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# *Community-Based Education Program*



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## **Promotional Copy**

### **#4229 – Women’s Court Support**

#### **Organization Information**

The host organization exists to support the right of all women and their families to live free from violence, poverty and oppression. Main activities include: Shelter, counseling programs and second-stage housing for women and children fleeing abuse, food access programs, pre-employment programs for abused survivors, violence prevention programs and inclusion programs.

#### **Project Information**

The purpose of the project is to respond to the specific needs of women, including Aboriginal and immigrant women, seeking legal resolution of the issues that arise following their experience of abuse: child custody/access, maintenance enforcement, and court appearances (as a complainant and as a person charged). The project will identify viewpoints of abuse-survivor and local agencies involved in service delivery about the nature of the challenges and barriers that abused women must overcome, such as access to justice (e.g. legal aid and representation, court attendance).

There are multiple options for student involvement:

- 1) Conduct a comprehensive literature review examining the issues and current best practices surrounding abused women’s navigation of Family and Criminal Court systems in Ontario, and other areas. This literature review will help with the project aim of identifying existing legal system gaps/barriers and best practices for abused women.
- 2) Conduct a Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) examining the operation of gender within Family and Criminal Court systems, regarding the issue of domestic violence. The GBA may consider such factors as: the gender composition of various professions involved in the Peterborough legal system in relation to their levels of decision-making power; the gender breakdown of Family Court rulings, including child custody and access rulings in situations of domestic violence; the extent of gendered and/or anti-violence analyses in current training for related legal professions. The information gained from the GBA will help inform the recommendations for innovative legal system changes of the host’s larger Court Support Project.
- 3) Collaboratively draft and distribute an online survey; assist in the facilitation of interviews and/or focus groups being conducted by the Court Support Project Manager with project stakeholders (including local service providers for abused women and legal system professionals). The survey, interviews and focus groups will examine how the legal system currently works, and explore possibilities for improvement.
- 4) Observe and assist in field note collection for an externally-facilitated mapping exercise involving service providers.
- 5) Observe/assist in solution-focused focus groups with key project stakeholder groups to collaboratively identify and prioritize innovative approaches to be undertaken that will lead to service improvements.

#### **Benefit to the Host Organization and Community**

The TCCBE project(s) will increase the depth and breadth of research being undertaken by the host organization, which will assist in realizing the larger aims of the project, which are: Respond to the specific needs of women, including Aboriginal and immigrant women, seeking legal resolution of the issues that arise following their experience of abuse: child custody/access, maintenance enforcement, and court appearances (as a complainant and as a person charged).

### **What students might learn**

The student(s) will have an opportunity to learn about how the legal system is currently working for abused women in Peterborough, including strengths and gaps, and will be a meaningful part of a larger project seeking to improve service provision in this area. As well, students will utilize advanced level social science research skills and report writing.

### **Screening or Training Requirements**

Host organization confidentiality forms  
Police record check for the vulnerable sector

### **Skills or Experience Needed**

- Feminist/anti-oppressive analysis
- Ability to work independently
- Ability to work as part of a larger project team
- Strong research skills (upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level students)

### **Resources Required for Project Provided by Host**

On-site photocopying, printing, telephone/long distance calling. All expenses must be pre-approved by host.