

Name of Respondent	Organization	Response Summary
Lynn Burns	Pro Bono Legal Ontario (PBLO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate: to bridge the gap between lawyers who want to donate their services and low-income Ontarians whose legal problems do not attract government funding. • Vision: To ensure that low-income Ontarians have the resources they need to live safe, healthy and stable lives. • Services compliment, but do not duplicate legal aid. • Committed to a user-friendly justice system that avoids unnecessary overlap 2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics: low-income Ontarians whose civil law problems do not attract government funding 3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforming and simplifying court procedures • Making it easier for litigants to complete and file court forms • Access to free legal assistance for self-represented litigants 4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of comprehensive end user testing when procedural reforms are being considered • Limited availability and quality of court form completion software and e-filing • Court's hours of operation • Lack of onsite legal assistance • Lack of unbundled services in the marketplace 5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted an interactive court completion program with PBSC in 2009. The basis was using guided interviews to complete court docs. • Provided consulting services to Luke's Place court assistance project for survivors of DV. This is a brief service program • 393 Pro Bono ILA. Provided consulting services • With Advocates society, have been approached by the superior court to help develop a plain language guide

		<p>for self-represented litigants with family law matters</p> <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Thomas Dart & Tamara Bodnaruk- Wide</p>	<p>Family Mediation Canada (FMC)</p>	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate: an interdisciplinary association of professionals dedicated to the promotion of family mediation as a first choice in resolving family conflict and to the ongoing support of professional family mediators across Canada • Vision: FMC promotes excellence in family mediation, and is the national certifying body for family mediators in Canada. • FMC was established in 1985 and is a nationally-registered not-for-profit organization. We are unique in that we are the only national family mediation organization. <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics: multidisciplinary family mediators, and our catchment area is national and international <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to mediation services for all Canadians involved in family disputes • Access to Independent Legal Advice (ILA) for those in family mediation • Regulation of family mediators <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of promotion and lack of funding for family mediation • Lack of interdisciplinary cooperation • Lack of funding for affordable ILA • Lack of recognized regulation of family mediators <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National certification program for family mediators (internationally recognized) • National certification program for family mediators specializing in elder mediation • Best practices for International Custody Disputes • National registry of family mediators

		<p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board routinely examines its practices and ensures that the protocol around its certification of mediators is at a high standard. The standards we employ are internationally recognized and have been adopted by the Provincial Government of British Columbia and Ontario as appropriate for the practice of family mediation.
Nicole Alywin	Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (CFCJ)	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate: Is a national not-for-profit dedicated to advancing civil justice reform through research and advocacy. <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i> * Attained from http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/sites/default/files/docs/2013/AC_Report_English_Final.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two things are urgently needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, a new way of thinking – a culture shift – is required to move away from old patterns and old approaches ○ Second, a specific action plan – a goal-oriented access to justice roadmap – is urgently needed. <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i> * Attained from http://www.cfcj-fcjc.org/sites/default/files/docs/2013/AC_Report_English_Final.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Aid funding and coverage is not available for most people and problems • The cost of legal services and length of proceedings is increasing <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of justice: weighing the costs of fair and effective resolution to legal problems. This five-year long study, funded by SSHRC, is designed to develop methods to measure what our civil justice system costs, who it serves, whether it is meeting the needs of its users and the price of failing to do so. • Evaluating the cost of family disputes: Measuring the cost implications of various dispute resolution methods. As part of the cost of justice study, this project, undertaken in partnership with the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, seeks to aggregate data produced by research organizations and government agencies on the empirical impact of provincial family dispute resolution programs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFCJ has also played a supporting role in the work of the National Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Carol Barkwell	Luke's Place	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique resource centre devoted to improving the safety and experience of abused women and their children as they proceed through the family law process. • Mission: Luke's Place mission is to support abused women and their children throughout the family law process and to provide them and their communities with specialized resources about family law and woman abuse. • Vision: Our vision is a family law system that promotes healthy, and safe families. The Luke's Place mandate consists of three main goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of short and long term support to abused women focusing on family law issues in Durham Region ○ Provision of specialized resources and a centralized resource library for use by abused women and their advocates throughout Ontario ○ Provision of consultation, education and training on family law and woman abuse to the service community and the general public throughout Ontario <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <p>Demographics: focused on the development of a specialized response to support abused women in this difficult and challenging process including the provision of individual service and group support, creation of a Pro Bono Summary Advice Clinic, development and continuing updates of a resource manual, tools and training process for advocates, and the provision of community-based training and mentorship for shelter staff, lawyers, and other social service professionals.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <p>Based on our research as well as our direct service work, we have concluded that the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters involving domestic violence are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a specialized response (case management) for domestic violence cases, which would include clearly distinguishing these cases from those currently identified as "high conflict" and ensuring an effective, timely response to legal bullying which, when not managed, can have devastating impacts on women's physical and emotional well-being and safety as well as on court outcomes. • Affordable access to lawyers who understand domestic violence, which necessitates a review and expansion of

Legal Aid Ontario's financial eligibility criteria as well as the development of CPD focused specifically on domestic violence

- More expedient access to interim relief and case resolution and access to multi disciplinary supports in cases of domestic violence so women can emerge from the family court process with appropriate outcomes.

