

Law Society of Nunavut

A2J Program – 2016 AGM Report



Over the past year, the Access to Justice Committee has pursued activities in accordance with the A2J Program approved by the LSN membership, with a strategic focus on two areas of programming (youth and legal information), while also building the capacity of the membership and of community partners to participate in ongoing and future access to justice activities.

Strategic Approach

The Committee membership was rejuvenated after the 2015 AGM, with new membership from interested LSN members. Gloria Song and James Morton were selected as Co-Chairs of the Committee. In September, the Co-Chairs, CEO and Access to Justice Consultant had a day-long strategic planning session to review possible activities and needs, resulting in recommended priorities for the year that were adopted by the Committee. The two primary areas of activity that were selected are *youth and school programming* and the development of *legal information* to meet identified needs.

National Action Committee

The National Action Committee on Access to Civil and Family Matters, chaired by Justice Cromwell met in Montreal this year. The Committee Co-Chairs attended, supported by Sarah McCoubrey, and reported on Nunavut's activities. It was also an opportunity to provide input into the type of national coordination or support that would be useful within the territory. Nunavut's activities were highlighted and of interest to many attendees. Of note, there was representation, for the first time, from all of the territories, as well as active discussion from the Ontario and Quebec representatives about the issues arising in their northern communities and for Inuit residents of those provinces. There were initial discussions about possible collaboration on translation costs, sharing of existing or new resources and opportunities to support northern efforts, in which Nunavut's progress was seen as a model to replicate in other locations.

Public Legal Information and Education

This year has seen the completion of a new court process video, launched in November at the Nunavut Court of Justice, establishing a territory-specific tool for preparing people for court appearances. It was launched in conjunction with the visit from Federation President Tom Conway and LSUC Treasurer Janet Minor.

Six new legal information tools are being developed. Written as plain language resources to be made available in multiple languages, the resources focus on six topics identified as high needs within the territory. They are being drafted and will be reviewed by Committee members, with Gloria Song taking the lead on drafting the content. These plain language

resources will be posted on a web portal linked to the LSN website, but hosted on a discrete webpage. The proposed name is *Nunavut legal knowledge*. This web address will be easy to find and made available to local community partners as a link on their websites. Printable versions of the info sheets will be available for download and promoted to justice, as well as health, education and housing agencies who field legal questions

James Morton has generously made his Facebook page posts and regular Nunatsiaq News columns available as a vehicle for additional plain language content and as an indication of interest, particularly in civil topics or areas of procedure that may not be raised with counsel. These may be the basis for new topics on the LSN legal information webpage.

Youth Programming

During the spring, youth-focused programming was planned and delivered during many of the court sittings in the territory. These programs worked with community or school partners to identify the appropriate youth audience and subject areas for justice education sessions. Lawyers, while on circuit, connected with youth and facilitated conversations about legal issues as well as careers in the justice system. New classroom resources and facilitation materials were developed and modified for each location, recognizing that lawyers and others in the court party are busy during the court sitting. The following table highlights to locations, audiences and status of these events

Location	Dates	LSN Volunteers	Community Contact	Project description	Status
Pond Inlet	March 21	Ivan Nault Sarah Bailey	Principal of High School	Classroom based session for Grades 10 - 12	Young person's funeral to be held the same day; Principal asked for the session to continue; Ultimately cancelled due to weather
Arviat	April 4/5	Priscilla Ferrazzi	Hamlet programmer for youth sessions	Young men's session focused on issues involving alcohol (possession, driving)	Complete
Iqaluit	April 15	Jena Montgomery Bryn Bamber Erica Marcassa	High School Law Teacher	Classroom session for Grade 12 Law class (all girls)	Complete
Rankin Inlet	April 18/19	Jonathan Park	High School Teacher	Classroom session on	Complete
Kugluktuk	May 10,11,13	Sara Siebert Pete LeCain	High School Principal and Grade 9-10 and 11-12 teachers of Careers units	Careers and Tech intensive unit Classroom session based on employment issues and court visit	Complete

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Resolute / Arctic Bay circuit	June 20 - 22	Justice Hennessy	Unknown	-	May be planned in mid-May based on summer youth program schedule

Community Events

Two A2J Community Events were planned for the spring, designed to create an opportunity for community members to learn about legal issues and meet lawyers and justice professionals in a community setting. The very successful event in Kugluktuk took place on May 12th. The event planned for Rankin Inlet was postponed because the heavy court docket and the availability of resident lawyers to participate in a community event throughout the year, not just during the circuit court sitting.

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Kugluktuk	May 12	Sara Siebert Pete LeCain Caroline Pothemont Sarah Arngna'naaq Jonathan Park	Doris Nancy Ivarluk – Court Worker	Community Open House focusing on civil law, particularly poverty and family law	Complete
Rankin Inlet	TBD	Susan Enuaraq Mandy Sammurtok	Kivalliq Legal Services	Open house at Community Hall	Postponed

Professional Development for Lawyers

Professional Development sessions were held in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, focusing on justice education, community outreach and youth engagement. These sessions were delivered by Bryn Bamber, the Aboriginal Program Manager at the Ontario Justice Education Network.

Communications

The territory's access to justice programming has been highlighted in the LSN newsletter and on its website. Jena Montgomery has prepared an article for the PPSC internal newsletter, sharing Nunavut's activities with colleagues across the country. The Kugluktuk A2J activities included radio broadcasts and promotion. Ongoing highlighting of access to justice activities highlights the pro bono efforts of LSN members, increases people's awareness and comfort with lawyers and helps to identify new community partners and needs.

Funding, Recognition and Closing Remarks

All of these activities are funded through a generous grant from the Law Foundation of Ontario. Currently, we are under budget and invite our membership to contact the Law Society of they are interested in delivering such activities in Iqaluit or in other communities. What remains important to remember for the continued growing success of these initiatives – as it is a learning process for all- at the heart of A2J are the needs of the communities,

flexibility and collaboration. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the support of Community Justice, the various organizations that have helped us better understand the context and needs of their own community and for their contribution in the development of the legal info sheets ; and last but not least, the various local law related organizations, such as the PPSC and the NLSB, as without their support our members would not be able to participate in these important community based activities. We are thankful to these organizations and our members for their continued commitment and engagement.