested that the LInC appears to be meeting SRLs needs, given the number of repeat visitors observed going to the LInC. Of the client survey respondents, over half (56%) said they have visited the LInC more than once, with most of these visits being for the same issue (78%). See Table 22.

Table 22: Respondents' number of visits to the LInC – client survey by site and total								
	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
Number of visits to the LInC								
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
One	54	41%	18	50%	16	52%	88	44%
Two	37	28%	8	22%	6	19%	51	26%
Three	20	15%	7	19%	1	3%	28	14%
More than three	22	17%	3	8%	8	26%	33	17%
Whether multiple visits were about the same legal issue or more than one legal issue								
	(n=79)	%	(n=18)	%	(n=15)	%	(n=112)	%
Same issue	63	80%	13	72%	11	73%	87	78%
Different issue	16	20%	5	28%	4	27%	25	22%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

¹¹ Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. (2007). *Alberta Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project*. Retrieved September 11, 2007, from <http://cfcj-fcjc.org/docs/2007/mapping-en.pdf>. p.1 (footnote 2).

SRLs understanding of their options

Most stakeholders believe LInC clients are receiving a good understanding of possible options for resolving their legal issue, although again some acknowledged that they did not know. Stakeholders said the LInC staff have a broad range of experience and understanding of the court system, that they spend time with the clients and make efforts to find answers for them, and that they inform clients of the various options available to them, as well as provide them with options as to where else they can go for assistance. Respondents to the client survey confirmed what stakeholders said, with most respondents from all three sites saying that the LInC staff person that assisted them seemed to understand their legal issue (95% overall), seemed knowledgeable about possible options for the client for resolving their issue (90% overall), and helped them find or gave them information to help them with their legal issue (92% overall). (See Table 23.)

Table 23: The LInC staff person’s understanding of respondents’ issues and options – client survey by site and total

Did the LInC staff person..?	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Seem to understand your legal issue								
Agree	128	96%	33	92%	28	90%	189	95%
Disagree	5	4%	3	8%	3	10%	11	6%
Don’t know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seem knowledgeable about your options for how to resolve your legal issue								
Agree	123	93%	31	86%	26	84%	180	90%
Disagree	2	2%	3	8%	4	13%	9	5%
Don’t know/no response	8	6%	2	6%	1	3%	11	6%
Help you find or give you information to help you with your legal issue								
Agree	123	93%	30	83%	30	97%	183	92%
Disagree	8	6%	6	17%	-	-	14	7%
Don’t know/no response	2	2%	-	-	1	3%	3	2%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Some stakeholders noted, however, that how well this helps the client depends on the client making the right choices, and following through on the options provided. Some stakeholders also noted that the provision of options is where there can be a fine line between legal information and legal advice, or that all court personnel have to be cautious about providing options rather than direction, which could be perceived as advice.

As illustrated in Table 24, a high proportion of the client survey respondents overall also said that after visiting the LInC they had a better understanding of their legal issue (81%), as well as how to access material to help them with their issue (81%), and what they had to do next to help them resolve their issue (88%). Just over half of the client survey respondents said that after visiting the LInC they also had a better understanding of alternatives to court (e.g. mediation or dispute resolution services) (51%), or of other organizations that could help them (57%). In the latter case, this was highest in Red Deer respondents, of which 71% (n=22) said they had a better understanding of other organizations that could help them.

Do you have a better understanding of...?	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Your legal issue								
Agree	109	82%	30	83%	22	71%	161	81%
Disagree	20	15%	4	11%	8	26%	32	16%
Not applicable	4	3%	2	6%	1	3%	7	4%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
How to access legal materials to help you with your legal issue								
Agree	107	81%	30	83%	24	77%	161	81%
Disagree	15	11%	3	8%	6	19%	24	12%
Not applicable	10	8%	3	8%	1	3%	14	7%
Don't know/no response	1	1%	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Alternatives to court, such as, for example, mediation services or dispute resolution services								
Agree	64	48%	19	53%	18	58%	101	51%
Disagree	25	19%	6	17%	8	26%	39	20%
Not applicable	41	31%	11	31%	5	16%	57	29%
Don't know/no response	3	2%	-	-	-	-	3	2%
What other organizations could help you with your legal issue								
Agree	70	53%	22	61%	22	71%	114	57%
Disagree	33	25%	6	17%	6	19%	45	23%
Not applicable	30	23%	8	22%	3	10%	41	21%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
What you had to do next to resolve your legal issue								
Agree	118	89%	32	89%	26	84%	176	88%
Disagree	9	7%	4	11%	5	16%	18	9%
Not applicable	6	5%	-	-	-	-	6	3%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.								

As well, most of the 28 exit interview participants agreed that after visiting the LInC they had a better understanding of (see Table 6, Appendix C):

- ▶ their legal issue (26 out of 28 agreed; 1 said the question was not applicable to them)
- ▶ how to access legal materials to help them with their legal issue (23 out of 28 agreed; 4 said the question was not applicable to them)
- ▶ alternatives to court (14 out of 28 agreed; 10 said the question was not applicable to them)
- ▶ what organizations can help them with their legal issue (15 out of 28 agreed; 9 said the question was not applicable to them)
- ▶ what they have to do next to resolve their legal issue (24 out of 28 agreed; 2 said the question was not applicable to them).

As indicated, most of those that did not agree with the above said that it was because the question was not applicable to them for that visit to the LInC.

Of the respondents to the community organization and other government department survey, 42% (n=14) said they believed the LInC gave their clients a good understanding of possible options for resolving their legal issue (Table 25). Over half (n=17, 52%) of the respondents, however, said they did not know if their clients were receiving a good understanding of their options. The survey asked respondents a series of questions on their perception of the effectiveness of the LInC. Few of the respondents disagreed with the statements on the effectiveness of the LInC; most either agreed with the various statements or said they did not know. And, in fact, a large proportion indicated they did not know for many of the questions. For example, while just over a third (n=12, 36%) of respondents believed the LInC is meeting the needs of their clients with legal issues, half of the respondents (n=16, 49%) said they did not know if this was occurring.

