

2018-2019



Legal Aid Alberta

# VALUE FOR ALL ALBERTANS

ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019

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# LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

MAY 31, 2019

Honourable Minister Doug Schweitzer  
Minister of Justice and Solicitor General  
Province of Alberta  
424 Legislature Building  
10800 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

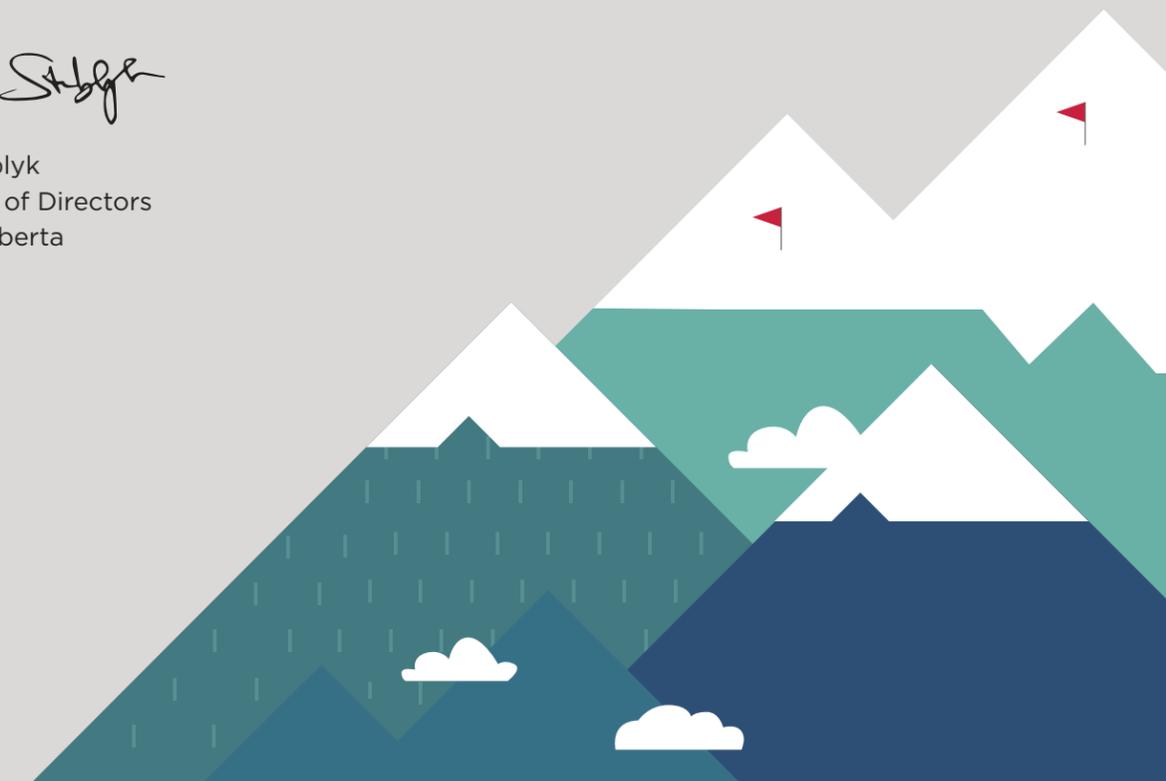
Rob Armstrong, QC  
President  
Law Society of Alberta  
Suite 500  
919 11 Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2R 1P3

**To The Honourable Minister Doug Schweitzer and Mr. Armstrong:**

Pursuant to Sections 19.1(a) and 19.2(b) of the *Governance Agreement Respecting Legal Aid*, it is my pleasure to submit on behalf of the Board of Directors the 2018-2019 Legal Aid Alberta Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deanna Steblyk  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Legal Aid Alberta



Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) is a not-for-profit organization that provides legal representation and support for Albertans facing legal issues.

A registered society incorporated under the provincial *Societies Act*, LAA is independent from government but accountable to Alberta’s Minister of Justice and Solicitor General and to the Law Society of Alberta.

LAA provides legal services to clients in support of fairness in Alberta’s justice system – services that help ensure Albertans in all circumstances understand and are able to defend their legal rights.

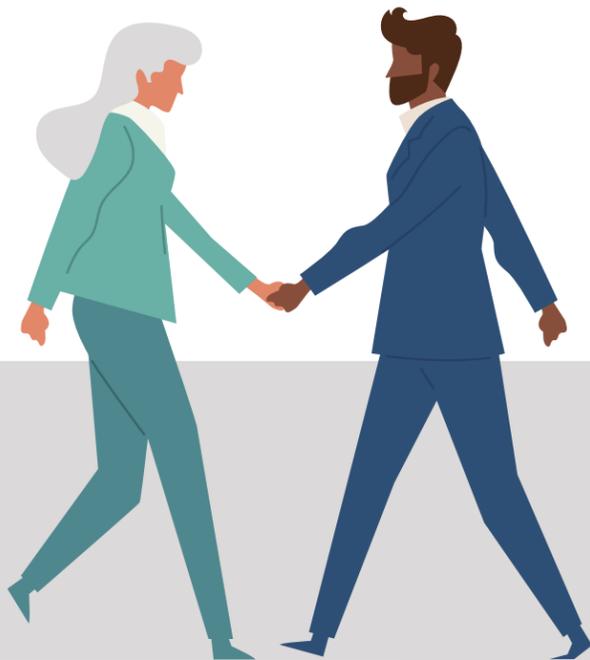
The LAA service delivery model is a hybrid of staff and contractors. LAA staff provide highly specialized legal and other support services directly to Albertans, while the remaining services are provided by LAA roster lawyers. Members of the roster are independent Alberta lawyers who have registered with LAA to provide services on behalf of the organization.

Within our mandate, LAA is uniquely positioned to provide additional services that have a significantly positive impact on the justice system and the lives of Albertans. This includes services like Duty Counsel for all Albertans in courtrooms and elsewhere, services in support of emergency protection orders, services for Indigenous Albertans at the Siksika Nation, and support workers for youth and families in crisis.

LAA also provides legal services on behalf of the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General when it is directed to do so by Alberta courts.

Internally, LAA strives to be an employer of choice and a Centre of Excellence where employees are, and are recognized to be, some of the top experts in their fields. We are committed to sharing knowledge within the legal community, working to support improvements to the Alberta judicial system.

Working with our funding partners, stakeholders, and community, we provide targeted training for practicing Alberta lawyers and the legal community on a range of topics, with the goal of better outcomes for the clients they represent.



LAA supports its core business, provision of legal services to eligible Albertans, through:



## Representation and Case Management



Intake and Assessment



Appointment of Counsel



Invoicing, Billing and Client Collections

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

43,792

TOTAL CERTIFICATES ISSUED: (EXCLUDING DUTY COUNSEL CERTIFICATES)

AVERAGE COST OF CERTIFICATES

\$1,768

TOTAL CALLS

198,166

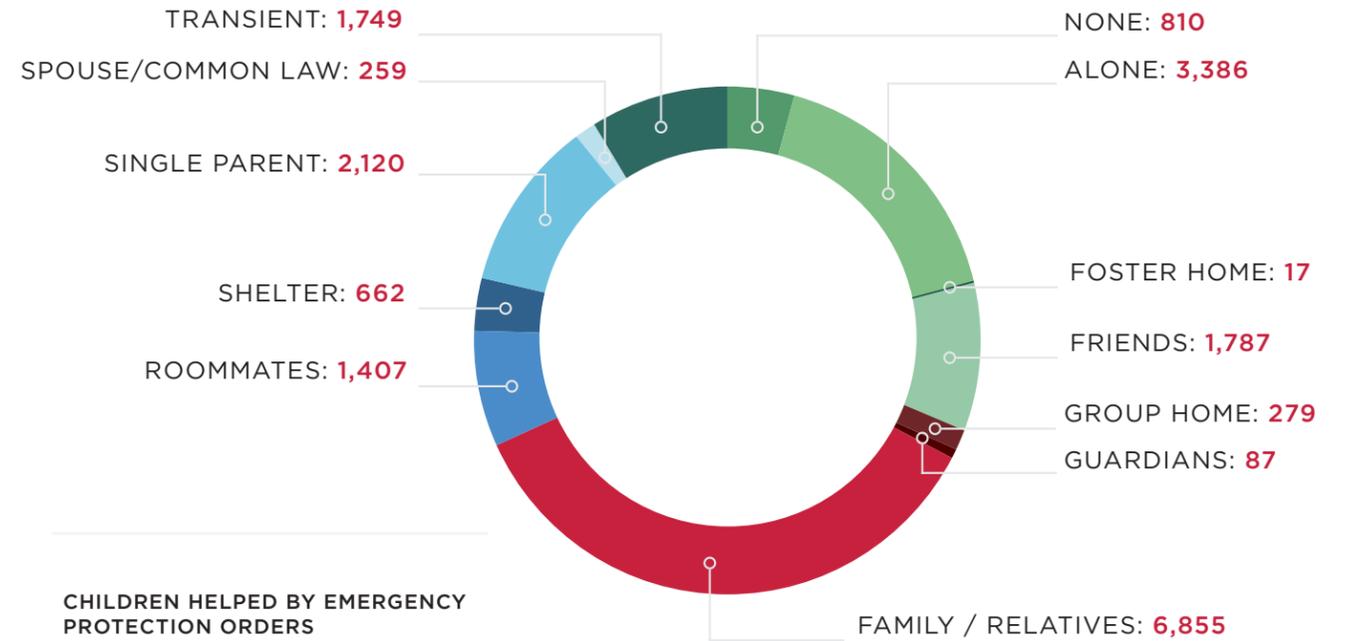
AVERAGE APPOINTING TIME FOR A LAWYER (DAYS)

