

Report of January 30, 2026 meeting of

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE COLLABORATIVES

Hosted by the

Action Committee on **Access to Justice**



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Established by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin in 2008, the Action Committee on Access to Justice (then called the "Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters") works towards improved access to justice for people in Canada. The Action Committee brings people from all corners of Canada's justice system together to propose and examine approaches on this critical issue. A Steering Committee of volunteers coordinate annual events and administer the Action Committee. Committees of Action Committee members plan regional and national activities to advance access to justice.

Comments on this report can be sent to the Action Committee to **info@actioncommitteea2j.ca**.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, *Access to Civil & Family Justice: A Roadmap for Change* report called for the creation of Access to Justice Implementation Commissions. This report inspired the development of the various Canadian Provincial and Territorial (PT) Access to Justice Collaboratives (Collaboratives).[1] These Collaboratives are designed by each province/territory to "suit [their] own particular needs".[2] The membership of each Collaborative is broadly based, typically involving "judicial and court administration participation, combined with multi-stakeholder collaboration"[3], and the public. The role of these Collaboratives is to be innovative, action-oriented, and/or advisory. They "inspire, lead, and support change by clearly defining problems and crafting solutions and assisting with the piloting, implementation, and evaluation of reforms".[4]

The Collaboratives gathered for the first time in 2015. This meeting was documented in the *Action Committee Meeting of Provincial and Territorial Access to Justice Groups* report.[5] The purpose of this meeting was multi-faceted. It reflected the progress made by the Collaboratives with an opportunity to discuss access to justice (A2J) initiatives underway in different jurisdictions and to highlight promising developments. The meeting also provided an opportunity to learn from common challenges, and to consider further collaborations and cooperation among justice stakeholders.[6]

Since the 2015 meeting of Collaboratives, many Action Committee Summits, PT Collaborative Thought Leadership Tables, and Listening Tour events have been held that have offered

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Note: Thank you to University of Saskatchewan CREATE Justice student interns, Bethany Pratchler and Kiauna Cote who assisted in notetaking during the meeting and developing this report.

1 Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, *Access to Civil & Family Justice: A Roadmap for Change* (Ottawa: Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, 2013).
2 *Ibid* at 20.
3 *Ibid*.
4 *Ibid* at 21.
5 Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, *Action Committee Meeting of Provincial and Territorial Access to Justice Groups* (Ottawa: Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, 2015).
6 *Ibid* at 2.

meaningful connection among Collaborative leads and members across Canadian jurisdictions.

The summer of 2025 marked a new phase for the Action Committee, with, thanks to several Canadian Law Foundations, the hiring of staff. This increased capacity enabled organizing the first in-person gathering specifically for Collaborative leads and member representatives (members of the Collaborative Working Group) since 2015, held on January 30, 2026. Attendance included members of the Collaborative Working Group, with representation across provinces and territories. Of the 29 participants, 20 joined the meaning in-person in Ottawa, Ontario and six joined remotely via Zoom. The agenda was created specifically in response to Collaborative Working Group members' feedback from previous years and from a targeted consultation during Fall 2025.

The topics addressed during the meeting and captured in this report include:

- Part 1: A Roundtable on Collaboratives in Canada – Current Context and Data Insights
- Part 2: A Panel of Presentations on Understanding Collaborative Structures in Canada
- Part 3: A Group Discussion on Building the Path Toward Better Collaborative Funding
- Part 4: A Workshop on Advancing a Collaborative Toolkit

At the end of the meeting, participants were invited to reflect on three topics: (1) meeting content using the "Two Stars and a Wish" format; (2) next steps moving forward; and (3) the pitches that resulted from the collaborative toolkit prototyping session. Seventeen of the 29 participants completed and submitted the feedback forms. Participants responses to those three topics are reflected in relevant sections of the report.