Table 25: Effectiveness of the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=33)

Would you say that the LInC ...	Agree		Disagree		Don't know		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Provides a service that did not exist in your community before?	21	64%	1	3%	9	27%	2	6%
Makes it easier for individuals to navigate the justice system?	18	55%	1	3%	13	39%	1	3%
Is a good resource for assisting clients with court forms?	15	46%	2	6%	15	46%	1	3%
Has or will lead to improved access to justice for self-represented individuals?	15	46%	2	6%	14	42%	2	6%
Gives your clients appropriate referrals?	14	42%	0	0%	17	52%	2	6%
Gives your clients a good understanding of possible options for resolving their legal issue?	14	42%	1	3%	17	52%	1	3%
Has or will lead to reduced court time required for dealing with self-represented litigants' cases?	14	42%	1	3%	16	49%	2	6%
Gives your clients a good understanding of what they have to do to prepare their case?	13	39%	2	6%	17	52%	1	3%
Gives your clients a good understanding of the court process?	12	36%	2	6%	18	55%	1	3%
Meets the needs of your clients who have legal issues?	12	36%	4	12%	16	49%	1	3%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

SRLs' understanding of how to prepare their case

Most stakeholders interviewed thought the LInC was giving clients a good understanding of what they have to do to prepare their cases (e.g., which court forms to fill out, and how to complete and submit them). Some said they based this opinion on positive feedback they have received either from LInC clients or other service agencies/personnel (e.g., judicial clerks). Others have been in a position to make firsthand observations of court forms completed with the assistance of the LInC and noted they were better prepared. Overall, client survey respondents themselves highly agreed that the assistance from the LInC gave them a better understanding of how to complete and file court forms (86% and 85%, respectively; Table 26). As well, of the 28 LInC clients that participated in the exit interviews, most said that after their visit to the LInC they had a better understanding of what court forms to use, and how to complete and file the court forms (see Table 6, Appendix C).

Close to half (n=15, 46%) of respondents to the community organization and other government department survey believed that LInC is a good resource for assisting clients with court forms, although another half (46%) said they did not know (see Table 25).

A few stakeholders noted that the LInC is a useful resource for SRLs to access through various aspects of preparing their case, and was described as a “point-in-time” service. Again, however, the LInC is dealing with a wide range of people, some of whom may have barriers to understanding and using the information provided by the LInC (e.g., mental disabilities, literacy problems, or cultural issues).

Table 26: Respondents’ level of understanding of court forms after visiting the LInC – client survey by site and total

Do you have a better understanding of...?	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=126)	%	(n=34)	%	(n=23)	%	(n=183)	%
How to complete court forms and/or documents								
Agree	113	90%	25	74%	19	83%	157	86%
Disagree	8	6%	7	21%	3	13%	18	10%
Not applicable	5	4%	2	6%	1	4%	8	4%
How to file court forms and/or documents								
Agree	108	86%	27	79%	20	87%	155	85%
Disagree	14	11%	5	15%	2	9%	21	12%
Not applicable	4	3%	2	6%	1	4%	7	4%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Note: “n”= those who said they received help at the LInC with finding, completing, or filing court forms and/or documents.

SRLs’ understanding of the court process

While stakeholders acknowledged they had not been in a position to observe SRLs in court, or even if they did would not know whether the SRL had been to the LInC, most expected that LInC clients would receive a good understanding of the court process and what to do in court. Similarly, over half (n=18, 55%) of the respondents to the community organization and government department survey said they did not know if the LInC gave their clients a good understanding of the court process (see Table 25). Several stakeholders said they have been able to observe that the court process does go smoother when court forms are in better order and the judge is not required to ask the SRL as many questions. A few stakeholders commented about having received good feedback from SRLs after the court process, that it went well, or that they were not as intimidated by the process as they believe they would have been without the LInC’s help.

However, as was pointed out by several stakeholders, the court process is complex, and the public in general is often nervous about the court process and can find it confusing and difficult even with the assistance provided by the LInC. Or some clients may not make the best use of the information provided by the LInC to help them prepare for court, or there are situations that require a lawyer. Further, the process in Queen’s Bench Court as well as in the Court of Appeal is more complex than Provincial Court procedures, making it more challenging for SRLs to represent themselves in these courts regardless of how well they prepare.

Client opinion corroborates stakeholders’ opinions. The majority of respondents to the client survey overall agree that the LInC gave them a better understanding of what to expect in court (65%) and how to prepare for court (59%), and said that after visiting the LInC they were more comfortable with the idea of representing themselves in court (69%). See Table 27. However, this level of agreement is not as high as for the other areas of understanding and preparing for resolving their legal issue (see Table 24 and Table 26).. The remaining respondents were split

between disagreeing that they were better prepared for court or said that it was not applicable to them, because they were not going to court. The 28 exit interview participants said either that they had a better understanding of what to expect in court, of how to prepare for court, and that they were more comfortable with the idea of representing themselves in court, or they said it was not applicable to them, because they were not planning on going to court (see Table 6, Appendix C).

Table 27: Respondents' level of understanding of court processes after visiting the LInC – client survey by site and total

Respondents' agreement that they ...?	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Have a better understanding of what to expect in court								
Agree	89	67%	20	56%	20	65%	129	65%
Disagree	26	20%	8	22%	6	19%	40	20%
Not applicable	15	11%	8	22%	5	16%	28	14%
Don't know/no response	3	2%	-	-	-	-	3	2%
Have a better understanding of how to prepare for court								
Agree	81	61%	19	53%	18	58%	118	59%
Disagree	26	20%	7	19%	7	23%	40	20%
Not applicable	25	19%	10	28%	6	19%	41	21%
Don't know/no response	1	1%	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Are more comfortable with the idea of going to court								
Agree	90	68%	25	69%	22	71%	137	69%
Disagree	19	14%	8	22%	5	16%	32	16%
Not applicable	22	17%	3	8%	3	10%	28	14%
Don't know/no response	2	2%	-	-	1	3%	3	2%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

However, of the 78 respondents that had gone to court since their visit to the LInC, 87% believed that the assistance they received from the LInC had helped them better represent themselves in court (see Table 6, Appendix E).

Are SRLs receiving appropriate referrals?

Although stakeholders interviewed believe that clients are getting appropriate referrals to other organizations that could help them, some said they were not aware of what referrals clients were getting. Others said they could only speak with regard to referrals the LInC had made to their own organization, and believed these were appropriate. Similarly, while 42% (n=14) of respondents to the community organizations and other government departments survey believed the LInC is giving their clients appropriate referrals, over half (n=17, 52%) said they did not know (see Table 25).

The LInC's ability to make referrals to other organizations is expected to grow as the staff gain knowledge of other resources available. One activity LInC coordinators take part in is to visit organizations to discuss LInC services or to learn about the services provided by these organizations. Stakeholders that could speak first hand on this sharing of information found it valuable for both parties, or other stakeholders said they had received positive feedback from such organizations.

From the intake data, 42% of clients are receiving some type of referral from the LInC, and in Grande Prairie 70% of clients are receiving a referral (Table 28).

Number of referrals	Edmonton (n=1,333)	Grande Prairie area (n=337)	Red Deer area (n=591)	Total all sites* (n=2,267)	
	Percent of clients			Number	Percent
0	62%	30%	65%	1,314	58%
1	23%	43%	21%	570	25%
2	10%	15%	8%	234	10%
3	4%	9%	4%	103	5%
4	1%	3%	2%	40	2%
5	<1%	<1%	-	5	<1%
6		<1%	-	1	<1%

*Total includes six records where the location was not specified
Note: The 953 clients receiving referrals above (2,267 - 1,314) is greater than the 622 clients in Table 10 that were indicated to have received referrals.

