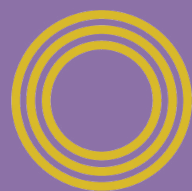


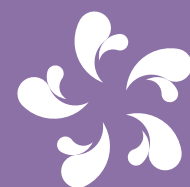


# Access to Justice Week 2021

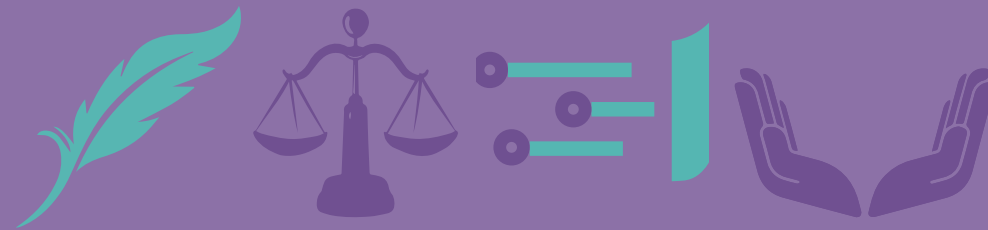


**Law Society**  
of Ontario

**Barreau**  
de l'Ontario



**TAG** The Action Group on Access to Justice  
Groupe d'action sur l'accès à la justice



## Access to Justice Week 2021



TAG

The Action Group on Access to Justice  
Groupe d'action sur l'accès à la justice

### Inclusive Justice and Community Building

Ontario hosted its sixth Access to Justice Week, held virtually, from October 25 to 29, 2021. Sessions centered on enhancing the legal professions' relationships with Indigenous Peoples were prominent in the week's programming. Other highlights included programs about supporting clients with mental health needs, rural access to justice, best practices in digital justice, disability justice, and more. In addition to opportunities for legal professionals, this year's programming featured three public-facing workshops designed to help break down everyday barriers faced by those accessing the justice system.

Access to Justice Week brings together a range of justice sector stakeholders locally and from across Canada to develop meaningful, public-centred solutions that advance systemic change in the justice system. This Week is an opportunity to learn about new initiatives, connect with diverse partners and explore critical access to justice issues from different perspectives.



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25  
Programs



6 national programs  
19 Ontario programs

104,878  
Social Media  
impressions



LSO LinkedIn Impressions: 23,565



LSO Facebook Impressions: 9,035



LSO Instagram Impressions: 1,788



LSO Twitter Impressions: 21,718



Treasurer Twitter Impressions: 20,972



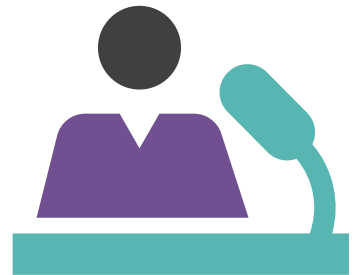
TAG Twitter: 27,800

2,675  
Participants  
tuned-in



up from 1534  
in 2020

98  
Speakers



up from  
63 in 2020



#### Traffic on TAG's new website\*

Pageviews:  
**32,345**

Sessions:  
**25,853**

\*FROM OCTOBER 1-31, 2021



#### Joint national news release

Generated **59 million**  
media impressions



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@tagactiongroupLinkedin

# Program overview

## **A closer look: The justice sector's response to the TRC's Calls to Action (October 25)**

Moderated by LSO Treasurer Teresa Donnelly, a panel of Indigenous speakers shared their insights on the progress made towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action applicable to the justice sector.

Panelists noted that while efforts have been focused on making changes to the colonial justice system, Reconciliation will require the revitalization of Indigenous legal orders, cultures and languages. This live webcast welcomed 190 viewers.

## **National event: Access to justice: Indigenous perspectives (October 25)**

Hosted by the Law Society of Manitoba, this timely conversation explored the impacts of Canada's legal institutions on Indigenous Peoples and what is required by the justice sector and beyond for Reconciliation. Danielle Morrison moderated this panel, which included the Honourable Murray Sinclair, former CBA President Bradley Regehr, Dr. Cindy Blackstock and Dr. Pamela Palmater. This live webcast welcomed 368 viewers.

## **Building blocks: Towards cultural competency in the justice sector (October 25)**

This panel, moderated by LSO Benchers and Chair of the Equity and Indigenous Affairs Committee Dianne Corbiere, shared insights on the efforts being made by the Federation of Canadian Law Societies' working group, Canadian law schools and the provincial government to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 27 and 28 on cultural competency in the justice sector. Panelists noted that a deeper understanding of the experiences of Indigenous Peoples will enable legal professionals to facilitate access to justice. This live webcast welcomed 121 viewers.

## **Use your legal training: Afghan crisis (October 25)**

Cohosted by the Roundtable of Legal Diversity Associations, this practical workshop provided attendees with tools and resources to support Afghan citizens as they navigate Canada's immigration and refugee processes in light of the current crisis in Afghanistan. Lawyers with expertise in private sponsorship and refugee claims shared historical context on the Afghan crisis as well as personal stories to empower and inspire participants to use their legal training to help Afghan refugees. This live webcast welcomed 85 viewers.

