

2026

ADVANCING AN
ACCESS TO JUSTICE
COLLABORATIVE
TOOLBOX:
**DEVELOPING
ORIENTATION
MATERIALS & A
GUIDEBOOK FOR
COLLABORATIVE
LEADERSHIP**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the 14th Annual Dean's Forum, we user-tested orientation materials given to new Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network members and presented the idea of a Guidebook for Collaborative Leadership to act as a guide for advancing and understanding cultural shifts in the justice system.

Access to justice is a multifaceted issue encompassing the legal sphere, which touches many Canadians. By analyzing the resources used to orient members as they join the network, our hope is to advance tools which help members connect, align, and act on access to justice improvements. The orientation and guidebook tools coalesce to reinforce each facet. Connectivity enables members to share information, alignment develops relations to support collective action, and productivity drives purposeful outcomes and innovations. The orientation materials serve as a mechanism to foster connectivity, and the guidebook's intention is to bridge the gap of *how* to meet connectivity with alignment and the productivity of the network.

Our research utilized an action research methodology, supported by a preliminary literature review and a series of consultations. These consultations were focused on user-testing the orientation materials and soft launching the concept of a guidebook. Input was gathered from consultees within the network and other jurisdictions, and from systems thinking experts from other disciplines in order to enrich our perspective on how to ameliorate these documents. Insights from our consultations identified specific changes to improve the usability of the orientation materials and we compiled a range of feedback on the guidebook.

The orientation materials have been updated in response to consultation feedback on ways to strengthen the connectivity purpose of the network as new members are onboarded. The aim is that both the orientation materials and guidebook form part of a Provincial-Territorial Access to Justice Collaborative resource toolbox – and that in sharing our Saskatchewan experience, other jurisdictions may do the same, for reciprocal learning and strengthening of access to justice collaboratives across Canada.

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KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

The National Action Committee on Access to Justice (the AC) – Works toward improved access to justice for people in Canada. It was established in 2007 by the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada from 2000 to 2017. The AC is now chaired by Justice Andromache Karakatsanis and as of July 2025, has an Executive Director (Veronique Morissette) and Strategic Advisor (Brea Lowenberger).

Provincial/Territorial Access to Justice Collaborative Working Group – The Provincial/Territorial Collaborative Working Group advances Pillar 2 (Engagement) of the AC Strategic Plan and serves as a national meeting space for provincial and territorial access to justice collaboratives. Established in response to a key recommendation of the 2013 *Roadmap for Change*, the group fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing across jurisdictions. It supports the work of existing collaboratives and assists in the development of new ones in regions where they have yet to be established, thereby strengthening engagement, alignment, and innovation across Canada’s access to justice ecosystem.¹

Provincial/Territorial Access to Justice Collaboratives (PT A2J Collaboratives or PT A2J Collaborative members) – Refers to each province's officially designated access to justice collaborative (i.e., in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network).

Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network (SK A2J Network) – Saskatchewan’s Provincial-Territorial Access to Justice Collaborative, a connectivity network that seeks to:

1. Foster a “public first” approach to all justice processes and services;
2. Promote widespread understanding of the problem of inadequate access to appropriate legal services and mechanisms to resolve disputes;
3. Generate energy and enthusiasm for access to justice within and outside of the Network;

¹ Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network, “Orientation Manual: Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters Origins and Value of Provincial/Territorial Collaboratives” (2025) at pp 4-5 (Orientation Manual - Action Committee).

4. Foster information exchange, communication, engagement, and momentum-building within and among member organizations and a diverse group of stakeholders and interest groups; and
5. Engage in appropriate collaboration and coordination between and among members with respect to access to justice initiatives.

Guidebook – An interactive resource that will be given to new SK A2J Network members to help provide context for what it means to be a member of a collaborative. It invites the new member to reflect on how they can contribute to change within the collaborative both individually and as a collective. The guidebook may additionally act as a “manual” for members of the network to navigate cultural shifts that the justice system has and is experiencing.

Orientation Materials/Package – A series of documents that are currently being distributed as new members are onboarded into the SK A2J Network.

Systems Change – A system can refer to a configuration of frameworks, practices, resources, decision-making structures, individuals, organizations, and governance actors, which interact with one another.² Examples include workforces, health systems, and the education system.³ Systems change involves reshaping a system’s relationships, practices, and rules to achieve better outcomes.⁴

Systems Thinking – “Systems thinking is an understanding of how the different components and stakeholders of a system interact and impact each other. Systems thinking goes further than mapping key stakeholders and institutions, and includes analyzing formal and informal interrelationships, and how they influence the functioning of a system.”⁵

Network – Collaborative structures formed intentionally to found and create change. Networks may build connectivity, align around shared goals, and/or coordinate collective action. As a network matures, it may evolve from fostering relationships, to coordinating

² M. Cabaj, “Transformation and Systems Change; A Primer” (21 January 2026) <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Transformation%20%26%20Systems%20Change%20Primer.pdf?hsLang=en-us> at p 6 [Cabaj].

³ Cabaj at p 6.

⁴ Cabaj at p 6.

⁵ S. Ndaruhutse, C. Jones, & A. Riggall, “Why Systems Thinking is Important for the Education Sector.” *Education Development Trust* <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED603263.pdf> at p 15.

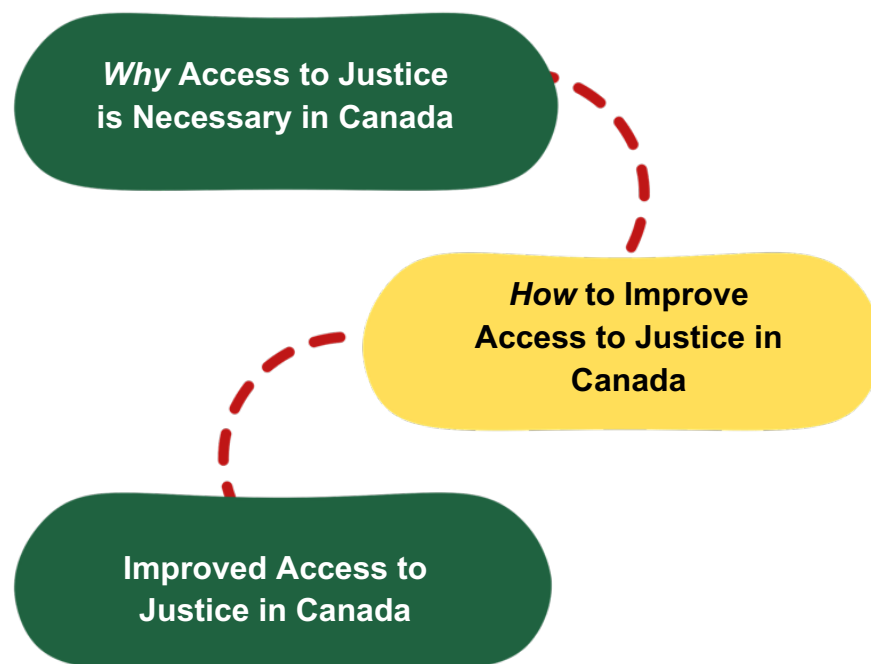
efforts, to producing action. As a network grows, more interconnectedness may allow for a greater integrated flow of information and resources among members.⁶

⁶ Orientation Manual – Background on Value of Network.

I. INTRODUCTION

In celebration of the 10-year anniversary in 2026 of both the SK A2J Network and CREATE Justice – and a new partnership with the National Action Committee on Access to Justice (AC) – the Dean’s Forum this year is focusing on “capacity building” for justice sector collaboration with both a local and national lens.

There are PT A2J Collaborative members across Canada (such as members of the SK A2J Network) who work tirelessly to improve access to justice across Canada. There are frontline services, research, and innovative developments in the access to justice sphere, however, what lacks is a set of “blueprints” on advancing *collective* access to justice efforts through collaborative alliances such as PT A2J Collaboratives. To help address this gap, our project has focused on researching, editing, and user-testing with local and national stakeholders two resources for a PT A2J Collaborative resource toolbox. The two resources include: (1) an orientation package for a PT A2J Collaborative; and (2) a chapter for a Guidebook for Collaborative Leadership. The toolbox, once completed, is intended to have both local and national relevance to: (1) broadly, help advance collective access to justice action; and (2) specifically, support PT A2J Collaborative members establish, sustain, strengthen, and evaluate their collaborative’s effectiveness as a vehicle to advance access to justice in Canada.



A. Background on PT A2J Collaboratives

Summary of the National PT A2J Collaborative Landscape

The 2013 report, *A Roadmap for Change*, headed by former Supreme Court of Canada Justice, the Honourable Thomas Albert Cromwell, examined how accessible justice can be achieved to assist people in Canada dealing with their legal needs.⁷ To further this objective, the report called for the implementation of coordinated local access to justice “implementations commissions” or “collaboratives” and staff coordinators, a recommendation that was further reinforced by the Canadian Bar Association report: *Reaching Equal Justice*.⁸ This sparked the response of many provinces and territories to develop a collaborative, collectively known as the PT A2J Collaboratives. With no one department or agency obtaining responsibility for the delivery of justice in Canada, it became clear that for positive change in access to justice in Canada to occur, there needed to be coordinated collaboratives amongst the provinces and territories promoting, designing, and implementing change on an ongoing basis.⁹

“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... After all, it will be these local organizations, along with others, who will have the important ideas for moving forward together.”

