

SERVICES OFFERED BY LEGAL AID ONTARIO

Local Court Based Services

Through our Enhanced Duty Counsel services, we are providing as much service as possible to financially eligible unrepresented clients in the OCJ and SCJ family court systems. These services may include summary advice, procedural advice, document preparation, 1st appearance court, attendance on case and settlement conferences, negotiation, drafting consents, referral to mediation services etc.

We are able to provide these services with the assistance of private bar lawyers acting as per diem duty counsel and also through our staff lawyers James Oxley, Georgette Makhoul, Stephanie Johnson and Kaitlyn McCabe as well as our non-legal staff Lucille McDonald (fifth floor office at OCJ) and Vicky Veres (Family Law Service Centre – located at 185 City Hall Square).

It is our intention to have 2 Duty Counsel at OCJ for first appearance court each Friday. Also there will be Duty Counsel each Friday morning at SCJ for motions court.

For unrepresented clients set for conferences in OCJ and SCJ we may also attend with clients (schedule permitting) especially where we feel that our attendance may be of assistance in resolving matters or where it is a particularly vulnerable client. We won't always be able to attend but we will try to do so where we think it is appropriate and required.

As duty counsel we are there to assist a client who is unrepresented and we are not counsel of record.

These services are in addition to and distinct from matters where Ms. Johnson may be appearing as counsel of record. In these matters, a client has received a Legal Aid Certificate and has chosen to retain Ms. Johnson.

Family Law Service Centre (FLSC)

Stephanie Johnson and Vicky Veres staff the FLSC. Besides the services outlined above Stephanie through the FLSC will accept certificates in Family and Child Protection matters. Where she is providing a certificate service, she is counsel of record.

Referral Lists

LAO maintains up-to-date referral lists of private bar lawyers who are willing to accept certificates.

We have also developed a list of lawyers who will offer unbundled services to clients who do not meet our eligibility criteria.

Motion to Change Seminars

We continue to do the monthly motion to change seminars and we are planning an Application seminar for the fall. There are no financial criteria associated with these seminars.

In Leamington

Family Duty Counsel is scheduled for each family court day. In addition we provide Advice Lawyer services 2 hours bi-monthly through the South Essex Community Centre. Clients can receive assistance including summary advice, procedural advice, document preparation, referral to mediation services etc.

Across the Province

Financially eligible clients can obtain Summary Legal Advice by contacting our Client Service Centre. The Client Service Centre has lawyers in Toronto and across the province who can speak with clients and provide Summary Legal Advice regarding separation or divorce, co-parenting issues; custody, access, child or spousal support, family court process, including mediation and a motion to change. Clients can also be assisted with drafting forms and referrals. The number is 1-800-668-8258

Clients entering the family court system for the first time can access information online through the [Family Law Information Program](#). This is a free, online service which gives basic information on the family court process, legal definitions and more. There is no eligibility criteria associated with this service.

Applying for Legal Aid

Clients wishing to apply for Legal Aid can do so either by contacting our Client Service Centre 1-800-668-8258 (which can provide service in over 120 languages) or by applying in person at our court house office located on the 2nd floor of the Ontario Court of Justice (M-F 8:30-4:30 - closed for lunch 1:15-2:30).

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding family duty counsel services in Essex County, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Updated: February 15, 2013