



BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 20, 2021

Jean P. Whittow, QC
Chair, Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver BC V6C 3A8

Dear Jean Whittow:

On behalf of Premier Horgan and the Executive Council, I would like to extend my thanks to you and your board members, as well as the staff of Legal Aid BC, for the dedication, expertise, and skills with which you serve the people of British Columbia.

Every public sector organization is accountable to the citizens of British Columbia. The expectations of British Columbians are identified through their elected representatives, the members of the Legislative Assembly. Your contributions advance and protect the public interest of all British Columbians and through your work, you are supporting a society in which the people of this province can exercise their democratic rights, trust and feel protected by their public institutions.

You are serving British Columbians at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Recovering from the pandemic will require focused direction, strong alignment and ongoing engagement between public sector organizations and government. It will require all Crowns to adapt to changing circumstances and follow Public Health orders and guidelines as you find ways to deliver your services to citizens. This mandate letter, which I am sending in my capacity as Minister responsible for Legal Aid British Columbia, on behalf of the Executive Council, communicates expectations for your organization. It sets out overarching principles relevant to the entire public sector and provides specific direction to Legal Aid BC (LABC) about priorities and expectations for the coming fiscal year.

I expect that the following five foundational principles will inform your agency's policies and programs:

- **Putting people first:** We are committed to working with you to put people first. You and your board are uniquely positioned to advance and protect the public interest and I expect that you will consider how your board's decisions maintain, protect and enhance the public services people rely on and make life more affordable for everyone.

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- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. Government's unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey – one that all Crown agencies are expected to support as we work in cooperation with Indigenous peoples to establish a clear and sustainable path to lasting reconciliation. True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move towards self-determination. Guiding these efforts, Crown agencies must also remain focused on creating opportunities that implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through your mandate.
- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government, and their lives. The public sector has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every public sector organization has a role in this work. All Crowns are expected to adopt the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to ensure equity is reflected in your operations and programs. Similarly, appointments resulting in strong public sector boards that reflect the diversity of British Columbia will help achieve effective and citizen-centred governance.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** Announced in December 2018, the CleanBC climate action plan puts our province on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our clean air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for carbon impacts. As part of the accountability framework established in CleanBC, and consistent with the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, please ensure your organization aligns operations with targets and strategies for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and managing climate change risk, including the CleanBC target of a 50 per cent reduction in public sector building emissions and a 40% reduction in public sector fleet emissions by 2030. Your organization is expected to work with government to report out on these plans and activities as required by legislation.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** I expect that you will identify new and flexible ways to achieve your mandate and serve the citizens of British Columbia within the guidelines established by the Provincial Health Officer and considering best practices for conducting business during the pandemic. Collectively, our public sector will continue to support British Columbians through the pandemic and economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. As a public sector organization, I expect that you will consider how your decisions and operations reflect environmental, social and governance factors and contribute to this future.

The Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO), with the Ministry of Finance, will continue to support you and your board on recruitment and appointments as needed, and will be expanding professional development opportunities in 2021/22. This will include online training and information about provincial government initiatives to foster engaged and informed boards. As the Minister Responsible for LABC, I expect that you will make substantive progress on the following priorities and incorporate them in the goals, objectives, and performance measures in your 2021/22 Service Plan:

- Indigenous Justice – Work with the BC First Nations Justice Council, the Ministry of Attorney General, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and affected ministries on the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and related initiatives such as the transition of Gladue services and future transition of other Indigenous justice services.
- Family Law – Work with the Ministry of Attorney General, affected ministries and stakeholders to identify the best ways and tools to improve access to justice for low income families. This includes support for the Early Resolution and Case Management Process (currently operating in Victoria and implemented in Surrey in December 2020), and new Provincial Court Family Rules (to be implemented in May 2021); and any related strategies, initiatives or additional early resolution sites.
- Justice Recovery Initiative – Align legal aid service delivery approaches with transformative changes in the justice sector focussed on efficient, timely and accessible legal services, leveraging technology and new efficiencies where possible. This includes working with Ministry of Attorney General, affected ministries and relevant stakeholders to deliver core services digitally and the development of systems to support online mobile access to legal aid services.
- Administration Costs – Set a goal for reducing administration costs as an amount of funding received from LABC funding partners, where administration costs are defined as all LABC costs that are not incurred in direct legal service delivery to LABC clients or the public, and where the goal for the amount of funding spent on administration costs is lower than current level. Include in your annual report or another public report your administration cost actuals and progress towards your administrative cost goals.

Each board member is required to sign the Mandate Letter to acknowledge government's direction to your organization. The signed Mandate Letter is to be posted publicly on your organization's website in spring 2021.

Jean P. Whittow, QC
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I look forward to continuing to work with you and your board colleagues to build a better British Columbia.

Yours truly,



David Eby, QC
Attorney General and
Minister Responsible for Housing

Date: April 20, 2021

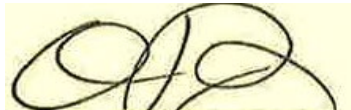
Enclosure: LABC Mandate Letter signing sheet

pc: The Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Lori Wanamaker, Deputy Minister to the Premier, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service
Heather Wood, Deputy Minister and Secretary to Treasury Board, Ministry of Finance
Douglas S. Scott, Deputy Minister, Crown Agencies Secretariat, Ministry of Finance
Richard J. M. Fyfe, QC, Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General
Jean P. Whittow, QC, Chair, LABC Board of Directors
Nathalie Baker, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Karen Christiansen, CPA, CA, FCA, FCPA, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Celeste Haldane, QC, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Nancy G. Merrill, QC, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Gisela Ruebsaat, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Allan P. Seckel, QC, Member, LABC Bords of Directors
Christine Smith-Martin, Member, LABC Board of Directors
Donna M. Turko, QC, Member, LABC Board of Director
Mark Benton, QC, Chief Executive Officer/President, Legal Aid BC

Legal Aid BC Mandate
Letter 2021/22 Board
Signature Sheet



Jean P. Whittow, QC
Chair
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC



Nathalie Baker
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC



Karen Christiansen, CPA,
CA, FCA, FCPA
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC



Celeste Haldane, QC
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Board of Directors
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Gisela Ruebsaat
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC



Allan P. Seckel, QC
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC

Resigned: February 13, 2021

Christine Smith-Martin
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC



Donna M. Turko, QC
Member
Board of Directors
Legal Aid BC