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Immigration extra fee requests

When LSS increased the preparation time for refugee hearings from 5 to 10 hours last November, we also introduced a change to our procedures for extra fee requests. When counsel anticipates their preparation time will exceed twice the maximum authorized, they should seek advance authorization. Advance authorization, however, is not required for extra fee requests of less than 10 hours. This change was introduced to avoid situations where counsel had invested considerable preparation time and faced an uncertain response to an extra fee request.

Community court lead defence lawyer

Downtown Community Court is a pilot initiative scheduled to start in Vancouver in spring 2008. For more information about the community court, see www.ag.gov.bc.ca/community-court.

LSS is recruiting candidates for the contract position of Lead Defence Counsel. The position will be part time this fall during the final stages of program and policy development. It will become full time with the start of operations in 2008. The defence counsel job will soon be posted on the LSS website at www.lss.bc.ca/about_lss/jobs.asp. You can also get details by phoning (604) 601-6007 or e-mailing Melissa.Eden@lss.bc.ca.

Lawyer satisfaction survey winners!

The following winners of our lawyer satisfaction survey draw will receive a gift certificate for a one-day course from Continuing Legal Education:

Ian Lawson
Tyleen Underwood
Michelle Daneliuk
Susan Kurtz
Jane Gatwiri Rukaria

The survey results will be posted on the LSS website this fall. Thanks again to all who responded to the survey.

Referred lawyers

When you accept a referral, LSS will only discuss matters related to that referral (including authorization requests and account processing). If another lawyer has taken over conduct of the case (on record), please contact the referring office to arrange an official change of lawyer.

Civil rules consultation

One of the recommendations of the Civil Justice Reform Working Group report was to create new Supreme Court Rules. The Civil Rules Drafting Group has prepared a concept draft of the proposed new rules, which is posted on the supplemental Justice Review Task Force (JRTF) website at www.bcjusticereviewforum.ca/civilrules. Members of the judiciary, lawyers, paralegals, advocates, court registry staff, and others are encouraged to provide feedback to the JRTF via this online forum by October 31, 2007.

Family Relations Act

Since February 2006, the Ministry of Attorney General has been reviewing the Family Relations Act as a first step towards modernizing family law in BC and supporting cooperative approaches to resolving family law disputes.

The first year of the review was devoted to research. In early 2007, the ministry began posting discussion papers at www.ag.gov.bc.ca/legislation/index.htm#fra and inviting feedback as part of the consultation process.

To hear an interview with family lawyer Nancy Cameron about the proposed changes, listen to the audio clip posted on the Family Law in BC website at www.familylaw.lss.bc.ca/resources/podcasts.asp.

Expect to see legal aid ads in buses soon

Don't be surprised if your clients start referring to an ad for legal aid that they saw on the bus. This month a Legal Services Society ad started appearing in 325 buses, promoting legal aid in most areas of the province — from the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island to the Okanagan, Kootenays, and the North.

The bus ads, which will run until March 2008, will refer riders to their local legal aid office, the LSS Call Centre, and/or the LSS website. The ad will also use an easy-to-remember "alias" for the LSS website: www.legalaid.bc.ca, which takes people directly to www.lss.bc.ca.

One in a million

In July we received our one-millionth account since launching our billing system in 1999. Steve Andrea is now officially one in a million!