4. *In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?*

Our work has also helped us confidently identify the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters involving domestic violence:

- The lack of acknowledgement/analysis of domestic violence, including the reality of ongoing and often escalating violence post-separation has led to a lack of effective measures to address the unique issues posed by incises where domestic violence is present. The unwritten presumption in favour of joint custody and a variety of custody and access arrangements that maximize contact with the abuser is one example of outcomes that flow when a proper analysis is not applied in these cases;
- The inconsistent use of remedies available within the system to address legal bullying mean women cannot rely on an appropriate response by the family court system; the inconsistent access to court services in a timely manner across the province places women and their children at risk of ongoing harm.
- Despite the ongoing need for these services and initiatives, Luke's Place has only been able to secure funding by way of short-term project grants throughout its 10-year service delivery history. A lack of predictable, annual financial resources from government and other funders is a significant challenge for Luke's Place and many other services across the province in providing stable and secure supports to abused women in the family law system. This in and of itself is an access to justice issue.

5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*

- Luke's Place engages in research on issues related to violence against women and children and family law/court, with funding from a variety of sources
- Luke's Place focuses on raising the profile and understanding of this issue provincially and internationally through leadership of and participation in think tanks, stakeholder consultations, presentations at provincial and international conferences, distribution of published materials, and completion of academic research.
- Luke's Place direct services are provided to abused women living in or who have a family law case in the Durham Region, Ontario and include:
 - Family law support is available at confidential locations in Oshawa and Ajax and at our office at the Durham Region family court.
 - Court preparation, including recording the history of abuse, gathering evidence, preparing

		<p>documentation, accompaniment to court and lawyers' appointments, debriefing and setting next steps (provided by Legal Support Workers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pro bono clinic, to provide women with summary legal advice, assistance with legal documentation and court preparation (provided by volunteer community lawyers working with Legal Support Workers) ○ Safety planning (provided by Legal Support Workers) ○ Resource library ○ Family law networking group; a weekly group for woman abuse survivors to receive support as they proceed through the family court process ○ Early Information and Safety Planning sessions and Legal Information Workshops for women (delivered by Legal Support Workers, volunteers and community lawyers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Luke's Place has a well developed and ongoing formal collaboration with the four Durham Region Shelters and Catholic Family Services Durham, including having successfully worked together on the development of the Training Manual, training and support of shelter advocates, the training and provision of volunteers, and development of a formal referral and service intersection process with respect to shared access to the pro bono clinic. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <p>We have completed extensive evaluation by service users and partners of many of our programs and initiatives, which we can make available to you upon request. We have also completed a number of academic and community-based research projects that speak to the needs of abused women and effective responses to those needs within the family law system. All research is available on our website through this direct link: http://lukesplace.ca/resources/</p> <p>In particular we would call your attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "It Shouldn't Be This Hard" - A gender-based analysis of family law, family court and violence against women ➤ Study of the experiences of abused women in family courts in eight regions of Ontario ➤ "Through the Looking Glass" - Executive summary of a needs assessment and gaps analysis for abused women unrepresented in the family law system in Durham Region
Anne Marie Predko	Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <p>Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible for administering justice in Ontario. Within the ministry, the Court Services Division is responsible for the administration of the courts.</p> <p>The division's mission is to provide a modern and professional court service that supports accessible, fair, timely and effective justice services.</p>

The *Courts of Justice Act* sets out important **goals** for the administration of the courts. Specifically, section 71 of the act states that the administration of the courts shall be carried on so as to:

- Maintain the independence of the judiciary as a separate branch of government
- Recognize the respective roles and responsibilities of the Attorney General and the judiciary in the administration of justice
- Encourage public access to the courts and public confidence in the administration of justice
- Further the provision of high quality services to the public
- Promote the efficient use of public resources

2. *What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?*

For the purpose of providing court services, the division is organized into seven administrative regions. The seven regions are:

- **Central East Region:** The region has a population of nearly two and a half million people and serves the communities of York, Durham, Simcoe, Muskoka, Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough and the City of Kawartha Lakes.
- **Central West Region:** The region has a population of over three million people, and includes the western Greater Toronto Area and extends from Fort Erie in the east to Dufferin County in the north and Norfolk County in the southwest. The region is the most populated of all seven regions and serves a diverse, multicultural population, including Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Mississauga's of the New Credit First Nation.
- **East Region:** The region serves over 1.6 million people and most court locations provide services in both English and French. Geographically the region borders the province of Quebec along the Ottawa River from L'Orignal to Killaloe extending southwest along the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario to Quinte West, and adjacent to central Ontario, east of Peterborough and Huntsville.
- **Northeast Region:** The region has a population of 552,000, and spans the area from Mattawa in the east to Wawa in the west, and from Parry Sound in the south to Peawanuck on the coast of Hudson's Bay in the north. There are significant Francophone and Aboriginal populations.
- **Northwest Region:** The population of the region is approximately 224,000, and it encompasses a vast geography, extending from the Minnesota border in the south to Fort Severn in the north, and from the Manitoba border in the west to the White River in the east.
- **Toronto Region:** The region serves the City of Toronto. With a population of over 2.6 million, the region has the highest population density of all Court Services Division regions. It is ethnically diverse with one in four immigrants to Canada settling in Toronto.
- **West Region:** The region has an estimated population of 2,259,725. Geographically, the region spans

approximately 33,000 square kilometres from Owen Sound down along the shores of Lake Huron to Windsor, then back up the shores of Lake Erie to St. Thomas before heading back to Owen Sound via Kitchener and Guelph, and includes both large urban and rural farming communities.

