

A Series of Qualitative Studies  
on Serious Legal Problems



# A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Faced by Chinese Canadians in Greater Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia

Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria



Greater Victoria  
Local Immigration  
Partnership



Inter-Cultural  
Association  
of Greater Victoria

March 2025

*The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice Canada or the government of Canada.*



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

Canada

Information contained in this publication or product may be reproduced, in part or in whole, and by any means, for personal or public non-commercial purposes, without charge or further permission, unless otherwise specified.

You are asked to:

- exercise due diligence in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced;
- indicate both the complete title of the materials reproduced, as well as the author organization; and
- indicate that the reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada and that the reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.

Commercial reproduction and distribution is prohibited except with written permission from the Department of Justice Canada. For more information, please contact the Department of Justice Canada at: [www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca).

©His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 2025

A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Faced by Chinese Canadians in Greater Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia

J4-189/2025E-PDF  
ISBN 978-0-660-79542-3

# Table of Contents

- Land Acknowledgements .....5**
- Research Lead .....6**
- 1 Executive Summary .....7**
- 2 Introduction.....8**
  - 2.1 Background to Legal Needs Surveys .....8**
    - a. “Who Are the Right People to Listen To?” .....8
    - b. A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Series .....8
    - c. Background Demographic Data on Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria .....9
  - 2.2 Research Questions ..... 10**
- 3 Methodology ..... 11**
  - a. Terms Used in the Study ..... 11
  - b. Study Advisory: Nothing About Us Without Us ..... 11
  - c. Recruitment ..... 11
  - d. Interview Procedures ..... 12
  - e. Analysis..... 12
- 4 Findings..... 13**
  - 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants ..... 13**
  - 4.2 Types of Serious Legal Problems ..... 16**
  - 4.3 Strategies for Resolving Legal Problems ..... 17**
    - a. Strategies for finding information ..... 17
    - b. Strategies for resolving a legal problem ..... 18
  - 4.4 Health, Economic, and Social Impacts ..... 22**
    - a. Health consequences ..... 22
    - b. Social consequences ..... 23
    - c. Economic consequences ..... 23
  - 4.5 Barriers to Justice ..... 24**
    - a. Endurance as Cultural Barrier ..... 24
    - b. Immigrant Status and Related Intersectional Vulnerabilities ..... 25
    - c. Language and Trust in Translated Information ..... 25
    - d. Lack of Information ..... 25
    - e. Time and Cost ..... 26
    - f. Perceived Chance of Success..... 27

**4.6 Other Factors Affecting Experiences and Outcomes ..... 27**

- a. Gender ..... 27
- b. Agency ..... 28
- c. Multiple Legal Problems and Serious Effects ..... 29

**4.7 Recommendations for Governments and (Legal) Support Services ..... 29**

**5 Discussion..... 31**

- 5.1 Research Highlights ..... 31**
- 5.2 Culture, Language, and Legal Strategies in a Biased Context ..... 32**
- 5.3 A Legal System Out of Reach ..... 33**

**6 References ..... 35**

**7 Resources ..... 37**

## Land Acknowledgements

This research took place on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish people. As newcomers and settlers, we are uninvited visitors on this land and we acknowledge with respect the Songhees, Esquimalt, Tsartlip, Tseycum, Tsawout, Pauquachin and T'sou-ke nations as well as the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. In the spirit of creating strong, respectful relationships, we are committed to working in partnership with all Indigenous communities to reduce the impact of colonization that continues through our work with newcomers.

**We gratefully acknowledge funding by the Department of Justice Canada.**

## Research Lead

The **Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)** offers services for immigrant and refugee newcomers, including settlement and integration services, translation and interpretation, English classes, mentoring, job search assistance and guidance, volunteer matching, and peer support. We also provide outreach and education in the community through arts programming, community development workshops on anti-racism, multiculturalism, diversity awareness, immigration, and human rights.

The **Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership (GVLIP)** is a program of ICA. By listening, informing, researching, connecting, and collaborating on community projects and events we foster partnerships with local governments, employers, educators, healthcare professionals, and housing organizations to create a welcoming, equitable, inclusive, just, and well-connected community in which everybody has opportunities to thrive, learn, live, work, and play in safety.

### Research Team

- Florentien Verhage, Ph.D., lead researcher
- Robin McGeough, researcher
- Hanna Kontomyrova, research support

### Advisory Team

- Gayle Nye
- Gilbert Cheung
- Grace Wong Sneddon
- Liz Li
- Nora Butz
- Solomon Wu

**We are grateful for the participation of the respondents, for trusting us with their stories, and for helping us understand the legal strategies and legal needs of Chinese Canadians.**

# 1 Executive Summary

This study was designed to gather information from Chinese Canadian communities in Greater Victoria and Greater Vancouver to gain deeper insight into their experience when navigating serious legal problems. Twenty participants, all immigrants of Chinese descent, shared the following key points:

## Barriers to Justice

- Lack of information (85%) and lack of time (58%) were top barriers to justice.
- Participants requested better access to translated information that goes beyond introductory pamphlets but also worried that important information is lost in translation.
- Half of the participants hesitated to ask for help and felt that cultural expectations within the Chinese community encouraged them to endure rather than seek help for a serious legal problem. This was especially so when experiencing discrimination and harassment.
- Gender and immigration status were intersectional factors that affected some participants ability to access justice.
- Participants worried that the Canadian justice system would not be responsive to them because it includes few representatives that had cultural proximity to them (such as having immigrant backgrounds, speaking with accented English, being of Chinese descent, or other such backgrounds).

## Information finding strategies

- Online information (68%) and information obtained from family and friends (58%) were the top two sources of information participants sought, though this information was rated as only “somewhat helpful.”
- Government or legal services with online automated message systems and long timelines were perceived as being out of reach and often not a viable solution to a problem.
- Participants preferred off-line advice from multi-lingual legal experts and community workers with cultural proximity.

## Legal recourse strategies

- Complex legal problems that involved family conflicts were more often resolved through the formal legal system (89%).
- Problems that were related to discrimination were not generally resolved through official legal channels.

## Consequences of facing legal problems

- Facing a serious legal problem impacted participants’ lives and worsened health conditions, caused excessive stress, anxiety and depression and increased the need for health services (95%). Social consequences, such as the loss of a social network, were more often reported by women (92%).
- Maintaining agency and choice throughout the process is important and adds to someone’s feeling of dignity and value.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background to Legal Needs Surveys

#### a. “Who Are the Right People to Listen To?”<sup>1</sup>

Canada’s justice system is in crisis as evidenced by significant delays across the justice system, increases in costs of legal help, limited eligibility for legal aid, and many communities feeling alienated from the justice system (Farrow 2024). Calling on the legal profession to find solutions in collaboration with other sectors, Farrow argues that:

“[I]t is the **public**...that needs to be the focus in terms of understanding current justice problems with a view of finding appropriate, innovative, efficient, accessible, and just solutions...**these and other voices are the right ones to be listening to** when it comes to understanding everyday legal problems and the social context in which people, particularly the most vulnerable and those with the least access to justice, experience those problems.” (Farrow 2024, 8-9, **bold ours**)

Asking “people directly about problems in their daily lives that may have a legal dimension” are important for governments and policy-makers when designing new legal policies and programs (Savage and McDonald 2022, 4).

The 2021 Canadian Legal Problems Survey (CLPS) takes such a people-centered approach and received responses from more than 20,000 randomly selected residents of Canadian provinces. The survey revealed that 34% of Canadians experienced at least one legal problem in the three years prior to being polled and that while a large majority (90%) found it important to resolve the problem they experienced, only 33% involved the formal justice system in that solution. Lack of knowledge, expressed in a variety of ways (e.g., not knowing something could be done about it, not knowing where to go, etc.), was the most often cited barrier for people experiencing serious legal problems. High cost (37%) or usefulness (41%) were also mentioned as reasons for not contacting a lawyer (Savage and McDonald 2022).

Past legal needs surveys conducted in Canada showed that individuals with social disadvantages are more likely to experience multiple serious legal problems (Currie 2009, 2016) which makes it particularly important to listen to them (Farrow 2024).

This small qualitative study highlights the voices of one such community: Chinese Canadians living in Greater Vancouver or Greater Victoria.

#### b. A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Series

In 2020-2021, Justice Canada invited multiple communities to undertake a series of small qualitative studies looking at the experience of minority populations such as 2SLGBTQI+ populations, Black Canadians, persons with disabilities, immigrants and Indigenous people. One such small study “Serious Legal Problems Faced by Immigrants in Victoria and Vancouver, B.C.” was carried out by this research

---

<sup>1</sup> Farrow 2024, 8.

team (Verhage 2022). Another study was completed in 2024 with seniors living in Ontario.<sup>2</sup> Reports on three additional populations are currently being completed: Muslim populations, Jewish populations and Chinese Canadians.

For this study, a small number of Chinese Canadian individuals were recruited to take part in a 1.5-hour in-depth conversation to enable them to share their story and carefully track the individual’s experience with facing serious legal problems. This qualitative study complements the CLPS and enables us to learn where barriers to justice hinder participants’ desire to resolve a complex legal problem.

