



**GOVERNMENT'S LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS**

**BETWEEN**

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE  
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA)**

**AND**

**THE CHAIR OF THE LEGAL SERVICES SOCIETY  
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOCIETY)**

**FOR 2014/15**

**PURPOSE**

This Letter of Expectations (the Letter) provides Government's annual direction to the Crown corporation and is an agreement on the parties' respective accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities. The Letter confirms the Society's mandate and priority actions, articulates the key performance expectations as documented in the Government's Expectations Manual for British Columbia Crown Agencies<sup>1</sup>, and forms the basis for the development of the Society's Service Plan and Annual Service Plan Report. The Letter does not create any legal or binding obligations on the parties. It is intended to create an opportunity for dialogue between the parties and to support an open, positive and co-operative working relationship, resulting in the achievement of government's policy and performance expectations in a transparent and accountable manner.

**CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITIES - MANDATE**

Government has provided the following mandate direction to the Legal Services Society under the Legal Services Society Act:

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<sup>1</sup> The Province of British Columbia's Crown Agency Accountability System (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/caro/publications/index.html>) establishes guiding principles for the governance of Crown corporations. The *Government's Expectations For British Columbia Crown Agencies* provides for a Government's Letter of Expectations (Letter) to be developed.

- a) The Society's objects are to:
- i. Assist individuals to resolve their legal problems and facilitate their access to justice;
  - ii. Establish and administer an effective and efficient system for providing legal aid to individuals in British Columbia; and
  - iii. Provide advice to the Attorney General respecting legal aid and access to justice for individuals in British Columbia.
- b) The Society's guiding principles are to:
- i. Give priority to identifying and assessing the legal needs of low income individuals in British Columbia;
  - ii. Consider the perspectives of both justice system service providers and the general public;
  - iii. Coordinate legal aid with other aspects of the justice system and with community services; and
  - iv. Be flexible and innovative in the manner in which it carries out its objects.

#### **SPECIFIC CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITIES**

To achieve this mandate, the Society is directed to take the following specific actions:

- Maintain a working group to meet on a monthly basis, as required:
  - Comprised of:
    - Executive Director, Criminal Justice and Legal Access Policy Division, Ministry of Justice or such other designate as may be assigned by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Justice Services Branch, and
    - Director, Strategic Planning, Policy and Human Resources Legal Services Society, or such other designate as may be assigned by the Chief Executive Officer, Legal Services Society, and
    - Other staff of the Government and / or the Society, as occasion may require.
  - To meet periodically, on a continuous basis, to consider:
    - The budget development cycle;
    - The financial position on the Society;
    - The establishment of strategic priorities for the Society in alignment with the Government's strategic priorities, policy objectives and fiscal plan;
    - Issues relating to the Society's objects that might affect Government's responsibility for legal aid and access to justice; and
    - Coordination of policy and program development, and such other issues as may arise.
- Share information and consult with the Government to support policy, planning and program coordination, by:
  - Ensuring that legal aid service delivery aligns to the Government's strategic priorities, policy objectives and fiscal plan;
  - Collaborating with Government on matters and issues, such as large cases and justice reform;

- Collaborating with the Government and other justice system participants on justice reform initiatives that promote early resolution in administrative, civil, criminal and family law cases;
- Promoting early, collaborative dispute resolution in child protection cases and family law cases;
- Liaising with the Government in relation to each area of law; and
- Participating in the coordination of services among the Society, Government, and other justice system participants to achieve efficiencies in the delivery of legal aid services.

#### **GENERAL SOCIETY ACCOUNTABILITIES**

Over the past decades, British Columbians have come to expect high quality products and services delivered by their Crown corporations. The Province is well served by our Crown corporations and it is up to the Boards and Senior Management teams of these organizations to manage in the best interests of the Province and our citizens and conduct its affairs with the principles of integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service.

As a Crown corporation, it is critical that the operations of the entity be done as efficiently as possible, in order to ensure families are provided with services at the lowest cost possible.

Government sets broad policy direction to ensure the Society's operation and performance is consistent with the Government's Strategic Plan, found at:

[http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2013\\_June\\_Update/stplan/2013\\_June\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2013_June_Update/stplan/2013_June_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

and as such, the Society will:

- Ensure that the Society's priorities reflect Government's priorities of:
  - Strong Economy**  
A government that supports our economy by controlling spending to balance the budget, keeping taxes and government debt affordable and protecting B.C.'s hard-earned triple-A credit rating.
  - Jobs**  
A government that is focused on job creation and investment in the province.
  - Families**  
A government that works continuously to improve social programs that support families of every description, and improve the lives of British Columbians.
- Comply with Crown Agency Accountability System guidelines, policy, due dates and best practices, as set out from time to time and as applicable to the Society, found at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/caro/publications/index.html> including the Information and Events Calendar for commercial and service delivery Crown corporations, Government's Expectations Manual for British Columbia Crown Agencies and the Best Practices Guideline & Disclosure Requirements for Governing Boards of British Columbia Sector Organizations.
- Comply with all legislation and policies applicable to the Society including but not limited to:

- The executive compensation policies for Crown corporations. Found at: [http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/psec/disclosuredocs/crown\\_corporation\\_executive\\_compensation\\_july\\_2012.pdf](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/psec/disclosuredocs/crown_corporation_executive_compensation_july_2012.pdf)
- Ensure Government is advised in advance of the release of any information requests by the Society under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- Government's requirements to be carbon neutral under the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*.
  
