

Legal Aid Facts

Enhanced Family LawLINE

Family LawLINE is a proven telephone advice service that provides brief next-step advice to eligible clients with family law issues both before and after they have engaged the court process. For a pilot program, the service is being expanded to include preparation and review of legal documents, and legal coaching for people representing themselves in court. It is one of five Justice Innovation and Transformation Initiatives funded by the Ministry of Justice until 2017.

Innovative services

Enhanced Family LawLINE provides the following services:

- Information and advice on court processes, both Provincial and Supreme Court
- Information and advice on options for resolving legal issues out-of-court
- Referrals to other services, including online resources and other public agencies
- Help with preparing documents for court or for other legal issues
- Coaching to help people who are representing themselves in court

Under the pilot, Family LawLINE provides up to six hours of dedicated time for one lawyer and client to work together on each current legal matter. Previously, people usually spoke with a different lawyer every time they called the Family LawLINE and received only three hours in total.

Family LawLINE now helps people prepare documents for court and other legal processes. This may involve reviewing, editing or in some cases helping to draft a specific legal document. Previously, advice was provided, but lawyers could not review the documents.

The enhanced service also provides coaching and guidance to help people represent themselves more effectively.

Advice is provided by lawyers throughout the province by phone. Clients may engage with their lawyers by phone or by email.

Benefits for clients

Expanding the scope of Family LawLINE by providing more hours, continuity of service, help with document preparation and legal coaching will better support clients to resolve their problems out of court.

It will help clients address the range of issues they face on separation and divorce. Assisting self-represented litigants to be better prepared for court hearings will decrease hearing time, freeing up judicial resources.

Expanded advice coupled with effective online resources will support and empower clients to find affordable, fair, and enduring resolutions to their family law problems, bringing stability to their lives and the lives of their children.

An independent evaluator will evaluate the program to determine whether the pilot meets its objectives.
