



The Legal Aid Fax

March 2008

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March/April cheque run schedule

To accommodate an upgrade to our finance system, LSS has revised the cheque run schedule as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Thursday, March 27/08 | Regular schedule |
| Monday, March 31/08 | Extra cheque schedule |
| Thursday, April 3/08 | Schedule cancelled |
| Thursday, April 10/08 | Resume regular schedule |

Technology support grant — *update*

LSS received over 500 applications for the technology support grant (announced February 20, 2008). The grant payment of \$2,000 (per approved application) will be issued by the end of April 2008. Our objectives are to support lawyers' ability to work efficiently and effectively with legal aid clients, LSS, the courts, and other parts of the justice system; and to support legal aid renewal by encouraging more private lawyers to provide legal aid services.

Tiered rates for duty counsel & circuit counsel — *reminder*

Tiered rates now apply to all duty counsel and circuit counsel accounts LSS receives on or after April 1, 2008. For complete details see [Notice to Counsel #60](#), dated March 6, 2008, at www.lss.bc.ca (under For lawyers > Notices to Counsel).

Bursaries for CLE family law conferences

LSS and the Continuing Legal Education Society (CLE) are offering bursaries to lawyers with less than five years' call for upcoming CLE family law conferences:

Course: Family Law: Handling High Conflict Personalities

Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2008

LSS will pay the registration fee for a limited number of tariff bar lawyers who agree to take 12 referrals in the coming year. To apply, send an e-mail to lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca, indicating your call date and the conference you want to attend, and your agreement to accept these 12 referrals. Spaces are limited, so apply early! Lawyers who don't qualify can still get a 25% discount on the registration fee if they agree to take 12 referrals in the coming year.

Meals & meterage

In accordance with BC Public Service Agency rates, meal allowances were increased, effective March 30, 2008, as follows:

| MEAL | RATE |
|-----------|---------|
| Breakfast | \$11.25 |
| Lunch | \$13.00 |
| Dinner | \$22.00 |
| Per diem | \$46.25 |

Meterage was increased to \$0.49 per kilometre.

Brydges — Osmond roster

Partly in response to *R. v. Osmond*, LSS has developed an enhanced Brydges service for persons arrested for murder, manslaughter, or attempted murder.

In such situations, the on-duty Brydges lawyer will contact a senior member of the bar to provide advice to a suspect in police custody, rather than try to do it from another location and under time constraints. A modest tariff has been created (\$150–\$240) for these situations. Whenever possible, senior local counsel who have defended murder or attempted murder cases will be called to provide advice for such cases.

In some areas of the province, LSS does not have local counsel available to participate in this service. Calls in these locations are being directed to senior lawyers who may not be able to visit clients in person. In these locations, LSS will consider adding senior counsel to the roster of lawyers participating in this enhanced service. For more information, contact Allen Vander Linde at allen.vanderlinde@lss.bc.ca

Fees for copies of documents provided by RCMP

We recently received a request from a lawyer who had obtained a court order for disclosure of an RCMP file. After receiving the copies of documents from the RCMP file, he got a bill for several thousand dollars of copying and administrative fees.

When obtaining copies of documents from third party files, it is a good practice to contact the third party to

find out what the cost will be. And please don't forget to ask for pre-approval for the disbursement from LSS.

A message from Audit and Investigation

When costs are awarded to a legal aid client, those costs are assignable to LSS under section 24(2) of the *Legal Services Society Act*. If costs are paid into your trust account, you are responsible for forwarding the funds to LSS either by cheque OR by indicating the amount in the applicable section of the client's LSS Family Billing Form. When reported on the billing form, the amount will be deducted from your account.

If you learn that a legal aid client received the costs directly, please notify the Audit and Investigation Department ("A&I"). We will deal with the client to recover costs.

If costs are awarded but the opposing party fails to pay, LSS may pursue collection of those costs either directly or with your assistance, in which case you will be compensated for your time.

LSS is not responsible for paying costs that may be awarded against a legal aid client.

For more information concerning costs, please refer to paragraphs 52 and 53 of the General Terms and Conditions of the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs* OR contact Kristy Jaundrew, Collections Audit Clerk, A&I, phone: 604-601-6016, or fax: 604-682-0979.

FLWS reaches one million page views!

Many lawyers are unaware of the public legal information work done by LSS on websites such as the Family Law in BC website (FLWS) at www.familylaw.lss.bc.ca. The FLWS has become a key resource for citizens facing family law problems, and for the lawyers, mediators, community workers, and other intermediaries who help them.

The Family Law website has passed the milestone of over one million page views since being redesigned and re-launched in December 2006. One "page view" is one viewing of one page by one site visitor.

You'll find over 1,500 pages of family law materials written for the public on the site, as well as several videos useful for clients who learn more from visuals than from text. Our videos were viewed over 4,000 times in 2007, and, interestingly, our Court Forms page was visited over 35,000 times. Stay tuned for several new videos in March.

2007 saw over 150,000 unique visitors from almost every town and hamlet in BC, from every province in Canada, and from 145 different countries. Site visitors had their computers set in more than 40 different languages.

January 2008 was our busiest month ever, with over 15,000 visitors and 100,000 page views.

Try introducing your family law clients to the FLWS — they'll thank you for it!

New LSS financial eligibility guidelines effective April 1, 2008

New LSS financial eligibility levels came into **effect April 1, 2008**. The new guidelines reflect about a 3% increase since the last increase in 2005.

The charts below provide the new guidelines:

| Household size | LEGAL REPRESENTATION | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| | Current net household monthly income | New net household monthly income April 1/08 | Personal property exemption (applies only to representation) |
| 1 | \$1,349 | \$1,400 | \$2,000 |
| 2 | \$1,888 | \$1,950 | \$4,000 |
| 3 | \$2,427 | \$2,500 | \$4,500 |
| 4 | \$2,967 | \$3,050 | \$5,000 |
| 5 | \$3,506 | \$3,600 | \$5,500 |
| 6 | \$4,046 | \$4,160 | \$6,000 |
| 7 or more | \$4,585 | \$4,715 | \$6,000 |

| Household size | LEGAL ADVICE | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Current net household monthly income | New net household monthly income (and annual income) April 1/08 |
| 1 | \$3,000 | Same as 4 persons |
| 2 | \$3,000 | Same as 4 persons |
| 3 | \$3,000 | Same as 4 persons |
| 4 | \$3,000 | \$3,085 (\$37,000 annual) |
| 5 | \$3,500 | \$3,625 (\$43,500 annual) |
| 6 | \$4,085 | \$4,200 (\$50,500 annual) |
| 7 or more | \$4,585 | \$4,750 (\$57,000 annual) |

Redesigned LSS website coming soon

When you visit the LSS website (www.lss.bc.ca) in mid-April, you'll be greeted by the site's fresh new look and feel. You'll also notice that the site has been radically restructured to make it easier for the public, advocates, media, and lawyers to find what they're looking for.

One of the site's exciting new features is a section devoted to multilingual publications. From an icon on the homepage, a person who speaks a language other than English will be able to see at a glance every publication LSS has in their language. English sub-titles on those pages will help you guide your clients to those publications.

By clicking on the Lawyers button at the top of the homepage, you'll be able to access everything you need to do legal aid work. The new Lawyers' section of the site provides several options for finding what you want quickly. There are also quick links from the homepage directly to e-billing and resources for lawyers.

If you have any questions or comments about the site, please e-mail jacqueline.wood@lss.bc.ca.