



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

[www.lawfoundation.on.ca](http://www.lawfoundation.on.ca)

## **Linguistic and Rural Access to Justice Project**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Law Foundation of Ontario is leading an innovative project to improve access to legal information and legal services for people who do not speak English or French or who live in rural or remote areas of Ontario.

#### **Why this project?**

The Law Foundation's vision is to be a catalyst for advancing the ideal of a truly accessible justice system. Information about legal rights and obligations is a first step in obtaining access to justice. Access to lawyers, paralegals or community legal workers is also vital to follow up on the information in a meaningful way. In reviewing grant applications to its Law and Innovations Fund, the Foundation was struck by the challenges to legal access faced by people who do not speak English or French and by people living in rural or remote areas of the province. In addition to its ongoing funding of community projects, the Foundation wanted to engage in a broader dialogue to generate more systemic solutions. This project will recommend how the Foundation, working in partnership with other organizations, can make a strategic investment in access to justice in these areas.

#### **How is the project being conducted?**

In February 2008, the Foundation asked two public policy experts, George Thomson and Karen Cohl, to lead this project. They have extensive justice and public policy experience, initially within government and now as private consultants. They are working closely with the Foundation in carrying out the project. The project began with research on promising developments in the areas under review and informal consultations with people who have related experience and expertise. Formal consultations began with the release of a Consultation Guide in May 2008. A final report with recommendations is planned for the fall of 2008.

#### **What is the project's focus?**

Access to justice is a vast topic. This project is focusing on access to two components (legal information and legal services) for two groups who often face barriers to meeting those fundamental legal needs (people who do not speak English or French and people living in rural or remote areas).

#### **How can I get involved?**

You can obtain a copy of the Consultation Guide on the website of The Law Foundation of Ontario, [www.lawfoundation.on.ca](http://www.lawfoundation.on.ca). If you would like to know more about the Linguistic and Rural Access to Justice Project or to provide input, please contact Barb Stewart at the Foundation, (416) 598-1550, [bstewart@lawfoundation.on.ca](mailto:bstewart@lawfoundation.on.ca).

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