

Community Legal Clinics

Sustaining Communities

Community legal clinics are independent, non-profit organizations and receive annual funding from Legal Aid Ontario. Each clinic is able to determine its own operational policies, within the established policy framework set out by LAO.

Legal Aid Ontario funds [80 community legal clinics](#) throughout the province, with 17 providing [specialty legal services](#). Most community legal clinics are located in specific areas, and each community in Ontario is served by a clinic.

Community legal clinics do not charge legal fees, but may ask clients who are able to pay to contribute some or all of the case expenses, such as court filing fees and the costs of obtaining medical reports.

Clinic Services

Clinics address the unique needs of low-income disadvantaged people by providing legal assistance in areas such as housing law, social assistance and other income support programs. These legal issues represent people's most basic needs: a source of income for those unable to work and a roof over their heads.

They also provide community development, referrals, public legal education to agencies and low-income communities and engage in activities to reform the law. They are often at the forefront of systemic change that benefits low-income Ontarians.

Although no two clinics are exactly alike, the types of issues they may provide help with include:

- Tenant Rights
- Ontario Works and Welfare
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Government Pensions
- Immigration
- Employment Insurance
- Workplace Safety and Insurance
- Workers' Compensation
- Employment Rights
- Criminal Injuries Compensation
- Human Rights

Specialty Clinics

The 17 [specialty legal clinics](#) focus on marginalized groups of disadvantaged clients or particular areas of law that affect large numbers of low-income people. They represent the elderly, the disabled, urban Aboriginals, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Clinic Boards of Directors

Governed by locally elected Boards of Directors, Boards have the responsibility of determining what the most pressing legal needs are in their communities and providing services to meet those needs. Board members are volunteers that come from all walks of life and bring a wide range of talents and experiences to their clinics. Most clinics have former clients or other representatives from low-income and disadvantaged groups on their boards.

Clinic Services over the past 6 years

	2001-02	2002-03	2004-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Direct client services						
Cases	14,747	14,825	15,497	15,964	15,966	17,628
Brief service	26,063	30,076	31,356	28,790	29,170	28,795
Advice	93,502	97,302	98,296	103,872	100,951	101,515
Outreach*	4,471	5,157	6,143	6,149	7,323	7,902
TOTAL	138,803	147,360	151,292	155,045	153,410	155,840

Note that 2001-2004 figures are estimated fiscal year activity (Actual available from 2005).

* Outreach refers to Community Development, Law Reform and Public Legal Education Activities.