



## Client & Lawyer Rights & Responsibilities

- I. Meet with your lawyer as soon as possible after you receive your Personal Information Form (PIF) from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). You and your lawyer have only 28 days to complete your PIF and deliver it to the IRB.
- II. If you receive a certificate for only a lawyer's opinion letter, Legal Aid will pay your lawyer to review your refugee claim and give an opinion on its merits. Legal Aid will then decide if it will pay your lawyer to prepare your PIF and to represent you at the hearing. The IRB is enforcing its 28-day PIF filing time limit, even if Legal Aid asks your lawyer for an opinion letter.
- III. If you receive a certificate for preparation of your PIF and representation before the IRB, Legal Aid will pay your lawyer for these services. Do not pay the lawyer yourself for these services. The certificate covers a limited number of hours for preparation (16 hours for a full hearing, 8 hours for an expedited hearing). The time limit for your lawyer's work on your case includes any work done by a law clerk/paralegal. Time limits also apply to work done by interpreters.
  - ❑ Your lawyer should personally interview you about the contents of your PIF before you sign it.
  - ❑ At all meetings, your lawyer should provide an interpreter if you need one. Legal Aid will pay for the interpreter (up to 10 hours, or more if your lawyer obtains approval). Do not pay the interpreter yourself.
  - ❑ Make sure your PIF is complete, correct in every detail, and you understand it perfectly before you sign it. The PIF is your declaration, so you are expected to understand it. You have the right to correct your PIF, if necessary, before you sign it.
  - ❑ Your lawyer should give you a complete copy of your signed PIF sent to the IRB.
  - ❑ If your lawyer thinks a medical or psychological report is needed for your hearing, your lawyer will send you to a doctor or psychologist to obtain one. Legal Aid will pay your lawyer for this report up to a set amount of money. Do not pay for this report yourself.
  - ❑ Documents which are not in English or French, must be translated before they can be sent to the IRB. If your identity or personal documents need translation, talk to your lawyer about this. Legal Aid will pay for a limited amount of translation. If you have more documents that need translating, your lawyer can ask Legal Aid to pay for more translations if necessary.
  - ❑ Your lawyer should meet with you to prepare you for your hearing and go with you to your hearing unless you agree to be represented by another lawyer, or by an articling student directly supervised by your lawyer.
  - ❑ Your lawyer must tell you who will be working under your legal aid certificate, preparing your PIF with you and going with you to your hearing, and whether or not that person is a lawyer.
- IV. Tell Legal Aid, your lawyer, the IRB, and the Immigration Department if you change address or phone number.

**Please ask your lawyer whether she/he is on Legal Aid Ontario's Refugee Panel and can accept your certificate if you receive one.**

**If you have any questions or concerns, go back to the office where you applied for legal aid.**