- Follow the spirit and intent of the financial policy requirements in the Ministry of Finance Core Policy and Procedures Manual found at: <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/fmb/manuals/CPM/CPMtoc.htm>
  
- Participate in government's Core and Crown reviews, which may include the review of Crown mandates, and implement the recommendations of these reviews.
  
- Ensure that any planned deficit spending or use of the retained earnings is approved in advance by Treasury Board.
  
- Inform Government immediately if the Society is unable to meet the performance and financial targets identified in its Service Plan.

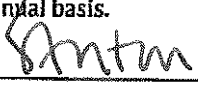
#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific to the Society, Government will:

- Work with LSS to maintain a working group to meet on a monthly basis, as required:
  - Comprised of:
    - Executive Director, Criminal Justice and Legal Access Policy Division, Ministry of Justice or such other designate as may be assigned by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Justice Services Branch, and
    - Director, Strategic Planning, Policy and Human Resources Legal Services Society, or such other designate as may be assigned by the Chief Executive Officer, Legal Services Society, and
    - Other staff of the Government and / or the Society, as occasion may require.
  - To meet periodically, on a continuous basis, to consider:
    - The budget development cycle;
    - The financial position on the Society;
    - The establishment of strategic priorities for the Society in alignment with the Government's strategic priorities, policy objectives and fiscal plan;
    - Issues relating to the Society's objects that might affect Government's responsibility for legal aid and access to justice; and
    - Coordination of policy and program development, and such other issues as may arise.
  
- Work with LSS to support policy, planning and program coordination, by:
  - Communicating the Government's strategic priorities, policy objectives and fiscal plan;

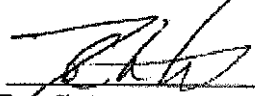
**REVIEW AND REVISION OF THIS LETTER**

The Minister of Justice is accountable for undertaking reviews of this Letter and monitoring its implementation. Government and the Society may agree to amend this Letter on a more frequent than annual basis.

  
Honourable Suzanne Anton, QC  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Date

6 Mar 2014.

  
Tom Christensen  
Chair, Legal Services Society

Date

Jan. 9, 2013

cc. Honourable Christy Clark  
Premier

John Dyble  
Deputy Minister to the Premier and Cabinet Secretary

Peter Milburn  
Deputy Minister and Secretary to Treasury Board  
Ministry of Finance

Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland  
Associate Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Finance

Richard Fyfe, Q.C.  
Deputy Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice

Mark Benton, Q.C.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Legal Services Society

Jay Chalke, Q.C.  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Justice

- o Collaborating with LSS on matters and issues, such as large cases and justice reform;
- o Collaborating with LSS on Special Funding Agreement<sup>2</sup> cases by providing advance notice of upcoming cases and unanticipated expenses related to management of Special Funding Agreement costs;
- o Meeting to discuss Special Funding Agreement Cases as required; and
- o Collaborating with LSS on justice reform initiatives that promote early resolution in administrative, civil, criminal and family law cases.

During the term of this Letter, Government may provide further policy direction to the Ministry of Justice, who will communicate any such direction, including implementation expectations, to the Legal Services Society as decisions are made.

#### **AREAS OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**

Government and the Society are committed to transparency and accountability to the public and have planning, reporting and disclosure requirements in the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, and/or the *Financial Information Act*.

On a quarterly basis, the Minister Responsible, Suzanne Anton, QC, the Deputy Attorney General, Richard Fyfe, QC, the Board Chair, Tom Christensen, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mark Benton, QC, will meet to discuss relevant and current Society business. The meeting will be to review the achievement of the goals, objectives, performance measures, financial targets and risk assessments identified in the Society's Service Plan and other items of interest and concern.

The parties agree that each will advise the other in a timely manner of any issues that may materially affect the business of the Society and/or the interests of Government, including information on any risks to achieving financial forecasts and performance targets.

The Society and the Crown Agencies Resource Office will post the most recent signed copy of the Government's Letter of Expectations on their respective websites.

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<sup>2</sup> "Special Funding Agreement" means an agreement between the Attorney General and the Society pursuant to which the Society will provide Legal Aid Services on a particular case, the Attorney General will reimburse the Society for all fees and disbursement on the case in excess of \$175,000.