

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The Attorney General of Ontario

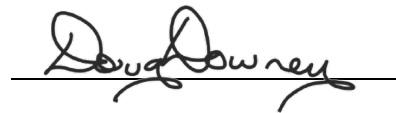
and

The Chair of Legal Aid Ontario

August 26, 2025

Signatures

I have read, understood and concur with this MOU dated August 26, 2025 and will abide by the requirements for this MOU and the AAD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Downey", is written over a horizontal line.

The Honourable Doug Downey
Attorney General

October 17, 2025

Date

I have read, understood and concur with this MOU dated August 26, 2025 and will abide by the requirements for this MOU and the AAD.



Steve Pengelly
Chair
Legal Aid Ontario

October 9, 2025

Date

Table of Contents

Signatures	2
Table of Contents.....	4
1. Preamble	8
2. Purpose	8
3. Definitions	9
Agency's Legal Authority and Mandate	11
4. Agency Type, Function and Public Body Status	11
5. Corporate Status and Crown Agency Status	11
6. Guiding Principles	11
7. Accountability Relationships.....	13
7.1 Minister	13
7.2 Chair	13
7.3 Board of Directors	13
7.4 Deputy Minister	14
7.5 Chief Executive Officer (CEO).....	14
8. Roles and Responsibilities	15
8.1 Minister	15
8.2 Chair	16
8.3 Board of Directors	20
8.4 Deputy Minister	22
8.5 Chief Executive Officer (CEO).....	24
9. Ethical Framework.....	27
10. Reporting Requirements	28
10.1 Business Plan	28
10.2 Annual Reports	29
10.3 Human resources and compensation	30
10.4 Other Reports	30
11. Public Posting Requirements	31
12. Communications and Issues Management.....	32
13. Administrative Arrangements	34
13.1 Applicable Government Directives	34

13.2 Administrative and Organizational Support Services (as applicable)	34
13.3 Agreements with Third Parties	35
13.4 Legal Services	36
13.5 Creation, Collection, Maintenance and Disposition of Records.....	36
13.6 Cyber Security	36
13.7 Intellectual Property	37
13.8 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy.....	37
13.9 Service Standards.....	37
13.10 Diversity and Inclusion	37
14. Financial Arrangements.....	39
15.1 General	39
15.2 Funding	40
15.3 Financial Reports	40
15.4 Taxation Status: Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)	41
Collection/Remittance of HST	41
Payment of HST	41
HST Recovery	41
15.5 Realty.....	41
15. Audit and Review Arrangements.....	42
16.1 Audits.....	42
16.2 Other Reviews	42
16. Staffing and Appointments.....	44
17.1 Delegation of Human Resources Management Authority	44
17.2 Staffing Requirements.....	44
17.3 Designated Executives.....	44
17.4 Appointments	45
17.5 Remuneration	45
17. Risk Management, Liability Protection and Insurance.....	46
18.1 Risk Management	46
18.1.1 Artificial Intelligence Risk Management.....	46
18.2 Liability Protection and Insurance	47
18. Compliance and Corrective Actions	48
19. Effective Date, Duration and Review of the MOU	48

Signatures 49

The parties to this memorandum of understanding agree to the following:

1. Preamble

- a. Provincial agencies deliver important and valued services to the people of Ontario. In delivering these public services, provincial agencies are accountable to the government through the responsible minister.
- b. Provincial agencies must use public resources efficiently and effectively to carry out their mandates, as established by their respective constituting instruments and in alignment with the key priorities of the provincial government. Their operations are guided by the key principles of the Agencies and Appointments Directive (AAD).
- c. The parties to this MOU acknowledge that the legal authority of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is set out in the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 (LASA, 2020), and the agency is part of government which requires them to comply with legislation, government directives, policies, and guidelines applicable to them. LAO, as a provincial agency, has the capacity, rights, power, and privileges of a natural person for carrying out its objects, subject to the limitations placed upon it under the LASA, 2020 and/or limitations imposed by Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet. Further, the parties to this MOU acknowledge that the agency is not a Crown agency within the meaning of the Crown Agency Act, and may be required to ensure that their directives and policies adhere to certain government directives, policies, and guidelines, including those for human resources, while being mindful of collective agreement and bargaining obligations.

2. Purpose

- a. The purpose of this memorandum of understanding (MOU) is to:
 - Establish the accountability relationships between the Minister of the Attorney General and the Chair of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO)
 - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the minister, the chair, the deputy minister, the chief executive officer (CEO), and LAO's board of directors.
 - Clarify the operational, administrative, financial, staffing, auditing, and reporting arrangements between the Legal Aid Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General
- b. This MOU should be read together with the *Legal Aid Services Act, 2020* (LASA, 2020). This MOU does not affect, modify, or limit the powers of the agency as set out under the LASA, 2020, or interfere with the responsibilities of any of its parties as established by law. In case of a conflict between this MOU and any act or regulation, the act or regulation prevails.
- c. This MOU replaces the memorandum of understanding between the parties dated October 22, 2022.

3. Definitions

In this MOU:

- a. “AAD” means the Agencies and Appointments Directive, issued by Management Board of Cabinet;
- b. “Agency” or “provincial agency” means Legal Aid Ontario (LAO);
- c. “Annual Report” means the annual report referred to in article 10.2 of this MOU;
- d. “Applicable Government Directives” means the government directives, policies, standards and guidelines that apply to the agency;
- e. “Artificial intelligence system” means a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, makes inferences, from the input it receives, in order to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments.
- f. “Board” means the board of directors of the Legal Aid Ontario;
- g. “Business Plan” means the annual business plan described under article 10.1 of this MOU;
- h. “CEO” (as appropriate) means the chief executive officer of the agency.
- i. “Chair” means the Chair of the Legal Aid Ontario;
- j. “CoA” means Certificate of Assurance;
- k. “Constituting instrument” means the *Legal Aid Services Act, 2020* that which continued Legal Aid Ontario as a corporation;
- l. “Consultant” means a person or entity that under an agreement, other than an employment agreement, provides expert or strategic advice and related services for consideration and decision-making;
- m. “Deputy Minister” means the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of the Attorney General;
- n. “Designated Executive” means designated executive defined in the *Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014*, S.O. 2014;
- o. “Executive Council Act” means the *Executive Council Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E. 25, as amended;
- p. “FIPPA” means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.F.31, as amended;

- q. "Fiscal Year" means the period from April 1 to March 31;
- r. "Government" means the Government of Ontario;
- s. "MBC" means the Management Board of Cabinet;
- t. "Member" means an individual appointed to the agency by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC), but does not mean an individual employed or appointed by the agency as staff;
- u. "Minister" means the Minister of the Ministry of the Attorney General or such other person who may be designated from time to time as the responsible minister in relation to this MOU in accordance with the *Executive Council Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.25, as amended;
- v. "Minister of Finance" means the Minister of Finance or such other person who may be designated from time to time under the *Executive Council Act*;
- w. "Ministry" means the Ministry of the Attorney General or any successor to the ministry;
- x. "MOU" means this memorandum of understanding signed by the minister and the chair;
- y. "OPS" means the Ontario Public Service;
- z. "Other acts" mean *Legal Aid Services Act, 2020*, S.O. 2020, c. 11, Sched. 15 (LASA, 2020) that governs the agency
- aa. "President of the Treasury Board" means this President of the Treasury Board or such other person who may be designated from time to time under the *Executive Council Act*;
- bb. "PSC" means the Public Service Commission;
- cc. "PSOA" means the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006*, S.O. 2006, c. 35, Sched. A, as amended;
- dd. "TBS" means the Treasury Board Secretariat;
- ee. "TB/MBC" means the Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet;

Agency's Legal Authority and Mandate

- a. The legal authority of Legal Aid Ontario is set out in the *Legal Aid Services Act, 2020* (LASA, 2020).
- b. The provincial agency's mandate is set out in the LASA, 2020, which states that the agency's objects are to:
 - Establish and administer a flexible and sustainable system for providing legal aid services to individuals in Ontario;
 - Establish policies and priorities for the provision of legal aid services based on its financial resources;
 - Facilitate co-ordination among the different legal aid services that are provided and the manners in which they are provided, including through different service providers;
 - Monitor and supervise the provision of legal aid services in Ontario; and
 - Advise the Minister on all aspects of legal aid services in Ontario including any features of the justice system that affect or may affect the demand for or quality of legal aid services.

