



The Law Foundation of Ontario
Building a better foundation for justice in Ontario

THE LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO

KEY GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF

THE COMMUNITY CAPACITY CONSORTIUM

The Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO) recently released the Connecting Report which made a number of recommendations for improving access to legal information and services for linguistic minorities and members of rural and remote communities. A copy of this Report may be found at www.lawfoundation.on.ca.

The Connecting Report recommended improving the ability of non-legal community organizations to identify legal issues and provide basic legal information and referral for their clients. It suggested that a consortium of legal and non-legal organizations be formed to develop a package of funding proposals for the LFO in the areas of:

- ∞ Legal information and referral training for front-line workers
- ∞ Real-time legal help for front line workers (particularly when they are serving clients in crisis)
- ∞ Increasing the availability of public legal information available in minority languages.

The Report recommended the creation of a consortium because, while there are individual projects aimed at improving linguistic and rural access to justice, there is no harmonized sense of direction and no mechanism or system for community organizations to participate collectively in identifying areas of priority. A consortium would assist in creating a more integrated system while drawing on the strengths of existing organizations. The Report contemplated that the consortium would have a lead organization.

LFO has asked CLEO to consult and work with the community to develop an organizational model for the Community Capacity Consortium. Once developed, this model will be submitted for LFO approval. If approved, the consortium would then proceed to create a coordinated funding package for LFO consideration.

LFO has provided these Key Guidelines as a framework for the development of a Community Capacity Consortium. It has asked CLEO to report back to it with a proposed model by November, 2009.

A. OBJECTIVE

The objective is to develop a Community Capacity Consortium that will facilitate the delivery of improved access to legal information and services for linguistic minorities and residents of rural and remote communities. It should contribute to a coherent, planned system where users, through multiple points of entry, can obtain legal information and services.

B. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The development of an operational model is to be guided by the following principles:

1. *Clarity* – The respective roles of the lead organization, members of the consortium and their relationship to LFO must be clear.
2. *Accountability* - There must be lines of accountability to LFO for financial management and performance, including project and administrative and planning performance.
3. *Effective Decision-Making* – The management structure must allow for timely and effective decision-making. The leadership function must be designed to ensure that the planning and implementation of projects occurs and results in improved service delivery to users.
4. *Inclusiveness* – The membership of the consortium should include those organizations best able to reach the identified communities.
5. *Collaboration* – The members of the consortium should work together in a collaborative manner respecting the experience and skills that each member brings to the initiative.
6. *Coordination* - The consortium must provide a coordinated plan with projects which work together to support its vision. Where appropriate, members should engage in joint projects or partnerships.
7. *Excellence* - The consortium should be committed to excellence and provide only superior funding proposals to LFO for its consideration. It should seek funding for those members of the consortium who are best able to deliver a given project.
8. *User- Driven* – The plan and projects of the consortium should be driven by the needs of the users of legal information and services.
9. *Improvement* – The consortium should be committed to improvement through learning from experience and evaluation.
10. *Sustainability* – The consortium should have a sustainable structure that is flexible enough to evolve in response to changing circumstances.

C. ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

The operational model should respond to the general principles and include the:

1. Respective roles of the lead organization, members of the consortium and their relationship to LFO, including need for funding administrative/coordination support
2. Types of organizations to be included in the consortium, including the names of specific organizations that are interested in participating in the consortium.
3. Methods of participating in the consortium including advisory roles, partnerships etc.
4. Lines of accountability to LFO for financial management and performance, including project and administrative and planning performance.
5. Tools for strengthening the structure of the consortium such as MOUs between LFO and the consortium, MOUs between LFO and the lead organization, partnership agreements, LFO criteria for evaluating funding package etc.
6. A proposed timeline for development of a funding package.
7. Any other matters that arise during the consultation which are deemed important to the development of the consortium.

LFO looks forward to receiving a proposed operational structure for the Community Capacity Consortium and extends its appreciation, in advance, to all those who participate in the development of a Community Capacity Consortium model for its consideration.