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From: Diane Shearer [mailto:Diane.Shearer@gov.ab.ca]
Sent: January-30-15 4:39 PM
To: Diane Shearer
Subject: Reforming the Family Justice System Initiative Message to Collaborators

To Our Valued RFJS Collaborators:

We recognize that some time has passed since we last communicated with you, and we would like to apologize for the delay. However, we want to assure you we remain committed to this initiative, and we trust you are as well. We would like to share this brief update on what we've been doing since our last Workshop on October 16th.

We are pleased to tell you that the Law Society of Alberta has agreed to join our initiative as a third co-convenor. The Law Society will be choosing their representative in February, and we look forward to welcoming them onboard. The Law Society will bring another very welcome perspective to the work of our Backbone Organization.

Our Backbone Organization has been working hard on getting our website up and running. The website will include both a public page describing the RFJS, and a working page that all of our Sectors and Working Groups will be able to use to share information. We have run into some licensing and design issues, which we are working to resolve. While we have no firm timeframe for the site, we will share information with you as soon as it is available.

One of the key elements to our collaborative action approach will be the use of developmental evaluation. As we discussed at our October 16th workshop, developmental evaluation will be key to creating the shared measures we will need to ensure we are achieving the kind of change we desire. In November, Barb Turner, Diana Lowe and Diane Shearer from the Backbone, as well as John-Paul Boyd of our Research and Evaluation Sector, attended a workshop on developmental evaluation and the Theory of Change, hosted by the McConnell Foundation. The Foundation invited us to apply for an Innoweave Grant, which would provide funding for a local coach to assist us with our Developmental Evaluation design. The grant application was submitted early in January and we expect to learn later this month whether we will receive the requested funding.

In December, we held a Strategy Session for the Backbone Organization, which allowed us to plan for the coming year and to create a draft Theory of Change for the RFJS. We were assisted in the strategy session by excellent facilitators from the GOA Co-Lab, and we will continue to draw on their expertise

for our upcoming meetings. We know that some of you have been asking questions about next steps, and we want to respond to those questions:

When will the Sector Leads meet again?
We are holding a Sector Lead meeting on February 13, 2015.

When is the next Collaborator meeting?
Our next full collaborator Workshop is in Edmonton on March 13, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Workshop will be held at the University of Alberta Lister Centre, in the Wild Rose Room. A detailed invitation will follow shortly.

What is happening with the prototypes we developed on October 16th?
When we meet in March we will define the parameters of the social lab(s) and decide on two to three prototypes we will draw on to begin work. Working Groups will also be identified at this time. The Report setting out all of the October prototypes is attached.

How will the public be engaged?
The Working Groups will determine when and how they will engage with the public, whether as part of the initial design, the implementation, testing or perhaps all of these.

When will we be ready to act?
As each Working Group moves forward with its social lab process, they will decide when they are ready to move from a development phase into actual testing. This will be done in communication with the full Collaborator's group and with the support of the Backbone.

We know that many of you have been sharing ideas with our Backbone Organization – about specific prototype ideas and about family justice reforms generally. These ideas are being gathered into a list for our initial working groups to look at in March.

As you are well aware, there are challenges in proceeding with such a large-scale initiative. However, we are up for the challenge. As you can see, we have accomplished a great deal already, and we have much to celebrate. We are inspired by you - by your deep commitment to this work and your belief that change is possible, and we can make it happen.

Andrea & Lynn