4. Agency Type, Function and Public Body Status

- a. The agency is designated as a board-governed provincial agency with an Operational Service function under the AAD.
- b. The agency is prescribed as a public body in accordance with Ontario Regulation 146/10 under the PSOA.

5. Corporate Status and Crown Agency Status

- a. The agency is not a Crown agency within the meaning of the *Crown Agency Act*.
- b. The provincial agency has the capacity, rights, power and privileges of a natural person for carrying out its objects, subject to the limitations placed upon it under the LASA, 2020 and/or limitations imposed by Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet.

6. Guiding Principles

The parties agree to the following principles:

- a. **Accountability:** Provincial agencies deliver public services and are accountable to the government through the responsible minister. In delivering on their mandate, provincial agencies balance operational flexibility with the minister's accountability for the

provincial agency to Cabinet, the Legislative Assembly and the people of Ontario. Accountability of the minister for each provincial agency cannot be delegated.

Every provincial agency complies with all applicable legislation and Ontario Public Service (OPS) directives and policies. Further, agencies ensure that their directives and policies adhere to certain government directives, policies and guidelines, including those for human resources, while being mindful of collective agreement and bargaining obligations. This includes applicable legislation and directives related to procurement.

- b. **Responsiveness:** Provincial agencies align their mandate and operations with government priorities and direction. Open and consistent communication between provincial agencies and their responsible ministry helps ensure that government priorities and direction are clearly understood and helps to manage risks or issues as they arise. Provincial agencies deliver a high standard of public service that meets the needs of the population that they serve.
- c. **Efficiency:** Provincial agencies use public resources efficiently and effectively to carry out their mandates, as established by their respective constituting instruments. They operate in a cost-effective manner and pursue efficiencies throughout the agency's service delivery and administration.
- d. **Sustainability:** Provincial agencies operate in a way so that their current form is sustainable over the long-term while delivering a high standard of service to the public.
- e. **Transparency:** Good governance and accountability practices for provincial agencies are complemented by transparency in the form of public posting of governance and accountability documents including the business plan, annual report, MOU and expenses information.

7. Accountability Relationships

7.1 Minister

The minister is accountable:

- a. To Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly for the agency's fulfilment of its mandate and its compliance with government policies, and for reporting to the Legislative Assembly on the agency's affairs.
- b. For reporting and responding to Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet on the agency's performance and compliance with government's applicable direction, including directives and operational policies.
- c. To the Cabinet for the performance of the agency and its compliance with the government's operational policies and broad policy directions.

7.2 Chair

The chair, acting on behalf of the board of directors, is accountable:

- a. To the minister for the agency's performance in fulfilling its mandate, and for carrying out the roles and responsibilities assigned to the chair by the LASA, 2020, this MOU, and applicable government directives and policies.
- b. For reporting to the minister, as requested, on the agency's activities.
- c. For ensuring timely communications with the minister regarding any issue that affects, or can reasonably be expected to affect, the minister's responsibilities for the agency.
- d. To the minister to confirm the agency's compliance with legislation, government directives, and applicable accounting, financial, and I&IT policies.

7.3 Board of Directors

The board of directors is accountable, through the chair, to the minister for the oversight and governance of the agency; setting goals, objectives and strategic direction for the agency as outlined in the annual letter of direction; and for carrying out the roles and responsibilities assigned to it by LASA, 2020, this MOU, and applicable other government directives and policies.

7.4 Deputy Minister

The deputy minister reports to the Secretary of the Cabinet and is responsible for supporting the minister in the effective oversight of provincial agencies. The deputy minister is accountable for the performance of the ministry in providing administrative and organizational support to the agency and for carrying out the roles and responsibilities assigned by the minister, LASA, 2020, this MOU, and applicable government directives and policies.

The deputy minister is also accountable for attesting to TB/MBC on the agency's compliance with applicable directives to the best of their knowledge and ability.

7.5 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Where the CEO is employed under the agency's authority and not under Part III of the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006*, the CEO is accountable to the board for the management and administration of the agency, the supervision of agency staff, and carrying out the roles and responsibilities assigned by the board, the agency's constituting instrument, this MOU and government directives. The CEO works under the direction of the chair to implement policy and operational decisions. The CEO reports the agency's performance results to the board, through the chair. The board and chair are accountable to the minister.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Minister

The minister is responsible for:

- a. Reporting and responding to the Legislative Assembly on the affairs of the agency.
- b. Reporting and responding to TB/MBC on the agency's performance and compliance with applicable directives, the government's operational policies and policy directions.
- c. Meeting with the chair at least quarterly on: government and ministry priorities for the agency; agency, board, chair and CEO performance; emerging issues and opportunities; agency high risks and action plans including direction on corrective action, as required; and agency business plan and capital priorities.
 - i. As a best practice, meetings are to be quarterly. The minister may delegate some of the meetings to an associate minister or parliamentary assistant. The minister should meet with the chair at least twice per year, with one meeting focused on agency, board, chair and CEO performance.
 - ii. If the minister deems the agency to be low-risk, the minister may reduce the number of meetings to twice a year, instead of quarterly, with one meeting focused on agency, board, chair and CEO performance.
- d. Informing the chair of the government's priorities and broad policy directions for the agency and setting expectations for the agency in the annual letter of direction.
- e. Working with the chair to develop appropriate measures and mechanisms related to the performance of the agency.
- f. Reviewing the advice or recommendation of the chair on candidates for appointment or reappointment to the board.
- g. Making recommendations to Cabinet and the Lieutenant Governor in Council for appointments and reappointments to the agency, pursuant to the process for agency appointments established by legislation and/or by MBC through the AAD.
- h. Determining at any time the need for a review or audit of the agency, directing the chair to undertake reviews or audits of the agency on a periodic basis, and recommending to TB/MBC any change(s) to the governance or administration of the agency resulting from any such review or audit.
- i. Signing the MOU into effect after it has been signed by the chair.

- j. Receiving the agency's annual business plan and approving or providing suggested changes to the plan no later than 30 calendar days from receiving it.
- k. Ensuring that the agency's business plan is made available to the public no later than 30 calendar days from approving it.
- l. Receiving the agency's annual report and approving the report no later than 60 calendar days of the ministry's receipt of the report from the agency.
- m. Ensuring the annual report is tabled no later than 30 calendar days from approval and then made available to the public.
- n. Recommending to TB/MBC any provincial funding to be allocated to the agency.
- o. When appropriate or necessary, taking action, or directing that the agency take corrective action with respect to the agency's administration or operations.
- p. Consulting, as appropriate, with the chair (and others) on significant new directions or when the government is considering regulatory or legislative changes for the agency.
- q. Recommending to TB/MBC the application of the OPS Procurement Directive.
- r. Recommending to TB/MBC, where required, the merger, any change to the mandate, or dissolution of the agency.
- s. Recommending to TB/MBC the powers to be given to, or revoked from, the agency when a change to the agency's mandate is being proposed.

