

Bridging the Gaps

Summary of Workshop Discussions

We would like to thank you for joining our ***Bridging the Gaps Workshop*** on May 9. We have already seen positive outcomes from our meeting, such as:

- Individuals from stakeholder organizations had the chance to meet face to face.
- Participants were able to get a deeper understanding of other agencies' services.
- Participants were able to identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination of services.
- ALF received valuable feedback about additional ways to support grantees and stakeholders.
- All of us had the opportunity to think about solutions and identify strategies to improve delivery of legal services in Alberta.

We would greatly appreciate your comments/feedback about the workshop, as well as the surveys and questionnaire you completed earlier.

Below are the ***Project Overview*** of the Bridging the Gaps initiative and the ***Summary of Workshop Discussions***, based on the note takers' annotations. Please let us know if there is anything we have missed or that you would like to add

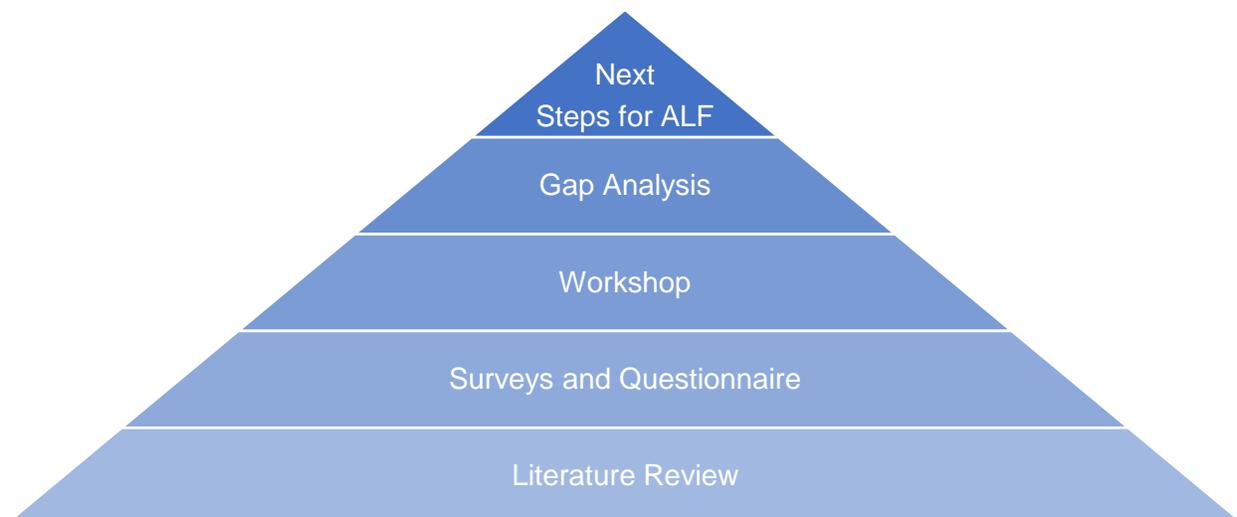
Project Overview

ALF's Legal Needs Assessment Initiative, later referred to as "Bridging the Gaps", was established to help ascertain unmet legal needs in Alberta to guide ALF grant-making over the coming years.

The methodology adopted was a combination of literature review, surveys and questionnaire, and stakeholder engagement. The following steps were taken from January 8, 2018 to June 6, 2018:

1. Review selected access to justice literature.
2. Develop a summary of common statements and recommendations found in the literature.
3. Develop surveys to test research findings regarding common statements and recommendations.
4. Develop questionnaire about existing legal services and priority legal needs (modelled on 2010 Clinic Symposium format).
5. Send surveys and questionnaire to select justice stakeholders.
6. Summarize surveys and questionnaire responses.
7. Build matrix of existing legal services.
8. Distribute summary of responses to participants before the workshop.
9. Develop list of 10 discussion topics for the workshop based on summary of responses to the surveys and questionnaire.
10. Facilitate a world café style workshop with justice stakeholders.
11. Summarize note takers notes and add some food for thought under each table topic.
- 12. Distribute summary of workshop discussions to participants.**
13. Analyze the information gathered from the literature review, surveys, questionnaire, matrix of existing legal services, workshop discussions and research on initiatives in Canada and the US on each table topic.
14. Develop a list of gaps identified and priorities.
15. Develop a list of potential next steps for ALF.
16. Build Report to the Board.

The methodology was designed to build on the information collected on each step to identify potential areas of action within ALF's mandate:



Based on the information collected from the literature review and the feedback received from the surveys and questionnaire, key topics and related recommendations were identified for focused discussion in a World Cafe Workshop format. Participants were encouraged to think about solutions to implement the recommendations. Below is a summary of the workshop discussions, based on the note takers' annotations.