3. *In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?*

- No Comment

4. *In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?*

- No Comment

5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*

Family Justice Services that Support Access to Justice

- Mediation and Information Programs: A suite of family mediation and information services, including on- and off-site mediation, a Mandatory Information Program (MIP) and Information and Referral Coordinators (IRCs) are available in court locations throughout the province.
- Family Law Information Centres (FLICs): An area in the courthouse where the public can get information and assistance in relation to family law matters. The FLIC is the point of entry into the family justice system for many litigants, particularly those without legal representation.
- Family Case Management Clerks: The *Family Law Rules* require that all cases not involving divorce and property be reviewed by court staff who check that the appropriate documents have been filed, refer clients to information about alternatives to the court process and the impact of separation and divorce on children, and schedule cases for a hearing. Case management Clerks are key to the successful operation of the Rules, and a complementary service to the Family Law Information Centres that have been established across the province.
- Document Assembly: Ontario's Court Forms Assistant is an online document assembly program that litigants, especially those who are self-represented, can use for help in completing eight of the most commonly used family law forms.
- Family Court Support Worker Program: The Family Court Support Worker Program provides support to victims of domestic violence who are involved in a family court process.

New Family Justice Services that Support Access to Justice

- Electronic Orders (Pilot): The ministry has developed an electronic tool to quickly create orders and consent agreements for SRLs. It uses standard terms, and reduces wait times for orders. The tool is currently being used to produce orders in court in four pilot locations and to produce orders in the back office province wide.

		<p>An enhanced version of the tool uses the same functionality to create consent agreements that can be quickly converted into final orders for judicial review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized Divorce (Pilot): The process for obtaining a simple divorce has been centralized in the Superior Court of Justice at 393 University Avenue to reduce wait times for a final order. This project is currently running, on a pilot basis, in the Superior Court of Justice at 393 University Avenue. • Administrative Child Support Service (In Development): Parties who are seeking child support will be able to apply for the establishment and recalculation of support through this service rather than applying with the court. • Pilot Projects to Enhance Access to Early Dispute Resolution (In Development): The first project involves having parties go through a form of enhanced triage before commencing a court application. The second project involves requiring parties to attend one session of mediation before being allowed to commence a court application. • Facilitating Independent Legal Advice on mediated agreements (In Development): MAG will be working with Legal Aid Ontario to create a streamlined process to provide legal advice and support to clients who attend mediation. • Simplification of Court Forms (In Development): Court forms will be simplified and made more accessible to assist clients who are not represented in family court <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2012/13 the Ministry undertook an evaluation to assess the efficiency of and satisfaction with the delivery of mediation and information services.
Janet Budgell	Legal Aid Ontario	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <p>LAO has a statutory mandate to promote access to justice throughout Ontario for low-income individuals by means of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing consistently high quality legal aid services in a cost-effective and efficient manner; • Encouraging and facilitating flexibility and innovation in the provision of legal aid services; • Identifying, assessing and recognizing the diverse legal needs of low-income individuals and of disadvantaged communities in Ontario; and • Providing legal aid services to low-income individuals through a corporation that will operate independently from the Government of Ontario but within a framework of accountability to the Government of Ontario for the expenditure of public funds <p>In filling this mandate Legal Aid Ontario is committed to providing services which recognize the importance of diversity, access, equity, creativity and quality.</p>

		<p>LAO’s vision is to ensure that healthy communities include responsive and meaningful legal aid services and improved access to justice</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAO is the second largest justice agency in the province and provides more than 1 million assists to Ontarians annually. LAO provides services to individuals with low or no income, and only people meeting strict financial eligibility limits receive legal aid. LAO services are carefully targeted to meet diverse client needs and make the most efficient use of our resources. LAO does not have regional catchment areas and provides services to all Ontarians who are financial eligible. • A wide range of services are available through LAO’s toll-free number, including summary legal advice for family and criminal law matters. LAO provides duty counsel services for people who arrive in criminal, family or youth courts without a lawyer. LAO also runs a certificate program for the most serious and complex cases where eligible low-income clients can retain a private lawyer. Poverty law services are delivered through a network of independent, community-based legal aid clinics, funded by LAO. <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <p>LAO’s priorities in promoting access to justice in family law matters are based on LAO business plan priorities, existing LAO policies, LAO policy and empirical research, provincial government priorities and extensive stakeholder consultations. What follows below is a provisional list of current LAO priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing access to legal aid family services by increasing LAO financial eligibility rates • Decreasing the number of unrepresented litigants in family courts • Building a culture of consensual dispute resolution • Promoting social justice and a fair society • Responding to evolving needs and supporting and enhancing outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From LAO’s perspective, the most significant challenge impeding access to justice in family law matters is LAO’s financial eligibility rates. In order to create a better integrated and coordinated system, there is also an opportunity to develop enhanced triage to help identify client needs and divert clients to consensual dispute solution mechanisms early on, when appropriate. High conflict cases and situations where family violence is present also require early identification, and the provision of holistic services would be beneficial to those families. • LAO also agrees with the analysis contained in the Cromwell Report respecting further challenges to access to
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justice in family law issues.

5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*

There are two very significant initiatives underway at LAO that will support improved and expanded access to justice in family law matters.

First, LAO recently received a \$30M investment from the provincial government to “... improve access to justice and enhance outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups by strengthening the capacity of Family Law Service Centres...”

- This initiative is time limited since the \$30M commitment is being provided by LAO in the form of \$10M/year over three years. The funding for this initiative will conclude at the end of the 2015/2016 fiscal year. LAO is using these funds to implement a number of new projects and initiatives to support access to justice which will be implemented through the next three years including:

- Expansion of Family Law Service Centers (FLSC)
- Enhancing SLASS services to provide law students with greater opportunities to assist family law clients
- Providing Independent Legal Advice (‘ILA’) to those who participate in mediation, through a variety of channels including staff lawyers, duty counsel and the private bar.