The main services that the LInCs are referring clients to varies somewhat by site (Table 29). Clients in Edmonton are mainly referred to either the ALL (16%) or a lawyer (13%). Given the number of family issues the Grande Prairie site handles, these clients are mainly referred to the Family Court Counsellor (25%), and then either the ALL (18%) or a FLIC office (18%), such as the Edmonton FLIC. Red Deer clients are not referred predominantly to any one agency, with 10% referred to the Central Alberta Law Office, 9% to see a lawyer, 7% to LAA, and 6% to the Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic. Few Red Deer clients (4%) are being referred to the ALL.

Where referred to	Edmonton (n=1,333)	Grande Prairie area (n=337)	Red Deer area (n=591)	Total all sites* (n=2,267)	
	Percent of clients			Number	Percent
Alberta Law Line	16%	18%	4%	295	13%
Lawyer	13%	14%	9%	276	12%
Legal Aid Alberta	6%	10%	7%	162	7%
Family Law Information Centre	5%	18%	2%	133	6%
Family Court Counsellor**	1%	25%	<1%	96	4%
Edmonton Community Legal Centre	4%	-	<1%	58	3%
Central Alberta Law Office	-	<1%	10%	58	3%
Student Legal Services	3%	1%	1%	53	2%
Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic	-	-	6%	35	2%
Courthouse library	2%	1%	1%	32	1%
Counselling services	1%	1%	1%	19	1%
Other	10%	27%	16%	318	14%
None	62%	30%	65%	1,314	58%

*Total includes six records where the location was not specified
**Family Court Counsellor is not a hard category for the LInC intake data, but was calculated from the “other” category.
Note: Multiple responses allowed. Column totals do not sum to 100%.

As was illustrated in Table 13, 41% of all respondents to the client survey said they received information or referrals about other services that could provide them with legal advice or legal representation, and 34% said they received information or referrals about where else they could go for help, such as some type of counselling, advocacy, or information service. A larger proportion of Red Deer respondents said they received one of these referrals than those from Edmonton or Grande Prairie, with 61% and 42% of Red Deer respondents receiving such referrals, respectively. Of the 28 exit interview participants, 10 said they received information or referrals about services that provide legal advice/legal representation, and seven said they received information or referrals about where else to go for help.

Of the client survey respondents that said they had been given some type of referral from the LInC, 49% said they had contacted the referral, and 59% said that all or some of these referrals had been helpful to them (Table 30).

Table 30: Outcomes of referrals made to clients – client survey by site and total

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=69)	%	(n=23)	%	(n=23)	%	(n=115)	%
Whether respondents had contacted referrals made to them by the LInC								
Yes	36	52%	12	52%	8	35%	56	49%
Not yet, but plan to	5	7%	-	-	2	9%	7	6%
No	27	39%	11	48%	13	57%	51	43%
Don't know/no response	1	1%	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Helpfulness of referrals contacted								
	(n=36)	%	(n=12)	%	(n=8)	%	(n=56)	%
Yes, all were helpful	20	56%	5	42%	3	38%	28	50%
Yes, some were helpful	3	8%	2	17%	-	-	5	9%
No	12	33%	5	42%	5	63%	22	39%
Not applicable (e.g., have not had appointment yet, too early to tell)	1	3%	-	-	-	-	1	2%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Demand for services

Stakeholders interviewed believe that the demand for LInC services has increased as the public and other service agencies have become more aware of its services and the assistance provided. The consensus is that demand for the LInC will increase as it becomes more widely known and as the population of Alberta, the costs of lawyers, and the number of SRLs increase. Stakeholders believe the demand for services has exceeded expectations in Edmonton, and some questioned whether the Edmonton LInC in particular has the resources to meet increased demand for services. Red Deer and Grande Prairie stakeholders did not seem as concerned about that LInC's ability to keep up with demand. Grande Prairie stakeholders said the demand will increase as the area's population grows and the Northern communities become more aware of the LInC's services, or if the LInC could provide in-person services to areas outside of Grande Prairie. In both Red Deer and Grande Prairie, stakeholders suggested more advertising to increase public awareness of the LInC. Respondents to the community organization and other government department survey mainly did not know (69%) if the demand for the LInC services among their clients has increased since it opened (see Table 6, Appendix F).

Stakeholders also suggested that it may be helpful to give clients the option of making appointments to increase service to potential clients. Stakeholders said this could be helpful to both clients and LInC staff, even if an appointment system was used for certain days of the week and on-demand service continues for the other days.

5.3.2 Increased access to justice for SRLs

In general, stakeholders interviewed believe that the assistance provided by the LInC has enhanced SRLs' experiences within the justice system and has increased their access to justice. Stakeholders gave a number of examples of how they believe the LInCs are increasing access to justice for SRLs. These include the following:

- ▶ They are getting access to resources at the LInC that they might not otherwise have, such as a computer, the Internet, a printer, and a photocopier.
- ▶ They are getting one-on-one service from someone who is there specifically to help them, and who will not confuse them with legal terminology.
- ▶ They are able to get proper referrals from one location.
- ▶ The LInC streamlines the system for SRLs.
- ▶ The LInC helps them become more familiar with the court process and makes it less intimidating.

Stakeholders say that because there was no one providing this type of assistance before the establishment of the LInCs, that this in itself has increased access to justice. The lack of this type of service was confirmed by respondents to the community organizations and other government departments, of which 64% (n=21) said that the LInC provides a service that did not exist in their community before (see Table 25). Almost half (n=15, 46%) of these respondents also believe that the LInC has or will lead to improved access to justice for SRLs, although an almost equal number (n=14, 42%) said they did not know if access to justice would be improved (also see Table 25).

Other than the LInC, respondents to the client survey had gone mainly to another courthouse resource for assistance (Table 31) such as a court clerk (54%) or the law library (23%, with most of these from Edmonton). Close to a quarter (23%) had tried to get help from a private lawyer, and 16% said they had not tried to get help anywhere before coming to the LInC.

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Court clerk	76	51%	16	44%	16	52%	108	54%
Law library in the courthouse	42	32%	2	6%	2	7%	46	23%
A private lawyer	32	24%	6	17%	7	23%	45	23%
Alberta Law Line (called before coming to the LInC)	27	20%	5	14%	5	16%	37	19%
Legal Aid Alberta	21	16%	5	14%	5	16%	31	16%
Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board (Edmonton and Red Deer)	19	14%	1	3%	4	13%	24	12%
Family Law Information Centre (FLIC)	17	13%	4	11%	2	7%	23	12%
Family Court Counsellor	8	6%	8	22%	3	10%	19	10%
Another government department	7	5%	1	3%	3	10%	11	6%
Another community organization	7	5%	-	-	-	-	7	4%
Someone else in court (unspecified)	3	2%	-	-	1	3%	4	2%
The Internet	2	2%	-	-	-	-	2	1%
Did not try to get help anywhere else	16	12%	7	19%	9	29%	32	16%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; totals may sum to more than 100%.

