



Action Committee on  
Access to Justice  
in Civil and Family Matters

# CANADA'S JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2022 PROGRESS



**New A2J projects  
in 2022:**

**253**

**Number of people  
impacted by 2022 A2J  
projects:**

**8,272,357**



# About this Report

The Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Affairs adopted its nine Justice Development Goals (JDGs) after working collaboratively with people across Canada to examine how to advance A2J. These nine goals map out a path to improve A2J that everyone, whatever they are working on, can use to align their work. Whether as individuals working to meet local needs, or as governments responsible for funding decisions, we can align our work — driving towards a more inclusive and accessible system.

This Report highlights access to justice efforts across Canada in 2022. The projects and data reported here were shared with the Action Committee by organizations across the country, building on their ongoing efforts and sustained commitment to improving access to justice. There are many organizations advancing access to justice that are not yet connected with this collaborative effort. Other organizations may not have shared all of their new initiatives.

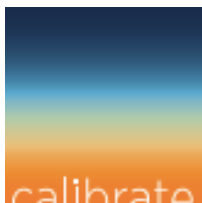
To learn more about these 253 projects, read the 2022 digital report on the JDG's at [justicedevelopmentgoals.ca](https://justicedevelopmentgoals.ca).

The Action Committee is generously funded by:



Department of Justice  
Canada

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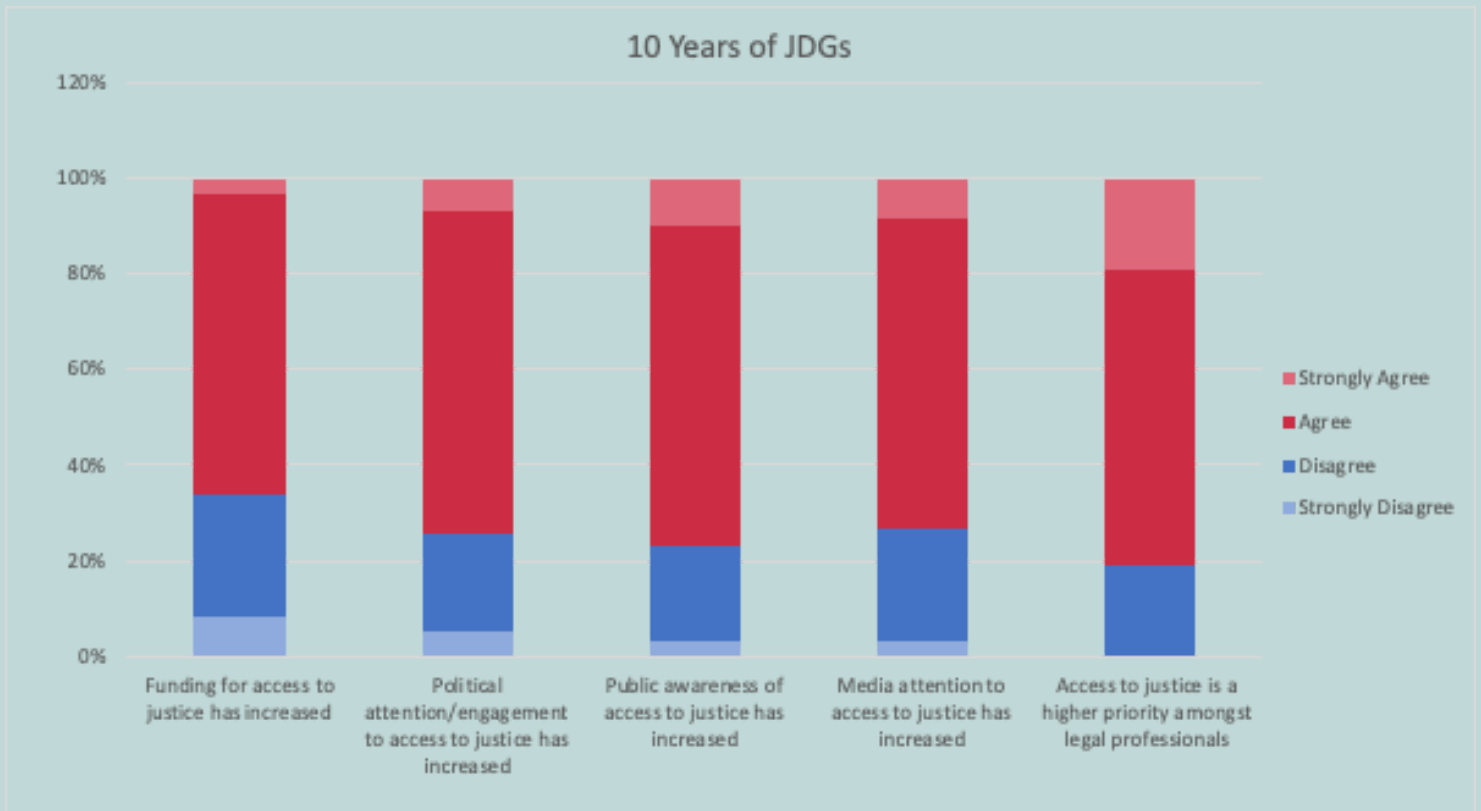


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## Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters Celebrating 10 years of the roadmap for change

2023 is the 10th anniversary of the establishment of Canada's Justice Development Goals! This year, 61 access to justice organizations responded to a set of questions intended to measure the impact of the JDGs within Canada's justice sector.



