

Legal Aid Ontario

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

[Getting Legal Help](#)

[Information for Lawyers](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[Publications & Resources](#)

[About LAO](#)

[Blog](#)



LAO Update: Spring 2018 Edition

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

Table of contents

1. [Message from the CEO](#)
2. [Projects and announcements from the fourth quarter](#)
3. [Client services](#)
4. [Performance measures](#)
5. [LAO statement of operations](#)



Message from the CEO

As 2017/18 drew to a close, the Ontario government released its 2018 budget, which included an ongoing investment in the expansion of legal aid.

Since 2014, the government has raised the eligibility threshold for legal aid by 25 per cent, bringing us even closer to the low income measure and enabling more low-income Ontarians to use our services.

At the tail end of March, we announced that we were raising our eligibility threshold for 2018 by another six per cent for our certificate program and for clinic law services, effective April 1.

Also effective that date, we started asking legal aid applicants about their race to help us collect the statistics that would help LAO figure out how to improve our services and create the types of programs that certain racialized groups need. This initiative is just one that LAO has begun as part of our vulnerable client strategies. A core focus for us is to develop a stronger understanding of what certain client groups need so that we can get them the services that they need most.

In January, for example, we announced that we would be funding the new legal aid clinic, Black Legal Action Centre. This is a grassroots effort that help us ensure that much needed legal services are getting to the communities that need them.

Regarding LAO's financial situation, things have improved significantly since the end of 2016 when we were forced to take measures to bring spending into line with a balanced budget. As a result of our budget strategy, as well as increases in funding from the Federal government (for refugee services) and from the Law Foundation (due to increases to the Bank of Canada interest rate in July and September last year), LAO ended the 2017/18 fiscal year with an operating surplus.

While there is still a ways to go, we are definitely in a better position than we were a year ago. Looking forward, we know that better than anticipated revenues from the Law Foundation will help us to move forward with new services and updates to programs. We are currently assessing our fiscal position and will keep you up-to-date as we move forward when LAO is able to gradually start reintroducing certain services. To provide a broad overview of the services we provided to clients in 2017/18, we will be sharing our service level reports for certificates, the call centre, duty counsel and others as they are finalized. We will share our services level report for 2017/18 as they are finalized.

Best,

David

David Field
President & CEO
Legal Aid Ontario

Projects and announcements from the fourth quarter

A new legal aid clinic for Black Ontarians

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

2017 Sidney B. Linden Award goes to Grace Pluchino

Thursday, January 11, 2018

Longer than usual wait times for LAO's call centre

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Details on Legal Aid Ontario's financial eligibility increase for 2018

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

LAO starts to collect race-based data

Monday, March 26, 2018

Selected media (English only)

New legal clinic for Black Ontarians in place by August 2018

May Warren, *Metro*, January 10, 2018

Law society seeks greater involvement in legal aid issues

Jacques Gallant, *Toronto Star*, January 25, 2018

Prowling the cells at Old City Hall

Kevin Connor, *Toronto Sun*, February 25, 2018

Trial in absence a real Toronto tragedy

Op-ed by Amy Slotek (staff lawyer), *Toronto Star*, March 26, 2018

Blog

SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON STREET CHECKS

FAITES PART DE VOTRE OPINION SUR LES CONTRÔLES POLICIERS DE ROUTINE



[Share your views on street checks](#)

– Jan. 2018



February 22 is Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada
– Feb. 2018



French: much more than just a language
– Mar. 2018



Righting the wrongs of bail court: LAO duty counsel at the forefront of "uncomfortable" change

– Mar. 2018

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.