Table	Recommendation	Feedback	Identified Strategies
1. Court Forms and Procedures	<i>Make it easier to complete court forms and follow court procedures.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance is needed to identify which forms to use and how to properly fill them. • Automated court form generator services would be helpful. • A centralized system for identifying and accessing forms using a needs assessment questionnaire would be helpful (like Turbo Tax). The system would prompt users to answer a few initial questions then direct them to the appropriate forms that are specific to their issues. • It is important to consider that some users have limited access to computers/technology. • A form repository is needed. Database of court forms could be managed and maintained by the Law Library. • Information regarding the right forms to use is limited due to restriction from providing legal advice. • A process flow chart or check list would be helpful to assist users with navigating the justice system. • Court clerks currently check forms for accuracy and completeness. However, once an error is flagged they send the form back to the user without checking the rest of the document for additional errors. Clerks should check the entire form and identify all issues in one cycle. • Coaching on court procedure is needed. Many organizations currently offer this service. • Language support with forms and court procedure is need. • Paralegals could help with form filling. However, many lawyers feel there is big variance in the qualification level of paralegals and feel uneasy with the quality of their work. Standardized paralegal education program is needed. • Court processes and forms should be simplified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated court form generator services • Assistance to identify which forms are needed and how to properly fill them • Form repository • Paralegal assistance with form filling • PLEI with flowcharts on court procedure • Coaching for court procedures • Language support • Simplify court forms and procedures

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2. Legal services for Indigenous people	<i>Work with the community to develop and implement culturally appropriate legal service solutions to better reach and serve Indigenous populations.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of urban Indigenous people are different from the ones living on reserve (e.g. transportation and access to technology barriers). Indigenous people are overrepresented in the “need” but not in the “giving” sector. Indigenous people need to serve their people. There is a need for more Indigenous legal service providers. There is a need to engage with Indigenous communities to build relationships, listen to their needs and work together to find and implement solutions. CLG having an Indigenous liaison and an Indigenous articling student providing legal services were key to develop a strong relationship with the community. There is not enough duty counsel type of services and remote legal service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Indigenous communities to build relationships, listen to their needs and work together to find and implement solutions Indigenous liaisons and Indigenous legal service providers Legal capacity building for Indigenous populations Remote legal service delivery and transportation services for Indigenous people living on reserve Duty counsel type of service
3. Legal services for newcomers	<i>Work with the community to develop and implement linguistic and culturally appropriate legal services for newcomers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers experience both language and cultural barriers to find and understand PLEI and legal advice. Legal services to newcomers are most effective when provided in community centers or when legal clinics outreach to the community. Schools, newcomer centers, community association and churches are examples of important places to connect with newcomers. Free or low cost interpretation and translation services are needed. Cultural sensitivity training to service providers is needed. There are multiple immigrant serving agencies in Calgary, which causes competition for funding. There is a need for human rights education regarding discrimination against newcomers. There is not enough cultural diversity in the legal profession. PLEI should be translated to different languages and adapted to different cultural backgrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation and interpretation services Multilingual PLEI Cultural sensitivity training to service providers Legal services provided in community centers or legal clinics doing outreach to communities

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4. Alternative legal service delivery	<i>Further develop and implement legal service delivery models (other than traditional full representation by a lawyer) useful or appropriate to serve different demographics in different areas of law.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules governing legal service provision are too complex, too restrictive and actively prohibit creative thinking around problem-solving. • There is big variance in the qualification level of paralegals. Training can go from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the institution offering the diploma program. • There is a need for better intake and triage services. • The physical point of access for triage services should be outside the court building and should be housed together as a “one-stop shop”. • There is a need for more unbundled legal services. • There is a need for more coaching on court procedures and to clarify expectations in terms of length of proceedings and possible outcomes. “Advice on the legal system, not only legal advice.” • There is a need to educate the public on the structure of the justice system. • Social work and legal work are complimentary services. If the issue has a legal basis, social workers should be supervised by a lawyer. There is a concern that if clients talk to a social worker first they may unknowingly waive their attorney-client privilege. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbundled legal services • Intake and triage services • Coaching for court procedures and to clarify expectations • Lawyer supervised paralegal services • Lawyer supervised social worker services
5. Alternative dispute resolution	<i>Further develop and implement alternative judicial and extra-judicial dispute resolution methods to enhance access to justice.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADR is not for everyone or every situation. Not suitable for cases of domestic violence or when there is a considerable power imbalance between parties. • Client assessment is needed to determine the appropriateness of ADR services. • A multidisciplinary ADR team with a social worker as a case manager would be helpful to provide support beyond legal assistance. • ADR is a good fit for family law. The court system and process can be intimidating, especially for children. • Public education on ADR is needed. It should start early, with kids and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client assessment to determine the appropriateness of ADR services • ADR for family law cases • Public education on ADR