Client survey respondents were asked the current status of their issue, and 38% said that they had resolved their issue since their visit to the LInC (Table 32). Of these respondents, most (83%) resolved their issue without the help of a private lawyer, plus 42% said they were able to resolve their issue without going to court. And almost all of these respondents (93%) said the assistance they received from the LInC was helpful in resolving their issue. Not as many (n=6, 29%), however, said that one of referrals made by the LInC was helpful in resolving their issue.

Status of their legal issue	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Issue resolved	52	39%	15	42%	9	29%	76	38%
Decided not to pursue	4	3%	3	8%	3	10%	10	5%
Still working at resolving	75	56%	18	50%	19	61%	112	56%
Don't know/no response	2	2%	-	-	-	-	2	1%
Respondents that resolved their legal issue								
Respondents that...	(n=52)	%	(n=15)	%	(n=9)	%	(n=76)	%
Did not use a private lawyer to help them resolve	42	81%	12	80%	9	100%	63	83%
Resolved without going to court	26	50%	3	20%	3	33%	32	42%
Said the LInC was helpful in resolving their issue	48	92%	15	100%	8	89%	71	93%
	(n=14)	%	(n=5)	%	(n=2)	%	(n=21)	%
Said one of the referrals made by the LInC was helpful in resolving their issue	3	21%	2	40%	1	50%	6	29%

To consider the volume of people that the LInCs assist, Table 33 illustrates the number of clients assisted from when the first two LInCs (Edmonton and Red Deer) opened on April 2, 2007 up to January 31, 2008. When all modes of assistance are considered (in-person, telephone, and email), a total of 24,457 clients have been assisted over the 10 months to January 31, 2008, or an average of 2,446 clients per month.

Assistance provided	Edmonton	Grande Prairie area	Red Deer area*	Total all sites
In-person visits for 15 minutes or more	1,594	373	591	2,558
In-person visits less than 15 minutes	13,586	291	5,747	19,624
Responses to telephone enquiries	1,119	532	408	2,059
Responses to email enquiries	185	2	29	216
Total client assists	16,484	1,198	6,775	24,457
Months open	10	7.5	10	10
Average clients assisted per month	1,648	160	678	2,446

Note: Number of clients assisted may include the same client assisted more than once
 Source: Law Information Centres Statistical Data, 2007-2008
 *Note: this data source indicated that up to January 31, 2008 a total 14 clients in Wetaskiwin and 7 clients in Stettler were assisted for 15 minutes or more, but the intake data indicated 34 clients in Wetaskiwin and 7 in Stettler up to the beginning of January 2008.

5.3.3 Impact on other areas of the Justice system

Stakeholders at all sites generally believe the LInCs are creating efficiencies in other areas of the Justice system. Prior to the LInCs, these SRLs were placing burdens on both the judicial counters and on the courts. SRLs with little experience in the Justice system, who were unfamiliar with the courthouse and with court forms, would come to the courthouse counters looking for more assistance than court clerks were able to give and still serve other members of the public. Further burdens were placed upon the courts when SRLs would appear in court unprepared and unfamiliar with the process, with incomplete court forms. This created frustrations for both the SRLs and courthouse staff.

Stakeholders said that the LInC is having an impact on the judicial counters, and many said they had either observed this themselves or have had feedback from court clerks. Impacts noticed by some clerks include that SRLs seem happier, the court forms are more complete, the filing process is expedited, clerks can assist other members of the public in a timelier manner, and other members of the public waiting for assistance are less frustrated because their wait times are reduced. While court clerks in all sites confirmed that the LInC has eased the burden on the judicial counter, we noted a more positive response in Red Deer and Grande Prairie. Although Edmonton court clerks do mainly believe the LInC has had a positive impact for them, there seemed to be some uncertainty as to what extent the LInC has eased the burden for them. This could be a consequence of the high traffic through the Edmonton courthouse and that even with the LInC the judicial counters are kept busy. And several Edmonton stakeholders believe that some clerks do not direct many SRLs to the LInC, or that they will direct them to the kiosk if anywhere.

Some stakeholders say that just having somewhere to direct SRLs to for assistance is a big help to court staff, and also gives the staff a greater sense of satisfaction to be able to tell SRLs that there is someone to help them rather than having to either turn people away or try to think of some other agency that could assist the SRL. Stakeholders say that the kiosk in Edmonton and the kiosk component of the LInC in Red Deer is helpful as well, in that SRLs can make a first stop at the kiosks, and either be directed to other appropriate areas of the courthouse, to other agencies, or to the LInC for more detailed assistance.

Most stakeholders said that they were not in a position to know if the LInC services had impacted the amount of court time required to hear SRLs cases. Some stakeholders said they expected that it should, or that they had heard some positive feedback confirming this. Similarly, while 42% (n=14) of the respondents to the community organization and other government departments survey believe that the LInC has or will lead to reduced court time required for dealing with SRLs, almost half (n=16, 49%) said they did not know if this would occur (see Table 25). A few of the judiciary stakeholders have observed that some SRLs are coming to court with some understanding of the process, with their forms more complete, and are better organized. However, for the most part it cannot be confirmed that these SRLs have been to the LInC, and judges have to use caution in asking if SRLs have been to the LInC or recommending that they go to the LInC for fear of losing their impartiality. Stakeholders did say that when SRLs come to court with well-prepared court forms the number of questions the judge or justice has to ask the SRL is reduced, expediting the court process and making for a better experience for both the SRL and the judge/justice. Plus, if the SRL is better prepared for court this may not necessarily reduce the court time, but may make for more effective use of the court time. However, some concern was expressed that the Court of Appeal is a highly specialized court, and that the LInC staff do not have the experience for assisting clients with Court of Appeal matters.

Several stakeholders believe that one function of the LInC is to provide clients with accurate information to ensure their expectations are realistic, including providing information on what a court can and cannot do for them. As was indicated in Table 24, 51% of the client survey respondents said that the LInC had given them a better understanding of alternatives to court, such as mediation services or dispute resolution services. And as was also indicated in Table 32, 38% of the respondents to the client survey had resolved their legal issue since their visit to the LInC, and of these, 42% were able to do so without going to court, and 93% said the assistance they received from the LInC was helpful in resolving their issue.

