

Legal Aid Ontario

We provide legal assistance for low-income people living in Ontario

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LAO Update: Winter 2017 Edition

A quarterly update on Legal Aid Ontario's latest access to justice initiatives

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Message from the CEO

Throughout the third quarter, I was invited to speak at nine different events hosted by either lawyer associations or a community legal clinic. One theme that was top of mind was looking beyond what LAO and the private bar are doing now so that we can help those who are still "left out"—either because they don't qualify for legal aid or don't know where to get legal help.

The Action Group on Access to Justice [released a report](#) back in 2016 that surveyed over 1,500 Ontarians on their views on justice and access to justice.

Forty per cent of Ontarians don't believe they have fair and equal access to the justice system. And when it comes to getting legal help? Most people try to get help from lawyers, but almost a third turn to friends or family for advice on how to make their way through the legal system.

Part of LAO's mandate is to help people get a jumpstart on their legal issue as early as possible. This could mean providing people with information about their rights and providing that information in places that they can easily access it.

I'm a firm believer in working together with a variety of social and justice workers to come up with programs that can help people to avoid the problems that have created the legal crises they find themselves in. And this remains my call to action for 2018.

Best,

David

David Field
President & CEO
Legal Aid Ontario

Spotlight: Racialized Communities Strategy Consultation

Back in June 2016, when we first announced we were developing a racialized communities strategy, we started off by talking to those who work with racialized communities to get a better sense of existing gaps and how we can work together to better provide legal services.

Our second phase, announced in July, focuses more on talking to those in low-income racialized communities—so

we can hear directly from those who need our services.

Some of what we've started to hear seems obvious: for those who don't speak English or French, the biggest hurdle is learning about their rights in a language *they* are comfortable with.

In early 2018, our consultations will continue. Right from the start, we've offered to have interpreters available at these sessions and as we organize language-specific sessions, we hope this will help bring out an open dialogue that will enable us to think about what LAO's next steps should be.

For those of you with a largely racialized client base, we encourage you to help spread the word about these consultations. Those who are unable to attend a session in-person are always free to write down their thoughts—we have translated our [consultation questions](#) into [a number of languages](#)—and send them to us at rsc@lao.on.ca.

Hello and goodbye

I'm pleased to announce that Louis Dimitracopoulos joined us in late January as our chief administrative officer with oversight of many departments including Finance, Lawyer Services & Payments and Client Account Services, IT, and Facilities. Louis has had a long career in public service. He comes to us from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care where he was the director of Policy Coordination and Intergovernmental Relations.

Jayne Mallin also joined us in February as the new vice president overseeing the Southwest Region, and will have accountability for the London, Hamilton-Kitchener and Essex, Lambton & Kent Districts as well as the specialty clinics. Jayne brings with her a wealth of experience having been both an LAO and clinic staff lawyer as well as having been the legal director at Rexdale Community Legal Clinic.

In addition, as the quarter drew to an end, we saw a couple of senior staff move on with new endeavours.

First, Charles Lafortune, our acting vice president for the Provincial Case Management Office and Special Projects decided to move on from LAO to pursue more time traveling with family and friends. Then, George MacPherson, our director general in the Eastern District, was appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

This was followed by our executive lead for the Refugee and Immigration Program in the GTA, Jawad Kassab, announcing he was retiring after having been at LAO for 22 years. Jawad began his career with us by starting as a staff lawyer at the Refugee Law Office when it was first founded.

We wish them all the best and thank them for their many contributions to LAO.

Projects and announcements from the last quarter

- Legal Aid Ontario sets dates for racialized communities strategy meetings
- Congratulations to Legal Aid Ontario' (Justice) George MacPherson, appointed to Ontario Superior Court
- Submit your certificate-related documents through the certificate tab of *Legal Aid Online* for faster service
- LAO reintroducing merit consideration for Consent and Capacity Board appeals
- LAO and MAG develop resources for family law cases subject to the *Hague Service Convention*
- Effective December 10, 2017: Changes to charges heard separately certificate issuing process

Selected media

Ottawa provides \$7.1 million for LAO refugee services

Alex Robinson, Canadian Lawyer – October 13, 2017

Article on the Federal funding toward the shortfall in LAO refugee services and the reaction from refugee lawyers

How bail court is being reformed for the first time in decades

Fatima Syed, Toronto Star – December 2, 2017

A profile of the duty counsel at the 1000 Finch courthouse in Toronto and how reforms in Bail law may reduce the remand population in Ontario. (English only)

Helping black students succeed

Matt Galloway, CBC Metro Morning – December 7, 2017

Interview with Nia Singh about the launch of the PLUG program in Rexdale to assist for Black students facing expulsion, funded by LAO’s education grant. (English only)

Blog

The cover features a solid red background with a network of thin, white, intersecting curved lines. A large white circle is centered in the upper half, containing the title text. In the lower right, the TAG logo is displayed.

