

Toronto, October 17th, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INVESTING IN JUSTICE SAVES MORE MONEY THAN IT COSTS – REPORT

A new report published today by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (CFCJ), a research organization based at Osgoode Hall Law School, provides extensive evidence that spending money on justice services and programs results in financial returns that far outweigh the cost of the investments.

The [Investing in Justice report](#) examines research carried out across justice services and programs in several regions, including North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Australia and Asia. The report concludes that across a diversity of justice programs and services, spending on justice results in significant economic and other benefits that generally significantly exceed the value of the investment. In many cases, the rate of return on investment in justice services and programs is between CAD \$9 and \$16 for every CAD \$1 that is spent.

Justice sector spending that was examined for the report relates primarily to civil legal aid, community-based justice programs, pro bono services, and alternative dispute resolution. The report also includes assessments related to spending on legal expense insurance (LEI), legal empowerment initiatives, youth justice, restorative justice and other programs.

Driving home the significance of justice sector investments, the report presents data revealing that cutting spending on justice almost always results in increased costs to the state, the courts and communities. These increased costs derive from a range of outcomes including higher eviction rates, higher unemployment rates and increased homelessness — all of which place greater demands on government services and budgets. Cuts also impact formal justice services, in particular with reduced funding leading to more inefficient courts and higher court costs.

“The evidence really is clear,” says CFCJ director and report co-author Lisa Moore. “Study after study shows that spending to facilitate access to justice through civil legal aid, community-based justice services and a range of other pathways for legal problem resolution saves money for governments, the courts, communities and individuals and also generates money within local economies. It’s a good financial investment.”

According to fellow co-author, Osgoode Hall Law School Professor Trevor Farrow, “two-thirds of the world’s population lacks meaningful access to justice. Canada is not immune from this crisis – many members of our communities, particularly the most vulnerable, cannot access justice. Investing in justice is clearly the right thing to do. As this new report shows, it is also the smart thing to do.”

In recent years, research from the CFCJ has confirmed the high costs to government programs that result from Canadians not being able to respond adequately to their everyday legal problems. These costs to the state are estimated at \$800 million or more annually. The research presented in the Investing in Justice report reinforces the significant costs borne by the state from individuals not being able adequately to address their justice problems, and also makes the case that spending on justice to remove barriers and facilitate dispute resolution is money well spent.



Canadian Forum on Civil Justice 
Forum canadien sur la justice civile

The Investing in Justice report was commissioned by the [Task Force on Justice](#) and is part of an [international collection of background papers](#) in support of UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.3 – equal justice for all.

The Investing in Justice report is available for download on the CFCJ website here: <https://cfcj-fcjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Investing-in-Justice-A-Literature-Review-in-Support-of-the-Case-for-Improved-Access-by-Lisa-Moore-and-Trevor-C-W-Farrow.pdf>.

What justice experts are saying about ‘Investing in Justice’:

“Injustice is costly, as the Task Force on Justice has stated. This important new report by Lisa Moore and Trevor Farrow is crucial to better understand the benefits of investing in justice and the costs of failing to make such investments. It’s the first global review of what we know about the return on investment in justice programs and services. Its conclusion that investing in justice saves more money than it costs, helps make the case for the investments that are urgently needed to deliver on the promise of justice for all by 2030.” – Maaïke de Langen, of NYU’s Center on International Cooperation, Head of research for the Task Force on Justice

“At the OECD we see a strong need for building a convincing business case for access to justice. The OECD White Paper provides an estimate of annual costs of legal problems that ranges from 0.5%– 3% of GDP in most countries. Yet there is room to further explore the costs and benefits of delivering access to justice, also in terms of social and economic outcomes. This report represents an important step to strengthen the evidence base and analysis in this area, and ultimately – deliver equal access to justice for all.” – Tatyana Teplova, Senior Counsellor, Head of Gender, Justice and Inclusiveness, OECD Public Governance Directorate

The [Canadian Forum on Civil Justice](#) (CFCJ) is a national non-profit organization based at [Osgoode Hall Law School](#) at York University that aims to advance civil justice reform through research and advocacy. The CFCJ strives to make the civil justice system more accessible, effective, and sustainable through projects and initiatives that are people-centered.

Contacts for the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice – Forum canadien sur la justice civile:

Trevor C.W. Farrow

Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School & Chair, Canadian Forum on Civil Justice

TFarrow@osgoode.yorku.ca

Lisa Moore

Director, Canadian Forum on Civil Justice

lmoore@cfcj-fcjc.org

--

Contact for York University:

Janice Walls

Media Relations

wallsj@yorku.ca