



LEAF
FAEJ

WOMEN'S LEGAL
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND
FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION
JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

LEAF's Strategic Plan 2021-2026

LEAF challenges systems of oppression and exclusion and charts new paths in feminist litigation to illuminate gender inequality in society. Its long history of feminist activism is the foundation for LEAF's priorities in the next five years. Inspired by the track record of its feminist agitators, LEAF continues to take on controversial issues, bringing a feminist analysis to emerging inequalities in society.

Looking ahead to 2026, LEAF commits to:

Prioritizing reconciliation and working to amplify and affirm Indigenous voices and systems

LEAF's work towards substantive equality is only possible with the acknowledgment of the colonial foundation and continued colonial effects of the legal system with which we primarily engage. This engagement and our recognition of the harms of colonial systems, including the colonial legal system, is a fundamental contradiction in the work of LEAF. We recognize the importance of decolonization, the need to address the harms of colonialism, and ally with Indigenous Peoples in our work. However, we also acknowledge that the basis of our work affirms a legal framework that is intrinsically colonial and harmful in essence.

LEAF acknowledges the devastating impact of colonial laws on the lives of Indigenous Peoples and Nations, and recognizes the particularly harmful role those colonial systems, including legal systems, have had on the lives of Indigenous women and girls. We also acknowledge the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples and Nations, including women and girls.

LEAF currently seeks to challenge the harmful impacts of these laws on Indigenous Peoples and Nations, particularly women and girls, within the colonial legal system. LEAF takes anti-Indigenous racism positions and harm reduction approaches in our advocacy. However, LEAF recognizes the limitations and contraction in the values of LEAF and our approach within the Canadian judicial system.

LEAF acknowledges that fundamental to reconciliation is decolonizing our understanding of the law. This includes identifying the space LEAF occupies in affirming the colonial legal

system, as well making space and actively affirming and amplifying Indigenous legal orders as alternatives to the colonial legal system. This affirmation includes supporting the revitalization of existing Indigenous legal systems and orders, recognizing that these systems and orders have existed for millennia, and that the revitalization work has been ongoing.

LEAF is committed to supporting and upholding this work.

LEAF commits to working collaboratively with Indigenous women and groups where LEAF can be of service and support. LEAF recognizes the space we occupy and shall actively engage in creating and maintaining space to affirm and amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples and Nations. We understand our role when supporting Indigenous Peoples and Nations work may be asymmetrical in our contributions and shall be committed to achieving transparency.

Core Priorities	Ascendant Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will build sincere, respectful relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities across the country. • LEAF educates its staff, Board and volunteers about the legacy of colonialism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will act to affirm Indigenous legal orders and support their revitalization • LEAF will take legal positions that challenge colonial structures and laws.

Amplify the voices of those who experience gender discrimination.

Women experience gender discrimination in different ways, depending in part on their particular communities and identities. Women know the issues that affect their safety, freedoms and full participation in society. LEAF works with community organizations to ground its legal advocacy in women's unique lived experiences of gender inequality.

Through its community collaborations, LEAF will listen to and learn from the intersectional knowledge of those facing gender discrimination, responding to the priorities raised by these organizations. We will build partnerships across communities and strengthen our understanding of how race, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, gender identity, class,

educational, political status and other intersectional realities affect women’s experience of discrimination and oppression.

Responding to these priorities may require LEAF to embrace uncertainty and conflicting perspectives on emerging issues. LEAF accepts that there are multiple feminist viewpoints. Where views diverge or conflict, LEAF has a role in building understanding and charting paths for complementary strategies. We will approach our sustained involvement in these issues with curiosity and humility, allowing LEAF to make agile decisions about its advocacy role and to amplify the voices of its partners.

Core Priorities	Ascendant Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF acts with respect for intersectional and multi-sector knowledge. • LEAF fosters collaborative, respectful relationships with new and existing partners. • LEAF advocates for inclusive feminism that accepts multiple feminist viewpoints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will lead in difficult conversations, including ones that challenge its own positions. • LEAF will cultivate a new organizational culture of curiosity, risk and tolerance for ambiguity on emerging issues.