We hope this report will be useful both retroactively and prospectively. Retroactively, this report acts as a "marker in time" that summarizes where the Collaboratives stand on a national level. This report captures some of the challenges and opportunities that Collaboratives have, and are having to, navigate. Prospectively, this report operates as a "vision for the future" to document ideas, examples, and tools highlighted by Collaborative members, which (1) Collaboratives can use to evolve and adapt, as needed, and (2) can be referenced by the Action Committee to support Collaboratives, as appropriate.

PART 1

COLLABORATIVES IN CANADA - CURRENT CONTEXT AND DATA INSIGHTS



Part 1 Facilitator:

Peter Kingsley, KC, Chair of Collaborative Working Group.

Part 1 Objective:

A research and user-informed introduction on starting, maintaining, and evolving Collaboratives in Canada (Collaboratives leads and members being the “users” in this instance).

> "Being able to network with and hear from other people was a big star. Networking during meetings like this is valuable and is a great opportunity to explore more opportunities to share and gather information, experiences, skills, and promising practices."

Welcome from Chair of the Action Committee (Justice Andromache Karakatsanis)

Justice Andromache Karakatsanis welcomed participants and framed the day around the value of research-informed discussion and shared learning across Collaboratives.

She situated the Collaboratives in relation to the Action Committee as a whole, indicating that the Action Committee is comprised of:

1. representatives from justice sector institutions;
2. public/equality seeking organizations; and
3. *the meeting participants* – coordinators and representatives from Collaboratives.

She highlighted that the 2013 *Roadmap for Change* of the Action Committee was a foundational call for establishing Collaboratives. The report stated:

- For coherent, collaborative and coordinated change to occur, mechanisms need to be available in all provinces and territories. Where such collaborative mechanisms already exist, they need to be supported and perhaps reformed where necessary. Where they do not already exist, they need to be created and supported.[7]

She noted the session would support an evidence-based "roadmap to change" by surfacing current realities and priorities across jurisdictions, and by using data insights to guide practical next steps. She concluded by thanking participants and signaling the Collaboratives are at the heart of the Action Committee's work.

Introductions from Collaborative Working Group Members

Participants were invited to introduce themselves and answer the following questions using the "Two Stars and a Wish" method:

- **Introductions**: Their role in relation to their Collaborative (lead/coordinator, chair, member, etc.).
- **Two stars**: Two examples of successes resulting from their Collaborative.
- **One wish**: One challenge/question about starting, maintaining, or evolving a Collaborative.

Some of the common wins and common challenges that emerged from the "Two Stars and a Wish" roundtable are as follows and detailed below. Collaboratives across Canada indicated the need to focus on:

- Engaging **multiple disciplines** to advance Collaboratives and initiatives
- Engaging **diverse voices** to advance Collaboratives and initiatives
- **Geographical A2J** to advance Collaboratives and initiatives
- **Funding, measuring, and sustaining Collaboratives** to advance initiatives
- Outcomes and respond to calls for **a paradigm and culture shift to guide approaches to reform**

7 *Supra* note 1 at 20-21.

> "The day provided an opportunity to hear participants discuss the immediate A2J challenges they are facing."

Focus on engaging multiple disciplines to advance Collaboratives and initiatives

Learning and engagement emerged as strong themes. Participants expressed interest in learning about innovations that help bridge gaps and advance existing projects, particularly innovations which draw on multiple sectors, and those that support smaller jurisdictions with limited coverage areas.

There was recognition that more multi and interdisciplinary voices need to be brought to Collaborative tables, which requires coordinating support. Engagement with diverse voices must be thoughtful and meaningful. Understanding how to effectively engage with multiple disciplines, and developing the skills and mechanisms to do so, remains an ongoing priority. Collaborative leads and members require time and resources to build and sustain meaningful relationships across diverse communities.

Continuing to diversify multidisciplinary collaboration was also discussed as essential to strengthening Collaboratives and A2J initiatives. Participants from British Columbia highlighted its community action model, which brings together professionals from health, law, finance, and mental health, while participants from Alberta highlighted the cross-sector and system transformation approach to the Re-imagining the Family Justice System initiative. Cross-disciplinary participation was viewed as crucial. Other regions are collaborating with health professionals and community justice workers, demonstrating progress in expanding engagement beyond traditional legal sectors. Innovation through technology was also referenced, including the use of artificial intelligence to improve A2J initiatives. The multi and interdisciplinary approaches highlighted show that progress is possible when interdisciplinarity, innovation, and collaboration are combined.