8.2 Chair

The chair is responsible to support the board of directors by:

- a. Providing leadership to the agency's board of directors and ensuring that the board carries out its fiduciary responsibilities for decisions regarding the agency.
- b. Providing strategic leadership to the agency by working with the board of directors to set the goals, objectives and strategic directions as outlined in the annual letter of direction.
- c. Ensuring compliance with legislative and TB/MBC policy obligations.
- d. Reporting to the minister as requested on the agency's activities within agreed upon timelines, including an annual letter confirming the agency's compliance with all applicable legislation, directives, and accounting, financial and I&IT policies.
- e. Meeting with the minister at least quarterly on: government and ministry priorities for the agency; agency, board and CEO performance; emerging issues and opportunities;

agency high risks and action plans including direction on corrective action, as required; and agency business plan and capital priorities.

- i. As a best practice, meetings are to be quarterly. The minister may delegate some of the meetings to an associate minister or parliamentary assistant. The minister should meet with the chair at least twice per year, with one meeting focused on agency, board and CEO performance.
 - ii. If the minister deems the agency to be low-risk, the minister may reduce the number of meetings to twice a year, instead of quarterly, with one meeting focused on agency, board, chair and CEO performance.
- f. Ensuring timely communications with the minister regarding any issues or events that may concern or can reasonably be expected to concern the minister in the exercise of their responsibilities relating to the agency.
- g. Ensuring the agency is fulfilling the government's priorities and expectations from the annual letter of direction and achieving its key performance measures.
- h. Informing the minister on progress on achieving the government's priorities and broad policy directions for the agency as outlined in the annual letter of direction.
- i. Working with the minister to develop appropriate measures and mechanisms related to the performance of the agency.
- j. Utilizing the agency's skills matrix to advise the minister of any competency skills gaps on the board and provide recommendations for recruitment strategies, appointments, or re-appointments as needed, including advising the minister on appointee attendance and performance.
- k. Cooperating with any review or audit of the agency.
- l. Requesting an external audit of the financial transactions or management controls of the agency, at the agency's expense, if required.
- m. Advising the minister and deputy minister, annually at minimum, on any outstanding audit recommendations/issues.
- n. Sharing all audit engagement reports (including those prepared by their own internal audit function and/or those reported to the agency's chair) with their respective minister and deputy minister (and when requested, with the President of the Treasury Board).
- o. Seeking strategic policy direction for the agency from the minister.
- p. Signing the agency's MOU on behalf of the board, along with the CEO or

equivalent.

- q. Submitting the agency's business plan/attestation memo, budget, annual report/attestation memo and financial reports, on behalf of the board, to the minister in accordance with the timelines specified in the applicable government directives and this MOU.
- r. Ensuring that the agency operates within its approved budget allocation in fulfilling its mandate, and that public funds are used for the purpose intended with integrity and honesty.
- s. Consulting with the minister in advance regarding any activity which may have an impact on the government and ministry's policies, directives or procedures, or on the agency's mandate, powers or responsibilities as set out in the agency's constituting instrument.
- t. Chairing board meetings, including the management of the board's agenda.
- u. Reviewing the performance of the CEO annually in consultation with the board of directors and deputy minister.
- v. Reviewing and approving claims for per diems and travel expenses for board members.
- w. Ensuring appropriate management systems are in place (financial, information technology (including cyber security), human resources, procurement) for the effective administration of the agency.
- x. Establishing and implementing artificial intelligence (AI) risk management in alignment with the principles of the Responsible Use of AI Directive and requirements in section 6.3, ensuring that they fulfill the role outlined for "Provincial Agency Heads or Equivalent" in the Responsible Use of AI Directive.
- y. Carrying out effective public communications and relations for the agency as required by the Communications Protocol.
- z. Acknowledging the importance of promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace within the agency, and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace within the agency.
- aa. Ensuring that board members are informed of their responsibilities under the PSOA with regard to the rules of ethical conduct, including the political activity rules.

Fulfilling the role of ethics executive for public servants who are government appointees to Legal Aid Ontario, promoting ethical conduct and ensuring that all members of the agency are familiar with the ethical requirements of the PSOA, and the regulations and the directives made under that Act, including in respect of conflict of interest, political activity and the protected disclosure of wrongdoing

8.3 Board of Directors

The board of directors is responsible for:

- a. Managing and controlling the affairs of the provincial agency.
- b. Ensuring the agency is governed in an effective and efficient manner and the agency uses public funds with integrity and honesty, and only for the business of the agency based on the principle of value for money, and in compliance with applicable legislation and directives and policies.
- c. Ensuring the agency is fulfilling the government's priorities and expectations from the annual letter of direction in the establishment of goals, objectives, and strategic directions for the agency.
- d. Establishing robust performance measures, targets and management systems, and monitoring and assessing the agency's performance measures, targets and management systems.
- e. Governing the affairs of the agency in fulfilling the government's priorities and expectations from the annual letter of direction as set out in its approved business plan as described in section 10.1 of this MOU, and the policy parameters established and communicated in writing by the minister.
- f. Directing the development of and approving the agency's business plans for submission to the minister within the timelines established by the AAD.
- g. Directing the preparation of and approving the agency's annual reports for submission to the minister for approval, and for tabling in the Legislative Assembly, within the timelines established by the AAD or the agency's constituting instrument as applicable.
- h. Approving the agency's reports and reviews that may be requested by the minister from time to time for submissions to the minister within agreed upon timelines.
- i. Making decisions consistent with the business plan approved for the agency and ensuring that the agency operates within its budget allocation.
- j. Ensuring the CEO, or equivalent, is fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in this MOU and the AAD.
- k. Reviewing the performance of the CEO annually in consultation with the chair and deputy minister.
- l. Ensuring that the agency is governed in an effective and efficient manner according to accepted business and financial practices, and in accordance with applicable directives and policies.
- m. Establishing such board committees or oversight mechanisms as may be required

to advise the board on effective management, governance or accountability procedures for the agency.

- n. Approving the agency's MOU, and any amendments to the MOU, subject to TB/MBC approval, in a timely manner and authorizing the chair to sign the MOU, or any amendments to the MOU, on behalf of the agency.
- o. Directing the development of an appropriate risk management framework and a risk management plan and arranging for risk-based reviews and audits of the agency as needed.
- p. Where applicable, ensuring that conflict of interest rules that the agency is required to follow, as set out in Ontario Regulation 381/07 under PSOA (or as have been approved and published by the Integrity Commissioner on the Commissioner's website), are in place for the members of the board and employees of the agency.
- q. Directing corrective action on the functioning or operations of the agency, if needed.
- r. Cooperating with and sharing any relevant information on any risk-based or periodic review directed by the minister or TB/MBC.
- s. Consulting, as appropriate, with stakeholders on the agency's goals, objectives, and strategic directions.
- t. Providing advice to the government, through the minister, on issues within or affecting the agency's mandate and operations.
- u. Appointing a chief executive officer and setting performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives for the CEO which give due weight to the proper management and use of public resources.

8.4 Deputy Minister

Deputy minister responsibilities may be fulfilled by a delegate approved by the Secretary of Cabinet.