**c. Background Demographic Data on Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria**

Vancouver is a large metropolitan area on the mainland of British Columbia. According to the 2021 Census, the Greater Vancouver region has more than 2.6 million residents with a majority identifying as racialized (55%). Greater Victoria is the capital of British Columbia; it has a majority white population (78%) and includes a relatively small urban core with a larger rural margin around it. It is located on Vancouver Island, which makes the area less accessible and less well-connected to the rest of the province and services than Vancouver. For demographic data on these regions, see figure 1.

**Figure 1 - Population Overview for Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria (Statistics Canada 2023)**

	Greater Vancouver		Greater Victoria	
	# Number	% Percent	# Number	% Percent
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>2,607,010</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>388,475</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Racialized Population</b>	<b>1,420,270</b>	<b>55% of total population</b>	<b>64,775</b>	<b>17% of total population</b>
<b>Chinese descent</b>	<b>512,260</b>	<b>36% of racialized population</b> (20% of total population)	<b>17,385</b>	<b>26% of racialized population</b> (5% of total population)
<b>Immigrant Population</b>	<b>1,089,180</b>	<b>42% of total population</b>	<b>73,345</b>	<b>19% of total population</b>
<b>Birthplace China</b>	<b>204,825</b>	<b>19% of immigrant population</b> (8% of total population)	<b>6,480</b>	<b>9% of immigrant population</b> (2% of total population)

<sup>2</sup> These studies can be found on the Justice Canada website: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/survey-enquete.html>

## 2.2 Research Questions

The goal of this study was to understand the types of legal problems that people of Chinese descent face in their everyday lives in Canada, to examine the methods that they use to resolve these legal problems, and to look at the economic, social, physical and mental consequences of having to deal with these legal problems. To this end, we interviewed twenty people of Chinese descent living on Vancouver Island and in the Greater Vancouver area. Research questions included:

- 1) What types of serious legal problems have you experienced?
- 2) How have you tried to resolve your problems and what has been the outcome of these efforts?
- 3) Have you resolved your problems through recourse to the formal legal system?
- 4) What barriers have you faced when trying to obtain information and legal advice to resolve your problems?
- 5) What has been the economic, social, physical and mental health impact of these problems on you (and your family)?

## 3 Methodology

### a. Terms Used in the Study

**Serious Legal Problems:** A problem or dispute with someone like a landlord, a neighbour, a family member, a business, or a government service that is not easy to fix. People were eligible regardless of seeking recourse through the formal legal system and regardless of solving the legal problem they faced.

**Chinese Canadians:** People were eligible to participate in this study if they identified as being of Chinese descent. They could hold a variety of nationalities and/or immigration statuses, i.e., they could be Canadian citizens born in Canada or naturalized Canadian citizens. As well, they could be permanent or temporary residents with a variety of other nationalities.<sup>3</sup>

**Temporary and Permanent Resident (PR) Status:** the term “permanent resident” is applicable to persons who have legally immigrated to Canada but are not yet Canadian citizens. Skilled workers, family sponsored immigrants and refugees all have PR status on arrival. The term “temporary resident” describes temporary foreign workers or international students. Temporary residents often have less access to available services than permanent residents and citizens.

### b. Study Advisory: Nothing About Us Without Us

The two main researchers in the study were white and of European descent (one Canadian born, one an immigrant). To ensure equitable procedures, research implementation, data analysis, and reporting, a study advisory was created made up of six individuals who identified as being of Chinese descent. Advisory members were selected based on their connections to local Chinese communities, their expertise, and representing diverse intersectional identities. Advisory members were compensated for their time.

The advisory team reviewed and provided recommendations on the study materials. They reviewed and advised on the first draft and data-analysis and the final draft of this report.

To ensure confidentiality, the advisory did not have access to the names of participants, raw data, interview notes, or interview recordings and transcripts. Advisory members were not eligible to be participants in the study.

### c. Recruitment

To invite participants, digital and physical posters were shared in English, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese. A multilingual research webpage included detailed information about the project, recruitment information and information on the research design. Recruitment information clearly stated that interpretation would be provided during the interview.

Prospective participants were asked to fill in a short survey that asked them for their contact details and

---

<sup>3</sup> Chinese Canadians have arrived in British Columbia from every continent since first arriving in 1877 on Nuu-chahnulth territory (Chinese Canadian Museum 2025). Chinese Canadians have lived in B.C. for multiple generations and could have arrived from places such as China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mauritius, South Africa and many other countries.

a few demographic facts to help determine eligibility and to ensure there was some spread in identity markers for selected participants. Of 27 prospective participants, 21 followed up to arrange an interview. Of those 21 requests, one was rejected because of a suspected scam and 20 interviews were held.

#### **d. Interview Procedures**

Between October 2024 and January 2025, a total of 20 virtual interviews were conducted with people of Chinese descent living in Greater Vancouver (10 interviews), Greater Victoria (8 interviews), and Nanaimo (2 interviews). Participants received a letter of information and signed a letter of consent. All participants were compensated for their time. Sixteen interviews were conducted via Teams and five in-person. Eight interviews were done with the help of an interpreter. All interviews were recorded with participants' permission.

The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in a trauma-informed and strength-based manner. Questions did not focus on the details of incidents of violence or abuse but instead asked about how people navigated the legal problem. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours.

Many questions were open-ended but some were multiple choice or Likert scale options. At the end of each interview, participants were asked a set of demographic questions. Directly after the interview, the interviewer recorded all multiple choice, Likert scale, and demographic questions in a survey template. Interview notes and transcripts of the audio recordings were saved to track open-ended questions.

#### **e. Analysis**

The open questions recorded in interview notes and audio transcripts were coded into main themes. Themes were determined for each of the main sections of the interview:

- Types of problems and main factors contributing to the problems;
- Strategies for resolving the problems;
- Perceived barriers to justice and outcomes; and
- Economic, social, and health impacts of the legal problems.

## 4 Findings

This report is based on twenty in-depth interviews with people of Chinese descent in British Columbia. The goal of this study is to present the lived experiences of these twenty individuals to give insight into some of the challenges that people of Chinese descent might face when experiencing serious legal problems.

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants<sup>4</sup>

The description below is based on aggregate information from 19 participants. For some of the demographic questions the total responses (n) is less than 19, which means that some participants chose not to answer the question. See also figure 2.

- **Gender and Sexual Orientation:** Thirteen (68%) participants identified as female, and six (32%) as male. None identified as trans. Three of the women identified as bisexual or queer.
- **Age and Disability:** Participants were between 28 and 66-years-old with a mean of 44. Thirteen (68%) were between 30- and 60-years-old, two were 60+ and three were younger than 30. Generally, the women were younger (mean of 33) than the men (mean of 52). Two participants identified as having a disability.
- **Marital Status:** Nine (47%) of participants were married or in a domestic partnership, six (32%) were divorced or separated, two were single. On average, participants' household size included 2.6 individuals (range = 1 to 6).
- **Immigration Category and Current Immigration Status:** While anyone of Chinese descent was eligible to participate, all participants were immigrants. Twelve participants immigrated to Canada as economic immigrants (60%), five arrived as temporary residents and two arrived through the family class category. In terms of citizenship, 11 participants currently had Canadian citizenship (58%).
- **Years in Canada:** At the time of being interviewed, 14 participants had been in Canada for longer than 10 years (74%). Two were newcomers and had been in Canada for less than 5 years.
- **Country of Birth and Mother-Tongue:** All but two (89%) of the participants were born in China, one was born in Taiwan, another in Hong Kong. All but one of them (95%) had Mandarin as a mother tongue, one spoke Cantonese.
- **Language Skills:** Sixteen participants (84%) reported that they speak Mandarin at home, one spoke Cantonese, three participants shared that they also speak English at home. Eight participants requested an interpreter for the interview. Thirteen participants (68%) reported that they felt comfortable or very comfortable speaking English and were able to communicate sufficiently for their needs or comparably to a native English speaker. Four were somewhat