- The AC, “Access to Civil & Family Justice: A Roadmap for Change”

The PT A2J Collaboratives in Canada currently include:

- Access to Justice BC
- Alberta’s Transforming the Family Justice System
- Alberta’s Bridging the Gaps
- Saskatchewan’s A2J Network and CREATE Justice

⁷ Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, “Access to Civil & Family Justice: A Roadmap for Change” (October 2013) at p 1 (A Roadmap for Change).

⁸ The Canadian Bar Association, “Reaching equal justice report: An invitation to envision and act” (November 2013) (Reaching Equal Justice Report).

⁹ A Roadmap for Change at p 20.

- Manitoba's A2J Advisory Network
- Ontario's The Action Group
- The Quebec Forum
- Nova Scotia's Access to Justice and Law Reform Institute
- Northwest Territories' Access to Justice Committee

There are some similarities shared among the collaboratives in regards to their structure, organization, priorities, and goals.¹⁰ Key differences amongst collaboratives include the degree to which they receive backbone funding support, the stage of development the collaborative is in, their governance structure, the size of their core membership, the structure and make-up of their core membership, and the levels of public involvements amongst the work the collaboratives undertake.¹¹ While the groups vary in many ways, collectively the PT A2J Collaboratives are working towards the same objective: to convene stakeholders to improve access to justice across Canada (see Appendix A for an in-depth overview of PT A2J Collaboratives, last updated 2024).

Summary of Local PT A2J Collaborative Landscape

Saskatchewan's PT A2J Collaborative, the SK A2J Network, for example, has worked since 2016 to foster a strong access to justice community which includes members from various organizations within the civil and family justice sector in Saskatchewan.

The focus on advancing collaborative and collective efforts to address access to justice builds off previous Dean's Forum work on introducing a culture shift in the legal profession and testing different strategies to improve access to justice in Saskatchewan.¹²

In addressing "how" the network operates, members identified in 2018 that network principles of *connectivity*, *alignment*, and *productivity* would guide its operations.¹³ In 2018 and again in 2022, network members chose to be a *connectivity* network, supported by two co-coordinators.¹⁴ During the network's last strategic planning session in 2022, the following goals were set around connection, alignment, and action to improve A2J:

¹⁰ Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, "Action Committee Meeting of Provincial and Territorial Access to Justice Groups" (March 2015) at p 3 (Action Committee Meeting).

¹¹ Action Committee Meeting at p 4.

¹² See e.g. ["A Tale of Two Labs: Implementing Innovation in Saskatchewan"](#) (2021).

¹³ B. Lowenberger, A. McIntyre & E. Selensky, "Reducing the 'Justice Gap' through collaboration models for systemic change – using networks to improve access to justice" (2023) 101:2 Canadian Bar Review 389 (Lowenberger; McIntyre & Selensky).

¹⁴ Orientation Manual – Action Committee at pp 4-5.

- “Improve the network condition by building the degree of collaboration, connectivity, and participation among members;”
- “Improve alignment and productivity to maximize opportunities to improve access to justice;”¹⁵ [emphasis added].

Network activities have been correspondingly designed by the network co-coordinators to improve alignment and productivity to advance A2J improvements.¹⁶ A key nuance identified by members has been that meetings are designed to “connect” and “align” members, and “actions” are to occur “outside of” the network. The network is at a stage of evolution, specifically in determining what backbone support and governance will be needed to advance members’ priorities.

B. The current challenge and opportunity for advancing collective access to justice action

Collaborative and *collective* improvements in access to justice in Canada are being driven in large part by members of PT A2J Collaboratives.¹⁷ Some PT A2J Collaboratives focus on pursuing incremental access to justice changes, while others focus on pursuing more systemic, or transformational approaches to change – and some pursue a mix.¹⁸ Many of these stakeholders have expressed challenges related to “access fatigue” which can occur as a result of working on ongoing access to justice issues for years while seeing only minor changes and improvements in the access to justice sphere.¹⁹ Access fatigue can commonly occur, for example, by reading reports on access to justice issues without seeing action arise.²⁰

Systemic change can be hard, and the justice sector is not alone in the issue of advancing meaningful change. The healthcare sector, for example, struggles to implement structural change despite constant requests for reform.²¹ Equally, the

¹⁵ Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network, “Network Orientation Manual – SK A2J Network Strategic Plan (2022-2025)” at pp 9-12 (Orientation Manual – Strategic Plan).

¹⁶ Orientation Manual – Strategic Plan at pp 10-12.

¹⁷ Orientation Manual – Action Committee at pp 4-5.

¹⁸ See e.g. Access to Justice BC <https://accesstojusticebc.ca/user-centred/>.

¹⁹ Action Committee Meeting at p 5.

²⁰ Action Committee Meeting at p 5.

²¹ Y. Tian, et al., “The impact of alternate level of care on access block and operational strategies to reduce emergency wait times: a multi-centre simulation study” (2023) 25(7):608-616 doi: 10.1007/s43678-023-00514-1 (Tian); Consultation with Adrienne Danyliw.

education system faces challenges such as improving equity and equality amongst a diverse network of students.²²

Past and current research further indicates that while collaborative members have a strong understanding of why access to justice is necessary and important in Canada, what is needed is further attention to and development on **how** to accelerate **collective action** on access to justice improvements.²³ This point about maximizing access to justice impact through collaboration was made recently in an exploratory “Survey on Collaboratives Networks to Improve Access to Justice” (2026) conducted by CREATE Justice:

A2J Collaboratives should coordinate the necessary reflection on the possibility of bringing together and pooling the efforts of organizations interested in access to justice, and of promoting a coordinated, partnership-based approach through which the relevant stakeholders would work together to design shared, harmonized tools rather than multiplying parallel initiatives.²⁴

The *Roadmap for Change* encouraged the creation of provincial “implementation commissions” and coordinators of those groups focused on access to justice to “create and support coordinated local access to justice implementation commissions” (now referred to as PT A2J Collaboratives). Ideally, research on collaboration tools and systems thinking will assist PT A2J Collaborative members across Canada strengthen their capacity for collective action – and in turn, reduce access to justice fatigue by demonstrating meaningful collective impact.

C. Why change is important

There is a serious access to justice issue in Canada.²⁵ The current landscape of the civil and family justice systems in Canada are faulted by a lack of “coherent leadership, institutional structures that can design and implement change, and appropriate

²² A. Zengilowski, et al., “Overemphasizing individual differences and overlooking systemic factors reinforces educational inequality” (2023) 8:13 doi: [10.1038/s41539-023-00164-z](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-023-00164-z); Consultation with Curtis Howie.

²³ M. Stratton, “Creating Collaborative Alliances for Change: A Dynamic Resource for the Justice Community” (2009) <https://cfcj-fcj.org/sites/default/files/docs/2009/stratton-car-en.pdf> (Stratton); Action Committee Meeting; Lowenberger; McIntyre & Selensky; “PROTOTYPING WORKSHOP GUIDE: DESIGNING PT COLLABORATIVE RESOURCES”, Brea Lowenberger, Meeting of the A2J PT Collaboratives, January 30, 2026; See below in report *IC. Why change is important* pp 10-11.

²⁴ “Survey on Collaborative Networks to Improve Access to Justice”, 2026, unpublished, conducted and on file with CREATE Justice.

²⁵ A Roadmap for Change at p 1.

coordination to ensure consistent and cost effective reform.”²⁶ Consequently, the justice system remains inaccessible to many Canadians.

The public’s perceptions and experiences of the justice system have reduced their overall confidence in the system.²⁷ Data collected by the Canadian Bar Association, when consulting with those living in marginalized communities across Canada, found that people consistently described the justice system as:

- Not to be trusted;
- Only for people with money;
- Arbitrary;
- Difficult to navigate; and
- Inaccessible to ordinary people.²⁸

The lack of clear structure and centralized leadership in the justice system prohibits Canadians, many of whom are vulnerable, from accessing necessary justice services. This awakens the very purpose for which PT A2J Collaboratives have been designed. What is necessary now, and is the focus of this paper, is understanding how collaboratives can continue to evolve to work together to improve access to justice in Canada.

Access to Justice Gaps in Canada:

- “Nearly 12 million Canadians will experience at least 1 legal problem in a given 3 year period. Few will have the resources to solve them.
- Members of poor and vulnerable groups are particularly prone to legal problems. They experience more legal problems than higher income earners and more secure groups.
- People’s problems multiply; that is, having one kind of legal problem can often lead to other legal, social and health related problems.
- Finally, legal problems have social and economic costs. Unresolved legal problems adversely affect people’s lives and the public purse.”

- *A Roadmap for Change* at p iii.

²⁶ A Roadmap for Change at p iii.

²⁷ Reaching Equal Justice Report at p 16.

²⁸ Reaching Equal Justice Report at pp 16-18.

