

## A2J NETWORK NEWSLETTER

### SK A2J Coffee Chat

On January 24th, 2024, the Saskatchewan Access to Justice (A2J) Network gathered for a one-hour Coffee Chat – our first meeting of the year. A warm welcome was extended to our returning – and new Network members, Deputy Attorney General Max Bilson, KC and Chief Justice Leurer, who were able to attend the Coffee Chat last week. The meeting kicked off with members outlining their goals and interests for the upcoming year and having a thoughtful discussion about current initiatives and resulting areas for collaboration. Some areas of discussion included:

- Contributing and collaborating on ways to bring forward new ideas for A2J.
- Having data-informed discussions and continuing to bring data into A2J conversations.
- Collaborating on new initiatives to bring better supports to clients and courts.
- An expression of interest in continuing to understand how the work that individual agencies do complement each other in addressing A2J, and determining ways we can work together to achieve this.

Thank you to all who participated. For those who were not able to join, and to those who were, we look forward to connecting at our next meeting in June. A “save the date” for this meeting will be circulated in the coming weeks. In the meantime, we hope that Network members continue to information share and collaborate!

“Authentic leadership is about leading from the core of who we are to inspire each of us to our best contribution toward a shared mission”. – Henna Inam

### Child Support Service Calculates Payments Outside of Court

**Prepared by:** Kylie Head, KC, Ministry of Justice, Government of Saskatchewan. For more information, please contact Kylie at [kylie.head@gov.sk.ca](mailto:kylie.head@gov.sk.ca).

**Overview:** The Government of Saskatchewan is launching the Child Support Service to help parents going through separation and divorce calculate child support without going to family court.

*The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, 2023* came into force on September 15, 2023, updating legislation to enable calculations of child support. As it is an administrative process, it can be faster and less adversarial than going to family court. New federal regulations also came into force this November to allow provincial child support services greater powers to trace and locate parents through financial databanks to establish or update child support.

The Child Support Service expands on the Recalculation Service which launched in 2018 to offer a faster way to update child support amounts for existing child support orders. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to fund the recalculation portion of the service in the amount of \$348,000 per year. The program will now also provide calculation services to establish child support amounts at the beginning of a separation. The federal Department of Justice is providing financial support through the Canadian Family Justice Fund with the objective of improving access to the family justice system. This pilot project aims to build financial stability for children who have a protected right to child support. Parents can apply for child support decisions at no cost; parents do not need to hire a lawyer or fill out complex court forms or pay court fees.

Child Support Services such as administrative calculation and recalculation are part of a broader movement building capacity to resolve family law issues outside of court. Programs like the Child Support Service can have a significant positive impact on families by reducing the conflict children are exposed to. These initiatives also help free up the family court system to focus on more urgent and serious cases such as those involving domestic violence or child abduction.

You can find additional information online at [Child Support Service | Child Support | Government of Saskatchewan](#).

## Featured Research Sketch

### REDUCING THE “JUSTICE GAP” THROUGH COLLABORATION MODELS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE: USING NETWORKS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

**Authors:** Brea Lowenberger (*CREATE Justice, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan [USask]*), Alyssa McIntyre (*former Crown Counsel & SK A2J Network Co-Coordinator, Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice*), and Elaine Selensky (*former CREATE Justice Summer Student, College of Law, USask*)

**Abstract:** The fall of 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the release of two touchstone reports: the Canadian Bar Association’s Reaching Equal Justice Report and the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters’ Roadmap for Change. These reports outlined a heightened concern about access to justice across Canada and introduced goal-based roadmaps with target deadlines for change. In order to coordinate change, the authors of the reports suggested the development of

multi-stakeholder implementation committees across all Canadian provinces and territories. However, “how” such action-oriented committees might be created and maintained was yet to be discovered for many jurisdictions. This paper seeks to contribute to the discourse on designing and evolving committees for systemic change by highlighting the characteristics, values, and challenges associated with one model for collaboration: networks. Using the Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network [SK A2J] as an example, we demonstrate how to design and maintain a network to reduce the “justice gap.” We also offer our combined reflections on how some SK A2J Network member organizations have used the power of networks to increase access to justice. With almost a decade since the release of the touchstone reports, we pause to consider and share our evolving Saskatchewan experience with the hope that other jurisdictions will do the same.

To read the whole article, please click [here](#).

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

### 2024 College of Law & CREATE Justice Research Poster Competition

**Date:** March 14, 2024

**Time:** 2:30 - 3:30 PM

**Location:** Dentons LLP Student Lounge, College of Law, USask

If you have any **questions regarding the poster competition**, or are **interested in judging**, please reach out to **Katie Richard** at [katie.richard@usask.ca](mailto:katie.richard@usask.ca)).

### 2024 Dean’s Forum on Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice

**Date:** March 11, 2024

**Time:** All Day

**Location:** USask College of Law

**About:** The 2024 Dean’s Forum on Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice (Dean’s Forum) aims to continue the conversation on how technology, & specifically generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), can be used by the public & legal service providers to create an effective civil & family justice system: one that provides justice, access, & fairness in a cost-conscious & efficient manner. The discussion about & use of GenAI has exploded in the legal sector in the last year – & any new technological advancement carries both potential opportunities & risks from an A2J lens.