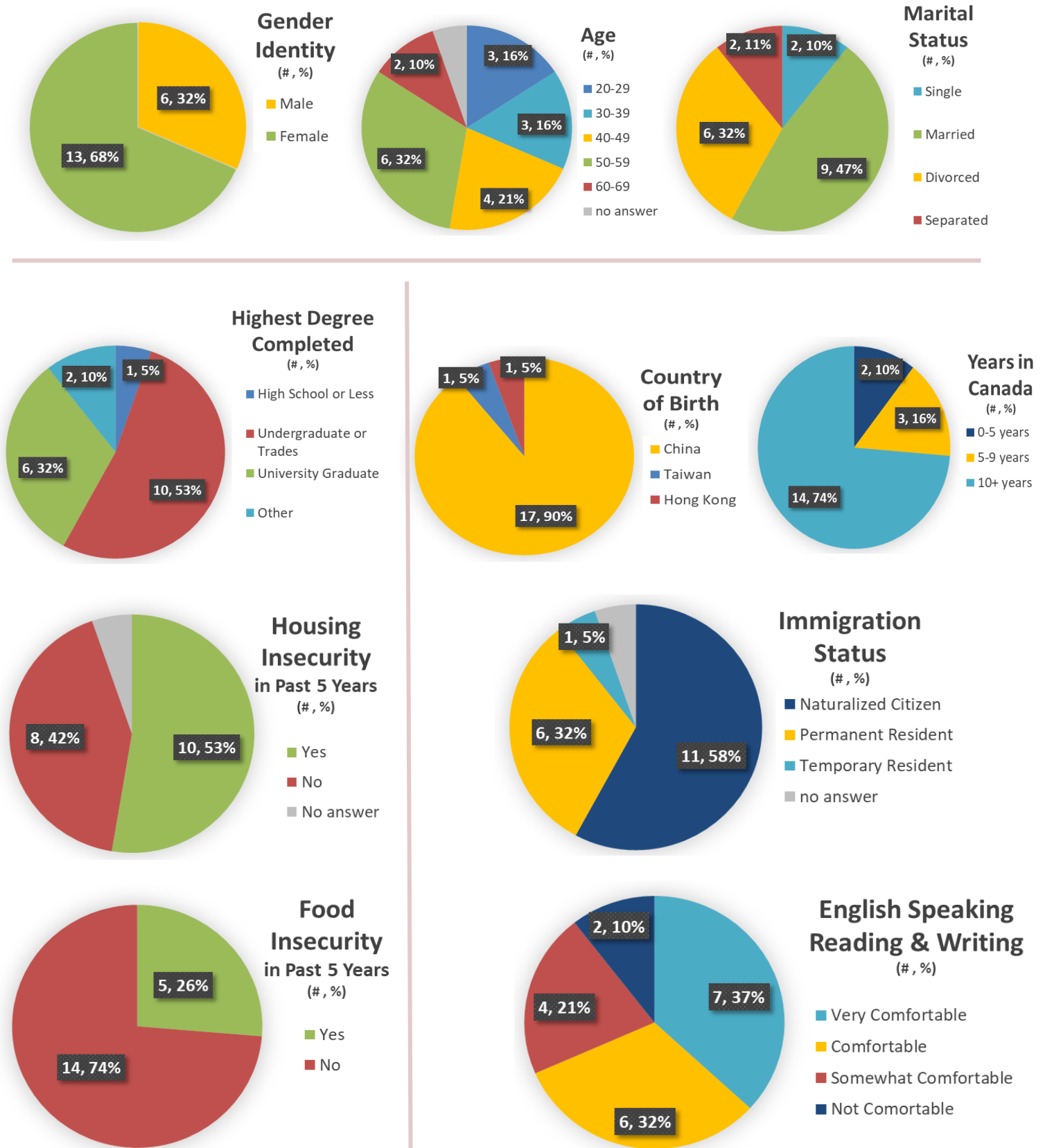
---

<sup>4</sup> Of the twenty participants, one person shared information from the 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective of assisting others with a legal problem. Because this participant did not speak from first-person experience, their demographic information was not included in this demographic profile.

comfortable and able to make themselves clear in simple situations, two said that they were not comfortable speaking English and would struggle to make themselves clear.

- **Education and Work:** Ten participants (53%) reported having an undergraduate or trades degree, six had a graduate degree (32%), and one had less than high school education. Twelve participants (63%) were employed full-time, part-time, or they were self-employed. Four participants were students and two were homemakers. One participant was unemployed and looking for work, and one was retired.
- **Housing and Food Security:** Ten participants (53%) shared that in the last five years they had experienced some level of housing insecurity, for example: they worried about paying their rent or mortgage, needing to downsize, or facing eviction. Some reported that they lived with friends or family or stayed in a shelter or transition house for some time. Most participants (74%) had not experienced food insecurity in the past five years, but five of them did: they had to skip meals, rely on food banks or on family and friends for food.

**Figure 2 - Demographic Summary of Participants**



## 4.2 Types of Serious Legal Problems

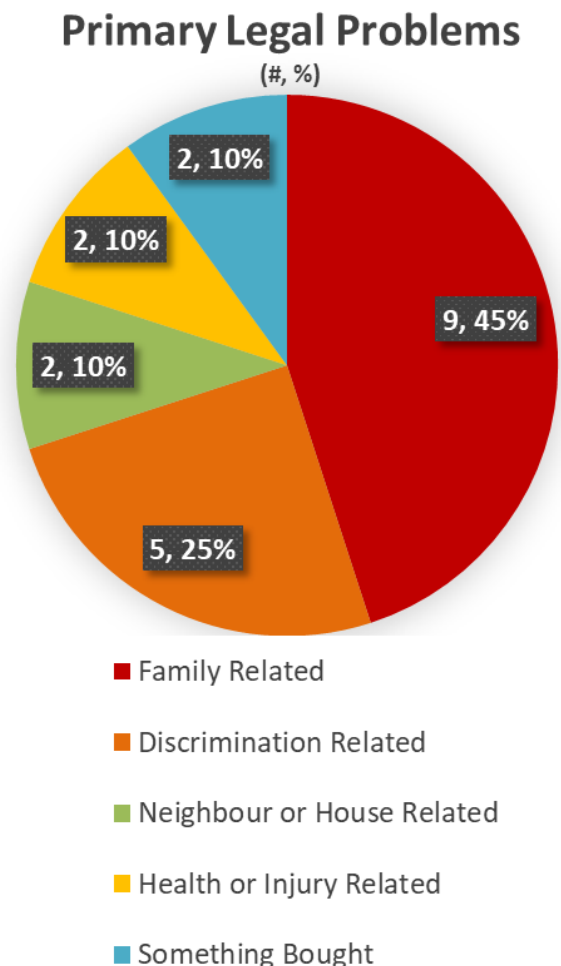
The twenty participants interviewed shared a total of 44 legal problems. Thirteen participants (65%) reported experiencing multiple legal problems at the same time or in succession, with many of the problems being related. For example, in many cases those experiencing domestic violence experienced multiple legal problems: e.g., they would report that they experienced family violence, divorce and custody problems that involved contact with the police as a victim of such violence, and as a result, some of those individuals would experience housing insecurity as well.

When accounting for such multi-layered and complex legal problems, there are 20 separate primary cases (10 of which experienced multiple related problems) across five categories (see figure 3):

- **Family Related Problems (9)**  
Including problems such as domestic violence, harassment, divorce, custody problems, contact with the police as a victim or suspect, and housing problems during a separation.
- **Discrimination or Harassment Related Problems (5)**  
Including discrimination by neighbours, landlords, employers, or a service provider and contact with the police because of such discrimination or harassment.
- **Neighbour or House Related Problems (2)**  
Including problems related to being a tenant or a landlord.
- **Health or Injury Related Problems (2)**  
Including dealing with the aftermath of an accident and consequences for the ability to work.
- **Something Bought (2)**  
Including scams and insurance services.

Family related problems and discrimination or harassment related problems stand out as the two most often reported and complex legal problems that were reported by participants.

Figure 3 - Primary Legal Problems



### 4.3 Strategies for Resolving Legal Problems

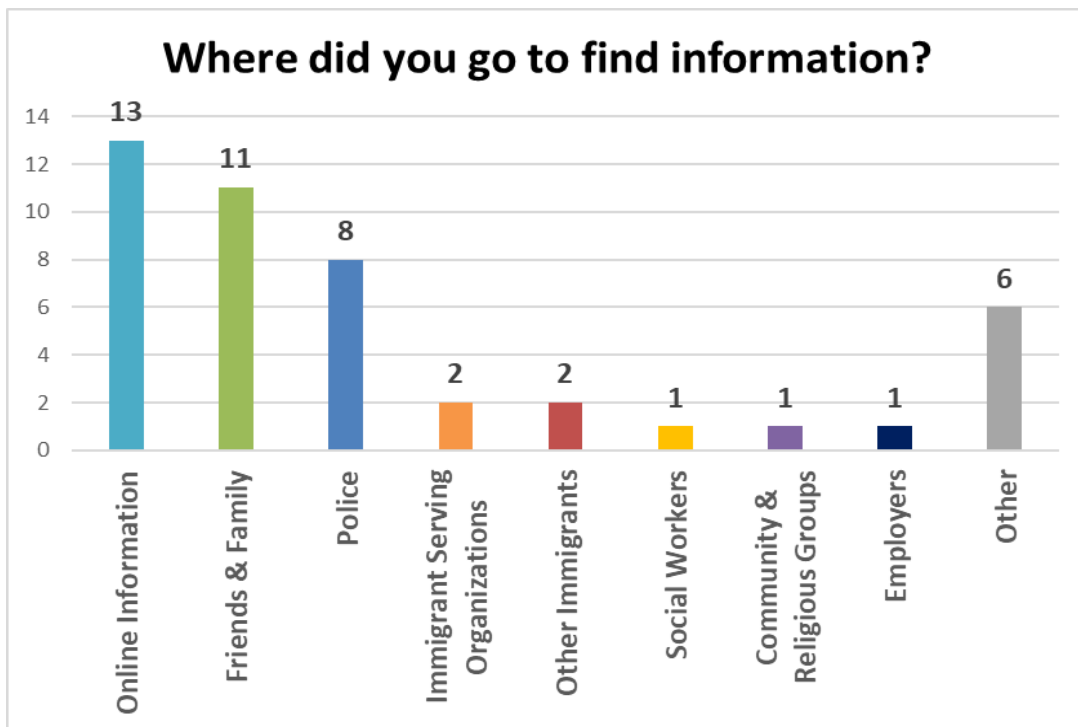
When facing serious legal problems, how did participants find information, attempt to resolve the problem, and how useful was help they received?