The deputy minister is responsible for:

- a. Advising and assisting the minister regarding the minister's oversight responsibilities for the Legal Aid Ontario, including informing the minister of policy direction, policies and priorities of relevance to the agency's mandate.
- b. Advising the minister on the requirements of the AAD, ensuring governance and accountability documents accurately adhere to the requirements of the AAD, and other directives that apply to Legal Aid Ontario.
- c. Attesting to TB/MBC on the provincial agency's compliance with the mandatory accountability requirements set out in the AAD and other applicable directives, the government's operational policies and policy directions based on the annual letter of compliance from the agency chair to the minister to the best of their knowledge and ability.
- d. Reporting/responding, within prescribed timelines, to TBS on compliance tracking.
- e. Informing the CEO or equivalent, in writing, of new government directives and any exceptions to, or exemptions in whole or in part from directives, government policies, or ministry administrative policies.
- f. Ensuring regular briefings and consultations between the chair and the minister at least quarterly, and between the ministry staff and the agency staff as needed.
- g. Meeting with the agency's CEO or equivalent at least quarterly on matters of mutual importance, including emerging issues and opportunities, government priorities and progress on annual letter of direction, agency business plans and results and agency high risks and action plans.
- h. Meeting with the agency's CEO or equivalent regularly and as required to discuss Certificate of Assurance exceptions and fraud instances and their related action plans.
- i. Supporting the minister in reviewing the performance targets, measures, and results of the agency.
- j. Signing the agency's MOU, acknowledging their responsibilities.
- k. Undertaking reviews of the agency as may be directed by the minister.
- l. Cooperating with any review of the agency as directed by the minister or TB/MBC.
- m. Ensuring the review of and assessing the agency's business plan and other

reports.

- n. Requesting information and data as needed to fulfill obligations under the AAD.
- o. Monitoring the agency on behalf of the minister while respecting the agency's authority, identifying needs for corrective action where warranted, and recommending to the minister ways of resolving any issues that might arise from time to time.
- p. Providing regular feedback to the minister on the performance of the agency.
- q. Providing annual feedback on the performance of the agency and CEO to the chair.
- r. Supporting ministers and minister's offices in monitoring and tracking upcoming and existing vacancies on boards, particularly where there is a legislated minimum number of members and to maintain quorum.
- s. Recommending to the minister, as may be necessary, the evaluation or review, including a risk-based review, of Legal Aid Ontario or any of its programs, or changes to the management framework or operations of Legal Aid Ontario.
- t. Ensuring that the ministry and the agency have the capacity and systems in place for on- going risk-based management, including appropriate oversight of the agency.
- u. Ensuring that the agency has an appropriate risk management framework and a risk management plan in place for managing risks that the agency may encounter in meeting its program or service delivery objectives.
- v. Undertaking timely risk-based reviews of the Legal Aid Ontario, its management, or operations, as may be directed by the minister or TB/MBC.
- w. Submitting to the minister, as part of the annual planning process, a risk assessment and management plan for each risk category, and for each business line (as applicable).
- x. Consulting with the agency's CEO or equivalent, as needed, on matters of mutual importance including services provided by the ministry and compliance with directives and ministry policies.
- y. Working with the CEO to address any issue that may arise.
- z. Arranging for administrative, financial, and other support to the agency, as specified in this MOU.

8.5 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The text in the section below includes the CEO's responsibilities under the AAD.

The chief executive officer is responsible for:

- a. Being accountable to the board.
- b. Managing the day-to-day operational, financial, analytical, and administrative affairs of the agency in accordance with the mandate of the agency, government directives and policies, accepted business and financial practices, and this MOU.
- c. Supporting the chair and board in meeting their responsibilities, including compliance with all applicable legislation, directives, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- d. Advising the chair on the requirements of and the agency's compliance with the AAD, as well as other government directives and policies, and agency by-laws and policies, including annually attesting to the chair on the agency's compliance with mandatory requirements.
- e. Attesting to the compliance of the agency to applicable directives and policies and supporting the board of directors to provide the statement of compliance of the agency.
- f. Ensuring that the provincial agency meets the requirements of the AAD.
- g. Meeting with the deputy minister at least quarterly on matters of mutual importance, including: emerging issues and opportunities; government priorities and progress on annual letter of direction; agency business plans and results; and, agency high risks, the action plan and advice on corrective action as required.
- h. Meeting with the deputy minister or an approved delegate regularly and as required to discuss Certificate of Assurance exceptions and fraud instances and their related action plans.
- i. Keeping the chair and board informed of operational matters and the implementation of policy and the operations of the agency.
- j. Keeping the ministry and the chair advised on issues or events that may concern the minister, the deputy minister and the chair in the exercise of their responsibilities.
- k. Translating the goals, objectives and strategic directions of the board, as set out in the annual letter of direction, into operational plans and activities in accordance with the agency's approved business plan.
- l. Carrying out in-year monitoring of the agency's performance and reporting on

results to the chair.

- m. Undertaking timely risk-based reviews of the agency's management and operations.
- n. Cooperating with a periodic review directed by the minister or TB/MBC.
- o. Signing the agency's MOU, along with the chair, on behalf of the board.
- p. Preparing the agency's annual report and business plan as directed by the board.
- q. Establishing and applying systems to ensure that the agency operates within its approved business plan.
- r. Providing leadership and management to the agency staff, including human and financial resources management, in accordance with the approved business plan, accepted business and financial practices and standards, the agency's constituting instrument, and government directives.
- s. Establishing and applying a financial management framework for the agency in accordance with applicable Minister of Finance/Treasury Board controllership directives, policies and guidelines.
- t. Applying policies and procedures so that public funds are used with integrity and honesty.
- u. Ensuring that the agency has the oversight capacity and an effective oversight framework in place for monitoring its management and operations.
- v. Providing information and reporting as requested by the minister, deputy minister, ministry and/or TBS, and within timelines set out by the minister, deputy minister, ministry and/or TBS.
- w. Establishing and applying the agency's risk management framework and risk management plan in place [as directed by the chair/board].
- x. Seeking support and advice from the ministry, as appropriate, on agency management issues.
- y. Establishing and applying a system for the retention of agency documents and for making such documents publicly available when appropriate, for complying with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act* where applicable.
- z. Carrying out effective public communications and relations for the agency as required by the Communications Protocol.
- aa. Fulfilling the role of ethics executive for employees of the agency.
- bb. Promoting ethical conduct and ensuring that all members of the agency are familiar

with the ethical requirements of the PSOA, and the regulations and directives made under that Act, including in respect of conflict of interest, political activity, and the protected disclosure of wrongdoing.

- cc. Preparing financial reports for approval by the board.
- dd. Preparing, for approval by the board, a performance review system for staff and implementing the system.

9. Ethical Framework

The members of the board who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council are subject to the conflict-of-interest provisions of the AAD and the conflict of interest provisions of the PSOA and its regulations.

Board members shall not use any information gained as a result of their appointment to or membership on the board for personal gain or benefit. A member who has reasonable grounds to believe that they have a conflict of interest in a matter before the board, or a committee of the board, shall disclose the nature of the conflict to the chair at the first opportunity and shall refrain from further participation in the consideration of the matter. The chair shall cause to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the board any declared conflicts of interest.

The chair, as the ethics executive for the provincial agency, is responsible for ensuring that appointees and staff of the agency are informed of the ethical rules to which they are subject, including the rules on conflict of interest, political activity and protected disclosure of wrongdoing that apply to the agency.