Focus on engaging diverse voices to advance Collaboratives and initiatives

Conversations about engagement also emphasized equity, inclusion, diversity, and belonging in Collaboratives and A2J initiatives. There is a need to diversify participation in Collaboratives and ensure broader representation across implementation of A2J initiatives. A consistent theme was the importance of including more voices in A2J conversations, including Indigenous communities, individuals in remote regions, and those facing systemic barriers.

Focus on geographic considerations to advance Collaboratives and initiatives

Geographic considerations was a significant concern raised by several Collaboratives during the roundtable. Work is currently being conducted, for example, in Nunavut, including the development of handbooks to support individuals interacting with the justice system. Ontario also highlighted the efforts of Collaborative members to better understand how to provide A2J initiatives in rural and remote communities.

Despite these efforts, gaps remain. Some regions are actively addressing rural and remote access challenges, while others are still identifying shortcomings. As some participants noted, rural and remote communities face distinct barriers, including physical distance from services, limited or no infrastructure, and language barriers. Participants did not indicate whether Collaborative membership includes designated seats for representatives from different geographic locations. Conversations emphasizing the importance of addressing geographic inequities suggest, however, that

participants are interested in considering how the needs of the public from different geographic locations can be meaningfully taken into account during Collaborative meetings.

Focus on language as a precondition to building trust and safety to advance Collaboratives and initiatives

Relatedly, several participants highlighted that rural and remote locations often are populated by First Nations and Inuit Peoples with distinct languages. The resulting language barriers, combined with a significant lack of infrastructure in some rural and remote regions identified above, has eroded the ability of some communities and individuals to understand and interact meaningfully with the justice system. Expanding participation therefore requires mechanisms that enable these communities to engage in, develop, and shape initiatives in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

Despite thoughtful planning and testing, we encountered challenges with our own translation services during the meeting, underscoring the importance of having systems in place to ensure language accessibility at (and beyond) Collaborative tables. Collaboratives can function effectively only where participants feel safe, and meeting participants' language needs is an important factor.



Focus on funding, measuring, and sustaining Collaboratives to advance initiatives

Access to sustainable funding for Collaboratives emerged as one of the most common and consistent challenges raised during the roundtable. While some Collaboratives have secured project-based or short-term funding, many participants emphasized ongoing uncertainty about how to obtain, structure, and sustain long-term financial support. Some regions, such as New Brunswick, have secured funding to expand A2J summits and launch service mapping research. Support for the Collaborative lead in Manitoba, building off Saskatchewan's evolving Collaborative model, was recently renewed for five years. However, many participants expressed curiosity about how other Collaboratives secure funding, how that funding is structured, and especially how it is sustained over time.

A shared concern was the need for stabilization and continuity. Collaboratives expressed a desire for stable teams and dedicated staffing rather than temporary, project-based roles that dissolve when funding ends. Participants noted sustained coordination in order to advance initiatives requires infrastructure, not just enthusiasm or volunteer commitment.

Reporting requirements tied to funding were also widely discussed. Funders often expect quantitative, measurable outcomes, and clear returns on investment. However, many Collaboratives are not direct service providers and may lack built-in evaluation capacity. There is a recognized need to work with funders to strengthen data collection and impact measurement frameworks for Collaboratives and associated initiatives without overburdening Collaborative leads and frontline partners.

Concern was also expressed about sustainability of Collaboratives over time, due to government influence and political shifts affecting funding stability. Government influence and shifting political priorities can help or hinder, further contributing to instability. Changes in leadership, policy direction, or funding mandates can disrupt momentum and long-term planning. Across jurisdictions, there was clear interest in learning how other Collaboratives secure durable funding models and maintain progress despite these pressures. A common wish is to have stable Collaborative teams with continuity, rather than initiatives that dissolve when funding ends.