D. Why collaboration is important

A Roadmap for Change emphasizes that what is needed to bridge the access to justice gaps is collaborative system-wide change.²⁹ Collaboration is important because it:

- Creates opportunities for useful information to be generated and exchanged;
- Invites stakeholders to build a sense of ownership in the project;
- Allows for the pooling and maximization of resources;
- Invites diverse viewpoints and perspectives; and
- Creates a foundation for future work.³⁰

Collaboration can be difficult to coordinate. Stakeholders can bring forward different experiences, perspectives, and ideas of what collaboration looks like. Therefore, to collaborate effectively, members must have a clear and shared understanding of what working together means philosophically and how it will be achieved in practice.³¹ Mary Stratton, in her report *Creating Collaborative Alliances for Change: A Dynamic Resource for the Justice Community*, sets out key elements for collaborative action:

“Collaborative action requires:

- A basic shared goal – such as access to justice – around which all stakeholders can find common ground from which to work together to achieve agreed beneficial change.
- A commitment to ask and answer the key questions involved in creating and maintaining successful collaborative alliances.
- An understanding that change is difficult; it takes time, and needs planning to implement.
- A willingness to be flexible, reflective, and to take on the challenges of change.
- A negotiated understanding of and respect for the different perspectives, organizational structures, cultures, mandates, resources, abilities and needs of all stakeholders.

²⁹ *A Roadmap for Change* at p 5.

³⁰ Stratton at pp 17-18.

³¹ Stratton at p 7.

- A commitment to address power imbalances and create safe, equitable, and appropriate ways for all stakeholders to participate according to their ability to do so.”³²

Returning to these key elements will assist stakeholders in working collectively towards meaningful change.

E. Value of systems change theories for collaboration

Proven methods for accelerating change among organizations are based in systems change theories. Systems change theories provide a framework that individuals or collaboratives can use on access to justice initiatives to navigate advancing change.³³ The frameworks are not solutions in and of themselves, however, they can work as a tool to assist collaboratives in creating change.³⁴ The following presents a series of systems change frameworks – also included in the guidebook:

Action Research

Action research is research model utilizing collaborative processes of investigation and reflection targeted to solve real-world problems.³⁵ The framework grounding action research is to integrate theory with practice by involving members in problem identification, solution development, and enacting changes.³⁶ This type of research is characterized by a partnership between practitioners and researchers to conceive solutions. It follows a repetitive cycle:

1. **Problem Identification:** Understand the issues.
2. **Plan:** Develop strategies to address the problem collaboratively.
3. **Act:** Implement or pilot solutions.
4. **Observe:** Gather data and assess the results.

³² Stratton at p 15.

³³ B. Lowenberger, J. Jaunzems Fernuk, L Howie., “Chapter 3: Frameworks for Change” in *Collaborative Leadership Guidebook*, (2026) [Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook].

³⁴ *Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change* in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

³⁵ *Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change* in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

³⁶ *Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change* in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

5. **Reflection:** Evaluate the effectiveness, refine approaches, and plan for future steps.³⁷

The advantages of using action research allows for innovation by involving members directly in the process, supports learning through iterative testing and evaluation, produces insights which can guide organization or systemic change, and aligns with systems change frameworks, allowing for effective transformation.³⁸

Stretch Collaboration

Adam Kahane describes “stretch collaboration,” where individuals work productively across organizations despite differing perspectives and interpretations.³⁹ This approach emphasizes stretching beyond comfort zones, allies, and certainty to achieve meaningful outcomes.⁴⁰ To exemplify, Adam Kahane draws on his experience of working in Colombia, where he was involved in an initiative spanning military officers, guerrilla groups, businesspeople, trade unionists, journalists, academics, and young people, among other groups, to work towards an improved future, despite conflict and distrust between groups.⁴¹ As such the work done was not grounded in conventional agreement but rather demonstrated how productive engagement can exist across differences.⁴²

Geels Multi-Level Framework on Sustainable Transitions

The Geels framework provides a structured approach to foster socio-technical transitions through a multi-level framework.⁴³ Achieving meaningful system change involves addressing three interconnected areas, where progress in the first two creates conditions for the third.⁴⁴ The three areas are:

1. **“Landscape** – Elements of the environment which keep the existing system in place, such as tradition, mindsets, and culture.

³⁷ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

³⁸ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

³⁹ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴⁰ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴¹ A. Kahane. “Chapter 4: Unconventional, Stretch Collaboration is Becoming Essential” in *Collaborating with the Enemy*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017 [Chapter 4: Unconventional, Stretch Collaboration is Becoming Essential in Collaborating with the Enemy].

⁴² Chapter 4: Unconventional, Stretch Collaboration is Becoming Essential in Collaborating with the Enemy.

⁴³ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴⁴ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

2. **Niche Innovations** – Elements which can become part of a transformed system, but have not yet been adopted into it.
3. **Regime** – The system as it exists, in the form of semi-coherent rules and processes. Through changes in the landscape and new innovations, there is pressure on the system to change.”⁴⁵

Three Horizons Framework

The Three Horizons Frameworks offers a way to understand how change develops over time, helping groups move from current conditions toward desired futures. It supports sharing diverse perspectives, identifying emerging innovations, and clarifying actions needed to achieve a desirable future.⁴⁶ By examining the present, anticipating change, and exploring future possibilities, the framework encourages planning while recognizing the three horizons coexist and simultaneously influence each other.⁴⁷ It serves as a communication tool to build a shared vision among members. The first horizon represents the existing structures and practices. In the second horizon, there are emerging innovations to foster transformation. The third and final horizon, reflects the change and embodies a long-term vision, aligned with evolving conditions and future needs.⁴⁸

Futures Triangle

The Futures Triangle helps to map the drivers, constraints, and aspirations influencing possible, desirable futures.⁴⁹ It is a framework which helps groups move from abstract ideas to more structured ones by using an activity to prompt thinking.⁵⁰ Participants draw a triangle, with “one side, the push of the present, on the other, the weight of the past, and at the apex, the pull of the future”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴⁶ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴⁷ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

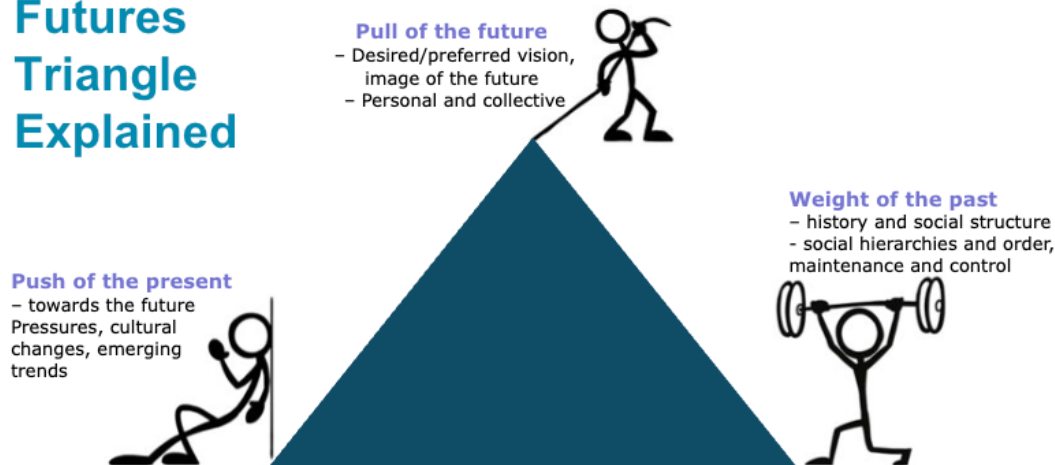
⁴⁸ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁴⁹ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁵⁰ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁵¹ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

Futures Triangle Explained



Adaptive Loop

Originally designed for ecological systems, the Adaptive Loop framework is applicable for understanding change within social systems. It is characterized by four phases:

1. **Growth:** A phase of rapid growth and resource accumulation. It is characterized by resilience and potential for change.
2. **Maturity:** Resources accumulate more slowly and become increasingly interconnected and stable. The system becomes more rigid and less resilient in this phase.
3. **Release:** A phase of rapid change, or collapse, where tightly bound resources are released. A disturbance or crisis can trigger it.
4. **Exploration:** In this phase, the system reorganizes and restructures. There is potential for innovation, and new approaches emerge.”⁵²

To exemplify this framework, it may be useful to think of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused the system to collapse, and in this collapse was the creation of effective vaccines and the use of online health care services, which enabled increased access for vulnerable populations.⁵³

These frameworks are tools that support advancing collaboration and systems-level action on access to justice. For example, the Saskatchewan Health Authority successfully relied on systems change theories to create change to their emergency department wait

⁵² Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

⁵³ Chapter 3 Frameworks for Change in Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

times.⁵⁴ By applying systems change theories, PT A2J Collaboratives can work to close the gap between *why* access to justice is necessary and *how* to improve access to justice at a systems level.

F. Our objective: Advancing a “toolbox” for collective action towards improving access to justice

With a strong desire to work together to reduce the gaps in access to justice across Canada, there are PT A2J Collaborative members from across Canada that have identified a need for resources that invite members to consider what being part of a PT A2J Collaborative means, and that can support creative, collective problem-solving (see Appendix A).

