

**March 25, 2022**

By email ([tracey.ooms@gov.bc.ca](mailto:tracey.ooms@gov.bc.ca))

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
BC Corrections

Attn: Lisa Anderson, Assistant Deputy Minister

**Re: Joint Submission to BC Corrections on Immigration Detention in  
Provincial Jails**

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Dear Assistant Deputy Minister Lisa Anderson:

We write on behalf of the **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Centre for Gender & Sexual Health Equity, Community Legal Assistance Society, Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic, Migrant Workers Centre BC, and West Coast LEAF** to urge BC Corrections to terminate all arrangements with the Canada Border Services Agency (“CBSA”) permitting the use of BC’s jails for immigration detention.

The practice of detaining people awaiting the determination of their legal status in Canada is discriminatory, inhumane, contrary to principles of fundamental justice and Canada’s obligations under international refugee law. Detention facilities - and particularly provincial jails - are wholly ill-equipped to meet the healthcare and socio-cultural needs of people who have come to Canada seeking refuge, safety, or opportunities to build better lives for themselves or their families. By authorizing and facilitating the use of provincial jails for immigration detention, BC is complicit in these human rights violations.

We are heartened by the province’s willingness to review its immigration detention arrangements with the CBSA. As the first province to undertake such a review, the BC Government has an opportunity to turn the tide on immigration detention. For far too long, Canada has offered itself up as a safe haven for those escaping inhumane and unjust conditions abroad only to subject them to harmful and discriminatory conditions of detention here. It is long past time for BC to end its complicity in immigration detention.

**We urge you to take the first step by cancelling BC’s immigration detention agreement with the CBSA.**

## Overview

The severe adverse impacts faced by detainees are detailed in Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International's recent, comprehensive report on immigration detention, *"I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There"*<sup>1</sup>. As a result of these impacts, the BC Government is arguably not only complicit in the violation of detainees' rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and international law, but also in breach of the applicable human rights legislation. Detaining people awaiting determination of their legal status in Canada in provincial jails engages the BC *Human Rights Code's* protection from discrimination on the basis of a number of protected grounds, including place of origin, race, mental disability and sex. The use of provincial carceral facilities for immigration detention cannot be reasonably justified. By continuing its agreement with the CBSA, the BC Government is exposing itself to potential human rights and constitutional legal challenges.

Since 2000, at least 17 people have died in immigration detention, including at least five since 2016.<sup>2</sup> Many of the people whose lives end while in immigration detention are unnamed and their causes of death unknown, as the circumstances of their deaths are not widely reported on, or even publicly acknowledged. This is why it is all the more remarkable when the facts do come to light. The circumstances of Lucía Vega Jiménez's death in immigration detention are relatively well-known, yet the loss of her life has not fundamentally changed immigration detention practices.

*Lucía Vega Jiménez was a Mexican national without status residing in the Lower Mainland. Ms. Vega Jiménez hanged herself in December 2013 after spending 19 days in immigration detention, 16 of which she spent at the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women in Maple Ridge, BC. A Coroner's inquest into her death was held in September and October 2014.<sup>3</sup> The findings revealed that her mental health assessment was cancelled and not rescheduled, she was questioned without her lawyer present, and was effectively told she had no hope of remaining in Canada.*

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, *"I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There" Immigration Detention in Canada and its Impact on Mental Health* (June 2021), online (pdf): HRW <[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/06/canada0621\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/06/canada0621_web.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Migrant Rights Network, *Immigration Detention – Election Reality Check 5* (October 1, 2019), online: MRN <<https://migrantrights.ca/resources/realitycheck5/>>

<sup>3</sup> BC Ministry of Justice, Coroner's Service, *Verdict at Coroner's Inquest, Findings and Recommendations as a Result of the Coroner's Inquest Pursuant to Section 38 of the Coroner's Act, into the death of Lucia Dominga Vega Jimenez* (October 7, 2014), online (pdf): <<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/inquest/2014/vega-jimenez-lucia-dominga-2013-0380-0004-verdict.pdf>>.