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6. Using technology strategically	<i>Leverage technology to develop and implement tools to enhance the delivery of legal services.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology can be used to assist with form filling, online form checking, remote service delivery, PLEI, online dispute resolution, mediation and shared intake and client file management systems. • ALF should consider implementing a centralized database of all service providers and provide a platform for collaboration and information sharing amongst the organizations. • Use of technology requires frequent maintenance. • Language support is needed. • It is important to consider that some users have limited access to computers and may not be comfortable using technology. Client assessment is needed to determine the appropriateness of technology assisted services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated court form generator services • Remote legal service delivery • Shared intake and client file management system • Centralized database and information sharing platform for legal service providers • Client assessment is needed to determine the appropriateness of technology assisted services.
7. Coordination of legal services	<i>Better coordinate delivery of legal services to provide seamless support, information and advice for individuals, especially vulnerable individuals.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized confidential client information area would be helpful, so clients would not have to tell their story over and over. • A shared client file management system would have to be designed with mechanisms and protocols to overcome issues of confidentiality and privilege. • A justice referral map is needed. The database of services should have enough details to make exact referrals. • A hotline for centralized legal service referral would be helpful. • Hot referrals would be ideal, which should include contacting another service on the client's behalf and may also involve writing a report or case history on the client and/or attending the service with the client. • A legal passport, like a permanent health care medical chart, would be helpful. • Sharing a space at another agency's office is a good coordination strategy. • Service providers are most comfortable making referrals if they know the other agency's services well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized confidential client information area • Database of legal services • Hot referrals • Hotline • Legal passport • Regular justice stakeholder meetings

Table	Recommendation	Feedback	Identified Strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services change constantly – stakeholders need to stay in touch and communicate changes. • Regular stakeholder meetings are needed to share information and coordinate efforts. • Legal Aid Alberta must be involved in any coordination efforts. 	
8. Educating the public	<i>Educate the public about the importance of having access to justice, knowing how the legal system works and knowing where to find assistance when needed.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many participants found this statement confusing. Some clarification was given by the facilitator during the workshop. To further explain, the first part relates to the need to educate the public on the individual and social cost of inaccessible justice and to increase public awareness and support to public legal services. The second part relates to the need to build legal capacity so that everyone has a basic understanding of their rights and obligations and available legal services in their community (e.g. CBA’s Legal Health Check initiative). • People usually only look for legal information when there is already a legal problem or dispute in place. • Legal-related education in schools, teaching law as a life skill, is needed to build early legal capacity. Topics should include how to resolve conflicts outside the justice system. • Education and engagement is also needed to clarify misconceptions about the law and to build trust between the public and justice system. • The public library, schools, health clinics and hospitals, newspapers, magazines, radio and social media were listed as good venues to disseminate information and publicize legal services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law-related education in schools to build early legal capacity • Public education on the individual and social cost of inaccessible justice • Public education to clarify misconceptions about the law and to build trust between the public and the justice system

Table	Recommendation	Feedback	Identified Strategies
9. Outcome analysis and evaluation	<i>Develop outcomes evaluation processes and data collection, for understanding, analyzing and sharing information about what works and doesn't work, and innovative ideas for legal problem-solving.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation is a skill rather than an activity. • ALF should have an evaluator on staff to visit grantees periodically and provide support in program evaluation. Grantees should have funding to hire evaluation staff, or at least contract them at times of need. • ALF should provide a global picture of all programs funded provincially and how everyone contributes to ALF's objects. This would give a sense of being part of a legal landscape. • There is a need for ALF-coordinated effort in evaluation and data-collection, across all grantees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build grantees' evaluation capacity • ALF coordinated effort in evaluation and data collection across all grantees
10. Building community relationships	<i>Build and maintain relationships with communities/groups to better understand their members' legal needs and support them in addressing those needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers need to engage with the community to understand their needs and how to overcome relationship barriers. • Cultural sensitivity and language support are key to successful community relationship building. • Good communication, collaboration and coordination among service providers are needed. • Regular stakeholder meetings are needed for information sharing, communication, collaboration and coordination of services. • Confidentiality is a big barrier to sharing client information among service providers. • A cross-sector centralized intake would be very difficult, but an integrated intake across legal service providers may be possible. • Sharing expertise is a positive outcome of successful community relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural sensitivity training • Language services • Community engagement and participation in the assessment of needs and design of legal services • Regular justice stakeholder meetings (with community organizations) • Expertise sharing