

Paper: Community Justice Help: Advancing Community-Based Access to Justice (CLEO & LFO 2020)



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Community based organizations are essential partners to courts, legal aid, pro bono, and the private bar as they build systems to support remote delivery, which is increasingly becoming a part of any delivery system.

The report, "[Community Justice Help: Advancing Community-Based Access to Justice](#)", proposes a new approach for enabling community workers (as non-lawyers) to provide assistance for law-related problems. Based on an exploration of the realities of how people seek support for their law-related problems, the research highlights the fact that people who have law-related problems, particularly those who have low incomes or face other social disadvantages, often turn for help to community workers they know and trust. And community workers typically give their

clients holistic help with their array of intersecting problems, which may involve non-legal as well as legal aspects. The research suggests that labelling this type of help as “legal advice” — and thus the exclusive purview of lawyers and paralegals — hinders access to justice. The research puts forward a three-part framework for supporting, rather than discouraging, “community justice help”, and in so doing enabling community workers to play a role in advancing access to justice.

Below is a description provided in the paper:

"This discussion paper is the result of research and consultations undertaken by Julie Mathews, Executive Director of Community Legal Education Ontario, and Professor David Wiseman, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, from September 2018 to December 2019. Julie’s participation in the project was enabled by a Community Leadership in Justice Fellowship awarded by The Law Foundation of Ontario. While the project was financially supported by The Law Foundation of Ontario, the authors are solely responsible for all content. The project was supported by Community Legal Education Ontario."

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Featured work on SRLN Research Working Group webinar

On October 1, 2020, the SRLN Research Working Group hosted a webinar in which Julie Mathews, Executive Director of Community Legal Education Ontario, and Professor David Wiseman at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, presented about their research, Community Justice: Help Advancing Community Based Access to Justice. This session explored critical aspects to consider in leveraging these relationships to deliver justice.

You can view the recording of the [SRLN Research Working Group Call, October 1, 2020](#) as well as other recordings, on the [SRLN Access to Justice GoToStage channel](#).

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