

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION
AND INFORMATION SERVICE
OF NEW BRUNSWICK

2017 2018

ANNUAL
REPORT



Helping the Public Know the Law

Mission Statement

Helping the Public Know the Law!

PLEIS-NB is a non-profit organization and a registered charity. Our mandate is to develop bilingual educational products and services about the law for the general public in order to promote access to the legal system. Our goal is to assist the public in identifying and understanding their legal rights and responsibilities, and attaining self-help skills where appropriate, to improve their ability to deal with legal issues.

To meet the diverse information needs of people living in New Brunswick, PLEIS-NB has adopted the following objectives:

- (i) To respond to individual and community requests for information about the law, the legal system, sources of legal assistance and law reform;
- (ii) To increase the availability of easily understood general information about the law, as well as law-related information on specific topics;
- (iii) To promote a greater understanding of how the law affects everyday activities and to facilitate self-help skills; and,
- (iv) To act as a clearinghouse for information about the law by promoting awareness of and access to legal resources in the community, while encouraging the coordination of public legal education initiatives.



Public Legal Education
and Information Service
of New Brunswick

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Fax (506) 462-5193
E-mail pleisnb@web.ca

www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca
www.familylawnb.ca
www.youthjusticenb.ca
www.thehealingjourney.ca

Executive Director's REPORT



A special thanks to the PLEIS-NB Board Members, staff, students, and volunteers, who play a significant role in our quest to promote access to justice. As well, I acknowledge our core funders, namely, Justice Canada, the New Brunswick Law Foundation, and the Office of the Attorney General of New Brunswick. They make it possible for PLEIS-NB to offer many basic services and pursue project funding for special law education initiatives that greatly benefit the people of this province.

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.

I am pleased to report that Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick continued to offer a range of helpful core activities this fiscal year. This included our publication program, our speaker's bureau, our website and social media presence, and our ever popular Family Law Workshops.

We trained and mentored two senior year UNB law students to staff the line and a UdeM law student looked after the line in the summer. The students enjoyed engaging with individuals experiencing real-life family law problems and we assisted 1,956 individual callers with their family law questions.

We were pleased once again to collaborate with Victim Services, Department of Public Safety. We created three new resources for victims of crime, researched a directory of services for victims of abuse on First Nation Communities, and undertook a national survey on testimonial aids for youth.

An exciting new development was the partnership with the New Brunswick Community College to transform our safety planning tool for women living with domestic violence into an APP – the first of its kind in North America.

Project funding from the Canada Family Justice Fund (Justice Canada) enabled us to produce several new family law publications such as nine new fact sheets and a booklet on grandparent's right to spend time with their grandchildren and a new Support Enforcement booklet. These are just a few of our new resources.

We look forward to working collaboratively with government, community and the legal sector over the coming year. Together we can enhance efforts to help the public know the law.

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D. Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 2017-2018

We bid farewell to long standing Board member Suzanne Bonnell-Burley who ended her term with us in June 2017. Suzanne's contribution will be missed. However, we were pleased to welcome two new board members, Elena Bosi who represents the Office of the Attorney General, and Alaina Nicholson representing the New Brunswick Financial and Consumer Services Commission. Martha McClellan has stepped into the Vice-president position.

Clea Ward (President)

McInnes Cooper

Alaina Nicholson

Financial and Consumer Services Commission

Robert LeBlanc

Faculté de droit, Université de Moncton

Martha McClellan (Vice-president),

*Director of Career Development and External Relationships,
Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick*

Jason Dempsey

Phillips Dempsey, Moncton

Elena Bosi

*Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services, Office of the
Attorney General*

