

FLEW Backgrounder

Background

Family Law Education for Women (FLEW) evolved from the advocacy efforts of the No Religious Arbitration Coalition (the “Coalition”). The Coalition was a group of more than 100 women’s and community agencies that came together to advocate successfully against the use of religious arbitration in family law in Ontario.

The Coalition’s work highlighted the need for widespread public family law education and outreach to women - in particular, isolated and vulnerable women - across the province.

What is FLEW?

Shortly after announcing changes to the *Arbitration Act*, the Government of Ontario decided to fund a project targeted to reach these women and invited a number of agencies involved with the Coalition to manage the project. Eventually, seven of these, Action ontarienne contre la violence faites aux femmes (AOcVF), Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), Springtide Resources and YWCA Toronto, came together to form FLEW.

FLEW’s goals

FLEW’s goals are to provide accessible information to women in Ontario to assist them in understanding their family law rights and how they can exercise them. In particular, FLEW’s focus is on reaching women who may be vulnerable and isolated due to recent immigration, religion, ethno-cultural factors, language, disability, geographic location or other reasons limiting access.

FLEW Materials

Following a process of community consultation and needs assessment, FLEW identified 12 priority areas of family law for material development, including marriage and divorce, custody and access, support, and property division.

These materials are available in 11 languages, including English, French, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Farsi, Somali, Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu and Tamil. To view the full list of the topics available, visit the FLEW website at www.onefamilylaw.ca or www.undroitdefamille.com.

Specialty Materials

In addition to these core materials, FLEW has partnered with a number of community agencies to adapt the materials for specific communities of women. Through these partnerships, we have produced materials in several alternative formats to increase their accessibility for women with disabilities, and Deaf women. We have also produced materials specifically for Aboriginal women, Francophone women, Jewish women, Muslim women, Christian women and immigrant domestic caregivers. For more details about these materials, and instruction on how to order them, please visit the FLEW website at www.onefamilylaw.ca.

Where to Get FLEW's Materials

As a first step in its distribution plan, FLEW has sent a Resource Kit with sample materials to 800 community partners across the province. Included on this list are women's shelters, community health care centres, newcomer information centres and language classes, family resources centres, legal aid offices and clinics, friendship centres and many more community agencies.

We have encouraged these partners to display our materials, to put our posters up on their walls, and to distribute our leaflets throughout their communities in places where women are likely to come across them in their daily lives. We have also invited them to order as many additional copies of the materials as they require, in as many languages as they will use, free of charge.

FLEW's materials can also be viewed, downloaded and printed from our website at www.onefamilylaw.ca or www.undroitdefamille.ca.