10. Reporting Requirements

10.1 Business Plan

- a. The chair will ensure that the minister is provided annually with the agency's business plan covering a minimum of three (3) years from the upcoming fiscal year, unless otherwise specified by TB/MBC, for approval by the minister. The annual business plan shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the AAD.
- b. The draft annual business plan is to be submitted to the ministry's chief administrative officer or designated equivalent no later than 90 calendar days prior to the beginning of the agency's fiscal year start, and the board-approved business plan is to be submitted to the minister for approval no later than 30 calendar days prior to the beginning of the provincial agency's fiscal year.
- c. The chair will ensure that the business plan demonstrates the agency's plans in fulfilling the government priorities set out in the annual letter of direction. When the business plan is submitted to the minister for approval, an attestation memo from the agency chair must also be submitted that details how the agency plans to achieve each government priority.
- d. The chair is responsible for ensuring that the agency's business plan includes a system of performance measures and reporting on the achievement of the objectives set out in the business plan. The system must include performance goals, how they will be achieved, and targeted results and timeframes.
- e. The chair will ensure that the business plan includes a summary of HR impacts, including: current number of employees expressed as full-time equivalents and current number of executives.
- f. The chair will ensure that the business plan includes a risk assessment and risk management plan. This will assist the ministry in developing its risk assessment and risk management plan information in accordance with the requirements of the AAD to assess risks, develop and maintain necessary records, and report to TB/MBC.
- g. The chair will ensure that the business plan includes an inventory of the provincial agency's artificial intelligence (AI) use cases in accordance with requirements of the Responsible Use of AI Directive.
- h. The chair will ensure that publicly posted business plans do not disclose: personal information, sensitive employment and labour relations information, solicitor-client privileged information, Cabinet confidential information, trade secrets, information that would prejudice the financial or commercial interests of the agency in the marketplace, and information that would otherwise pose a risk to the security of the facilities and/or operations of the agency. If necessary, this confidential information, included in the minister-approved business plan, may be redacted in the publicly

posted version.

- i. The minister will review the agency's annual business plan and will promptly advise the chair whether or not they concur with the directions proposed by the agency. The minister may advise the chair where and in what manner the agency's plan varies from government or ministry policy or priorities as may be required, and the chair, on behalf of the board of directors, will revise the agency's plan accordingly. Business plans are only to be considered valid once the responsible minister has approved the plan and the approval has been expressed in writing.
- j. The minister will approve or provide suggested changes to the business plan no later than 30 calendar days from the minister's receipt of the report. In certain circumstances, minister approval may be given to only certain portions of a business plan as submitted by an agency.
- k. The parties acknowledge that TB/MBC may require the minister to submit the agency's business plan to TB/MBC for review at any time.
- l. The chair, through the CEO, will ensure that the minister approved business plan is made available to the public in an accessible format (to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*), in both official languages (to comply with the *French Language Services Act*), on the provincial agency website no later than 30 calendar days from minister's approval of the plan.

10.2 Annual Reports

- a. The chair will ensure that the ministry is provided annually with the agency's annual report. The annual report shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the AAD.
- b. The annual report is to be submitted to the ministry no later than 90 calendar days from the provincial agency's receipt of the audited financial statement (where the Auditor General is the auditor of record).
- c. The chair will ensure that the annual report includes a summary of HR impacts, including: number of employees expressed as full-time equivalents, and number of executives.
- d. The chair will ensure that publicly posted annual reports do not disclose: personal information, sensitive employment and labour relations information, solicitor-client privileged information, Cabinet confidential information, trade secrets, information that would prejudice the financial or commercial interests of the agency in the marketplace, and information that would otherwise pose a risk to the security of the facilities and/or operations of the agency.

- e. The chair will ensure that the annual report demonstrates how the agency has fulfilled the expectations and government priorities set out in the annual letter of direction. When the annual report is submitted to the minister for approval, an attestation memo from the agency chair must also be submitted that details how the agency has achieved each government priority.
- f. The minister will approve the annual report no later than 60 calendar days from the ministry's receipt of the report and will table the report in the Legislative Assembly no later than 30 calendar days from approval.
- g. The chair, through the CEO, will ensure that the minister approved annual report is publicly posted in an accessible format (to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*), in both official languages (to comply with the *French Language Services Act*), on the provincial agency website after the report has been tabled in the Legislature and no later than 30 calendar days from minister's approval of the report.
- h. When distributing annual reports, digital formats and channels for distribution must be used unless otherwise required (e.g., by directive, legislation).

10.3 Human resources and compensation

- a. The CEO will ensure that the agency provides workforce, compensation and operational data as set out in the AAD Operational Policy.
- b. The CEO will also ensure that the agency reports on HR and compensation policies in its business plans and annual reports, in accordance with the requirements of the AAD, AAD Operational Policy, and articles 10.1 and 10.2 of this MOU.
- c. The CEO will also ensure that the agency provides any other additional workforce, compensation and operational data as requested by TBS.

10.4 Other Reports

The chair is responsible on behalf of the board of directors for:

- a. Ensuring that all required reports and documents, including those set out in the AAD and the agency's constituting instrument, are submitted for review and approval by the minister in accordance with the prescribed timelines.
- b. Supplying specific data and other information, at the request of the minister or the deputy minister, that may be required from time-to-time.

11. Public Posting Requirements

- a. The provincial agency, through the chair on behalf of the board of directors, will ensure that the following approved governance documents are posted in an accessible format (to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*), in both official languages (to comply with to the *French Language Services Act*), on the provincial agency' website no later than the specified timelines:
 - Memorandum of understanding – 30 calendar days of signing by all parties
 - Annual letter of direction – no later than the corresponding annual business plan
 - Annual business plan – 30 calendar days of minister's approval
 - Annual report – 30 calendar days of minister's approval (the report must first be tabled in the Legislature).
- b. Posted governance documents should not disclose: personal information, sensitive employment and labour relations information, solicitor-client privileged information, Cabinet confidential information, trade secrets or scientific information, information that would prejudice the financial or commercial interests of the provincial agency in the marketplace, and information that would otherwise pose a risk to the security of the facilities and/or operations of the provincial agency
- c. The provincial agency, through the chair on behalf of the board of directors, will ensure that the expense information for appointees and senior management staff are posted on the agency or ministry website, in accordance with the requirements of the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive.
- d. The provincial agency, through the chair on behalf of the board of directors, will ensure that any other applicable public posting requirements are met.

12. Communications and Issues Management

The parties to this MOU recognize that the timely exchange of information on the plans, strategies, operations, and administration of the agency is essential for the minister to meet their responsibilities for reporting and responding to the Legislative Assembly on the affairs of the agency. The parties also recognize that it is essential for the chair on behalf of the board of directors to be kept informed of government initiatives and broad policy directions that may affect the agency's mandate and functions.

The minister and the chair on behalf of the board of directors, therefore, agree that:

- a. The chair, and the CEO as necessary, will consult with the minister, in a timely manner, of all planned announcements, events or issues, including contentious matters, that concern or can be reasonably expected to concern the minister in the exercise of their responsibilities.
- b. The minister will advise the chair, and the CEO as necessary, in a timely manner, as appropriate, on broad government policy initiatives or legislation being considered by the government that may impact on the agency's mandate or functions, or which otherwise will have a significant impact on the agency.
- c. The minister will advise the chair, and the CEO as necessary, and the chair will consult with the minister on public communication strategies and publications. They will keep each other informed of the results of stakeholder and other public consultations and discussions as they relate to the agency's mandate and functions.
- d. The minister and the chair will meet at least quarterly on: government and ministry priorities for the agency; agency, board, chair and CEO performance; emerging issues and opportunities; agency high risks and action plans including direction on corrective action, as required; and agency business plan and capital priorities.
 - i. As a best practice, meetings are to be quarterly. The minister may delegate some of the meetings to an associate minister or parliamentary assistant. The minister should meet with the chair at least twice per year, with one meeting focused on agency, board, chair and CEO performance.
 - ii. If the minister deems the agency to be low-risk, the minister may reduce the number of meetings to twice a year, instead of quarterly, with one meeting focused on agency, board, chair and CEO performance.
- e. The deputy minister and the CEO or equivalent will meet at least quarterly to discuss matters of mutual importance including: emerging issues and opportunities; government priorities and progress on annual letter of direction; agency business plan and results; and agency high risks, the action plan and advice on corrective action as required.

- i. The deputy minister and the CEO or equivalent shall provide timely information and advice to each other concerning significant matters affecting the agency's management or operations.
- f. The agency and ministry will comply with the Public Communications Protocol set out in Appendix 1 to this MOU for ongoing issues management, public communications and paid advertising.