## **Working together to increase access to justice (October 26)**

Cohosted by Pro Bono Ontario (PBO), celebrating their 20th anniversary this year, this session explored the important role Pro Bono Ontario has played in facilitating access to justice, the volunteer opportunities available with PBO and the additional support required to achieve full access to justice in Ontario. The panel of PBO board members and volunteers shared insights from the healthcare sector as well as practices that can support lawyers and build a pro bono culture. This live webcast welcomed 172 viewers.

## **People-centered access to justice: Best practices for serving clients with mental health needs (October 26)**

Moderated by LSO Treasurer Teresa Donnelly, this panel of mental health law experts explored how to support clients facing mental health challenges. Panelists encouraged participants to be open to taking on clients facing mental health issues and to ensure they provide equitable access to justice by communicating respectfully and compassionately with clients. Panelists also discussed providing accommodations and support to clients with mental health needs. This live webcast welcomed 167 viewers.

# Program overview (cont'd)

## **National event: Reflections on the impact of COVID-19 on online adjudication (October 26)**

Hosted by CREATE Justice in Saskatchewan, this session brought together a panel of experts to reflect on the past 18 months of online adjudication and dispute resolution and share lessons learned. Panelists from the judiciary, tribunals and arbitration discussed the benefits of online adjudication and what adjustments are needed post-pandemic. This live webcast welcomed 131 viewers.

## **Access to justice tools and resources for sole practitioners and small firms (October 26)**

Cohosted by the Toronto Lawyers Association, this session provided participants with a case study on how to efficiently use the resources available to them, including library services, to facilitate access to justice. LA Law Library Executive Director Sandra Levin also shared how the library works with justice sector participants to develop meaningful programs for the public. This live webcast welcomed 107 viewers.

## **National Duty Counsel Day (October 27)**

Canada's inaugural National Duty Counsel Day was held on October 27 to highlight the important role duty counsel play in access to justice. Initiated by

Canada's legal aid associations, this day included a virtual event featuring elected officials, chief justices and judges, legal aid lawyers, staff and clients, members of the legal industry and justice supporters.

## **A2J in practice: Tips for successfully building access to justice into your law practice (October 27)**

Cohosted by LAWPRO and the Toronto Lawyers Association, this diverse panel of lawyers shared how they incorporated processes and strategies that increased access to justice within their work as sole practitioners, managing partners, associates and volunteers. Sliding scale rates, unbundling, volunteering, and legal aid were some of the mechanisms described that have helped the panelists serve their clients while building a successful practice and managing risk. This live webcast welcomed 99 viewers.

## **Public workshop: Law Practice Program free legal clinic 2021 (October 27 and 28)**

The University of Ottawa's law practice program, in partnership with the Ontario Legal Information Centre, hosted free virtual legal information clinics from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on October 27 and 28. These clinics were available to all residents of Ontario and

were conducted in both English and French over telephone or videoconferencing. 63 appointments were held over the two days.

## **Public workshop: Droits linguistiques et services en français en Ontario (October 27)**

L'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario hosted this seminar to provide members of the public with information about their language rights both in Canada and in Ontario, including those related to government services, education and the workplace. The facilitator also provided resources on where to find more information on language rights and French legal services. This live webcast welcomed 44 viewers.

## **National event: Developing and engaging in a reconciliation mapping exercise (October 27)**

The Law Society of Saskatchewan hosted this national event on a Reconciliation mapping exercise facilitated by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC). During this session, the Law Society of Saskatchewan and the OTC discussed the importance of this exercise, which determines a baseline of Reconciliation efforts and supports the development of recommendations, as well as its methodology and lessons learned. This live webcast welcomed 85 viewers.

# Program overview (cont'd)

## **Inclusive Innovation: Best practices for “digital first” virtual courts and tribunals (October 27)**

Hosted by The Action Group on Access to Justice (TAG) and moderated by LSO Executive Director of Policy Cara-Marie O'Hagan, this session looked at a forthcoming report from TAG on recommendations to improve virtual court and tribunal processes now and post-pandemic. Panelists from Legal Aid Ontario, the Superior Court of Justice and the BC Civil Resolution Tribunal discussed the incremental and transformational change needed to make courts and tribunals accessible and people centered. This live webcast welcomed 133 viewers.

## **National event: Rural access to justice (October 27)**

The Atlantic Canada Justice Panel hosted a discussion with justice professionals from across rural Atlantic Canada on the challenges of the access to justice crisis in their jurisdictions and potential solutions. Panelists included representatives from the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Community Legal Information in PEI and law practice in New Brunswick. This live webcast welcomed 40 viewers.

## **Public workshop: Law and daily life – addressing your legal questions (October 27)**

Cohosted by the Federation of Ontario Law Associations (FOLA), this session provided members

of the public the opportunity to ask legal professionals from across Ontario general questions on everyday legal matters such as wills, landlord and tenant issues, family law, vaccine mandates and more. A panel of lawyers and paralegals with diverse expertise shared resources and considerations to help participants feel empowered to address their legal concerns. This live webcast welcomed 77 viewers.