Focus on outcomes and respond to calls for a paradigm and culture shift to guide approaches to reform

Participants highlighted an interest in better understanding the mechanisms through which Collaboratives advance impact. Collaboratives across Canada have a range of objectives – some have a connectivity and information exchange purpose, while others, such as British Columbia, highlighted moving to a "collective impact" approach. Alberta representatives from the *Re-imagining the Family Justice System* initiative (*RFJS*) highlighted their specific focus on improving outcomes for families and utilizing strategies to advance a paradigm[8] and culture shift[9]. They responded to Action Committee report calls to action by adopting systems thinking and the evidence of brain science and resilience to work toward the goal of "helping families thrive". The Alberta representatives welcomed and encouraged other jurisdictions to reach out to them and the Centre for Transformation that has now been funded and established at the University of Calgary to support this work. A common wish is to have stable funding – such as that supporting the *RFJS* initiative in Alberta – to support Collaboratives advancing similar work in other jurisdictions.

The "Two Stars and a Wish" exercise allowed participants to fully introduce themselves. Participants reported this method was an effective way to facilitate meaningful relationship building and information exchange. Additionally, having a flexible schedule and allowing everyone the time they needed to introduce themselves created a relaxed and supportive environment that set the foundation for meaningful exchange for the remainder of the meeting.

8 Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, *Meaningful Change for Family Justice: Beyond Wise Words* (Ottawa: Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, 2013) at 3. Alberta representatives indicated the RFJS is guided by this report, a publication of the Action Committee's Family Justice Working Group, which identified the need for a paradigm shift at 2-3 where they said: "Despite these changes, reports and inquiries continue to call for further reform, saying that the changes to date, while welcome, are simply not enough". The report continues to advocate at 8 for a more dramatic shift to non-adversarial approaches, calling for "drastic change", a "fundamental overhaul" and a "paradigm shift".

9 *Supra* note 1 at 6. *RFJS* representatives indicated this concern was raised again in the 2013 *Roadmap for Change* where Part 2 focused on "Moving Forward: Six Guiding Principles for Change". The discussion began with a call for a culture shift and observed at 6 that "the previous approach to access to justice problems and solutions, far from succeeding, has produced our present, unsustainable situation." The six guiding principles were adopted to help support the new culture, and include "#6: Focus on Outcomes".

PART 2

UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES IN CANADA



Part 2 Facilitator:

Brea Lowenberger, Action Committee Strategic Advisor.

Panelists:

Tina Parbhakar
Kevin Gravier
Leah Howie

Part 2 Objective:

Information exchange about the history of Collaboratives, what purpose they serve, and the different types of Collaboratives. Panelists walked through their experience of starting, maintaining and evolving their collaboratives.

This section outlines key themes that arose from participant presentations on the structure of Collaboratives in Canada. Consideration of the following topics were highlighted in the discussion:

- **Supporting Collaborative leads and other backbone support** for Collaboratives
- **Membership** in Collaboratives
- **Governance** of Collaboratives

Consideration of supporting Collaborative leads and other backbone support for Collaboratives

A key structural opportunity identified across the presentations is the importance of increased backbone support and sufficient coordination to ensure the continuity of Collaboratives. Collaboratives require increased backbone support to assist them in remaining progressive and flexible. Dedicated coordination helps preserve institutional memory, maintain momentum, and support long-term governance stability. Clear governance structures that are secured and understood moving forward can strengthen collaborative effectiveness and reduce reliance on individual memory.

Barriers arise when there is limited shared understanding of each agency's governance structure or funding realities. Joint initiatives can be difficult to implement without adequate coordination and capacity from Collaborative leads and other backbone support for Collaboratives. Presenters highlighted best practices they have observed of Collaboratives, such as information sharing and setting realistic expectations, especially in resource-restricted environments. Opportunities to strengthen relationships with external partners can help build capacity of Collaboratives over time.



