

Goal 09

Improve Funding Strategies

Ensuring sustainable funding for access to justice initiatives is an ongoing challenge. This year saw a number of targeted funds, announcements, or creative funding strategies to make sure that there is funding for access to justice. Here is a sample of funding initiatives.

Law Foundations

Law Foundations across Canada support projects that improve access to justice, expand public understanding of the legal system and support legal education. Over \$44 million is granted annually to projects by these independent foundations. In addition to the regular granting in each province or territory, the Access to Justice Fund operated by the Law Foundation of Ontario supports projects across the country. It distributes money received from cy-près courts awards to access to justice projects. Since 2009, it has received more than 15 cy-près awards and supported more than 100 grants worth over \$15 million.*

*Estimates taken from Foundation websites and news releases. Final audited statements of Foundation assets and grants are not yet available. These estimates may change once final figures are available.

Government Funding

In Ontario, legal aid eligibility rates were increased by another 6% again this year, the fourth increase in recent years. Quebec increased its legal aid eligibility rate by 4.7% this year and also invited project proposals to a \$500,000 fund to promote access to justice. The BC government invested \$16 million in collaborative approaches to child protection, family and civil issues to enhance access to justice. In the Yukon, the Crime



\$44

MILLION

in Law Foundation grants across
Canada

\$15

MILLION

from cy-près decisions granted
exclusively to A2J since 2009 through
the LFO's Access to Justice Fund

Prevention and Victim Services Trust announced funding for 5 community-led projects. Funding was offered through the Alberta Community Restorative Justice grant. In Manitoba, in addition to free legal aid for those who qualify, the Agreement to Pay program allows people to pay for legal services at legal aid rates, instead of market rates, in some cases.

New Funding Strategies

Some projects are finding ways to make the most of limited funds or to share resources. A Nova Scotia web tool has been developed by IT students at Saint Mary's University to help people prepare wills. By partnering

with the university, this tool was developed and launched without new funding.

New strategies for funding access to justice have also been developed. In BC, the Law Society released a report of its task force outlining a Vision for Publically Funded Legal Aid. The Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals is using its accessibility survey to help make decisions about funding and resources. The Manitoba Law Society's Forgivable Loan Program forgives the student debt of law students who practice in rural areas where there is a shortage of legal services.