

25 YEARS OF FACILITATING ACCESS TO THE LAW FOR ALL

Written by Éducaloi, 2025 Understanding the law and the rules that govern everyday life is not always easy for the general public. That's why Éducaloi, a Quebec non-profit organization and partner of LexisNexis, works daily to make the law accessible, easy to understand and easy to use for the people of Quebec.

As Quebec's leading source of reliable, plain-language legal information, with over 8.5 million visits to its website each year, Éducaloi is a key player in democratizing the law and improving access to justice. With its dual expertise in clear communication of the law and legal education, Éducaloi targets all adults and young people in Quebec, regardless of their origins, social situation, religion, gender identity, age, migratory status, or other conditions. The organization acts on many levels to contribute to a legally informed, autonomous, and responsible society.

TOOLS TO REACH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

Éducaloi's multidisciplinary team creates free resources to clarify the law for the general public. Articles, videos, guides, leaflets, infographics, podcasts, radio shows, quizzes... varied and innovative formats are designed to adapt to people's needs and help them to better understand the legal concepts of their daily lives. The topics covered are diverse (family, fraud, work, housing, health, justice, etc.), so everyone can recognize the legal aspects of their lives and develop reflexes that empower them to act.

Éducaloi also works with community organizations and the legal and academic communities to equip them with tools and to train them in legal education and

clear communication of the law. Their free legal workshops, facilitated by volunteer jurists, introduce elementary and high school students to legal concepts and their role as citizens in society. Extended this year to community organizations, these workshops are designed to clarify the law for those who need it most.

MONITORING LEGAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE HEART OF ÉDUCALOI'S MISSION



With the support of LexisNexis monitoring solutions, Éducaloi is always aware of legal developments in Quebec and Canada. Its team can easily follow the evolution of the law and clarify its effects by updating its contents or creating new ones. In recent months, this monitoring has enabled Éducaloi to identify changes in the use of English in the province brought about

by Bill 14. It could then adjust its existing tools to facilitate understanding of the rules governing the use of French and English in various fields.

25 YEARS OF COMMITMENT, THE BEGINNING OF A GREAT STORY

Éducaloi is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. A quarter-century of commitment to building a society that knows and understands its rights. 25 years of adapting to legal, technical, and societal changes by developing new tools and ways of clarifying, explaining, and informing based on the population's needs. And that's just the beginning! To celebrate its 25th anniversary, Éducaloi invited its partners to a fundraising evening and launched 25 ambitious, innovative, and creative initiatives made possible

Éducaloi has been a pioneer in clear communication of the law and legal education in Quebec. It continues to innovate and share its expertise, with a goal of advancing Quebec society towards an accessible, simple, and straightforward justice system."

through a collective fundraising campaign. Videos in sign language, comic strips and mangas, printed booklets, and other media will be designed to further the understanding of the law.

Over the past 25 years, Éducaloi has reached 75 million visits on its website, **educaloi.qc.ca**, with over 1,600 up-to-date resources, nearly 4,000 in-class workshops, 300 employees, and close to 100,000 subscribers on social networks and newsletters.

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Make the right move with Éducaloi!

FACILITER L'ACCÈS AU DROIT POUR TOUTES ET TOUS, DEPUIS 25 ANS

Rédigé par Éducaloi, 2025 Comprendre le droit et les lois qui régissent le quotidien n'est pas toujours facile pour la population. C'est pourquoi Éducaloi, organisme de bienfaisance québécois et partenaire de LexisNexis, agit chaque jour pour rendre le droit accessible, facile à comprendre et à utiliser pour la population du Québec.

Source principale d'information juridique fiable et vulgarisée au Québec, avec plus de 8,5 millions de visites de son site Internet chaque année, Éducaloi est un acteur de premier plan dans la démocratisation du droit et l'amélioration de l'accès à la justice. Avec une double expertise en communication claire du droit et en éducation juridique, Éducaloi s'adresse à toutes et tous les adultes et les jeunes du Québec, peu importe leurs origines, leur situation sociale, leur religion, leur identité de genre, leur âge, leur statut migratoire ou toute autre condition. L'organisme agit à plusieurs niveaux pour contribuer à une société juridiquement informée, autonome et responsable.

DES OUTILS POUR REJOINDRE LE PLUS GRAND NOMBRE

Son équipe pluridisciplinaire créée notamment des ressources gratuites pour clarifier le droit pour la population du Québec. Des articles, vidéos, guides, dépliants, dossiers, infographies, balados, émissions de radio, quiz... des formats variés et innovants, pensés pour s'adapter aux usages du grand public et lui permettre de mieux comprendre les notions de droits qui entourent sa vie quotidienne. Les sujets abordés sont diverses (famille, fraude, travail, logement, santé, justice, etc.), afin que chaque personne soit consciente des situations juridiques qui existent dans sa vie et puisse développer ses réflexes et sa confiance d'agir.

