



Call for Proposals – Alternative Justice Mechanisms for Sexual Violence Project

The Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is a national not-for-profit that works to advance the substantive equality of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people in Canada through litigation, law reform, and public legal education.

We are funding one researcher to support and inform our Alternative Justice Mechanisms for Sexual Violence Project.

Proposals are due by **11:59 pm EDT on July 24, 2022**. Further information follows.

Please share this call with your networks!

Overview

Number of awards	1
Value	\$20,000
Duration	Mid-August 2022 to mid-August 2023
Application deadline	July 24, 2022 (11:59pm EDT)
Results announced	By August 2, 2022
Submission instructions	Submit all documents as a single PDF to Cee Strauss (they/them) at c.strauss@leaf.ca

Context

Alternative justice mechanisms are justice models that seek to redress harm using principles and procedures that differ from state-based legal systems. They can be restorative justice measures that are integrated into the existing criminal legal system, or that are entirely community-based; transformative justice measures that, like restorative justice, seek to remedy harm rather than punish for a crime, but that unlike restorative justice, are never integrated into state legal systems; disciplinary processes in postsecondary settings; and all manner of community-based mediation programs that do not strictly fulfill either restorative or transformative justice’s definitional criteria.

Historically, many mainstream feminists rejected the idea that alternative mechanisms could bring justice for sexual assault survivors. More recently, however, some sexual violence support service providers have begun piloting alternative justice mechanisms for survivors who are interested in such processes. LEAF seeks to assist such alternative justice practitioners by determining whether there are any legal barriers to their work, and if so, by proposing law reform measures to address those barriers.

LEAF is therefore launching its Alternative Justice Mechanisms Project to identify legal barriers to alternative justice mechanisms for sexual violence. We are seeking a researcher to conduct research and interviews (described below), and to summarize that research in a final report that identifies how legal frameworks could be modified to facilitate alternative justice mechanisms for sexual violence.

Description

Alternative justice practices can be divided between (1) those that are amenable to being integrated into the Canadian legal system, and (2) those that are strictly community-based and intend to remain so. The method of research will differ based on the type of practice.

Alternative justice practices that can be integrated into the Canadian legal system

With respect to alternative practices that are amenable to integration into the legal system, the researcher will conduct research as well as structured interviews with alternative justice practitioners and legal system actors (e.g., Crown counsel and counsel for survivors) to determine:

- Existing laws and policies that regulate alternative justice processes;
- The Crown policies and practices that govern recourse to “Alternative Measures” under section 717 of the *Criminal Code* in relation to sexual assault offences and how, if at all, “Alternative Measures” are considered for such offences;
- How, if at all, should access to “Alternative Measures” in sexual assault prosecutions be enhanced in a way that centres the justice needs of survivors;
- Building on the research already conducted in LEAF’s [Due Justice reports](#), whether university investigations and university disciplinary proceedings are meeting the needs of survivors;

Consulting community-based alternative justice practitioners to determine whether they face legal barriers in carrying out their work

On a parallel track, the researcher will consult with practitioners of alternative justice outside of regulated processes. The researcher will determine practitioners’ views on the legal system, and how their processes interact with or are inhibited by law.

Final Report

The findings from the anticipated legal research, structured interviews, and consultations will drive the nature of the researcher's final report. We anticipate that the final report will:

- Describe existing legal frameworks for alternative justice mechanisms, and assess whether they are appropriate for sexual violence processes;
- Identify how such legal frameworks, and the practices within them, could be modified to facilitate alternative justice mechanisms for sexual violence;
- Summarize the results of the consultations with practitioners of alternative justice who are not integrated into any legal systems, and describe legal barriers identified, if any;
- Provide recommendations as to how to remove those barriers, if invited to do so by the practitioners that have been consulted.

Value and duration

The successful applicant will be awarded \$20,000 to complete their research and write their report. The researcher will be expected to adhere to an agreed upon schedule of deliverables, including: in collaboration with LEAF staff, assembling an Advisory Committee by September 30, 2022; submitting a detailed research plan by October 31, 2022; submitting a detailed outline of the report (date to be determined); submitting a draft of the research report by mid-June 2023, to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee; and submitting a final report by August 15, 2023. All research products must be completed by August 15, 2023.

By applying for this funding opportunity, the successful applicant consents to LEAF publicly sharing the resulting research products.

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 topic
- 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 "Alternative Justice Mechanisms Project – Call for Proposals". Applications are to be submitted to Cee Strauss (they/them) at c.strauss@leaf.ca, and must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on July 24, 2022.

The successful applicant will be notified by August 2, 2022. Only the successful applicant will be contacted.

LEAF welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities for all available opportunities. Where possible, accommodations will be made available upon request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

LEAF encourages applications from candidates who reflect the diversity of our communities. We strongly encourage applicants who self-identify as belonging to BIPOC, newcomer, gender diverse, and other equity-deserving groups to apply.

Contact Information

For more information about this funding opportunity, or if you have any accommodation requests related to the application process, please contact:

Cee Strauss (they/them)

Staff Lawyer

Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)

[Email: c.strauss@leaf.ca](mailto:c.strauss@leaf.ca)