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**Legal  
Services  
Society**

January 2019

## **Legal Aid Brief**

### **Updates from the Legal Services Society**

**In this issue:** On the road again: Listening to lawyers; Travel not authorized?; What you should know about Parents Legal Centres; Putting Indigenous clients together with Indigenous lawyers; Missed it the first time?; Invoice survey highlights

#### **On the road again: Listening to lawyers**

Legal Services Society staff have met with lawyers in several locations. It was a chance to get feedback and answer questions about legal aid service and policy changes resulting from this fiscal year's budget increase.

We heard mixed opinions about how we're doing in the sessions conducted so far, which were in Duncan, Campbell River, Kelowna, Victoria, Smithers, Prince George and Kamloops. While attendees appreciated our visits, they expressed continued disappointment with low hourly tariff rates.

Some lawyers also expressed concern about things such as how their livelihoods might be affected by new LSS Parents Legal Centres and why the local lawyer incentive doesn't include more lawyers.

More sessions will be held in early 2019, so look for dates in upcoming messages. We want to hear your

input so that we can find ways to address any concerns we can.

### **Travel not authorized?**

If travel is not authorized on your contract you can still bill for meterage, parking, bus, train, ferry, taxi fares and tolls using the guidelines set out on page 13 of the [Disbursements Tariff](#).

### **What you should know about Parents Legal Centres**

CFCSA services are now being offered at Parents Legal Centres (PLCs) in Prince George, Smithers, Duncan, and Campbell River. PLCs will also be opened in Victoria, Kamloops and Williams Lake early this year.

LSS Parents Legal Centres focus on collaborative processes before trial. This means some child protection clients will still require legal representation for contested hearings. The tariff bar will also continue to get contracts to represent opposing parties in locations where there is a PLC.

### **Putting Indigenous clients together with Indigenous lawyers**

LSS is changing its choice of counsel policy for a trial period for Indigenous clients who need help with family or CFCSA matters. Starting January 31, 2019, if a client requests an Indigenous lawyer and no local Indigenous lawyers are available, LSS Intake will try to find a non-local Indigenous lawyer who is willing to take the contract with a travel authorization.

A lawyer is considered "non-local" when the distance travelled from the lawyer's office to the court location exceeds 160 km per round trip. If you have not yet updated your LSS Online profile to indicate that you are Indigenous, please consider doing so. To find out more about participating in the trial, contact [lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca).

## Missed it the first time? More chances to learn

### Cultural competency for lawyers webinar

We are happy to announce that LSS will once again provide lawyers with bursaries to attend the rebroadcast of last fall's successful CLEBC cultural competency course. As part of our Quality Assistance Program, LSS bursaries are available to lawyers who have taken a minimum of 3 LSS contracts in the last 12 months.

The course will be rebroadcast **March 4 - 5, 2019; 9 am – 4 pm** (worth 13 CPD credits)

Here are two good reasons to take it:

As I am a non-Indigenous lawyer who practices child protection and family law with Indigenous communities, my ongoing education is vital to my work with these communities. This course has furthered my education and has meaningfully added to my tool set in how I work together with my clients. – Child Protection and Family Lawyer

What I took away that matters the most to me is that we can assist with the process of reconciliation, as lawyers, using the tools available to us. I am committed to the change, and I am certain that many of my colleagues feel, and will act, the same way. The course was invaluable. The process to register through LSS and CLEBC was seamless. I was surprised and impressed with how easy it was. – Elizabete Costa

If you meet the criteria above, apply by emailing [lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca) and indicate in the subject line: Cultural Competency bursary request, and tell us your call date and vendor number.

### Bankruptcy law for family lawyers webinar

Did you miss the FREE Bankruptcy and Family Law Webinar? Good news! Here's a link to the one-hour recording, which you can view at your convenience: <https://vimeo.com/305586503>

The webinar provides an overview of the effect of bankruptcy on the division of family property, debt and support calculations. In particular, it focusses on how filing for bankruptcy before or after separation will impact the division of family property. Presenter Samantha de Wit is a family lawyer with Brown Henderson Melbye.

