



Legal Aid Facts

Criminal Case Management

Effective and efficient case management

Background

In 2001, LSS introduced a criminal case management program in response to the number of lengthy criminal proceedings and the growing complexity of prosecutions.

The program has since evolved into the current [Criminal Case Management \(CCM\)](#) program, a policy that was prepared in consultation with the Criminal Tariff Advisory Committee and LSS's criminal case review lawyers.

CCM ensures there is clarity, consistency, and transparency in the administration of long and complex criminal cases. The policy is designed to manage the allocation of funds and other resources in lengthy criminal trials by assuring prudent and cost-effective expenditures that support efficient trial process.

Criminal Case Management

Under CCM, counsel in criminal cases must provide LSS with an outline of evidence, issues, and the time required for preparation from which a budget will be determined.

In larger cases, counsel must prepare a work plan that allocates hours to specific areas of the case and sets periodic reviews to ensure the budget remains current.

CCM cases are subject to set standards of quality, accountability, and efficiency. The budget, the amount of management provided, the frequency of billing, the level of case detail and the ongoing communication required from counsel to effectively manage the case is proportionate to the complexity and cost of the case.

Which cases qualify?

CCM applies to all criminal cases where the preliminary hearing or trial is scheduled to last more than 10 days of court time, regardless of projected fees and disbursements.

The cases subject to CCM may range from those that are legally complex with multiple accused and voluminous disclosure, to those that are not legally complex, but are time-consuming by their nature.

Counsel may request entry into the CCM process in cases that are anticipated to last less than 10 days or when the anticipated general preparation time is more than 75 hours.



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Benefits of Criminal Case Management

Criminal Case Management:

- ensures the budget is applied to the specific items to which it has been allocated and helps predict costs for lengthy cases;
- encourages earlier assessment and preparation;
- ensures the accused has appropriate representation;
- ensures efficient use of legal aid resources (e.g., research work can be assigned to a researcher rather than lead counsel);
- allows budgeting flexibility if trial strategy changes;
- promotes ongoing cost predictability as trial circumstances change;
- ensures timely billing; and
- provides for accountability for public dollars.

Funding large criminal cases

LSS's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) states that where an individual's cases costs exceed \$175,000, the case is funded by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), not legal aid. While LSS continues to manage these cases, it fully recovers costs in excess of \$175,000 from government. This is done to ensure that the cost of large cases does not draw upon the funding to provide legal aid services for BC's neediest people facing family, criminal, immigration and child protection problems.