



Department of Justice Policy on Public Legal Education and Information November 2009

The Department of Justice develops and delivers public legal education and information (PLEI) materials and activities to Canadians as part of its mission to support the Minister of Justice regarding federal mandates and responsibilities, and of the stewardship role it plays in collaboration with provinces and territories with respect to Canada's justice system. This helps ensure that Canada is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient and fair system of justice. In our justice system, the public is expected to know the law.

The Department is committed to continuing to play a leadership role to help ensure that the population of Canada has access to justice. PLEI constitutes an important means towards that goal. The following outlines the Department's key principles and considerations in undertaking PLEI activities:

1. The Department recognizes that Canadians require legal information to be provided to them in plain language, and in a variety of user-friendly ways, to help them understand information that pertains to their legal affairs. Also, research indicates that effective PLEI products often include legal and related non-legal information because those seeking information tend to have clusters of interdependent problems, both legal and non-legal.
2. The Department is committed to taking positive measures to promote access to justice in a way that enhances the vitality of official language communities in minority situations and that promotes the full recognition and use of French and English, while respecting the civil law and common law systems in private law matters.
3. The Department recognizes that many Canadians face barriers in obtaining information about the law and how it affects them because of factors or circumstances, such as living in an isolated area, having a disability or because of cultural or linguistic differences. The Department strives to take these particular needs into account in providing PLEI.
4. The Department recognizes the importance of supporting provincial and territorial governments' efforts on PLEI in view of their responsibilities for the administration of justice, and of working in collaboration with them, with non-governmental organizations and with federal departments on the development and delivery of PLEI.
5. The Department uses PLEI to meet strategic objectives, considering that PLEI is a cost-effective instrument of choice that improves the legal literacy of Canadians. The efficacy of the justice system itself benefits when everyone is informed about their rights and obligations and how they can resolve legal problems.