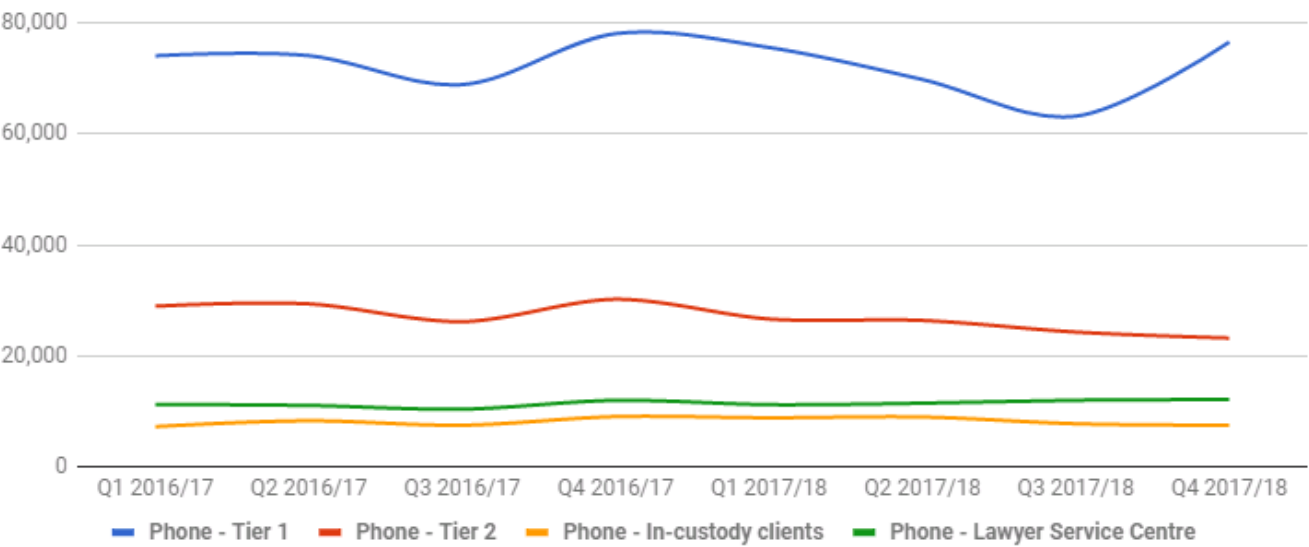
• **Call centre – In-custody**

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



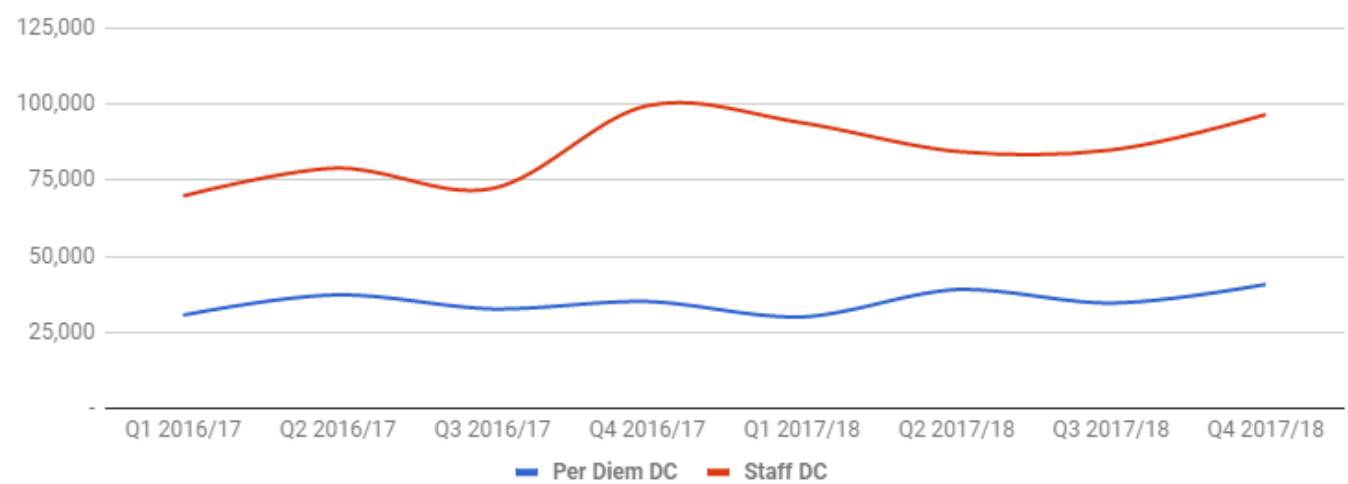
Persons assisted for intake, triage and support	2016/17		2017/18			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Phone: Tier 1	68,891	78,089	75,588	69,813	63,187	76,566
Phone: Tier 2	26,108	30,167	26,587	26,336	24,235	23,152
Phone: In-custody clients	7,419	8,992	8,773	8,919	7,693	7,437
Phone: Lawyer Service Centre	10,306	11,928	11,132	11,403	11,942	12,061