2019 3.81

CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN FAMILY LAW BY FAMILY SIZE



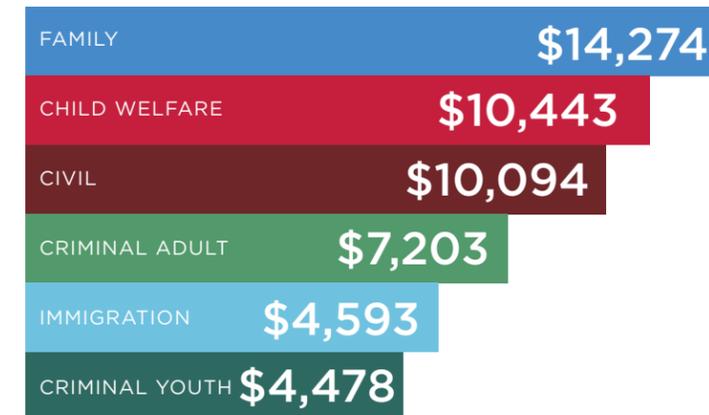
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CLIENTS ISSUED REPRESENTATION CERTIFICATES



CHILDREN HELPED BY EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS

2,957

ANNUAL AVERAGE INCOME, SINGLE PERSON FAMILY



CLIENTS ISSUED REPRESENTATION CERTIFICATES

FAMILY

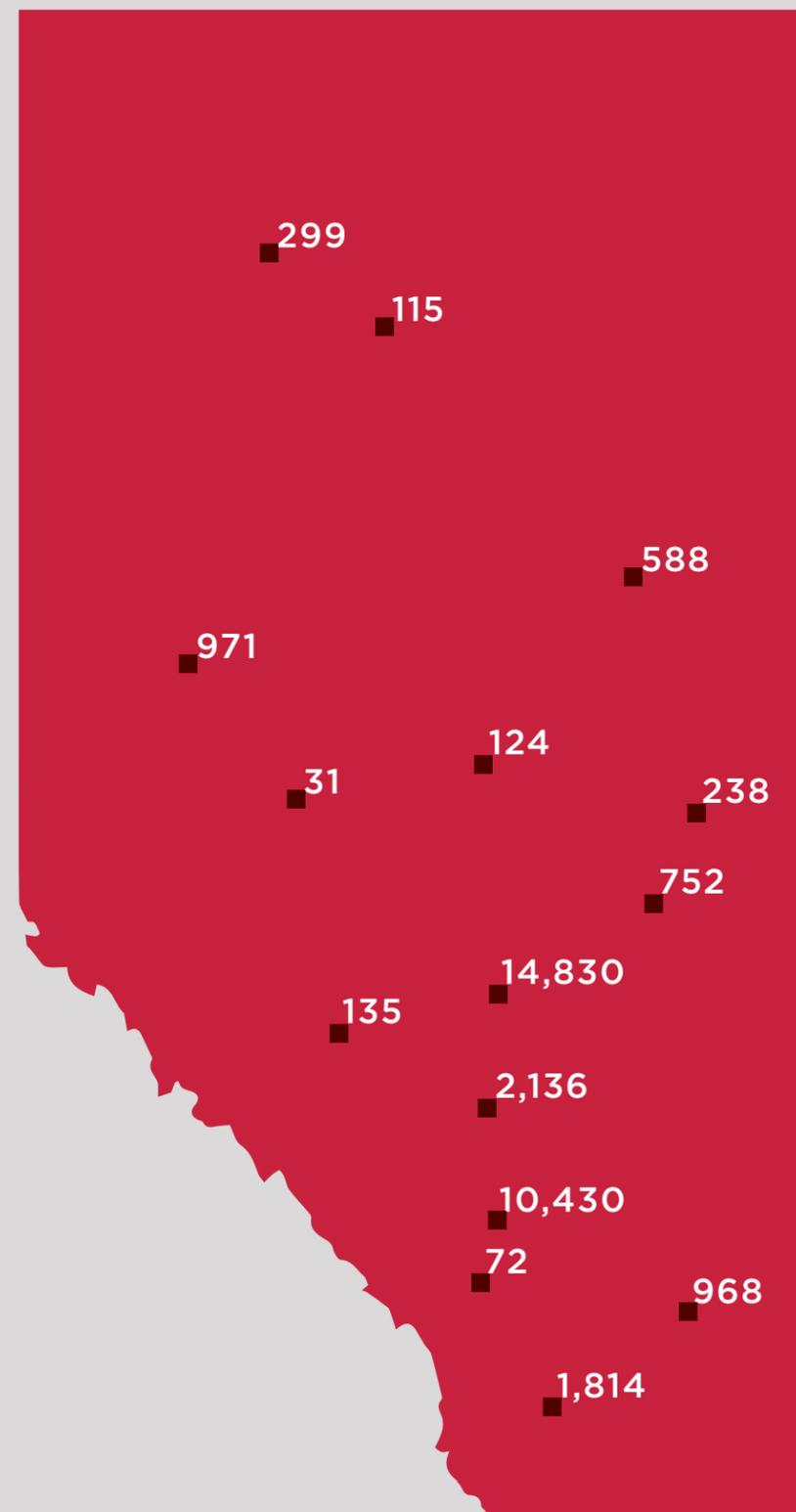
6,037

CHILD WELFARE	CIVIL	IMMIGRATION
1,474	68	552

CRIMINAL ADULT	CRIMINAL YOUTH
17,648	1,996

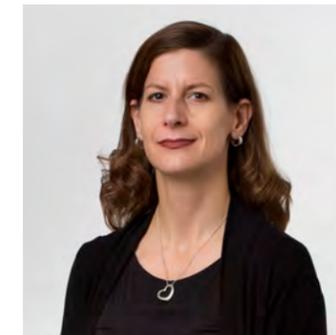


# CERTIFICATES BY LOCATIONS



- 277 AIRDRIE
- 10 ALBERTA HOSPITAL EDMONTON
- 2 ASSUMPTION
- 124 ATHABASCA
- 88 BARRHEAD
- 2 BLACKFALDS
- 238 BONNYVILLE
- 65 BOYLE
- 65 BRETON
- 156 BROOKS
- 10,430 CALGARY
- 3 CALGARY FOOTHILLS HOSPITAL
- 2 CALGARY REMAND CENTRE
- 4 CALGARY ROCKYVIEW GENERAL HOSPITAL
- 229 CAMROSE
- 95 CANMORE
- 211 CARDSTON
- 133 CHATEH
- 258 COCHRANE
- 314 COLD LAKE
- 18 CORONATION
- 136 DIDSBURY
- 189 DRAYTON VALLEY
- 153 DRUMHELLER
- 5 DRUMHELLER INSTITUTION
- 14,830 EDMONTON
- 8 EDMONTON REMAND CENTRE
- 135 EDSON
- 49 EVANSBURG
- 34 FAIRVIEW
- 22 FALHER
- 5 FORT CHIPEWYAN
- 158 FORT MACLEOD
- 588 FORT MCMURRAY
- 373 FORT SASKATCHEWAN
- 115 FORT VERMILION
- 31 FOX CREEK
- 75 GLENEVIS
- 45 GRANDE CACHE
- 971 GRANDE PRAIRIE
- 23 HANNA
- 299 HIGH LEVEL
- 380 HIGH PRAIRIE
- 3 HIGH RIVER
- 142 HINTON
- 23 JASPER
- 46 KILLAM
- 163 LAC LA BICHE
- 441 LEDUC
- 1,814 LETHBRIDGE
- 1 LETHBRIDGE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE
- 248 LLOYDMINISTER
- 75 MAYERTHORPE
- 968 MEDICINE HAT
- 119 MORINVILLE
- 131 OKOTOKS
- 284 PEACE RIVER
- 2 PETER LOUGHEED HOSPITAL CALGARY
- 144 PINCHER CREEK
- 170 PONOKA
- 2,136 RED DEER
- 1 RED DEER REMAND CENTRE
- 59 RED EARTH CREEK
- 55 RIMBEY
- 295 ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
- 331 SHERWOOD PARK
- 319 SIKSIKA NATION
- 192 SLAVE LAKE
- 2 SPRUCE GROVE
- 243 ST. ALBERT
- 752 ST. PAUL
- 88 STETTNER
- 639 STONY PLAIN
- 222 STRATHMORE
- 85 TABER
- 72 TSUU TINA NATIONS
- 58 TURNER VALLEY
- 134 VALLEYVIEW
- 219 VEGREVILLE
- 46 VERMILION
- 203 WABASCA-DESMARAIS
- 95 WAINWRIGHT
- 114 WESTLOCK
- 1,044 WETASKIWIN
- 256 WHITECOURT

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



**DEANNA STEBLYK**  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
LEGAL AID ALBERTA

Access to justice is a fundamental right that is enshrined in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It exists only when all citizens can understand, use, and afford information and services to prevent and resolve their legal disputes and to achieve just outcomes without delay.

Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) plays an integral part in ensuring that access to justice is afforded to those who are the most vulnerable in our society. Through a user-centered philosophy, LAA focuses on delivering programs and services that help break down barriers so all Albertans are able to address their legal issues and assert their legal rights.

With LAA's recently negotiated Governance Agreement in place, the organization is now well-positioned to capitalize on the growing collaboration between stakeholders within the Alberta justice system. As we have seen, when those with a stake in the system come together to find innovative ways of addressing the challenges we are faced with, great things can happen. Improving access to justice in Alberta is the responsibility of all those who play a role in the system: including the judiciary, lawyers, all levels of government, paralegals, academics and NGOs.

In the health care system, we have seen the tremendous value of prevention and health promotion, and now the justice system is also looking at ways to innovate and develop a more holistic and integrated institutional response to the current - and growing - demands.

In many ways, LAA is already doing this. Our family and youth criminal law areas take an integrated service delivery approach that considers the specific needs of each client we serve. We play a crucial role in a number of projects like Mental Health Court and Drug Treatment Court that have significant impacts on the traditional justice system in non-traditional ways.

It's only a small part of why, as a Board of Directors, we are proud of the accomplishments of the LAA team over the last year. And with the new three-year Strategic Plan, the organization lives the values that we have established to guide them in the decisions they make every day. Across the organization staff work tirelessly to deliver unwavering and innovative services to clients as one unified organization. They truly embody the organization's mission of providing legal services and expertise to individuals and the legal community to support fairness in the justice system.

The Board would also like to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the tremendous contribution Alberta's roster lawyers make in our province. The professionalism and dedication shown by these trusted partners is a key factor in the success of LAA.

As a Board we are proud to be a part of the direction in which the organization is now heading. With a new Governance Agreement, a sustainable funding model, and a visionary Strategic Plan, LAA is in a position to continue to build on its sterling reputation as one of the best legal aid plans in the country. To support this work, the Board established a Transitional Change Management Committee to provide focus and advice that will help enhance and support change in the organization.

We remain confident in the financial performance, accountability, reporting, and efficiencies of the organization, and believe that all Albertans are getting tremendous value for the dollars that are invested in the work LAA does to ensure fairness in the justice system. For more information, our audited financial statements are presented in Appendix A.

Lastly, I would like to thank outgoing Board member, and past board chair, Robert W. Calvert, Q.C., for his tireless contributions during his term, and welcome Michael Waite as our newest director.

The Board of Directors looks forward to doing its part to ensure that LAA continues to play a vital leadership role in Alberta's justice system, and ensuring representation is available when needed so all Albertans have meaningful access to justice.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

It is a fundamental tenet of our justice system that regardless of economic status, all Albertans are entitled to fairness and the opportunity to protect their legal rights.

Our programs and services are essential to the efficiency and speed of the justice system, and as a result, save taxpayers significant costs to health care and social programs if legal matters remained unresolved, and thus unnecessarily time-consuming. Studies in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom suggest for every dollar spent on legal aid, the costs savings to taxpayers is up to six times the investment.

An ineffective justice system results in Albertans navigating the system without appropriate assistance, which results in individuals bearing additional stress, including emotional and physical health, impacts to familial relationships, lost days of work and in some cases, unemployment, and loss of housing.

Legal Aid Alberta provides value for all Albertans and assists individuals and families in resolving legal issues that allow them to become contributing members of their communities and economy. And never in our 40-plus year existence has the organization been in a better position to have an impact on the justice system, and those who reach out to us in some of the most challenging times in their lives.

Our new five-year Governance Agreement has given us the flexibility and tools to innovate and improve on our already class-leading services and successes. It gives us the sustainable funding needed to determine how we can better serve our clients, and improve access to justice for all Albertans.

We have begun to change the way we do business. Our new three-year Strategic Plan provides a clear path forward to LAA to modernize our service delivery so clients receive quality services appropriate to their circumstances in a timely and efficient way. A renewed spirit of collaboration in Alberta's justice system, coupled with our long-term vision, will allow us to build on the successes we have already seen with our partners across the justice system as we work to innovate and improve our service to Albertans.

Over the last year, we have streamlined the client journey so they are able to get the help they need faster by reducing the time it takes to get a lawyer by over 60%. We began offering full-day in-take and assessment at the Calgary and Edmonton courthouses to make it easier for clients to get a lawyer. We launched a province-wide, technologically sophisticated Justice of the Peace Bail Program that is available to all Albertans - 16 hours a day, seven days a week -

regardless of their income. This program significantly reduced the length of bail hearings and helped reduce the burden on the courts by arranging release conditions at an earlier stage only when appropriate.

We helped more than 2,957 children escape violent situations through our Emergency Protection Order Program, which is available to all Albertans regardless of income. We continued to provide support to Mental Health Court and Drug Treatment Court where both programs show continued success in helping some of our most vulnerable break the cycle.

The examples provided in this report are a mere snapshot of the successes we have had in the last year, and as you read ahead you will find many more examples of our positive contributions to the province and the justice system. These successes link directly to the priorities outlined in our strategic plan, that our services are accessible and delivered fairly to Albertans, and the values of our organization guiding us in the decisions we make every day. Over the next three years, I am confident that we can achieve the goals we have set out in our Strategic Plan for the betterment of access to justice for all Albertans.

However, our effectiveness is only possible because of the expertise, dedication and passion of our staff and roster lawyers. Our collaborative and support efforts to deliver unwavering and innovative services to our clients are crucial to the success of LAA as a unified Centre of Excellence that works tirelessly to protect the rights of Albertans.

With a new Governance Agreement in place, sustainable funding that provides stability, and a new Strategic Plan to guide us, we are in a position to continue to build on the work that is underway, and operate and innovate into the future for the benefit of all Albertans.



**GIANPAOLO (JOHN) PANUSA**

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
LEGAL AID ALBERTA



# LEGAL AID ALBERTA YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2018

### APRIL

Mental Health Court launched in Edmonton.

The first appeals lawyer in Legal Aid Alberta's (LAA) history was hired to focus on legal issues that impact our clients and our justice system.

LAA hosted a training session on Representation of Children in High Conflict Parenting Matters for staff and roster counsel in Edmonton.

Intergenerational Historic Trauma and its Impact on Aboriginal Clients in the Justice System training sessions were provided to roster and staff lawyers in Edmonton.

### MAY

The first phase of the Justice of the Peace (JP) Bail Program launched in Calgary.

Intergenerational Historic Trauma and its Impact on Aboriginal Clients in the Justice System training sessions were provided to roster and staff lawyers in Calgary and Red Deer.

### JUNE

LAA participated in the annual celebrations of Law Day at Siksika Nation.

Intergenerational Historic Trauma and its Impact on Aboriginal Clients in the Justice System training sessions held for roster and staff lawyers in Lethbridge. In total, 110 roster lawyers and 10 staff lawyers completed the training in 2018-2019.

Newly formed Joint Work Site Health & Safety Committee held their first meeting.

### JULY

Launched new LAA news site and blog to improve public visibility.

After a nearly five year absence, LAA re-booted its articling student program with the hiring of three law school graduates.

Legal Representation & Advice management team was reorganized to better align with future goals and plans.

### AUGUST

Second phase of the JP Bail Program launched in Northern and Southern Alberta.

Youth criminal lawyer Karen McGowan's charter challenge against the extended segregation of an Alberta youth was successful when the judge ruled it unlawful confinement and in contravention of national and international law.

### SEPTEMBER

JP Bail program became available across the province with launch of program in Edmonton.

Hosted a training session on Representation of Children in High Conflict Parenting matters for Roster and staff lawyers in Calgary.