Éducaloi s'adresse aussi aux organismes communautaires et aux mondes scolaire et juridique pour les équiper et les former en communication claire du droit et en éducation juridique. Leurs ateliers juridiques gratuits, animés par des juristes bénévoles, permettent d'introduire les élèves primaires et secondaires aux notions de droit, et à leur rôle en tant que citoyennes et citoyens dans la société. Étendus cette année aux organismes communautaires, ces ateliers sont conçus pour clarifier le droit pour celles et ceux qui en ont le plus besoin.

SUIVI DES DÉVELOPPEMENTS JURIDIQUES AU CŒUR DE LA MISSION D'ÉDUCALOI



Avec l'appui des solutions de veille LexisNexis. Éducaloi reste toujours au courant de l'actualité juridique du Québec et du Canada. Son équipe peut facilement suivre l'évolution du droit et en clarifier les effets en mettant à jour ses contenus ou en en créant de nouveaux. Ces derniers mois, ce

suivi a notamment permis d'identifier les changements en matière d'utilisation de l'anglais dans la province apportés par la loi 14 et d'ajuster les outils existants pour faciliter la compréhension des règles d'utilisation du français et de l'anglais dans différents domaines.

25 ANS D'ENGAGEMENT, LE DÉBUT D'UNE GRANDE HISTOIRE

Éducaloi fête cette année ses 25 ans. Un quart de siècle d'engagement pour contribuer à bâtir une société qui connaît et comprend ses droits. 25 ans d'adaptation aux évolutions légales, mais aussi

techniques et sociétales, en développant de nouveaux outils et de nouvelles façons de faire pour clarifier, expliquer, informer selon les besoins de la population. Et ce n'est que le début! Pour célébrer ses 25 ans, Éducaloi a invité ses partenaires à marquer l'évènement lors d'une soirée-bénéfice et a mis en œuvre 25 initiatives ambitieuses, innovantes et créatives, financées grâce à une campagne de financement collective. Vidéos en langue des signes, bandes dessinées et mangas, fascicules imprimés et autres supports seront ainsi conçus pour continuer à faire avancer la compréhension du droit.

En 25 ans, ce sont 75 millions de visites sur son site **educaloi.qc.ca**, plus de 1600 contenus à jour disponibles, près de 4000 ateliers en classe, 300 personnes employées, et près de 100000 personnes abonnées à leurs réseaux sociaux et infolettres.

Éducaloi a été pionnière en matière de communication claire du droit et en éducation juridique au Québec et continue d'innover et de partager son savoir-faire, dans un but commun : faire évoluer la société québécoise vers une justice accessible, simple et sans détour."

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Question droit? Éducaloi.

YUKON'S TESLIN TLINGIT COUNCIL MOVES FURTHER TOWARDS ESTABLISHING JUSTICE SYSTEM

By Terry Davidson Originally published on Law360 Canada, © LexisNexis Canada Inc. A First Nation in Yukon has taken another step towards having its own justice system after signing an agreement furthering the use of community-based "restorative measures."

According to a joint **news release** from Feb. 10, Yukon, the federal government and Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC), a self-governing Frist Nation in the Southern Yukon Territory, have signed the Corrections and Community Services Amendment — which applies to the overarching Administration of Justice Agreement from 2011.

"This agreement [on the Community Services Amendment] will support Teslin Tlingit Council in implementing their corrections and community service model that uses restorative measures rooted in Teslin Tlingit culture, values and way of life known as Haa Kusteeyí (Our Way)," states the release.

With this, Ottawa will provide TTC with \$5 million this fiscal year and \$2.1 million annually in support of its work, which "will focus on health and wellness to reconnect Teslin Tlingit Citizens to their community, clans, Elders and families."

"The focal point of [TTC's] corrections and community services model is the establishment of a land-based healing camp with the support of Elders and trained counsellors," states the release.

"With the corrections and community services component of the Implementation

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Plan now in place, [TTC] can fully exercise their self-government jurisdiction over justice matters and move forward with implementing their vision for justice, peace and safety in their community."

TTC's path to the present dates back to the signing of the Administration of Justice Agreement and the associated Implementation Plan — actions

that paved the way for TTC to establish its Justice Council Act and Peacemaker Court.

According to TTC's **website**, the Peacemaker Court "operates in accordance with principles of judicial independence, impartiality and fairness."