In response, this project seeks to research, edit, prototype, and user-test two resources for a PT A2J Collaborative resource toolbox. The two tools focused on in this project include a PT A2J Collaborative Orientation Welcome Package exemplar, based on updating SK A2J Network materials (the “**orientation package**” or “**orientation materials**”) and a draft chapter of a Collaborative Leadership Guidebook (the “**guidebook**”). The orientation package includes key documents that are currently being distributed as new members are onboarded into the SK A2J Network. The guidebook, still under development, is an interactive resource that will be shared with new SK A2J Network members to provide collaborative leadership tools. The guidebook may additionally act as a manual for PT A2J Collaborative members to navigate the cultural shift that the justice system has and is experiencing.

The resources, once finalized, are intended to become part of a national toolkit for PT A2J Collaborative members. Our hope is that our research translates into functional tools that can assist members in contributing to collaborative goals.

The remainder of this policy paper will provide an overview of the work we have done in pursuit of this objective. First, it will outline how the research was conducted, including an overview of our preliminary literature review and the consultation process.

“Having every province and territory actively engaged in the access to justice conversation is indicative not only of the serious and pressing challenges we face in the field of access to justice, but also of the growing desire within the field to take concrete action to meet those challenges.”

*- Honourable Justice
Thomas A. Cromwell*

⁵⁴ Tian; Consultation with Adrienne Danyliw.

Following, it will consider both resources, the SK A2J Network Orientation Welcome Package and Collaborative Leadership Guidebook, looking at the feedback gathered throughout consultations and the changes we made as a result of this feedback. Next, this paper will invite readers to consider how both resources could be implemented by PT A2J Collaboratives. Lastly, it will look at how success can be measured to understand the efficacy of the resources.

II. RESEARCH OUTLINE

To accomplish the objective of this project, we engaged in two primary phases of research. First, we reviewed and analyzed existing research to gain a deep understanding of the state of collaboration related to advancing access to justice in Canada. The second phase of our research involved consultations with key stakeholders in the SK A2J Network as well as systems thinking experts in Saskatchewan.

A. Resource & literature review

We began our research process examining existing research and developments on systems change and access to justice, including the 2013 report *A Roadmap for Change*. The 2013 report *A Roadmap for Change* provided us context into the issues that have been faced by stakeholders in the access to justice community. From there, we reviewed various theories and developments to set a foundation for developing our consultations (see Appendix B for an overview of our literature review).

Because our research centered around two existing tools, we extensively reviewed both the orientation package and the draft guidebook to gain a thorough understanding of the tools as they existed prior to our project.

B. Consultation process

The consultation phase began with reaching out to 11 stakeholders involved in access to justice and/or systems change in Canada. To gain diverse perspectives and information, we undertook a purposive sampling approach to four different groups of people we wanted to consult with:

- A leader from a different access to justice network
- A new member of the SK A2J Network

- Existing members of the SK A2J Network (ideally one long standing)
- Experts on systems change thinking from other disciplines, including health and education

Our consultations gathered feedback on both items in the PT A2J Collaborative resource toolbox: the orientation materials and the guidebook. For the orientation materials, we provided each consultee with the orientation package prior to meeting with them. Our goal was to user-test the existing orientation materials with stakeholders to gain their insights on the efficacy of these materials. The guidebook is still under development, so our consultations involved engaging stakeholders in the idea of a guidebook for “collaborative leadership” and how this tool may bring value into PT A2J Collaboratives, such as the SK A2J Network.

Interviews were carried out over a two-week period. They were conducted over Zoom and lasted approximately 30 minutes each. The consultation questions varied depending on the person we met with, as each set of questions was tailored to their specific expertise and experiences (see Appendix C for our consultation questions).

III. USER-TESTING OUR RESOURCE: ORIENTATION MATERIALS

We user-tested the SK A2J Network Orientation Welcome Package during the consultation phase of research. To do this, each consultee was provided with a copy of the orientation materials in advance of their scheduled consultation to review. The orientation materials included:

- A welcome email
- Background on PT A2J Collaboratives
- An overview on the SK A2J Network
- The SK A2J Network Strategic Plan for 2022-2025
- The SK A2J Network Mandate for 2022-2025
- A sample of a SK A2J Network newsletter
- Background information on the value of networks

The purpose of sending these materials to stakeholders was to gain their perspectives of what was helpful within the resources, what may be beneficial to add or takeaway, and

whether the overall structure of the materials was supportive to new members joining the collaborative.

A. Feedback from user-testing the orientation materials

The consultations provided a wide array of feedback on the orientation materials. Overall, the sentiment from stakeholders was that the materials as they existed were effective at communicating the network's purpose and what to expect as a new member entering the network. Two categories of feedback arose during the consultations: first, ideas to highlight the connectivity and alignment function of the network, and second, formatting considerations, as further detailed below.

(1) Ideas to highlight the connectivity and alignment function of the network:

- Include a list of the stakeholders within each organization to know who network members are.
- Include a sample agenda from past meetings.
- Include an opening sentence that explains who the SK A2J Network is and what they do.
- Include a list of examples of successes of the SK A2J Network so new members can get a sense of how they can contribute to the network.
- Include a “guiding statement”. This would involve establishing guiding principles generated by the network to align network members.
- Clarify that members do the work, but there are coordinating functions within the network.
- Clarify that all members may not have the capacity or experience to contribute to all projects.

(2) Formatting considerations:

- Update information specific to certain organizations.
- Put materials into one streamlined document.

- Repetition amongst the material can be redundant and information can be more concise to avoid repetition. Nearly all consultees pointed out repetition of mission and vision statements in the SK A2J Network Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 and the SK A2J Network Mandate for 2022-2025.
- Streamline font and format of documents for consistency.

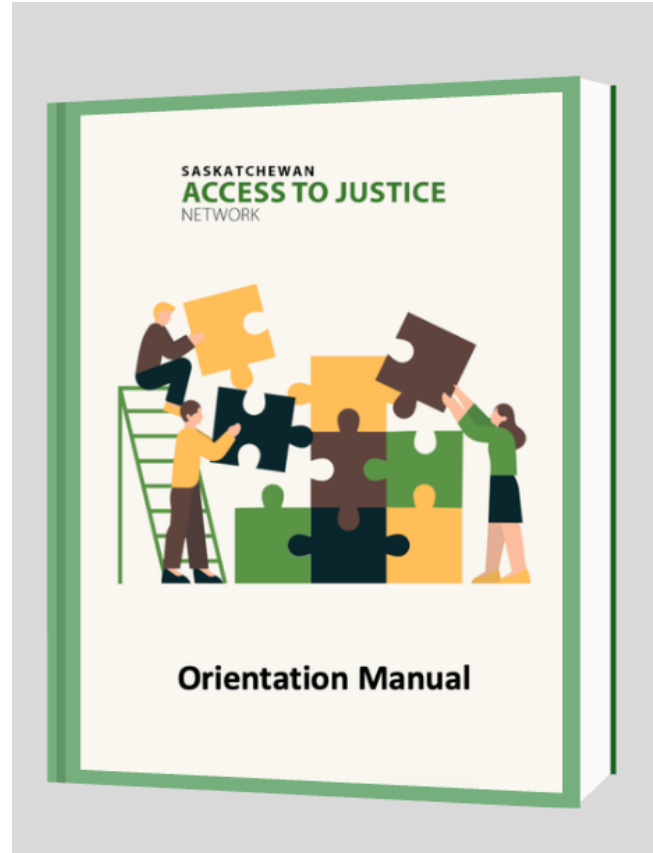
The engagement we observed during our consultations, along with the insightful feedback on the orientation materials, underscored the importance of these materials in strengthening connectivity and alignment within the Network.

B. Revisions to orientation materials after user-testing

Following the consultations, we began updating the orientation materials to reflect the suggestions that arose during the user-testing phase. It was important to us to make changes that stakeholders suggested as they have first-hand experience in the SK A2J Network and understand what is helpful to know as a new member is onboarded. We made changes to the materials to advance both the connectivity and alignment function of the network and to the formatting of the documents.

SK A2J Network Orientation Welcome Package → SK A2J Network Orientation Manual

We began by drafting the existing orientation materials into one document to examine how they flowed together as an “orientation manual” (the “**SK A2J Network Orientation Manual**”). As an orientation manual, members can easily print or reference a PDF version of the document. We included a table of contents to ease accessibility to documents. The beginning stages of the revisions on the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual focused on formatting the document to include visual changes suggested by stakeholders including drafting a cover page and updating fonts and text size to streamline the document.



Changes made highlight the connectivity and alignment function of the network

Following the amalgamation of documents into the SK A2J Orientation Manual, we shifted our efforts to making changes centered around the connectivity and alignment function of the network. These changes included:

- Creating an introduction on outlining what the SK A2J Network is and what they do. The goal of this page is to provide context for new members on the information that is to follow within the manual (page 2):

Welcome to the Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network!

The Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network (**SK A2J Network**) is the province's "collaborative" associated with the National Action Committee on Access to Justice, comprised of stakeholders from across the justice sector who meet regularly to share information and collaborate on improving access to justice in Saskatchewan.