STAFF – VOLUNTEERS 2017 - 2018

Current or New Staff

Dr. Deborah Doherty, *Executive Director*

Judy Sembinelli, *Bookkeeper/Family Law Workshop
Coordinator*

Experiential/Clinical Procedure Law Students, University of New Brunswick

Brandon Walzak

Nushka Blais, *UNB*

Out-going Staff

Emma Thompson, *Administrative Assistant/FTSOTC*

Mylene Wood, *Administrative Assistant/FTSOTC*

Mychelle Drouin, *Administrative Assistant/FTSOTC*

Stefanie Beaulieu, *Administrative Assistant/FTSOTC*

Law Students 2017

Gareth Briden, *UNB Legal
Researcher*

Bridgette Morrissey, *UNB
Legal Researcher*

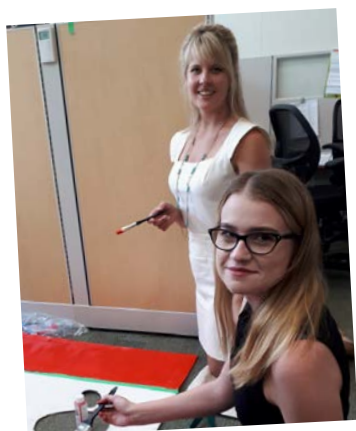
Molly Hall, *UdeM Legal
Researcher*

Pro Bono Students

Emma Wilson

Lauren Trueman

Victoria Morrissey



From left to right:
Bridgett Morrissey, *UNB Law*;
Molly Hall, *UdeM Law*

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Toll-Free Family Law Information Line – 1-888-236-2444

The Toll-Free Family Law Line is offered in cooperation with Court Services Division, Department of Justice and Public Safety. Court staff, Legal Aid and private bar lawyers, as well as community agencies are pleased to refer individuals who have general questions about family law matters or need assistance understanding court procedures. Despite staff turnover this year, the information line responded to 1,956 unique calls this past fiscal year – an increase of about 8% from the previous year. That's an average of about 166 calls each month. The contribution of the experiential learning students from the UNB law school was instrumental. About 67% of the callers wanted general information and resources on family law matters. Other callers wanting help with procedural matters, most typically custody and access, divorce and child support. Approximately 20% of the callers received service in French and 57% of callers were female.

Family Law Workshop for SRLs

The Family Law Workshop initiative is a core activity that is supported by the Law Foundation and the Department of Justice and Public Safety. Classes on various topics are offered monthly around the province. We strive to reach people living outside the larger urban areas as they face greater barriers in accessing law information. Our lawyer volunteers are happy to deliver the class to three of four folks who otherwise would not have access to the information in rural communities.

This year we organized 33 workshops and reached about 150 individuals. Of the 7 French workshops organized, we successfully held 4 in Caraquet, Edmundston and Shediac. Evaluation feedback from participants and lawyers remains extremely positive. Through our participant information kits we shared more than 6,400 publications.

Websites

PLEIS-NB (www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca): Our main site features access to most of the resources that can be found on the specialized sites as well. This past year, the PLEIS-NB site had 193,668 unique visitors, of which 82.3% were new visits. There were a total of 384,074 page views. Overall, the top three English resources accessed in relation to unique page views were: *"No Means No"*; *"Peace Bonds and Restraining Orders"*; and *"Probate of the Will."* The most viewed French resources were *"What Parents should know about Child Protection"*; *"Being an Executor"* and *"When Couples Separate."*

Family Law NB (www.familylawnb.ca): There were 32,648 visits to the English side and 4,365 on the French side, resulting in 37,013 visits to the two websites and 166,679 page views. There were over 36,305 new users to our sites. The top page views of English resources were *"Separation and Divorce"*; *"Doing Your Own Divorce"*; and *"Child Support"*. The top page views of French resources were *"Child Support"*; *"Family Law Forms"*; and *"Find a Lawyer/ Get Help"*.

Publications and Dissemination Activities

Demand for hard copies of our numerous resources remains high. Over the past year, PLEIS-NB distributed approximately 50,000 publications. Most are available free of charge for quantities fewer than 50, or can be accessed on our websites, in libraries and community agencies across the province. This year, the focus was on reviewing and reprinting all of our family law resources. Because these publications are so popular and are printed often, we try to update them as often as annually. The resources reviewed included this year were child support, spousal support, custody and access, marital property, separation and divorce, and living common-law. We also updated *Power of Attorney*, *Patient's Rights* and *Mental Competence*.



