

Legal Aid Services & Tariffs

Summary of Cuts

The provincial government has announced it will cut legal aid funding by 38.8% over three years and require LSS to absorb substantial new costs. This means the Society will no longer have the funds necessary to maintain existing services to clients. This backgrounder summarizes the major services that must be eliminated given these financial constraints.

Service	Description	# cases
Legal Representation (begin to phase out, beginning April 1, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ all family cases where violence is not involved ➤ all poverty law cases 	8,000 6,000
Summary Advice (begin to phase out, beginning April 1, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ up to 2 hours of assistance currently provided by poverty law staff lawyers and paralegals for problems outside the existing tariffs and for poverty law problems (intake cases) ➤ summary advice for legal aid applicants found ineligible for referral to a lawyer 	22,800 2,600

#s are estimates based on 2000 – 2001 data

Service	Description	# groups or clients
Public Legal Education Programs (eliminated by April 1, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ small grants to local organizations for community development and public legal education projects ➤ small grants for public libraries to purchase legal materials 	78 67

#s are estimates based on 2000 – 2001 data

Restructuring (by September 2002)	LSS will replace all 60 existing offices with an entirely new structure. Staff will be reduced by approximately 74%. The new structure will consist of 7 regional centres, 24 local agents, and a province-wide call centre.
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Tariffs	Description	Impact
Current holdback system removed & all tariffs reduced by 10% by April 1, 2002	Holdbacks were amounts deducted from accounts, and paid to lawyers on a pro-rata basis if any money was available in the tariff budgets at the end of the fiscal year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hourly tariffs will drop from \$80 to \$72/hour. There are specified maximum hours billable for most work. ◆ The impact on block fees is comparable to that on hourly tariffs.