LAO currently offers a full range of services, which includes summary legal advice, assistance with document preparation, assistance with negotiation, and in-court representation up to an including full representation through staff lawyers and private bar lawyers

Update: On November 1, 2014, LAO implemented the first of three increases in to financial eligibility guidelines for all legal aid services by six percent. This increase applies to certificates and duty counsel services provided by LAO. Community legal clinics funded by LAO also saw their financial eligibility guidelines rise.

6. *Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?*

Both of the initiatives listed above are new. As a result, LAO has not begun evaluation of these initiatives. That said, LAO has provisionally identified several key performance indicators for these initiatives including:

- Impact on number of unrepresented litigants in family courts
- Number of clients served
- Impact on vulnerable clients
- Balance between and amongst regional and provincial initiatives
- Balance between consensual dispute resolution and litigation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial estimates of sustainability • Stakeholder satisfaction with portfolio of programs <p>LAO would be willing to share any evaluation results or KPIs with AFCC when finalized</p>
Tami Moscoe	Superior Court of Canada	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <p>The Ontario Superior Court of Justice has jurisdiction over criminal, civil, and family cases, and is the largest superior trial court in Canada. The Family Court is a branch of the Superior Court of Justice and operates in 17 locations in Ontario.</p> <p>The Superior Court of Justice’s complement of over 300 federally appointed judges serve approximately 13.5 million people throughout the province. Every day, the judges and judicial officials of the Court work to provide Ontarians with effective, affordable, and timely justice.</p> <p>The Chief Justice of the Superior Court is responsible for the sittings of the Court and assigning judicial duties, as well as other matters relating to the governance and administration of the Court. The Associate Chief Justice, eight Regional Senior Judges, and the Senior Judge of the Family Court form the Executive of the Court, which provides advice to the Chief Justice on policy and governance issues. Together, the Chief Justice and the members of the Executive work to ensure the proper administration of the Court.</p> <p>In total, the Court serves eight judicial regions in Ontario. Each region is headed by a Regional Senior Judge who exercises the powers and performs the duties of the Chief Justice in that region. The business of the Court can vary from region to region depending on the particular requirements of each jurisdiction; however, the constant that binds the Court together is the commitment of its judges and judicial officials to meet the diverse needs of Ontarians.</p> <p>As the social and legal landscape of the province continues to grow and change, the Superior Court of Justice remains steadfast in its goal to constantly improve the Court’s service to the public and provide justice to the people of Ontario.</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <p>The Superior Court of Justice operates in 50 districts in the province and therefore its user demographics vary widely.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a problem-solving approach to family justice disputes rather than a litigious approach; • Encouraging the use of ADR where appropriate. If not, providing timely adjudication; • Promoting rules that are applied consistently; • Providing proportional family justice processes; and,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that every court event is meaningful and moves the case forward. <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to affordable legal advice for self-represented litigants • Lack of access to timely and sufficient mental health, social service and assessment services in many jurisdictions • Limits on government funding for innovative front end resources <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCJ is working on its best practices to ensure that it is providing timely and effective family court events. It is anticipated that this project will be completed in the fall of 2014. • The SCJ is part of a multidisciplinary team that is developing tools to improve processes relating to custody and access assessments in Ontario, including brief focused assessments. • The SCJ, with support from the Ministry of the Attorney General, is planning to expand the six existing Dispute Resolution Officer programs to two more Family Courts in London and St. Catharine’s. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>No One Interviewed</p>	<p>National Action Committee (Cromwell Report)</p>	<p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more expansive, user-centered vision of an accessible civil and family justice system is required • We need a system that provides the necessary institutions, knowledge, resources and service to avoid, manage and resolve civil and family legal problems and disputes. That system, must be able to do so in ways that are as timely, efficient, effective, proportional and just as possible: by preventing disputes and by early management of legal issues; through negotiation and informal dispute resolution services; and where necessary, through formal dispute resolution by tribunals and courts (p.2) • Innovation Goals: Widen the focus from dispute resolution to education and prevention; build a robust “front end;” early resolution services sector; improve accessibility to and coordination of public legal information; justice continuum must be reflective of the population it serves (p. 11-14). • Specific innovations and improvements that should be considered and potentially developed include: unbundling; alternative business and delivery models; increased opportunities for paralegal services; increased legal information services by lawyers and qualified non-lawyers; appropriate outsourcing of legal services;

		<p>summary advice and referrals; alternative billing models; legal expense insurance and broad-based legal care; pro bono and low bono services; creative partnerships and initiatives designed to encourage expanding access to legal services – particularly to low income clients; programs to promote justice services to rural and remote communities as well as marginalized and equity seeking communities; programs that match unmet legal needs with unmet legal markets. (p.14)</p> <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family justice system is too complex, too slow and too expensive (p.1) • It is too often incapable of producing just outcomes that are proportional to the problems brought to it or reflective of the needs of the people it is meant to serve (p.1) • Gaps include: Legal aid funding and coverage is not available for most people and problems and the cost of legal services and length of proceedings is increasing
<p>Kirsten Manley-Casimir</p>	<p>Law Foundation of Ontario</p>	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i></p> <p>The Law Foundation of Ontario has a unique mandate to improve access to justice for the people of Ontario. We provide funding that enables a wide range of organizations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people to understand the law and the justice system. • Help people to use the law to improve their lives. • Foster excellence in the work of lawyers, paralegals and other legal professionals. <p>A priority for the LFO is improving access to justice for disadvantaged groups. The LFO achieves its objectives through a variety of grants, fellowships, scholarships, and awards in addition to annual payments to Legal Aid Ontario.</p> <p>The LFO also administers the Class Proceedings Fund to support the independent Class Proceedings Committee. That Fund provides financial assistance to parties involved in class action lawsuits in the public interest.</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <p>The LFO has two sources of revenue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LFO’s main source of revenue is interest from lawyers’ and paralegals’ mixed trust accounts. By law, the LFO gives 75% of this revenue after operating expenses to Legal Aid Ontario. The LFO uses the remaining 25% for innovative grants to improve access to justice. These grants are made for projects or organizations that benefit the people of Ontario. As a result, the majority of these grants go to organizations within Ontario although there are some exceptions. • The LFO also receives funds from the proceeds of class action lawsuits where the court has made a cy-près award in its favour. The LFO uses these funds to make grants across the country through the Access to Justice