The purpose of this Orientation Manual is to introduce you to the network, inspire action, and hopefully set you up for success as a contributor to the network. As you begin your work and involvement in the collaborative, you may find that returning to this document will allow you to realign with the mission and vision of the group to engage meaningfully as an individual and as part of the collective.

- Including network members' names next to their organization within the network mandate and including the organization's mandate (pages 14-17):

Current members include:

	Organization	Member Name	Organization Mandate
Co-Chairs	Deputy Attorney General	Max Bilson, KC	"The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General provides a fair justice system that upholds the law and protects the rights of all individuals in Saskatchewan; promotes safe and secure communities; and provides legal and justice policy advice to government."
	Dean, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan	Martin Phillipson	"The College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan is the university's law school. Located in Saskatoon in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, the College of Law was established in 1912 and is the oldest law school in Western Canada, a distinction it shares with the University of Alberta."
Co- Coordinators	Saskatchewan Access to Justice Coordinator	Brea Lowenberger	"Coordinate the network and facilitate network meetings and connectivity tools."
	Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network Co-Coordinator	Position vacant	
Member	College of Law, University of Saskatchewan	Heather Heavin	(Above.)
		Michaela Keet	

- Clarifying that all members may not have the capacity or experience to contribute to all projects (page 35):

Everyone comes to the table with different perspectives, experiences, and expertise; however, all voices hold the same weight. It is okay if your capacity or experience in a certain project does not feel aligned. What is important is ensuring that the network works together towards the same objective: to improve access to justice in Saskatchewan.

- Adding a sample network meeting agenda (pages 29-30):

06 Sample SK A2J Network Meeting Agenda

9:00
REFRESHMENTS & MUFFINS

9:30

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

PART 1: SPOTLIGHTING NETWORK ALIGNMENT

Goals (from Strategic Plan): increase collaboration among members of the network to achieve better societal outcomes regarding access to justice (A2J); improve alignment & productivity to maximize opportunities to improve A2J; & improve the network condition by building the degree of collaboration, connectivity, & participation among members

Max & Martin

Ministry of Justice & College of Law

- Planning for Saskatchewan A2J Week

Pam & Brea

Law Society & CREATE Justice

- (a) How your organization plans to **contribute** to the week;
- (b) Whether you'd like to **partner** on an event with another member organization; and
- (c) Whether you have **staff that can assist on communications** related to the week.

10:30
MORNING COFFEE BREAK

- Creating space within the document to include examples of past network successes (page 8). This will be updated following further user-testing on Dean's Forum Day.

Formatting considerations and changes

The next phase of the revisions was focused on implementing formatting changes that were suggested in the consultations. These changes included:

- Introducing a "Next Steps" section at the end of the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual to tie the materials together at the end, creating a seamless document and assisting new members with what they can expect once they have gone through the materials.
- Streamlining the documents into one package, and in doing so, deleting any repetitive parts. This included adding the mission and vision of the SK A2J Network at the beginning of the document under section 02 "What is the SK A2J Network?", rather than repeated back-to-back under 03 "SK A2J Network

Strategic Plan 2022- 2025” and 04 “SK A2J Network Mandate 2022-2025.” Nearly all consultees referenced that repeating the mission and vision felt redundant and that it could be condensed.

02 What is the SK A2J Network?

<i>Our Vision</i>	A people-centered justice system that improves the well-being of its participants. ¹
<i>Our Mission</i>	The Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network seeks to: 1. Foster a “public first” approach to all justice processes and services; 2. Promote widespread understanding of the problem of inadequate access to appropriate legal services and mechanisms to resolve disputes; 3. Generate energy and enthusiasm for access to justice within and outside of the Network; 4. Foster information exchange, communication, engagement, and momentum-building within and among member organizations and a diverse group of stakeholders and interest groups; and 5. Engage in appropriate collaboration and coordination between and among members with respect to access to justice initiatives.

C. Key takeaways for PT A2J Collaboratives from findings from user-testing orientation materials

The feedback we received was incredibly informative on the connectivity purpose the orientation materials are intended for. We synthesized our findings into key takeaways that may be valuable for PT A2J Collaboratives.

The orientation materials reinforce connectivity within the network

Many of the consultees noted the **newsletter** served as both a reminder and exemplar of the importance of the network; it demonstrated actionable change and updates occurring within and outside of the network. It was flagged a few times, indicating a value on updates and change occurring in the network, suggesting the materials are not merely

informational but are reinforcing a shared connection, alignment, and desired engagement across the network. The information exchange facilitated through the newsletter is a tool that supports relationship building.⁵⁵ The purpose of the materials is to encourage connectivity and alignment into the network, and it was motivating to receive positive feedback that the documents are successful in doing so.

The orientation materials foster integration of new members into the network

Near the end of the consultations, when we spoke to a new member of the network, we discussed how the individual felt after going through the materials on the onset of their onboarding into the network. The stakeholder spoke to how the orientation materials were helpful, but in truth was a reiteration of the material he was aware of given his involvement in the community prior to stepping into the role which involved him in the network. He explained that while he was predisposed to this information, the documents were a mindful refresher and suggested that in a jurisdiction that lacks

*"It is paralyzing to strive for consensus. Rather, it is **commitment that is the key and the goal, not perfection.**"*

- Curtis H.,
Systems Thinking
Consultee from
Education Sector

the strength of the network in Saskatchewan, the resource would be helpful for integration into a larger PT A2J Collaborative. In this reflection, it became apparent that community ties speak to the success of the network. This is not necessarily due to the characteristic of a smaller jurisdiction, but rather **a community willing to commit to a shared interest in improving access to justice.**

The consultations confirmed the orientation materials were helpful guides for fostering integration and illustrating the commitment of other team members. The changes made to the orientation manual help streamline the information and advance connectivity within the network.

The orientation materials inspire productivity within the network, and beyond

The orientation materials can serve as a reminder of the purpose of the network. Consultees indicated it would be useful to highlight past innovations of the network to serve not only as a point of familiarization, but to understand the broad reach of the network's impact. The examples of network successes that will be highlighted in the materials encourage new network members to continue this precedent and demonstrates how innovative ideas can build upon prior successes.

⁵⁵ Stratton at p 15.

Consultees highlighted to us the value these materials and the research we are conducting can bring to other PT A2J Collaboratives across Canada. Our hope is that PT A2J Collaboratives may draw on our research and share back what they learn on making orientation materials as effective as possible for new members.

*“An orientation package **signals** a standard of **professionalism**”*

*- Paige Thombs, Lead of BC’s Transform the Family Justice
System Collaborative*

Formatting improves engagement and readability

The feedback from stakeholders relating to formatting was helpful to make changes to improve the usability of the orientation materials. PT A2J Collaborative coordinators may consider how even small formatting changes can make materials more digestible for new members.

While the orientation materials are tailored to the SK A2J Network, feedback from consultations generated many insights that can be valuable for other jurisdictions. The orientation materials are an example that other PT A2J Collaboratives may wish to consider in drafting orientation materials, tailored to their collaborative. Ensuring there is a shared language between members through an orientation package strengthens the connectivity and alignment of the network, ultimately facilitating a basis for productivity to grow by allowing a member to meaningfully engage with the initiative.⁵⁶

IV. USER-TESTING OUR RESOURCE: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP GUIDEBOOK

We gained stakeholders’ initial impressions of the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook during the consultation phase of research. To do this, each consultee was provided with an overview of the purpose of the guidebook at the beginning of their consultation.

We described the guidebook as a tool that may become part of a national PT A2J Collaborative resource toolkit. The objective of the guidebook is an interactive resource that will be shared with new PT A2J Collaborative members to help new members become acquainted with how cross-sector collaboration may be reciprocally beneficial to

⁵⁶ Stratton at p 15.

them and other members – and strategies to advance collaboration, as appropriate, across the justice system. We acknowledged that the guidebook may additionally act as a manual for members of the PT A2J Collaborative to navigate the cultural shift that the justice system has experienced.

A. Feedback from consultations on the guidebook

Overall, stakeholders were optimistic on the idea of a guidebook for systems change.

The feedback that arose from this stage of the consultations included:

- A tool of this kind can be helpful if accompanied with active facilitation to assist someone to walk through it
- The guidebook must not be created in isolation, but must be used collaboratively
- The benefit of dialogue and context can get lost from a group setting if only going through it alone
- If contextualized with examples it could add value

We used the feedback given in this stage and our own research on systems change theories to make edits to the guidebook in preparation of the user-testing phase.⁵⁷

“You are on to something with the [guidebook]...it is a strong idea, especially to be able to create space collaboratively and build off of each other’s ideas with action... **this is where the magic happens.**”

- Adrienne Danyliw, Systems Thinking Consultee from the Health Sector

⁵⁷ See Chapter 3 in the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook for research on systems change frameworks.

B. Revisions to the guidebook after consultations

We began the first revisions to the guidebook following our consultations. The consultation phase allowed us to better understand how network members contextualize a guidebook on systems change and how best the resource can be implemented into PT A2J Collaboratives. Beyond our consultations, we also made changes to the guidebook based on findings from our literature review and research on systems change theories.⁵⁸ We have focused our revisions on Chapter 3 of the guidebook, “Frameworks for Change”, in preparation for user-testing the guidebook on Dean’s Forum Day.