81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that access to justice is a higher priority amongst legal professionals since the adoption of the JDGs. This was also the area with the highest proportion organizations choosing Strongly Agree, at 19% of the total responses.

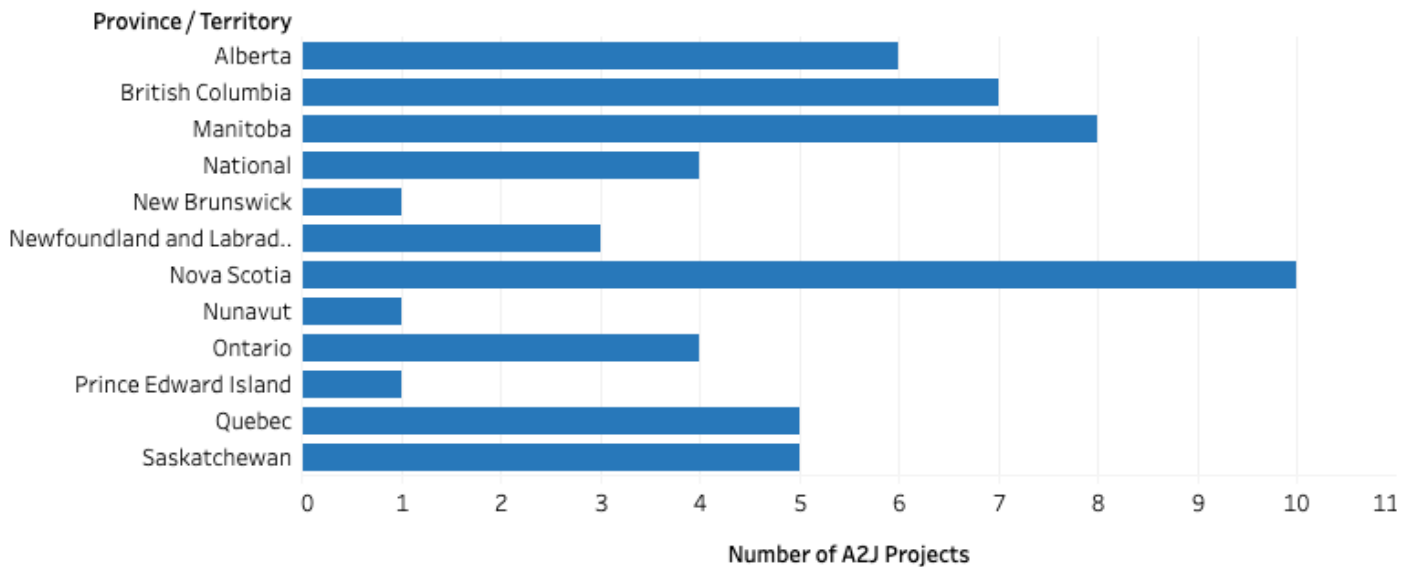
The area where respondents have seen the lowest impact of the JDGs is in funding. Just 63% of respondents agreed, and 3% strongly agreed, that funding for access to justice has increased since the adoption of the JDGs.

The increase in attention and awareness of access to justice were viewed consistently across different audiences. Ranging from 73-77%, respondents agreed or strongly agreed that public awareness, political attention and media attention increased since the adoption of the JDGs.

## ADDRESS EVERYDAY LEGAL PROBLEMS

In 2022, A2J organizations expanded people-centred justice initiatives through projects focusing on the needs of Indigenous peoples, newcomers, people with disabilities, linguistic minorities, LBGTQ+ individuals, youth, and sexual and domestic violence victims. Organizations made their public legal education and prevention materials more readily available by creating and improving online libraries, databases, and helplines.

Each rectangle represents a JDG 1 project



### 1.1 EDUCATE EARLY

Provide targeted, free, accessible public legal education about frequent legal issues, different types of solutions and the process of enforcing rights.

### 1.2 PREVENT

Foster legal capability so that people can spot legal issues early, get preventative or proactive help and anticipate, avoid or manage frequent legal issues.

### 1.3 OFFER A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Develop and expand legal services to include the full continuum of information, advice, help lines, online services, in-person services, and partial or full representation.

### 1.4 REFLECT CANADIAN SOCIETY

Put the services people need in the communities where they live with the resources to address the barriers they face.