Architects of Justice



Architects of Justice: A new podcast that explores access to justice in Ontario

– October 2017

The poster has a bright yellow background. It is decorated with a complex pattern of thick black and pink lines that form a series of interconnected, irregular rectangular shapes, resembling a stylized circuit board or a maze. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

Access to Justice Week

OCTOBER 23 - 27, 2017

#A2J2017

Ontario's second annual Access to Justice week

– October 2017



Seamless access to justice in French: an Ottawa pilot with province wide implications

– October 2017



Offering services where they're most needed: working within the community

– October 2017



The Hamilton Boldness Project

– October 2017



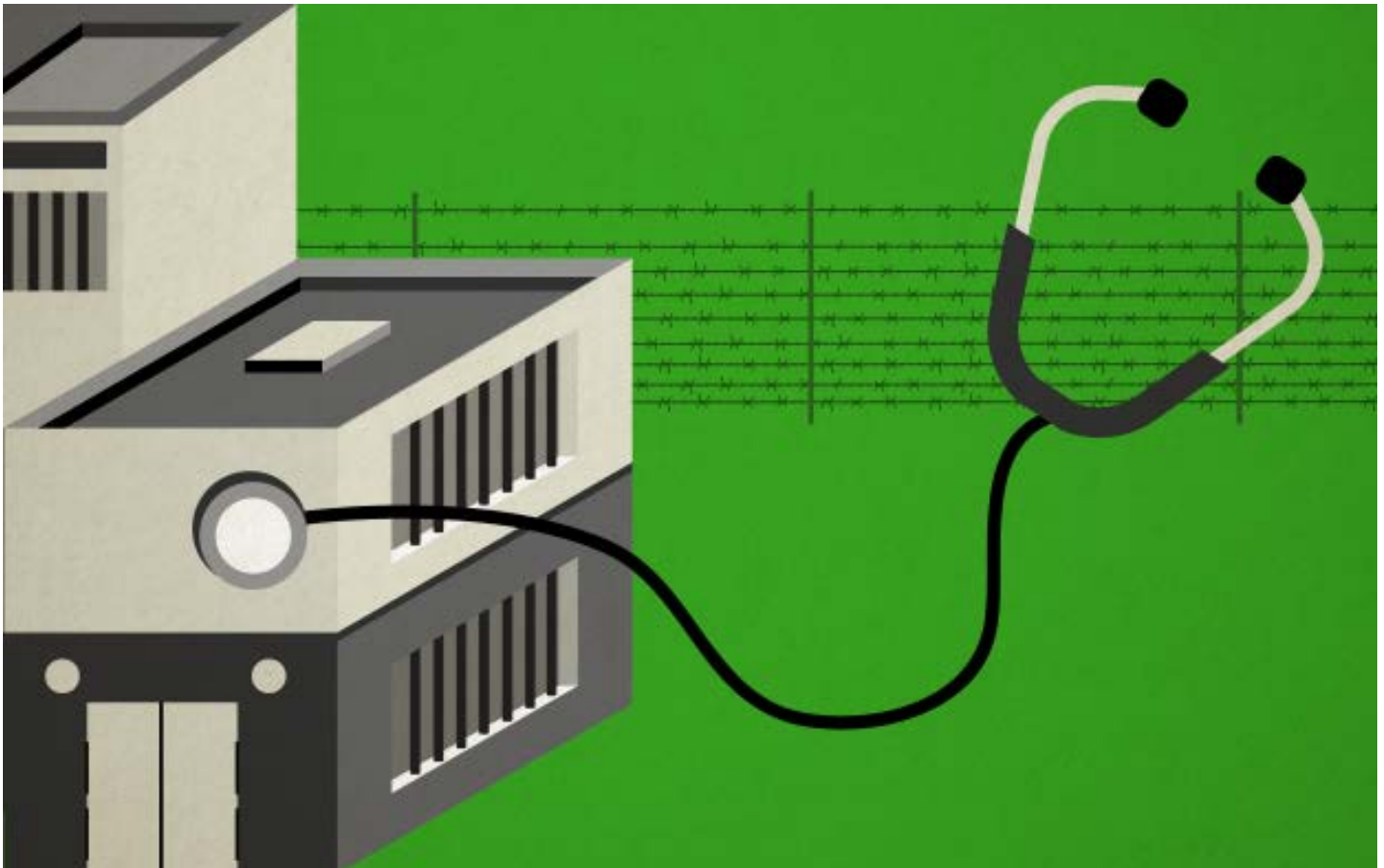
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

