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February 15, 2013



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Access to Information Request No. [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for access to information, which was received in this office on February 11, 2013.

There were two parts to your request:

Request 1: Records re Options for Delivery of Legal Services to West Toronto

Request 2: Records Regarding Cost per Square Foot at 20 Dundas Street West.

These two parts are being treated as separate requests, as you have sent \$10.00 as two fees for these requests.

This letter will deal with the second request; the first request is dealt with in the file FOI Request 13-002.

You have requested record(s) indicating the cost per square foot of Legal Aid Ontario's office space at 20 Dundas Street West. You have indicated that this request can be satisfied by providing a copy of the lease as well as a record indicating the size of the space leased in square feet. As an alternative, you have suggested that this request can be satisfied by providing a letter from a staff person at LAO indicating the cost per square foot. Attached is a memo from the Leasing Specialist at LAO, setting out the total space rented at 20 Dundas Street West and the net rent and operating costs per square foot for that space. No exemptions have been made from this memo.

I would like to take this opportunity to add some context to this information.

Legal Aid Ontario is a modern organization that is committed to finding ways to strengthen and develop the means to deliver legal aid services more effectively and efficiently. In July 2008, as part of its modernization strategy, LAO moved the Provincial Office, the Toronto Office, the Family Law Office and the Refugee

Law Office to the Atrium on Bay, near the Eaton Centre. Centralizing these offices on a single floor generated \$900,000 in savings per year for LAO, and approximately \$10 million in savings over the term of the lease. The location of the Atrium, including its access to subway, bus and streetcar routes, was ideal not only for client service but for staff as well. The move also allowed LAO to modernize and update its work environment by creating an open concept office design and layout practices which resulted in a reduction in the overall square footage of the LAO offices from 85,000 to 74,459 square feet. In 2011, the Clinic Resource Office was moved from its Adelaide Street location to the Atrium on Bay as part of the Research, Policy and External Relations Division, resulting in further administrative savings of about \$250,000. LAO's current rentable square feet per person is about 166, well below the OPS standard of 200. The leasing cost is \$12.80 per square foot plus the operating cost of \$21.12, for a total cost of \$33.92 per square foot. The annual leasing cost per person is approximately \$5500.

All of these changes are part of LAO's plan to reduce administrative costs and focus more resources on client services, which is a trend among government ministries, public sector agencies, hospitals, social service agencies and other profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Across Ontario, two clinics have less than 300 square feet per person. The most cost effective clinic in this respect has 275.6 rentable square feet per funded position and half the clinics have more than 417 rentable square feet per funded position in their principal offices. For legal clinics in Toronto, the cost ranges from \$28.28 to \$40.46 per square foot, for a total rent funding in 2012-13 of \$2,718,985. There are 240 funded positions in the Toronto clinics, and the average annual leasing cost per person across the Toronto clinics is \$11,353.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. I am responsible for the decision to grant you access to these records. You may ask for a review of this decision within 30 days of receiving this letter by writing to: The Information and Privacy Commission/Ontario, 2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400, Toronto Ontario M4W 1A8, Telephone 1-800-387-0073.

If you decide to request a review of this decision, please provide the Commissioner's office with the following: the file number listed at the beginning of this letter; a copy of this decision letter; and a copy of the original request for information you sent to our institution.

In addition, you must send an appeal fee to the Commissioner's office. That appeal fee for personal information is \$10.00.

Yours truly,

Robert W. Ward  
President/CEO