13. Administrative Arrangements

13.1 Applicable Government Directives

- a. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that the agency operates in accordance with all applicable government directives and policies. This includes, but is not limited to, the list of directives and policies found on the InsideOPS Directives and Policies page.
- b. The ministry will inform the agency of amendments or additions to legislation, government directives, policies and guidelines that apply to the agency; however, the agency is responsible for complying with all legislation, government directives, policies and guidelines to which it is subject. Information on corporate direction is available on the InsideOPS Directives and Policies page.
- c. All agencies are part of government and are required to comply with legislation, government directives, policies and guidelines applicable to them. Further, agencies may be required to ensure that their directives and policies adhere to certain government directives, policies and guidelines, including those for human resources, while being mindful of collective agreement and bargaining obligations.
- d. Procurement: The agency is considered an Other Included Entity under the OPS Procurement Directive and the Directive applies in part. The agency must establish their own procurement policy as set out in the OPS Procurement Directive.
- e. The agency must comply with corporate direction including the Transfer Payment Accountability Directive and the Transfer Payment Operational Policy and financial/accounting directives and policies.
- f. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that clear expectations are established for transfer payment recipients, and for ensuring effective diligence when setting up and monitoring transfer payment contracts to ensure public services are delivered, commitments are fulfilled, and the right controls are in place to ensure the prudent use of taxpayers' money.

13.2 Administrative and Organizational Support Services (as applicable)

- a. The parties to this MOU acknowledge that the legal authority of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is set out in the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 (LASA, 2020), and the agency is part of government which requires them to comply with legislation, government directives, policies, and guidelines applicable to them. LAO, as a provincial agency, has the capacity, rights, power, and privileges of a natural person for carrying out its objects, subject to the limitations placed upon it under the LASA, 2020 and/or limitations imposed by Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet. Further, the parties to this MOU acknowledge that the agency is not a

Crown agency within the meaning of the Crown Agency Act, and may be required to ensure that their directives and policies adhere to certain government directives, policies, and guidelines, including those for human resources, while being mindful of collective agreement and bargaining obligations.

- b. Subject to statutory requirements and applicable government directives, the Agency may establish its own administrative, financial, procurement, human resources and operational policies and guidelines, exercising sound business acumen and operational flexibility.

13.3 Agreements with Third Parties

- a. Legal Aid Ontario may authorize service providers, including lawyers, community legal clinics, other community legal services organizations, student legal services organizations and Indigenous legal services organizations to provide legal aid services.
- b. The power for Legal Aid Ontario to authorize service providers to provide legal aid services is set out in the LASA, 2020. The process for authorizing legal aid service providers and the rules for determining payment of service providers are set out in Legal Aid Ontario's Legal Aid Services Rules.

13.4 Legal Services

- a. LAO will provide its own legal services. LAO may retain outside legal assistance when it requires expertise unavailable from staff counsel or when the services provided by staff counsel could result in any conflict of interest or give rise to a challenge of bias.
- b. In keeping with the guiding principle of prudent use of public resources, when retaining outside legal assistance, LAO will be guided by the best practices for the retention of outside legal counsel as may be set out by Ministry policies from time to time.

13.5 Creation, Collection, Maintenance and Disposition of Records

- a. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that a system is in place for the creation, collection, maintenance, and disposal of records.
- b. The board, through the chair, is responsible for ensuring that the provincial agency complies with all government legislation, directives and policies related to information and records management.
- c. The CEO, the chair and the board shall protect the legal, fiscal, and other interests of the agency by implementing reasonable measures to ensure the ongoing viability, integrity, preservation, and security of all official records created, commissioned, or acquired by the agency. This includes, but is not limited to, all electronic records, such as emails, information posted on the agency's website(s), database data sets, and all records stored on personal computers and shared drives.
- d. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring measures are implemented requiring the agency's employees to create full, accurate and reliable records that document and support significant business transactions, decisions, events, policies and programs.

13.6 Cyber Security

- a. Agencies are responsible and accountable for the ownership and management of cyber security risks and related impacts within their organization.
- b. Agencies must ensure adequate systems, protocols and procedures are established and maintained to ensure cyber resilience, recovery and maturity.
- c. An agency's cyber security practices and protocols should be regularly reviewed and updated to address new and emerging cyber security threats.

- d. Agencies should align with any applicable policies and standards issued by the OPS, such as the Government of Ontario Information Technology Standards (GO-ITS) 25.0 and any other relevant GO-ITS standards, Corporate Policy on Information Sensitivity Classification, Corporate Policy on Cyber Security and Cyber Risk Management, Governance and Management of Information and Data Assets Directive, Governance and Management of Information Technology Directive.

13.7 Intellectual Property

- a. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that the legal, financial and other interests of the government related to intellectual property are protected in any contract that the agency may enter with a third party that involves the creation of intellectual property.

13.8 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

- a. The chair and the minister acknowledge that the agency is bound to follow the requirements set out in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) in relation to the collection, retention, security, use, distribution, disclosure, access and correction and disposal of records.
- b. The CEO is the institution head for the purposes of the FIPPA.

13.9 Service Standards

- a. The provincial agency shall establish customer service and quality standards that are consistent with the appropriate standards of the government, the ministry and the Ontario Public Service.
- b. The chair will ensure that the agency delivers its services at a quality standard that reflects the principles and requirements of the OPS Service Directive.
- c. The chair will ensure that the agency designs, delivers and implements its digital services, whether internally built or procured, to reflect the principles and requirements outlined in the Digital and Data Directive, including Ontario's Digital Service Standard.
- d. Legal Aid Ontario has in place a formal process for responding to complaints about the quality of services received by clients of the agency consistent with the government's service quality standards.
- e. The agency's annual business plan will include performance measures and targets for client service and the agency's response to complaints.

13.10 Diversity and Inclusion

- a. The provincial agency, through the chair on behalf of the board of directors, acknowledges the importance of promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace within the agency.
- b. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, will support a diverse and inclusive workplace within the agency by:
 - i. Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives to promote an inclusive environment free of workplace discrimination and harassment; and
 - ii. Adopting an inclusive process to ensure all voices are heard.
- c. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that the agency operates in accordance with the *Human Rights Code*, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, *French Language Services Act*, and *Pay Equity Act*.

14. Financial Arrangements

14.1 General

All financial procedures for the agency shall be in accordance with applicable government directives, ministry and corporate financial and administrative policies and procedures.

- a. When ordered to do so by the Minister of Finance and/or the President of the Treasury Board, pursuant to Section 16.4 of the *Financial Administration Act*, the agency shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund any money that the Minister of Finance and/or the President of the Treasury Board determines is surplus to its requirements.
- b. Pursuant to Section 28 of the *Financial Administration Act*, the agency shall not enter into any financial arrangement or commitment, guarantee, indemnity or similar transaction that may increase, directly or indirectly, the indebtedness or contingent liabilities of the Government of Ontario without the approval of the Minister of Finance and/or the President of the Treasury Board. The minister's approval is required before seeking statutory approval from the Minister of Finance or President of the Treasury Board.
- c. The provincial agency's approved operating and capital allocations may be adjusted in a given year if in-year fiscal constraints are ordered by Cabinet or the minister. The agency will be provided with notice of changes to its allocation as soon as is reasonably possible. Where the agency must reallocate resources as a result of its operating and/or capital allocations being adjusted, the agency shall inform and discuss the changes with the ministry before making such changes.
- d. The agency will report to TBS when it has sought external advice on matters where: (i) the effectiveness of the advice depends on a particular accounting treatment or presentation in the financial statements; (ii) the outcome or consequences of the advice has or will have a material effect on the financial statements; and (iii) where there could be reasonable doubt as to the appropriateness of the related accounting treatment or presentation under the relevant financial reporting framework.

