



Legal Aid Ontario
2025-2030
Strategic
Plan

Inclusive • Collaborative • Accountable • Responsive • Empowered



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1. Message from the Chair and CEO

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is committed to promoting access to justice for our clients and delivering public value. Our 2025-2030 strategic plan outlines a path to strengthen our organization, innovate service delivery, and empower our clients by providing the services they need to navigate the legal system with dignity and fairness.

At the core of our mission is the delivery of public value. To this end, we are increasing our innovative capacity and prioritizing operational excellence. We are engaging in evidence-based, data-driven decision-making to improve service delivery, explore innovative service delivery models, and inform outcome-based performance measures.

By modernizing our processes and leveraging technology, we aim to deliver more efficient, effective and responsive services. Our commitment to accountability and transparency ensures that we measure our progress, continuously improve, and responsibly manage public resources.

Empowering our clients is key. Our client-centred approach focuses on responding to clients' needs with high-quality services that are timely, accessible, inclusive, and culturally competent. We are enhancing access points for clients, with a focus on digital channels to support online self-service and ensure our clients get the services they need, when and where they need them.

Given our unique perspective and leadership role in the justice system, we are deepening our collaboration with the courts and other justice sector participants, contributing our expertise, resources, and innovative proposals to support a fair and effective system that takes our clients' experiences and needs into account, and delivers public value.

To achieve these objectives, we must attract and retain talent. Our plan emphasizes the importance of a supportive, inclusive environment in which our employees, roster members, and other service providers can excel. By investing in people, we enhance the quality of services delivered and further our mission to promote access to justice.

Our strategic plan is a roadmap for LAO's future. Guided by our values, vision and mission, we will continue to support our clients by delivering the vital services that are a pillar of the justice system in Ontario.



J.S.A. (Steve) Pengelly
Chair, Board of Directors



Aileen Page
President and CEO

2. Legal Aid Ontario

LAO funds services in the following areas:

- Criminal law, including matters involving the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*
- Family law, including domestic violence
- Child protection law
- Poverty law, including matters that particularly affect low-income individuals, such as housing, income maintenance and social assistance
- Human rights law
- Health law, including mental health law
- Employment law
- Education law
- Immigration and refugee law

LAO provides services through staff offices, the private bar¹, entity service providers and other organizations². These services include:

- Duty counsel
- Legal advice
- Brief services
- Limited scope representation
- Full representation
- Dispute resolution services
- Public legal education

¹ Non-LAO lawyers who accept legal certificates, serve as duty counsel, etc.

² Includes community legal clinics, Indigenous legal services organizations, and student legal services organizations.

3. Our plan at a glance



4. Our values: I CARE



I Inclusive

Inclusivity guides us to embrace diversity, promote equitable access to justice, and work to ensure that clients, staff, service providers and justice sector participants feel respected, valued and empowered in their interactions with us.



C Collaborative

We are committed to working closely with our clients, staff and justice sector participants to advance access to justice and ensure that services are aligned to client needs.



A Accountable

We maintain a commitment to transparency, responsibility and integrity in our actions and decisions, holding ourselves accountable for the effective delivery of services and good stewardship of public funds.



R Responsive

We strive to address client needs with agility and empathy, adapting our services and strategies to meet evolving circumstances, and continuously seeking feedback to ensure that we remain attentive and effective in our support of our clients.



E Empowered

Our values drive the behaviours and attitudes we wish to uphold. Acting in alignment with these values empowers our people, who in turn empower our clients.

5. Strategic goals

5.1 Client-centred services

LAO is dedicated to providing inclusive, accessible and needs-based services that recognize the diversity of Ontarians. This strategic goal aims to enhance client-centred services and improve our clients' overall experience in collaboration with justice sector participants.

We will:

- Enhance client navigation and experience by providing services that are inclusive, accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of Ontarians.
- Optimize resource allocation to align with client needs.
- Leverage data to improve service delivery.

Strategic initiatives:

1. **Client-centred service approaches:** Explore innovative service delivery models while ensuring culturally competent, anti-racist and trauma-informed programs.
2. **Client service channels:** Strengthen multi-channel client services, including digital, to support inclusive, self-service and timely access.
3. **Indigenous legal services:** Work in partnership with Indigenous communities to strengthen culturally safe and relevant services, programs and supports for Indigenous clients.
4. **Assessment of community need:** Determine the relative need of communities across Ontario in order to deploy resources effectively, so that clients have consistent access to services in all communities.

Expected outcomes:

- Improved client experience and satisfaction.
- Culturally competent, anti-racist and trauma-informed services and programs.
- Improved access to services, including language access and digital self-service, for clients across Ontario.