#### a. Strategies for finding information

By far, the most popular strategies for finding information were (see figure 4):

- Searching online (13),
- Talking to friends and family (11),
- Receiving information from police services after experiencing an emergency (8).

Figure 4 - Information Sources

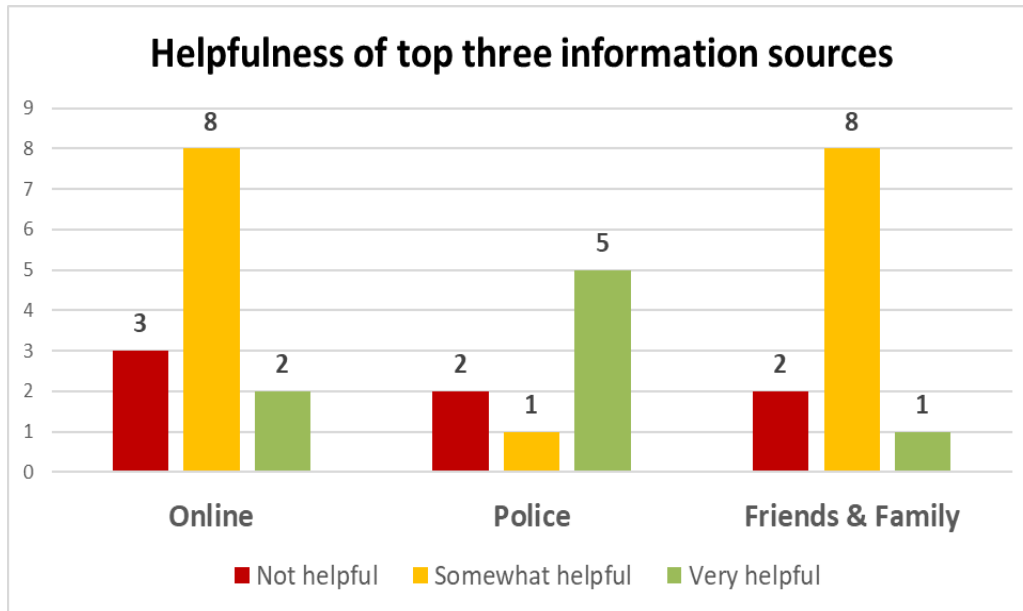


Among other responses, participants shared that they had obtained information from the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC), a bank, the BC Human Rights Tribunal, and a strata council<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of the helpfulness of the three top strategies for finding information, online information and information from family and friends was mostly found to be somewhat helpful, whereas information received from police emergency teams and victim services was more often found very helpful (figure 5).

<sup>5</sup> A strata council is the elected body that manages a strata corporation, which owns common land, as per the [Strata Property Act](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/strata-housing/operating-a-strata/roles-and-responsibilities/strata-councils) in British Columbia. For more information, please see: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/strata-housing/operating-a-strata/roles-and-responsibilities/strata-councils>

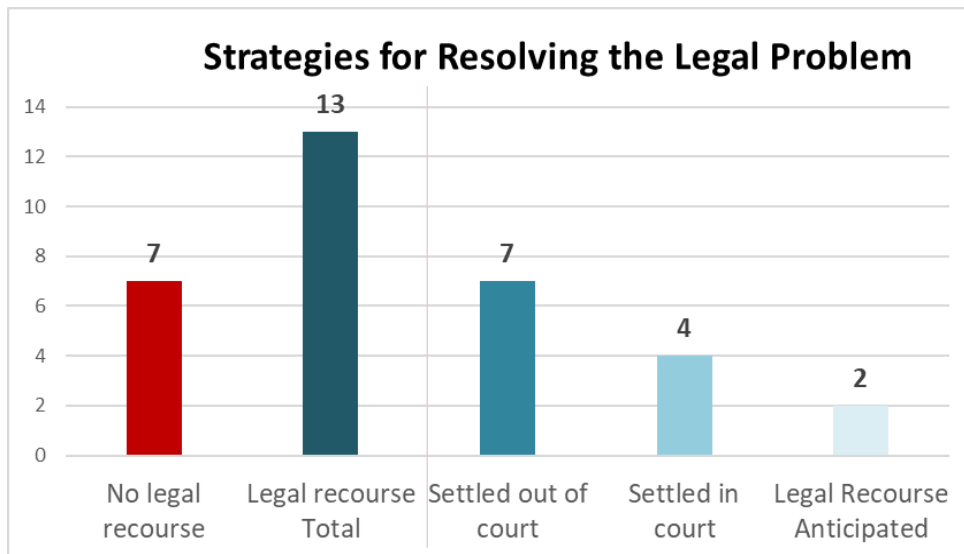
**Figure 5 - Helpfulness of Information**



**b. Strategies for resolving a legal problem**

Of the 20 participants, the majority (65%) took legal recourse which included seven who settled out of court, four who went to court and two who were at the very start of the process (Figure 6).

**Figure 6 - Strategies for Resolving Legal Problem**



Most of those experiencing complex legal problems sought legal recourse. That is, of the 10 participants who experienced complex legal problems, eight sought legal recourse and two did not. Complexity was defined as experiencing multiple related legal problems at the same time.

Seven individuals did *not* take any legal action.

**Legal recourse**

Figure 7 contains an overview of participants that sought legal recourse, the main type of problem they faced (including the number of related problems), the kind of recourse sought, and the status of their cases.

Eight of nine (89%) family related problems that were reported in this study were addressed through some form of legal recourse, whereas only one of the five (20%) discrimination related problems was addressed through the formal legal system.

Of the seven who had the case resolved through legal resource, only two thought the resolution was very fair, one thought it was somewhat fair and five considered it not fairly resolved.

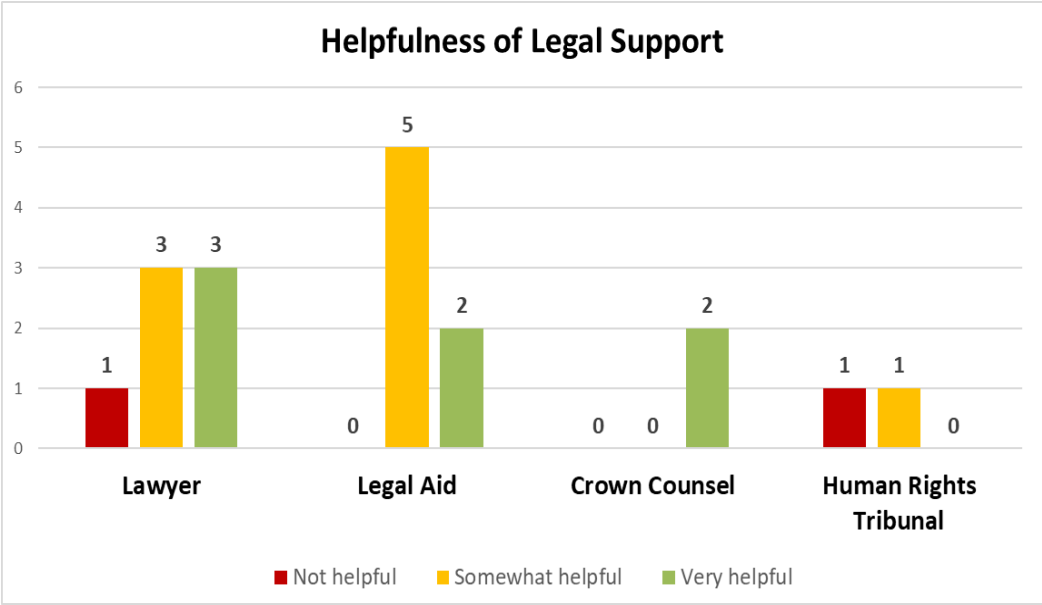
**Figure 7- Type of Legal Problem, Legal Recourse, and Status of the Problem**

Main problem category	Number of legal problems	Kind of Legal Assistance	Court	Resolved?	Closed?
Family related	5	Legal Aid	yes	no	no, ongoing
Family related	4	Defense Counsel	yes	yes	yes
Family related	2	Legal Aid Mediator	yes	no	yes
House related	1	RTB	yes	yes	yes
Family related	4	Legal Aid	no	no	no, ongoing
Injury Related	3	Lawyer	no	no	no, ongoing
Family related	2	Legal Aid	no	yes	yes
Family related	2	Legal Aid Crown Counsel	no	yes	yes
Discrimination related	2	ICBC	no	yes	yes
Family related	1	Legal Aid	no	yes	yes
Injury related	1	Lawyer	no	yes	yes
Family related	1	Future	n/a	n/a	n/a
Family related	1	Future	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Accessing help:** Among participants who sought legal recourse, six obtained Legal Aid and two a lawyer. Two reached out to Crown or Defense counsel, one dealt with ICBC, one to the Resident Tenancy Branch (RTB). Three reached out to the BC Human Rights Tribunal but did not obtain support through them.