Consideration of membership in Collaboratives

Structural opportunities for Collaboratives rooted in diverse engagement and lived experience were highlighted. Including individuals with real-life experience strengthens A2J initiatives and ensures that reforms are grounded in practical realities. Sustained collaboration across sectors remains central to advancing A2J goals, particularly when networks move beyond silos and toward collective impact.

At the same time, structural barriers related to the political dynamics within Collaborative spaces was highlighted. Participation can involve power imbalances, particularly when members are also funders, decision-makers, or hold positions of authority. These hierarchical dynamics may affect engagement and influence the flow of operations. The political realities of collaboration, including competition for funding among agencies, funding relationships, and decision-making control can intensify tensions within the collaborative environment. Naming and acknowledging these dynamics is necessary to manage them effectively.

Consideration of governance of Collaboratives

The importance of respecting the autonomy of each agency within A2J collaborations was emphasized. Each organization operates with its own governance systems, funding models, and priorities. Recognizing and understanding these differences is essential to effective cooperation and collaboration. This autonomy presents both an opportunity and a structural constraint, particularly when joint projects require alignment across agencies with varying capacities and mandates, as discussed next.

However, governance remains a structural barrier. The discussion identified ongoing challenges in maintaining structure, continuity, and clarity within Collaborative frameworks. The success of Collaboratives often depends on individuals, which creates vulnerability when roles shift. The tension between collaboration and competition was also highlighted. Greater transparency within structural frameworks can help manage these stresses and guide Collaboratives through competing interests while preserving shared objectives.

The presentations provided a strong foundation for the meeting day's discussion. The presentations encouraged and inspired participants to think about how different Collaboratives are modelled and operate. Not only was this a valuable opportunity to encourage participants to learn about other Collaboratives, as expressed by a participant, it was also "*an excellent way*" to inform the workshop that occurred in the afternoon.

PART 3

BUILDING THE PATH TO BETTER COLLABORATIVE FUNDING



Part 3 Facilitator:

Brea Lowenberger, Action Committee Strategic Advisor.

Part 3 Objective:

Information sharing on funding strategies and identifying shared interests to advance funding for Collaboratives. Participants were invited to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the current state of funding and resourcing for your Collaborative?
2. What is the desired future state for funding and resourcing?
3. What steps (small or large) will help move toward that future state?

> "A2J Collaboratives need to be honest and must deliver value and results for the public. This involves ensuring the Collaboratives are properly resourced as an essential element of a rule of law."

Building on introductory remarks from Collaborative leads and members, participants described a varied and uneven funding landscape across Collaboratives.[10] While some jurisdictions benefit from ongoing Law Foundation funding for their institutional backbone structure, many rely heavily on volunteer labor, in-kind contributions, and short-term project grants. Core operational funding, particularly for coordination and backbone support, remains difficult to secure. Across regions, there was broad recognition that Collaborative infrastructure requires sustained investment, not just episodic project funding. Participants' responses to the question prompts are summarized in relation to the following:

- Funding **barriers** for Collaboratives
- Funding **opportunities** for Collaboratives
- Ideas for **next steps to advance funding** for Collaboratives

Funding barriers for Collaboratives

Structural barriers within existing funding frameworks were highlighted. Many grant programs are designed for registered charities or incorporated non-profits, while Collaboratives often operate as informal networks without independent legal status. In some jurisdictions, Collaboratives partner with established organizations to access funding, but this approach can introduce complexity. Participants noted how traditional outcome-based grant models often prioritize direct service delivery, making it challenging to articulate the value of backbone coordination and collective impact work.

Funding opportunities for Collaboratives

Despite these constraints, participants identified opportunities for progress. Law Foundations remain important partners, though there is varied understanding of Collaborative models. Participants discussed the importance of increasing awareness about the role and value of Collaboratives, including through public initiatives such as Access to Justice Week. There was also interest in developing shared materials to explain the backbone function and exploring joint or national funding proposals to strengthen collective positioning.