In 2022, organizations understood legal needs broadly and viewed A2J as a multi-sectoral issue. A2J project topics were varied, spanning investor protection, small businesses, wills and estates, housing, employment, harassment, divorce, children’s rights, immigration, poverty, mental health, and criminal law issues.



**2.1 FOCUS ON LEGAL NEEDS FOR EVERYONE**

Focus on addressing service gaps for basic, essential legal services including family law, wills, employment, housing and consumer issues.

**2.2 ENCOURAGE INNOVATION**

Develop and expand alternative ways to get legal help including different kinds of professionals, partnerships or ways of doing business.

**2.3 EXPAND SCOPE OF LEGAL AID**

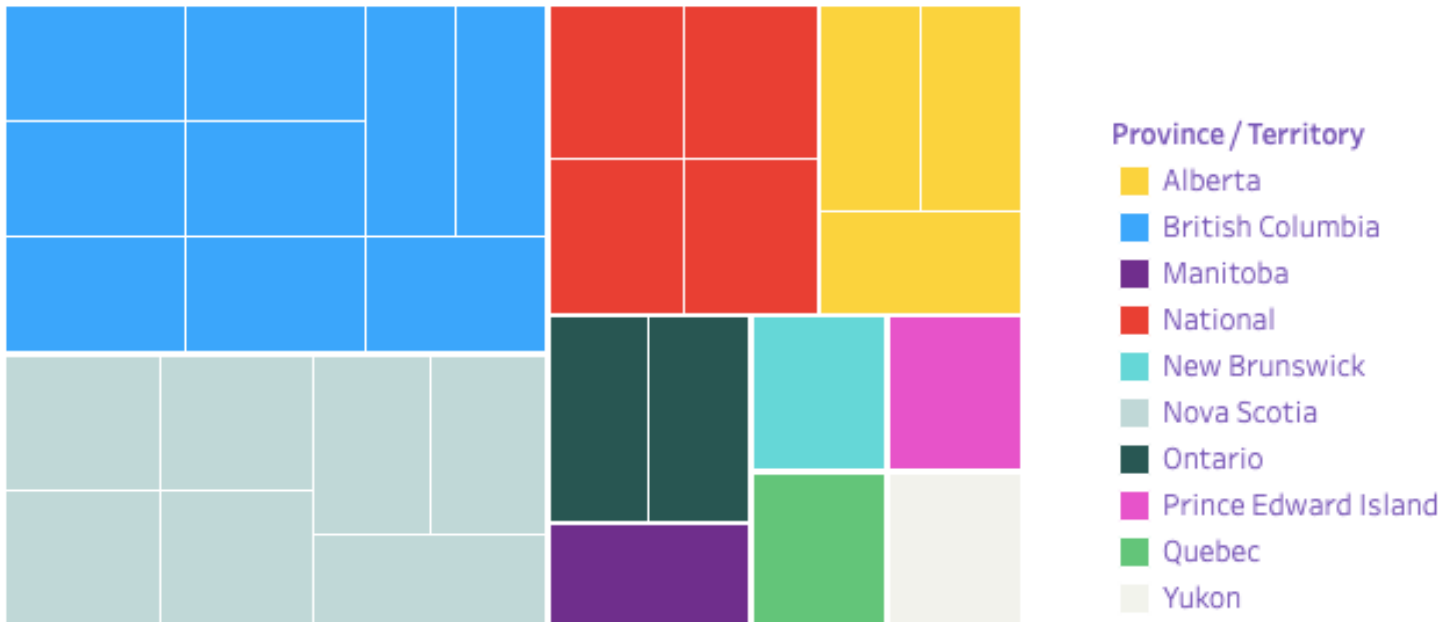
Make legal aid available to more people and for a wider range of legal problems.

**2.4 FOCUS ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Emphasize the responsibility of lawyers and paralegals to fill access to justice gaps.

In 2022, courts expanded and improved their digital case management, filing procedures, and virtual hearing procedures. Courts also improved access through the creation of Indigenous Justice Strategies and new rules and procedures for hearings involving self-represented litigants.

Each square represents a JDG 3 project



**3.1 ENSURE ACCESS TO COURTS**

Courts must be adequately staffed and located where people live to make sure people can get access to a judge when needed, especially when fundamental and constitutional rights are at stake.

**3.2 PROMOTE MULTI SERVICE CENTRES**

Courthouses should offer mediation, dispute resolution, and informal or non-legal services to make it easy for people to access cheaper and simpler options at any stage of the process.

**3.3 HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE REPRESENTING THEMSELVES**

Courts should offer services, including early resolution and information services, for people who are navigating the legal system alone.

**3.4 MANAGE CASES EFFECTIVELY**

Timelines, simplified procedures, shared experts, and limited number of witness should be agreed to, or insisted on by judges, to make better use of court time and encourage early settlement.