Multiple tours of the Edmonton Law Courts conducted with Federal, Provincial and Municipal political leaders and key stakeholders to inform the public debate and educate leaders about our role in the justice system.

LAA participated in the Criminal Justice Summit to discuss *Jordan* decision impact and other criminal justice issues.

De-escalation of Potentially Violent Situations training provided to staff across the organization.

### OCTOBER

LAA, the Government of Alberta and the Law Society of Alberta announced new five-year Governance Agreement and sustainable funding model.

Launched full-day in-person criminal assessment services at Edmonton and Calgary courthouses.

Trial program between LAA and Tsuu T'ina/Stoney Nation Correction Society to provide a dedicated phone queue and Legal Services Officer to complete client assessments begins.

### NOVEMBER

LAA lawyer Grace Auger received a Leadership in the Profession award during the Women in Law Leadership (WILL) Awards.

Legal Services Officers began training to issue certificates, helping to decrease the time between approval for services and the appointment of a lawyer.

### DECEMBER

A pilot project to study choice of counsel for clients is announced with plans for a January 2019 start date.

The first meeting of the Roster Representation Committee occurred.

Team Lead positions are introduced in Legal Representation & Advice to improve overall management structure.

## 2019

### JANUARY

LAA co-hosted the inaugural Junior Counsel Criminal Law Conference with over 50 lawyers attending two days of panel discussions.

Launched new three-year Strategic Plan for LAA with new Vision, Mission and Values for the organization.

LAA granted intervener status at Supreme Court of Canada to argue there should be a lower presumptive ceiling for youth proceedings.

A new Support Organizations database launched on the LAA website for clients to access other support services agencies.

### FEBRUARY

IT completed Data Centre move, providing a commercial grade and highly secured site to host LAA's IT services.

Employee Engagement Survey was completed with an 85% participation rate.

Law Society appointed Youth Criminal lawyer Sarah Lanceley to new Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Release of new Occupational Health & Safety Policy, Harassment Prevention Policy, Violence Prevention Policy, and a revised Respectful Workplace Policy, along with training.

### MARCH

De-escalation of Potentially Violent Situations training provided to staff across the organization.

Trial program to provide a dedicated phone queue and Legal Services Officer to complete client assessments expanded to include Big Stone Nation.



Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) is governed by a Board of Directors that supports the organizational goal of providing quality and effective legal advice and representation to Albertans to help protect their legal rights and ensure a fair process.

The board is composed of up to six directors who are lawyers practicing in Alberta, and a minimum of five directors who are members of the public with varying backgrounds and expertise. All members are identified through a robust selection process and are appointed as outlined in the Governance Agreement by the Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta.

Using its experience and knowledge, the Board of Directors is responsible for the strategic direction of the organization's goals and policies through sound governance practices. This helps ensure LAA is serving the public good while being accountable to our funders and the public.

Direction and decisions of the Board of Directors and the Strategic Plan are implemented by the executive and management teams to support the legal aid plan.

**DEANNA STEBLYK (CHAIR)**  
CALGARY  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2015

**RYAN CALLIOUX (VICE-CHAIR)**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2016

**PETER A. CARTER**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2014

**JIM DONIHEE**  
CALGARY  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2014

**OWEN EDMONDSON**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2017

**CHRISTINE HUTCHINSON**  
CALGARY  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2017

**GRAHAM JOHNSON**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2014

**NANCY PECK**  
CALGARY  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2016

**HILARY ROSE**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2016

**DARYL ROYER**  
EDMONTON  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2017

**MICHAEL WAITE**  
CALGARY  
DIRECTOR SINCE: 2018



# ONE ORGANIZATION THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Taking direction from the Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) Board of Directors and the Strategic Plan, the Executive Committee leads the organization and its operations. By supporting the decisions of the Board in support of the legal aid plan, the Executive team leads the development of policies, plans and budgets to align with the strategic direction of the organization.



**G. JOHN PANUSA**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

John reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the executive planning and coordination of the province-wide legal aid plan under the Board of Directors and pursuant to the Legal Aid Alberta Governance Agreement. He also represents the organization in dealing with Alberta Justice, the Law Society of Alberta, the Federal Government, other Legal Aid plans in Canada, the legal community at large, and the general public.



**STEVE BURFORD**  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY

As Vice President of Finance & Technology, Steve ensures that systems and infrastructure necessary to support our front-line staff in delivering legal services to our clients are sufficient and reliable. He is also responsible for Facilities, Purchasing, and financial management of LAA. This includes preparation of budgets, business plans, and sustainability plans for review by the Board of Directors and the organization's funders.



**LYLE TOOP**  
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN  
RESOURCES, COMMUNICATIONS  
AND CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Lyle oversees all aspects of Human Resources, Communications, and Organizational Change Management. This includes oversight and accountability for Human Resource Services, Payroll & Benefits, Labour Relations, Occupational Health Safety and Wellness, Internal/ External Communications and Strategic Planning.



**LORI HAUGHIAN**  
VICE PRESIDENT CLIENT AND  
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES  
ACTING VICE PRESIDENT, LEGAL  
REPRESENTATION AND ADVICE

Lori is responsible for providing leadership, direction, and executive oversight to all Client Services' functions within LAA including Client Intake & Assessment, Appointing, Client Payments, and Certificate & Tariff Administration.

In her role as Acting Vice President of Legal Representation and Advice, Lori provides guidance and oversight for the day to day operations of the Staff Law Offices and the Corporate Law & Case Management group.



**BRIAN MULAWKA**  
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS  
AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

As Director of Public Relations and Internal Communications, Brian is responsible for all communications and stakeholder relations. He oversees all external and internal communications and is responsible for ensuring consistent and appropriate messaging and branding across all parts of the organization.



In January 2019, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) launched its new three-year Strategic Plan, a touchstone for everything that the organization will do to keep its focus on what is most important: to deliver services for Albertans that support fairness in the justice system and allow residents to understand and protect their legal rights.

The rolling plan will help support the continued efforts to come together as one organization by creating common goals and a shared direction. It is a living document that will provide guidance for staff so they can make the best, values-based decisions in the organization's pursuit of continually improving its work as a client-focused Centre of Excellence.

The plan envisions what LAA will look like in the future, and the strategic priorities that will help the organization achieve this future state. The plan identifies significant areas of improvement, what will be done to address these areas, and how success will be measured along the way.

The plan will be updated annually and reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors and senior management team, will drive annual business planning and budgeting, and will ensure the organization remains focused on its broader goals and strategic direction. It will help ensure continued focused on its mandate and fulfill its obligations as set out in the Governance Agreement.

The plan provides insight for community partners and stakeholders who are integral to LAA's success. By publicly setting organizational goals and expressing the long-term direction intended to be followed, the plan supports LAA's goal to effectively work together as part of Alberta's larger justice system community.

## THE PATH TO SUCCESS

The Strategic Plan is intended to function as the road map to assist the organization in reaching its desired destination. By focusing on key priorities over the next three years and targeting strategic areas of improvement, LAA will be well positioned to drive towards fulfilling its mission and achieving its vision.

### Strategic Priorities

- Our mandate, vision, and services are clearly defined and better understood by all stakeholders.
- We operate as one unified, innovative, and sustainable organization.
- We are and are seen to be a Centre of Excellence.
- Our services are accessible and delivered fairly to Albertans.
- Our organization is a great place to work.



## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

The new LAA vision statement focuses on tomorrow, on where we want to be, and the direction our organization is headed. Our mission statement focuses on today, and what we can do now to move towards our ideal future state.

### VISION

An Alberta where everyone is able to understand and protect their legal rights.

### MISSION

We provide legal services and expertise to individuals and the legal community to support fairness in the justice system.

### VALUES

Our organization strives to always focus on what matters, to stay true to our values in everything we do. These values are the underpinning of our organization, reflecting on what is truly important to us and guide us in the decisions we make every day.

#### WE ARE ONE

We work together in a collaborative and supportive manner to deliver unwavering and innovative services to our clients as one unified organization.

#### WE ARE PROTECTORS

We serve Albertans, often the most vulnerable of us, and work tirelessly to protect their rights and to ensure a fair process.

#### WE ARE EXCEPTIONAL

We are experts at what we do and we continually strive for improvement.

#### WE ARE INDEPENDENT

We operate and provide legal counsel free from outside involvement.