5.3.4 Extent of collaborative partnerships developed

Many stakeholders either did not know if the LInC services affected the level of collaboration and consultation among service providers or could only speak regarding the collaboration between their own organization and the LInC, which all believed was good. Respondents to the community organization and other government departments survey who said they have some type of relationship with the LInC were also mainly unaware of whether the LInC has affected collaborative relationships among service providers (Table 34). Just over half of these respondents (n=17, 52%) said they did not know if the LInC encourages/establishes collaborative relationships, and 61% (n=20) said they did not know if the LInC would lead to greater

coordination of services between the LInC and other service providers. Plus, from Table 21, few of these organizations (n=7, 10%) said that they meet with the LInC and other service providers for communication/networking purposes, or provide expertise to the LInC to assist with developing its resources or services (n=4, 6%), or provide or share other resources/services with the LInC (n=2, 3%).

Table 34: Effectiveness of the LInC in fostering collaborative partnerships – community organization and other government department survey (n=33)

Would you say that the LInC ...	Agree		Disagree		Don't know		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encourages/establishes collaborative relationships with other service providers?	11	33%	4	12%	17	52%	1	3%
Has or will lead to greater coordination of services between the LInC and other service providers?	11	33%	1	3%	20	61%	1	3%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

The LInC made considerable front end effort to foster and establish good partnerships with other parts of the justice system, other government departments, and NGOs. Further, the LInC appears to have established a presence in a small time frame, developing several strong ongoing partnerships, as well as more informal referral-based relationships. As noted previously, LInC staff will visit other organizations to make presentations about the LInC and to learn about the services of other organizations.

However, there do not appear to be continued efforts to further promote and develop relationships between other service providers, not just between the LInC and service providers. An objective of the LInC is to encourage ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources. A few opinions expressed were that it will take effort to maintain partnerships, that more could be done to develop partnerships between service providers, and that the LInC could take the lead on such an endeavour. Others, however, said that the level of collaboration would increase over time, as is the case in most developing relationships. Work towards this objective may have been stalled by the logistics of functioning without a manager for a few months. Plus, it takes considerable effort to get three LInC sites up and running. Given that each site is staffed by only one or two coordinators, efforts have understandably concentrated on providing services to clients, acquiring the necessary training to provide the assistance needed, establishing relationships with and learning about individual organizations, and, in Red Deer, developing and staffing the circuit sites.

The results of the community organization and other government department survey indicate that there are opportunities for the LInC to further promote themselves and develop relationships with other organizations, given that over a third (37%) of respondents had not heard of the LInC, and of those that had, only 39% (n=28) said they have some type of relationship with the LInC, such as in making or receiving referrals (see Table 18 and Table 20). As well, 49% (n=36) of the respondents said while they currently have no relationship with the LInC, they would be interested in pursuing one. Of the 33 respondents that said they have some type of relationship with the LInC, just over half (n=17, 51%) said they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their current relationship with the LInC (Table 35). Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for improving their relationship with the LInC. The few suggestions made

(10 respondents) included having meetings or presentations, having improved direct and continuing contact, or distributing information/brochures.

Table 35: Organizations' satisfaction with their current relationship/partnership with the LInC – community organization and other government department survey (n=33)

Response	n	%
Very satisfied	5	15%
Somewhat satisfied	12	36%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	15%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	9%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Don't know	6	18%
No response	2	6%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

5.4 Satisfaction with the LInC

Almost all stakeholders said they believed that clients are satisfied with the LInC because they either have had positive feedback from clients or assume clients are satisfied because they have not heard any complaints. Client feedback to stakeholders has been that the LInC was helpful, they understood more about the process after visiting the LInC, and they are grateful for the help they received. Several again said they think SRLs are appreciative of simply having someone willing to listen to them, providing them with individual assistance, and making the process less intimidating.

Clients themselves showed a high level of satisfaction, with 80% of respondents to the client survey very satisfied and 15% somewhat satisfied (Table 36). When asked to comment on their level of satisfaction, respondents said that the information they received from the LInC was helpful for their legal issue (54%), that they got all that they needed at the LInC (13%), and that the staff were helpful and polite (41%; see Table 7, Appendix E). And, of the 28 LInC clients that participated in the exit interviews, 24 were very satisfied and the remaining 4 were somewhat satisfied with the LInC services (see Table 11, Appendix C).

Table 36: Satisfaction with the LInC – client survey by site and total

	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Very satisfied	107	81%	28	78%	25	81%	160	80%
Somewhat satisfied	20	15%	6	17%	3	10%	29	15%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	2%	1	3%	-	-	4	2%
Somewhat dissatisfied	1	1%	-	-	2	7%	3	2%
Very dissatisfied	2	2%	1	3%	-	-	3	2%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	1	3%	1	1%

Note: Totals do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents to the client survey expressed a high level of satisfaction with the LInC staff, with almost all saying that the LInC staff person that assisted them listened to them carefully (99%), answered all their questions (94%), and treated them with respect (100%). See Table 37. All of the 28 participants to the exit interview also agreed with these statements (see Table 7, Appendix C).

Table 37: Respondents' satisfaction with service from the LInC – client survey by site and total								
Whether LInC staff...	Edmonton		Grande Prairie		Red Deer		Total	
	(n=133)	%	(n=36)	%	(n=31)	%	(n=200)	%
Listened to you carefully								
Agree	133	100%	34	94%	30	97%	197	99%
Disagree	-	-	2	6%	1	3%	3	2%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Answered all of your questions								
Agree	125	94%	34	94%	29	94%	188	94%
Disagree	8	6%	2	6%	2	7%	12	6%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Treated you with respect								
Agree	133	100%	35	97%	31	100%	199	100%
Disagree	-	-	1	3%	-	-	1	1%
Don't know/no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Plus almost all client survey respondents (99%) and all exit interview respondents said they would use the LInC again if the need arose and that they would recommend the LInC to others. The few client survey respondents that expressed some dissatisfaction with the LInC said that they did not think they received useful information at the LInC or the staff did not have sufficient knowledge on their issue (8%), or that they believed the information received at the LInC was too basic (4%).

The majority of respondents (n=19, 58%) to the community organization and other government department survey did not know how satisfied their clients who have used the LInC are with the services received, and 33% (n=11) said their clients were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied (Table 38).

Table 38: Satisfaction of organizations' clients who have used the LInC – community and other government departments survey (n=33)		
Response	n	%
Very satisfied	5	15%
Somewhat satisfied	6	18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	-	-
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	6%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Don't know	19	58%
No response	1	3%

Almost all stakeholders said they too are satisfied with the LInC. Many believe that other organizations are also satisfied, although some said they were unable to comment for other community organizations. Of the respondents to the community organization and other government department survey that said they have some type of relationship with the LInC, 60% (n=20) said they are either very or somewhat satisfied with the LInC, and 15% (n=5) said they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 39).

And in fact, stakeholders see a need for establishing a LInC in other areas of Alberta, such as in Calgary (although most are aware that a LInC is planned for Calgary), Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat, as well as Northern Alberta. Several believe a LInC would be helpful wherever there is a courthouse.