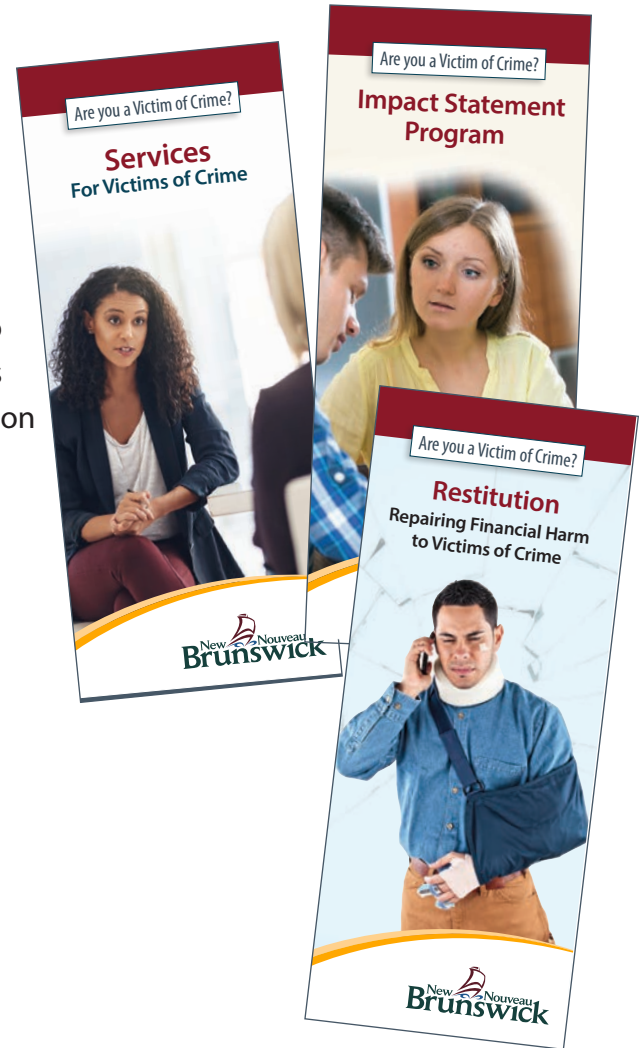
Projects and Contracts

Safety Planning for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

This was the second year of a five year partnership with Victim Services, Department of Justice and Public Safety, to work collaboratively on creating more resources for victims of crime and updating existing ones. In year 2 we focussed on the following:

- Services for Victims of Crime
- Restitution: Repairing Financial Harm to Victims of Crime
- Impact Statement Program

These resources have been distributed to Victim Services offices, Crown prosecutors' offices, Legal Aid offices, libraries, and community agencies where the public can access them.

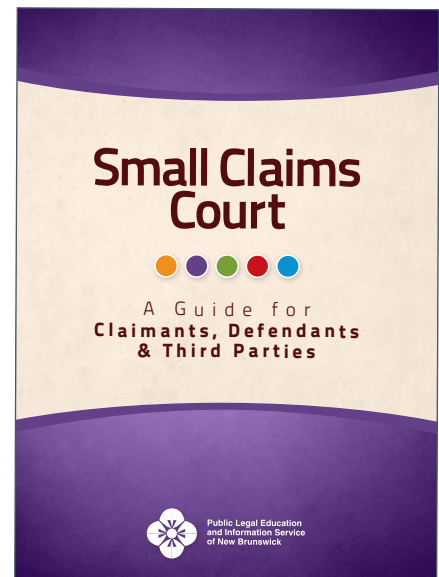


Small Claims

The General Regulation under the *Small Claims Act* was amended to increase the limit on the amount of money that can be claimed under the provincial small claims court. On April 1, 2018, the maximum amount increased to \$20,000 from \$12,500.

To prepare for this amendment, PLEIS-NB worked collaboratively with Court Services Branch, Justice and Public Safety, to revise and print a new guide. We also amended two of the forms which were affected.

Entitled, "*Small Claims Court: A Guide for Claimants, Defendants and Third Parties*", this guide was completed and distributed in large quantities to all of the courts at the end of March 2018. The guide was printed in a new colour (purple as opposed to green) so as not to be confused with the former guide of the same name.