– November 2017



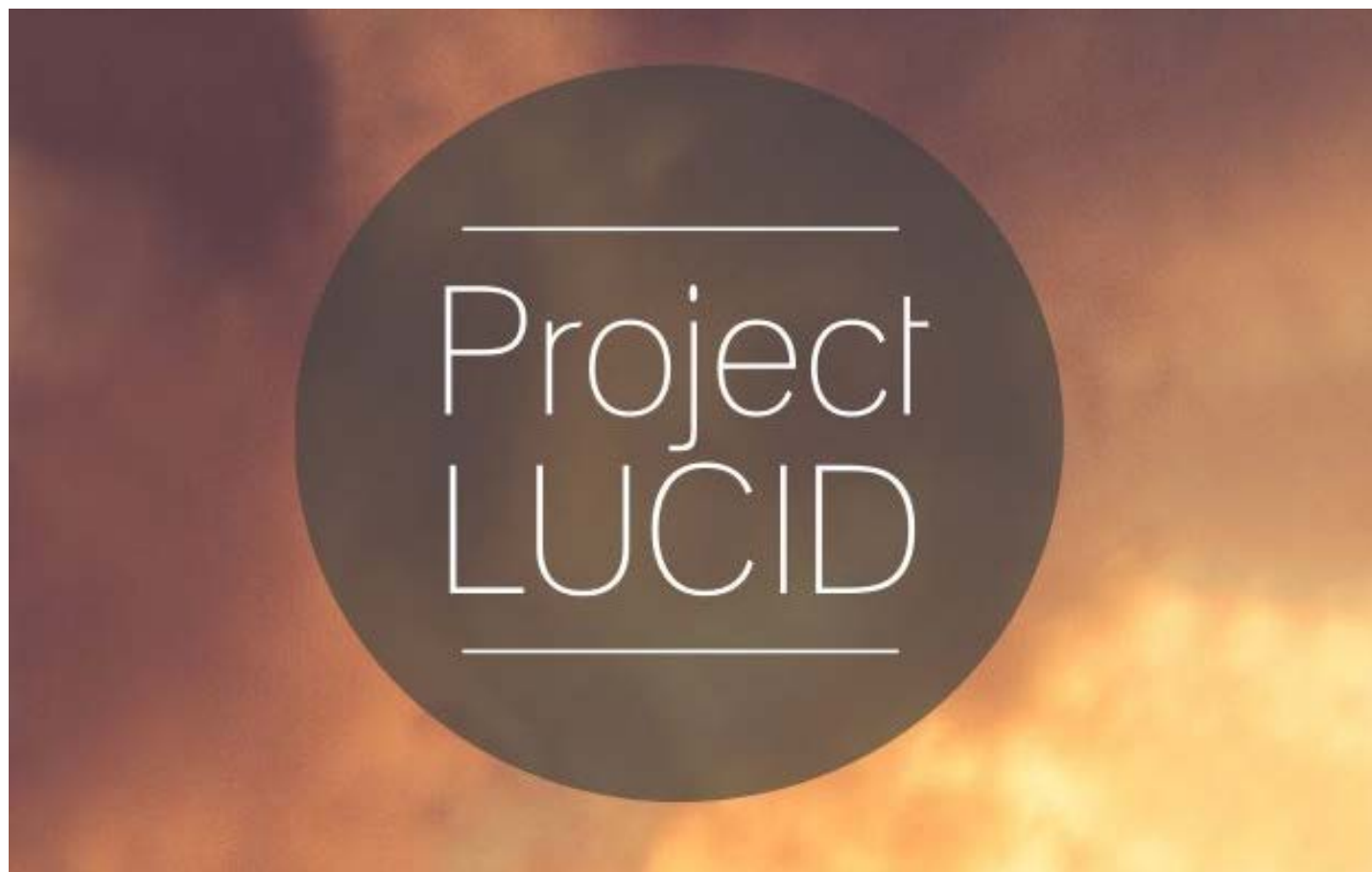
How are women with disabilities affected by violence that is different from other women?

