

The Alberta **Limited Legal Services** Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Project Improves Access to Justice, Affordability of Lawyers

Innovative project to produce first research on impact of limited scope legal services.

<http://albertalegalservices.com/>

Calgary, 18 April 2017: Rob Harvie QC and John-Paul Boyd today announced the launch of the [Alberta Limited Legal Services Project](http://albertalegalservices.com/), an exciting new program aimed at improving Albertans' access to justice. 43 lawyers, located across the province and practicing in the most requested areas of law, have agreed to provide limited legal services – giving clients the services they want, when they want them, at a price they can afford – for the 18-month period of the project.

Lawyers are normally hired to handle a case from start to finish, which can quickly become unaffordable. Studies show that the high cost of lawyers is a factor in most people's decisions to go to court on their own, and that even middle-income Canadians are often unable to hire a lawyer to manage their legal problems.

Limited legal services, also called *limited scope retainers* and *unbundled legal services*, allow people to hire a lawyer for just one or two tasks rather than all of a case. The lawyer might provide advice or an opinion, coach someone through a difficult court application or disclosure process, prepare an argument or an affidavit, or advise on responding to a lawsuit or settlement offer.

Limited legal services are expected to help people navigate Canada's complicated court system, increase the chances that justice will be done and improve people's capacity to respond to legal problems. However, no studies have yet been done to prove that limited services have this effect. The Alberta Limited Legal Services Project will fill this gap in the research. The Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family will survey both lawyers and clients during the data-collection phase of the project to learn about the usefulness of limited services and assess clients' and lawyers' satisfaction with legal work provided on this basis.

Harvie said that this project "will show lawyers that limited legal services are profitable and rewarding, and can easily be integrated into the busiest of law practices." Boyd says that "this

project will have a huge impact on access to justice throughout Alberta and across Canada,” by “encouraging lawyers to provide brief legal services, and by letting people who struggle to pay for legal help know that affordable alternatives to the usual cradle-to-grave approach exist.”

Robert G. Harvie QC is a lawyer with [Huckvale LLP](#), a Lethbridge law firm, and a Bencher of the Law Society of Alberta. Rob has practiced family law for more than 30 years. He presently serves as the Chair of the [National Self Represented Litigants Project](#) Advisory Board.

John-Paul E. Boyd is a family law lawyer and the Executive Director of the [Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family](#), an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Calgary. He is the founding author of the wikibook [JP Boyd on Family Law](#) and a regular speaker on family law subjects for judges, lawyers and the public.

The Alberta Limited Legal Services Project is organized by Rob Harvie and John-Paul Boyd with an ad hoc steering committee of Alberta lawyers, and is generously funded by a grant from the [Law Foundation of Ontario](#). Although services in all areas of the law are available, the project focusses on family law, being the area of the greatest and most urgent need. Lawyers may join the project at any point during the data-collection phase, which runs from April 2017 to September 2018. The final report will be available at the end of October 2018.

Contact Information

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albertalegalservices.com

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