Fund. These grants can support projects that are provincial or territorial in focus or multi-jurisdictional.

The majority of funding we provide therefore benefits the people of Ontario. In addition, we have been able to provide significant funding across Canada through the ATJF.

3. *In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?*
There are multiple challenges in the area of family law as many recent reports highlight. These challenges include the following:
 - Recent projects on the experiences of self-represented litigants (SRLs) point to difficulties for SRLs in understanding and navigating the family law system, prohibitive costs in retaining a lawyer and a disconnection between the challenges faced by SRLs and legal professionals working within the justice system.
 - There is also low public awareness about where to go to get accurate and up-to-date legal information in the context of family law disputes.
 - There could also be improved coordination between legal services and other social services for people involved in the family law system.

These are just some of the issues that the reports raise. In the LFO's view, a multi-layered approach is needed to address the significant areas of need to increase access to justice in family law.
4. *In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?*
 - One challenge is the increasing number of SRLs in the family justice system. This will require some adaptation in legal processes and in the provision of public legal information. This may also require a restructuring of legal service provision to make it more affordable to access legal expertise.
5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*
 - To date, the LFO has not had a targeted funding program in the area of family law. The LFO does, however, have a Responsive Grants program to which applicants can apply for project support in any area of law. It is through this program that many of the LFO's family law grants have been made. In addition, the Access to Justice Fund has as one of its five themes the area of Domestic Violence so the LFO has funded several projects across Canada in that area as well.
 - Our CEO, Elizabeth Goldberg, is participating on "The Action Group" (TAG) Advisory Committee, which is a committee of representatives from various non-profit and government organizations interested in contributing to family law reform in Ontario. TAG is looking closely at the various access to justice reports in family law and creating a process to collaborate to support initiatives in this area.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the recent proliferation of reports identifying family law as a significant area of need, the LFO will continue to consider how it can contribute to increasing access to justice in family law. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LFO is currently completing a review of the Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women sector in Ontario. The report will be completed in the fall of 2014. An LFO staff member would be happy to discuss the results if this might be of interest.
Wendy Sturgeon	Niagara Chapter-Native Women Inc.	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> The Vision of the Niagara Chapter Native Women, Inc. is to help Native Women to empower themselves emotional, spiritually, physically, intellectually and economically. This will allow Native Women to advocate for their rights which will impact communities and the next seven generations. The Chapter will enhance the pride in being a Native Woman. We work to strengthen and empower Native women and their families to participate as an Indigenous people</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> We serve the off reserve, urban Aboriginal population (FNMI peoples) in the Greater Niagara Region (Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, Wainfleet, St. Catherine’s, Beamsville, Jordan, Stoney Creek up to Hamilton, Brantford and Six Nation area when asked.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest would be educating mainstream professionals on Aboriginal legislation and how to effectively apply it to empower/enhance better outcomes for our people caught up in legal issues. The extreme lack of Culturally Relevant Legal Support Services and the general lack of lawyers’ availability is frustrating. Lawyers need to use “Gladue Principles” at every opportunity as they apply to family law matters every time our people are involved. Aboriginal Family Court Workers and Aboriginal Lawyers working in family law matters are desperately needed. They all should be able to apply “Gladue Principles to family law. Having a lawyer that stays with a client from beginning to end and who is truly dedicated to achieving the best outcome possible for their client would greatly improve final results. Having Aboriginal lawyers that are exclusively dedicated to the Aboriginal community and our legal challenges at a free or minimal cost to the client would allow them to become most knowledgeable in Aboriginal law and more effective in a pragmatic sense to the cause. <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number one issue is that justice and legal personal: judges, lawyers, law enforcement and courts in general do not know or understand the Aboriginal perspective and cannot apply the legislation around the Aboriginal

piece successfully. Aboriginal Rights are not upheld in courts, not brought to courts attention and rarely validated. We have actually stopped a proceeding right in the courtroom by informing the judge that this person is of Aboriginal decent and the Children's Aid didn't do its due diligence on their behalf. Affidavits from Children's Aid Societies are written from a colonial, oppressive mindset, often tainted with an individual's own bias and stereotyped ideas based on generations of supremacist practice. These people don't even know they are racist. When files are passed to new workers as often happens, the past becomes gospel and new workers rely on those akin to abuse and cruelty, oppressive condescending, attitudes of CAS workers, some lawyers, judges and others within the justice system needs to be addressed as the University level upon entry into law and social work programs. These issues just build on earlier wrong assumptions in many cases and ends up with more and more hurt being put upon the Aboriginal families/children and community. No wonder there is apathy, suicide and despair.

