



Extended Family Services Opinion Letter

Name of client

Legal Aid BC Contract #

Name of lawyer

Name of opposing party

Name of opposing lawyer (if represented)

To consider your Extended Family Services Opinion Letter, Legal Aid BC requires that it be typed and you have submitted an up-to-date invoice via the Lawyer Portal.

The decision to issue Extended Services is a discretionary decision made by a Case Review Lawyer, and is based on established criteria, a merit test, and available budget. This is required to ensure that:

- the Family Law Services' budget is directed to the clients and cases which have priority; and
- Family Law Services are as effective as possible in assisting clients to resolve their family law disputes.

Lawyers and clients are expected to use their initial family representation contract to advance the case as much as possible, including obtaining interim orders on the covered issue(s) and to explore all reasonable ways to settle their case. This opinion letter should be used where reasonable efforts to resolve a case have been exhausted and additional time is justified by the significance of the outstanding issue(s), a meritorious position taken by the client, and the position taken by the opposing party.

If approved, Extended Services are provided as a one-time standard allocation of preparation hours – 25 hours for Provincial Court cases and 40 hours for Supreme Court cases. Extended Services hours will be added to the lawyer's existing family representation contract. Any unused hours from the existing contract will continue to be available.

1) What are the contested issues between the parties?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting time and/or responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Division of family property/debt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Family violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child support | <input type="checkbox"/> Relocation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spousal support | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): |

2) Stage of proceedings Date(s) of next appearance Nature of next proceeding	<hr/> <hr/>
3) Date(s) set for trial	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date(s) _____
4) Court level	Supreme <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial <input type="checkbox"/>
5) Provide a brief summary of the facts and legal issues. Describe the remaining issues and whether they involve family violence towards the client or children. <hr/> 	
6) Describe efforts to resolve the issues. Include confirmation that your client has provided appropriate disclosure. Provide a summary of any mediation or collaborative processes. <hr/> 	
7) How has the opposing party conducted the litigation? Provide a copy of written offer to settle given to the opposing party. Provide a copy of response from opposing party. <hr/> 	

8) Provide a summary of steps taken in the proceeding. Provide copies of all pleadings and orders. If no orders have been obtained, explain why.

9) Is the client at risk of being alienated from their children? If so, describe and explain why the existing order is insufficient.

10) Will the client or children be left at risk or without safety if coverage is not extended? If so, describe and explain why the existing order is insufficient.

11) What further steps do you recommend to protect and advance the client's interests?

12) Please provide your legal opinion on the merits of each issue at this stage. Are your client's instructions reasonable? *Please attach copies of all orders, agreements and any relevant pleadings and any other documents in support of your application for extended services (e.g., Section 211 reports, other expert reports, etc.).*

13) What is the source and estimated amount of the client's gross monthly income and assets? *Please provide a copy of the relevant pages of the client's Financial Statement (if one has been prepared and is up to date).*

Social assistance	\$	_____	
Maintenance	\$	_____	
Employment	\$	_____	
Other	\$	_____	Please describe _____
Assets	\$	_____	Please describe _____
	\$	_____	Please describe _____
	\$	_____	Please describe _____

Lawyer signature _____

Date _____

Preparation of a submitted opinion letter is billable as up to one hour of General Preparation (please refer to the Family Tariff chapter of *Legal Aid BC Tariffs*).

Attach this form to your Lawyer Portal Authorization Request.

Note: If you anticipate any disbursements that require prior authorization under the *Disbursements Tariff*, please add those tariff items to your Authorization Request.

For more information, contact Legal Aid BC Case Management at 604-601-6155 or 1-888-401-6206.

Please send a copy of this opinion letter to your client.