



Justice Innovation and Transformation Initiatives (JITI) FAQ for Expanded Family Duty Counsel in Victoria

The Ministry of Justice has made a commitment to the Legal Services Society to provide \$2 million a year for three years, starting in 2014/2015, to fund five pilot projects at LSS. These FAQ will help answer questions about the Expanded Family Duty Counsel pilot project.

Expanded Family Duty Counsel – launched October 2014

Family Duty Counsel is a proven program for enhancing the quality of brief advice services for eligible clients. The Legal Services Society is now expanding this program to provide greater continuity of advice as well as new services such as legal coaching to support people who are representing themselves. The Expanded Family Duty Counsel pilot site will be located at the Justice Access Centre at the courthouse in Victoria.

Questions	Answers
What services are provided by Expanded Family Duty Counsel?	<p>Expanded Family Duty Counsel will provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal advice on family law issues• Information and advice on court processes, both Provincial and Supreme Court• Information and advice on options for resolving legal issues out-of-court• Referrals to other services, including online resources and other public agencies• Help with preparing documents for court or for other legal issues• Help with preparing for court appearances• Provide representation in court on brief uncontested issues• Coaching to help people who are representing themselves in court

<p>What is new and innovative about this service?</p>	<p>Expanded Family Duty Counsel is innovative and transformative in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Family Duty Counsel will set appointments so that a client can work with the same lawyer throughout the service. <i>Previously, people usually spoke with a different lawyer every time they came to see Family Duty Counsel.</i> It will provide up to 6 hours with the same lawyer for each current legal matter. <i>Previously, people received only 3 hours in total.</i> It will provide administrative support and tools to Family Duty Counsel. <i>Previously, administrative support and tools were not provided.</i> It will provide coaching to help people represent themselves more effectively. <i>Previously, a coaching service was only available on a limited basis.</i> It will develop a program for articling students in Family law. <i>Previously, an articling student program was not available.</i>
<p>How does a client access the service?</p>	<p>Expanded Family Duty Counsel will be located at the Justice Access Centre in Victoria, which is in the courthouse complex.</p> <p>Clients will be able to make appointments, but drop-ins are permitted for urgent or brief matters.</p> <p>Expanded Family Duty Counsel are available Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.</p>
<p>Why is it being offered in Victoria and not in other locations?</p>	<p>A program similar to expanded family duty counsel exists in the Vancouver JAC. It is being introduced in Victoria because the demand for family duty counsel exceeds current services in that location.</p> <p>The model also fits well with the services delivered in the Victoria Justice Access Centre.</p>
<p>How will the pilot improve the efficiency of and timely access to the justice system?</p>	<p>The presence of Expanded Family Duty Counsel in the courthouse and its integration with other JAC services has a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the court by helping clients reach out-of-court resolutions to their family law issues and to be better prepared for court hearings, when they are needed.</p>

How will the service benefit families?	Expanded in-person service, along with integration with the resources at the Justice Access Centre and improved referrals to outside agencies will support and empower clients to find affordable, fair and enduring resolutions to their family law issues, bringing stability to their lives and the lives of their children.
Why doesn't LSS increase the number of representation referrals instead of adding these services?	The pilot programs are part of the Ministry of Justice initiative for Justice Transformation. LSS can use the funding only for services that are innovative or transformative, and cannot use it to increase the capacity of existing tariff bar services.
How will the pilots be evaluated to determine if the new models improve the efficiency of and timely access to the justice system?	<p>An independent evaluator will use the best data available to determine whether the pilots have met their objectives. The evaluations will rely on existing data sources, including data gathered by LSS and the Court Services Branch, as well as data generated by client and service provider surveys.</p> <p>The Expanded Family Duty Counsel evaluation will have a particular focus on the client experience, including outcomes, and will take an in-depth look at how the Family Duty Counsel program works within the Victoria JAC from the client's perspective.</p>