

February 18, 2015

Dear Grantees,

RE: ANNUAL FUNDING GUIDELINES

The Foundation undertakes an annual review of its current and projected financial position in order to provide some forward guidance to grantees and potential applicants. The assessment of our capacity to support renewed operating grants and approve new project grants is intended to provide grantees an appreciation of the context in which the Foundation Directors expect to be making decisions over the coming year. We also take this opportunity to highlight any priorities that the Board has established and new initiatives underway or likely to be undertaken by the Foundation.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

We currently find ourselves in a state of economic uncertainty. The dramatic fall in oil prices over the last several months is expected to result in slower economic activity in Alberta which will likely lead to lower average balances in lawyers' pooled trust accounts. The Bank of Canada's recent reduction in the prime rate is designed to offset the economic slowdown to some degree; however, lower interest rates will negatively impact the Foundation's primary source of revenue which is interest on lawyers' pooled trust accounts.

Looking ahead, we must be prepared for a potentially significant reduction in annual revenue from lawyers' pooled trust accounts. Although the Foundation continues to hold assets in its strategic reserve fund, this too may have to be drawn down substantially to maintain grants at current levels. The legal needs of Albertans are not expected to decline in this uncertain economic environment, as our population expands and legal issues become more complex. Accordingly, the Foundation will be looking to grantees to maximize the impact of their programs within a climate of reasonable spending restraint.

Grantees can expect to receive further guidance from the Foundation in the coming months, as we monitor economic indicators and their anticipated impact on Foundation revenues.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Over the past year, the Foundation has undertaken a strategic planning process to examine the role that it should be taking in the justice sector. In the course of this process, including input from directors, staff, grantees and other stakeholders, it became clear that the Foundation should be more than just a grant-making agency. With its broad perspective, and the knowledge and insights gained from working with its grantees, ALF is in a position to take a leadership role in shaping the future legal landscape in Alberta.

The strategic plan takes the Foundation's statutory objects and transforms them into four Organizational Ends:

- The law and the administration of justice reflect the current values of Albertans.
- Albertans are aware of and understand the law and their legal rights and obligations.
- Albertans can effectively exercise their rights under the law.
- The Foundation will excel as an organization that identifies and addresses key justice sector issues and concerns.

In the coming years, the Foundation plans to take a more active role in identifying specific needs in the areas noted in the first three Ends, engaging with stakeholders to develop solutions to meet those needs, and supporting programs and initiatives designed to implement those solutions.

Particular initiatives that the Foundation will be involved in over the next three years include:

- supporting the collaborative development of *LegalAve*, a one-stop web portal with guided pathways to assist Albertans in understanding the nature of their legal issues and what steps can be taken to resolve those issues, as well as the resources available to assist them in that process;
- developing solutions to address the growing need for legal assistance in family matters; and
- working with grantees to build capacity in program design, delivery and evaluation to better understand the effectiveness of their work and opportunities for improved outcomes.

STAFFING UPDATE

To achieve these ends and undertake these initiatives, the Foundation has expanded its program staff complement to three. We welcome two new Grant Coordinators, Janet Kerrigan and Michelle Bickley. Janet brings a background in the non-profit sector, both in Calgary and abroad, with experience managing grants that are designed to respond to community needs. Michelle has spent over 18 years in the non-profit sector, most recently as a program evaluation specialist. Janet and Michelle will join the Foundation's Program Coordinator, Trish Cameron, and Executive Director, Deborah Duncan, to work with grantees in identifying priority needs, developing and implementing responsive programs and demonstrating their impact for Albertans.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony G. Young', written over a large, stylized, circular scribble.

Anthony G. Young, Q.C.
Chair