**3.5 BE ACCESSIBLE AND USER-FOCUSED**

Courts and procedures need to be modernized to reflect people’s needs, including better use of technology where it can make the process faster or easier without ignoring the needs of vulnerable people.

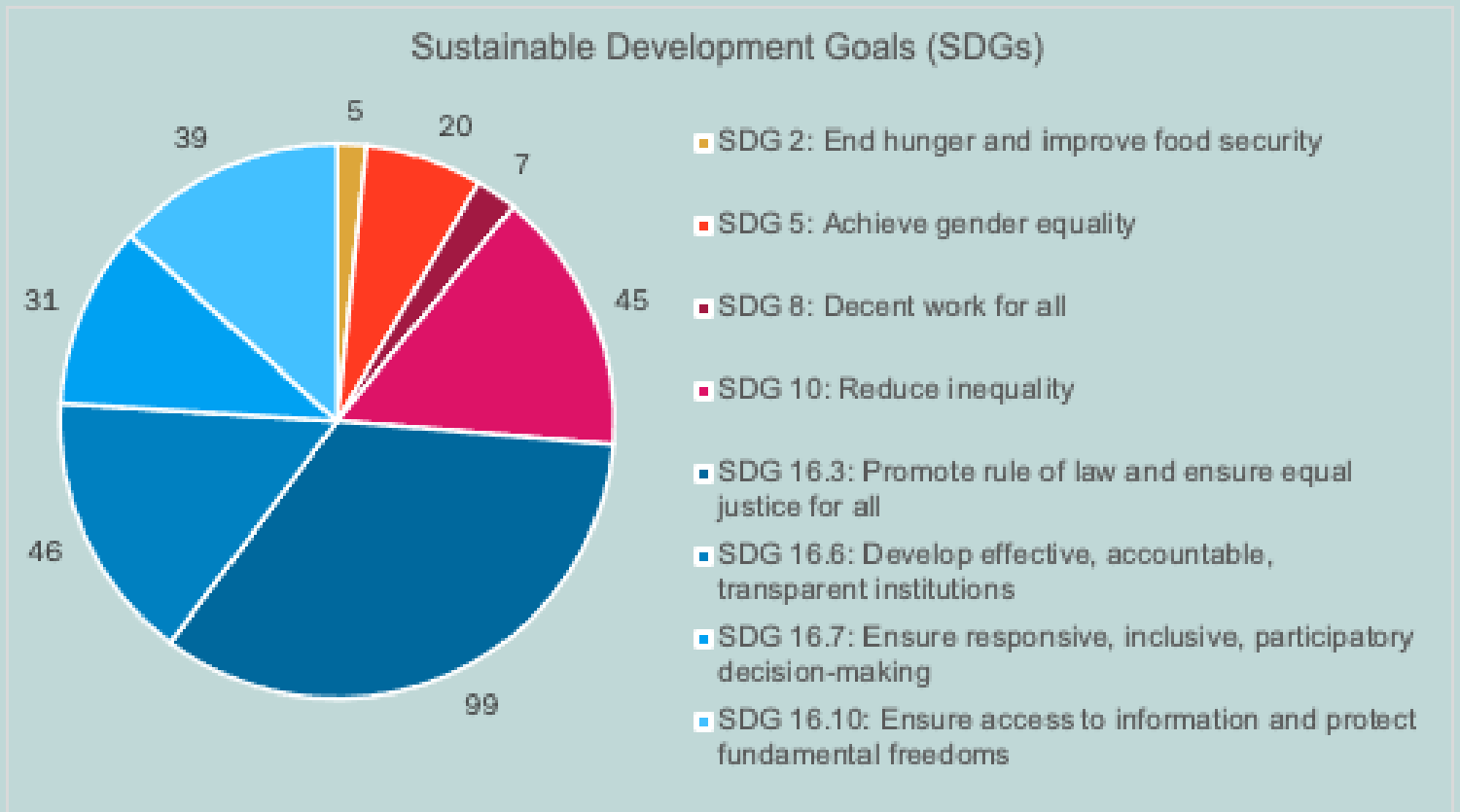
**3.6 PROTECT JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE**

Ensure system improvements do not interfere with a judge’s ability to make independent, ethical decisions to protect people’s rights.

# Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Action Committee developed Canada's Justice Development Goals (JDGs) to align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations as a blueprint for addressing big global challenges, from poverty and climate change to gender equality and education. UN member states use the SDGs to track progress in key areas, and help people see how their work is connected to these big goals at the local, national, and international level.