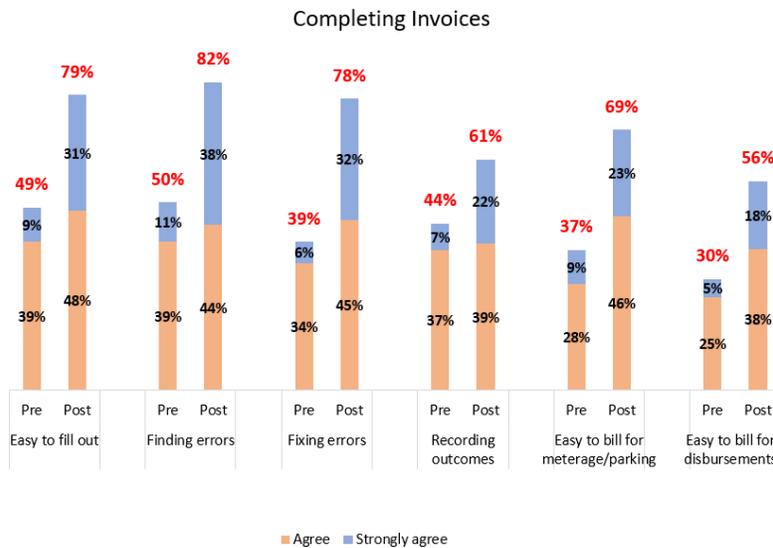
Participants in this webinar may claim up to one hour of CPD credits with the LSBC.

### Highlights from the survey on the new LSS invoice

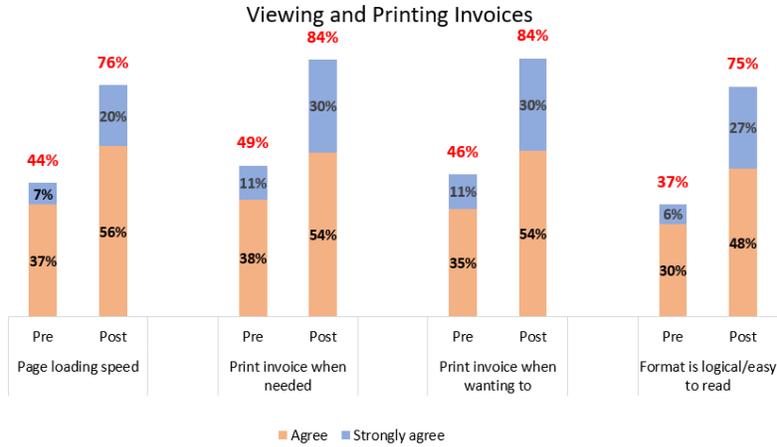
LSS asked for your feedback about LSS Online invoices before and after we changed them; then compared the results of the two surveys to see whether or not the changes improved your invoicing experience. Thank you to the 142 lawyers who told us what they thought, and congratulations to Kiran Duhra, Joshua Dedora and David Garling — winners of the random draw for \$300 gift certificates.

The results tell us that we have improved your invoicing experience. Overall, your satisfaction with the process for completing and submitting invoices increased from 44% to 71%.

About completing invoices, you told us:



And about viewing and printing invoices, you told us:



So while we are pleased with the improvements, we do know there are other invoicing and printing changes that we can do to make your experience even better.

The top 3 areas you want us to improve in LSS Online are:

- Authorization request improvements (66%)
- Easier viewing of client details (36%)
- Easier archiving of contracts, invoices and authorizations (32%)

Stay tuned for these changes and more!

**Questions or comments?**

Contact our Lawyer Support team at: 604-601-6155 / 1-888-401-6206 or [lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca)

*Sent from the traditional unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x̣m̄θkw̄əȳəm (Musqueam), Skwxw̄ú7mesh (Squamish) and Səl̓ílw̄ətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*



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