## STRATEGIC PLAN: EARLY SUCCESSES

APRIL 1, 2019	Phase one data centre project complete.	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
APRIL 1, 2019	Conduct a follow-up employee engagement survey	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
APRIL 30, 2019	Update LAA brand, develop new story, and communicate to all stakeholders	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
APRIL 30, 2019	Communicate new LAA vision, mission, and strategic priorities to all staff	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
APRIL 30, 2019	Implement and train management staff on a new, robust health and safety program across LAA.	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
APRIL 30, 2019	Identify and train all leaders on LAA's new strategic plan, vision, mission, and leadership expectations	COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
MAY 1, 2019	Develop and implement stakeholder engagement strategy	75% COMPLETE
JUNE 1, 2019	A comprehensive risk management framework and project prioritization	80% COMPLETE
JUNE 30, 2019	Complete IT security and threat assessment	ONGOING
JUNE 30, 2019	Project management methodology in place	ONGOING
OCTOBER 31, 2019	Identify and implement multi-year leadership and management training program	ONGOING
DECEMBER 30, 2019	Develop and implement onboarding package and process for new employees	ONGOING
MARCH 31, 2020	Services provided to family law clients are focused via an enhanced assessment process which takes into account the urgent needs of applicants. Expanded duty counsel services in family court.	ONGOING
MARCH 31, 2020	Reduce time required to appoint counsel	ONGOING
MARCH 31, 2020	Increase in the number of clients served/assisted in indigenous communities.	ONGOING

ONE ORGANIZATION  
STAFF PROFILES



**TEANNA BENSON**  
LEGAL ASSISTANT

Access for justice can be unattainable to many, especially our most vulnerable Albertans. Our work at Legal Aid Alberta is so important to this group of people, because without it, they would likely not be able to obtain their desired outcome, if any. Family law situations are very serious and important to the people involved, and navigating the court process without legal representation can be very confusing and overwhelming.

Having a skilled legal assistant as a part of the legal team is a great benefit to our clients in terms of the speed the file will be conducted, the accuracy and efficiency of the progress of the file and the cost of the final outcome.



**BROOKE BROWNING**  
LEGAL SERVICES OFFICER

It is my job to identify the needs of the clients as well as determine their eligibility for our services. In doing so, I play a role in connecting the most vulnerable Albertans with the support they need.

It is humbling to play a role in reducing some of the stress and anxiety that one experiences during those moments of vulnerability. The determination of my colleagues to provide the most effective and efficient services they can while maintaining compassion is inspiring.

The work Legal Aid Alberta does provides substantial and necessary services that help Albertans understand their legal rights and provides access to justice.



**JAN KOPECKY**  
LEGAL SERVICES OFFICER

I believe that our work at Legal Aid Alberta helps make the playing field equal - whether or not one has money does not determine whether or not one has counsel. There are many vulnerable people in Alberta that need help with the court system to ensure that their rights are protected and their voices are being heard.

Legal Aid Alberta is a type of 'broker' service for clients - finding them the best source of assistance. This is an important service because assisting people with the right 'tools' helps them to understand the process better - by understanding the process more clearly, better decisions are made, which usually results in better outcomes and happier lives.



**OLA OYELAMI**  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
BUSINESS PARTNER

The quality of Legal Aid Alberta staff (knowledge and skills) has a great bearing on the services we provide to Albertans, which ultimately impacts how we interact with the justice system.

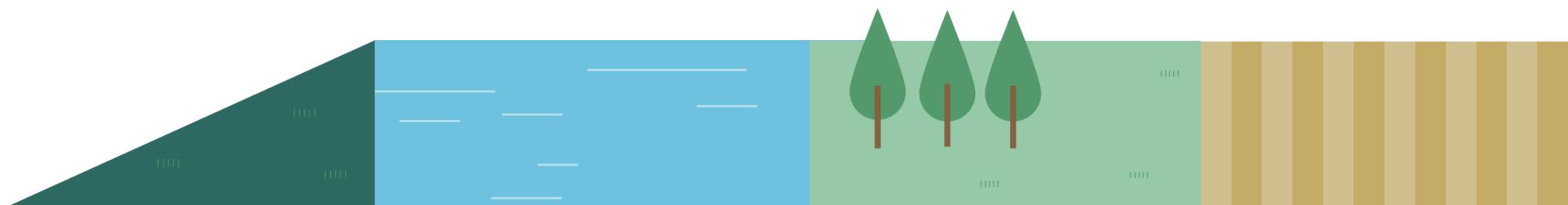
Service to people is my greatest inspiration; I derive immeasurable satisfaction daily from knowing that I am touching Albertans' lives in some little capacities. It is intrinsically rewarding and fulfilling being a member of the larger team of PROTECTORS that are serving the most vulnerable in our community, often when they are at the lowest point in their lives. I am also inspired by the opportunities to influence and assist with employees' development and engagement, and play a part in shaping strategic business decisions that directly impact the lives of Albertans.



**SALIF CISSE**  
INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYST

The feeling of being part of an organization that serves and protects Albertans is a very great feeling. While I am not a lawyer, the supporting role I have with their daily work makes me proud to be part of something so much more than myself.

Every time employees are able to use IT resources and tools to do the best possible work to assist Albertans with their justice needs, my job is accomplished and I feel rewarded knowing that.



## OVERVIEW

Overall, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) saw an increase in representation certificates issued in 2018-2019 of approximately 9% to 43,792 from 40,239. All practice areas saw an increase, except for Immigration Law, where certificates issued dropped by approximately 19% to 883 from 1,091.

In comparison, LAA saw a decrease in the total number of active certificates across the province in all areas except for Youth Criminal Law where a marginal increase occurred. Active Adult Criminal Law certificates decreased 15% to 44,214 certificates in 2018-2019 from 52,078 in the previous fiscal year. In the area of Family Law, certificates decreased by 18% in 2018-2019 to 13,402 from 16,270 in 2017-2018.

The decrease in active certificates can be attributed to a number of factors, particularly changes to LAA's internal operations and processes, including changes to certificate expiries, the implementation of the Family Law program, and changes to client intake and appointment.

The increase in the average cost of certificates for 2018-2019 compared to the previous fiscal year was marginal in comparison to three years ago. The large increase from 2016-2017 was attributed to factors like increased case complexity, inflation, and the 10% increase in the tariff fee in late 2015.

### AVERAGE COST OF CERTIFICATES

AREA OF LAW	2018-19	2017-2018	2016-2017
CHILD WELFARE	\$3,042	\$2,921	\$2,615
CIVIL	\$1,577	\$1,946	\$1,540
CRIMINAL ADULT	\$1,500	\$1,493	\$1,256
CRIMINAL YOUTH	\$1,055	\$981	\$818
FAMILY	\$3,186	\$2,855	\$2,408
IMMIGRATION	\$1,481	\$1,625	\$1,465
TOTAL	\$1,768	\$1,721	\$1,435

The Discretionary Coverage Program saw 373 certificates issued this past fiscal year, a decrease of 27% from the previous year. The program helps to limit time in court to hear formal court-ordered counsel applications, decreasing the time it takes for counsel to be appointed and reducing the burden on the courts and our staff.



**CLAUDETTE RATCLIFFE**  
JUSTICE NAVIGATOR

If Legal Aid did not exist, so many vulnerable Albertans, whose voices are the quietest, would not have access to justice. We ensure that clients are enabled to find their voice and access needed resources and feel supported, respected and valued during their journey.

I am inspired by the dedication of the team members around me, and in Legal Aid Alberta as a whole, who all have a shared goal of ensuring that clients receive timely, fair and excellent representation. I feel blessed to work for an organization that puts the client first.



**DENISE MINUE**  
LAWYER

Having worked within a variety of settings over the years, I value Legal Aid Alberta's commitment to excellence and continually striving for improvement. I also value the vast resources and supports available within the organization and Legal Aid Alberta's commitment to continuing education and professional growth. The work environment is positive and supportive and the opportunity to make a significant positive impact on individuals' lives is rewarding.

Individuals are equal before and under the law and it's important that Albertans have access to affordable legal representation. The services available allow individuals to make informed decisions and be actively involved in deciding the best way to move their matter forward. I feel our work makes a real difference in peoples' lives.