The CEO shall be responsible for providing the ministry with the necessary documentation to support the agency's expenditures.

14.2 Funding

- a. The provincial agency shall maintain a bank account in its own name and manage its financial activities, including leasing, investment and management of cash in accordance with the Ontario Financing Authority's policy directions.
- b. The agency is funded by the ministry using via a transfer payment. Note that this form of funding does not mean that the accountability rules for transfer payments are applied. For clarity, TPAD does not apply to funding for provincial agencies through the TP account.
- c. The agency is required to maintain a contingency reserve fund in accordance with O. Reg. 672/21 under LASA, 2020.
- d. The agency is funded by the Government, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund pursuant to an appropriation authorized by the Legislative Assembly, and is subject to adjustments made by the minister, TB/MBC or the legislative Assembly.
- e. The CEO will prepare estimates of the agency's expenditures for inclusion in the ministry's business plan for presentation to the Legislative Assembly. The chair will deliver these estimates to the minister in sufficient time to be analyzed and approved by the minister.
- f. The estimates provided by the chair may, after appropriate consultation with the chair, be altered as required. The parties acknowledged that TB/MBC has final decision-making authority.
- g. Financial procedures of the agency must be in accordance with TB/MBC and Ministry of Finance directives and guidelines and other applicable government direction.
- h. The agency has the power under subsection 30(1) of the LASA, 2020, to enter into funding arrangements and/or receiving funding from several other sources to fund its program which does not form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (e.g., the federal government, the Law Foundation).

14.3 Financial Reports

- a. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, will provide to the minister audited annual financial statements, and will include them as part of the agency's annual report. The statements will be provided in accordance with instructions issued by the Office of the Provincial Controller Division.
- b. The agency will submit its salary information to the ministry, in accordance with the *Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996*.

14.4 Taxation Status: Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)

Collection/Remittance of HST

- a. The agency is responsible for complying with its obligations as a supplier under the federal *Excise Tax Act* to collect and remit HST in respect of any taxable supplies made by it.

Payment of HST

- b. The agency is responsible for paying HST where applicable, in accordance with the *Excise Tax Act* (Canada).

HST Recovery

- c. The agency is not entitled to claim HST Government Rebates.
- d. The agency is expected to claim any refunds, input tax credits or other rebates under the *Excise Tax Act* (Canada) for which it is eligible.

14.5 Realty

- a. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that the agency operates in accordance with the MBC Realty Directive.
- b. Appendix B of the Realty Directive sets out the Mandatory Office Space Standards and Office Space Planning Practices that must be complied with when acquiring space for accommodation and program purposes.
- c. The chair recognizes that all lease agreements for provincial agencies without realty authority are under the administration and control of the Minister of Infrastructure.
- d. The agency will align hybrid work policies with the OPS and identify and assess office optimization opportunities to reduce office realty footprint and find cost reductions.

15. Audit and Review Arrangements

15.1 Audits

- a. The agency is subject to periodic review and value-for-money audit by the Auditor General of Ontario under the *Auditor General Act* or by the Ontario Internal Audit Division of Treasury Board Secretariat.
- b. A provincial agency can request and/or must accept the provision of internal audit services by the Ontario Internal Audit Division in accordance with the Internal Audit Directive.
- c. Regardless of any previous or annual external audit, the minister or the chair (on behalf of the board of directors) may direct that the agency be audited at any time. The results of such audit should be shared by the chair to the minister in accordance with article 8.2.
- d. A provincial agency will share all engagement reports (including those prepared by their own internal audit function and/or those reported to the agency's chair) with their respective minister and deputy minister (and when requested, with the President of the Treasury Board). The agency will advise the respective minister and deputy minister annually, at a minimum, on any outstanding recommendations/issues.
- e. A provincial agency will share its approved audit plan with their respective minister and deputy minister, (and when requested, with the President of the Treasury Board) to support understanding of agency risks.
- f. The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, may request an external audit of the financial transactions or management controls of the agency, at the agency's expense.

15.2 Other Reviews

Legal Aid Ontario is subject to periodic review initiated at the discretion and direction of TB/MBC or the minister. The review may cover such matters relating to the agency that are determined by TB/MBC or the minister, and may include the mandate, powers, governance structure and/or operations of the agency, including finance, human resources/labour relations and agency processes.

- a. In requiring a periodic review, the minister or TB/MBC shall determine the timing and responsibility for conducting the review, the roles of the chair, the board of directors, and the minister, and how any other parties are involved.
- b. A mandate review of the provincial agency will be conducted at least once every six years. The date of the next review will be 2028/2029.

- c. The minister will consult the chair, on behalf of the board of directors, as appropriate during any such review.
- d. The chair, CEO and board will cooperate in any review.
- e. In the event of a review initiated at the direction of the minister, the minister shall submit any recommendations for change that are developed from the results of the review regarding the agency to TB/MBC for consideration.

16. Staffing and Appointments

16.1 Delegation of Human Resources Management Authority

- a. Where the PSC has delegated its powers, duties and functions in relation to human resources management to the deputy minister, chair or prescribed individual under Ontario Regulation 148/10, that person is accountable for exercising that authority in compliance with any relevant legislation, directives or policies in accordance with the mandate of Legal Aid Ontario, and within the parameters of the delegated authority.

16.2 Staffing Requirements

- a. Under the constituting instrument, the board may employ such persons as it considers necessary for its purposes. An employee of Legal Aid Ontario is not an employee of the Crown.
- b. The agency will provide to TBS workforce, compensation and operational data as set out in the AAD Operational Policy.

16.3 Designated Executives

The agency shall provide total compensation to its designated executives, including the CEO, in accordance with the legislation, directives, policies and guidelines applicable to them.

16.4 Appointments

- a. The chair is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister in consultation with the Law Society of Ontario pursuant to subsection 21(4) of the LASA 2020. There is no fixed term of appointment.
- b. The members of the agency are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister pursuant to section 21(2) of the LASA, 2020. There is no fixed term of appointment.
- c. The maximum number of members is 11, as set out in the LASA, 2020. Five of the members appointed shall be selected by the Minister from a list of persons recommended by the Law Society of Ontario.
- d. The chair must utilize the agency's skills matrix and recruitment strategy in advising the minister of any competency skills gaps on the board and providing any recommendations for appointments or re-appointments, including advising the minister on appointee attendance and performance.

16.5 Remuneration

- a. Remuneration for board members is set by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.
- b. Appointees to Legal Aid Ontario are remunerated \$375 per diem except for the chair of the board, who is remunerated at an annual rate of \$150,000 pursuant to Order in Council 360/2019.
- c. Provincial agencies, including board members, must comply with the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive issued by MBC. Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of government business shall be reimbursed. Expenses for board members under the Directive are subject to requirements for public disclosure of expense information.

17. Risk Management, Liability Protection and Insurance

17.1 Risk Management

Ministers and ministries are accountable for working with their provincial agencies to ensure effective management of risks. The ministry and agency will meet to discuss agency high risks and action plans including direction on corrective action.

The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that a risk management strategy is developed and in place for the provincial agency, in accordance with the AAD and the OPS Enterprise Risk Management Directive and Risk Management process.

The agency shall ensure that the risks it faces are addressed in an appropriate manner.

17.1.1 Artificial Intelligence Risk Management

The chair, on behalf of the board of directors, is responsible for ensuring that artificial intelligence (AI) risk management is undertaken in alignment with the principles and requirements of the Responsible Use of AI Directive.