Of the participants who sought legal recourse, the majority (9) had difficulty accessing legal help citing: cost (7), language (3), and time (3) as barriers.

**Figure 8 - Helpfulness of Legal Support**



**Usefulness of help:** When tracking the *kind of legal assistance* sought and the helpfulness of that information (see figure 8), support from the Crown counsel was always seen as very useful. Legal aid was often seen as somewhat useful. Receiving help from a lawyer had a wider range of either being very helpful or not being helpful.

Of interest is that approaching the Human Rights Tribunal was never rated as very helpful. Participants reported that the difficulty contacting the Tribunal, and the long timelines involved, was a barrier.

“Even when you send an email, they don’t have any answer for you... my sister, she said: ‘Oh no, those are, you know, very high level. They don’t take a look at your small case’.” [Research participant]

“How could you help a family if you already set the timeline between 1 to 1½ year... the choice they provide to the public is not logical because if you think about reality, the students in the school got bullied or got discriminated on a daily basis. And you [Human Rights Tribunal] said it’s legal support for between 1 and 1 ½ year... it’s not compatible at all.” [Research participant]

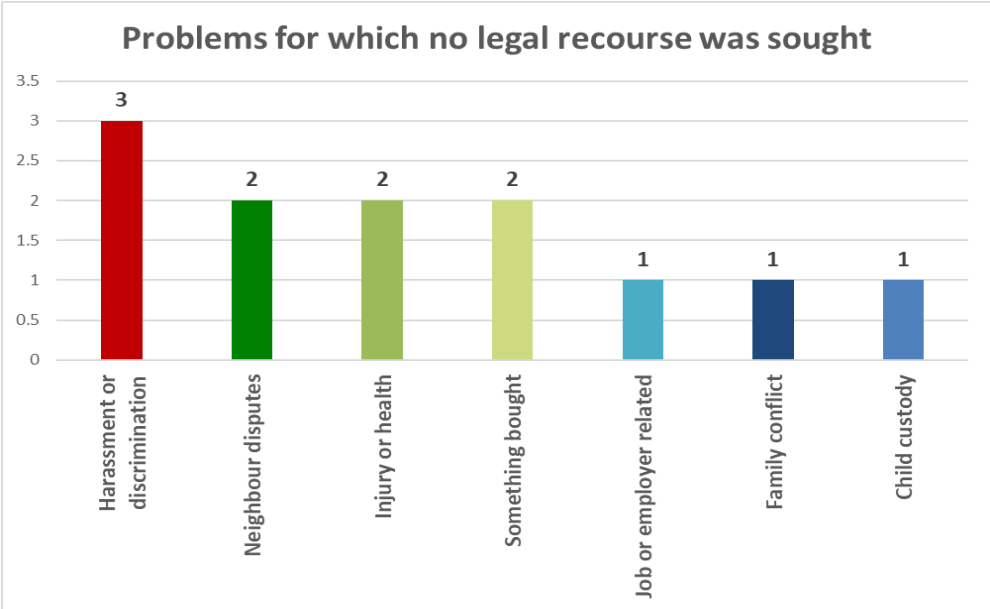
**No legal recourse - Other responses and strategies:**

The seven participants who did not take any legal action reported 12 legal problems between them, some of which were related. Some participants felt alone trying to navigate the problem:

“If it is about a personal thing, I don’t feel like there is a lot of help on the way. Yeah, they usually ask you to solve it yourself first, but it is already hard to solve, personal relationship is hard... Maybe your heart might be hurt, but it’s not physical harm. So we didn’t ask for legal help.” [Research participant]

Problems for which no legal recourse was sought are summarized in figure 9:

**Figure 9 - Problems for which no legal recourse was sought**



Reasons for not seeking legal help were that the cost of legal representation was not worth the cost of what was lost, or that the process was too long or not effective. A participant who experienced discrimination said:

“Maybe I can talk to the manager, but the manager is always on the supervisor’s side, you know... It’s just a waste of my time. I can do it on the internet or something, but I just don’t bother doing that, I just rather take a rest. You know they won’t beat me physically or something, no. Just inside my heart is not very free.” [Research participant]

Some of these individuals took alternative approaches such as referring to an internal reporting system, turning to a strata council, school board, bank, receiving online advice, negotiating with the party involved, or have a friend mediate.

**Accessing help:** All seven participants who did not seek legal recourse reported having difficulties accessing information, reporting that they did not know where to go to find help. The most used resources for help were:

- Friends or family (6)
- Online resources (4)

Four of these individuals tried to resolve the problem they experienced by negotiating with the other person(s) involved.

**Usefulness of help:** None of the participants who did not seek legal recourse found the information they obtained very useful. Most shared that the information found was:

- Somewhat useful (5)
- Not useful at all (2).

Of those who negotiated directly with the parties involved, three said this had not been a successful strategy; for one participant it had been somewhat successful.

**Resolution of problems:** For most participants who did not seek legal recourse, the problem was not resolved and in three cases the problem was ongoing:

- Not resolved (5)
- Resolved (2)

“It’s just something like you couldn’t solve. And that is the only thing you can do: like you leave. It’s like running, running away from a problem. It’s not really solving a problem.” [Research participant]

#### 4.4 Health, Economic, and Social Impacts

Experiencing serious legal problems can have severe impacts on someone’s life. Among the twenty participants, impacts on health and on social lives were most often reported. Almost half of participants also reported financial strain or housing insecurity after or during the time that the problem was faced (see figure 10).

##### a. Health consequences

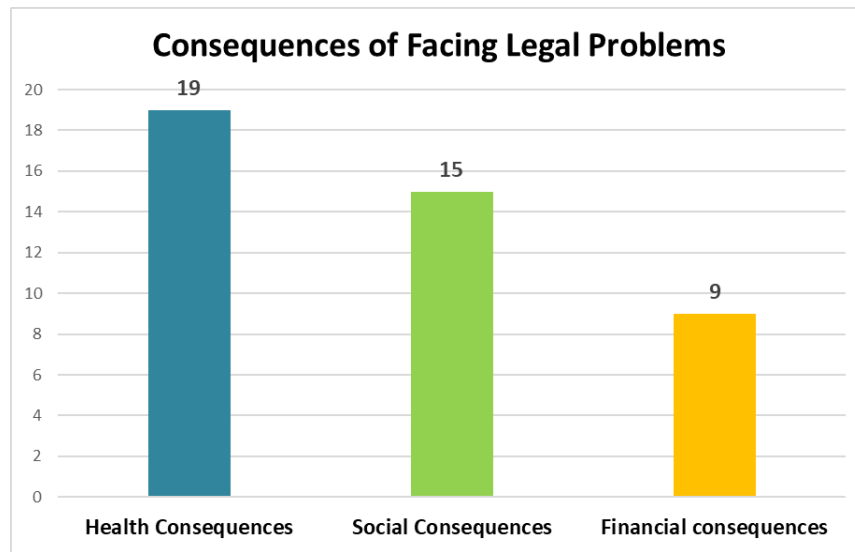
Almost every participant described some level of being stressed (19), anxious, fearful, or sad because of the legal problems that they experienced. Needing medical assistance after an injury, or sustained counselling after experiencing excessive stress, depression and anxiety were health concerns that most seriously affected well-being. Effects on one’s mental health were often described as affecting their dignity as a human being:

“Psychologically it imposed a lot of shadow and pressure on me.” [Research participant]

“I just have not felt human in so long.” [Research participant]

“I feel like I’m not a live person...And when I look back, I think that’s the time period my condition was at the bottom because I got sick all the time...when I look back now, I knew it was because of the stress.” [Research participant]

**Figure 10 – Consequences of facing legal problems**



### **b. Social consequences**

Fifteen (75%) respondents felt that the legal problems they experienced affected their relationships with people around them, their friends, and their family. Isolation, or not having friends and family around, was also what made some of the problems much harder to overcome from the start. Many participants mentioned that the lack of family made it harder to navigate life in Canada.

Not surprisingly, in family law cases and custody problems which involved a loss of a child, a family, or a community, the sense of being alone was most strongly felt. In those cases, the health-related concerns were also the most severe.

Gender seemed to affect the social consequences the participants experienced: 92% of the women reporting that their social lives were affected by the legal problem they experienced.

### **c. Economic consequences**

Almost half of participants (9 or 45%) reported some financial hardship in response to their legal problems. Because of legal aid, for most the actual legal fees stayed low. The main economic burden was expressed instead as an effect or loss of work (7 participants) or study (5 participants). Six individuals lost housing and three moved to a shelter after housing loss while one individual stayed with friends or family for a while.

