



Legal
Services
Society

British Columbia
www.lss.bc.ca

Announcement

March 1, 2005

Legal aid information and advice projects extended

LSS is an independent, non-profit organization that has provided legal aid to people with low incomes in BC since 1979.

Legal representation is available for serious family issues (e.g., involving child apprehension matters or domestic violence) and serious criminal problems. It is also available for some immigration, mental health law, and prison law matters.

Legal advice is available through criminal duty counsel in all courts, family duty counsel in provincial courts, the Brydges Line, and the LawLINE advice project.

Legal information is available through the province-wide toll-free LawLINE, plain language publications, and Internet services, including the Electronic Law Library, the Family Law in British Columbia, the LSS, and the LawLINK websites.

*To contact the **LSS Call Centre and LawLINE**, dial: (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland) or 1-866-577-2525 (toll free from outside the Lower Mainland).*

LSS projects are made possible with grants from the Law Foundation, the Notary Foundation, and the federal Legal Aid Renewal Fund, as well as with funding from the provincial government.

Vancouver, BC — The Legal Services Society is extending its LawLINE advice, LawLINK, and Legal Information Outreach Worker (LLOW) pilot projects to July 29, 2005.

Originally scheduled to continue until March 31, the society decided to extend the initiatives until the LSS Board of Directors can base longer-term plans on final evaluations of all three services. The board will do this at its annual planning retreat in June, when it will also address priorities such as tariff renewal.

“Extending the projects is an interim measure we can take to support the clients who rely on these services,” said Executive Director Mark Benton.

The LawLINE project is a toll-free hotline, with lawyers and paralegals providing brief legal services in all areas of law to people with low incomes. The services include legal advice, writing correspondence, and drafting legal documents, in addition to information and referrals. Almost half of the 15,000/year LawLINE cases involve advice services.

The LawLINE evaluation, completed in fall 2004, reported that 85% of callers who were interviewed said the service made a difference to them and 89% said they would likely use it again if they had another legal problem. Most callers who reported family health, transportation, or scheduling problems, said LawLINE was easier for them to use than a walk-in service would be.

LawLINK consists of a website (www.lawlink.bc.ca) and public access computers. The service connects low income people to reliable information and tools for resolving their legal problems. Computer kiosks are located in all LSS regional centres. The pilot project is testing the effectiveness of providing public access computers in additional locations such as courthouses, libraries, and community agencies.

LLOWs improve access to legal aid services in LSS Regional Centre locations and surrounding communities. They provide the necessary education, awareness, support, and outreach required to help clients and intermediaries understand and use LSS programs and services, including LawLINK, family duty counsel, and LawLINE.

Evaluations of LawLINK and LLOW services should be completed this spring.

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