



## Services for Clients and Lawyers During PEA Strike

The Professional Employees Association (PEA), the association representing 28 LSS staff lawyers, has issued 72-hour strike notice to support its collective bargaining demands.

The PEA has advised LSS that the strike will begin with a one-day walkout at the Vancouver Regional Centre starting at 7 am on Friday, November 1. The PEA has also advised LSS that its members will not picket any other locations and all other locations will remain open.

Details of what further actions, if any, the PEA intends to take after November 1 have not been provided.

LSS's 155 non-lawyer staff, represented by the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU), are expected to honour the picket line. This will result in significant disruption of services. This message describes the services that are available to assist clients and lawyers during the service disruption.

### Services not affected by the strike

- Services provided by private lawyers are not affected by the strike. More than 900 private lawyers accept contracts to represent legal aid clients, to provide duty counsel services, and to provide telephone advice to persons detained by police. Private lawyers also serve as local agents for LSS and take legal aid applications at more than 50 locations.

### Assistance for clients

If you have a private lawyer

- If you have been approved for legal aid and a private lawyer has been appointed the lawyer will continue to represent you.

If you have applied for legal aid, but a lawyer has not yet been appointed

- If your application is pending, contact the office where you applied.

If you need a lawyer

- You can apply in person or by phone at other legal aid locations in more than 30 communities around the province and in most courthouses. For locations see: [https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/legalAidLocations\\_Map](https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalAidLocations_Map).
- If there is no legal aid location in your community, apply through the no-charge call centre at 1-800-663-7867 or in Metro Vancouver at 604-660-2421. Wait times may be long due to the strike.

- If the matter is not urgent, please apply when the strike is over.

If you are a Parents Legal Centre client or are represented by a Legal Services Society staff lawyer

- If the matter is urgent, contact the lawyer assigned to your case. If you are unable to contact your lawyer contact LSS's call centre at 1-800-663-7867 or in Metro Vancouver at 604-660-2421. Wait times may be long due to the strike.

## Assistance for lawyers

### New clients

- If you have a new client who has an urgent issue that is covered by legal aid, is financially eligible and is unable to apply for legal aid you may take the necessary steps to protect the client's interests and have the client make the application when the strike is over.
- For coverage guidelines see: [https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/legalRepresentation](https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalRepresentation).
- For financial eligibility guidelines see: [https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal\\_aid/dolQualifyRepresentation](https://legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/dolQualifyRepresentation).

### Invoicing

- LSS Online will continue to be available and LSS will make best efforts to make payments in a timely manner.

### Disbursements

- You may incur disbursements under \$1,000 if the services are reasonable and necessary and are an expense a client of modest means would approve on a private retainer. You must request authorization through LSS Online when the strike is over.
- For disbursements that are over \$1,000 or are urgent, follow normal procedures and apply through LSS Online. LSS will make best efforts to process the requests in a timely manner.
- For disbursement guidelines see: <https://legalaid.bc.ca/sites/default/files/2019-06/disbursementsTariffApril2019.pdf>.

### Case Management

- We have limited ability to review authorization requests for fees (ie: Extended Family & CFCSA Services, Criminal Case Management, Large Case management, Travel, Bail, etc).
- LSS will make best efforts to process the requests in a timely manner.

- Please submit requests (through LSS Online). Provide all of the relevant details so that assessment of requests may be completed without further steps.
- Mark requests urgent if there is an imminent court date or process that needs to take place.
- For guidance, please refer to the [General Tariff Information section of each Tariff](#).

## Appeals

- Criminal: If you have an existing client who has a meritorious appeal that affects the client's liberty, you may take the necessary steps and have the client apply for legal aid when the strike is over.
- Family and CFCSA: If your client has a meritorious appeal, and the matter is urgent, contact Olga Volpe at [olga.volpe@lss.bc.ca](mailto:olga.volpe@lss.bc.ca)

## Immigration

- If you have a client who has a meritorious claim, is financially eligible and who is unable to apply for legal aid, you may take necessary steps and have the client apply for legal aid when the strike is over.

## Large criminal cases

- Submit all requests to [lcmsupport@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lcmsupport@lss.bc.ca). LSS will make best efforts to process requests in a timely manner, but there may be delays.

## Additional assistance

- If you have any questions or require any clarification, contact us at [lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca) or 604-601-6155. We will make every effort to respond to you in a timely way, but you can expect some delays.

## Updates

- Updates will be posted on LSS Online.