- a. The agency shall implement AI risk management in alignment with the requirements outlined in Section 6.3 of the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive.
 - The agency shall ensure the management of technology risks in a documented and appropriate manner.
 - The agency will identify threats and risks, assess their potential impact, severity, and likelihood, and document the risks and actions taken to address them.
- b. The agency shall ensure that a business process exists for accountable executives to document their ongoing efforts to treat (resolve, mitigate, or accept) risks throughout the technology lifecycle.
- c. The agency shall publish a list of AI use cases as part of the Business Plan.
- d. The agency shall track and report quarterly on IT threats and technology risks and vulnerabilities, and associated risk treatment efforts. This includes reporting on AI use cases and associated risk management.
- e. The agency shall ensure that IT systems can meet the confidentiality, integrity, and availability requirements of all information and that systems can adequately safeguard or dispose of information according to its sensitivity level.

17.2 Liability Protection and Insurance

- a. Subsection 20 (2) of the LASA, 2020 provides that Section 136 of the *Business Corporations Act* applies to LAO, the members of its board, and its officers.
- b. Section 136 of the *Business Corporations Act* allows a corporation to indemnify a director or officer of the corporation against all costs, charges and expenses reasonably incurred by the individual in respect of any proceeding in which the individual is involved because of that association with the corporation. As such, the Minister of Finance or the President of Treasury Board would need to approve the indemnity.
- c. Section 37 of the LASA, 2020 protects board members, officers, and employees from legal action and damages. Section 38 protects LAO from liability for any action of a service provider who provides legal aid services. Section 39 protects board members, officers, and employees from being compelled as witnesses in proceedings in respect of information and/or documents received while acting in the scope of their appointment or employment.
- d. The Agency is not covered under the Government of Ontario's General and Road Liability Protection Program (GRLPP) and agrees to put in effect and maintain all the necessary and appropriate insurance that a prudent organization in the business of the Agency would maintain, including but not limited to commercial general liability insurance, directors' and officers' liability insurance, errors and omissions liability insurance, and any other third-party liability insurance coverage to protect itself against claims that might arise from anything done or omitted to be done by the Agency or its directors, officers, employees or other persons retained by the Agency and from anything done or omitted to be done where bodily or personal injury, death or property damage, including loss of use thereof, is caused. Evidence of insurance shall be provided to the Ministry annually if requested.

18. Compliance and Corrective Actions

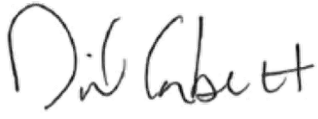
- a. Open and consistent communication between provincial agencies and their responsible ministry helps ensure that government priorities and direction are clearly understood and helps to manage risks or issues as they arise.
- b. Situations may arise through the course of monitoring where corrective action is required. Corrective action refers to the steps taken to remedy non-compliance with this directive. Corrective action supports agencies in delivering on desired outputs and/or outcomes, and meeting the terms and conditions established by this directive.
- c. If a ministry initiates corrective action, it must be progressive in nature and in proportion to the risk associated with the degree of non-compliance. The degree of corrective action should only be increased if the agency's non-compliance continues. It is important that ministries document all actions and provide timely and clear communication to the agency chair or senior executives relating to potential corrective actions. This may include letters of direction by the accountable minister and/or the President of the Treasury Board as required.
- d. Before engaging in more severe corrective actions, ministries must consult with TBS and legal counsel.

19. Effective Date, Duration and Review of the MOU

- a. This MOU becomes effective on the date it is signed by the minister as the last party to execute it ("Original Effective Date") and continues in effect until it is revoked or replaced by a subsequent MOU signed by the parties.
- b. A copy of the signed MOU and any successor MOU must be provided to the Secretary, Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet, no later than seven calendar days from being signed.
- c. Upon a change in minister, deputy minister, chair or CEO of a board-governed provincial agency, the newly appointed individual must review and sign this MOU no later than four months from the new appointment.

Signatures

I acknowledge my role and the requirements as set out in this MOU and the AAD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Corbett", written over a horizontal line.

David Corbett
Deputy Attorney General

October 14, 2025

Date

I acknowledge my role and the requirements as set out in this MOU and the AAD.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aileen Page". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aileen Page
President & CEO
Legal Aid Ontario

October 9, 2025

Date

Appendix 1: Public Communications Protocol

1. Purpose

The communications protocol sets out a framework for the ministry and agency to collaborate on public communications opportunities led by the agency.

The communications protocol applies to both the agency's implementation of its legislated mandate and the promotion of the work it does. It will also support the minister's accountability to the Legislative Assembly and to Cabinet for the same.

2. Definitions

a. "Public communications" means any material that is communicated to the public, either directly or through the media in:

- Oral form, such as a speech or public presentation or interview to be broadcast
- Printed form, such as a hard copy report
- Electronic form, such as a posting to a website
- Paid advertising, such as digital or print campaign.

b. A "contentious issue" is a matter that is, or may reasonably be expected to be, of concern to the Legislative Assembly or the public, or is likely to result in inquiries being directed to the minister or government. Contentious issues may be raised by:

- Members of the Legislative Assembly
- The public
- Media
- Stakeholders
- Service delivery partners.

3. The agency will comply with the TB/MBC Visual Identity Directive.

4. The ministry and the agency will appoint persons to serve as public communications "leads".

- The ministry lead is the Director of Communications.
- The agency lead is the head of communications/public affairs.

5. For the purpose of this protocol, public communications are divided into three categories:

a. **Media responses or communications products related to the routine business** of the agency and its programs that **do not** have direct implications for either the ministry or the government, or could not be considered a government priority.

- Media responses, news releases or other communications products are to be shared with the ministry lead on an appropriate and timely cadence (i.e., daily) who will circulate as appropriate to other individuals within the ministry.
- **Note:** Funding related announcement are not considered routine business and must be escalated to category B. Contentious issues must be escalated to category C.

b. **Communications products and/or plans where provincial or ministerial messaging on government priorities would enhance the agency's or the government's profile**, or would provide opportunities for local government announcements

- **For all non-contentious items that might generate media interest**, the agency lead will notify the ministry lead of upcoming communications plans and products a minimum of three (3) business weeks in advance.
- **For non-contentious items which provide government messaging opportunities** or involve funding announcements, the agency must request approval of communications products seven (7) business days prior to the date required.
- **Final approval** is required from the minister's office and will be sought via the ministry lead. If the agency were not to receive comments or approval from the minister's office or ministry lead within forty-eight (48) hours of the date on which the item is to be issued, the agency should escalate a follow-up, noting that they will proceed accordingly.
- **Non-contentious media responses** are to be shared with the ministry lead on an appropriate and timely cadence (i.e., daily) who will circulate as appropriate to other individuals within the ministry. Contentious media responses follow the process below.

- c. **Contentious issues, media responses, and news releases** that may have direct implications for either the ministry or the government or are likely to result in inquiries being directed to the minister or government.
- The agency lead will notify the ministry lead immediately upon becoming aware of the issue and will notify the minister's office simultaneously. The ministry lead may also advise the agency of contentious issues that require attention. The agency will provide all required background information on the issue to the ministry lead, who will arrange to have a contentious issues note prepared, as required.
 - The agency must obtain ministry approval prior to issuing media responses or news releases in this category. The agency lead will provide the media response or news releases to the ministry lead who will initiate the approval process within the ministry.
 - Final approval on media responses and news releases in this category is required from the minister's office.

6. Advertising

- To deliver on the long-range demands of planning advertising, the agency will provide the ministry with its annual marketing plan three (3) months in advance of its start date (on the agency's fiscal year).
- Agency to share campaign briefs with the ministry a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance of briefing creative/media (agency) partners. Ministry to ensure alignment on campaign objectives and messaging.
- Advertising materials and campaigns can be reviewed by the ministry's MO.
- Final messaging and creative to be shared with the ministry at least two (2) weeks before going live.