

## Community Legal Information Forums in BC Public Libraries

The **purpose of a forum** is to create an opportunity for local community groups to meet and share their knowledge and ideas about legal information services in their community.

The **LawMatters Program** of Courthouse Libraries BC assists libraries to host half-day **community legal information forums**.

The **goals of the forum** are:

1. to enhance local community groups knowledge of local and provincial legal information resources
2. to highlight the legal information resources at the local public library
3. to share legal information from the LawMatters program, the [www.clicklaw.bc.ca](http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca) website and Courthouse Libraries BC

### Here's how to host a community legal information forum at your library:

LawMatters staff can help you prepare and hold this event. We can send you the *LawMatters Community Legal Information Forums Planning Guide* [24 pp PDF, also available at [www.bclawmatters.ca](http://www.bclawmatters.ca)] which provides a step-by-step planning process and templates for invitations, agendas and an evaluation form.

Interested? Call Janet Freeman at 1-800-665-2570 or 604-660-9204, or email [jfreeman@courthouselibrary.ca](mailto:jfreeman@courthouselibrary.ca) to discuss hosting a forum in your community.

The **LawMatters at your local public library** program provides grants to public libraries to add to their legal information collections, as well as training and support in answering legal reference questions. For more information about the LawMatters program, see [www.bclawmatters.ca](http://www.bclawmatters.ca) and the LawMatters blog at [www.bclawmatters.blogspot.com](http://www.bclawmatters.blogspot.com). You can search for “legal information forums” within the blog to see reports from previous community forums held in Chilliwack, Squamish, Nanaimo and Courtenay, as well as this report of the forum in Duncan:

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### **Community Legal Information Forum in Duncan**



Representatives from local community groups, as well as the local Law Courts registry, and Courthouse Libraries BC/LawMatters staff, met at the Cowichan Branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library in Duncan on May 10. Public librarians Melanie Reaveley and Monica Finn welcomed staff members from Seniors Support and Resources Society, Legal Services Society, Cowichan Intercultural Society, Ready to Rent (Victoria), The Salvation Army, Vancouver Island Health Authority and Cowichan Women Against Violence.

Participants exchanged information about their services, and discussed what would increase access to justice for their clients. Some of the ideas included: more in-person help for Supreme Court matters; workshops on wills, powers of attorney, executorship and representation agreements as well as family law; co-sponsor a workshop on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren with Parent Support Services; court tours and better court information signage for the public. Appreciative comments included "let's do this twice a year, or quarterly" and "great job gathering groups together!"