Changes made to the guidebook:

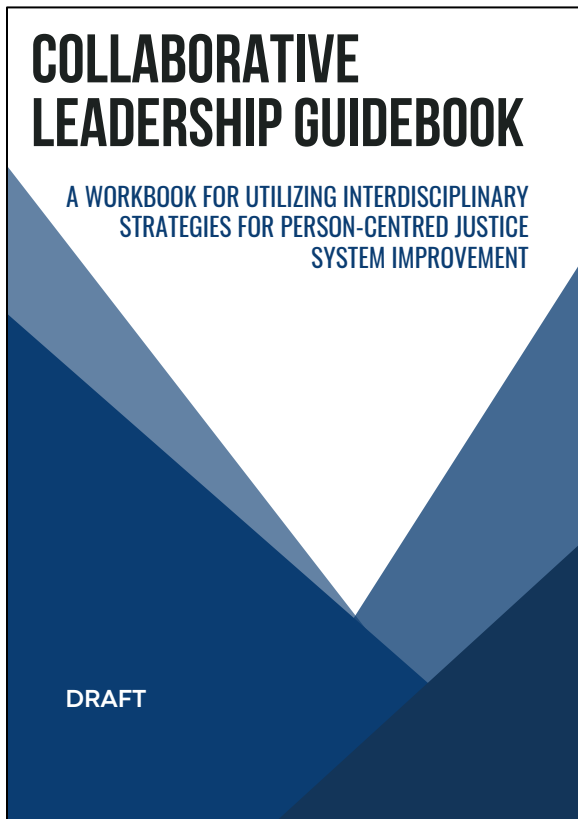
- Adding in a “core value analysis” to the guidebook.⁵⁹ The purpose of identifying one’s core values is to understand the fundamental principles that guide one’s decision making, behaviour, and priorities.⁶⁰ The implementation of this exercise to the guidebook was informed by our consultation with Adrienne Danyliw, systems thinking consultee from the health sector. Adrienne shared that in order for systems change to occur, one must have a good belief of where they are at, knowing who they are, what they stand for, and what they value. This resonated with us and we found a core values assessment would allow individuals the space to reflect on what is truly important to them.
- Drafting clear and concise descriptions on frameworks for change.
 - By communicating the frameworks in straightforward, accessible terms, along with examples, it is more digestible for readers to apply the frameworks to real-world scenarios.
- Enhancing the visual appeal of the guidebook.
 - Our hope is that the guidebook is a tool that members will want to reference and work through, and therefore, we find it important that material is clearly laid out with fonts, colours, and graphics to improve the overall readability and visual appeal.

⁵⁸ See pages 15-17 for research on systems change frameworks; See Appendix B for a summary of our literature review.

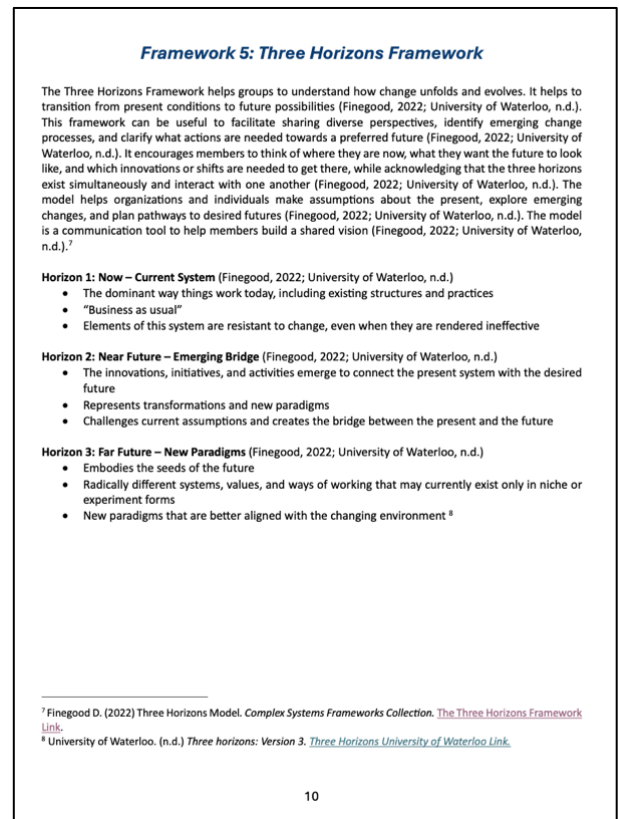
⁵⁹ Brene Brown, “Living Into Our Values Exercise” (retrieved 20 February, 2026) <https://brenebrown.com/resources/living-into-our-values-3/>.

⁶⁰ M.R. Chowdhury, “3+ Best Personal Values Assessment & Questionnaires” (retrieved 20 February 2026) <https://positivepsychology.com/values-questionnaire/>.

- During a consultation, a stakeholder mentioned the importance of a visually appealing document, stating usability, embedded in readability through a well-designed resource.
- More specific changes include creating a cover page and allowing for white space to make the material easier to digest and read by splitting it up logically, to generate a balance between a textbook style guidebook and a workbook.



Cover Page



Example of Page with White Space

C. Feedback following initial revisions

The design of this draft chapter in the guidebook was a collaborative effort. We received revisions and suggestions from a few experienced professionals who aided us in the readability of the resource and edited our work within the draft document. A notable suggestion was to include further white space to allow for readers to have the opportunity to write down their thoughts in the margins, or space for annotations to allow for engagement with the resource. Other edits and suggestions included reformatting the chapter, reflecting how visual appearance can change the propensity to use a resource.

We have edited the chapter to reflect these suggestions, in hopes to satisfy both an attractive appearance and to provide space for readers to contemplate and engage with the resource as they complete it.

D. Key takeaways for PT A2J Collaboratives from findings from user-testing a guidebook for collaborative leadership

The positive reactions we received from consultees in the idea of the guidebook was powerful and encouraging. A resource which encourages sustained engagement, and continuous re-alignment was well-received and satisfies purposes within the network. Many consultees, including members of the SK A2J Network expressed excitement and a desire to see the completed guidebook, suggesting a clear interest, need, and value of the resource.

The guidebook can act as a reference point when working through change

Our interviews indicated several network members strongly value dedicated spaces for discussion and time allotted to do what the rudimentary purpose the network stands for: to network. The guidebook may act as a reference point to return to this point to create opportunities for stakeholders to collectively work through real world examples, strengthen engagement with one another, and allow space to connect. We learned through our consultations the care that is required by PT A2J Collaborative Coordinators for connectivity in a network to flourish; the guidebook is a tool to encourage conversations and reflection surrounding what continued culture shift in the profession means.

As we continue to user-test and iterate the guidebook, the consultations emphasized the value of facilitating the resource in a group setting. The potential for the conversations and reflections to be had while using the resource is one that could fuel great change within a PT A2J Collaborative, and beyond.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES

A. Learnings on implementation from beginning stages of research

As we embarked on our project, we considered how the orientation and guidebook tools may be implemented and who may implement them. This section sets out limitations

of our project that should be considered in an implementation strategy, as well as specific ideas for next steps in implementing the orientation materials and guidebook.

B. Limitations

While our research allowed us to advance both the orientation materials and the guidebook, there were certain limitations that impacted our ability to develop these resources further.

Time Constraints

A significant limitation on this project was time. We were faced with completing all preliminary research, gathering information through consultations, and developing our resources and analysis within a two-month time frame. It would have been beneficial to conduct a second round of consultations user-testing the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual to gain feedback on how the changes made impacted the efficacy of the materials. Further, as the guidebook is still a developing resource, conducting thorough user-testing of it, once available, will help make the resource as useful as possible.

To effectively contribute to the guidebook within the timeframe of the course, we focused on the content solely in Chapter 3: *Frameworks for Change*. This allowed us to conduct proper research on the frameworks for change discussed in the chapter, however we did not have sufficient time to gain the knowledge to edit the content of each chapter as we did with Chapter Three.

Despite our time limitation, we were able to explore and identify ideas which could improve both resources as they are put into effect. The remainder of the section focuses on how these resources can be implemented and suggested next steps for the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual and Collaborative Leadership Guidebook.

C. Implementation of the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual

Implementation of the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual

The SK A2J Orientation Manual can be implemented for use within the SK A2J Network when onboarding new members to the collaborative. Additionally, the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual can provide a framework that may assist other jurisdictions in developing meaningful orientation documents specific to their province or territory.

It is important to note that the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual will need to be updated as members within the network shift to accurately reflect who is in the network. This is important for maintaining the integrity of the resource and requires coordination support.

Next steps for the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual

There are additional changes that will need to be made before the document can be implemented. These changes include:

- Updating information specific to certain organizations;
- Illustrating examples of successes the SK A2J Network has experienced together under section 02; and
- Including important logistical information under section 08 “Next Steps”.

While not required for immediate implementation, there are further changes that can be made to the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual:

- Expanding on the list of current members under section 04 to include short biography write ups and a photo of each member. Some consultees indicated the inclusion of this information would assist with familiarity and relationship building among members. This will need coordination support.
- Including a “guiding statement”. This is something that would need to be discussed and established between network members at a future meeting.