The CBSA does not take responsibility for conditions and deaths in provincial prisons; in their 2020-21 Departmental Plan, they note “limited control over detention conditions in non-CBSA facilities, which poses challenges in ensuring a common standard of care.”<sup>4</sup> Detainees have no recourse to challenge CBSA’s decision regarding the site of their detention within the detention review hearing process.

Detention in provincial jails is not an anomaly or a rare occurrence. For decades CBSA has been using provincial jails as detention sites to warehouse immigration detainees, including those with known mental health impairments. Moreover, despite CBSA’s stated intention to move away from detention in provincial facilities, reliance on the practice is growing both in terms of numbers and length of detention. Between April and September 2020, 50 percent of immigration detainees were held in provincial jails, up from about 20% in the three-year period between April 2017 and March 2020.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Immigration detention as a form of violence and discrimination***

Immigration detention is a tool of Canada’s cruel deportation policies. The CBSA sets annual quotas for deportations leading to a culture that incentivizes the violation of migrant’s rights.<sup>6</sup> Specific heavy-handed and unlawful tactics engaged by CBSA officers have come to light, such as fraudulently obtaining passports for detainees<sup>7</sup> and paying human smugglers to deport people.<sup>8</sup> This month, the Federal Court

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Canada Border Services Agency 2020-21 Departmental Plan (2020) at 20, online (pdf): CBSA <<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/reports-rapports/rpp/2020-2021/report-rapport-eng.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup> CBSA, Statistics, Annual detention, fiscal year 2019 to 2020, online: <<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/detent/stat-2019-2020-eng.html>> and Quarterly detention statistics: Fourth quarter (Q4) fiscal year 2020 to 2021, online: <<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/detent/qstat-2020-2021-eng.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> Kathleen Harris, “Canada Border Services Agency moves to ‘substantially’ increase deportations” *CBC News* (October 31, 2018), online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/cbsa-deportations-border-removals-1.4873169>>.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Brendan Kennedy, “Canadian border agent under investigation after passport for immigration detainee deemed fraudulent” *Toronto Star* (December 11, 2020), online: <<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/12/10/canadian-border-agent-under-investigation-after-passport-for-immigration-detainee-deemed-fraudulent.html>>; Adrian Humphreys, “Canada’s bizarre – and failed – attempt to send ‘the Man With No Name’ to Africa and the mysterious fixer who made it happen” *The National Post* (January 25, 2015), online: <<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadas-bizarre-and-failed-attempt-to-send-the-man-with-no-name-to-africa>>.

<sup>8</sup> See, CBC Radio, *The Current*, “To No Man’s Land: The story of Saeed Jama’s deportation to Somalia” (Nov 4, 2014), online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/a-story-of->

found that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and CBSA were violating a detainee's right to procedural fairness and her rights under section 7 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, while arguing for her continued detention.<sup>9</sup>

In this context, detention becomes a tool to pressure detainees to waive their rights or withdraw applications that may allow them to remain in the country and to cut off connections to legal counsel, community support and detainees' ability to collect evidence for their legal processes.<sup>10</sup> A 2018 independent audit commissioned by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) found that the Immigration Division tended to rely, uncritically, on the submissions of CBSA Hearings Officers.<sup>11</sup> These submissions often misstated facts and other critical details in the file and can play a significant role in a decision to continue detention, especially when the bar to continue detention was dangerously low.<sup>12</sup> The gravity of this cannot be overstated.

*In 2016-2017, the CBSA detained a Nigerian-born Canadian citizen, Olajide Ogunye. Notwithstanding his presentation of government-issued documentation confirming his identity, Mr. Ogunye was detained for eight months in two maximum-security provincial jails, after being approached by CBSA officers outside his home on his way to work.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Ogunye reported that, due to near daily lockdowns, he was unable to contact family members, and the unlawful detention destroyed his life. This is not the only time that the CBSA has detained a Canadian citizen. According to data obtained from CBSA through an Access to Information Act request, the agency detained another Canadian man for 108 days in 2019.<sup>14</sup>*

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[deportation-to-somalia-and-canada-s-voice-at-war-1.2907289/to-no-man-s-land-the-story-of-saeed-jama-s-deportation-to-somalia-1.2907291](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/06/canada0621_web.pdf)>.