– December 2017



Prison law a focus for Legal Aid Ontario

– December 2017



Project LUCID: Environmental scan and needs assessment

– December 2017

Client services

Intake, triage and support services

LAO offers intake, triage and support services to people applying for legal aid, existing legal aid clients and lawyers who provide legal services on behalf of legal aid.

- **Call centre – Tier 1**

Agents in Tier 1 of LAO's call centre can help assess service needs and provide information about qualifying for legal aid. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to: triage, making referrals, performing status checks and updating client profiles.

- **Call centre – Tier 2**

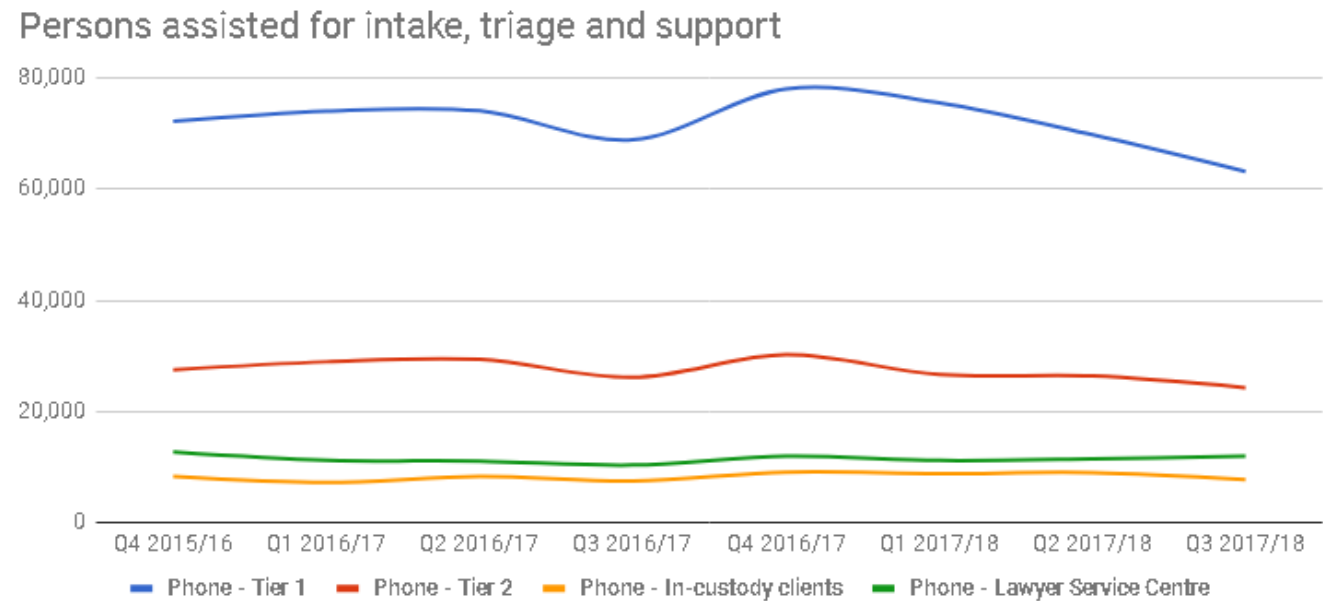
Tier 2 agents conduct an in-depth analysis of a client's legal needs, financial situation and case details to determine eligibility for legal aid services. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to: processing applications, issuing certificates, making referrals, and providing enhanced public legal information.

• **Call centre – In-custody**

LAO also offers a service dedicated to helping people who are incarcerated across the province. Staff take calls directly from inmates to determine legal aid eligibility, process applications and issue certificates as well as conduct status checks on submitted applications.

• **Call centre – Lawyers**

Lawyers who do legal aid work can contact the call centre for information, including but not limited to: tariff, billing, account status and technical support. This group serves as a first point of contact for most lawyers' enquiries.