Pursuing feminist litigation, law reform and public education

LEAF will work with its members across the country to bring intersectional feminist analyses to litigation, law reform, and public education.

LEAF will continue to intervene in cases to bring feminist legal analyses to the interpretation of Canadian laws. LEAF will offer its litigation expertise to the communities and partners working to achieve gender equality. We will work with these organizations, our members and feminist advocates across the country to monitor cases, follow emerging issues and triage litigation.

LEAF’s network of members and partners around the country identify proposed laws, and opportunities for advocacy in the law reform process. We will work collaboratively to ensure

that feminist analyses are part of the process of law-making at the local, regional and national level.

LEAF will raise public awareness of gender equality through proactive education and dynamic engagement in the public discourse. In the era of 24-hour news cycles and social media, LEAF can harness multiple platforms to raise awareness about gender equality, both by shining a light on these issues in the context of current events, and by highlighting our case work and law reform efforts.

Core Priorities	Ascendant Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will continue to lead collaborative interventions in cases across Canada. • LEAF will strengthen its capacity to respond to law reform and public discourse on gender equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will strengthen its mechanisms for monitoring and triaging cases and law reform opportunities. • LEAF will formalize the assessment of the intersectional experiences of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people in its case monitoring and litigation. • LEAF will explore strategies for trial level advocacy for gender equality.

Deepening and enriching the LEAF network

We rely on the ever-growing contingent of feminist lawyers, legal academics and activists committed to LEAF's work as we respond, with agility, to gender equality issues in courtrooms, before the legislatures and in public debates. The extent of LEAF supporters across the country is our greatest strength and one of our significant contributions to the feminist movement in Canada.

LEAF's reputation is built on a long line of passionate feminists sharing their incredible legal and academic expertise at the frontlines of women's rights. These women have created the climate in workplaces, schools and living rooms for more inclusive conversations about gender equality. We commit to continuing LEAF's evolution by working honestly, and in good faith with our members, Branches, volunteers and partners from coast to coast to coast. We

will draw humbly on the expertise of the communities we are a part of, without appropriating their voices or their strategies for change.

The women involved in LEAF's Committees, Cases and Branches are the backbone of our operations. These feminist legal thinkers understand and can react quickly to the needs of local communities. We are cultivating a large network of feminists who, though not involved in our day-to-day operations, are versed in LEAF positions, connected to each other, and ready to mobilize when the need arises. LEAF is committed to continuing to grow this thriving feminist legal network across the country.

Core Priorities	Ascendant Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will rejuvenate its network of Branches, volunteer academics and pro bono litigators. • LEAF will deepen its connections with other organizations in the feminist community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAF will orient and engage with members across the country to cultivate an extensive base of feminists well-versed in LEAF's analyses and ready to mobilize when needed. • LEAF will identify areas of common priority with feminists in other professions.

Cultivating financial and administrative stability

LEAF commits to be a progressive employer that offers stable, sustainable jobs. The people who chose to work for LEAF share a passion for our mission and work incredibly hard to both promote gender equality and to engage with feminists across the country. We commit to stability, respect and fair treatment as a feminist employer.

Sufficient, predictable funding from a range of sources is critical to achieving this operational stability. The Board will work to develop a funding base that is resilient in times of political change and shifts in programming demands.



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Core Priorities	Ascendant Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LEAF is a stable, progressive, feminist employer.• LEAF maintains transparent governance and operational practices including rigorous monitoring and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LEAF will adopt agile decision-making processes.• LEAF will collaborate with likeminded organizations to ensure sustainable funding for feminist work.• The LEAF Board will lead an active, diversified funding strategy.



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LEAF advocates for substantive gender equality with a proud, intersectional feminist voice.

Looking ahead to 2025, LEAF commits to:

Prioritizing reconciliation and working to amplify and affirm Indigenous voices and systems

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Ascendant Priorities	LEAF will act to affirm Indigenous legal systems and support their revitalization. LEAF will take legal positions that challenge colonial structures and laws.
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Amplify the voices of those who experience gender discrimination

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Pursuing feminist litigation, law reform and public education

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Ascendant Priorities LEAF will strengthen its mechanisms for monitoring and triaging cases & law reform opportunities.
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