You were asked “In 100 words or less, share one innovative access to justice project or idea that you think has made an impact.” The forty responses revealed key themes in the innovations already underway in Ontario, ideas of innovations in other jurisdictions and organizations that are collaborating to meet access to justice needs. The survey remains open through June. Ideas can be added by going to: [http://fluidsurveys.com/s/TAGgreatideas/](http://fluidsurveys.com/s/TAGgreatideas/)

**Leveraging the skills of law students to help fill gaps**

Funding articling student positions in public interests organizations and legal clinics has increased the capacity of community based organizations and trained a new generation of young lawyers in the public interest sector. Pro Bono Students Canada exposes and engages students across Canada in a broad range of supervised, engaging A2J projects. Students draft forms and help clients navigate the Family Courts. These projects enhance the reputation of the bar, train students, and create a pipeline into family law.

**Court Simplification makes justice more accessible**

Innovations in the courts that have made it easier and cheaper to pursue court resolution including the use of telephone conferences to deal with routine procedural matters, increasing the monetary limits for small claim actions, use of Settlement Conferences in Small Claims Court and plain language, how-to-guides posted online by administrative tribunals. Coordination between parts of the system, as happens in the Roundtable on Complex Criminal Trials, brings the necessary resources into the process early on. Legal services from duty counsel providing summary advice on Small Claims and Superior Court matters, family law information centres, paralegals, duty counsel and legal aid, on site mediation in family matters and dispute resolution officers in courthouses all connect people with services when they need them.

**Research into needs**

CLEO's Connecting Project provided a basis for legal and social agencies to collaborate in identifying needs and helped to make the case for LFO funding to 60 collaborations between multidisciplinary legal and social services increase the capacity of front-line workers at community organizations. Multi-language access has become easier as trusted intermediaries become aware of available resources feel more confident accessing them, effectively addresses the multidimensional aspect of legal problems for persons who have difficulty accessing the traditional legal system.
**Provide early information to prevent complex legal problems**

Initiatives that help people anticipate legal issues and ask for help connect them with legal services and understand legal issues before they become complex. Project such as METRAC’s public legal information webinars for women and their service providers, medical-legal partnership like the PBLO project at Sick Kids or OJEN/ROEJ’s Young Mom’s project for new mothers living in shelters or residential care build awareness, confidence in legal resolution and ideas about how to avoid legal conflicts.

**Help Self-represented Litigants navigate the system**

A number of projects focus on people in the midst of a legal dispute without representation. Innovations like the unbundling of legal services at the Human Rights Legal Support Centre, PBLO’s Law Help Ontario’s continuum of services from procedural information through to representation and Legal Aid Ontario’s toll-free number providing summary legal advice and referrals in over 200 languages provide direct legal services. The Migrant Worker Coalition connects vulnerable workers to explain rights and provide representation on employment issues. The Self-Represented Litigants project has created attention to and a forum for learning from the experiences of those who navigate the courts without assistance.

**Ideas for Next Steps**

- Generate an access to justice fund from lawyer and paralegal fees and increased court filing fees
- Raise legal aid eligibility rates for criminal or family justice system
- Provide front end and back end debt relief to law students
- Providing "coaching" to self-represented litigants to enable them to move forward on their own
- Set up a "legal brokerage" assisting family law litigants to get legal advice from lawyers at a reduced fee (see Family Law Access Centre in Manitoba)
- Replicate the American Bar Association’s "incubator" initiative providing mentoring, office and business support, financial assistance to lawyers building a practice that serves otherwise underserved clients