Areas covered by the court include adoption; inheritance and wills; the solemnization of marriage; the management and protection of settlement land; the protection of fish, wildlife and habitat; planning, zoning and land development; and the prevention of overcrowding of residences and "other buildings."

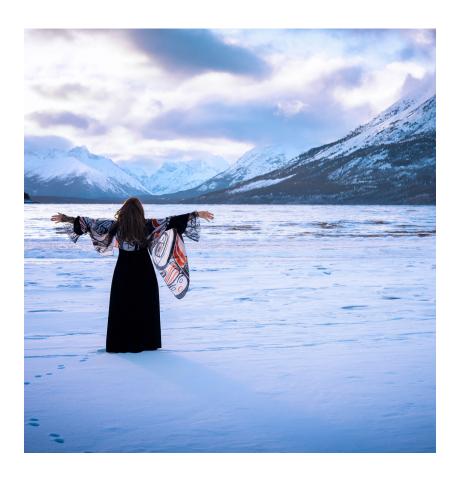
The Peacemaker Court "will not be exercising criminal law procedures," the site states.

Yukon justice minister and attorney general Tracy-Anne McPhee called it a historic event.

"This marks a historic milestone for the [TTC] and is a powerful step forward for Yukon First Nations in asserting their justice authority under Self-Government Agreements," said McPhee in a statement. "Our government is proud to stand in support of this achievement. ... I look forward to seeing the lasting, positive impact of this agreement throughout Yukon communities."

TTC Chief Eric Morris said it fulfills "an important and crucial aspect of our Administration of Justice Agreement."

"This component will allow healing to occur for offenders of [TTC] laws and which healing is based on Tlingit values of Haa Kusteeyí," said Morris. "This aspect of healing complements the adjudication and enforcement of [TTC] laws which implementation components have been previously agreed to and are being gradually implemented."



Federal justice minister Arif Virani said the Administration of Justice agreements "support the recognition of Indigenous justice systems."

"They provide practical and meaningful ways for Teslin Tlingit people to assume greater control over the administration of justice in their communities in ways that reflect their traditions and values. Signing this agreement will strengthen their community-based justice system and support their self-determination on the shared path of reconciliation."

The release notes that the ongoing implementation of the Administration of Justice Agreement answers the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for the "recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems."

Yukon has one of the largest Indigenous populations in Canada. According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 22.3 per cent of Yukon's population identified themselves as Indigenous in the 2021 Census — the third highest in Canada, behind only the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

TOP JUDGE SAYS SCC WANTS TO HEAR MORE PRIVATE LAW CASES, URGES CANADIANS TO 'FIGHT FOR' RULE OF LAW

By Cristin Schmitz Originally published on Law360 Canada, © LexisNexis Canada Inc. As the Supreme Court of Canada marks its 150th birthday amid rising incursions on the rule of law abroad, Chief Justice Richard Wagner says it can also be an opportune time for Canadians to reflect on the state of their own courts, the rule of law and their independent and impartial justice system.

"Since it is our 150th anniversary this year, it's a good time, given what's going on in the world very close to us, ... to reflect on that, and to make sure that we will fight for ... and defend ... our rule of law, defend our justice system, and make sure that the judges always could benefit from judicial independence for the benefit of the people," the chief justice told Law360 Canada in an exclusive interview in his Ottawa chambers Jan. 29.

Earlier this week, the Supreme Court welcomed 85 ambassadors into its Art Deco courtroom, where the foreign representatives were curious about its unique role as the only apex court in the world that is both bilingual and bijural (i.e. civil and common law).

"Many of those ambassadors will communicate with my office and I will refer them to the National Judicial Institute (NJI) with a view to help their own judiciary in their own countries to improve their system," Chief Justice Wagner said.

Recently, the NJI, the federal judicial educational body that he chairs, agreed to give the judiciary in Vietnam training on subjects such as judgment writing and ethical principles for judges, the chief justice said.



"We should not underestimate the importance of the Supreme Court, and the courts in general in Canada, on the world scene," he remarked. "We are well-regarded. We are regarded as a democratic country that was able to keep the rule of law and an independent judiciary, which for [some foreign diplomats] is sometimes a strange animal."

In the wide-ranging interview, the chief justice also said he and his colleagues would be "very happy" to hear more private law cases — addressing a concern lawyers have expressed that the top court allocates too many of its resources to criminal, constitutional and other public law cases.