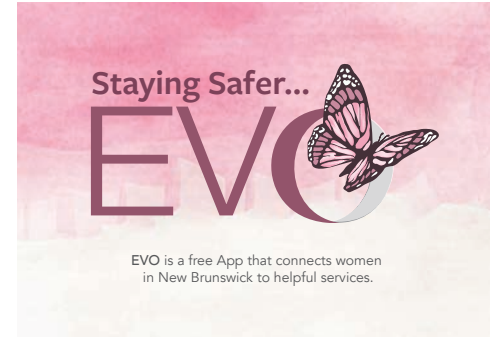


Creation of an APP named “EVO”

Year 2 also focused on converting the new safety planning resource for women living in an abusive relationship into an APP that would promote help seeking in a strategic and personal fashion. The APP profiles sixteen different situations that might put a woman at risk of harm by their partner.

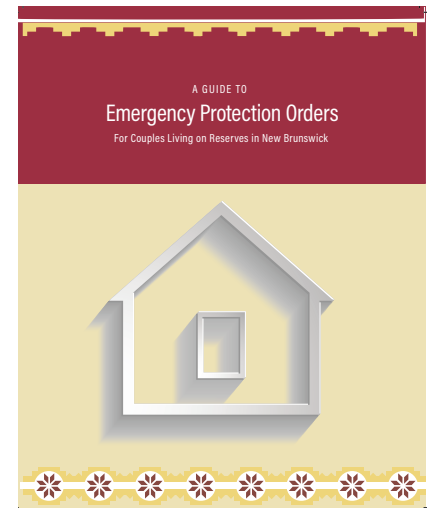
The APP supports help-seeking behaviour and links individuals to services ranging from resolving family law situations, to dealing with addictions and suicide threats, to fear of firearms in the home.

The design features have been finalized and the functionality will be field tested in the new fiscal year (Year 3).



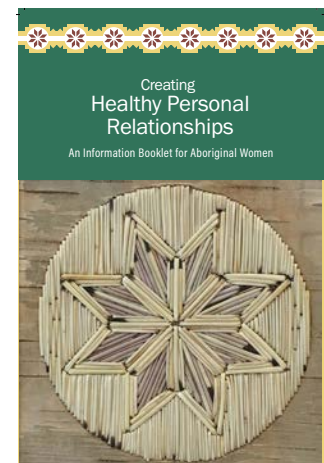
Emergency Protection Orders for Couples Living on Reserve

Under the federal *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act* victims of family violence living on reserve can apply in “Family Court” for an Emergency Protection Order that gives the victim temporary and exclusive use of the home while they explore their options for dealing with family violence. Thanks to funding and collaboration of court services staff at Justice and Public Safety, and the review comments and suggestions by Gignoo Transition House, PLEIS-NB released *Emergency Protection Orders for Couples Living on Reserves in New Brunswick* – a guide which is available online and in hard copy. You can also check out the online fillable affidavit and sample cover letter to go with an application.



Creating Healthy Personal Relationships: An Information booklet for Aboriginal Women

The other booklet was updated with the assistance of Gignoo Transition House staff. It discusses unhealthy relationships and how to recognize them. It also reviews family law issues that may arise and relevant remedies for couples living on Reserve. It includes resources available in New Brunswick to find legal information or advice, shelters, and other services.



Special Project: Canada Family Justice Fund – Justice Canada

With funding from the new Canada Family Justice Fund, we were able to produce several new resources that contribute to our body of family law resources. They enable us to promote access to the family justice system and included the following:

Family Law Fact Sheets

Creation of nine Family Law Fact Sheets. Five of these fact sheets focused attention on settling family law matters outside of court. The options for coming to an agreement were explained. The other fact sheets were identified from questions that we commonly heard at our family law workshops, such as changing the name of child after separation or travelling with children.