See which of the SDGs organizations reported impacting or advancing in 2022:



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

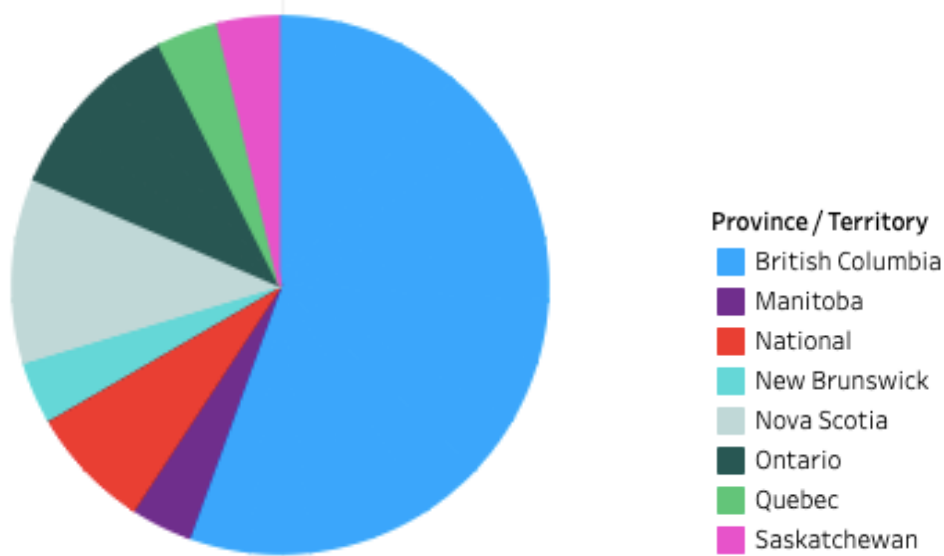
**17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD**

## IMPROVE FAMILY JUSTICE

In 2022, the family law sector supported child welfare and protection initiatives, including Child Protection Practice Groups, Family Case Conferences, and rosters of lawyers specialised in high-conflict parenting matters. Innovations included self-guided online courses on filing for divorce, parenting after separation, and navigating family courts.



Each wedge represents a JDG 4 project



### 4.1 OFFER A BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES

Make family law services easier to find, including triage, early intervention, integrated and collaborative processes, parenting and financial services.

### 4.2 PROMOTE CONSENSUAL RESOLUTION

Develop and expand proactive management of family issues and more consensual approaches and services, maintaining a focus on safety.

### 4.3 INNOVATE

Educate people about less adversarial approaches and experiment with new services and processes to create opportunities for consensus resolution..

### 4.4 RESTRUCTURE FAMILY COURTS

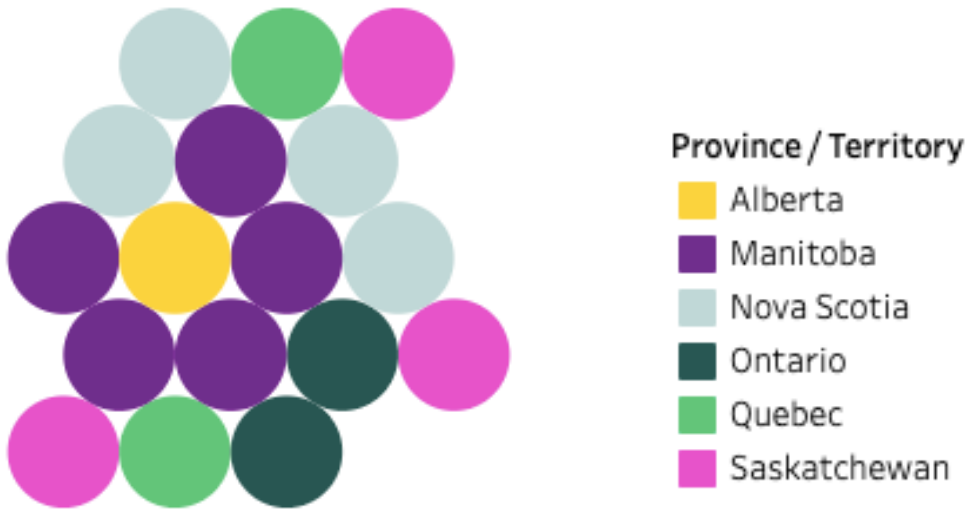
Locate all of the aspects of family law in the same place, including separation, custody and access, and divorce, ideally under one judge.



WORK TOGETHER

In 2022, the third annual A2J week expanded its national momentum, with the simultaneous participation of 7 provincial collaboratives. The Cross-Canada Family Justice Transformation Strategy, an alliance of organizations spanning provinces aimed at transforming the family justice system, also launched in 2022.

Each circle represents a JDG 5 project



5.1 ESTABLISH COORDINATED EFFORTS

Bring all of the organizations involved in access to justice in each province or territory together to focus on local solutions.

5.2 INCLUDE EVERYONE

Involve the major institutions (courts, governments), professional groups (lawyers' associations), community groups and non- profits (clinics, PLE providers), academics and individuals to find new creative approaches.

