

VISION FOR

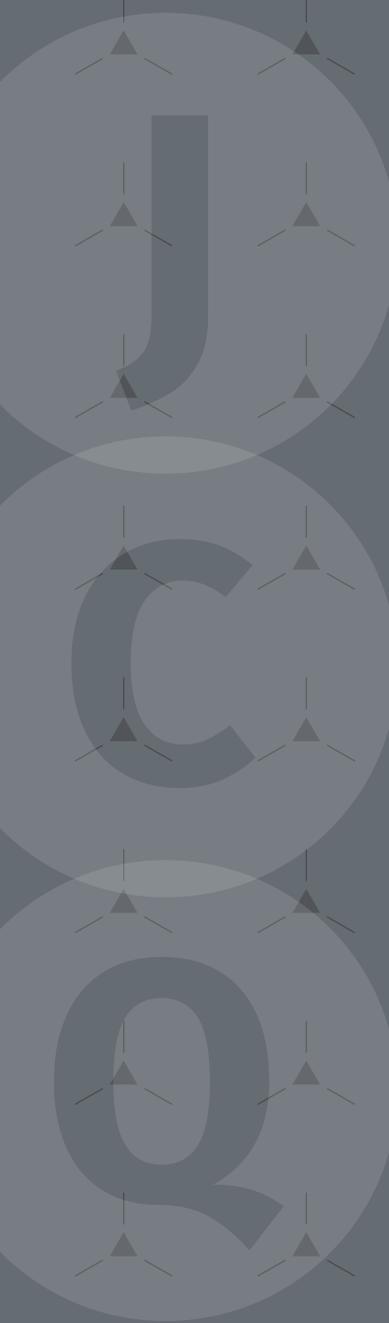
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COUR
DU QUÉBEC





Message from the Chief Judge

The Court of Québec's vision for 2019–2020–2021 highlights the Court's primary mission: providing quality services to Quebecers. For our Court and its judges and presiding justices of the peace (judges), this means delivering independent, impartial, honest, humane, and efficient justice.

These values underlie the priorities we set and the concrete action we take in each of the Court of Québec's areas of jurisdiction.

The vision is not exhaustive, because one of the Court of Québec's strengths is its ability to adapt to the constantly evolving society it serves. However, it is a roadmap to guide judges across Québec in achieving the Court's ultimate goal of providing better access to justice for all Quebecers.

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Lucie Rondeau".

LUCIE RONDEAU
Chief Judge





VALUES

The vision is designed to help the Court set its priorities based on the following basic values:

INDEPENDENCE

The principle of a justice system that is independent from the other branches of government exists for the benefit of the public rather than the judges. It is essential to maintain public trust in the administration of justice, including the impartiality of judges. The need to preserve this independence is especially important when the state brings its citizens before the Court. This is always the case with the Youth Division and the Criminal and Penal Division. Civil disputes also sometimes arise between the state and its citizens.

IMPARTIALITY AND INTEGRITY

The neutrality that judges must show requires that they approach each case with an open mind, without prejudice.

HUMANITY

Going to court is a very stressful experience for many people. It is important for judges to treat those before them with courtesy and respect.

EFFICIENCY

Good case management is one of the ways judges ensure that justice is delivered quickly and efficiently. The other actors in the justice system must also be vigilant about eliminating potential sources of lengthy delays. Everyone must ensure that each step in the judicial proceedings has a purpose. The sum total of all these ongoing efforts makes the justice system more efficient, and this benefits society as a whole.

VALUES

VISION

VISION

Provide quality services across Québec
in each of the Court of Québec's areas of jurisdiction



CITIZENS

Delivering justice is the primary mission of the courts. At the Court of Québec, this responsibility is borne on a daily basis by its judges, who sit in all regions of Québec, including in Indigenous communities.

For judges, delivering justice is not just about resolving disputes, it is also about using sound case management to promote the optimal use of judicial resources, reduce wait times, apply judicial procedures fairly, simply, proportionately, and economically, and ensure that the parties exercise their rights in a spirit of cooperation, conciliation, balance, and respect.

Achieving these objectives requires the collaboration of the other actors within the justice system, which involves, for example, the use of various mechanisms to speed up and simplify the judicial process (pre-trial conferences, facilitation conferences, settlement conferences, case management, judicial conciliation, pre-trial agreements and expedited channels in youth matters, mediation, and out-of-court interviews in lieu of preliminary inquiries).

In addition to these challenges, an increasing number of people approach the justice system without the help of a lawyer. More and more people also want to be involved in finding solutions and resolving their disputes. Therefore, the Court wishes to work with other actors in the justice system to educate Quebecers, especially on how to prevent and resolve disputes.