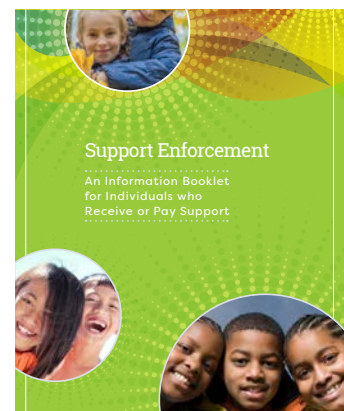
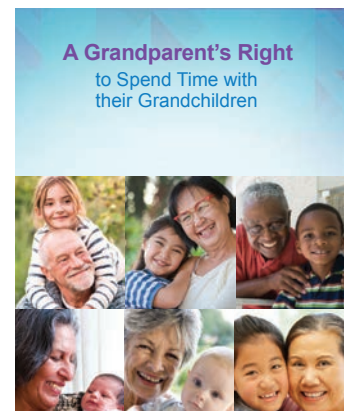
- Clearance Certificate and Trial Record
- When does Spousal Support End?
- Travelling with Children
- Changing a Child's Last Name
- Mediation
- Can a Parent End All Rights and Obligations to a Child?
- Collaborative Law
- Traditional Negotiation with Lawyers
- Coming to an Agreement Together

A Grandparent's Right to Spend Time with their Grandchildren

The goal of this booklet is to explain the options that a grandparent might explore if they were being denied access to their grandchildren. An amendment to the *Family Services Act* ensures that one of the factors that will be considered by a judge who is asked to make a decision about access, is the love and ties that a child has to a grandparent.

Support Enforcement

In response to changes to the support enforcement system in New Brunswick, including a change of name from Family Support Orders Service to the Office of Support Enforcement, PLEIS-NB worked collaboratively with OSE to develop a comprehensive new booklet with important information for beneficiaries and payers.



Social Media Campaign

Through Facebook, twitter and website announcements, we conducted four weeks of promotions/boosts using social media to create awareness of the new family resources. Each week we were pleased to see our reach expand. During the campaign, we went from reaching fewer than 1300 people every two months in English, to reaching over 32,000 people. There were many likes and shares. Comments tended to be from individuals who had negative experiences with the family justice system. On the French side of our facebook, we went from reaching barely 1000 people in that timeframe to reaching over 26,100 people. A couple of examples of the eleven ads from our campaign are set out below.



Special Events

Annual BBQ

In 2017 our celebratory theme was “Canada 150 NB.”

We were joined at our annual BBQ by staff, friends, community partners, funders, volunteers and members of the private bar, the legal community, and the law schools. Our BBQ is a small gesture of gratitude to everyone who contributes to our efforts to educate and inform the public about the law.



Thanks to Costco Wholesale and Sobeys Regent Street for contributing to our event.

Annual PLEIS-NB BBQ: From left to right: Deborah, Chris, Jennifer, Judy, Spencer, Juliette, Jael, Danielle



Staff from Gignoo Transition House.



Financial Overview 2017-18

teed saunders
doyle Chartered professional
accountants
& advisors

An independent
member of 

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Public Legal Education & Information Service Of New Brunswick Inc.

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Public Legal Education & Information Service Of New Brunswick Inc., which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2018 and the statements of revenues and expenditures, changes in net assets and cash flow for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Public Legal Education & Information Service Of New Brunswick Inc. as at March 31, 2018 and the results of its operations and its cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Teed Saunders Doyle

Fredericton, New Brunswick
June 25, 2018

39 Canterbury Street, Saint John, NB, Canada
565 Priestman Street, Suite 102, Fredericton, NB, Canada

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION & INFORMATION SERVICE OF NEW BRUNSWICK INC. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Year Ended March 31, 2018

	2018	2017
REVENUE		
Justice Canada	\$ 134,956	\$ 94,348
Miscellaneous project revenue	26,751	37,281
New Brunswick Department of Public Safety	-	71,744
New Brunswick Law Foundation	90,000	90,000
New Brunswick Department of Justice	239,707	108,687
Women's Equality Branch	-	116,790
Publications Sales and Other Revenue	496	6,445
	<u>491,910</u>	<u>525,295</u>
COST OF SALES		
Administration	31,429	19,901
Conference and travel	19,438	9,806
Miscellaneous	1,418	5,426
Office expense	22,709	30,871
Printing and distribution	152,445	74,031
Professional services	94,397	21,980
Salaries and benefits	178,212	226,155
	<u>500,048</u>	<u>388,170</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ (8,138)</u>	<u>\$ 137,125</u>