



September 5, 2019

RE: Modernization of Legal Aid Services

We are pleased to provide this submission on behalf of Community Legal Aid and Legal Assistance of Windsor. Our clinics are co-located in downtown Windsor and offer services to our clients in the following areas of law: summary conviction offences, provincial offences, landlord tenant, small claims, employment standards, wrongful dismissal, family law, academic integrity matters, criminal injuries compensation, public benefits law, Ontario works, Ontario Disability, Employment Insurance, Refugee and Immigration law and Anti Human Trafficking support. We also have an Indigenous Justice Coordinator working with our indigenous communities. And since our inception 45 years ago, we have offered social work services.

The two clinics are affiliated with the University of Windsor and offer law and social work students volunteer, academic credit and paid summer employment opportunities. Each year, we work with approximately 150 law and social work students. The students have consistently evaluated the programs and indicate we provide excellent training opportunities in poverty law. Many of our graduates have sought employment with Legal Aid Ontario as staff or as certificate lawyers as a result their student clinic experience. The University of Windsor has financially supported our programs and considers us to be an important community resource.

Both clinics have community members participating on the Advisory Board for CLA and on the Official Board for LAW. Their participation matters because they help us define and shape our response to emerging community issues. Our community is the 4th most culturally diverse community in Canada. It is the home to the Canadian auto industry and much of our employment opportunities are in manufacturing. Our indigenous community is urban and we do not have a local first nation territory to which the members belong. We have one of the highest rates of drug overdose in the province. Our west end community suffers from one of the highest rates of child poverty in Canada. Our rural communities have the highest rates of migrant workers in the province. This community profile defines our work.

The following initiatives were undertaken by our clinics in response to these needs:

1. Anti Human Trafficking Project

This started as a community project in 2002 with 14 community agencies. It was funded by Ontario Trillium foundation in 2013 and has received 3 years of funding from the Ministry of Community and Services to provide individual and systemic advocacy to survivors of human trafficking in the sex trade, forced labour and forced marriage. We have provided training throughout Canada to community agencies, police, crown attorneys and to the clinic system in Ontario. We have participated in national consultations on the development of government policies on anti human trafficking.

2. Employment Services for Laid Off Workers

The recession hit Windsor a year before the rest of the province in 2007. We spearheaded worker adjustment programs and were a founding member of Workforce Windsor Essex which today offers

comprehensive support and networking opportunities for employers and the unemployed workforce. We provided consultation to Employment Ontario and were instrumental in the development of the Second Career Training Initiative. We coordinated consultation with local community colleges to help them recognize the training needs of our community. We shared this information and initiatives within our community clinic network.

3. Refugee and Immigration Services

These services are coordinated with our anti human trafficking work because some of our survivors of human trafficking need legal services to maintain their status in Canada. We have been responsive to the needs of our migrant worker population, including providing support through the criminal law proceedings and human rights tribunal process in the Presteve case which resulted in the highest damage award in Canadian history. This work was possible because of the trust and long standing services which we have provided to this community.

4. Prison initiative

We had been working in our local detention center providing immigration and support services. When Legal Aid approached us to submit a funding proposal to do Prison Law we were able to respond positively because we knew we would have community support and partners for this initiative. The LAO funding crisis cancelled our plans to proceed with this project.

5. Domestic Violence

Our women's shelter started as a LAW student initiative over 40 years ago. We have continued to partner with Hiatus House on emerging issues, including our anti human trafficking project. It is a satellite office for our public legal education seminars.

6. Criminal Law Reforms

Community Legal Aid participated in the Justice Committee hearings on Bill C -75. Our board member who is a prominent criminal lawyer flew to Ottawa at his own expense, to testify before the committee about the importance of retaining law students' ability to represent clients on summary conviction matter.

7. Mental Health Reform

Our clinics have played a prominent role in the development of the work of the Mental Health Court committee and the Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee. We have identified emerging issues, participated in organising and providing education forums and the coordination of community response.

8. Indigenous Initiatives

For three years prior to the funding of our Indigenous justice coordinator position we coordinated community education initiatives and connected our indigenous agencies with our justice sector partners. We were able to make these connections because of the community work that we have been doing for the past decades. We are continuing this work and providing support to individual indigenous clients through our Indigenous Justice Coordinator.

9. I Decide Project

As a result of our work with beneficiaries of the class action lawsuit launched by former residents of the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres, we were able to secure funding to pilot a

project supporting people with intellectual disabilities. We provided training throughout the community legal clinic system to create awareness and support for this work.

10. Income Security and Housing

For years, our clinic has led community consultations, provided public legal seminars and participated in municipal consultations. We have organized law reform campaigns at the municipal level. Our leadership on these issues is recognized and welcomed by the community.

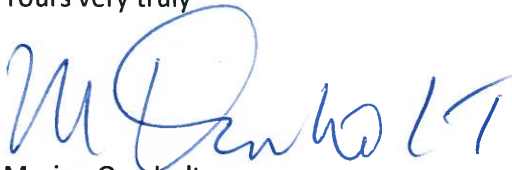
We have supported vital community agencies and successfully campaigned to keep funding for women shelters and services in mental health in our community.

We have shared this information with you to emphasize the effectiveness of the current Legal Aid Services Act which recognizes the clinics as the providers of poverty law services and defines the roles and responsibilities of community legal clinic Boards. This is a good model that has allowed us to extend the reach and presence of Legal Aid Ontario in our community. We have been able to identify and respond to emerging issues and bring our expertise which has been developed in our community work to the table. Our work has been enhanced by our ability to collaborate with the speciality clinics. We have hosted workshops and seminars, coordinated direct individual client services and responded to systemic issues with IVAGO, ACTO and ISAC. ACE and ARCH have been important resources in our disability and mental health work.

We participate in a local coordinating committee with our Director General and other legal aid services providers. We work closely with the private bar and maintain good working relationships with our local law association. We are accountable to Legal Aid Ontario through the existing financial and statistical reporting systems. We have appreciated the support that we have received from LAO and value our relationship. We have participated in the Legal Aid Ontario advisory board committees to share our expertise and deepen our knowledge of the legal aid services across the province.

Ontario's communities are diverse and their legal needs vary. The existing community legal clinics and SLASS clinic system allows us to be flexible, responsive and efficient. We need core funding to continue our work on your behalf to service our communities. We thank you for this opportunity to make this submission and look forward to continuing the dialogue on these important services.

Yours very truly



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