



Notice to Counsel

June 8, 2026, #133

Family Legal Aid Expansion Continuous Improvement Update

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, LABC is introducing the following upcoming changes to its family law services:

1) Update on process for accessing additional hours for a standard representation contract

In 2024, LABC introduced Family Legal Aid Expansion hours, an additional 25 General Preparation hours for clients experiencing family violence and one or more eligible legal issues. This introduced a simplified process for accessing additional representation hours for many clients experiencing family violence. Effective June 22, 2026 we will be revising the eligible legal issues criteria for Family Legal Aid Expansion hours – see table below.

Table A. Eligibility criteria for Family Legal Aid Expansion Hours as of June 22, 2026

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The client is financially eligible for LABC standard representation services 2. The client is experiencing family violence and one or more of the following legal issues as identified on the client contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ cases in which a family law protection order or other legal assistance to protect themselves or their child from harm or violence may be needed (identified as protection order on the client's contract) ○ clients experiencing a permanent or repeated denial of contact or parenting time with/access to a child, or clients who have guardianship or custody of a child who has been unlawfully held by the other parent/party (identified as denial of parenting time on the client's contract) ○ cases requiring an initial — or change to the current — parenting (guardianship, parenting arrangements, or contact/custody or access) order (identified as parenting issues on the client's contract) ○ cases requiring an order to prevent the other parent from permanently relocating their child out of the province (identified as relocation on the client's contract). 3. The client needs these additional hours to achieve stabilization of their family law matters. |
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Process for accessing Family Legal Aid Expansion hours

- Lawyers may seek Family Legal Aid Expansion hours by submitting an authorization request via the Lawyer Portal and attaching a simple Family Legal Aid Expansion Hours Certification form (a formal opinion is not necessary).
- Family Legal Aid Expansion hours will be approved up to available budget on a first-come, first-served basis each month.
- **Note:** Many clients who would have received additional representation hours through Extended Family Services in previous years will now be eligible to receive Family Legal Aid Expansion hours through the simplified certification process starting June 22, 2026.

How will this change impact access to Extended Family Services (EFS)?

- Requests for Extended Family Services will continue to be approved for exceptional cases on a discretionary basis up to available budget.
- **You should expect that the hours available on the standard representation contract are all that will be provided, except for clearly exceptional cases.** To protect your ability to end services to your client when the available hours have been used, consider the steps shared below (see “*What should I do if I exhaust my available hours but my client still needs representation?*”).

What should I do if I apply for Family Legal Aid Expansion hours and there is no available budget?

- If Family Legal Aid Expansion hour budget limits are reached in any given month, lawyers may make a subsequent request the next month.

What should I do if I exhaust my available hours but my client still needs representation?

- Family Legal Aid Expansion hours are **one-time** allotments of 25 hours. Any subsequent authorization requests will not be approved.
- Lawyers may seek authorizations for additional preparation or extra fees, but these tariff items are only available on a discretionary basis subject to budgetary limits (see: [General Terms and Conditions](#), paragraph 40).
- To protect your ability to end services to your client when the available hours have been used, consider taking the following steps (see [here](#)):
 - Use a [retainer agreement](#) that clearly sets out the scope of your services and confirms your intention to end services once your LABC retainer ends.
 - Review the BC Code of Professional Conduct on [withdrawal from representation](#) and consider keeping a signed Notice of Intention to Act in Person in your file.
 - Keep your client informed about the limitations of your retainer and regularly review the available hours with them.
 - Consider preparing your clients to take steps on their own when the retainer ends and helping them use the [Family Law website](#) or other available [resources](#).

2) Transition from virtual Family Law Centres (FLC) services in Prince George and Kamloops to in-person services

LABC will be recruiting staff to provide clients with access to in-person FLC services at two additional locations:

FLC Prince George		FLC Kamloops	
Court locations	302 - 1488 4th Avenue	Court locations	623 Victoria Street
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince George • Vanderhoof • Mackenzie 	Prince George, BC V2L 4Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kamloops • Kelowna 	Kamloops, BC V2C 2B3 FLC.kamloops@legalaid.bc.ca

Once recruitment is complete, these services will be co-located with Parents Legal Centres in those communities.

To be eligible for the Family Law Centres, clients must be:

1. **Financially eligible** for LABC family law standard representation services- See “Financial eligibility” section;
2. Experiencing **Family Violence**;
3. Experiencing **one or more family law issues**, as follows:
 1. need an initial — or change to the current — parenting (guardianship, parenting arrangements, or contact/custody or access) order;
 2. have guardianship/custody of a child/children who have been unlawfully held by the other parent/party;
 3. have been permanently or repeatedly denied contact or parenting time with/access to a child;
 4. need a family law protection order or other legal assistance to protect themselves or their child from harm or violence; or
 5. need an order to prevent the other parent from permanently relocating (moving) their child out of the province (the risk must be real and imminent).

Eligible clients who are unable to access FLC services due to FLC capacity, or due to a conflict, will instead receive a standard representation contract, and their tariff lawyer may submit a certification form for Family Legal Aid Expansion hours.

Rhaea Bailey
Vice-President, Legal Strategy

June 8, 2026

Questions or comments?

Contact our Lawyer Support team:

- Call 604-601-6155; 1-888-401-6206 (no charge), or
- Email lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca

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