



# The Legal Aid Fax

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In This Issue ▶ ▶ ▶

Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey

## Lawyers 68% satisfied with overall LSS services, support

A survey conducted for LSS last year found that 68% of tariff lawyers were satisfied with the overall support and services they receive from the society. Lawyers who participated in the survey also gave LSS staff very high ratings for their courtesy and knowledge, but identified several areas where the society could make improvements.

The online Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey, conducted between January and March 2004, was sent to 1,026 private lawyers who had done legal aid work in the past year and for whom LSS had an e-mail address. The survey is one of four that will establish baselines for the society's performance measures. A staff survey is currently underway, and the others — for clients and intermediaries — will be conducted over the next two years.

Lawyers were asked about topics ranging from the referral process and account processing to the society's service levels and priorities.

Of the 404 lawyers surveyed, 90% agreed LSS employees are courteous and 80% agreed they are knowledgeable. The lawyers' overall satisfaction ratings of LSS in four key areas were —

- Referral process: 69%
- Authorization process: 67%
- Payment process: 79%
- Written communications: 85%

At the same time, the survey uncovered several areas for improvement. Just over half (51%) of the lawyers felt LSS undervalued their services. The main reasons cited for this were the tariff system — its inadequate fees, hours, and range of covered services; a lack of recognition for lawyers' sacrifices when considering extra fees; and excess bureaucracy and paperwork. A substantial number of lawyers (44%) indicated that the main thing LSS could do to improve overall support for them was implement a tariff structure that values the work done and encourages early (pre-trial) resolution of cases.

Other suggestions were for LSS to make referral decisions more transparent and improve authorization processes.

Just under half (42%) of the lawyers felt LSS was doing a good job allocating its limited resources. The most common suggestions for improving access to legal aid for clients were to relax financial eligibility requirements and simplify the application process. Other frequent suggestions were to increase family law services and coverage and increase poverty law coverage.

Tariff management is meeting regularly to follow up on the survey results and recommendations. The full report on the survey is posted on the LSS website at [www.lss.bc.ca](http://www.lss.bc.ca) (choose "For Lawyers" and then click on "Forms and Resources"). For more information, contact Janice Staryk at 604-601-6148 or [Janice.Staryk@lss.bc.ca](mailto:Janice.Staryk@lss.bc.ca).

## Key survey results

### Overall LSS support and services — 68% satisfied

#### Referral process — 69% satisfied

- Referrals distributed fairly: 52%
- Easy to get retainers revised: 52%
- Referral documents received in acceptable time frame: 90%

#### Authorization process — 67% satisfied

- Urgent decisions provided within the society's one-day guideline: 47%
- Non-urgent decisions provided within acceptable time frame: 60%
- Authorization decisions clear: 51%
- Would use electronic authorizations: 92%

#### Payment process — 79% satisfied

- Time for payment reasonable: 81%
- Decisions explained logically: 63%
- Use E-billing: 67%
- Would use electronic funds transfer: 66%

#### Written communications — 85% satisfied

- Legal Aid Fax: 91% receive it, and of those who receive it, 94% find it valuable
- LSS website: 63% use it; and of those who use it, 97% find it valuable