Concerns about finances, and loss of housing, also complicated the day-to-day routines of individuals and families. Participants stressed that these common and “trivial” problems were also important in the context of facing a legal problem:

“I don’t want to leave this property [after a divorce]... because my baby’s daycare is just on the corner of the street, it’s like 3 minutes walking distance. She is only little and it’s hard for me to get her into another daycare.” [Research participant]

“When I was moving, I figured that contacting a moving company and to complete the whole moving process was quite challenging, and also for some of the renting information...and I would say that while we consider them trivial, they are actually quite central to our well-being.”  
[Research participant]

## 4.5 Barriers to Justice

Participants shared six main barriers to justice. While each of them is discussed separately below, many participants experienced multiple related barriers at the same time. Barriers that are specific to our participant group are discussed first (cultural barriers, immigration status, language). Barriers that are more common across populations (lack of information or knowledge, time and cost, perceived chance of success) are discussed after. The top four barriers are represented in figure 11.

### a. Endurance as Cultural Barrier

In half of the interviews (10), endurance was mentioned as a cultural expectation within the Chinese community. Within these communities there is a perception that it is better to not create trouble, and to carry one’s suffering alone or to think of something as “just a family issue.” This idea that one should endure what is painful in one’s life could lead to people avoiding seeking help from friends and family or from official legal and social services.

“I think I’ve really noticed with Asian Culture is that we like endurance... when you suffer you just endure it, you don’t seek help, you don’t tell people you need help... and I think deep down they really want to seek help...cry for help but then instinctively you want to hold yourself back and just endure it and suffer quietly.” [Research participant]

“Especially for Chinese [people], we just want to be a quiet person and have our own life.”  
[Research participant]

“There is a kind of cultural background [in China], as trying to do things on our own.” [Research participant]

Some participants turned this idea of endurance around and encouraged others to seek out help earlier and not to be afraid of asking for such help:

“I missed the chance of really kind of asking for that immediate help from the people who I can trust the most...[Now] I would say... don’t be shy about asking from help from people who you are familiar with and lend a hand.” [Research participant]

Misinformation or lack of trust was also mentioned as inhibiting confidence in government information and resources:

“But at that time in the concept of the Chinese community, we thought that if the government is involved, that there could be something or someone being taken away ... we were particularly worried that the kids are going to be taken away. [Therefore] we were refusing for help.”  
[Research participant]

## **b. Immigrant Status and Related Intersectional Vulnerabilities**

Belonging to an equity denied group, especially along different intersectional identities such as being a newly arrived racialized immigrant, might stop someone from taking legal action or being informed enough to notice deception:

“But interesting, I never thought about looking for legal help. Probably it’s because we are immigrants and we did not want to get into trouble...and the other thing is we did not really know where to start.” [Research participant]

“They won’t step up to do something... they are afraid of their visa and maybe the manager said ‘oh you’re no good... we stop your permit.’” [Research participant]

“As I was quite new to Canada, [I] did not know much about this area...And it’s quite easy you know for a business to have some deceptive practice that just scam people’s money.”  
[Research participant]

Several women also shared that being a single newcomer mother dealing with a serious legal problem affects one’s capacity to such an extent that little energy remains to fully take charge of the problem:

“I was so busy maintaining the safety of our health and then trying to keep up with the study of the kids, I feel like the whole time I was just on the survival level. I did not really have any more energy to get into more details...I just tell myself, I can’t collapse.” [Research participant]

## **c. Language and Trust in Translated Information**

In six cases (30%), English language ability, or the ability to read complex information on official websites, was explicitly mentioned as a barrier to justice. But language as a barrier and accessibility to reliable information was a general theme that was mentioned by most participants. In many cases participants shared that they trusted the English language more than any translated resource or information. Most participants (14) preferred to read information in English, or they strategically chose English:

“This is a tricky question because for sure... Mandarin will be the easiest way for me to absorb the information. But we are in Canada, so if you want more accurate and on time, updated information, then English is the only choice.” [Research participant]

“Information may be lost during translation, right? Because English is the most original source.”  
[Research participant]

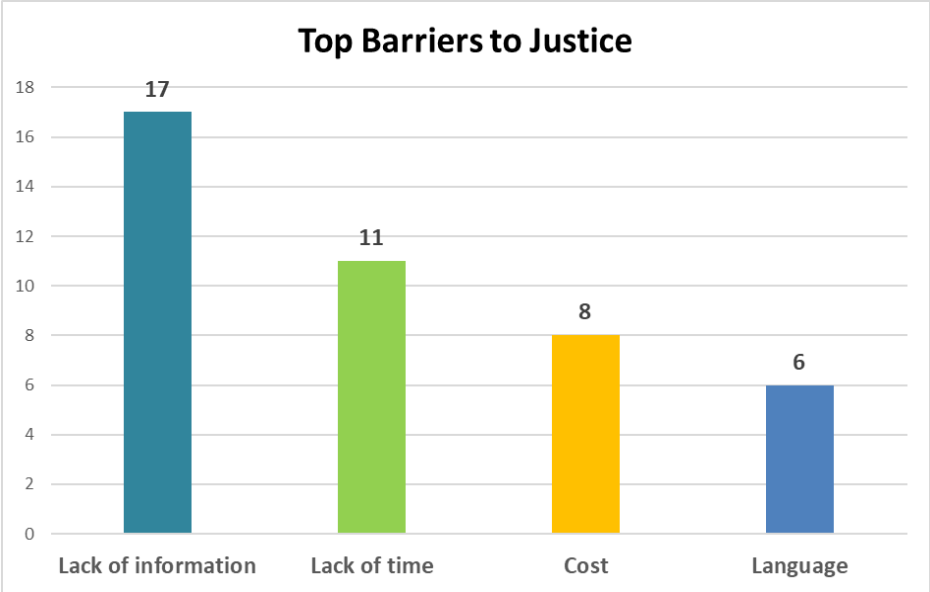
Even when looking at the six participants that listed language as a barrier to information, only one person in that group stated that they preferred to read online information in Mandarin, the others would prefer it in English for the reasons stated earlier.

## **d. Lack of Information**

A large majority, 17 participants (85%), reported that they had difficulty accessing information about their problem. They shared that they were unfamiliar with the Canadian legal system; they did not know

where to go; who to talk to; they did not know what to do or that there was something you could do; what services and organizations were out there to help; nor how to interpret information on official government websites.

**Figure 11 - Top barriers to justice**



Finding information was compounded as well by being overwhelmed by the problem itself:

“There were so many things going on at the time, it was really hard for me to actually know where I could go to get professional information about the steps I could take to help me with my situation.” [Research participant]

One participant explained that in some cases simple introductory information is available in brochures in different languages but that there is a need for more complex information to be shared:

“Yes they [the brochures] identify the problem, but the next steps, if [you] were hoping to find more of a deeper understanding of the problem and then to find out how to resolve those problems after stepping away from those shallow introductory kinds of information... like, what is the next step in order to gain better knowledge?” [Research participant]

Careful reading of information is important especially in cases where the incorrect way of following of steps and procedures might jeopardize everything:

“Yeah, I could only follow the steps and instructions provided by them. And if anytime I miss one step, I have to restart again for them to review the whole case. Sometimes if I miss, like, one single step, I might miss the whole case.” [Research participant]

**e. Time and Cost**

Time was mentioned explicitly by 11 individuals as a barrier to finding information and specifically to

finding legal help. For example, one participant mentioned not having time or capacity to select the best process or lawyer until it is too late:

“I was focused on recovering, not so much for like, let’s pick a lawyer that works the best or let’s see what other resources are available... and then it was too late.” [Research participant]

Or in response to a lack of trust in an internal reporting system for discrimination in the workplace, a participant noted that it would be a waste of their time. Finally, time was specifically mentioned when talking about the process of bringing a case to the Human Rights Tribunal:

“How do you help a family if you set a timeline of 1.5 years to go to court?” [Research participant]

Staff turnover at legal aid services was also identified by one individual as a factor extending the amount of time needed to address a legal case.

The cost of pursuing legal action was mentioned specifically by eight individuals and was the most frequent answer to the question of what constituted a barrier to finding legal help specifically. Cost was a barrier on its own, or because the cost of a lawyer would be more than the financial setback people had experienced. Cost, time, and capacity all together might especially feel like too high of a barrier to scale:

“The first thing come to my mind is it’s time consuming and it’s going to cost you a lot, a lot to money. And certainly, I, in my situation, I didn’t have that energy, the time to deal with this problem.” [Research participant]

#### **f. Perceived Chance of Success**

Specifically in the case discrimination and harassment, participants perceived their chance of success so low that it would not be worth further pursuing. Similarly, if the cost of legal representation outweighed the financial setback of the legal problem, participants did not choose to pursue the case.

Several participants mentioned that they worried that legal aid lawyers would not be taken as seriously in court as other lawyers. In addition, there was a worry that speaking another language than English or having a lawyer with an accent or a lawyer not from a European Canadian background might also lead to the court not giving the same weight to the arguments presented. While people valued having someone with cultural proximity advocate for them, they also worried that the legal system might not appreciate these advocates as much as they would.

