

## Legal Aid at a glance

In 1998, the Ontario government enacted the *Legal Aid Services Act* in which the province renewed and strengthened its commitment to legal aid. The Act established Legal Aid Ontario (LAO), an independent but publicly funded and publicly accountable non-profit corporation, to administer the province's legal aid program.

LAO's mandate in the *Legal Aid Services Act, 1998* is to "promote access to justice throughout Ontario for low-income individuals by means of providing consistently high quality legal aid services in a cost-effective and efficient manner."

### Operations

- Provided more than 1 million assists to Ontarians.
- 51 legal aid offices and 79 community legal clinics operated across Ontario.
- Duty counsel lawyers are available in courthouses province-wide for people who are unrepresented.
- Legal Aid Ontario is the second largest justice agency in the province.

### Finance

- Annual operating budget of \$362 million (2008).
- The Ontario government provides the majority of legal aid funding.
- The Federal government and the Law Foundation of Ontario also provide funding.
- Clients may also contribute towards the cost of their legal representation.

|                               | 2008 (in millions) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Province on Ontario           | 283,888            |
| The Law Foundation of Ontario | 56,419             |
| Client Contributions          | 18,950             |
| Other income                  | 3,393              |
|                               | <b>\$ 362,650</b>  |

### Legal Aid Certificates

- 107,299 certificates issued in 2008.
- 138,614 applications received

- Community Legal Clinics assisted 156,588 Ontarians (2008)
- 17 clinics provide specialty legal services.

### **Duty Counsel**

- Duty counsel provided 1,078,703 legal assists in 2008.
- Advice lawyers assist clients in over 130 locations, including all Family Law Information Centres.

### **Student Legal Aid Services Societies (SLASS)**

- SLASSs are located at each of the six Ontario law schools and are staffed by law students working under the close supervision of experienced lawyers.
- Opened 2,979 case files in 2008.
- In 2007 ,933 of the nearly 3,800 law students enrolled in the six law faculties participated in the SLASS program.

### **In-house Legal Offices**

- The three family law offices opened 844 case files
- The three criminal law offices opened 777 case files.
- The refugee law office opened 449 case files and provided legal help on immigration matters to nearly 1,000 people in detention centres.