## **Justice on the ground (October 27)**

Hosted by Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), this session brought together front-line community workers with diverse experiences who help their communities navigate the justice system. They shared the obstacles their clients face on a day-to-day basis, how they provide support and the transformational changes needed in policing, public policy and the justice sector to provide access to justice to vulnerable communities. This live webcast welcomed 95 viewers.

## **National event: Community justice colloquium: Advancing community-based access to justice (October 28)**

The National Action Committee on Access to Justice hosted this colloquium to highlight the efforts made across the country to advance the national justice development goals and showcase some of the important work being done by community leaders. Guest speaker Rebecca Sandefur, a leading American scholar, compelled attendees, through examples from

across Canada and the United States, that in order to increase access to justice we need to think like the people we want to help. This live webcast welcomed 170 viewers.

## **How journalism is advancing the public dialogue on criminal justice reform (October 28)**

As part of its series on bail reform, Law & Design CoLab hosted a session on the role of journalism in access to justice and criminal justice reform. A panel of journalists shared staggering findings on inequities in the Canadian justice system that they discovered through their work, the ongoing challenges to access the information required to report on the justice sector and the need to engage the general public on criminal justice reform. This live webcast welcomed 57 viewers.

## **Guidelines for better legal workshops (October 28)**

The Public Legal Education Association of Canada (PLEAC) and the Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) hosted this session on how to effectively design and deliver legal workshops for the public. Important considerations for content design including working with community partners and creating an engaging workshop structure were discussed by the panelists. This live webcast welcomed 75 viewers.



# Program overview (cont'd)

## **The right to be heard: The future of advocacy in Canada (October 28)**

The Advocates' Society hosted a special presentation on the final report of the Modern Advocacy Task Force on the future of advocacy in Canada. Speakers discussed the roles of both in-person and remote oral advocacy and a framework for determining which format is most appropriate for hearing a matter. This live webcast welcomed 78 viewers.

## **National event: Disability justice: Accessibility and beyond (October 28)**

Hosted by the University of Alberta, this session focused on the continued injustices faced by Canadians with disabilities, the importance of accessibility legislation in Ontario and federally, the efforts to adopt legislation in Alberta and what must be done to achieve disability justice in Canada. This live webcast welcomed 138 viewers.

## **Making connections: Promoting the role of paralegals in access to justice (October 28)**

A panel of communications experts shared best practices for paralegals to promote both their services and the profession to external audiences, including to municipal and provincial governments, on social media and through stakeholder relations. Caroline Pinto of Counsel Public Affairs, LSO Benchers and staff discussed the LSO's stakeholder engagement efforts since the introduction of regulation of paralegals in Ontario 15 years ago, as well as how paralegals can leverage their own networks to promote the profession's role in access to justice. This live webcast welcomed 102 viewers.

## **Breaking down the unfair stigma of a criminal record (October 29)**

Hosted by Law & Design CoLab, this panel provided insights on the challenges faced by those with criminal records, and what solutions are required to help break down the stigma. Panelists discussed the inequities in cannabis enforcement, reform of the Criminal Records Act, and the challenges and solutions for employment issues faced by justice-involved individuals. This live webcast welcomed 88 viewers.

## **Why be optimistic about bail reform in Ontario? (October 29)**

Hosted by Law & Design CoLab, this panel discussed the unique challenges of Indigenous Peoples and marginalized communities related to bail, the Ministry of the Attorney General's new programs put in place to address bail issues, efforts made by justices of the peace, innovations brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how criminal justice lawyers can be engaged. This live webcast welcomed 53 viewers.

## **Family law roundtable (working meeting – October 26)**

Members of The Action Group on Access to Justice met with service providers to review family law services available in Ontario from both public and private entities. Discussions centered on how to better direct clients to innovative solutions to affordable family law, including flexible pricing options, normalizing the concept of unbundled services, coaching tools and more.

# 2021 Plenary: Emerging themes

- Accessibility, particularly with respect to technology
- Mental health, mentoring and supporting new licensees for a sustainable legal profession
- Skill development for new professionals in court and tribunal settings
- Promotion of services and information to the public
- Authentic engagement with the Indigenous community and taking meaningful steps on the path to Reconciliation
- Collaboration with non-legal partners to expand front-line services and increased public awareness to help navigate the justice system
- Data collection and information sharing
- Continue to promote robust and sustainable legal aid services including through Legal Aid Ontario
- Advancing the national justice development goals



## Sunrise ceremony (October 25)

LSO Treasurer Teresa Donnelly kicked off the sixth annual Access to Justice Week in Ontario with a sunrise ceremony performed by Indigenous Elder Myeengun Henry at Osgoode Hall. The ceremony began a day of reconciliation-centred programming, recognizing the importance of enhancing the legal professions' relationships with Indigenous Peoples.



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