

July 31, 2023

Dear Grantees and Stakeholders,

**RE: ANNUAL FUNDING GUIDELINE**

We are now three years past the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The Alberta Law Foundation (the “Foundation”) appreciates all of our grantees’ contributions in recent years to legal research and law reform and to supporting Albertans in learning about, understanding and exercising their legal rights and responsibilities. While the pandemic years proved to be challenging with historically low interest rates, slow economic growth and low rates of employment, we are now facing new challenges including inflationary pressures and the accumulation of legal issues arising as a consequence of the pandemic shut-downs. Access to justice in the current environment continues to be a priority for the Foundation.

The Foundation regularly reviews its current and projected financial position with a view to providing guidance to grantees and potential grant applicants about the availability of funds to make grants in the coming year. We also take this opportunity to share what the Foundation has learned about gaps in legal services and priority legal needs in our community.

**Financial Position**

The increase in interest rates over the last year has created hardships for many Albertans. The affordability of basic needs, including legal assistance, is out of reach for more and more individuals. However, higher rates have benefitted the Foundation in the form of record annual revenue from interest on lawyers’ trust accounts, which means more resources are available to invest in services and initiatives that advance access to justice in our province.

**Funding Opportunities**

Anticipating the increase in revenue this past year, the Foundation has been working with grantees and other community stakeholders to further assess the legal needs in Alberta and the gaps that are still waiting to be filled. The Foundation board and staff met in June to review the findings of this engagement and update our policies and procedures to streamline some of our grant processes.

[The 2022-23 Alberta Legal Needs Assessment: What We Learned So Far](#) (the “Report”) is posted on the Foundation’s website. Current grantees and new applicants are urged to read the Report, connect with the community to identify specific legal needs and gaps, and develop initiatives designed to address those needs and gaps.

Over the coming months, the Foundation will be issuing special grant calls and creating funds for specific purposes to address some of the needs identified in the Report and also to provide an opportunity for existing grantees to enhance their organizational capacity – these will be advertised directly and through the Foundation’s newsletter and web site.

The Foundation is also excited to hear about new ideas and encourages applicants to present innovative project proposals that will reach out to more Albertans in underserved communities and areas of law, taking care to avoid unnecessary duplication of service. If you have an initiative that you have been thinking about, now is the time to request a project grant.

## Application Process

Non-profit organizations and other eligible groups in Alberta are invited to respond to specific calls when they are announced, or at any time submit an enquiry regarding a new project idea through the Foundation's [grant portal](#). We remind applicants that any proposal must still advance one of the Foundations statutory objects which are:


- (i) research and reform of the law or the administration of justice;
- (ii) law libraries;
- (iii) public legal education and information;
- (iv) Indigenous people's legal programs; student and community legal clinics and other like programs.

Further, applications for funding will be expected to include a plan and budget for evaluating the impact of the proposed project.

Potential applicants are strongly urged to initiate the enquiry process as early as possible. This will allow for an opportunity to discuss the process and obtain feedback from staff about how a proposal may fit into the Foundation's overall mandate and current funding strategy.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,



Stephanie L. Dobson, Chair