

LEGAL INFORMATION SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

LISNS delivers access to justice for Nova Scotians through its services and programs. The goal is to provide people with peace of mind through tools to avoid or manage legal conflict.

Innovation

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS) is a charitable not for profit which has been providing free legal information to Nova Scotians for over 35 years. LISNS is being recognized for innovation in the delivery of legal services to meet areas of need. It is a leader in access to justice and received the *Canadian Bar Association 2016 NS Law Day Award for innovation* in supporting self represented Nova Scotians through the public navigator project which also was recognized by the Minister of Justice in the Nova Scotia Legislature in Fall 2016.

The initiative focuses on training community laypeople to assist people through legal information who are thinking about going to court. Public Navigator info: <https://www.legalinfo.org/lisns-spotlight/pn-nslegislature>.

Digital Innovation

LISNS recently released the first of its kind in Canada, **wills app**, which is available to all Nova Scotians for free via the LISNS website. Wills app info: <https://www.legalinfo.org/legal-information-topics/our-new-wills-app-is-live>. This was possible through a partnership with volunteer IT students through Saint Mary's University. LISNS will be launching a **power of attorney app** in the Spring 2018. The wills and power of attorney apps respond to a significant need in the general NS population as well as a gap which exists for patients in palliative care and more generally in hospital settings. This builds on LISNS medical legal health partnership (the first in Atlantic Canada) with the IWK whereby qualifying families are able to access free legal services delivered.

LISNS is using the wills app to provide **wills to underprivileged seniors in the Preston Communities** – working in conjunction with the Wills Project at the Schulich School of Law and volunteer lawyers. LISNS is also hosting a series of wills information sessions at the public libraries in the Province which to date have had waiting lists resulting from the demand. Immigrants are particularly interested in receiving this information.

The recently launched free **Small Claims Court app**, a first in Canada, was developed to build on the public navigator initiative to respond to a need identified by the Chief Small Claims Court Adjudicator, and has been successfully piloted at the Halifax Small Claims Court where the senior administrator has declared it to be a “game changer” in providing people with

assistance. Small claims court info: <https://legalinfo.org/legal-information-topics/new-small-claims-court-app>.

Gold Standard Programming

LISNS provides a telephone hot-line service which continues to be recognized as a high quality response to people requiring legal information (demand continues to exceed supply). Callers speak to a legally trained legal information counsellor and may be triaged to a lawyer in private practice through the volunteer lawyer referral service which provides a 30 minute consultation for a \$20 fee. We serve approximately 9,000 Nova Scotians per year with a demand that exceeds current resources. LISNS has a website which provides information on all areas of the law and which receives almost half a million unique visitors annually. LISNS also provides support to the public via LiveChat and e-mail service.

Community Outreach

Partners for Legal Education

Together with the Partners for Legal Education (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Dalhousie Legal Aid, and AJEFNE) LISNS delivers legal information sessions for newcomers to Canada, covering civil law, family violence, residential tenancies, child protection, law in everyday life, human rights, immigration and refugee law, with over 100 participants in the sessions. LISNS has numerous publications written for newcomers on various topics that are available in multiple languages from the LISNS website.

LISNS FUNDING

LISNS receives the bulk of its funding through a small grant from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia (noteworthy that LISNS is the grantee which receives the highest grant in recognition of the support for LISNS work and its importance). LISNS receives a small grant from both the federal and provincial governments which have remained static over the past 20 years. LISNS does a lot with very little but must raise funds externally to support updating of publications and continue innovation in service delivery to be a relevant resource for Nova Scotians.

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