5.3 BE BOLD; TAKE ACTION

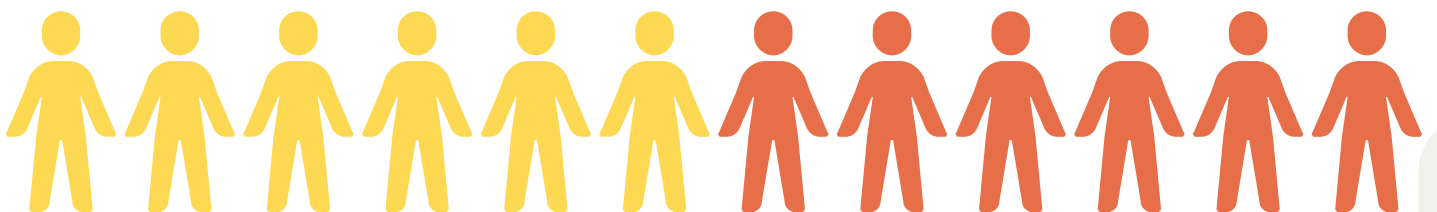
Local and national coordination must lead, take action and inspire others to tackle access to justice.

5.4 WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS

In addition to coordinating across the justice system, access to justice should be a serious focus within judges' organizations, lawyers' and paralegals' associations, courts and institutions.

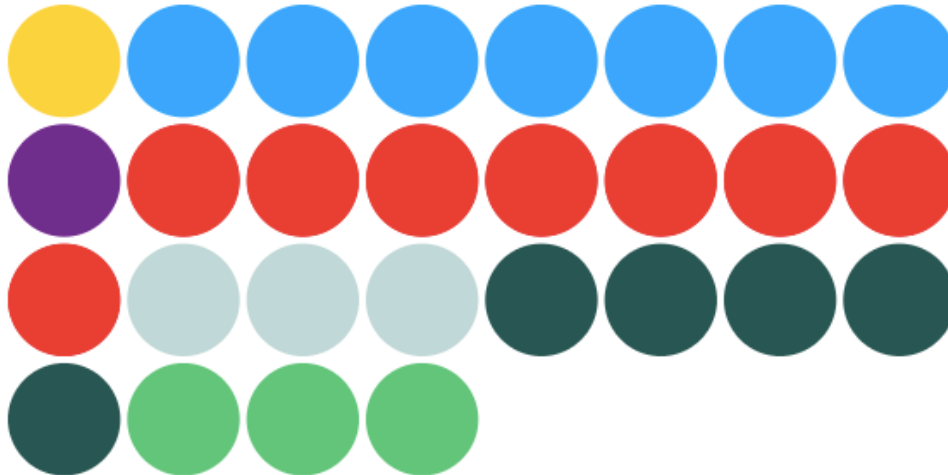
5.5 COORDINATE ACROSS CANADA

Keep momentum and sustained attention to these issues across the country to complement local and regional activity.



In 2022, A2J legal education for students focused on neurodiversity, systemic racism, engagement with police, and participation in justice systems. The legal community targeted education on sexual harassment and assault, anti-oppressive practices, cultural competency, and gender diversity.

Each circle represents a JDG 6 project



Province / Territory

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- National
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- Quebec

6.1 EDUCATE LAW STUDENTS AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Offer training on access to justice, emerging approaches, changing social situations and the skills to meet people’s needs, both at the start of and throughout legal careers.

6.2 EXPAND JUSTICE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Introduce legal capability into elementary and secondary schools to prepare people for legal issues in their lives; Offer training about access to justice issues in post-secondary programs to integrate legal, health, social and education services.



# ACTION ON RECONCILIATION

17 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action relate to justice and span the accountability of all justice sector organizations. This year, 54 access to justice organizations shared their approaches to reconciliation and the actions they took in 2022.

2022 was a year of action on Truth and Reconciliation for the access to justice organizations – implementing plans, collecting data, working directly with Indigenous communities, and decolonizing and Indigenizing education, approaches, and processes in the justice sector.

## IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES:

- Expanded diversity of board and committee
- Outreach plan
- Anti-racism, trauma-informed staff training
- Alignment of laws with UNDRIP
- Decolonizing land-based laws
- Identifying applicable calls to action (both TR and MMIWG) implementing an action plan and tracking progress

## COLLECTING DATA:

- Ensuring financing is specifically directed towards Indigenous justice issues identified by the community
- Data collection to determine whether services and resources are meeting Indigenous people and organizations

## WORKING DIRECTLY WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES:

- Incorporating Indigenous perspectives in research on legal issues and including Indigenous communities in co-creation
- Specific PLEI directed at Indigenous community members, including seniors, property rights
- Enhancing service (both technology and format) to remote communities