- The system is punitive and continues to beat us down. Recent reports prove that the justice system continues to be biased when it comes to Aboriginal people. More native women for example have been incarcerated for smaller, petty crimes than non-Aboriginal women. What were the nature of these crimes? Stealing food to feed their families, prostituting to feed her family – look at the root causes and address them. In most cases it is poverty-which again has been perpetrated by generations of oppression and colonialism impose upon us. We need affidavits from the Aboriginal perspective to also stack up but we need the will of the system to also “listen to us and validate our side.” Lawyers working on our behalf have that obligation yet we've seen some basically “through their clients under the bus,” encouraging them to accept less than ideal situations because they didn't know how to use the legislation and work the system in ‘our favour.’
- For Aboriginal Families, trust is the biggest issue. Canada is a foreign government living in our own homeland, there has been much disrespect and hurt. The historical sour relationship between governments has always demonstrated a lack of impunity and an abundance of oppression, racism and disproportionate punishment including sanctioned murder and genocide when it comes to Indigenous people.
- Human Rights infringements still go unnoticed and unaddressed by regulating bodies. There are no consequences imposed and the power imbalance does not allow for individuals, organizations or our societies to be able to act or respond effectively. Canada has to educate its people about the true history of this land and stop being racist. The only difference today is that people wait until we leave the room to condemn, snicker and laugh.
- Transportation issues to even meet with lawyers, court workers where they do exist, etc.
- Low literacy and comprehension rate therefore, lack of understanding: need to slow the process down and take more time. Avoid the ‘railroading’ into signing off on things the client doesn't understand.
- Cost/not enough dollars attached to legal aid certificates to effectively help clients.
- Poverty for families and for native organizations. Lack of Ministry funding to support indigenous based services/programs ensure there is less support, advocacy and lower capacity for programs to handle the overflow of clients who need immediate services. We know Aboriginal families are in a state of stress; they

tend to reach out at the last minute with minimal time to support them properly. Therefore we are apprehensive of even reaching out and tend to give up because of not knowing what to do.

5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*
- Currently the CFSA has amended legislation to empower First Nations and Native Community persons/agencies. Key piece of legislation is under way in educating the Child Welfare Sector on understanding Formal Customary Care, (Aboriginal Approaches) Alternative Dispute Resolution ADR when dealing with Aboriginal children in child protection matters. The barrier: what's the point of creating the legislation to enhance Aboriginal families when you have no one fulfilling positions that has the ability to follow through on the legislation that can make a real difference in Aboriginal families lives? Furthermore, who within the Native community specializes in child welfare, family law, politics and restorative issues? We, the native people do! We are able to articulate Indigenous based practices. We need to do this ourselves, be respected as professionals for our work, and be paid accordingly. The rebalancing of the Indigenous people of Canada will not happen from the "other" doing for us, from the outside but from "us", doing for ourselves from the inside. Aboriginal people need to be serviced by Aboriginal people, services and programs based in Culturally Relevant Indigenous practices/ways. In order to do this, we need to have full access to all federal funds held in trust for us since time of contact and we should not have to fight for every dollar if Canada truly wants to reconcile. Doling out piece meal funding is stressful to organizations, unfair to the community and puts all programs and services in jeopardy as staff seek more stable employment.
 - Our current program, "Original Pathways" Aboriginal Approaches to ADR is Culturally Relevant, Aboriginally created, owned and operated and employs only Aboriginal personnel. Our Aboriginal Child Advocate program was the first of its type in Ontario and has now proven to be a success by several measures. We have a partnership with our local CAS and all our programs work closely with them. Our Youth In Transition Worker (Aboriginal Specific) is one of only a few that are Aboriginal Specific around the province to assist with youth aging out of Foster Care, Crown Wardship, etc. All our programs are culturally based and relevant.
6. *Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?*
- Best practices and protocols mean actually sitting with us and talking in person. Aboriginal owned services and programs for serving Aboriginal people. We are your "go-to" experts.
 - We can share our first report Aboriginal Child Advocate Initiative AKA Aboriginal Child Facilitator: Feeling the Pulse of Aboriginal Children in Contact with Children's Aid Society, Niagara Region, Canada, 2010, now in its third printing. Follow-up to cases resolved within the Chapter's "Original Pathways" ADR program have

<p>Katherine Kavassalis</p>	<p>Office of the Children’s Lawyer</p>	<p>yielded significant and sustained success and satisfaction over the last few years of operation.</p> <p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> The Office of the Children’s Lawyer (“OCL”) is part of the Ministry of the Attorney General. The OCL provides legal and clinical services to children in personal rights matters, and legal services to children in property rights matters.</p> <p>Personal rights matters include child protection cases and custody and access cases. The OCL must provide legal representation for children in protection cases when ordered by the court to do so. However, in cases involving custody and/or access the OCL has discretion whether to accept the cases – and, if accepted, what type of service to deliver - when the court refers the matter to the OCL.</p> <p>Property rights matters include civil litigation cases (mostly personal injury actions) where the Office might be ordered to act a Litigation Guardian for a child where there is no other adult willing and able to defend or pursue a claim on the child’s behalf. The OCL also reviews proposed settlements referred by the courts in cases involving minors to assess whether they are in the best interests of the child, and reports back to the court. In estate/trust cases, the OCL represents minor and unborn beneficiaries in such matters as interpretation of wills, challenges to the validity of wills, removal of executors and trustees and other estate administration matters.</p> <p>The “vision” of the OCL is to deliver our services in timely ways to help as many children as efficiently as possible</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> The children we provide service for are from 0 – 18 years of age. The catchment area is Ontario.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out unified family courts across the province • Increase financial eligibility for LAO – at least to receive initial block time for consultation • Ensure case management in every court • Provide onsite help in every court to SRLs in completing/reviewing court forms • Provide ILA through LAO to SRLs around settlements reached in mediation and in court • Support unbundled legal services, provided it is made known when the SRL is accessing such services, and when a lawyer is providing such services the lawyer may be served with court documents <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low financial eligibility threshold for LAO
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Serenity Perry	Ontario Natives Women Association (ONWA)	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> The mandate of the Ontario Native Women's Association is a provincial organization established to empower and support all Aboriginal women and their families through research, advocacy, policy development and programs and a focus on local, regional and provincial activities.</p> <p><u>Guiding Principles</u> All Aboriginal ancestries will be treated with dignity, respect, equity and equality.</p> <p><u>Aims and Objectives</u> ONWA is founded upon and is committed to ensuring the principles of equality and social justice for Aboriginal women.</p> <p>ONWA is committed to the restoration and preservation of Aboriginal culture and heritage. Our languages are integral to culture and identity.</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> ONWA services aboriginal women and their families within a wide demographic in Ontario; including but not limited to: Kenora, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Hamilton, Ottawa, Napanee etc.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing stronger links with agencies within Ontario • Addressing accessibility barriers such as transportation • Home visits