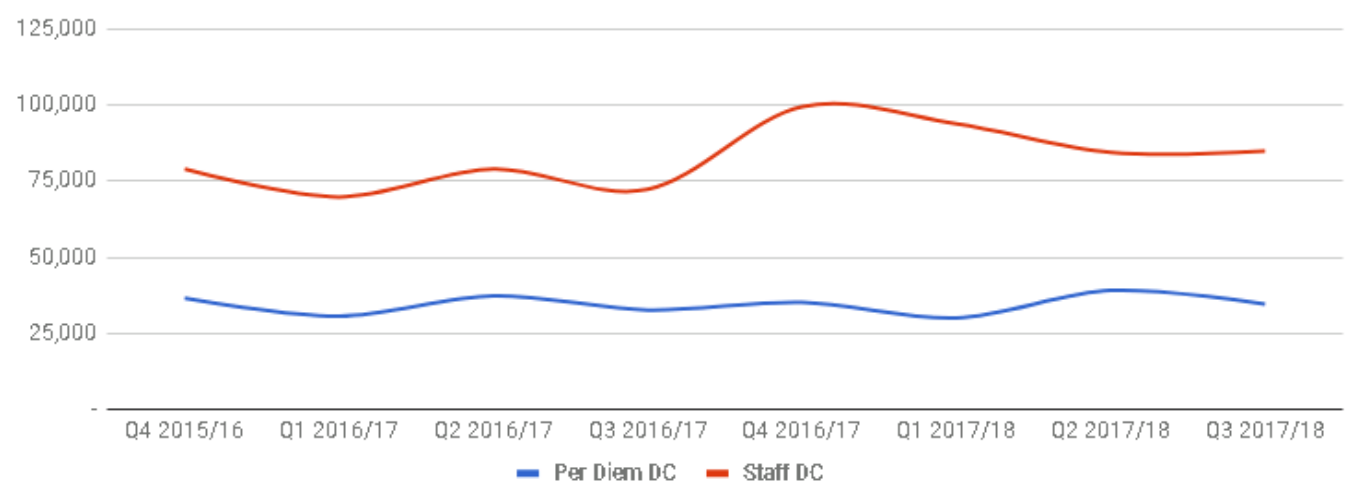
Persons assisted for intake, triage and support	2015/16	2016/17				2017/18		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Phone: Tier 1	72,204	74,088	74,118	68,891	78,089	75,588	69,813	63,187
Phone: Tier 2	27,428	28,906	29,324	26,108	30,167	26,587	26,336	24,235
Phone: In-custody clients	8,244	7,180	8,236	7,419	8,992	8,773	8,919	7,693
Phone: Lawyer Service Centre	12,679	11,175	11,000	10,306	11,928	11,132	11,403	11,942

Duty counsel services

Duty counsel are LAO staff and per diem lawyers in courthouses. They can give immediate legal assistance to low-income people who would otherwise be unrepresented and unassisted.

Criminal law services

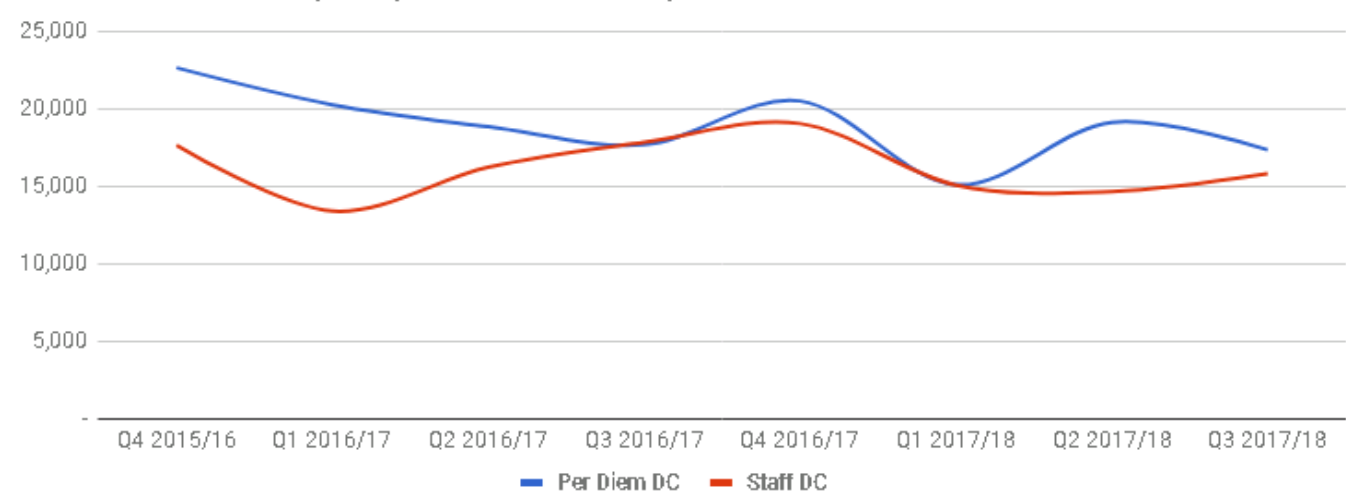
Persons assisted by duty counsel - Criminal law