### DISCRETIONARY COVERAGE CERTIFICATES ISSUED

2019 373 2018 512 2017 646



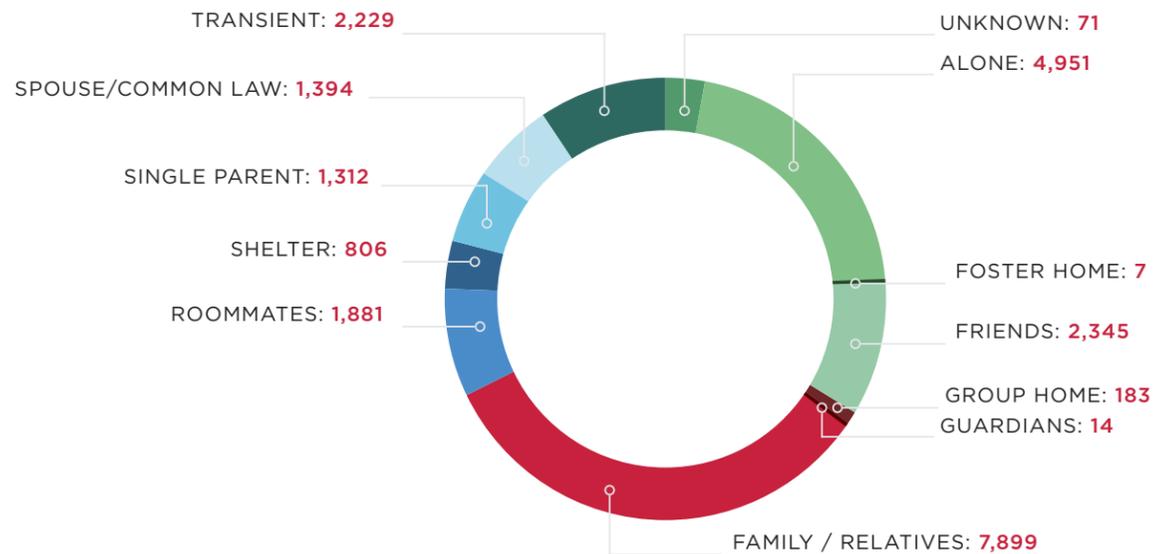
# ADULT CRIMINAL LAW

A significant part of Legal Aid Alberta's work in the justice system relates to adult criminal matters. We have over 1,300 staff and roster lawyers that are actively taking certificates for adult criminal matters across the province for Albertans that meet our financial requirements.

In 2018-2019, LAA issued 30,897 certificates for adult criminal matters, an increase of 11% from the previous fiscal year. Of the certificates issued, 76% were issued to male clients and 24% to female clients.

The average age of male Albertans with active certificates was approximately 35 years old, while females were 34 years old. More than 80% of clients identified their marital status as single, and 64% as living with either a roommate, family or alone.

### ADULT CRIMINAL CLIENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



**ANDREW HOLKO**  
ADULT CRIMINAL LAWYER

Quite often I am inspired by the simple things that occur on a daily basis and remind me as to why I chose this profession and to be associated with Legal Aid Alberta at this time in my career. It could be a knowing glance or thank you from a client, colleague or a judge who appreciates you, but usually it's a self-realization and feeling one gets when you know you have made a beneficial difference in seeing justice done.

Legal Aid has provided me with opportunities to apply my legal experiences to new initiatives, projects and positions within the organization. This is something I look forward to continue doing in the future. I enjoy working in a diverse organization with people who have different experiences and backgrounds. I am proud to be part of Legal Aid Alberta.

### CLIENTS WITH ACTIVE CRIMINAL CERTIFICATES



### CRIMINAL CLIENTS HOUSEHOLD SIZE



### MARITAL STATUS, CRIMINAL CLIENTS



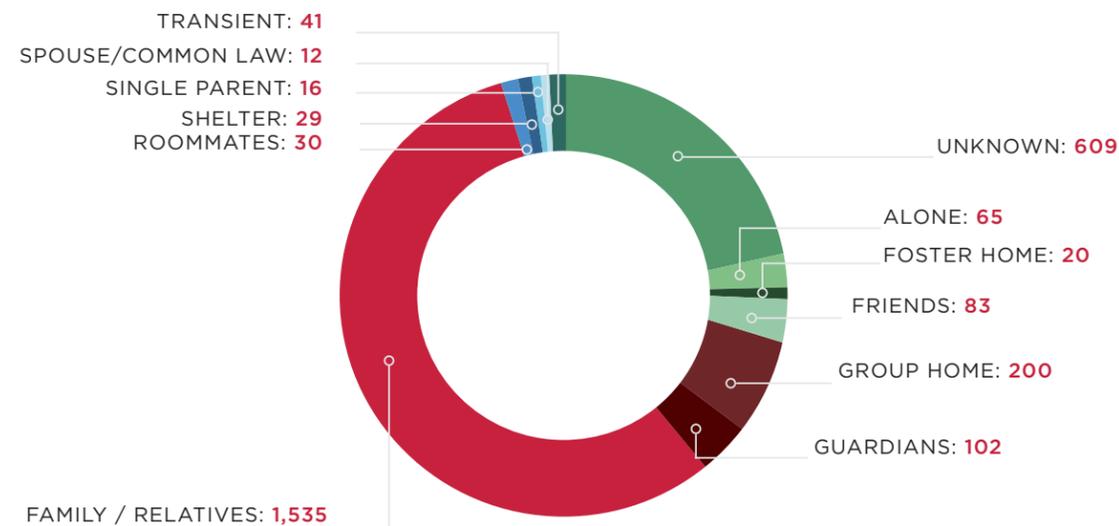
# YOUTH CRIMINAL LAW

As required under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, all Albertans ages 12 to 17 charged with a criminal offense are eligible to get a lawyer from Legal Aid Alberta (LAA). We have staff lawyers in Calgary and Edmonton that handle youth matters, and roster lawyers who cover youth matters across the province as needed.

In total, 3,201 certificates were issued in Youth Criminal Law, a small increase from 2017-2018, to clients with an average age of 17 years old. Clients were represented in over 70 communities in the province, with the majority being located in Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer.

Staff lawyers often work with justice navigators, who are LAA employees trained to support clients with the identification of options and strategies to legally related issues, in order to maximize the best possible outcome in court.

## YOUTH CRIMINAL LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



**SARAH LANCELEY**  
YOUTH LAWYER, TEAM LEAD

We balance the scales for those that would otherwise be at a disadvantage either because of life circumstances or because they could not afford a lawyer. As Duty Counsel, we help with court efficiency and we help individuals navigate the justice system. We advocate for those clients that cannot speak for themselves.

The justice system can have substantial outcomes and far reaching implications for our society as a whole. The services Legal Aid Alberta provides are necessary to ensure fairness in the justice system and in turn, that empowers our clients and leads to positive outcomes.

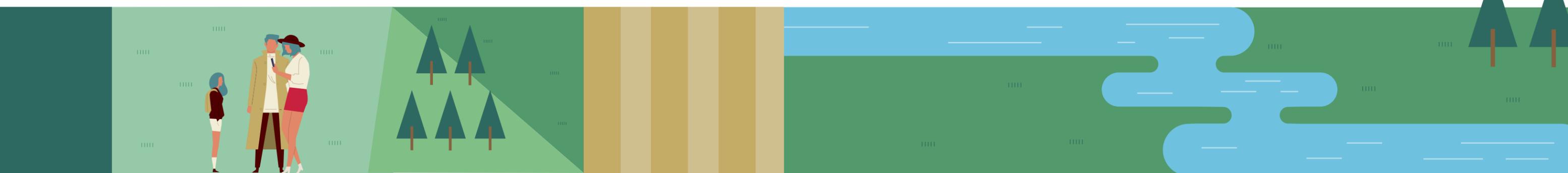
## YOUTH CLIENTS WITH ACTIVE CERTIFICATES



## ACTIVE CERTIFICATES



## AVERAGE AGE



# FAMILY LAW + CHILD WELFARE

Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) may provide a lawyer for a number of legal issues related to Family Law, including client protection and child welfare matters, representation of children, parental custody, access and parenting orders, and child and spousal support, to name a few legal issues faced by Albertans who accesses LAA services in 2018-2019.

In 2018-2019, a total of 7,001 certificates were issued in Family Law, with an average certificate cost of \$3,186, with the higher cost of cases predominately attributed to case complexity. The total certificates issued represented a 7% increase compared to the previous year. As well, average cost of certificates was higher than the previous year - an average of \$3,186 for 2018-2019 compared to \$2,855 in 2017-2018.

Albertans from 70 communities were represented by LAA in Family Law matters, with the majority in the major centres of Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge and Grande Prairie. Of the total of Family Law clients, 92% indicated they live in a household of up to four people, while the majority of certificates issued in Family Law were to female clients (71%) compared to male (29%).

Active certificates in the area of Child Welfare decreased slightly in 2018-2019 to 2,737 from 2,999 in the previous fiscal year. The majority of certificates were issued to female Albertans with an average age of 33 years old. A total of 71% of all certificates were issued to Albertans identifying as single.

Legal Aid Alberta will evaluate circumstances and legal issues to provide advice on the best course of action for resolution of the legal problem. Staff are trained to identify options and strategies for legal issues to help you get the best possible outcome.

