

The Nova Scotia Access to Justice Coordinating Committee

Preamble

As the National Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters released its report “A Roadmap for Change” and the Canadian Bar Association released its report “Reaching Equal Justice: An Invitation to Envision and Act”;

And as there is a commitment in Nova Scotia to building a coherent, collaborative, and coordinated approach to addressing all aspects of the justice system while avoiding duplication of effort and activity;

And because we recognize the constitutionally independent roles of many participants in the justice system and that each part of that system must work to improve those areas in which it has primary responsibility;

And because there is a need to put the public first in considering and implementing improvements in working to improve the justice system ;

Establishment of the Committee

The Nova Scotia Access to Justice Coordinating Committee (A2JCC) is hereby established.

Purpose

With the goal of making Nova Scotia a national leader in improvements to access to justice, the purpose of the A2JCC is to:

promote an efficient and cost-effective justice system for all Nova Scotians with an emphasis on justice services that address family law matters, criminal law processes and the individual’s civil legal needs;

promote an understanding of the importance of equal and accessible justice as a hallmark of a free and democratic society; and

to encourage the development of a shared purpose in pursuing these objectives

Terms of Reference

The A2JCC has the following terms of reference:

1. To provide leadership to a cohesive and collaborative approach for access to justice initiatives in Nova Scotia.
2. To provide, as appropriate, a forum for engaging the public and public sector participants.
3. To share information, monitor and co-ordinate work undertaken, and educate the public on our efforts.
4. To promote innovation in all aspects of the delivery of justice services.
5. To measure the impact of its work by gathering appropriate data and identifying expected indicators of success and outcomes in a manner that does not interfere with judicial independence.

Working Groups

1. The A2JCC will collaborate with existing (and if necessary will create) working groups which will autonomously address family law matters, criminal law processes and improving the response to civil legal needs. In that process, it will build on work that is already underway.
2. Working groups will be encouraged to:
 - develop Terms of Reference and, within existing budget allocations ,identify resources necessary to undertake its activities;
 - engage the public and justice sector participants, as appropriate, in collaborative and coordinated processes designed to address the A2JCC's purpose; and
 - periodically make presentations to the A2JCC.

Term

The A2JCC will have a term of three years at which time it is expected that:

Initiatives pursuant to the ACJCC purpose have been launched in family law matters, criminal law processes and improving the response to civil legal needs ;

Appropriate measurements have been determined and data is being collected; and

Substantial progress has been demonstrated

Membership

The following persons will be the members of the A2JCC:

3. The Chief Justice of Nova Scotia —Co-Chair;
4. The Minister of Justice — Co-chair
5. The President of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society;
6. The President of CBA-NS Branch;
7. The Dean of the Schulich School of Law;
8. The Executive Director of Nova Scotia Legal Aid; and
9. A member of the public

Resources

The work of the A2JCC will be supported by staff from each of the members of the A2JCC.

Communications plans and strategies will be developed as appropriate.

Annual Assessment

The A2JCC will assess progress and that of its Working Groups in meeting their respective purposes on an annual basis.