<sup>9</sup> *Lee v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, [2022 FC 344](#).

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, *"I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There" Immigration Detention in Canada and its Impact on Mental Health* (June 2021) at 71, online (pdf): HRW <[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/06/canada0621\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/06/canada0621_web.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Report of the 2017/2018 External Audit (Detention Review), online: <<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/transparency/reviews-audit-evaluations/Pages/ID-external-audit-1718.aspx>>.

<sup>12</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Report of the 2017/2018 External Audit (Detention Review), online: <<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/transparency/reviews-audit-evaluations/Pages/ID-external-audit-1718.aspx>>.

<sup>13</sup> Lisa Xing, "Canadian claiming border agency mistakenly detained him for 8 months sues for \$10M," *CBC News* (June 13, 2018) online:<<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-citizen-sues-border-services-agency-after-being-detained-eight-months-1.4703064>>

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, *"I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There" Immigration Detention in Canada and its Impact on Mental Health* (June 2021) at 67, fn 313,

Many migrants are detained solely because they are deemed to be flight risks and are experiencing the punitive conditions of carceral detention based on assumptions that members of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) make about their future behaviour. The IRB's external audit found that decision-makers routinely justified an individual's continued detention by citing evidence of their close ties to immediate and extended family members. While the existence of strong ties to a community in Canada is a factor to be considered when assessing flight risk, there is no guidance about whether the existence of such close ties is a positive or negative factor. The review also found that one or two instances of non-reporting to CBSA was given undue weight in assessing "flight risk". These were instances in which substance use or mental health instability were at issue, and the individual frequently had long periods of time during which they had been regularly reporting to CBSA.<sup>15</sup>

There is no reasonable justification for Canada to detain the vast majority of people awaiting determination of their legal status, and certainly no plausible reason for doing so in provincial carceral facilities. Alternative measures to facilitate attendance at immigration proceedings must be adopted to ensure human rights are protected. In 2015, the United Nations Human Rights Committee strongly condemned the Canadian immigration detention system, observing that immigration detention should only be a measure of last resort.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this, detention is often used to penalize migrants who have been the victims of Canada's immigration system, unable to maintain or restore their status often for reasons well beyond their control. This includes being the victim of fraud by immigration consultants, exploitative or discriminatory employers, poor working conditions, or falling out of status due to illness. Canada's immigration system therefore penalizes those who it has failed to protect by unfairly placing them into the immigration detention system.

Migrant workers often rely on their employers to be able to maintain and renew their status in Canada. Those who come under investigation for a potential breach in the conditions of their authorized stay in Canada can be detained while an investigation occurs, re-traumatizing workers who may have already been the subject of abuse at the hands of their Canadian employer. Migrant workers in Canada who have faced

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online (pdf): HRW  
<[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/06/canada0621\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/06/canada0621_web.pdf)>.

<sup>15</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Report of the 2017/2018 External Audit (Detention Review), online: <<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/transparency/reviews-audit-evaluations/Pages/ID-external-audit-1718.aspx>>.

<sup>16</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Canada, UN Doc. CCPR/C/CAN/CO/6, August 13, 2015, para 12. See also, UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 35, Article 9 (Liberty and security of the person), UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/35, December 16, 2014, para 18.

exploitation in the context of their employment are vulnerable to losing their status or to being forced to work for an employer contrary to the conditions of their work permit. The consequence of detention for workers and other temporary residents in these kinds of situations is extreme and unacceptable.

The detention of migrants as a result of immigration infractions, and particularly in provincial jails, fails to recognize the complex vulnerabilities of migrant workers, students and others who may have experienced abuse while navigating Canada's immigration system. Notably, employers or others committing fraud against migrants operate with impunity and are not subject to the same retribution despite being the perpetrators of fraud and abuse. Migrants move in order to seek safety and/or to provide a better life for themselves and their families and should not be re-traumatized and imprisoned in that pursuit.