### **4.6 Other Factors Affecting Experiences and Outcomes**

#### **a. Gender**

**Type of problem:** Men and women reported different legal problems. Among the 13 women in the study, the most frequently reported problems were family conflict (7) and contact with police as a victim (5) with problems with housing, discrimination, child custody, and neighbours following (all at 3).

Among the six participant men, discrimination was the top mentioned problem (3) followed by problems

with employers, an injury, and ICBC (2). None of the men reported family conflict or contact with the police as a victim or accused as one of their legal problems; one man reported a conflict about child custody.

This gender difference in the type of problem faced matches our 2021 legal needs study among immigrants (Verhage 2022). While these studies are small, they fit with data that shows that immigrant women have complex needs when experiencing divorce and domestic violence (Fonteyne et al. 2024; Tabibi et al. 2018).

**Gender and Housing:** Six women reported that they lost housing because of the legal problems they experienced. In comparison, one man reported losing housing due to facing a legal problem.

**Gender and Social Connections:** Women more often approached friends and family for help when experiencing a legal problem: seven women (54%) did so while no man reported the same. Women also reported more social consequences than men: two men (40%) reported that they experienced social isolation. Twelve women (92%) mentioned that their legal problem(s) contributed to them losing friends or family and to feeling more isolated:

“There was a sense of prejudice against the single, single mothers... they [other mothers] didn’t say but I can feel they don’t want to connect with me like before.” [Research participant]

**Gender and Health:** All women (13) and almost all men (6) reported experiencing mental health problems because of the legal problems they were facing. Mental health problems were reported equally by men and women, but when asked about experiencing physical *and* mental health consequences at the same time, far more women reported experiencing such complex health concerns (10 women vs. 2 men).

## **b. Agency**

In many stories (13), the importance of maintaining agency and control over a situation and having a voice is a top concern of participants that is related to feeling valued and dignity:

“I will try my best and fight for my dignity and justice.” [Research participant]

This is expressed in working hard to keep on top of the problem they are facing and taking some sort of control over the situation. For example, a participant who had to deal with a long waiting period shared: “it’s not that I’m just waiting, I have been actively collecting information and knowledge.” Another participant celebrated finding legal support that was the result of them showing up to a legal office in person which helped get an immediate referral to legal aid that otherwise did not seem available:

“Before I barely [have] legal knowledge, but when I take approach myself, I feel that they are always there to help.” [Research participant]

The desire to maintain agency is also expressed as being able to have a choice and not feel subject to a process without input:

“If I have the option, I would like to shop around, see which one I connect better [with], then I make a decision.” [Research participant]

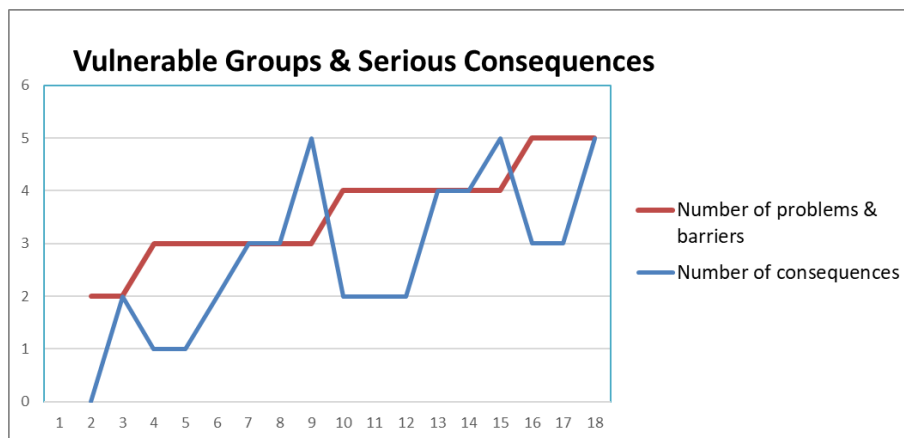
“I feel like a responsible adult in the society... and as a newcomer, I do see my value and I feel I’m needed somewhere in the society. So I want to be physically and mindfully strong for my small family...for the country where I choose to stay.” [Research participant]

### c. Multiple Legal Problems and Serious Effects

Thirteen participants experienced multiple serious legal problems and for ten of them the problems were connected. Those who were more vulnerable because they experienced more legal problems in combination with experiencing multiple barriers to justice also reported higher number of serious health, economic, and social consequences (figure 12). To track this, “most serious consequences” were determined to include the following:

- Needing significant medical attention or counselling
- Housing and food insecurity
- Being or becoming a single parent
- Losing custody of a child

**Figure 12 - Vulnerable groups and serious consequences**



## 4.7 Recommendations for Governments and (Legal) Support Services

To reduce barriers and the impact of experiencing serious legal problems, participants shared the following recommendations:

- Provide multilingual information on what to do when facing serious legal problems. Engage immigrants directly to inform them about the differences of the Canadian legal system and their countries of origin, with an emphasis on different legal pathways.
- Ensure there are Mandarin and Cantonese speaking people, along with those who understand immigrant experiences, in the legal system (consultants, lawyers, navigators, judges) and generally legal support services with lived-experience.
- Effectively collaborate and make use of other contact points (such as schools and community

services) to increase understanding of government processes and support (such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development [MCFD]).

- Ensure people have direct access to trained professionals who can listen, give information, make a difference (whether service providers, legal advisors, navigators, or other roles), possibly through a chat.
- Encourage accountability, especially in cases of discrimination. Understand that in many cases something “more than [anti-racist] education is needed” [research participant] in workplaces and the legal system itself.
- Manage expectations and address misinformation by making effective use of (social) media campaigns to provide education about the legal system and expectations about what a legal process might look like.
- Educate communities on what sources of information can be trusted and how to evaluate the effectiveness, expertise, and best fit of a legal service provider (legal aid, lawyers). Ensure that people understand the options they have and support people’s agency and decision making.
- Ensure a faster process to obtain access to legal support by reducing wait times and increase access.
- Provide parent-specific and child-centred supports to families facing serious legal problems.
- Ensure that general information about relocation or other legal adjacent information is included. E.g., finding reliable information on finding rentals, moving trucks, moving school districts, can be crucially important for one’s mental health and for reestablishing oneself after facing a serious legal problem.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Research Highlights

Immigrants of Chinese descent living on Vancouver Island and in Vancouver shared the following key points:

#### Information finding strategies

- Online information (68%) and information obtained from family and friends (58%) were the top two sources of information participants sought, though this information was rated as only “somewhat helpful.”
- Government or legal services with online automated message systems and long timelines were perceived as being out of reach and often not a viable solution to a problem.
- Participants preferred off-line advice from multi-lingual legal experts and community workers with shared lived experience.

#### Barriers to Justice

- Lack of information (85%) and lack of time (58%) were top barriers to justice.
- Participants requested better access to translated information that goes beyond introductory pamphlets, but also worried that important information is lost in translation.
- Half of the participants hesitated to ask for help and felt that cultural expectations encourage Chinese Canadians to endure rather than seek help for a serious legal problem. This was especially so when enduring discrimination and harassment.
- Gender and immigration status were intersectional factors that affected some participants ability to access to justice.
- Participants worried that the Canadian justice system would not be responsive to them because it includes few representatives that have cultural proximity to them (such as having immigrant backgrounds, speaking with accented English, being of Chinese descent, or other such backgrounds).

#### Legal recourse strategies

- Complex legal problems that involved family conflicts were more often resolved through the formal legal system (89%).
- Problems that were related to discrimination were not generally resolved through official legal channels.

#### Consequences to facing legal problems

- Facing a serious legal problem impacted participants’ lives and worsened health conditions, caused excessive stress, anxiety and depression and increased the need for health services (95%). Social consequences, such as the loss of a social network, were more often reported by women (92%).

- Maintaining agency and choice throughout the process is important and adds to someone's feeling of dignity and value.

## 5.2 Culture, Language, and Legal Strategies in a Biased Context

In this study we spoke to twenty individuals of Chinese descent. They shared with us that there is a need for more effective information sharing strategies for English language learners who experience serious legal problems.

First, there need to be more and better translations of web-information and brochures that are currently available especially when it concerns complex information:

“So what I want to reiterate is that providing a basic information that is introductory level is great but... what we also need is in-depth information that introduces what to do next.” [Research participant]

Participants noticed that when translated information is available on a webpage, it stops as soon as you go further into a problem which leaves English language learners at a disadvantage:

“Maybe the first two layers of website they have Mandarin translation. But if you go further then you need good English reading and searching ability to know the right answer.” [Research participant]

Together with this call for more and better access to translated information, many participants shared that they mistrust translated information on Canadian websites. For example, they wonder if the translated information is as up to date as the original English information.