Response	n	%
Very satisfied	6	18%
Somewhat satisfied	14	42%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	15%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	9%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Don't know	3	9%
No response	2	6%

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Stakeholders interviewed say they and other organizations have a good relationship with the LInC. Several also commented on the difficult task the LInC coordinators are undertaking, and that the success of the LInC is closely related to the suitability of the coordinators to their positions. Stakeholders at all sites spoke positively of the coordinators. Comments made are that the coordinators are experienced in the court processes, and that they are personable, outgoing, empathetic, and strive to give clients the assistance they need, all of which are considered necessary qualities for this position. Some say it is helpful to their organization to have somewhere to refer clients for assistance in areas where they are not equipped to help. Some stakeholders said that as community organizations become more familiar with services the LInC provides and more confident in these services, the level of satisfaction will likely increase.

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

This final section of the report summarizes the evaluation findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations. The conclusions are structured along the four evaluation objectives.

Objective 1: The degree to which the LInCs assist users to access information, education, and referrals services

The LInCs are addressing the needs of the increasing number of litigants coming to court without legal representation by providing them with a coordinated service approach where SRLs can obtain the information or referrals they need. The services available to assist clients include the services of the LInC coordinators to assist SRLs with their legal issue, as well a number of resources that can be used by the SRLs while working towards resolving their legal issues (library resources, computers with Internet access, a printer, a photocopier, a telephone, and direct access to the ALL).

Assistance provided. The evaluation found that clients are receiving a wide range of assistance in the key areas where SRLs need help. This includes, for example, information on court procedures and how to prepare for court, information on alternatives to court, and information and referrals to other agencies that can provide either some type of legal assistance or other needed assistance. In particular, clients are receiving help with accessing, completing, and filing court forms. Stakeholders are generally satisfied that the LInC is providing SRLs with the direction they need, and clients are satisfied they are getting a better understanding of their legal issue and what they need to do to resolve their issue.

Referrals provided. The evaluation found that referrals given to LInC clients are not wide ranging but targeted. For example, clients in Edmonton and Red Deer are mainly referred to an agency that can provide them with some type of legal advice or legal representation, while in Grande Prairie (reflecting the high proportion of family issues at that site) a high number of clients are referred to either a Family Court Counsellor or a FLIC office. The LInC's ability to make referrals to other organizations is expected to grow as the staff gain knowledge of other resources available. The LInC is proactive in this regard, with coordinators making efforts to visit organizations to discuss LInC services or to learn about the services provided by these organizations. Considering the number of respondents to the community organization and other government department survey that expressed an interest in developing a relationship with the LInC, there may be opportunities for the LInC to further expand their referral network.

The LInC has established a close relationship with the ALL, giving LInC clients that qualify direct access to legal advice. However, the LInC may not be taking full advantage of this referral resource, given the relatively low number of clients referred to the ALL, particularly in Red Deer.

There still appears to be some barriers preventing SRLs from contacting other agencies that could assist them, given the number of client survey respondents that did not contact the referral made to them by the LInC. As well, the LInC may need to take steps to ensure that the referrals made are appropriate referrals, based on the client survey findings that some clients who did contact the referral did not find it helpful. However, stakeholders interviewed believed that any referrals made to them by the LInC had been appropriate.

Recommendation: The LInCs should review their partnership with the ALL to assess the low usage of ALL services, and whether it is associated with the ALL's financial guidelines, a lack of private areas at the LInC for calling the ALL, or other factors.

Recommendation: Given that respondents to the client survey do not appear to be taking full advantage of the referrals recommended to them, the LInC should look for ways to obtain further client input on the use and helpfulness of referrals made to them. This could be in the form of client satisfaction surveys or follow-up surveys.

Objective 2: The effectiveness of the LInC service delivery model(s) including the collaborative and consultative structure to which government and community partners contribute

Management structure. The evaluation found that the dual management structure of the LInC, whereby the Grande Prairie and Red Deer coordinators report to both the LInC manager as well as the courthouse manager, currently works well. After some initial communication difficulties, the LInC manager and courthouse manager now collaborate and cooperate effectively. Continued operational success of the dual management structure depends upon this open and frequent communication between the LInC manager and other LInC staff and courthouse managers. This will become increasingly important as the LInC expands into other areas of Alberta.

The only formal documentation available that articulates the responsibilities of the LInC manager and the court manager are the broad-based guidelines provided in the LInC's *Service Vision and Program Design*. The dual management structure could be strengthened by a comprehensive set of management policies that provides the LInC manager and courthouse manager with clear guidelines on their individual responsibilities, and that could also be a reference source for other LInC staff to clarify their reporting requirements to each manager.

Recommendation: The LInC should consider developing and implementing a comprehensive set of management policies that would provide the LInC manager and courthouse manager with clear guidelines on their individual responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities of LInC staff. The evaluation found that LInC staff have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities. Staff speak positively about collaboration and sharing of resources between LInC offices and believe the quarterly in-person meetings with all staff are a valuable asset for fostering good relations between sites.

The one concern expressed by several stakeholders is the risk of coordinators providing legal advice as opposed to legal information. Legal information services such as the LInC regularly encounter the difficult distinction between the provision of legal advice and legal information. SRLs who are often under stress over their legal situation and are seeking whatever assistance they can find likely have difficulty understanding and accepting that the coordinators can only provide them with a certain amount of legal information and not legal advice. Although LInC staff themselves do not appear to see this as an issue, some stakeholders believe this should be a concern for the LInC. The LInC has made some consideration of this, in that a requirement of the

coordinator position is extensive court experience and knowledge of providing legal information versus legal advice. Some stakeholders suggest, however, that the LInC needs to better define the coordinators' role and tasks as well as establish some mechanisms for quality control, such as manuals documenting the information that can be given. However, because of the wide range of legal issues that clients have and the types of assistance provided by the LInC, compiling such manuals would take considerable time and effort. Several suggested that a staff lawyer at the LInC could ameliorate this risk, in that the staff lawyer could check forms.

Recommendation: The LInC should consider taking steps to ensure that staff are not providing legal advice, given the possible consequences. Steps could include monitoring of client files or providing staff with training and guidelines on legal information versus legal advice. Another option is providing LInC with access to a lawyer to assist clients that need legal advice. This could be in the form of a one-time assessment or a partnership developed for consulting on a longer term basis.

Collaborative efforts and partnerships. For a relatively new service, the LInC has established connections with a number of organizations and has developed strong relationships with organizations that can provide clients with some type of legal advice or legal representation. Other than the ALL, relationships are informal, and mainly involve making referrals to and from these organizations. The LInC has made considerable efforts to develop the relations with other service providers for the purpose of referrals, and these organizations are satisfied with their relationship with the LInC. Indeed, LInC coordinators make efforts to visit other agencies and learn about their services. There is further opportunity for the LInC to promote their own services and develop relationships with other organizations. Based on the community organization and other government department survey there are organizations within the communities that have not heard of the LInC, or that do not currently have a relationship with the LInC but are interested in pursuing one.

