

LEGAL AID ONTARIO

PRINCIPLES OF THE 2013 BUDGET FUNDING

Objective of the 2013 Funding

The 2013 Budget states:

*As part of the government's commitment to social justice and a fair society, additional funding of **\$30 million over three years** will be provided to Legal Aid Ontario. This funding will **improve access to justice and enhance outcomes for low-income families, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups by strengthening the capacity of Family Law Service Centres and other community and legal clinics** across Ontario to **respond to evolving needs**, and ensure services are sustainable. This is in addition to the \$150 million investment in Legal Aid Ontario over four years announced in September 2009."*

Principles for the Use of the 2013 Budget Funding

1. Meets the 2013 Budget objective: Allocation of the new funding meets the intent of the objectives of the 2013 budget funding.
2. Supports unmet needs of families and vulnerable people: Expenditure of the funds focusses on improving the delivery of front line services for vulnerable people/client, including reducing unrepresented litigants in family court proceedings.
3. Is sustainable: Costs of strengthening capacity must be sustainable, including savings achieved by LAO, other community and legal clinics, and with considerations of savings achieved within the justice system, as the funding is being provided on a one-time basis, \$10M a year for the next three years for a total of \$30M.
4. Results are measured: LAO will establish performance measures for LAO and other community and legal clinics that receive funds from this source that demonstrate accountability for the use of public funds, and LAO will report semi-annually to the Ministry on results achieved.
5. Accountabilities are clear: LAO is accountable for the provision of legal aid services, including the oversight and monitoring of clinic law services.
6. LAO and MAG agree the allocation of the funding in the first year to be:
 - a. \$7 million dollars would be used to strengthening the capacity of LAO FLSCs and other family law services, making it possible for more low-income families to access legal advice, duty counsel and mediation services;
 - b. \$2 million dollars in the first year to creating a "*Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Community and Legal Clinics*" to achieve the objectives of Budget 2013 in the context of LAO's approved 2013/14 business plan; and

- c. \$1 million dollars to create a "*Clinic Transformation Fund*" to ensure clinic transformation and future savings in the context of clinic modernization strategy included in LAO's 2013/14 business plan.
7. LAO will establish criteria for the allocation of the new funding, and consult with community and legal clinics, in accordance with the Consultation Policy in the Memorandum of Understanding between LAO and clinics, on the criteria that would be used to evaluate proposals from community and legal clinics.

The criteria for the allocation will incorporate the principles herein and other considerations such as:

- (i) For the allocation of the \$7M funding related to strengthening the capacity of FLSCs and other family law services:
 - a) Improves the delivery of front line client services for low-income families and vulnerable persons; and
 - b) Makes it possible for more low-income families to access legal advice, duty counsel, and mediation services.
- (ii) For the allocation of the \$2M funding related to "*Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Other Community and Legal Clinics*":
 - a. Focuses on new and enhanced services for community and legal clinics;
 - b. Delivers services through community access points in a way that increases the number of clients served and is cost-effective;
 - c. Expands the range of available holistic family-law related services at community and legal clinics;
 - d. Provides wrap-around services that address individuals' intersecting legal and non-legal needs such as housing, income assistance, family law and mental health issues in location "hubs," to prevent cascading problems and stabilize a client's situation;
 - e. Pilots the delivery of legal services at sites within the community in partnership and collaboration with student legal aid services and existing legal clinics;
- (iii) For the allocation of the \$1M funding related to "*Clinic Transformation Fund*":
 - a. Supports clinic transformation to promote innovation and strengthen clinics' abilities to demonstrate accountability for the use of public funds, provide consistent services to clients across the province, increase access points for clients, improve transparency and accountability;
 - b. Supports modernization and sustainability of services so as to achieve future savings in and after 2014.