Chief Justice Wagner also defended his court's policy, implemented in 2022, to bar intervener counsel from arguing in person at the Supreme Court — expanding on his earlier remarks that limiting interveners'

counsel to advocating on the court's Zoom platform levels the playing field among interveners and facilitates their access to justice by reducing costs.

But the evident challenges for the rule of law beyond Canada prompted Law360 Canada to raise the larger question about risks to that foundational principle of democratic governance.

Chief Justice Wagner declined to comment on any specifics involving the United States, including a number of American government actions since U.S. President Donald Trump took office Jan. 20, which are now facing court challenges.

"I'm not a politician, I'm only a judge," he remarked, while acknowledging that "I am very concerned ... for the last couple of years" about threats to the rule of law internationally.

But for Canada "I'm optimistic," Chief Justice Wagner declared.

"We should be mindful of what's going on" abroad, he advised. "But at the same time, I think it gives us the opportunity to realize the nice assets that we have [in Canada] and to bring people on board, and to realize that we have good and strong institutions, good democracy. We have good judges — the best in the world. We export our expertise to many countries in the world and I think that Canadians, knowing that, will realize that ... we're not that bad here in Canada ... And people should keep their trust in that," he said. "They should realize that [we] are, in a way, lucky to have this system [of] independent judges, impartial judges, governed by ethical principles — which is not the case in many other countries."

However, Chief Justice Wagner has also warned before that the Canadian justice system and judiciary are not immune to the kind of abuse and unfounded attacks, including from elected officials, that are seen in other countries.

Canada's courts are also **vulnerable** to organized misinformation and disinformation that have shaken public confidence.

But whose role is it to combat fake news about the courts and justice system during what seems to be a fraught period for the rule of law?

The bar? Politicians? Media?

Preserving and supporting the rule of law, and Canadians' understanding of and confidence in their system of justice, requires vigilance and action from the whole of society, including the judiciary, the bar, politicians and the public, he answered.

"I think it's up to everybody, to every stakeholder, to do it," the chief justice answered. "We have to aim for that," he said. "Insofar as we're concerned, we're only judges. We only have limited space to do it. We do it through our judgments. But we have to take every opportunity we have to inform the public of what we're doing."

The chief justice said that, to the best of his knowledge, the Supreme Court of Canada has not been targeted with an organized disinformation campaign, but he noted courts in other countries have been.

For example, Brazil's Supreme Federal Court set up its own "Disinformation Combat Program" in 2021 to counter falsehoods that distorted or altered the meaning of its decisions and jeopardized democratic stability and fundamental rights in the country.

One means that the Supreme Federal Court chose to fight fake news was by providing as much accurate information to the public as possible.

"That resonates with me," Chief Justice Wagner said. "Since public trust is fundamental to democracy and the justice system, it's important for the judges to make sure the public knows about it — because it's hard to appreciate something that you don't know."

The Supreme Court has rolled many initiatives based on its judges' commitment to support and "to improve the public trust through knowledge, through information," he noted (e.g. since he became chief justice in December 2017, the top court initiated plain-language summaries of all its judgments; hired communications personnel; expanded its social media presence; held appeal hearings and other public events in Winnipeg and Quebec City; issued annual reports; and in January 2025 unveiled a fully overhauled website.

(Canada's top judge also accepts the standing invitation from the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery to participate in an annual question-and-answer session with the national media.)

On Feb. 3, the chief justice and Justices Andromache Karakatsanis and Nicholas Kasirer will also be in Victoria, B.C. for a **two-day visit**, which will include a local media availability, meetings with local judges, lawyers and law students, and a town hall-style Q-and-A session with the public. It's the first of five such cross-country visits the court has scheduled to commemorate its 150th anniversary

"I think that we are lucky here in Canada, and especially at the Supreme Court, in terms of ... disinformation, but we have to fight for it," he said. "I think the biggest mistake would be to stop thinking about it. So we have to always be mindful of that, so that we will find new initiatives to make sure that the right information is provided," he said.

"But my recommendation, at this time, with my colleagues is to do our work the best we can, to write judgments as clearly as possible, and to take any opportunity to inform the public [and] inform the media what we're doing. I think that's the best counterattack we can find against misinformation so far."

Law360 Canada asked Chief Justice Wagner to address a concern expressed within the bar that the Supreme Court is not accepting to hear and decide enough cases — particularly "bread and butter" private law cases.

(In 2023, the top court decided 34 cases, including 27 written rulings — a 76-year low. There has been a **downward trend** in the number of appeals decided by the court for more than two decades.)

The chief justice said the COVID19 pandemic was a "major" contributing factor to the court's low output in 2023 as it reduced the number of intermediate appellate court judgments for which leave to appeal was sought.