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

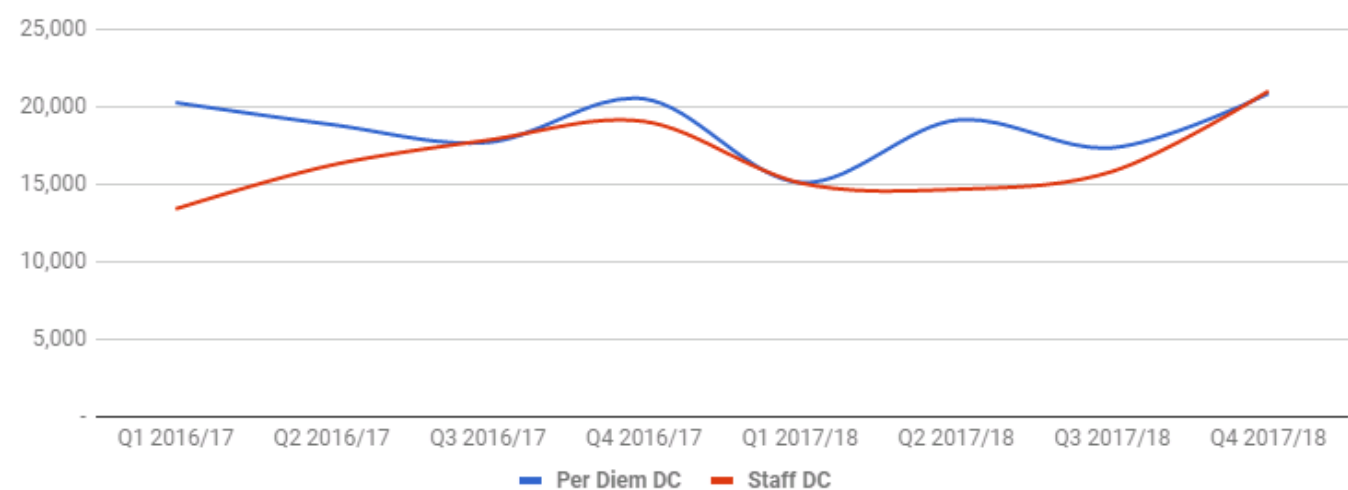
Persons assisted by duty counsel - Criminal law



Persons assisted by duty counsel - criminal law	2016/17		2017/18			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Per Diem DC	32,748	35,215	30,116	39,126	34,668	40,806
Staff DC	72,275	99,422	93,836	84,437	84,900	96,554
Total	105,023	134,637	123,952	123,563	119,568	137,360

Family law services

Persons assisted by duty counsel - Family law



Persons assisted by duty counsel - family law	2016/17		2017/18			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Per Diem DC	17,711	20,527	15,118	19,148	17,369	20,866

