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This fall, LSS is launching five projects intended to increase access to justice through enhanced legal advice services and early out-of-court resolution. The projects are the result of a Ministry of Justice request that LSS support justice transformation with \$2 million per year over the next three years. (Find out about [Lead FDC Lawyer](#) and [Lead Family LawLINE Lawyer](#) contract opportunities.)

Expanded Family Duty Counsel — Victoria

Expanded Family Duty Counsel is already a proven model for enhancing the continuity and quality of brief advice services for eligible clients, particularly for Provincial Court matters. This service will be implemented at the Justice Access Centre in Victoria and will focus on legal coaching intended to provide clients with the tools they need to manage and resolve their family law problems on their own.

Expanded Family LawLINE

Another currently successful model is Family LawLINE, which will be expanded to provide clients with an even higher level of advice than now available. Among the enhancements, clients will be able to send their documents to a lawyer to review and will be able to arrange follow-up appointments for help with preparing them. Clients will also receive coaching on advocacy and self-representation skills. A new lead LawLINE lawyer will ensure the quality and consistency of service.

Mediation Referral

This is a joint pilot project with Mediate BC to expand the availability of early and affordable mediation services. Clients who are financially eligible for legal representation services but do not fall within the coverage guidelines may qualify for a mediation referral. Suitable cases will be referred directly to Mediate BC and LSS will pay private mediators for up to four hours at tariff rates. After four hours, the mediator will offer further services if required based on a sliding scale up to a cap.

Parents' Legal Centre

A Parents' Legal Centre will be piloted in a community still to be determined, focusing on early, collaborative resolution of child protection matters. Staff at the centre will tailor services to parents, based on the stage of their involvement with MCFD/DAA (Delegated Aboriginal Agency). Services could include:

- brief advice and information about next steps (including referrals to other services),
- support before and at uncontested or procedural hearings, and
- support before and at Collaborative Planning and Decision Making (CPDM) and other collaborative processes.

The centre will provide services to parents until it's determined that the matter can't be resolved through collaborative dispute resolution or the issues have become too complex.

Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel

Two Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel pilots will be introduced over a two-year period, starting in 2015. Under this model, lawyers will retain conduct of selected uncomplicated files to support their early resolution. These pilots will test whether this approach provides services to a broader range of clients and contributes to court efficiency.

The service will only apply to qualifying criminal cases for which a trial date hasn't been fixed. Cases not resolved through expanded duty counsel will be assessed for a legal aid referral. This

initiative is consistent with two other criminal justice system reforms: the Provincial Court Scheduling Initiative and the Crown File Ownership Project.

For more information, read the [Ministry of Justice funding announcement](#). We'll keep you up to date about these projects as we have more details.
As always, we welcome your feedback. If you have any comments, please email them to lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca.

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