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing low level literacy and legal literacy among clients • Improved mental health/addictions access • Increased understanding by professionals when clients do not show up to their appointments <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long waitlists to access legal aid. • Legal needs are being unmet because clients are unsure of where to go to attain legal advice (beneficial to have a “one-stop-shop” for legal concerns) • Communication issues. Some clients do not have telephones/internet to connect with resources. In addition, those who do have access to a telephone may have difficulty contacting agencies because of long distance chargers. A solution is to ensure agencies have toll-free numbers for clients • Cost/expense for legal resources such as lawyers. Due to cost, clients represent themselves in court that can be detrimental to outcome. <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide advocacy and support. However, other than that no other projects currently. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we do evaluations, they tend to be outcome-based
<p>Christie Hayos</p>	<p>Hincks-Dellcrest Centre – Children’s Mental Health</p>	<p>1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> <u>Vision:</u> To bring hope, optimism, and possibilities to the children and families we serve. <u>Mission:</u> To be leaders in mental health care for children and their families by combining prevention, treatment, research and education <u>Values:</u> Believe in our kids, and know that it is a privilege to serve them and their families; seek knowledge, learn and teach every day; embrace diversity; be a great partner; bring passion, energy, and excellence to everything we do.</p> <p>In addition, Hincks-Dellcrest’s Strategic Plan (2011 to 2016) has five strategic objectives we are focused on achieving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strive for service excellence by continuously developing and incorporating cutting-edge thinking, approaches and methodologies into our care provision models 2. Focus in areas where we are or can be leaders

		<p>3. Develop a strong financial platform</p> <p>4. Build an exceptional children’s mental health organization that attracts, develops, excites and retains exceptional people.</p> <p>5. Partner and collaborate with other service providers to build system capacity</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> Hincks-Dellcrest Centre provides mental health counselling and treatment services to children and their families from birth to 17 years. Services within these programs are provided in the context of a multidisciplinary approach that includes access to personnel from a variety of mental health disciplines. Some services are provided by trainees closely monitored by an experienced supervisor.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i> I believe the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need for increase in services towards therapeutic access and reunification services as currently I believe they are difficult to access • I believe free mediation services would better help clients involved in family law matters <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i> I believe the biggest challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of collaboration between professionals involved in the court system and in mental health agencies • Lack of access to therapeutic access and reunification services • Costs regarding program access, especially for clients with minimal/low income • Lack of communication between current service providers and the services/programs they offer – to better help other agencies to provide additional resources to clients. <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently we do not have services/initiatives at Hincks-Dellcrest Centre that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters. Our services consist of centralized intake, outpatient services, day treatment services, and residential treatment services for children with mental health concerns. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
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<p>Judy Newman</p>	<p>Supervised Access Program, Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> Mission: To provide safe and neutral child focused setting for children to maintain contact with their parents where there is a concern for the child(ren)’s safety. Supervised access centres provide a setting where visits and exchanges can take place under the supervision of trained staff and volunteers. 2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> The Ministry of the Attorney General serves the province of Ontario. People who use the service are from all socioeconomic groups; however, a large number are low-income families. We work with families involved with separated and divorced who are in high conflict and have children. The children range from birth to 18 years. 3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative community services to divert people from using the court (i.e. settling out of court) • Increased access to legal advice for clients who need to go to court • More affordable services for clients • Create a position within the courts where there is one person of authority to help families make decisions/changes instead of having to go before a judge (i.e. a court officer that can review orders and make variations on the agreement for all parties). 4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordinated community services for clients • Unequal access to services across the province 5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have any initiatives underway as we are the service 6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently we are evaluating our long-term clients and conducting research on how to discharge them out of the system to lower the number of clients on our waitlist. In the research, we are looking at the reasons why people remain in services for two or more years; determine what the issues are; and whether there are ways to move the long-term clients out of the system/program faster, if appropriate.
<p>Kim Harris/Dan</p>	<p>The London Family Court</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are the mandate and vision of your organization?</i> The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System [now called The London Family Court Clinic] is a non-

