

The Polar Barristers

Access to Justice Update

The Law Society of Nunavut (LSN) is committed to building connections and using a collaborative approach to better respond to the legal needs and interests of all Nunavummiut. Through its Access to Justice Program launched in 2016, the Law Society strives to provide Nunavummiut with relevant resources and information that will help increase their understanding of their rights and get the legal help they need.

The LSN has undertaken two significant Access to Justice projects. The Family Violence Prevention project and Prevention of Harassment project are the first projects of their size and funding. We are pleased to provide an update on both projects as well as share what's to come throughout the remainder of 2022.



FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION¹

The *Access to Justice for Family Violence in Nunavut* project was a joint initiative between the Law Society of Nunavut and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. The project intended to break the silence on family violence in Nunavut by raising awareness about family violence, especially intimate partner violence, and the legal options available to address this issue. To this end, the project was broken into two parts: a research component and an [awareness campaign](#) component. Information gathered through the research component informed

the awareness campaign that was successfully launched at the Astro Theatre in Iqaluit on March 8, 2021.

The research gathered informed a number of recommendations by key stakeholders for consideration. These were documented in the *Access to Justice for Family Violence in Nunavut [Final Report on Research and Awareness Campaign](#)* that was shared with the key stakeholders at a meeting and roundtable discussion on March 24th 2022. The outcome from the roundtable was a commitment to continue

collaborating and ensure next steps are relevant and meaningful. A follow-up working meeting is scheduled for October 2022.

In addition to the year-long public awareness campaign, a number of plain language resources were developed to help "break the silence" on family violence including: [posters](#), [newspaper ads](#), [fact sheets](#), a social media campaign on [Facebook](#), [opinion editorial](#), [podcasts](#) and a [video series](#) of interviews with women with lived experience. 📌

¹Funding for this research project was generously provided by the Law Foundation of Ontario through its Access to Justice Fund, as well as the Department of Justice Canada.

PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT²

The Prevention of Harassment project addresses two main issues: sexual harassment in the workplace in Nunavut and other forms of harassment and gender-based violence issues that are more relevant to the unique context in Nunavut. The main objective is to support the elimination of gender-based violence and harassment in Nunavut using a trauma-informed approach.

Given the significant geographic challenges to providing legal information and legal services in the territory, the project aims to assist in filling this gap. It is achieving this by providing legal information and making available legal advice in the territory in a way that is relevant for the different communities. This means that the project has developed tools and resources that are tailored to the needs and realities of smaller communities.

In recognizing the need for a holistic and collaborative approach to access to justice, the LSN has been developing resources that not only provide legal information on the topic, but also mental wellness considerations informed by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to support people dealing with these issues.

In recognizing the need for a holistic and collaborative approach to access to justice, the Law Society has been developing resources that not only provide legal information on the topic, but also mental wellness considerations informed by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to support people dealing with these issues.

²Funding for this project was generously provided by the Department of Justice Canada under its Justice Partnership and Innovation Project.

As such, plain language information on harassment and gender-based violence resources have been developed to provide access to information related to harassment in the workplace including the:

- [Prevention of Harassment in the Workplace – What it is and what to do about it](#), a legal and wellness resource to help identify harassment in the workplace and what one can do if being harassed;
- [Addressing Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence in the Workplace – A Quick Guide for Employers in Nunavut](#), specifically created for employers;
- [Workplace Harassment: Legal & Wellness Resources](#), a list of organizations who can provide assistance;
- [A podcast on creating a healthy workplace with Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit perspectives](#)
- [Prevention of Harassment in the Workplace Posters](#); and a
- [Prevention of Harassment in the Workplace Informational Video](#).

In addition to developing the above tools and resources, the LSN is also committed to bring attention to the subject of sexual harassment in the workplace and gender based violence in other ways. On March 8th, 2021, an opinion editorial [Taking action against sexual harassment in the workplace on International Women's Day](#) written by Gloria Song, Access to Justice Co-Coordinator with the Law Society of Nunavut was published in the Nunatsiq News.

The LSN has also incorporated social media to help raise awareness on the topic and created a Facebook page, [Break the Silence](#). The Facebook page is being used to promote upcoming workshops and the resources created for the project.

Through engagement with stakeholders and partners, the LSN identified the need for community-based workshops. To address this need, the LSN developed the Community Workshop Program. Free legal advice clinics are also offered alongside the community-based workshops, providing the much-needed access to a lawyer and legal advice.

As part of the Community Workshop Program, the LSN also collaborated with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre to develop the [Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace - Legal Resources Manual](#) specifically to support lawyers. During October 2020, [training](#) was provided to Law Society members on the applicable legislation and how to adopt a trauma-informed approach based on Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit principles when meeting with members of the community.

Since launching the Community Workshop Program, the Law Society in partnership with Nunavut Legal Aid delivered a community workshop in Clyde River on March 24th 2021, followed by two workshops in Pangnirtung the week of March 27th and a workshop in Qikiqtarjuaq on April 5th.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, in-person community workshops were put on hold after the April 5th workshop. No stranger to pivoting throughout the pandemic, the Law Society partnered with the Carrefour Nunavut to offer a virtual community workshop on June 17th, 2021 directed at decision-makers from Francophone organizations in Iqaluit.

Once restrictions were lifted, in-person workshops were delivered in Iqaluit during the week of November 1st–5th 2021 with Atelier Francophone and the Iqaluit Chamber of Commerce. Throughout the week, pro bono sessions were also offered to community members and workshop participants. Additional in person workshops will be offered throughout the fall and early winter.

The Law Society of Nunavut is committed to bringing awareness to [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Gender Based Violence in Nunavut](#). If you or know any organization who is interested in welcoming our team, please let us know so we can confirm dates and begin planning. Contact our toll free general line: 1-844-979-2330 or email support@lawsociety.nu.ca. 📍