Moreover, the court heard and decided more cases last year, which the chief justice says he expects will continue in 2025.

"I think that the effect, or the impact, of COVID 19 is gone ... and that's why I'm optimistic that we could take more cases," the chief justice said.

"I wish we would have more cases," he added, observing that he and his colleagues "would be very happy to take more cases of private law compared to criminal law" or other cases.

"I cannot explain to you why, in private law, there's not as many cases as I would like to see," he said. "I don't know the reason why."

So what should lawyers be doing in this regard?

"Well I think that the bar, and of course their clients, if they want to go further they should ... try to get leave," he advised. "I think that they should not be discouraged to ... ask for leave ... if they find that they have a reasonable case to argue."

He indicated the court always applies the same "public importance" standard for leave to appeal — and not in a more restrictive way.

We are looking to cases where there is a legal issue of public importance, of public interest and [you can be assured] that once we see ... one, we'll take it."

"We never changed our criteria. We are looking to cases where there is a legal issue of public importance, of public interest and [you can be assured] that once we see ... one, we'll take it."

Does the low number of private law appeals indicate that private law litigants don't have the means to take their case further? he queried.

"I don't know the reason why. But there's no willingness of the court not to take those cases," he said. "In other words, we're nine people looking at all the [leave to appeal] applications ... and I can tell you that I want to hear as many cases as possible, and we're going on the right path now." Law360 Canada also asked the chief justice whether the court would reconsider its unpopular decision in 2022 to restrict intervener counsel to advocating for their clients on Zoom (whereas the parties' counsel still have the choice to appear in the Ottawa courtroom or online).

A number of intervener counsel have told Law360 Canada they believe they can represent their clients more effectively in person in front of the judges, as it makes it easier to read the full bench and facilitates extemporaneous exchanges with the judges.

"Every rule can be reconsidered, that's the way progress is made," he replied. "I'm not telling you that it will be reviewed but I think history and experience in this court has shown that we are willing and ready to change our habits, to change our way of doing things, so it will remain the same in the future."

Yet "the future demands that we use technology more and more in order to lower ... the cost [of], in order to facilitate access to, justice," he explained. "We kept the hearing of the parties in [our] presence, but we thought it would be a better use of the judicial resources, and ... show the way for the future, in asking that all the interveners for five minutes argue their case at distance."

At the same time, interventions are welcome and important to the Supreme Court of Canada, unlike some other Supreme Courts around the globe, he noted.

"It has to be clear, we need interveners," Chief Justice Wagner said. "And one way to keep it, and to keep the number [of interveners] as high as possible, is to facilitate access to justice, facilitate their presence in the courtroom, and that's by using technology."

One of the policy's objectives is to put all interveners "on the same level" and "avoid discrimination."

"The other reason is [intervener argument] is only for five minutes," he said. "And to ask a party to come from Newfoundland or B.C. to Ottawa with plane and hotels and so on and so forth for five minutes, it's a question of access to justice," he said. "It's a question of costs.

"And it was unfair to force all those people acting for different organizations ... to pay for those expenses," he elaborated, alluding to a pressure some interveners would feel to send their counsel to Ottawa if other interveners chose to do so.

"A good argument, whether it be in court or by Zoom, is a good argument and that doesn't change whether you are at a distance or in court," Chief Justice Wagner said.

He said he has received positive feedback about the court's use of Zoom from intervener counsel whose clients' can't afford to send them to Ottawa.

The chief justice, who co-chairs with the federal Minister of Justice the Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations, said it is also important that everyone in the Canadian justice system continues work on solving longstanding and well-documented problems, such as high costs and delays, that ordinary Canadians face in their efforts to get justice.

He also highlighted three pivotal years in the development of the Supreme Court of Canada since its creation in 1875: its transformation into Canada's final court of appeal after appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England were abolished in 1949; the 1982 birth of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which expanded the role and powers of the judicial branch of government; and the court's 2014 majority decision in Reference re Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6, which held that the top court is a "constitutionally essential institution" and a "foundational premise of the Constitution" whose composition and "essential features" cannot be substantively changed, except

by constitutional amendment, thereby securing its existence against abolition by Parliament and its nine-member composition: 2014 SCC 21.

"I think that was a great, great decision," said the chief justice, who voted with the 6-1 majority.

For example, the *Supreme Court Act* guarantees Quebec three judges on the top court and, following the Supreme Court's reference decision, "that cannot be changed, even though the number of the [Quebec] population, [its] demographic percentage [in Canada] may be lowered," the chief justice said. "Same thing for the number of judges. It's fundamental that there be some stability ...," he said.

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