5.2 Organizational excellence

LAO is committed to ensuring our processes and systems are efficient and effective for users — whether they be clients, staff, roster members or entity service providers. This strategic goal aims to drive excellence in all aspects of our operations, to value innovation, and to continuously improve how we work and serve our clients.

We will:

- Implement processes that respond to the changing needs of our clients, internal users and broader justice sector trends.
- Leverage data and technology solutions to improve operational efficiency, decision-making and reporting.

Strategic initiatives:

1. **Core infrastructure modernization and integration:** Undertake targeted infrastructure upgrades and enhancements with a digital-first perspective that will streamline operations and service delivery.
2. **Data governance:** Maintain strong management practices for client data and emerging innovations, including artificial intelligence (AI).
3. **High quality services:** Ensure clients receive services that meet LAO's standards for quality and optimize the use of public funds.
4. **Entity risk management process:** Operate entity risk management processes effectively to ensure that risks are addressed and to promote stability.

Expected outcomes:

- A responsive organization that can adapt to changes in our environment.
- Robust financial management, controllership and reporting functions.
- Optimized operational effectiveness and value-for-money.
- Strengthened resilience through proactive management of risks and business continuity.

5.3 Attract and retain talent

LAO's ability to deliver on our mandate depends on the people who work for us and with us every day — in the courts, in our corporate office and in clinics across the province. This strategic goal aims to support our dedicated employees, roster members and entity service providers by promoting an environment where diversity, learning and well-being are at the forefront. Attracting and retaining talent is critical for LAO to provide client-centred, effective services to low-income Ontarians.

We will:

- Foster inclusive environments that reflect the diversity of the clients we serve.
- Position LAO as an employer of choice.
- Support roster members with the tools and training needed to provide high-quality legal services.
- Work with entity service providers to ensure they fulfil their obligation to attract and retain staff who deliver high-quality legal services.

Strategic initiatives:

1. **Talent development strategy for LAO staff:** Implement an organization-wide strategy to attract, develop and retain qualified talent that embodies excellence, including a focused effort to recruit talent that reflects the diverse clientele we serve.
2. **Strengthening the roster:** Deploy actions to enhance support of roster members and attract new members.
3. **Supporting entity service providers:** Work with entity service providers to set goals and expectations for recruitment and retention of diverse, high-quality talent that meets the needs of their clients.

Expected outcomes:

- Enhanced employee engagement.
- Attraction and retention of highly skilled professionals across all service delivery channels.
- Increased diversity of legal aid staff and service providers.

5.4 Justice sector engagement

LAO is a critical participant in the justice system and is dedicated to working closely with other justice sector participants to uphold a fair and efficiently functioning justice system in Ontario. This strategic goal focuses on collaborating with others in the justice sector to ensure our clients' experiences and perspectives are heard, considered and reflected in justice sector decision-making.

We will:

- Explore opportunities to serve more low-income Ontarians.
- Provide advice and recommendations on all aspects of legal aid services in Ontario, offering our expertise and innovative, data-driven and evidence-based solutions and ideas for improving the justice system in Ontario.
- Build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones to improve our operations and client experience.
- Promote early resolution and enhance positive client outcomes.

Strategic initiatives:

1. **Supporting justice sector recovery:** Continue our work to support the court and tribunal recovery process through ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) and other justice sector participants, aiming to serve more people and resolve cases more efficiently, benefiting both clients and the broader justice sector.
2. **Court service delivery modernization:** Engage with the judiciary and MAG to explore opportunities to enhance and improve court-based service delivery in response to the changing needs of our clients.
3. **Effective communication and collaboration with justice sector participants:** Align with government priorities, enhance LAO's contribution to the effective functioning of the justice system, promote understanding of our clients' needs, and strengthen relationships through open dialogue and shared insights.

Expected outcomes:

- LAO will serve more low-income Ontarians.
- Increased contributions of our expertise while providing our clients' perspective on justice sector issues.
- Enhanced co-ordination, communication and positive relationships with justice sector participants that advance the interests of our clients.

6. Measuring our progress

As part of our commitment to excellence, transparency and continuous improvement, LAO will track and communicate the progress we make against this plan and continuously evaluate the following measures. This approach underscores our dedication to improvement and allows us to share our progress and potential areas for enhancement. We are committed to refining our strategies and operations to better serve and support our clients and to optimize our contribution to the broader justice sector in Ontario.

Client-centred services:

1. Client satisfaction
2. Client journey
3. Contact centre experience

Organizational excellence:

1. Budget allocated to direct client services
2. Financial performance
3. Enterprise Risk

Attract and retain talent:

1. Employee retention and engagement
2. Roster engagement
3. Equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging

Justice sector engagement:

1. Number of Ontarians served
2. Contribution to justice sector initiatives
3. Strategic advice provided to government



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