

LiRN LiNK Strategic Innovation Project Proposal Criteria



LiRN LiNK is an exciting initiative from the Legal Information and Resource Network (LiRN) intended to connect library users to the law — anytime, anywhere.

This initiative will deliver centralized services and drive innovation projects that expand access to legal information across Ontario.

LiRN LiNK Objectives

LiRN LiNK's objectives are to:

- **Expand access to legal information across Ontario**, with a particular focus on remote, digital, and province-wide accessibility.
- **Deliver centralized legal information services** that reduce duplication, improve consistency, and strengthen the capacity of the courthouse library network.
- **Support and enhance the work of librarians and libraries** by providing shared tools, professional support, and innovative service models that complement existing local services.
- **Advance access to justice through innovation**, by developing new tools or content, or service approaches that meaningfully improve how users find, understand, and use legal information.
- **Prioritize user-centred design**, ensuring that services and tools are informed by demonstrated user needs and are intuitive, inclusive, and equitable.
- **Promote open and equitable access**, favouring open-access solutions and minimizing barriers to use wherever possible.
- **Encourage collaboration and partnerships**, particularly with organizations working in legal information, legal services, education, and access to justice.

- **Support evidence-based decision-making**, including the use of user feedback, evaluation data, and clearly defined success measures to inform design and continuous improvement.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants include legal organizations, academic partners, non-profits working in access to justice, and cross-sector collaborations.

Projects must align with LiRN LiNK objectives.

Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed using a weighted evaluation model to ensure projects advance LiRN LiNK's strategic objectives while delivering meaningful, realistic, and sustainable outcomes. All proposals must meet minimum eligibility requirements to be considered.

1. Strategic Alignment (25%)

This criterion assesses how well the proposed project aligns with LiRN LiNK's purpose, goals, and LiRN's broader strategic priorities.

Projects will be evaluated on:

- Clear alignment with one or more of LiRN LiNK's objectives (stated above),
- Relevance to courthouse library users, legal professionals, library staff, or the public,
- Support for centralized, collaborative, and province-wide services, and
- Consistency with LiRN's strategic priorities, including equity, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making.

Strong proposals will clearly articulate *why* the project belongs within LiRN LiNK and how it complements existing services.

2. Impact (25%)

This criterion evaluates the potential of the project to deliver meaningful and measurable benefits.

Projects will be assessed on:

- The extent to which the project improves access to legal information,
- The size and diversity of the user group that will benefit,
- Responsiveness to demonstrated user needs or gaps in service,
- Potential to improve efficiency, usability, or quality of legal information services, and
- Contribution to equitable access, particularly for underserved or remote users.

Higher scores will be given to projects that demonstrate clear, province-wide impact rather than narrowly local or limited use.

3. Feasibility (20%)

This criterion assesses whether the project can realistically be delivered within the available timeframe and resources.

Projects will be evaluated on:

- Clarity and realism of the work plan and timeline,
- Appropriateness of the proposed scope,
- Demonstrated capacity, expertise, and staffing,
- Strength and clarity of the partnership structure,
- Appropriateness and justification of the proposed budget,

Strong proposals will demonstrate a clear understanding of the practical timeline requirements for this initiative.

Projects must be underway during the LiRN LiNK funding period (February 27, 2026 – February 26, 2027) and deliver clearly defined outputs within that timeframe.

Full project completion by February 2027 is not required; however, proposals must include a clear work plan, concrete deliverables to be achieved within the

LiRN LiNK funding period, and an identified timeline for overall project completion.

Projects may be structured in phases, where the phase funded through LiRN LiNK delivers stand-alone value.

Where a project is designed as a multi-phase initiative, applicants may identify future phases that extend beyond the current funding period. Eligibility for funding of subsequent phases will be subject to LiRN's funding being renewed or extended and will require a new application and assessment.

4. Sustainability (20%)

This criterion evaluates whether the project's outputs will continue to provide value beyond the initial funding period.

Projects will be assessed on:

- Clear identification of post-project ownership and responsibility,
- Realistic plans for maintenance, updates, or stewardship,
- Thoughtful consideration of ongoing resourcing requirements,
- Potential for scalability, reuse, or integration into existing systems, and
- Use of open-access or interoperable approaches where possible.

Projects do not need to be permanent; however, proposals must clearly explain the intended lifespan of the project and how its outcomes will continue to benefit users.

5. Innovation Strength (10%)

This criterion assesses the originality and creativity of the proposed project.

Projects will be evaluated on:

- Novelty of the idea, approach, or tool,
- Creative use of technology, partnerships, or design,

- Evidence that the innovation meaningfully advances access to legal information, and
- Thoughtful experimentation balanced with practical delivery.

Higher scores will be given to projects that introduce new ways of thinking or working while remaining grounded in user needs and feasibility.

Required Proposal Components

Components include:

- Project summary,
- Strategic alignment statement,
- Design and methodology,
- Partnership plan, if any (who you will work with, how you will work together, and why those partnerships matter to the success of the project),
- Work plan and timeline,
- Budget,
- Sustainability plan (long-term viability, realistic maintenance, and ongoing relevance), and
- Evaluation metrics.

Funding Expectations

LiRN LiNK anticipates supporting 2–3 projects, with funding levels based on scope, feasibility, and impact.

Reporting Requirements

Funded projects must submit quarterly updates, participate in check-ins, and provide a final report with deliverables and evaluation.

Project Submission Deadline

May 15, 2026

Submit your proposals to:

admin@lirn.ca