Next steps for funding Collaboratives

Looking forward, the discussion emphasized the need for strategic alignment between funding requests and A2J outcomes. While an awareness of both the limitations and advantages remains about Collaboratives formalizing their structures or maintaining flexible network models, there was agreement that Collaborative funding proposals need to balance a focus on measurable justice impacts and sustaining and evolving the Collaborative structure itself. Participants identified the leadership role of the Action Committee and Collaborative members in advancing promising steps toward a more stable and sustainable future, including: highlighting to funding agencies the purpose and impact of Collaboratives; strengthening partnerships with academic institutions; and exploring innovation-based funding mechanisms.

10 Given time constraints and the importance expressed by Collaboratives on this topic, this discussion was tabled and held during the next online meeting of the Collaborative Working Group on February 11, 2026.

PART 4

ADVANCING A COLLABORATIVE TOOLKIT



Part 4 Large Group Facilitators:

Peter Kingsley, KC
Véronique Morissette
Brea Lowenberger

Part 4 Objective:

Imagining and prototyping Action Committee resources to help members advance their Collaboratives.

Part 4 Small Group Facilitators:

Kevin O'Shea
Natasha Brown
Diana Lowe

> "The ideas which came out of the prototyping session were great! Having a home for resources, knowledge, and information facilitates the ability to learn amongst the Collaborative. It also will guide opportunities for cross-province/territory collaboration."

A short presentation to orient the afternoon workshop was delivered by Brea Lowenberger on the Collaborative Working Group collective impact work plan and a summary of feedback on areas of focus for Collaboratives from multiple data points – i.e. via past Collaboratives surveys, meetings, consultations, etc. During the afternoon session, groups were asked to create and pitch a prototype for the Collaboratives Working Group to advance, summarized below. Participants broke into small groups (loosely assigned groups based on stage of development of jurisdiction's Collaborative). Each group moved through the processes of idea generation, concept development, and developing a prototype. This was done by identifying a specific challenge and the need which needed to be addressed. Then the groups brainstormed possible resource ideas which would meet the unmet needs. These resources became the "pitches" that were brought back to the large group. After sharing the pitches with the larger group, participants were asked to reflect upon the pitches.

The three ideas that were pitched were:

- **Pitch #1…** "*To create a curated database to preserve institutional memory and encourage collective learning about Collaboratives*"
- **Pitch #2…** "*To create a website for Collaborative governance materials*"
- **Pitch #3…** "*To create an education platform focusing on A2J definitions/models, funding, and other resources for Collaboratives*"

Each of the three pilot proposals share the same basis and common theme; a platform for Collaboratives across Canada is required to promote and advance education, collaboration, and institutional memory. As one participant summarized, "*Combine all three projects because they share many of the same elements*", and another, "*The goal of each pitch is to increase knowledge sharing [about Collaboratives], this should remain the focus of [the platform and related] projects*."

The three key themes that arose in participant discussion that the platform should embody are summarized as follows. The platform should work to promote:

- Education
- Collaboration
- Institutional and collective memory

> "The group activity was a useful way to find outcomes for the session. It provided a good sense of how to move forward and answer the 'now what' question. It was also a good opportunity to allow Collaboratives to think about moving forward."

> "A2J needs to be human-centred. It needs to be disruptive of the traditional ways and approaches to conflict resolution. There needs to be a 'best practice inventory' and a variety of training tools which focus on the transformational aspects of A2J programming."

Platform to promote education

Each proposal suggested a platform to allow each Collaborative to contribute information and documents. Allowing each Collaborative to contribute information and documents will provide **education** for the other Collaborative members and for the public. Each Collaborative will be able to use the information and documents on the proposed platform to guide their work. The idea is to allow the Collaboratives to rely on the progress other Collaboratives have made so each individual Collaborative doesn't have to "*reinvent the wheel*" when they start to pursue an idea or task.

The proposed platform will also act as a source of information for the public. Contributing information and documents to the proposed platforms will allow the public to learn more about who each Collaborative is, how they define "access to justice", and what projects and resources they are working on.