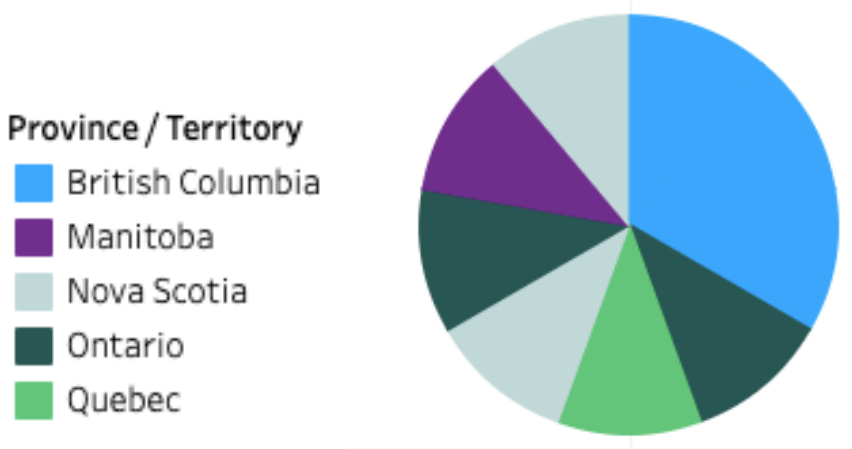
## DECOLONIZING AND INDIGENIZING EDUCATION, APPROACHES, AND PROCESSES

- Incorporating traditional ceremonies
- CPD and awareness raising
- Decolonizing administration and pedagogy and Indigenizing curriculum
- Expanding Indigenous court
- Decolonizing legal service delivery
- PLE sessions on Truth and Reconciliation for youth, adults and justice sector professionals
- Indigenous-themed resources for teachers
- Working with Indigenous artists

In 2022, innovation initiatives focused on the use, regulation, and impact of artificial intelligence and automated decision-making on A2J. 2022 also saw an increase in the scope of services historically performed by lawyers that paralegals and other advocates may now provide in justice systems.



Each wedge represents a JDG 7 project



**7.1 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT IS WORKING**

Create a culture of innovation in the justice system by focusing on new ideas and learning about successes and failures.

**7.2 SHARE GOOD IDEAS**

Promote the sharing of new models, ideas and successes to expand the impact of innovation.

# Access to Justice Week 2022

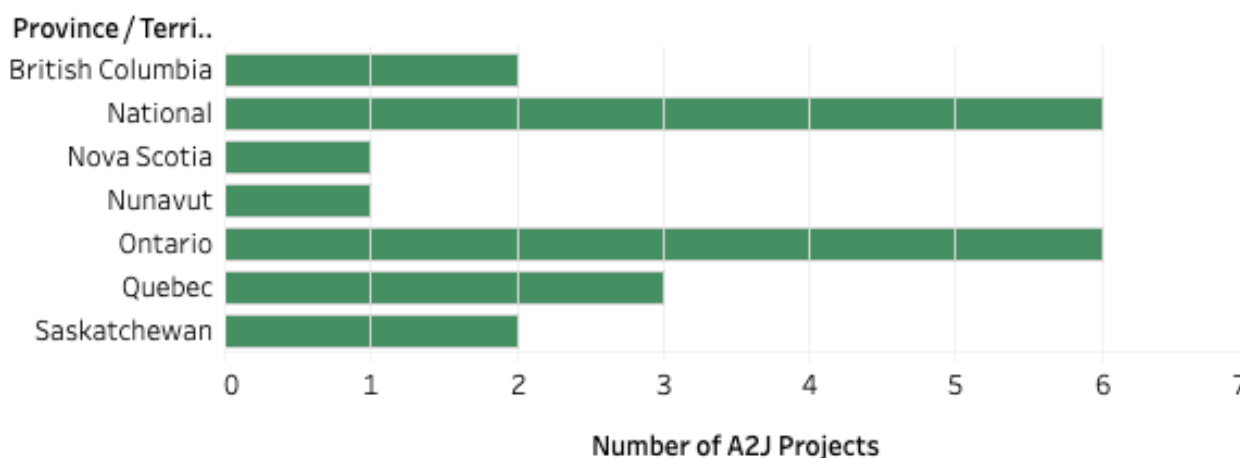


The seventh annual Access to Justice Week took place across the country from October 24th - 28th, 2022. The Week was a collaboration with nationally available online events organized by justice sector partners in AB, BC, MB, ON, NB, NS and SK. The theme of the week was "Access to Justice Counts: Using data to address the legal needs of Canadians".

ANALYZE AND LEARN

In 2022, disaggregated data collection, knowledge sharing and collaboration, and stakeholder engagement were key elements of A2J projects. Organizations relied on focus groups, surveys, and feedback consultations to ensure that research, project design, and pilot project evaluations were evidence-based – such as the Bootcamp held as a part of the evaluation of the Saskatchewan Legal Coaching and Unbundled Legal Services Pilot Project, and the data gathered in Victoria to support the Early Resolution and Case Management Model.