Ashbourne	Clinic	<p>profit social service agency helping children and families involved with the justice system. We work with children and families when they are in crisis and/or at a turning point in their lives and require assistance. We see our role as creating a justice system that is responsive to children and families.</p> <p>2. <i>What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i> We work with families who have issues with homelessness, families involved in custodian access and litigation, child welfare, as well as other family court issues.</p> <p>Our frontline intervention is mostly with residents of Ontario. However, we do work with clients outside of the province of Ontario and provide training related to Justice Issues nationally and internationally.</p> <p>3. <i>In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, the resolution process is too slow. Increasing the speed of resolution. • Integration of both criminal and family court issues in cases that overlap such as domestic violence cases. • Having one judge that works with families in all case proceedings. • Increase access to supports and services for children and families during family law matters. There are some agencies who would like the family court issues resolved before providing services. <p>4. <i>In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal and family law issues are not integrated even if the two cases are • An accessed to court related services for clients with limited or no funds to pay. <p>5. <i>Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in training projects on family court issues; provide supports to families involved in family law matters as well as provide custody evaluations. We also provide mediation and/or Parent Coordination Services upon referral on a fee-for-service basis • We have an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)-Link program that connects CAS with ADR practitioners in South West Ontario. When a child protection case qualifies for ADR, the CAS contacts ADR-Link to match the case with a qualified professional who accepts cases within that geographical area. <p>6. <i>Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform best practices protocols?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our ADR-Link program has been evaluated through a review over 5 years of customer satisfaction survey
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		follow- up feedback forms
Laurie Rektor & Mark MacAulay	Family Services Ottawa	<p><i>1. What are the mandate and vision of your organization</i></p> <p>Mission: Family Services Ottawa is a community agency, grounded in a history of responding to the needs of people in our community. We work with individuals, communities, and families in all their forms, who are currently in distress or at risk. We assist people to build on their strengths and move forward by providing counseling, education, and advocacy within a context of system change.</p> <p>Vision: We seek to build a safe, just and healthy society, where each person can thrive and contribute; enriched by their families; supported by friends, neighbors and communities; and served by dedicated community organizations. To this purpose we commit our resources, skills, creativity, and passion.</p> <p>Our Values: Families Services Ottawa commits to working in ways that demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanity – We respect and show compassion for our clients, staff and volunteers • Diversity – We are inclusive and responsive to a diverse cross-section of the population • Accessibility – We make special efforts to ensure access to services for people who face societal barriers • Effectiveness – We are innovative and use our resources well • Relevance – We pro-actively identify client/community concerns and address emerging issues • Collaboration – We work together with our clients, our colleagues and our community • Accountability – We strive towards continual evaluation and improvement of our work, and maintain ethical standards • Social Justice – We advocate healthy, safe and just environments free from violence, neglect and prejudice. <p>We provide service to people within Ottawa in the areas of mental health, counseling and community support. We aim to provide families the support they need for healthy and fulfilling lives.</p> <p><i>2. What are your user demographics and your regional catchment area?</i></p> <p>We provide 13 different programs that are offered to clients. There is diversity within these programs in regard to demographics and these services include programs free of charge, court mandated, referral from other organizations such as Children’s Aid Society (i.e. the ADR program). However, socioeconomically our clients mainly consist of lower and middle income individuals, generally female. Our clients tend to experience difficulties in many areas of their lives.</p> <p><i>3. In your view, what are the highest priorities in promoting better access to justice in family law matters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often in custody disputes, the parent without access to supervision is not as aware of their legal rights as the

parent with access.

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- 4. *In your view/agency view, what are the largest gaps or challenges impeding access to justice in family law matters*
 - Lack of knowledge about the family court system
 - Lack of accessibility to legal expertise based on cost
 - Lack of timely services. For example, someone in the supervised access program may have knowledge and access but the system may take so long that the client has to go a long time without seeing their children.
 - Another challenge is language in court orders and how they are operationalized when clients come to the agency for access to service. These court orders may conflict with other agencies policies and regulatory bodies staff belong to. For example: a court order might suggest a certain type of counseling for the family but actually given there is a history of violence within the family this type of intervention would not be recommended for the family. A solution would be to have a pre-worded statement that would address what the judge is trying to do and what the organization can provide the client(s).
 - In addition, judges may not be aware of the services available within Ottawa and because Family Services Ottawa is the only agency that provides this type of service in this area may not be able to fulfill the requirements the court is seeking for the client.

5. *Could you please describe any services currently underway or any new initiatives that you anticipate implementing through your organization that support access to justice initiatives in family law matters? If the service is time limited, please provide the expected end date.*

One of our new initiatives is a case management initiative provided for families in high conflict. In the initial pilot, there were 8 cases the judge referred to Family Services Ottawa. One professional (i.e. a counselor or ocl) would meet with the family individually and develop a service recommendation plan to help address the presenting issue by accessing everything in the community that is available. The idea of this initiative is to decrease the wait times prior to and during court proceedings.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program was set up 8 years ago. This program was created to assist families and children's aid societies find solutions to problems concerning the care of children and youth. In the past CAS agencies had refer families to the ADR program. However, Family Services Ottawa is moving towards changing this process by allowing families members to self-refer themselves to this program as sometimes there are challenges working with the CAS worker in getting this process completed efficiently.

In addition, Family Services Ottawa is a lead agency in the creation of the Ottawa high conflict forum. The idea behind this forum is to provide a one-day conference annually on current issues and engaging the community of professionals in addressing these issues. This was created to provide a collaborative mindset.

6. *Has there been any evaluation of these initiatives which you are willing to share with AFCC-O to better inform*

		<p><i>best practices protocols?</i></p> <p>In the case management initiative program evaluation's were used to determine what is working well with the program and what else can we do in the future to better this initiative. The idea is that this kind of service will reduce number of visits to court and solve issues in a timely manner.</p> <p>With the ADR program no official evaluations have taken place however there is a satisfaction survey that participants complete that is sent to our funders. The ADR program across the province, went under and evaluation about three years ago. These evaluations were made public January 2014.</p>
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