

Results at a glance

Evaluation of Gender-Based Violence Initiatives (JPIP)

Through Budget 2021, investments were made through two Justice Partnership and Innovation Program (JPIP) funding streams to contribute to the federal government's priority to advance the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The **Independent Legal Advice (ILA) and Independent Legal Representation (ILR)** funding stream provides access to free ILA/ILR for victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). Its main objective is to reduce the re-traumatization often faced by victims of IPV when engaging with the justice system, and work towards increasing confidence in the justice system's response to GBV.

The **Additional Supports** funding stream supports a range of activities, including family court support worker models, promotion of tools to identify family violence, and improving justice system coordination. The funding stream aims to improve support and access to justice for victims of IPV who are involved in the family justice system.

WHAT WAS FOUND

- There is a continued and growing need for support services for victims of IPV navigating the family justice system, due to the high and increasing prevalence of IPV in Canada. Ongoing efforts are required to fill gaps that remain to meet the needs of specific groups who face disproportionate risks of IPV or face unique challenges in accessing supports and justice.
- The funding streams have been responsive in meeting the needs of victims of IPV. They are serving a diverse group of clients, including women, Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQI+, racialized persons and communities, immigrants and newcomers, those living in rural/remote areas, people with disabilities, and official language minority communities.
- Key areas of success related to the design and delivery of the two funding streams include: the early support and guidance materials provided by JPIP officials; targeted efforts made by JPIP officials to foster strong working relationships among funding recipients; and embedding practices and approaches that are culturally sensitive and safe, trauma-informed, and use a gender-based approach.
- Challenges at the project level included: recruitment of qualified staff, high demand for services, and level of community support for short-term projects.
- ILA/ILR projects increased the capacity of funding recipients to establish and improve services and supports in communities throughout Canada. Funding increased access through advocacy, support, workshops, training, and the enhancement or creation

of new services where none previously existed.

- Training provided through ILA/ILR project funding enabled justice system professionals to respond more effectively to victims of IPV by increasing their knowledge and understanding of a range of topics such as coercive control and non-physical forms of family violence (e.g., financial abuse, gaslighting).
- ILA/ILR projects supported victims of IPV to make informed decisions and navigate the family and criminal justice system. Based on a client survey administered by funding recipients, there is evidence that victims felt they had a better understanding of their legal options and were provided comprehensive information about the applicable legal services.
- While it is not possible to eliminate re-traumatization from occurring fully due to the multiple interactions a victim may have with the justice system, ILA/ILR services played an important role in mitigating the re-traumatization of IPV victims by promoting trauma-informed practices and providing support throughout the legal process.
- The navigation role of family court support workers and triage officers along with the implementation of services that previously did not exist in communities (e.g., rural/remote locations) through Additional Supports projects contributed to an improved ability of the family justice system to respond to the needs of victims of IPV.
- ILA/ILR and Additional Supports projects contributed to increased engagement by fostering collaboration across legal fields (such as criminal and family law) and among governments, legal organizations, and community agencies to jointly address needs and issues facing victims of IPV. According to funding recipients, the funding also built trust between organizations and agencies, enabling more referrals for victims of IPV, thereby improving their ability to support victims effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations as the funding streams were implemented as expected and there are no identified barriers to the achievement of expected results.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION: The Evaluation of GBV Initiatives (JPIP) was conducted by the Department of Justice Canada's Evaluation Branch and covered fiscal years 2021-22 to 2024-25. It examined relevance, design and delivery, and effectiveness in accordance with the Treasury Board's *Policy on Results* (2016).