Each rectangle represents a JDG 8 project



8.1 DEVELOP METRICS

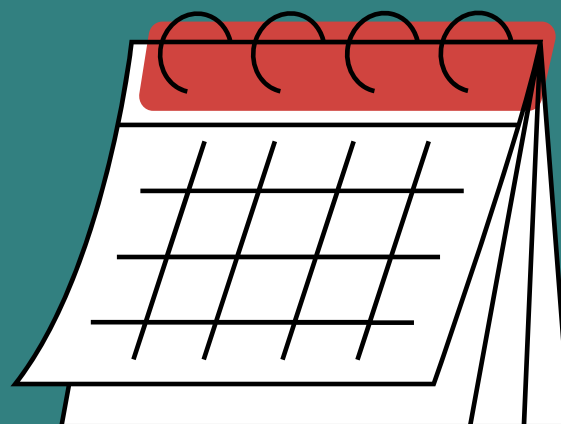
Establish benchmarks and standardized metrics to build a shared understanding of legal services, models and needs.

8.2 WORK WITH RESEARCHERS IN ALL FIELDS

Coordinate research between institutions and universities, and between social scientists, economists, system users, and legal institutions to better understand the issues.

Mark your Calendar!

Access to Justice Week 2023 will take place October 23rd – 27th.

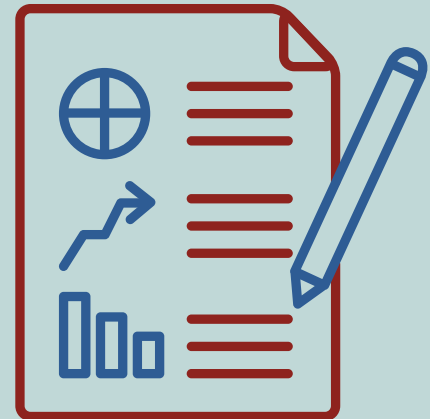


A listing of the events will be available on the Action Committee’s website at [justicedevelopmentgoals.ca/events](https://justicedevelopmentgoals.ca/events).

## USING DATA TO UNDERSTAND A2J

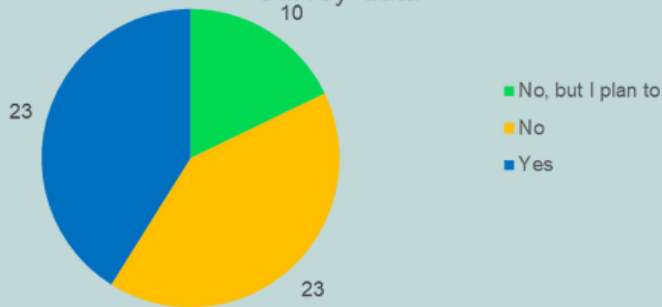
This year, we asked about using data to advance A2J. 35% of organizations collected data to measure their A2J impact. For 79% of these organizations, this data is public or shared with other institutions.

We also asked about how organizations have used the data from the 2021 Statistics Canada Legal Problems Survey.



Have you used the 2021 Statistics Canada Canadian Legal Problems Survey data in your work?

Organizations using Canadian Legal Problems Survey data



Which of the Categories of serious legal problems surveyed by StatsCan does your organization's programming or support specifically address?

Organizations addressing serious legal problems



IMPROVE FUNDING STRATEGIES

In 2022, Governments, law foundations and other institutions focused on sustainability and organizational capacity building through funding. Some law foundations more than doubled the amount of their grants and switched from annual to multi-year granting structures.

Each circle represents a province's JDG 9 projects



Announcements in 2022 of new funding devoted specifically to A2J totalled: **\$64,093,359**

Amount of money granted by Law Foundations in 2022 as reported in published Annual Reports. **\$41,239,686**

9.1 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT IS WORKING

Learn what the real costs of legal issues are and divert funding to prevent legal issues and minimize the demand on other social services.

9.2 BETTER FUNDING FOR LEGAL AID

Increase funding of legal aid, to make more people eligible and to expand the types of legal problems that are eligible.

9.3 MAKE SURE THE MONEY LASTS

Maintain the focus on access to justice to ensure that improvements can be sustained and changes are funded indefinitely.



## Organizations that reported their 2022 Access to Justice activities to advance the JDGs:

- 44 Non-profit organizations
- 18 Public legal education organizations
- 20 Professional Associations or Regulator of lawyers, paralegals or notaries
- 13 Governments
- 2 Funders of A2J projects
- 5 Law Schools or Law Professors
- 3 Legal Aid Plans
- 18 Legal Aid Clinics
- 12 Law Student Clinics
- 9 A2J Researchers
- 10 Courts (judiciary)
- 2 Provincial / Territorial A2J Collaborative
- 1 Court Administrations
- 3 Private lawyers or law firms
- 1 Advocacy Group
- 3 Tribunals



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