

# JUSTICE SECTOR CONSTELLATION: LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION RESULTS

July 2018

## Constellation Key Strategies

Advance policy and system change that improve accessibility to justice sector services

Coordinate justice sector resources and improve referrals to justice sector resources

Educate the public and stakeholders regarding the intersection of poverty and the legal system

## Project Findings and Themes

**Access:** Individuals in poverty face difficulty accessing legal supports because of childcare, transportation, parking, accessibility of information and knowledge of supports. Due to a lack of accessibility of information, individuals are getting sometimes misinformed legal advice from social workers and service providers that could have dangerous results.

**Coordination:** Individuals in poverty are facing difficulty due to a lack of collaboration between services and a need of better training for front line staff, officers, and service providers. Many services are not effectively addressing needs and FOIP creates added barriers.

**Awareness:** There is a clear connection between poverty and the law due to increase risk to meet basic needs, and financial limitations to reaching supports. It is important that everyone is aware of this connection in order to influence policy and increase awareness of supports. It is especially important that service providers are aware so that they are prepared with training and appropriate services to effectively address the needs and questions of their clients.

## Participant-Identified Solutions

**Make legal forms easier to read and complete:** simplified forms, translation services, support in filling out forms.

**Direction access points:** Peer support or practicum students who can assist individuals in court and then connect them to other services.

**Peer support:** Available in community hubs, shelters, courts, etc to direct and support. Peer support can also help individuals leaving incarceration to transition.

**Better advertise services:** Social media, pamphlets, etc.

**Collaboration:** Improve collaboration between service providers and increase staff knowledge of services to better direct clients. Create a centralized platform to access all services.

**Training and education:** Sensitivity and mental health training for police officers and front-line staff. Increase awareness of the relationship between poverty and law through courses, field trips, etc.

**Theory of Change Statement:** When Albertans have the knowledge, resources and capability to understand and address their legal issues and the justice sector is accessible and coordinated, then the legal system will not contribute to or cause poverty.

**Priority Areas:** Sustainability for the Constellation; Education and engagement; Coordination; Accessibility of legal system