D. Implementation of the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook

Implementation of the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook

The guidebook will ideally be implemented for use by any PT A2J Collaboratives across Canada. Effective implementation of the guidebook will ideally involve “active facilitation”, as suggested by Adrienne Danyliw. In employing active facilitation, Adrienne recommended the guidebook is worked through in a group setting to maximize the benefits of discussion. Depending on the number of participants this could be guided in small group sessions or a large group session. This was also reiterated by another consultee. A director of a PT A2J Collaborative in another jurisdiction recommended the guidebook would be most beneficial if completed in a group setting to foster a sense of connection while also providing an opportunity for participants to engage in thinking about systems change.

Next steps for the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook

There are further additions and revisions that will be necessary to finalize the guidebook. Next steps to implement the guidebook include:

- Finishing researching, editing, and writing the remaining chapters;
- User-testing Chapter 3 on Dean's Forum Day; and
- Presenting/user-testing it with national partners in May 2026 at the AC's first national research and data conference.

Further user-testing will be required as the guidebook evolves. We have received positive feedback on the benefits of the guidebook, and we are excited to include a sample of the guidebook to be user-tested on Dean's Forum Day. The feedback during the group activity will be indicative of further changes required.

E. Recommendation for Implementation: Mentorship

While this idea is beyond the scope of our assigned topic, the introduction of a mentorship program may be valuable to facilitate the SK A2J Orientation Manual and the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook to welcome and assist new network members. Ideally, this would look like new network members being assigned an "orientation facilitator" as they enter the collaborative. Stakeholders unanimously agreed that the resources should not exist in isolation and that collaboration would be beneficial for the implementation of these tools. Mentorship would assist new members to build connections with other members in their PT A2J Collaborative, which in turn may assist to solidify the network.

VI. MEASURING SUCCESS & CONCLUSION

An internal survey following the implementation of the resources may be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of both tools. For the SK A2J Orientation Manual, it would be helpful to gather feedback from new members on their orientation experience shortly after they have joined the network and completed the orientation process. The survey may consider how supported they feel going forward, information they feel they are missing, and what else may be helpful, among other things. Findings from this survey would assist in assessing the overall success of the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual in supporting

new members joining the network. Further, a survey could be conducted amongst other PT A2J Collaboratives to determine how helpful they find the SK A2J Orientation Manual as they develop or ameliorate their own orientation materials. Findings from this survey would assist in assessing how orientation manuals for PT A2J Collaboratives across Canada could be further developed for the benefit of all collaboratives.

For the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook, including a survey at the end of the resource for participants of the guidebook would be helpful to understand how useful the material was for those who went through the guidebook. It is important to note that a tool like the guidebook may work differently for different people, and as a result, measuring success for this tool may be more difficult.

In person discussions among network members at meetings following the implementation of both tools can also assist in measuring the success of the tools. Allowing people to share from experience how these tools having impacted their work will introduce valuable feedback on the success of the tools in practice.

We are hopeful that the SK A2J Network Orientation Manual and the Collaborative Leadership Guidebook can assist as tools for *how* PT A2J Collaborative members can *collectively* contribute to improving access to justice.

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of Structure of PT A2J Collaboratives Across Canada (last updated 2024), part of Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matter Provincial/Territorial Collaborative Working Group Binder for January 30, 2026 meeting [unpublished]

Note: This appendix has been redacted, as information regarding PT A2J Collaboratives continues to evolve. For the most current information, please consult the National Action Committee on Access to Justice's website and its directory of PT A2J Collaboratives.

Appendix B: Resource and Literature Review

Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, “Access to Civil & Family Justice: A Roadmap for Change” (October 2013) [LINK](#)

- “This report from the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters identifies significant gaps in Canada's justice system, highlighting issues of complexity, cost, and delay that hinder access for many citizens, particularly vulnerable groups. The report emphasizes the importance of addressing everyday legal problems and proposes a shift in culture guided by principles such as prioritizing the public, collaboration, prevention, simplification, and a focus on outcomes. It presents a nine-point roadmap encompassing innovations, institutional changes, research, and funding strategies to bridge the gap between ideas and action, aiming for measurable improvements in access to justice within five years and a widely adopted national policy framework.”

American Bar Association, “Access to Justice Commissions” [LINK](#)

- “Access to Justice Commissions are collaborative entities that bring together courts, the bar, civil legal aid providers, and other stakeholders in an effort to remove barriers to civil justice for low-income and disadvantaged people. Beginning with the first ATJ Commission in 1994 (Washington State), such entities have been developing all over the country, engaging in a full range of activities and strategies to accomplish their goals and objectives. A major strength of the Commission model is its ability to address the state's often-fragmented system for providing access to civil justice as a whole.

The ABA has fostered the launching and development of ATJ Commissions via the [Access to Justice Expansion Project](#), an initiative funded with generous support from the [Public Welfare Foundation](#) and [Kresge Foundation](#).”

B. Lowenberger, A. McIntyre, & E. Selensky, “Reducing the ‘Justice Gap’ Through Collaboration Models for Systemic Change: Using Networks to Improve Access to Justice”, *The Canadian Bar Review* (2023) [LINK](#)

- “The fall of 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the release of two touchstone reports: the Canadian Bar Association’s Reaching Equal Justice Report and the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters’ Roadmap for Change. These reports outlined a heightened concern about access to justice across Canada and introduced goal-based roadmaps with target deadlines for change. In order to coordinate change, the authors of the reports suggested the development of multi-stakeholder implementation committees across all Canadian

provinces and territories. However, “how” such action-oriented committees might be created and maintained was yet to be discovered for many jurisdictions. This paper seeks to contribute to the discourse on designing and evolving committees for systemic change by highlighting the characteristics, values, and challenges associated with one model for collaboration: networks. Using the Saskatchewan Access to Justice Network [SK A2J] as an example, we demonstrate how to design and maintain a network to reduce the “justice gap.” We also offer our combined reflections on how some SK A2J Network member organizations have used the power of networks to increase access to justice. With almost a decade since the release of the touchstone reports, we pause to consider and share our evolving Saskatchewan experience with the hope that other jurisdictions will do the same.”

B. Lowenberger, M. Keet, J. Anderson. “Collaborative Policy-making, Law Students, and Access to Justice: The Rewards of Destabilizing Institutional Patterns,” (2017) *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice* 148 [LINK](#)

- “Heightened concerns and dialogue about access to justice have infused the law school setting in Saskatchewan and, to varying degrees, across the country. If there ever were a time to approach social justice reform differently – to upset traditional parameters around decision making and step around older hierarchies for input and design – it would be now. This article describes the Dean’s Forum on Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice (colloquially known as the Dean’s Forum) as a platform for genuine student engagement in the development of public policy in this important area. We offer our combined reflections, gathered inside our “teaching team,” about the unique pedagogical features of our experiment and its challenges. As we continue to grow with the project, we offer this Saskatchewan story as one example of institutional collaboration in a quickly evolving educational and social policy landscape.”

J.F. Roberge, “Emerging Trends in Access to Justice and Dispute Resolution in Canada,” (2014) *Journal of Arbitration and Mediation* [LINK](#)

- “Providing access to justice is a major challenge for any judicial system. Canada has gone to great lengths to meet this challenge over the past thirty years, in part by developing alternative dispute resolution methods. Unfortunately, results have been mixed. Canadian society is currently preparing to renew its vision of access to justice and the contribution of dispute resolution methods in meeting that challenge. What lessons can we learn from Canada’s experience? What are the new directions and initiatives for access to justice? Our paper suggests that the Canadian experience can make two contributions to the access to justice debate. First, we suggest that the notion is evolving in the legal community from an institutional perspective to a contextual vision of access to justice. Second, we point out an evolution of alternative or appropriate dispute resolution methods

toward a participatory justice culture. Our paper suggests an evolving Canadian perspective on access to justice and dispute prevention and resolution methods.”