Platform to promote collaboration

The second common theme amongst each of the proposed platforms is **collaboration**. Each of the proposed platforms are intended to be used by, and to provide useful information, for all the Collaboratives. Each of the Collaboratives will be able to access and contribute to the platform. Additionally, the platform is intended to facilitate connections between and among the Collaboratives. Having a convenient and easily accessible platform for the Collaboratives to connect and learn will allow the Collaboratives to connect with each other, without putting a burden on a single, or multiple, Collaborative members to independently contact the various Collaboratives.

Platform to increase institutional and collective memory

Underlying each of those two common themes is the idea of increasing **institutional and collective memory** about Collaboratives and their related A2J initiatives. Having a centralized platform which stores information and documents for the Collaboratives provides a home for information about how the province or territory's Collaborative has functioned in the past, is currently functioning, and the projects which have been and are being completed by the Collaborative. Having a centralized platform also takes the burden of knowing and sharing this information off an individual member of the Collaborative, which is a current challenge for many of the Collaboratives.

> "Having meetings like these are great places to develop and encourage small, feasible actions that can be implemented."

Next steps to advance the platform

The workshop closed with an invitation for large group discussion and written feedback on prioritizing ideas for Collaborative tools/resources, including inviting participants to reflect on next steps to advance the platform. Sample participant responses to the pitches to create a platform about and for Collaboratives include:

- *"These projects should be started as soon as money/funding is available."*
- *"The timeline for these projects should be approximately 1 year."*
- *"Start the projects small, then grow and expand them as they develop – start with the education platform, then develop a database and governance website."*

Participants proposed the following next steps in relation to advancing the platform and associated "tools":

- **Explore funding support for the platform:** "*Support an examination of available funding to develop online resources to support Collaboratives.*"
- **Research and implement the platform**: "*Learn more about and create the new database/website for information sharing between the PT collaboratives.*"
- **Create opportunities for input on the platform:** "*To keep apprised of the work and next steps*" and to "*[p]rovide official and 'unofficial' input where it is needed*".

Participants also expressed a range of ways they would like to be involved in next steps to advance the platform and tools, such as:

- Identifying "*funding*".
- "*Whatever way is needed".*
- *"Contribut[ing] to [this] 'next generation' A2J model".*
- *"Being involved in hallway chats and group/committee, if created."*
- *"Providing input, suggestions, reviewing ideas or products, making suggestions."*

While each of the three small groups worked independently, there were striking similarities among each of the three pitches to create a platform. The similarity in identifying this unmet need highlights a gap that needs to be addressed. While this gap exists, there are also Collaborative Working Group members who are interested in assisting to advance a platform and related tools, as identified during conversations and feedback from the afternoon workshop.

General next steps for advancing the national working group of Collaboratives

At the conclusion of the day, participants were asked to complete a feedback form that also included an opportunity to propose any general next steps. The feedback provided by participants produced much value and should be considered moving forward. Some of the feedback received is summarized as follows:

- **Continue to anchor discussions about Collaboratives and related A2J initiatives in data and research:** "*Generate more data collection across the various jurisdictions to establish methods to compare data and how to access issues with data.*" Relatedly, a participant noted their interest in ensuring learning from participants, participatory debate, and design and customization is not by-passed through the typical "*copy and pasting*" methods which are sometimes employed.
- **Continue to offer relationship-building opportunities at future Collaborative meetings:** "*Time for more casual conversation and relationship building amongst participants.*"
- **Feature additional presentations about Collaborative structures at future meetings**: For example, one participant noted, "*The presentations were valuable [and] more opportunities for presentations would be welcome*". Some specific topic areas participants hope to discuss include the *scope* of Collaboratives, one noting their wish of "*Further defining what 'access to justice' means and how it can be limited for the Collaboratives' purposes.*"
- **Continue to consider the importance of accessibility of the meetings**: "*To have a multilingual meeting which is tech-proof and cost accessible for everyone involved.*"
- **Continue to build meaningful collaboration between Collaboratives and other national justice organizations:** Numerous participants noted an interest in further pursuing collaboration with other national justice organizations, such as the Federation of Law Reform Agencies of Canada and the Public Legal Education Association of Canada, noting a hope for "*[d]iscussion focusing on how the Collaboratives can enhance their collaboration with organizations such as PLEAC and FOLRAC*" and "*[e]ngaging in discussions with FOLRAC and PLEAC to enhance collaboration and funding opportunities*". Another participant suggested their interest in "*[b]eing part of discussions about collaboration with other national agencies and between PT groups*".
- **The meeting motivated renewed commitment to collaborative leadership and A2J**: Many of the participants indicated their interest in offering leadership and commitment to furthering A2J. Participant's feedback included reflections to "*offer more of my time, experiences, resources, and knowledge to [the Collaboratives working group], including strategic planning processes*" and another "*To use the starting point this meeting provided to support the judiciary in ways which will move A2J forward without threatening judicial independence.*" Another participant highlighted that they were inspired to "*[c]ontinue to advance A2J itself, especially focused on children [and their legal literacy]*".

