

## **Call for Proposals – Cybermisogyny Research Project**

### **Overview**

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is funding a research project to support and inform LEAF's law reform efforts and potential upcoming interventions concerning cybermisogyny.

Proposals are due by 11:59 pm EST on December 20, 2019. Further information follows.

Please share this call with your networks!

<b>Number of awards</b>	1
<b>Value</b>	\$15,000
<b>Duration</b>	January to June 2020
<b>Application deadline</b>	December 20, 2019 (11:59 pm EST)
<b>Results announced</b>	January 2020
<b>Submission instructions</b>	Submit all documents as a single PDF to Rosel Kim at <a href="mailto:r.kim@leaf.ca">r.kim@leaf.ca</a>

### **Context**

LEAF is dedicated to advancing the substantive equality rights of women and girls. LEAF has long been committed to recognizing and responding to emerging barriers to women's equality rights.

LEAF is concerned with the proliferation of misogyny and gender-based violence in the on-line world, known as "cybermisogyny". In particular, we are troubled by how technology is being used to manipulate, control, and disseminate sexual violence against women. Technology is changing the landscape for women's safety from violence and is being used to undermine women's equality rights. While the abuse, control, and sexual exploitation of women is not new, new technologies (and the different platforms on which information can be tracked and shared) have created new and dangerous (and too often anonymized) ways to commit these acts. This is a significant problem; if we fall behind in regulating technology, we risk seeing the many (though

insufficient) legal gains made to eliminate violence against women lost to technological changes that are seemingly difficult to contain, once adopted.

This growing problem requires a principled intersectional feminist response, which recognizes that while all women are vulnerable to technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (TFVAWG), those who exist at the intersections of misogyny, racism, ableism, and/or transphobia may have particularly insidious experiences of TFVAWG. LEAF seeks a Researcher to conduct research and prepare a paper that could inform the development of an equality-based framework for regulating TFVAWG to assist in LEAF's litigation and law reform work.

In particular, LEAF seeks to advocate for law reform in the area of regulating technology companies (including social media companies) that facilitate both the production and distribution of materials that constitute cybermisogyny, including nonconsensual distribution of sexual images (both 'real' and those created through deepfake technology), online hate directed at women, and other forms of TFVAWG. LEAF seeks to develop a law reform proposal that will hold corporations responsible for the role they play in enabling, and often profiting from, TFVAWG. LEAF's law reform proposal must be informed by in-depth research and intersectional feminist principles, and must be one that could be successfully implemented to address the rise in TFVAWG.

To this end, LEAF seeks a feminist researcher, who is well versed in the legislative and regulatory frameworks governing technology companies that facilitate both the production and distribution of cybermisogyny materials, to examine the following questions:

1. What current Canadian laws and regulations apply to online or tech companies, and to what extent could they be used to limit tech companies' conduct, hold them accountable for TFVAWG, and/or limit their ability to profit from TFVAWG? This would include an examination of privacy laws, hate speech regulations, newly emerging legislation restricting non-consensual distribution of intimate images, or other regulations.
2. What international strategies have been developed to regulate corporations who participate in, profit from or facilitate TFVAWG (or other harmful content) on their platform? This would include consideration of steps taken by the European Union to regulate social media companies both for the spread of hate, but also for the proliferation of "false information"; the United States' recent implementation of legislation to address sex trafficking on-line; and the regulation of corporate internet service providers who distribute hateful or illegal materials.
3. What does existing legal or academic research suggest about the best practices and solutions for holding corporations accountable for their role in the proliferation of TFVAWG (or other harmful content)?

4. What practices or solutions might be most effective in the Canadian context, and what barriers might exist to implementing those solutions?

This research will inform LEAF's law reform efforts and potential upcoming interventions in cases considering relevant issues relating to cybermisogyny in appellate courts.

### **Value and duration**

The successful applicant will be awarded \$15,000 to complete the research and prepare a paper. The work must be completed by June 1, 2020.

By applying for this funding opportunity, the successful applicant consents to LEAF sharing the research paper with other interested organizations and individuals.

### **Application process**

Applicants must submit the following as a single PDF attachment:

- A letter of intent summarizing the applicant's relevant expertise/experience in relation to the research issues (maximum two pages)
- Applicant's CV
- A brief writing sample (5-10 pages)

Applications will be accepted by email only. In the subject line of your email application, reference "LEAF Cybermisogyny – Call for Proposals". Applications are to be submitted to Rosel Kim at [r.kim@leaf.ca](mailto:r.kim@leaf.ca), and must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on December 20, 2019.

### **Contact information**

For more information about this opportunity, please contact:

**Rosel Kim**

Staff Lawyer

Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)

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