M.E. Simmons, “Collaborative Law at 25: A Canadian Study of a Global Phenomenon,” (2016) 49-2 *UBC Law Review* [LINK](#)

- “It has been said that, “Every truth passes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident”.¹ A quarter of a century has brought Collaborative Law (CL) ² through these three stages. Once ridiculed and opposed, it has now become a staple of family law dispute resolution in many communities around the world. This article will chart this journey by way of reporting on a cross-Canada empirical study. CL is a dispute resolution process by which parties and their lawyers enter into a binding contract, known as a “participation agreement”, which limits the representation to a facilitative problem-solving process with the intent to reach a negotiated settlement., CL has a unique focus on settlement in a process with representation for both sides. The participation agreement acts as a contractual commitment to particular processes and behaviours, as well as to settlement. Lawyers in CL must settle or withdraw from representation. In addition to this, there is a Disqualification Agreement (DA), whereby the lawyers relinquish the ability to represent those clients in any adversarial proceedings should the CL process terminate. Other requirements commonly delineated in the participation agreement include: full, complete, early voluntary disclosure of relevant information without formal discovery; good faith negotiation and participation with integrity; and confidentiality within and following the CL process. ⁴ Additionally, professional experts, who can include mental health professionals and financial professionals, are hired jointly by the parties with the goal of maintaining civility, saving time, and decreasing costs by avoiding duplication. Negotiations in CL are predominantly conducted through a series of four-way meetings during which parties and their respective counsel attempt to craft a mutually beneficial solution. CL has been touted by its practitioners as reducing costs, expediting resolution, leading to better, more creative solutions, and enhancing relationships. ⁵ Proponents of CL argue that the process offers more creative, longer-lasting outcomes than litigation and other dispute resolution mechanisms because of the commitment to settlement from the outset, through both lawyer disqualification, and the integral involvement of counsel in the negotiation process. As noted by Julic Macfarlane, there is general agreement that CL provides a negotiating environment with less “posturing and gamesmanship”, than traditional negotiation, although early research suggested that substantive outcomes often mirrored those available and achieved through adversarial means.- In the decade that has followed since this seminal piece of research, CL has undergone a series of changes and developments. The time is

ripe to re-examine the practice of CL in Canada. This study will examine CL through a historical lens, paired with current empirical work done in the field. Specifically, the research will highlight current practices in four Canadian CL communities. The first part of the article will situate CL within a historical context, outlining the progression and early days of the process. It will then look at the two specific areas upon which this research focuses: the team model and the utility of disqualification. Following such theoretical groundwork, the paper will turn to the methodology and results of the empirical study. Finally, the paper will end with discussion and future directions. This research shows that 25 years after the inception of CL, distinct changes have taken place that have impacted not only CL itself, but family dispute resolution more broadly. These changes are not slowing down. The evolution continues.”

M.M. Leering, “Enhancing the Legal Profession’s Capacity for Innovation: The Promise of Reflective Practice and Action Research for Increasing Access to Justice” (2017) 34:1 *Special Issue: Innovation and Access to Justice: Addressing the Challenge of a Diverse Justice and Ecosystem* [LINK](#)

- “Recent national reports have documented growing justice gaps in Canada and have identified a compelling need for innovation in the justice sector to better meet the needs of the public. Nurturing a greater capacity for individual, collective, and critical reflection will ensure the legal profession is much better equipped to respond creatively and strategically to a lack of equal access to justice. In this article, I explore the generative and transformative potential of reflective practice – an important professional competency in other professional disciplines, but under-theorized in law, and action research – a dynamic and flexible form of qualitative research for supporting a culture of innovation in the legal profession and the justice system. Reflective capacity is a crucial enabler of innovative thinking, and it undergirds approaches to encouraging individual and systems change emerging from the organizational learning and innovation literature. An enhanced capacity for reflection will also support more generative and “future-forming” dialogues within the profession and between justice system stakeholders. Furthermore, systematically reflecting on disorienting empirical data about the troubling state of access to justice could develop an “access to justice consciousness” in law students and legal professionals, leading to a stronger willingness to take action to narrow the justice gaps. Introducing action research as an unpretentious and effective enabler of profound transformation and innovation in individual and organizational practices offers significant promise for

tackling the “wicked problem” of access to justice. Practical illustrations of action research as an enabler of innovation drawn from legal practice are provided.”

M. Stratton, “Creating Collaborative Alliances for Change: A Dynamic Resource for the Justice Community”, *Canadian Forum on Civil Justice* (2009) [LINK](#)

- “The need for stakeholders to work collaboratively to effectively change justice and other systems is established internationally. Creating Collaborative Alliances for Change: A Dynamic Resource for the Justice Community has evolved in response to justice community partners who identified a need for a resource addressing the question, “How do we get a better understanding of building and maintaining successful collaborations?”

Developed as part of the Civil Justice System and the Public (CJSP) project, full details on the background and methodology for this Resource are provided in Appendix B. Sources are referenced and annotated in Appendix A.

The aim is to provide a step-by-step working guide that distills available theoretical knowledge and practice experience into a usable format. Collaboration is a complex process and there is much to consider. Consequently, taken as a whole, this Resource is lengthy. It is, however, designed to be electronic and searchable in multiple ways, allowing use in whole or in part according to need.”

P. Hoffman-Miller, “Reflective Practice” (2024) [LINK](#)

- “Reflective practice is a continuous process where individuals think critically about their actions and the underlying reasons for those actions. This method emphasizes the relationship between thought and action, aiming to enhance professional practice across various fields, particularly in education. Originating from the work of scholars Donald Schon and Chris Argyris, reflective practice encourages ongoing learning and adaptation, turning experiences into opportunities for growth. It involves cycles of self-observation and evaluation, allowing practitioners to understand the impact of their decisions on themselves and their learners.

In education, reflective practice is often supported by frameworks like Gibbs's Model of Reflection, which outlines a structured approach to reflection, encompassing description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusions, and action planning. This cyclical model helps individuals assess their experiences and apply lessons learned to future situations. By fostering a culture of reflection, professionals can enhance their skills, promote positive change, and contribute to the development of learning organizations. Through effective reflective practices, educators and other professionals can create an environment that values continuous improvement and encourages collaboration.”

S. Lee & S.M. Ospina, “A Framework for Assessing Accountability in Collaborative Governance: A Process-Based Approach” (2022) 5:1 *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* [LINK](#)

- “Despite the complexities involved around the accountability mechanisms of collaborative governance, little is known about how to assess accountability at the network level and disentangle possible accountability deficits. This study first explicates the nature of collaborative governance accountability in contrast to accountability in traditional public administration and market-based governance. The analysis shows how collaborative governance accountability is distinctive: (a) accountability relationships shift from bilateral to multilateral; (b) horizontal as well as vertical accountability relationships are involved; (c) not only formal standards but also informal norms are used; and (d) accountability challenges move from control/audit issues to trust-building and paradox management issues. We then propose a framework for accountability in collaborative governance, drawing its dimensions from the process-based accountability research. Our framework builds on three dimensions of collaborative accountability—information, discussion, and consequences—and elaborates on their components and indicators. Based on the framework, questions to guide future research are provided, focusing on tensions and paradoxes that can arise in each process dimension as primary accountability challenges in collaborative contexts.”

The Canadian Bar Association, “Reaching equal justice report: An invitation to envision and act” (November 2013) [LINK](#)

- No abstract available

Appendix C: Stakeholder Questions

Our consultation questions varied depending on the stakeholder's role and experience.

A leader from a different A2J network:

- What do your orientation/welcome materials to your PT Collaborative look like?
- From your experience, what might be the most valuable things to include in an orientation package to new Provincial-Territorial Access to Justice Collaborative (PT Collaborative) members?
- What in a workbook on systems change do you think might be useful for PT Collaborative member?
- Can you think of an ideal moment when the workbook should be introduced? Onboarding, in team's meeting, as examples.
- What would signal if these tools are successful in having an impact and participation in the A2J network?

A new member of the SK A2J network:

- What was most helpful in the orientation materials?
- Now that you have been to a couple of meetings, Is there information you would you have liked to see that was absent from the orientation materials?
- How did the orientation materials help to make you feel integrated into a collaborative network, if at all? If not, what might help?
- How might you find a workbook on systems change to be helpful as you continue to serve on the network?
- What questions might you still have after using the materials?
- Were there terms or concepts that were unfamiliar, and if so, did the materials provide any clarity?

An existing member of the SK A2J network:

- From your experience having served on the SK A2J Network for some years now, what might be most valuable to include in an orientation package to new SK A2J Network members?
- Are there ways the orientation materials could be updated to clarify the role of the network and the role of its members?
- Based on your experience, how useful do you think a new workbook on systems change strategies may be useful for SK A2J Network members?

- In what ways may a workbook engage with the goals internal to the current network?
- How did the materials help to clarify the network's purpose and goals of alignment and collaboration, if at all?
- How could a workbook on systems change strategies potentially support the SK A2J Network in advancing new A2J initiatives?

Interdisciplinary perspectives (Health sector):

- What elements are necessary for change to be meaningful when defining systems of change in a complex system like healthcare?
 - Purpose: no single person controlling the system, and so how can we approach change with a parallel to a medical context that has similar systems?
- What theory or frameworks most strongly influence your approach to systems change?
- What is “effective” collaboration and which tools are utilized to successfully reach this goal?
- What are indicators which suggest a system change is occurring?
- What cultural shifts are most necessary for systems change?
- What are the biggest challenges to creating successful collaboration?
- Adam Kahane, a scholar in the systems change discourse, suggests consensus is not necessary for systems change, but rather commitment is what is integral. Why might you agree or disagree with this sentiment?

Interdisciplinary perspectives (Education sector):

- How do you kickstart collective systems change when there is no single organization, authority, or “boss”?
- How would you measure success and effective collaboration?
- What theories, if any, have influenced your approach to systems change?
- How would you recommend including student and non-legal scholars/collaborators/personnel into justice system change conversations?
- What challenges have you faced in attempting to achieve equity for students and how were they handled?

- Purpose: What can we learn from goals toward equity in the school setting and how might they be applied?
- Adam Kahane, a scholar in the systems change discourse, suggests consensus is not necessary for systems change, but rather commitment is what is integral. Why might you agree or disagree with this sentiment?

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