### ***Harms of immigration detention***

There is considerable research showing that there are severe mental health impacts of even short term immigration detention on adults and children, which can include post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and the regression of child development milestones.<sup>17</sup> For asylum-seekers with pre-existing health vulnerabilities, including mental health conditions associated with the prolonged and repeated trauma that many folks escaping persecution and violence will have experienced, detention in carceral settings like provincial jails is especially harmful. Studies have shown higher rates of mental health concerns or self-harm amongst detained asylum seekers in comparison to those living in community, or even amongst the general prison population.<sup>18</sup>

Detention in provincial jails puts people awaiting a determination of their legal status in Canada at an unjustifiable and unacceptable risk of harm to their health, personal safety and dignity. These risks arise both from the carceral setting itself, and from the exacerbation of pre-existing vulnerabilities. For instance, migrants detained in jails are subjected to coercive authority for indeterminate periods of time and under conditions of extreme uncertainty. Already displaced from their places of origin - and having potentially travelled considerable distances at considerable risk to their safety and well-being - they are stripped of basic human rights and freedoms, including

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<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Cleveland J. and Rousseau C., Psychiatric symptoms associated with brief detention of adult asylum seekers in Canada. *Can J. Psychiatry* 2013; 58: 409-416; Kronick R., et al., Asylum-seeking children's experiences of detention in Canada: A Qualitative Study. *Am J. Orthopsychiatry* 2015; 85: 287-94; Cleveland J. et al, Symbolic Violence and Disempowerment as Factors in the Adverse Impact of Immigration Detention on Adult Asylum Seekers' Mental Health. *International J of Public Health* (2018): 63: 1001-1008.

<sup>18</sup> Melanie Griffiths, "Living with Uncertainty: Indefinite Immigration Detention," *Journal of Legal Anthropology* 1, no. 3 (2013): 263-86.

being able to make routine decisions about their day-to-day activities. They are largely required to obey orders and are in a constant state of powerlessness as against the authority of guards and immigration officials. While in immigration detention, they may be handcuffed, transported in prison vehicles, subjected to searches, kept under surveillance and have their personal belongings confiscated.

Pre-existing experiences of violence, including torture, disempowerment, humiliation, and degradation are exacerbated by detention. Research indicates many former immigration detainees continue to live with the effects of psychosocial disabilities they developed during incarceration, months and even years after their release from detention. Immigration detention also has long-term consequences that ripple beyond immigration detainees and affect their children, loved ones, and communities. Even after being released from detention, many former detainees live in heightened fear of Canadian authorities – fear that even a minor by-law interaction, such as jaywalking, might result in transfer back to jail.<sup>19</sup> These psychological impacts can be lifelong, and incredibly detrimental.

Further, as the legal status of migrants becomes increasingly precarious, so too does their economic security. Provinces can now impose individual residency requirements for eligibility for social assistance and other benefits and supports. These changes deepen poverty for those who are already marginalized, including migrants with precarious status. Post-detention, work permits in Canada often take months to process. Cuts and reductions to legal aid funding means refugees and migrants need financial resources to pay for the legal support necessary for their legal hearings. Living with precarious legal status also means an increased likelihood of being in temporary or casual employment, and a decreased likelihood of being able to assert labour rights. During the recent period of recession, both the unemployment rate and the poverty rate of very recent immigrants were more than double those of the Canadian-born population,<sup>20</sup> meaning that immigration is already correlated with poverty. The uncertainty of a potentially prolonged period of immigration detention only exacerbates economic disadvantage and instability.

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<sup>19</sup> Efrat Arbel and Ketty Nivyabandi, “Will British Columbia address systemic racism in immigration detention?” (op ed) *Vancouver Sun* (March 14, 2022), online: <https://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/efrat-arbel-and-ketty-nivyabandi-will-british-columbia-address-systemic-racism-in-immigration-detention>.