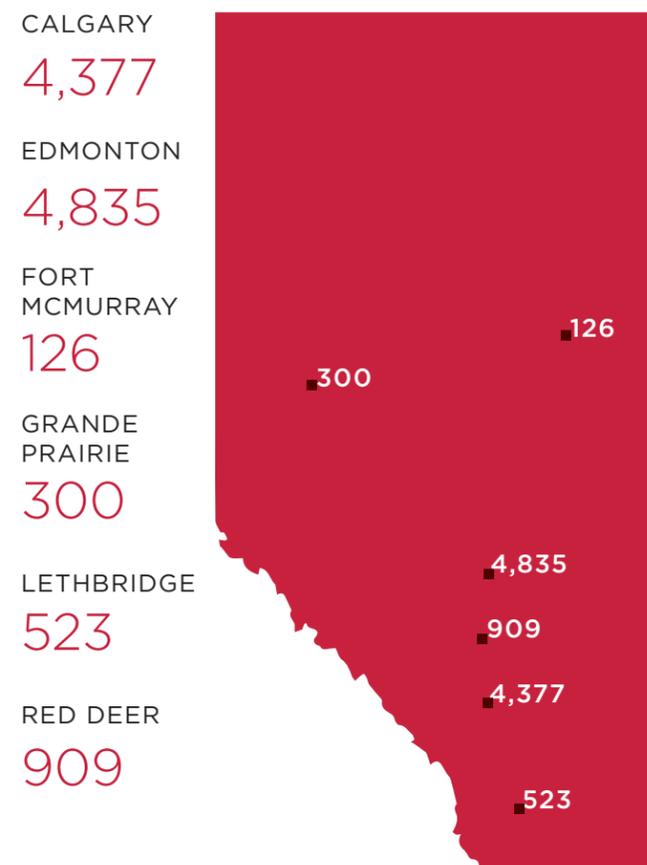


**JEFF KELLER**  
FAMILY LAWYER, TEAM LEAD

Without Legal Aid Alberta, the portion of our society who often gets ignored or lost in the cracks, can obtain the help they need to navigate through the confusing legal system and obtain the best solutions to help them move forward. Sometimes for the first time, clients are treated with dignity and respect and simply seen as a member of our community who just happens to need a hand.

I continue doing the work I do because it brings me great joy to see a young child, who was initially nervous and scared to meet with a lawyer, smile and appear so relieved when steps have been taken to help them.

## 2019 FAMILY LAW LOCATION TOTALS



## FAMILY LAW ACTIVE CERTIFICATES



## CHILD WELFARE ACTIVE CERTIFICATES



# IMMIGRATION LAW

In 2018-2019, 883 certificates were issued for immigration matters, with over 825 distinct clients represented by Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) in the areas of refugee claims, judicial reviews of refugee claims, detention reviews, and appeals among other areas. The number of certificates decreased in 2018-2019 by approximately 19% from 1,091 in 2017-2018, after certificates issued in 2017-2018 more than doubled from the previous fiscal year.

In total, LAA represented clients from over 100 countries, the majority coming from Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Turkey, and Uganda.

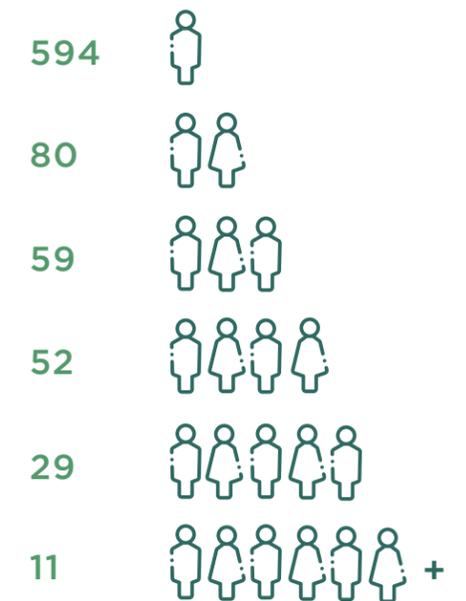
## IMMIGRATION, CERTIFICATES BY AREA OF SERVICE OFFERED

	2019	2018	2017
DETENTION HEARINGS	68	66	37
DFN REVIEWS	4	4	1
JUDICIAL REVIEW	13	13	6
MINISTERIAL APPEALS	7	1	
OTHER	65	321	488
REFUGEE APPEAL	42	55	41
REFUGEE CLAIM	1,048	1,015	312
REFUGEE APPEALS	24	28	4

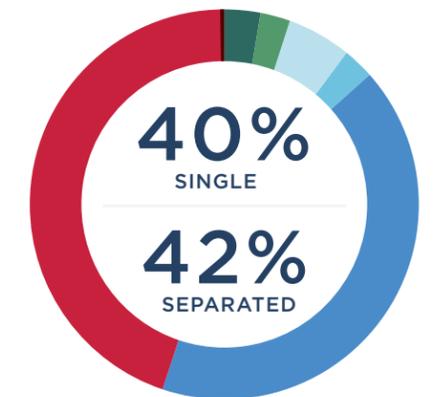
	2019	2018	2017
AFGHANISTAN	16	15	14
ALBANIA		5	2
ALGERIA	2		
ANGOLA	10	5	1
ARGENTINA	1		
AZERBAIJAN	11	20	1
BAHAMAS	4	7	
BANGLADESH	5	1	1
BARBADOS	1	2	1
BRAZIL		2	
BULGARIA	3	3	
BURUNDI	56	38	10
CAMEROON	88	55	24
CANADA	9	4	2
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	2	3	2
CHAD	8	1	2
CHILE	3	2	
CHINA	2		1
COLUMBIA	54	30	16
CONGO	37	25	24
COTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST)	2		
CUBA	1	1	3
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONG	9	10	3
DJIBOUTI	8	21	19
EGYPT	14	18	4
EL SALVADOR	26	23	6
ENGLAND	2	2	3
ERITREA	26	23	7
ETHIOPIA	79	64	26
FIJI	4	2	
FRANCE		1	1
GAMBIA	1	1	4
GEORGIA	1	3	2
GERMANY	8	4	1
GHANA	16	13	6
GUATEMALA	5	4	6
GUINEA	3	15	5
GUYANA	2	2	3
HAITI	23	37	4
HONDURAS	4	2	5
HUNGARY			1
INDIA	9	17	1
IRAN	7	2	3
IRAQ	10	8	6
ISREAL	4	2	1
ITALY	1	1	
JAMAICA	9	10	1
JORDAN	5	8	
KENYA	20	24	6
KOSOVO	1	2	
KUWAIT	4	4	

	2019	2018	2017
LEBANON	3	9	5
LIBERIA	4	11	4
LIBYA	5	10	4
MACEDONIA	2	4	
MALAWI	2		
MALI		1	2
MAURITANIA	1	4	8
MEXICO	20	21	
MONGOLIA	17	13	5
MOZAMBIQUE	1	1	
NAMIBIA	1	2	3
NETHERLANDS	1		
NICARAGUA	14		
NIGERIA	165	75	24
PAKISTAN	35	36	29
PARAGUAY	3		
PERU		1	
PHILIPPINES	11	11	7
POLAND	1	1	
PORTUGAL	2		
REPUBLIC OF KOREA		1	
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	1	4	3
RWANDA	32	18	2
SAINT LUCIA	2	1	2
SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	4	6	3
SAUDI ARABIA	17	11	3
SENEGAL	2	1	
SIERRA LEONE	2	5	5
SINGAPORE	1		2
SLOVAKIA		1	
SOMALIA	43	45	29
SOUTH AFRICA	6	2	
SOUTH SUDAN	10	20	6
SRI LANKA	2		1
SUDAN	29	28	10
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	8	13	4
TAJIKISTAN	4	2	
TOGO	4	2	
TUNISIA	3	10	
TURKEY	73	229	44
UGANDA	65	57	23
UKRAINE	1	3	1
UNDISCLOSED	1	217	353
UNITED ARAB EMIRITES	2		
UNITED KINGDOM		1	2
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA	4		
UNITED STATES	7	5	
UNKNOWN	4	22	45
VENEZUELA	15	16	2
YEMEN	5	9	4
ZAMBIA	2		
ZIMBABWE	20	32	26
GRAND TOTAL	1271	1503	889

## ACTIVE IMMIGRATION CLIENT HOUSEHOLD SIZE



## IMMIGRATION MARITAL STATUS



In Alberta, as in many other jurisdictions, court time is a very valuable and a very scarce resource. That is why at Legal Aid Alberta (LAA), numerous initiatives have been developed to aid in the fair resolution of matters, while greatly reducing the amount of court time required.

The services provided and supported by LAA realise a very significant savings in Alberta court time and help Albertans better understand and protect their legal rights. Below is an overview of a number of programs LAA offered or provided support to during the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

### MENTAL HEALTH COURT

The Edmonton Mental Health Court, which just celebrated its one-year anniversary, is designed to deal with matters where there is reason to believe a person's conflict with the law is due to a problem with mental health. The court is based on a therapeutic model, involving a more collaborative and restorative approach than the ones seen in the more conventional criminal court structure.

Based on a model used in other Canadian jurisdictions, Mental Health Court is a collaborative approach between the justice system and health care professionals to hear cases involving Albertans who may be facing mental health challenges and illnesses.