The LInC has not yet made considerable progress towards one of its objectives, which is to encourage ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources. At this point, ongoing efforts by the LInC appear to be mainly to develop the relations between the LInC itself and other service providers for the purpose of referrals. Given the time and effort required in establishing and setting up the LInCs, receiving the proper training, and serving clients, coordinators likely have little time for fostering relations between service providers. Plus, the LInC was without a manager for several months early in the implementation of the LInCs, which would make attaining this objective even more challenging.

Although the LInC and the FLIC have developed strong relationships in Edmonton and Red Deer, and make referrals to each other, there is some uncertainty about the difference between the services provided by each of these organizations. Further, SRLs that experience family law issues and would go to the FLIC are often experiencing other legal issues that would be covered by the LInC. However, those most closely involved with the two services do not appear to see this as an issue. Both the LInC intake data and client survey identified that all the LInC offices handle a significant number of family law matters, although only the Grande Prairie LInC is formally mandated to assist with family law issues, as no FLIC office exists in Grande Prairie. There may be some potential to develop some efficiencies and integration of these two similar

services. As well, several stakeholders identified a need to consider how to integrate the services generally provided to SRLs, to make the services more efficient and accessible to SRLs.

Recommendation: Now that the LInC has re-established a LInC manager, they should continue efforts towards achieving the objective of encouraging ongoing, collaborative, and consultative relationships among justice service providers/resources. To assist in these efforts, the LInC may want to delineate the roles of the LInC manager and the LInC coordinators in fostering relations. For example, the LInC manager could focus on the relations among justice service providers, and the coordinators could focus on developing relations between the LInC and other service providers.

Recommendation: It may be useful to conduct an assessment of the FLIC and the LInC services, determining if duplications exist or if there are ways to integrate the services and/or capture efficiencies for both Alberta Justice as well as for SRLs. For example, a suggestion was to combine the two small FLIC and LInC offices in Red Deer and make more efficient use of their combined resources. This could also be a first step in the integration of the SRL services that some stakeholders are recommending.

Objective 3: Identifying effective practices and/or any barriers in the implementation of the project that can inform future program implementation

LInC staffing and training of staff. Alberta Justice has effectively identified the needed skill set for the coordinator positions and has hired employees with the required skills. Stakeholders at all sites spoke of how well-matched the coordinators are for the positions. Indeed, some stakeholders believe that the success of the LInC is the result of the people hired to staff the centres. Qualities identified as necessary for the coordinator position include knowledge of the court process, a willingness to find the information clients require, an outgoing personality, and patience and empathy to listen to clients' concerns and give them the assistance they need. Stakeholders believe the current coordinators all possess these qualities, with all the coordinators having had experience as judicial clerks, and most having 10 years or more of such experience.

However, given the range of issues and clients that coordinators are dealing with, coordinators require knowledge on all the courts, and stakeholders say that even coordinators with court clerk experience have a large learning curve. Professional development opportunities, therefore, are important but challenging to provide and still keep the LInCs open, given that each LInC is staffed by at most two coordinators. Because the LInC is an on-demand service located at the courthouse, the expectation by both clients and other service providers, however, is that the LInCs will be open and available during the same hours as other courthouse services. In addition, as the demand for LInC services are expected to increase, this will further challenge their ability to provide staff with professional development opportunities and still keep the LInCs open.

Recommendation: The LInC should continue making ongoing professional development available to staff.

Recommendation: As the demand for LInC services grows, the LInC will have to implement strategies for providing professional development opportunities while keeping services open to clients.

Accessibility of the LInC. A major challenge that all LInCs appeared to have experienced during their establishment is in finding the necessary space requirements. Because the LInCs are located in the courthouses, and space in general is limited in these facilities, each LInC has had to adapt to the available space at each courthouse. This has created some accessibility issues. Privacy and space is an issue, particularly for the Red Deer LInC, which is very small, with all the resources in the one office. As a result, clients wanting to use different resources within the LInC are not afforded privacy. As well, because the Red Deer LInC also serves as a kiosk, there can be a lack of privacy for clients if the kiosk component is busy. Considerations are apparently being made for expanding into an adjacent office, which will help to alleviate this situation, but will still not provide a private area for clients to call the ALL. Further, neither the Red Deer nor Grande Prairie LInCs have private areas designated for clients to call the ALL. While the Edmonton LInC did have privacy issues, these have been resolved with the addition of the second interview room.

While some stakeholders said that at times there can be long wait times for clients at the Edmonton LInC, clients themselves are generally positive about their wait times. Wait times do not appear to be an accessibility issue at the Red Deer or Grande Prairie LInCs; however, if the demand for services increases, as is expected, they may also experience similar wait times.

Whether there is a segment of the population that may be in need of the LInC, but for various reasons is facing barriers in accessing the services, is unknown. Certain populations may be reluctant to use the LInC because they are intimidated by the courthouse location and/or the security system where it exists. Suggested solutions include some type of mobile LInC unit that could go out to locations where this underrepresented population would be more comfortable with accessing the LInC, or partnering with other organizations that currently serve marginalized populations.

The evaluation found that other accessibility issues, such as meeting the needs of persons with disabilities or those whose first language is not English, do not appear to be an issue at present. However, given the increasing population of Alberta, there may be a need to provide some type of interpretation services.

The evaluation found that the LInCs experienced a number of occasions over this first year of operation when they were closed, particularly the Grande Prairie LInC. Because the LInCs are staffed by one to two coordinators they must close if both the coordinators are unavailable (for example, if they are all on training, at meetings, or on holidays), and services to SRLs are disrupted. Although LInC staff appear to place priority on keeping the LInCs open, this disruption of service may be unavoidable at the present staffing levels, while also ensuring that staff are provided with adequate training opportunities.

Recommendation: The LInC should work with organizations to determine if there are certain populations that are not accessing the LInC and to assess the barriers to access and potential solutions for overcoming these barriers. One suggestion made by several stakeholders is the possibility of satellite or mobile LInCs. Given that the Red Deer LInC is already travelling to circuit points within its catchment area, mobile LInCs are a possibility; however, staffing these units could be an issue.

Recommendation: There are proactive steps the LInC could take with respect to assisting SRLs with special needs. For clients who have difficulties with English, the LInC could contract with an interpretation service such as CanTalk.

Recommendation: In current sites, and as expansion occurs, the LInC needs to ensure that the physical space provides appropriate privacy for clients receiving assistance from LInC staff as well as those clients calling the ALL.