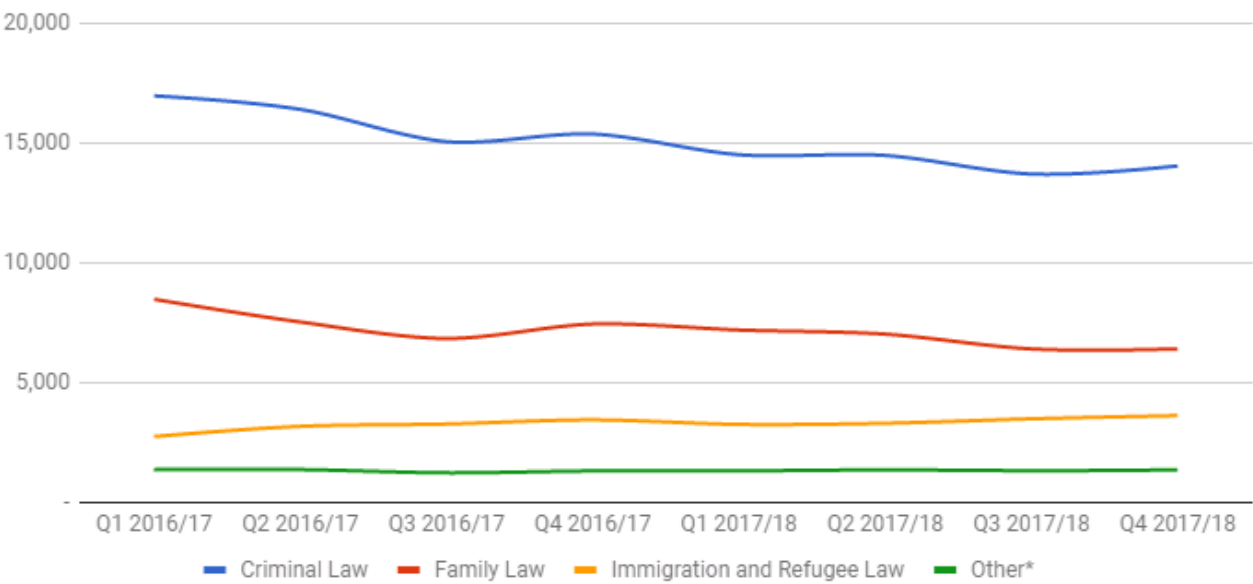
Staff DC	17,858	19,068	15,096	14,684	15,836	21,026
Total	35,569	39,595	30,214	33,832	33,205	41,892

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



Certificates issued by area of law	2016/17		2017/18			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Criminal Law	15,065	15,386	14,520	14,492	13,714	14,053
Family Law	6,841	7,452	7,200	7,028	6,409	6,411
Immigration and Refugee Law	3,276	3,451	3,259	3,306	3,493	3,628
Other ^[1]	1,235	1,316	1,314	1,365	1,322	1,359
Total Certificates Issued	26,417	27,605	26,293	26,191	24,938	25,451

^[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	Q4 2017/18	80%	75.6%	78.5%
% of area office appeals heard within 3 days	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	80%	51.6%	53.0%
Acceptance rate for certificate applications	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	87%	87.7%	84.5%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (L1)	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	80%	83.0%	16.0%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (LSC)	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	80%	69.0%	87.0%
% of calls answered within 3 minutes (Worklist)	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	80%	88.0%	54.0%
% of calls answered within 20 minutes (L2)	Quarterly	Q4 2017/18	80%	79.0%	20.0%
Overall client satisfaction - % of positive responses (in-person)	Annual	Q4 2017/18	80%	93.0%	77.0%
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 - Mar. 31, 2017 (\$M)	Apr. 1, 2017 - Mar. 31, 2018 (\$M)
Government Funding	\$414.4M	\$428.0M
Law Foundation	\$29.3M	\$46.9M
Other Revenue	\$12.2M	\$12.7M
Total revenue	\$455.9M	\$487.7M

Core Business Expenses

Certificate Costs	\$231.8M	\$232.4M
Client Service Offices	\$22.6M	\$20.4M
Clinic Program	\$87.1M	\$85.8M
Duty Counsel Program	\$56.2M	\$56.1M
Service Innovation	\$2.2M	\$2.2M
Total Core Business Expenses	\$399.9M	\$396.8M

Operating Expenses		
Service Provider Support	\$6.7M	\$6.4M
Administrative Expenses	\$38.8M	\$36.9M
Other Expenditures	\$7.2M	\$10.7M
Program Support	\$28.8M	\$26.0M
Total Operating Expenses	\$81.5M	\$80.0M
Total expenditures	\$481.4M	\$476.8M
Surplus / (deficit) before other corporate expenditures / savings	(\$25.5M)	\$10.8M

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



Legal Aid Ontario (LAO), an independent but publicly funded and publicly accountable non-profit corporation. None of this material may be commercially reproduced, but copying for other purposes, with credit, is encouraged.

© 1998-2019 Legal Aid Ontario, all rights reserved

- Privacy policy
- Accountability
- Disclaimer



