



Fact Sheet

Legal Aid Ontario at a glance

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) provides low-income Ontario residents with high quality legal aid services in a cost-effective and efficient manner. LAO is the second-largest justice agency in Ontario and one of the largest providers of legal services in North America.

Established by the *Legal Aid Services Act, 1998* Legal Aid Ontario is an independent but publically funded and publically accountable non-profit corporation, responsible for administering the province's legal aid program.

Services

Legal assistance is provided province-wide to financially and legally eligible clients through a range of service channels. Low-income Ontario residents seeking assistance with their legal matters can do so by:

- Calling Legal Aid Ontario toll-free, from anywhere in Ontario, or collect if outside of the province. Service is provided in 120 languages, including 18 Aboriginal languages and dialects through simultaneous interpreting services.
- Speaking with a duty counsel lawyer at any courthouse or a Legal Aid Ontario staff worker at one of the 50 courthouse locations.
- At one of the 77 community and specialty legal clinics operating across Ontario.
- Through Student Legal Aid Services Societies operating out of Ontario's six law schools.
- At Family Law Service Centres in Toronto, North York, Newmarket, Brampton, Chatham and Sarnia, and at the Family Law Offices in Thunder Bay and Ottawa
- For criminal law matters, at a Criminal Law Office in Barrie and Brampton
- Calling a toll-free Francophone legal advice lines for French-speaking clients, if in the GTA, Eastern and Northern Ontario, and parts of Central Ontario.

Finances

- LAO receives the majority of its funding from the province of Ontario and the Law Foundation of Ontario. Funding is also derived from Federal Government, through judgements, costs and settlements and through clients who contribute towards the cost of their legal representation. In 2010, LAO received funding from the following sources:

2009/10 (in millions)	
Province of Ontario	\$ 262.14
Government of Canada	\$53.30
Law Foundation Ontario	\$ 4.84
Client Contributions	\$ 21.88
Judgements, costs and settlements	\$ 0.26
Other Income	\$ 1.67
Total	\$ 344.09

Find out more about how [Legal Aid Ontario is funded](#).

Legal aid certificates

- 109,310 certificates issued in 2009/10.
- 47 per cent reduction in the cost per application taken over previous year.
- 74 per cent of applicants receive a same-day decision on their application.

Community, specialty and SLASS clinics

- Legal Aid Ontario funds 77 community and specialty legal clinics across Ontario.
- 60 community legal clinics provided assistance to 156,588 Ontarians last year.
- 17 clinics provide specialty legal services.
- Student Legal Aid Services Societies, located at each of Ontario's six law schools, provide assistance to the community through staff lawyers and students.
- In 2009 1,068 law students participated in the SLASS program.
- Legal Aid Ontario provided \$67.5 million in funding for poverty law services in 2009.

Duty counsel

- 1,074,755 assists provided in 2009 for criminal and family law matters.
- 728 criminal duty counsel lawyers (116 staff and 612 per diem).
- 642 family law duty counsel lawyers (52 staff and 590 per diem).
- Since 2000, duty counsel assists have increased by 35 per cent.

Family law services

- Six family law service centres are providing assistance to low-income individuals in Toronto, North York, Newmarket, Brampton, Chatham and Sarnia, along with two Family Law Offices in Thunder Bay and Ottawa.

Questions?

For more information on this topic contact media@lao.on.ca