<sup>20</sup> Harsha Walia, “Canada’s managed migration policy” in Teresa Healy and Stuart Trew (eds.) *The Harper Record 2008-2015* at 163 (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2015) online (pdf): [https://policyalternatives.ca/Harper\\_Record\\_2008-2015/09-HarperRecord-Walia.pdf](https://policyalternatives.ca/Harper_Record_2008-2015/09-HarperRecord-Walia.pdf).



## ***Gendered harms of immigration detention***

Women, transgender, and non-binary migrants seeking asylum in Canada face increased risk of immigration detention, as they may be more unlikely to be carrying identification documents. For migrants fleeing gender-based persecution from states with strong patriarchal social norms and legal systems, access to identity documents may be impossible. When presenting to CBSA officials these individuals may be unable to “prove” who they say they are, thus increasing the risk of their being detained for security or other reasons.<sup>21</sup>

While detention in all settings – but especially carceral settings – is harmful to the health and wellbeing of all people without legal status, carceral detention can be especially traumatizing for survivors of gender-based violence and interpersonal violence, as it magnifies the vast power differential that exists between survivors and border officials, especially where the individual officers are cisgender men. There is considerable risk of retraumatizing survivors where the circumstances or experience of detention replicates or approximates earlier experiences of confinement, powerlessness, humiliation, or coercion.<sup>22</sup>

Along with the harms identified above, immigration detention results in the separation of families over prolonged periods,<sup>23</sup> and thus has unique impacts on migrant parents who may be separated from their children for unknown and unknowable periods of time. The fear of being caught in the web of immigration detention may additionally result in those without legal status to not seek out necessary public services for themselves or their children, including education and healthcare.<sup>24</sup> For instance, studies indicate that women with precarious immigration

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<sup>21</sup> Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Submission to the Federal Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, “Migration Challenges for Canada in the 21st Century” (October 31, 2018) at 9-10, online (pdf): <[https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges\\_and\\_Opportunities.Canada\\_21st-Century.pdf](https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges_and_Opportunities.Canada_21st-Century.pdf).>

<sup>22</sup> Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Submission to the Federal Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, “Migration Challenges for Canada in the 21st Century” (October 31, 2018) at 9-10, online (pdf): <[https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges\\_and\\_Opportunities.Canada\\_21st-Century.pdf](https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges_and_Opportunities.Canada_21st-Century.pdf).>

<sup>23</sup> Susan Snyder, “Looking through the Bars: Immigration Detention and the Ethics of Mysticism,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 35, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 167-87.

<sup>24</sup> Cecilia Menjivar and Leisy Abrego, *Legal Violence in the Lives of Immigrants: How Immigration Enforcement Affects Families, Schools, and Workplaces* (Washington DC: Center for American Progress, 2012).

Salina Abji and Lindsay Larios, “Migrant Justice as Reproductive Justice: Birthright Citizenship and the Politics of Immigration Detention for Pregnant Women in Canada,” *Citizenship Studies* 25, no. 2 (2021): 253-72



status delay seeking prenatal care and consequently have higher rates of miscarriage, premature birth, and higher infant mortality.<sup>25</sup>

While the CBSA asserts that detention of vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and children is avoided, there is little transparency on CBSA practices and no oversight. Experiences of pregnant women in detention highlight structural violence at the intersections of migrant justice and reproductive rights, with children born in detention spending their initial formative years in prison.<sup>26</sup>

Further, women without legal status are also more likely to endure intimate partner and family violence, and exploitation from abusive partners and employers and less likely to report such situations for fear of being “outed” as someone without legal status and thus vulnerable to detention.<sup>27</sup>

The risk of immigration detention and deportation increases for people without status at each point of interaction with Canadian systems, whether those be systems that police families (child protection system), or that purport to maintain community safety (criminal justice system, private security companies, transit police, etc.). Child migrants are often caught in the web where these systems intersect. People who came to Canada as children or youth, and who came into state care for any reason are a population uniquely impacted. They may become engaged with the criminal justice system as a consequence of trauma endured in the child protection system. Criminal records combined with the failure of the state to seek and obtain Canadian citizenship on their behalf while they are in care, can lead to immigration detention and deportation to countries where they have never lived.