In a conversation, consultants who create digital solutions for sharing legal information shared with us that translating legal information is challenging because it requires frequent updates and that maintaining high quality translation is costly. Often translation costs are not budgeted into website updates. As well, more tailored information to a complex legal problem is harder to offer online and often requires direct contact with an advocate or legal professional. Notwithstanding these challenges, many online legal information resources in B.C. do not currently offer *any* translation options even for its basic information level. Legal Help BC, ClickLaw BC, and the People's Law School are all great at sharing legal information, but none of them provide translations on their websites, which indicates that there is room for improvement.

Second, along with English information being perceived as better than information offered in Mandarin or Cantonese, participants also shared that they think that English-speaking legal professionals of European descent will be more likely to get positive responses in court.

This does not mean that Chinese Canadians do not want better cultural representation among legal professionals. On the contrary, participants shared that they highly prefer a legal representative that has cultural proximity to them:

“I think we need lawyers who have lived experience, minority experiences, and I think we need a community of support clerks and security guards and social workers and support persons and

interpreters who are educated in these kinds of issues.” [Research participant]

Nonetheless, believing that the Canadian justice system reflects the same biases as they see in their everyday world, Chinese communities might worry about anti-Asian and anti-immigrant bias in the justice system and might strategically choose an English-speaking white legal representative for that reason.

When a person of Chinese descent notices that people of who look like them are not given a voice, they might feel the need to have someone outside of their community speak up for them in court, while at the same time worrying whether that person really hears them and can advocate for them. Navigating this tension between wanting to be heard and operating in a system that does not seem to listen is a common challenge of many other racialized communities.

Building trust and dismantling biases and barriers would need to begin with ensuring that equity deserving communities such as Chinese Canadians have a voice, that they are heard throughout the legal system, and have equitable access to justice in Canada.

### 5.3 A Legal System Out of Reach

In recent years, online processes and resources have been created expressly to bring the legal system closer to the user. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic digital technology has been used to increase access to justice (Murray 2023). For example, Legal Aid BC has designed digital public education resources to bring legal information closer to the public.

While this growth in digital legal resources and information has been a good thing, populations with less digital access (for example, because of costs, lack of digital skills, language, and trust barriers) will not be able to benefit from these new resources to the same extent. Instead, it might do the opposite: with fewer off-line opportunities to receive advice from someone in person or on the phone, it might seem that legal information and access is increasingly further away. Recently, Murray (2023) found that new immigrants and racialized individuals were among the population groups that disproportionately faced access-related barriers to internet use. This is supported by our research findings.

Throughout our interviews it became apparent that the Canadian legal system is seen as out of reach for many participants, especially for those experiencing discrimination. Official reporting systems in the workplace or in the province are seen as not responsive and for that reason not seen as very useful:

“I call and they say ‘just wait’ but no action, no further action, no.” [Research participant]

“I called couple of times [to a government office] not even people answer the phone, I left a message, no one called me back. I had sent an email a few times... And the human rights [office], I call a couple of times. Everything is online...it just makes me so frustrated, there is so much information and so many forms to fill. My child can’t wait. That’s not the support we need at the moment.” [Research participant]

In our 2021 study we saw that online processes and forms can be very helpful, especially when it concerns relatively straight forward legal problems such as disputes with landlords. Having easy steps to follow and submitting complaints online are very much appreciated in those cases.

The opposite is true when the process is more complicated or less concrete, such as making a human rights complaint, the online processes and forms are seen as a hindrance and a barrier to being heard. In those cases, the participants of this study really wanted to talk to a *person*:

“So I actually kind of have no confidence. ... I cannot get anyone to talk to me at the moment. So it’s quite discouraging to use that service [Legal Aid].” [Research participant]

“I feel like my kids are so urgent, I just want to talk to someone right away.” [Research participant]

Likewise, in the previous study participants expressed a preference for being able to talk with an actual person to get advice (Verhage 2022). As well, exposure to “online legal information does not directly equate to improved knowledge of rights or knowledge of how to handle a justice problem” (Denvir 2016); online information is often not enough to support individuals experiencing legal problems.

Digital access works best when it is complemented by off-line access to service providers, advisors, or navigators, which also was valued for receiving emotional support and compassionate interaction (Murray 2023). This finding is mirrored in this research, with participants calling for a more human approach to information sharing:

“I don’t have any hope for the legal system, I have experienced so much...what I need now is people.” [Research participant]

Several recent studies emphasize the important of law-related assistance from non-lawyers through community justice help and partnerships between legal clinics and other service providers (Mathews and Wiseman 2021; Currie 2021).

It is this human connection to learning, navigating and dealing with the aftermath of a serious legal problem, that sits at the core of the conversations we had throughout this research project. Human connection can also help with healing in the aftermath of a legal problem and establish important community connections:

“I could speak up, I feel at least I can say something... and I did try my best... that is part of my value and it also does balance my stress, I engage with my values and I do feel that is beneficial... [When dealing with] disappointment in society... relating to other people and helping others feels like a kind of healing.” [Research participant]

Offline and in-person connections can help someone navigate legal problems, it creates better understanding, trust, it increases the agency of a person experiencing legal problems, and lessens the social and emotional hurt people might experience. We need to nourish and support these kinds of human connections because they can reestablish trust and increase people’s access to justice.

## 6 References

- Chinese Canadian Museum. 2025. "What Does it Mean to be Chinese Canadian?" <https://www.chinesecanadianmuseum.ca/learn/learning-resources>
- Currie, A. 2009. "The Legal Problems of Everyday Life: The Nature, Extent and Consequences of Justiciable Problems Experienced by Canadians." Department of Justice Canada. [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/rr07\\_la1-rr07\\_aj1/rr07\\_la1.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/rr07_la1-rr07_aj1/rr07_la1.pdf)
- Currie, A. 2016. "Nudging the Paradigm Shift: Everyday Legal Problems in Canada." Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. <https://cfcj-fcjc.org/sites/default/files/publications/reports/Nudging%20the%20Paradigm%20Shift%2C%20Everyday%20Legal%20Problems%20in%20Canada%20-%20Ab%20Currie.pdf>
- Currie, A. 2021. "The Needs of Helping Organizations in the Community." Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. <https://cfcj-fcjc.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Needs-of-Helping-Organizations-Ab-Currie.pdf>
- Denvir, Catrina. 2016. "Online and In the Know? Public Legal Education, Young People, and the Internet." *Computers and Education* 92-93: 204-220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.10.003>
- Farrow, Trevor C.W. 2024. "Access to Justice and the Legal Profession: Three Questions." *The Advocates Journal* 42 (4): 6-11. [https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/scholarly\\_works/3143](https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/scholarly_works/3143)
- Fonteyne, H., K. Podritske, T. Park, and K. Hegadoren. 2024. "Immigrant Women's Experience of Domestic Violence in Canada: A Qualitative File Audit." *Journal of Family Violence* 39: 613–622. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-023-00490-1>
- Mathews, Julie, and David Wiseman. 2021. "Shifting the Paradigm: Exploring Opportunities for Community Justice Help." Community Legal Education Ontario. [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/ecjh-eamjc/docs/Shifting\\_Paradigm\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/ecjh-eamjc/docs/Shifting_Paradigm_Report_EN.pdf)
- Murray, Kate M. 2021. "Achieving Digital Equity in Access to Justice: Final Report." Legal Aid BC. <https://legalaids.bc.ca/about/reports/Achieving-Digital-Equity-Project>
- Savage, Laura, and Susan MacDonald. 2022. "Experiences of Serious Problems or Disputes in the Canadian Provinces, 2021." *Juristat* 42 (1): 1-28. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. 2023. "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population." Statistics Canada. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Tabibi, J., S. Ahmad, L. Baker, and D. Lalonde. 2018. "Intimate Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Refugee Women." Learning Network 26. [https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased\\_newsletters/issue-26/index.html](https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-26/index.html)

Verhage, Florentien. 2022. "A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Faced by Immigrants in Greater Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia." Department of Justice Canada.  
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/ivvbc/index.html>

## 7 Resources

### Legal Information (available in English only):

- **Legal Help BC / Ask JES Helpline:** British Columbians with legal questions can visit <https://legalhelpbc.ca/> or call **1-877-875-8867**.
- **ClickLaw:** Clicklaw guides you to trusted resources from non-profit organizations, the government, and the legal profession in British Columbia: <https://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/>.
- **People's Law School:** provides free education and information to help people effectively deal with the legal problems of daily life: <https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/>.

### Legal Aid:

- **Legal Aid:** The law is complicated, but not everyone can afford a lawyer. If you qualify, Legal Aid can help you with your legal issue: <https://legalaid.bc.ca/> translation and interpretation options: <https://legalaid.bc.ca/services/languages>.

### Justice Access Centres:

- **Victoria Justice Access Centre:** 225-850 Burdett Avenue, Victoria BC, V8W 1B4.  
Phone: **250-356-7012**.
- **Vancouver Justice Access Centre:** 290-800 Hornby Street, Vancouver BC, V6Z 2C5.  
Phone: **604-660-2084**.
- **What Justice Access Centres Do:** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/divorce/family-justice/who-can-help/justice-access-centres>  
Phone: toll-free in B.C. **1-800-663-7867** (ask to be connected to the Victoria or Vancouver location)