

# Legal Aid BC Update

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After a hiatus in publishing this newsletter, it is with pleasure that I reintroduce the Legal Aid BC Update. The newsletter is intended to keep you informed about developments at the Legal Services Society (LSS). It is distributed to justice system stakeholders, Canadian legal aid plans, and law-related organizations. Please forward it to anyone who might be interested in learning more about legal aid in BC.

## No time like the present



The summer is upon us but things have not slowed down at LSS. We're embarking on several ambitious projects this year that will provide British Columbians with more ways to access legal aid services. Here in brief is what we're working on. I welcome your feedback.

## Justice innovation

This fall, LSS will launch 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 Ministry of Justice funding of \$2 million per year. In brief, these projects are:

- Expanded Family Duty Counsel: Located at the Justice Access Centre in Victoria, the focus of the service will be on legal coaching so that clients will have the tools to manage and resolve their family law problems on their own.
- Expanded Family LawLINE: The service will be expanded to provide clients with a higher level of advice than now available, such as help with document preparation, as well as coaching on advocacy and self-representation skills.
- Mediation Referral: A joint project with Mediate BC to expand the availability of early and affordable mediation services.
- Parents' Legal Centre: The centre will be piloted in a location to be determined, focusing on early, collaborative resolution of child protection matters.
- Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel: The model will be piloted at two locations over a two-year period. Lawyers will retain conduct of uncomplicated files for a set time, benefitting clients and increasing court efficiency.

## MyLawBC

MyLawBC is a proposed website that will provide online legal information and advice services in an entirely new way in BC. Funded by the Law Foundation, it will integrate interactive technologies

with up-to-date legal information to give users the ability to assess what they need to do next to resolve their legal matters.

Currently in the early stages of development, we'll have more news on MyLawBC in the coming months.



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