After the feedback forms were collected, the day concluded with final thoughts and reflections from Justice Karakatsanis and Peter Kingsley, KC. These thoughts focused on the impact that the Collaboratives, and their members, are having on the field of A2J across Canada.



CONCLUSION

As identified by Justice Karakatsanis in her opening remarks, the Action Committee and Collaboratives have a symbiotic relationship. Some supports for Collaboratives led by the Action Committee are already occurring, but there are some future supportive roles the Action Committee could play that have yet to be realized. Currently, the Action Committee is a national organization which, among other roles, acts as a coordinator bringing the Collaboratives together for relationship building and information exchange. Having national meetings and bringing the Collaboratives together plays a supportive role because it creates and encourages connections and collaborations among the Collaboratives. Other roles the Action Committee could play in supporting the Collaboratives include being the facilitating body that works to implement, or assist with implementing, the platform and related pilot projects proposed at the January 30, 2026 meeting.

Participants indicated the January 30, 2026 meeting provided essential value. As highlighted throughout this report, key impacts that were learned, or gained, during the meeting include the following:

- **Connections with other Collaboratives and Collaborative members**, one participant noting "*[b]eing able to bring a pan-Canadian group together is a shooting star*".
- **Learning about structuring Collaboratives**, including how the Collaboratives are formed, organized, and funded, etc. These discussions led to idea generation and information the participating Collaboratives could bring back to their home Collaboratives.
- **Reflections on the "next generation" of Collaboratives in Canada**, including upon how their home Collaboratives are operating and reflections on what other Collaboratives are doing and what their home Collaboratives could do differently.

Much has occurred since the call for the development of "Access to Justice Implementation Commissions" in 2013. Having representatives from across provinces and territories attend the meeting and meaningfully participate signals the continued need and interest for Collaboratives to continue to develop and advance across Canada. This report is intended to help inform next steps, provincially and nationally, to help further support the evolution of Collaboratives across Canada.

APPENDIX:

List of Provincial and Territorial Access to Justice Collaborative Participants

- Alberta – Diana Lowe, KC, Barb Turner, Patricia Hebert, KC (virtual)
- British Columbia – Paige Thombs (virtual), Tina Parbhakar
- Manitoba – Peter Kingsley, KC, Natasha Brown
- New Brunswick – Christian Whalen
- Newfoundland and Labrador – Robyn Coish, Kevin O'Shea
- Northwest Territories - Keelen Simpson
- Nova Scotia – Charlene Moore, KC
- Nunavut – Jasmine Redfern, Romy Leclerc (virtual)
- Ontario – Patti Latimer, Aneurin Thomas, Courtney Carrier, Jess Reekie
- Prince Edward Island – Lindsay McLellan (virtual)
- Quebec – Kevin Gravier
- Saskatchewan – Leah Howie, Brea Lowenberger
- Action Committee on Access to Justice Representatives – The Honourable Andromache Karakatsanis, Catherine McKinnon, Christine Odoherty, Mark Benton, KC, Yasmin Khaliq, Véronique Morissette, Brea Lowenberger


THANK YOU!
Action Committee on
Access to Justice