The Forum will, therefore, examine two interconnected topics from an A2J lens: how GenAI might improve A2J for the public & empower legal information/service providers to provide more accessible & equitable services. Students are invited to create draft handbooks for litigants & legal information/service providers on using GenAI for legal help. The handbooks will include both opportunity areas, as well as risks & harms of GenAI in A2J for these two user groups. The use of scenarios on how GenAI might be used by the students’ assigned user group will be encouraged.

For further information on the history or previous reports of the Dean’s Forum, visit: [this link](#).

## Provincial Member Updates

*Below we provide a list of A2J initiatives undertaken by Network members and their respective organizations. If you would like to highlight your initiatives in the next newsletter, please contact Brea ([b.lowenberger@usask.ca](mailto:b.lowenberger@usask.ca)).*

### CREATE Justice, College of Law, USask Update

- The 2024 Dean's Forum class has kicked off. Students recently completed their consultation phase & are finalizing day-of design and drafting their reports. Thank you to all who have contributed!
- In September 2023, "Dear Beth", a podcast featuring stories of the legal profession through a women's perspective, was launched. So far, five (5) podcasts have been aired. The names and link to each episode and synopsis is included below:
  - [Episode 1: "Dear Beth...A Women in Law Podcast Trailer"](#).
  - [Episode 2: "It's never too late to be who you might have been"](#).
  - [Episode 3: "Never Use Others for Kindling"](#).
  - [Episode 4: "The Otherside: what does being an accomplice look like?"](#)
  - [Episode 5: Creating a Seat at the Table: A Roundtable Discussion](#).

### Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan/Pro Bono Students Canada Update

- We are pleased to announce that the nomination period for our 5th annual [Chief Justice Richard Wagner Awards](#) in recognition of outstanding student volunteers is now open! We hope this initiative will promote the spirit of pro bono, increase student engagement, and elevate the important work and impact of our partners and volunteers, like you. If you have had the opportunity to work with a particularly impressive PBSC student volunteer during the course of your partnership with us, please take just a few short minutes to submit a nomination here: [pbsc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1C8g3c97hvGlq06](https://pbsc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1C8g3c97hvGlq06). Please note that the deadline for nomination is **February 23 at 12:00 p.m. EST**.

### PLEA Update

- PLEA has embarked upon a two-year project that will see every PLEA resource reviewed, updated and supplemented – printed and online. The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Legacy Grant supports the project, and we hope this will help all Network members in their work.

### Law Society Update

- Update on the Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information (SALI) Initiative: [SALI](#) connects justice stakeholders, information providers, and community organizations to amplify access to legal information and assistance in Saskatchewan through collaboration and partnership. SALI creates resources, provides training, and publishes a newsletter to help legal information providers and community organizations connect members of the public with information about the law, legal advice/assistance, and community support. Please read the [Fall 2023 Newsletter](#) to learn more about SALI's recent activities!

## Ministry of Justice Update

- The Ministry of Justice, with its partners, is offering sessions focused on getting help in Family Law. The poster with details is included below. If you would like more information on this initiative, please contact the Government of Saskatchewan at [familylaw@gov.sk.ca](mailto:familylaw@gov.sk.ca).

**WINTER/SPRING SCHEDULE 2024**

## SASKATCHEWAN FAMILY LAW HELP SESSIONS

Location	Address	Days	Times
<b>BATTLEFORD</b>	<b>Court of King's Bench</b> 291 23rd Street West, Battleford.	THURSDAYS, January 18, March 21, May 23,	9:00 am – 12:00 pm
<b>MEADOW LAKE</b>	<b>Salvation Army Office</b> 212 2nd Street West, Meadow Lake.	WEDNESDAYS, January 24, February 28, March 27, April 24, May 22,	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
<b>MOOSE JAW</b>	<b>Court of King's Bench</b> 64 Ominica Street West.	FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH,	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
<b>PRINCE ALBERT</b>	<b>Court of King's Bench</b> 1800 Central Avenue.	WEDNESDAY, February 21, April 24,	3:30 pm – 5:30 pm
<b>REGINA</b>	<b>Court of King's Bench</b> Law Society Library, 2nd Floor 2425 Victoria Ave.	EVERY WEDNESDAY,	9:30 am – 11:30 am
<b>SASKATOON</b>	<b>Court of King's Bench</b> Law Society Library, 520 Spadina Crescent East.	FRIDAYS, January 19, February 23, March 22, April 26	9:30 am – 11:30 am
	<b>Saskatoon Public Library (Frances Morrison Central Library)</b> 311 23rd Street East.	THURSDAYS, January 18, February 22, March 21, April 25,	6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
	<b>(Cliff Wright Branch)</b> 1635 McKercher Drive.	THURSDAYS, January 18, March 21,	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
	<b>(Mayfair Branch)</b> 602-33rd Street West.	THURSDAY, February 22, April 25,	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

For more information, contact  
**familylaw@gov.sk.ca** or  
call **1-888-218-2822** (extension 2)

Logos: Law Society of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Public Library, Family Law Saskatchewan, PALS, Saskatchewan, PALS, PALS

## National Updates

### New Publication: A2J & Legal Education

The National Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil & Family Matters is pleased to announce the publication of its 2023 Data Project, *A2J & Legal Education!*

Through this project, the Action Committee sought to better understand the impact of A2J education on the career choices of young legal professionals, including decisions to incorporate access to justice work into their legal careers. Understanding these choices can potentially help inform where the broader A2J sector's priorities — including those of the Action Committee at this critical juncture of the 10th Anniversary of the Roadmap for Change — should lie.

To read the report, click [here](#).