Persons assisted by duty counsel - criminal law	2015/16	2016/17				2017/18		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Per Diem DC	36,618	30,744	37,383	32,748	35,215	30,116	39,126	34,668
Staff DC	78,968	69,831	78,976	72,275	99,422	93,836	84,437	84,900
Total	115,586	100,575	116,359	105,023	134,637	123,952	123,563	119,568

Family law services

Persons assisted by duty counsel - Family law



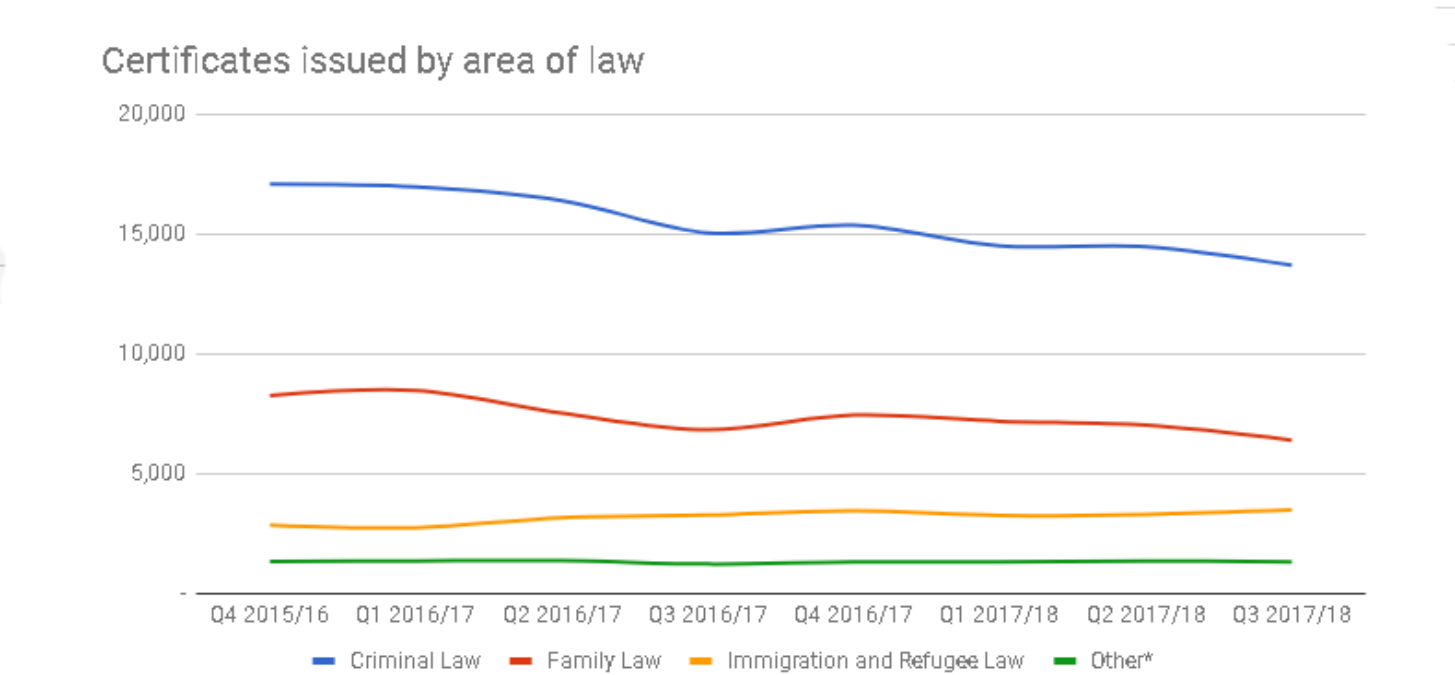
Persons assisted by duty counsel - family law	2015/16	2016/17				2017/18		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3