▶ ACTIONS ◀		
ADAPTATION AND FLEXIBILITY	MANAGEMENT, SIMPLIFICATION, AND ALTERNATE CHANNELS	COMMUNICATIONS, DIALOGUE, AND EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support and assist the development of regional initiatives to meet specific needs (e.g., mental health, homelessness, and drug addiction) ▶ Encourage sharing of best practices among regions ▶ Actively participate in forums to consult Indigenous peoples regarding justice services in their communities, alternative legal sanctions, and different approaches to reparative justice ▶ Foster agreements with Indigenous communities on special youth protection programs (Sec. 37.5 of the <i>Youth Protection Act</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage judges' use of available management tools as well as the parties' use of dispute settlement and prevention methods by making a greater effort to educate them about these mechanisms ▶ Promote up-to-date judicial approaches adapted to situations subject to the <i>Youth Protection Act</i> (e.g., separation disputes) ▶ Broaden the use of the case management measures set out in the <i>Youth Protection Act</i> ▶ Permanently implement onsite and compulsory mediation for certain cases in the Small Claims Division, given the positive results of the pilot projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a communications strategy to better educate the public about the roles of the Court of Québec and its judges in the justice system ▶ Make more information available online to help people prepare their cases and trials ▶ Set up a new, more modern Court of Québec website that is easier for the general public and the legal community to use ▶ Participate actively in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The small claims issue table (Table de concertation en matière de petites créances) • The Québec forum on access to justice in civil and family justice (Forum québécois sur l'accès à la justice civile et familiale) • ADAJ (Accessing Law and Justice) research projects • The Barreau du Québec Indigenous justice committee on legal information



JURISDICTION

The judges of the Court of Québec exercise their jurisdiction in many areas that affect the daily life of citizens: civil proceedings, taxation, appeals from decisions by administrative tribunals, criminal and penal cases, youth matters (protection, adoption, and criminal justice for adolescents).

To give Quebecers simpler, more effective access to law and justice, we must reflect on the services the Court of Québec and municipal courts provide and on the structure of our courts in all matters.

With regard to children and their families, we must ensure greater consistency in the work of the various courts that deal with them.

The situation of Indigenous communities requires that we stay in regular contact with them to ensure that justice services meet their needs.

▶ ACTIONS ◀		
COHERENT COURT STRUCTURE	MODERNIZING CRIMINAL LAW	FAMILY-FRIENDLY PROCEDURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase the Court of Québec’s ability to exercise all its jurisdiction ▶ Take part in the reflection and work required to better harmonize judicial services in order to make them easier to access ▶ Include in this reflection the responsibilities of municipal judges (those exercising their functions exclusively and those presently sitting) and the role of the Associate Chief Judge responsible for Municipal Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support comprehensive criminal law reform and propose ways to simplify and modernize the enforcement of criminal law for the benefit of citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lead the working group on judicial practice in youth protection (Groupe de travail sur la pratique judiciaire en matière de protection de la jeunesse). The working group is tasked with proposing legislative amendments to ensure more efficient handling of evidence respecting disputes while preserving the right to a full and complete defence ▶ Implement measures that enable judges and the parties to ensure that the orders issued by the Court of Québec in youth or criminal cases and by the Superior Court regarding family cases are complementary and consistent
SPECIFIC NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adopt specific rules of practice enabling the Court to exercise its jurisdiction in a manner that meets the needs of Indigenous communities 		

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QUALITY

Quality justice means services provided within a reasonable time frame. This means that judges must benefit from optimal work organization and the necessary resources, both human and material (including buildings and IT).

For the Court to exercise its very broad jurisdiction, judges also must have access to just as broad a range of professional development opportunities, including training in writing judgments, to make it easier for citizens to understand them. People who appear without a lawyer are also part of judges' daily reality in all fields of law.

▶ ACTIONS ◀

WORK ORGANIZATION

- ▶ Continue reflecting on how to better organize judges' work
- ▶ Determine, document, and express the needs of the Court and its judges with respect to all aspects of their mission (e.g., judge positions, support staff, courtrooms, office space, security, technology, etc.)
- ▶ Participate in the project on transforming and modernizing Québec's justice system

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JUDGES

- ▶ Broaden training opportunities to reflect ongoing changes in judges' functions and meet society's needs
- ▶ Update judges' knowledge of social realities, especially those of Indigenous communities
- ▶ Help judges keep their knowledge up to date by communicating information more efficiently

COUR DU QUÉBEC

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