

Big Case Management

For more information

Please contact your local district area director. You can find this information on our website, legalaid.on.ca.

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) sets budgets for criminal cases expected to cost more than \$20,000.

In these cases, LAO establishes individual budgets instead of using its hourly rate and number of hours available to pay lawyers. LAO works with the lawyer to tailor a budget that meets the requirements that meet the case to help better manage costs and ensure that the lawyer can plan his or her defence strategy accordingly.

Budgets are set for the following criminal matters:

- Any case where the total fees and disbursements are likely to be between \$20,000 and \$75,000
- First or second degree murder cases where the total fees and disbursements are expected to be more than \$30,000
- Any case with multiple accused where the collective fees and disbursements are expected to be more than \$50,000
- Where the preliminary hearing is likely to take more than two weeks.

Cases that are expected to cost more than \$75,000 are reviewed by the Exceptions Committee.

The application process

1. Lawyer submits an opinion letter, providing LAO with a comprehensive outline of all the relevant facts and legal issues pertaining to the case, to the district's director general.
2. If the case is accepted, LAO works with the lawyer to set a budget.
3. The lawyer provides periodic updates to LAO and adheres to a set of guidelines that outline conduct, quality service, budget management and billing rules.

If a BCM application is denied, there is no appeal, but lawyers can re-apply if there is a change in circumstance.