Per Diem DC	22,669	20,284	18,864	17,711	20,527	15,118	19,148	17,369
Staff DC	17,674	13,416	16,248	17,858	19,068	15,096	14,684	15,836
Total	40,343	33,700	35,112	35,569	39,595	30,214	33,832	33,205

Representation by a private practice lawyer

Legal aid applicants who are financially eligible, and who are facing a serious legal matter covered by LAO, may be issued a certificate to cover the cost of a private practice lawyer.

A certificate is a voucher that a low-income person can take to one of more than 3,600 private practice lawyers across the province who accept legal aid clients. A certificate guarantees the lawyer payment for a certain number of hours if they accept the case.



Certificates issued by area of law	2015/16	2016/17				2017/18		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Criminal Law	17,098	16,982	16,415	15,065	15,386	14,520	14,492	13,714
Family Law	8,274	8,483	7,535	6,841	7,452	7,200	7,028	6,409
Immigration and Refugee Law	2,869	2,753	3,178	3,276	3,451	3,259	3,306	3,493
Other ^[1]	1,344	1,369	1,372	1,235	1,316	1,314	1,365	1,322
Total Certificates Issued	29,585	29,587	28,500	26,417	27,605	26,293	26,191	24,938

^[1] Other is a category that represents all other legal matters covered by LAO certificates, such as: CCB matters, prison law matters and matters before civil tribunal.

Performance measures

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) name	Measurement frequency	Last measured	Target	Previous year (2016/17)	Current value
% of same day decisions for certificates	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	75.6%	79.2%
% of area office appeals heard within 3 days	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	51.6%	50.9%
Acceptance rate for certificate applications	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	87%	87.7%	83.4%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (L1)	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	83.0%	41.0%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (LSC)	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	69.0%	85.0%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (Worklist)	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	88.0%	60.0%
% of calls answered within 20 minutes (L2)	Quarterly	Q3 2017/18	80%	79.0%	46.0%
Overall client satisfaction - % of positive responses (in-person)	Annual	Q3 2016/17	80%	93.0%	93.0%
Number of Ontarians financially eligible for LAO's services	Annual	Q1 2017/18	Maintain	1,540,000	1,540,000
Overall lawyer satisfaction - % of positive responses	Annual	Q3 2017/18	60%	56.0%	53.0%

Statement of operations

Revenue	Apr. 1, 2016 - Dec. 31, 2016 (\$M)	Apr. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2017 (\$M)
Government Funding	\$303.3M	\$313.9M
Law Foundation	\$19.4M	\$30.9M
Other Revenue	\$9.8M	\$10.7M
Total revenue	\$332.4M	\$355.5M

Core Business Expenses

Certificate Costs	\$171.2M	\$174.3M
Client Service Offices	\$16.7M	\$15.0M
Clinic Program	\$65.0M	\$62.3M
Duty Counsel Program	\$40.9M	\$39.8M

Service Innovation	\$1.8M	\$1.7M
Total Core Business Expenses	\$295.6M	\$293.0M

Operating Expenses

Service Provider Support	\$4.9M	\$4.6M
Administrative Expenses	\$28.1M	\$25.5M
Other Expenditures	\$6.0M	\$5.7M
Program Support	\$21.1M	\$18.9M
Total Operating Expenses	\$60.2M	\$54.6M

Total expenditures	\$355.7M	\$347.7M
Surplus / (deficit) before other corporate expenditures / savings	(\$23.3M)	\$7.8M

Totals may not add due to rounding

Getting legal help

Are you eligible for legal aid?
Types of help
Getting help in the courtroom
Community and specialty clinics

For lawyers

News and notices
Legal Aid Online
Billing inquiries
Forms library

Resources

Accessibility
Careers at LAO
Legal Aid Ontario mobile app
News archives
Other resources

Contacts

Call us toll-free for help
Legal professionals
Media
Legal Aid Ontario information and services
Making an appeal or complaint
Ethics hotline



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