Communication strategy. The LInC implemented an effective communication strategy to other members of the justice system and community organizations. The evaluation found numerous ways in which the LInC communicated their services, both at the implementation phase by engaging NGOs in this process, and through continued communication with NGOs and with other areas of Alberta Justice. As noted, there are still opportunities for promoting the LInC, given the number of organizations that have not heard of the LInC.

The LInC has not implemented an ongoing communication strategy to the public after its initial efforts which primarily involved media attention around official openings. LInC clients affirmed that they mainly found out about the LInC through someone at the courthouse. Stakeholders also say that the public hears of the LInC through word of mouth. While some stakeholders believe that the LInC could not handle any increased traffic that advertisement to the public would bring, others emphasize that it is important to inform the public of the availability of these services. Given that the LInCs in Red Deer and Grande Prairie serve large areas outside of their immediate centres and do not have the same concerns as the Edmonton LInC about operating at capacity, these areas could benefit from promotional efforts to ensure organizations and potential clients are aware of the services and that they can be accessed by telephone or email.

Organizations use various methods for promoting their services, such as signage, brochures, and websites. However, the LInC currently provides minimal information on their website. And the evaluation found there are opportunities for the LInC to increase the visibility of its signage, as well as to improve its brochures/pamphlets.

Recommendation: The LInC should consider developing and implementing an ongoing strategy to promote its service to the public.

Recommendation: As part of its promotion efforts the LInC could look at ways to augment its promotional materials. This could include ways to improve its website and access to the website, its signage, and brochures (particularly including contact information in the brochures).

Collection of LInC intake data. Alberta Justice and the LInC took proactive steps to put an intake data collection strategy in place at the outset of the LInCs. Considering how new the LInC is, it has collected a large amount of data on the services provided to clients. However, the current data collection process will not support ongoing evaluation of the LInCs.

The data collection strategy has been an evolving process and has been modified based on client input (data collection moved from a long to a short form). In addition, staff time is limited and the focus is on client service. As a result, data collection is not systematic: LInC staff collect some information only when there is time or when coordinators are comfortable asking clients for the information. With data collection occurring in an inconsistent manner, numerous intake records are incomplete. This is further compounded by the fact that the current database records a large proportion of the data entry on a “Yes” or “No” basis, and unentered data defaults as a “No.” Given that coordinators are not always able to collect and record all data, this leads to uncertainty as to whether a “No” answer is actually a “no response”. In addition, some data entry fields have no restrictions on data entry, allowing the data recorder to enter data freely in any manner, making it difficult to aggregate. For example, the intake data had 18 different permutations of listing clients’ residence in Edmonton, including a variety of misspellings. This makes it difficult of aggregate data reliably.

There are also some data being collected that the LInC is not fully utilizing. For example, visits to the LInC that are under 15 minutes in duration comprise 80% of total client assists. However, the reasons for these visits as well as referrals made during these visits are currently not aggregated and reported on, but are recorded either in Word documents or handwritten logs and are not being used.

Recommendation: The LInC’s data collection process should be evaluated and refined. The LInC should conduct a complete review of the data it is collecting, how it is collecting it, and how it is housing and aggregating the data for each in-person assist of over 15 minutes, in-person assists of under 15 minutes, telephone assists, and email assists. The data should be collected in a formalized manner that is least intrusive to the client, is easily collected and entered by the coordinators, and can easily be aggregated. Further, steps should be taken to ensure data is collected and entered consistently between all sites.

Objective 4: The degree to which the LInCs have assisted in enhancing efficiencies in the court system

Assessing the degree to which the LInCs have assisted in enhancing the efficiencies in the court system is challenged in that few or no statistics or data appear to be kept on SRLs. Any conclusions must be based primarily on stakeholder observations. Stakeholders mainly believe that the LInC has enhanced efficiencies throughout the court system, and say it is helpful to courthouse staff and other organizations to have somewhere to direct SRLs. Before the LInC, stakeholders say they had to either turn people away or try to think of possible agencies that could assist SRLs.

Access to Justice. The evaluation found that the LInCs are providing SRLs with greater access to justice in that SRLs are given access to resources they might not otherwise have, they are obtaining a better understanding of the justice process, and they are receiving referrals to other services that can assist them. This puts SRLs in a better position to work towards the resolution they need for their legal issues, and makes for a better experience for SRLs. Clients and other stakeholders agree that the LInC is enhancing the SRLs' experience with the court process, and is giving them a better understanding of what they have to do to resolve their issues. And LInC clients that have resolved their legal issues credit the LInC for helping them reach resolution. As well, some of these clients were able to resolve their legal issues without going to court, which should further add to efficiencies in the court system.

Impact on the judicial counters. The LInC is having an impact on the judicial counters. Impacts noticed by some clerks include that SRLs seem happier, the court forms are more complete, the filing process is expedited, clerks have more time to assist other members of the public, and other members of the public waiting for assistance are less frustrated because their wait times are reduced. Clients confirm that the LInC gave them a better understanding of how to complete their court forms.

As well, the kiosk in Edmonton and the kiosk component of the LInC in Red Deer are helpful additions to the courthouses in that SRLs can make a first stop at the kiosks, and either be directed to other appropriate areas of the courthouse, to other agencies, or into the LInC for more detailed assistance.

Impact on the court process. Identifying the impact on the court process is more difficult. Most stakeholders are not in a position to know if the LInC services have impacted the amount of court time required to hear SRLs' cases. The judiciary themselves are, for the most part, not in a position to know if an SRL has used the LInC, as they cannot ask questions that would place them at risk of losing their impartiality. As well, several stakeholders questioned if some judges are aware of the LInC and its services, despite the communications distributed within Alberta Justice. A few of the judiciary stakeholders have observed that some SRLs are coming to court with some understanding of the process, with their forms more complete, and are better organized. Clients that had represented themselves in court believed they had been better able to represent themselves as a result of the assistance from the LInC. When SRLs come to court with well-prepared court forms, this reduces the number of questions the judge or justice must ask the SRL and expedites the court process, making for a better experience for all. In addition, better-prepared SRLs make more effective use of their court time. Given that the LInCs are still relatively new, it may be too soon for a noticeable impact to be observed in the courts, or to attribute the preparedness of SRLs to the LInC. Plus, as pointed out by some stakeholders, the court process is complex, particularly for Court of Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal, and the public in general is often nervous of the court process and can find it confusing and difficult even with the assistance provided by the LInC.

Recommendation: The LInC may want to consider implementing a means of obtaining regular follow-up feedback from other Alberta Justice staff over the next few years to assist in assessing the impact of the LInC on the court system.

Recommendation: Alberta Justice should conduct a review of the LInC logic model produced for the evaluation (see Appendix A) in order to formulate a performance measurement strategy for assessing outcomes, and to identify indicators and data sources for measuring outcomes.