



Independent Legal Assistance (ILA) Program Request For Information

Inform the future of national legal assistance for people affected by sexual misconduct

The Department of National Defence (DND) is seeking input from Canadian legal professionals through a national Request for Information (RFI). This is your chance to help shape the future of the Independent Legal Assistance (ILA) Program, which connects individuals affected by sexual misconduct in a CAF/DND context with qualified civilian lawyers on an as-needed basis.

About the ILA program

- Launched in 2023 by DND's Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC), its objective is to support individuals affected by sexual misconduct in a DND/CAF context. It provides up to four hours of legal information and advice and limited legal representation for victims in criminal proceedings.
- In its first phase, the ILA program reimbursed legal expenses incurred by eligible individuals seeking assistance.
- In its second phase, a legal team has been hired to provide direct legal services to eligible clients.
- In its third and final phase, the SMSRC aims to connect clients directly with private-sector lawyers across Canada, free of charge to them but paid by the SMSRC to supplement the work of the ILA legal team.

Purpose of the RFI

- To gather feedback from law firms and lawyers across Canada about their interest, capacity, and availability to provide legal services under the third phase of the ILA Program
- To seek industry input on the requirements and qualifications of a prospective procurement process
- To inform a possible future Request for Standing Offer (RFSO) that could create a national roster of qualified legal professionals to provide the aforementioned legal services to SMSRC clients.

Why provide input

- To support improved access to independent legal assistance for individuals affected by sexual misconduct in a DND/CAF context.
- To contribute to the design of a national legal assistance mechanism and support DND's internal decision-making
- To help define the structure, scope, and eligibility criteria of the RFSO, ensuring it reflects the realities and capacities of legal professionals across jurisdictions.

How to participate

- Based on the information detailed in Annex A of the [RFI](#), provide feedback outlined in Annex B, including:
 - A brief corporate profile of the respondent
 - The respondents' interest in and capability to meet the various aspects of the work addressed in Annex A
 - Feedback on identified constraints, ranking methodology, and pricing structure.
- Send one electronic copy of your response to SMSRCProcurement-ContractingCSRIS@forces.gc.ca

IMPORTANT: This RFI is **not** a bid solicitation. No contract will result directly from it. Responding to the RFI is not required to participate in any future legal services procurement processes.