## **Conclusion**

Immigration detention in Canada is a gendered, racialized, and classed form of structural violence. The conflation of immigration with criminality has particularly acute impacts on the population of people without legal status in Canada, for whom engagement with each and any one state system bears a compounded risk of prolonged and indefinite detention – often under carceral conditions – for no reason other than being a person without status.

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<sup>25</sup> Ana Ballesteros-Pena, “‘Same Content in New Bottles’ in the Immigration Detention System in Canada: Impacts on Young Adults and Adult Undocumented Migrants,” in Silvia Gomes, Maria João Leote de Carvalho, and Vera Duarte (eds.) *Incarceration and Generation, Vol. 1: Multiple Faces of Confinement* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

<sup>26</sup> Salina Abji and Lindsay Larios, “Migrant Justice as Reproductive Justice: Birthright Citizenship and the Politics of Immigration Detention for Pregnant Women in Canada,” *Citizenship Studies* 25, no. 2 (2021): 253-72.

<sup>27</sup> Robjant K, Hassan R and Katona C (2009) Mental health implications of detaining asylum seekers: Systematic review. *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 194: 306–312.

We urge you to cancel BC's immigration detention agreement with the CBSA. BC's jails are no place for people who have come to Canada seeking refuge, safety, or opportunities to build better lives for themselves or their families.

Yours truly,



Raji Mangat

*Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:*

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition  
Centre for Gender & Sexual Health Equity  
Community Legal Assistance Society  
Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic  
Migrant Workers Centre  
West Coast LEAF

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### **About us:**

The **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition** comprises 100+ organizations and community mobilizations that collectively advocate for public policy solutions to end poverty, homelessness and inequality in BC. We aim to improve the health and well-being of all living in British Columbia. The Coalition advocates for a targeted and comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that prioritizes equity-seeking groups and a whole government, cross-ministry approach to ending poverty. Our work is grounded in the foundation of universal human rights.

The **Centre for Gender & Sexual Health Equity** is a University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University academic centre housed at Providence Health Care. The CGSHE's mission is to provide leadership in gender equity and sexual health for all in BC, Canada and globally, through rigorous community-engaged research that meets the highest scientific and ethical standards, evidence-based policy development, and the implementation of innovative, patient-centred and equity-oriented clinical and community practices through guidelines and education.

The **Community Legal Assistance Society** (CLAS) provides legal assistance to low-income and marginalized people in British Columbia in the areas of housing, income security, workers' rights, mental health, and human rights law. CLAS's activities are carried out through service and test cases; systemic advocacy and law

reform; legal supervision services to advocacy organizations; and public legal education and training. CLAS's BC Human Rights Clinic provides information, referrals, legal advice, advocacy, and legal representation services to eligible complainants.

The **Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic** provides free legal advice and representation, with interpretation services, for low-income people whose cases are not covered or easy to serve in the traditional legal aid system. Alongside our casework, we advocate for change on issues that repeatedly come up for our clients by engaging in systemic litigation and law reform efforts. We provide legal education to community groups and service providers across BC. Clinic staff also serve as mentors to law students and junior lawyers interested in the refugee and immigration law field.

The **Migrant Workers Centre** is a non-profit organization dedicated to legal advocacy for migrant workers in BC. Established in 1986, MWC facilitates access to justice for migrant workers through the provision of free legal advice and representation. MWC also works to advance fair immigration policy and improved labour standards for migrant workers through public legal education, law and policy reform, and test case litigation.

**West Coast LEAF** uses legal strategies to address gender-based discrimination and harm in BC and across Canada. Founded in 1985, we work to connect communities directly impacted with efforts to reform the laws, policies and government actions that shape their experiences of gender justice. In 2018, the organization's mandate expanded to recognize that gender-based inequalities threaten the safety, well-being and human rights not only of women, but also of Two-Spirit people, intersex people, gender non-conforming people, trans people of all genders and people with non-binary gender identities.