

Federal Court



Cour fédérale

## FEDERAL COURT LAUNCHES ONLINE ACCESS TO COURT RECORDS PILOT PROJECT

**OTTAWA, Ontario, September 8, 2022** – As part of its ongoing commitment to the open court principle and to access to justice in the digital world, the Federal Court is launching a platform to provide online access to Court records. Beginning September 12, 2022, litigants and the public will be able to access certain Court records directly through the Federal Court’s website rather than having to contact the Court to request records from the Registry.

The Court will introduce the new platform in several phases. An initial pilot project will provide access to select documents filed in matters commenced on or after the launch date in four areas of the Court’s jurisdiction: Intellectual Property, Indigenous Law, Maritime and Admiralty, and Class Actions. Within these areas, pleadings and written arguments filed electronically, as well as Court-issued documents such as orders, directions, and judgments, will be available online. The Court anticipates that electronic access to additional documents and to documents in additional practice areas will be introduced in future phases of the project.

The Honourable Paul Crampton, Chief Justice of the Federal Court, said the pilot project will improve access to justice by allowing interested parties to obtain records from Court proceedings more easily and efficiently. “The open court principle is a fundamental part of the Canadian judicial system and is directly tied to the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the *Charter*,” said Chief Justice Crampton. “The Federal Court is pleased to be taking this step to further its strategic vision of becoming a more digitally accessible Court that better responds to the needs of litigants and the public.”

The launch of this pilot project furthers the implementation of the Court’s [Strategic Plan 2020–2025](#) and follows extensive consultations with members of the bar and other stakeholders. In those consultations, the Court received valuable input on both the importance of the open court principle and the need to recognize the particular privacy interests that arise when information is available online. To balance these interests, the Court will permit parties to request an exemption from online posting if they can show that online availability will result in a material adverse impact on the personal dignity or security of an individual. In addition, to allow parties or counsel to request an exemption or to correct filing errors, documents filed by parties will be made available online three business days after filing.

The new online access platform will supplement, rather than replace, existing methods for obtaining records from the Federal Court Registry, which will continue to be available, including in respect of files commenced prior to the launch date. The Court will make documents in the pilot project available for download at no cost.

The Federal Court is Canada’s national, bijural, and bilingual trial court. It handles cases in a broad range of areas of federal jurisdiction and sits in cities across the country. More information about the pilot project and online access to Court records can be found in the Federal Court’s [Notice to Parties and the Profession](#) about the project, available on the Federal Court’s website: [www.fct-cf.gc.ca](http://www.fct-cf.gc.ca).