LAA currently dedicates three in-house Duty Counsel lawyers and three Justice Navigators to Mental Health Court, with one lawyer and one Justice Navigator assigned to each court sitting. On average, 300 files per month are referred to Mental Health Court. From April 4 to December 3, 2018, there were 3,412 files referred to Mental Health Court, covering 499 unique individuals.

3,412  
MENTAL HEALTH COURT FILES

499  
UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS

300  
FILES PER MONTH



**AMNA QURESHI**  
MENTAL HEALTH COURT LAWYER, TEAM LEAD

Working with Legal Aid Alberta is a dream job for me. It is an organization where I am surrounded by experts in so many fields and constantly challenged to learn, not just by the eye to an evolving legal landscape in our country but because of the collective drive toward creative and meaningful ways to assist our clients.

I believe that we at Legal Aid Alberta understand that access to justice is an issue that affects all Albertans but is especially relevant for the most vulnerable in our community. I am proud to work for an organization that advocates for those who are the most vulnerable, not just by representing them in court, but more importantly by empowering them with resources, skills and education so that everyone here is able to understand and protect their legal rights.

### DRUG TREATMENT COURT

The Edmonton Drug Treatment Court Service is an intensive one-year (minimum) court-supervised drug treatment program aimed at helping participants break the cycle of crime and addiction. The program sees participants completing drug treatment rather than being incarcerated. Successful graduates return to the community with access to secure housing, employment or schooling, as well as the tools to continue in their recovery. The success of the drug court program is evident through its graduates, who are at a much lower risk to re-offend.

Albertans who complete the program participate in a graduation ceremony in the courtroom where their success is celebrated with friends, family, mentors, former graduates and stakeholders who play a part in supporting them through their journey. Read more about the journeys of three Albertans who have benefited from Drug Treatment Court.



**JOAN BLAINE**  
DRUG TREATMENT COURT LAWYER

Observing the efforts and achievements of my colleagues and other professionals in the criminal justice system inspires me to contribute in any way I can to attain positive outcomes. My daily interactions with our clientele remind me that every life tells a story and that some - or many - are more tragic than others.

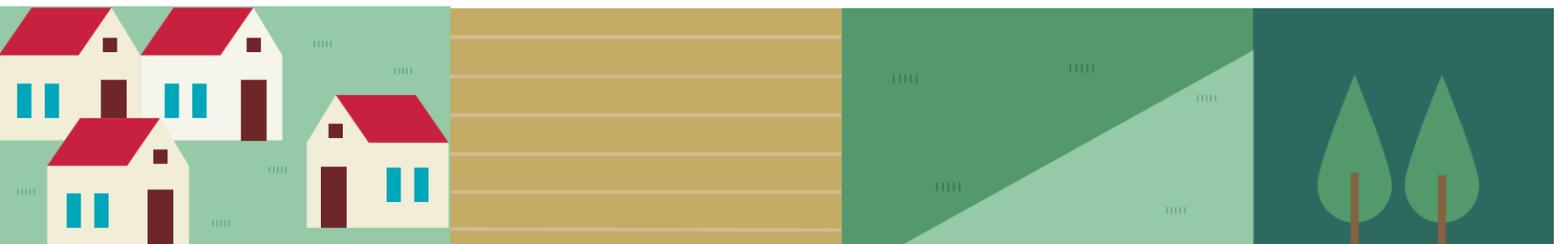
Recognition of a person's context and background is crucial for proper and effective representation in the Courtroom. I realise their worth and help them find their voice. All too often they haven't before been heard.



**MARK DAoust**  
LAWYER

Working for Legal Aid Alberta means I get to be part of trying to improve the criminal justice system. When the parts function well, the system benefits. I get to be one of the safeguards against the system breaking down. My work at Legal Aid Alberta allows disadvantaged members of society to have equal footing in the criminal justice system. This includes people with addictions and mental health issues.

I am inspired by meeting individuals who need my help to navigate through the court process. Without my help, these people can end up with results that are disproportionate to what they have done.



DRUG TREATMENT COURT TESTIMONIALS



### I'M CONNECTED TO MY CULTURE A LOT MORE

**NAME: TYSON**

AGE: 31

Tyson says drug court saved his life. Growing up on Saddle Creek First Nation, Tyson first tried alcohol at 8 years old, and was addicted by age 10. He grew up in a family where addiction was prevalent and trauma, death and loss were extensive. He dropped out of high school at age 16, and by 19 was addicted to crack and about to become a father. "I needed to support my family, so I went to get a job," he says, which also helped feed his addiction.

Tyson moved to Edmonton in 2011 looking for better opportunities, however, by 2014 he developed an addiction to meth. "I had a job, a house, raising kids, and then it all just fell apart." He ended up living on the streets. "I was ready to give up and I was telling myself I'd drink and do as much as I could." Tyson entered guilty pleas and faced 24 months in custody. "I reached rock bottom at the time, and my lawyer brought up (drug court) and said it would help me."

Since he entered the program, Tyson has completed 61 hours of volunteer work in the community, over 40 drug screens and attended over 100 recovery meetings. Tyson has attended residential treatment several times. He is actively involved in ongoing programs and psychological counseling. His goal is to be more involved with his culture, obtain custody of his two daughters and continue his education. "I'm making better decisions and getting my life back in order. My kids are back in my life and I want to go to school and become an addictions counselor."

An important thing for Tyson is the fact he reconnects to his Indigenous culture. While attending Poundmakers, he helped build a sweat lodge, and became a group advisor and mentor to others in the program. This is something he said wouldn't have been possible without drug court. "My life depends on it. With drug court, I'm on the right path. The staff (is) so supportive and I can't speak more highly of them. I'm optimistic about what I can do. There was none of that before."



### I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS MY LIFE

**NAME: ALANA**

AGE: 27

Alana was 12 when she started drinking alcohol and smoking pot. She had a loving and supportive family growing up, but when she experienced severe trauma at a young age, it eventually led her to self-medicate in order to escape. "It was never something I told my family," she says. By the time she was 16, she was using cocaine; crack by the age of 18; and by 21, she was using fentanyl and injecting heroin. "I never believed I had a problem," she says. "I just thought it was my life. I would call my parents every night at 10 p.m. to let them know I was alive. I was hopeless."

Alana entered her guilty pleas in September 2017, and was facing over two years in prison for her charges. When her Legal Aid Alberta lawyer told her about Drug Treatment Court, she agreed to do it. She observed drug court for three months while she was still using and doesn't really remember it. "Deep down I knew I wanted it, and it was life and death."

As she started the drug court program, she went through a period of detox followed by intensive treatment and ongoing programs. Alana started to see herself take on a new life and new purpose. Alana's journey through the drug court program has been a difficult one. She struggled immensely. She was required to attend residential treatment multiple times, day treatment programs, ongoing psychological counseling and a multitude of life skills programs. "I didn't think people were willing to help. I thought the whole world was against me. This program, it's like a family. They check in and they're always there for you."

Since entering the program almost two years ago, Alana has completed over 147 hours of volunteer work in the community with a variety of organizations, has attended over 300 recovery based meetings and has had over 135 clean drug screens. Alana is currently employed full time and graduated from the program in May 2019. "I'm grateful for what the program has done for me. It has changed my life."



### ALL I KNEW WAS CHAOS

**NAME: JEREMIE**

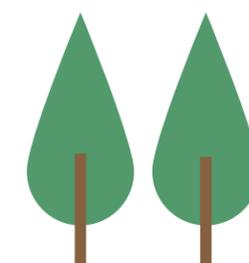
AGE: 24

Jeremie moved out on his own at the age of 14. He was in foster care at a young age, due to his parents' addictions issues. He then experienced experienced abuse at the hands of those who were supposed to take care of him. "I had trust and abandonment issues, issues with authority, after that," he says. He had begun selling drugs at the age of 12. "I felt there was a void, and I had been the reason my parents were addicted. Selling drugs made me feel like I had a purpose and value."

During that time, Jeremie experienced the loss of friends from drugs, had been stabbed and shot at, and overdosed multiple times. "How many times can you cheat death? I realised I was doing things to people that others did to my parents."

He managed to get sober on his own for three months, but relapsed on opioids before getting clean again by attending a treatment program. However, his past caught up with him when he was arrested on trafficking charges. Facing a year in jail, he worried about how his progress might be stopped. "I'm sure I would have relapsed in jail," he says. "If it wasn't for my lawyer telling me about drug court, I don't know what life would be like for me."

The people Jeremie has met in the program have helped him build a better life. "I have made bonds with people who I'll know the rest of my life. It's such an incredible family." He says the accountability helps drive him to be involved in the program and humbled him. "Drug court is helping me learn to live my life. It's a fantastic program."



## DUTY COUNSEL

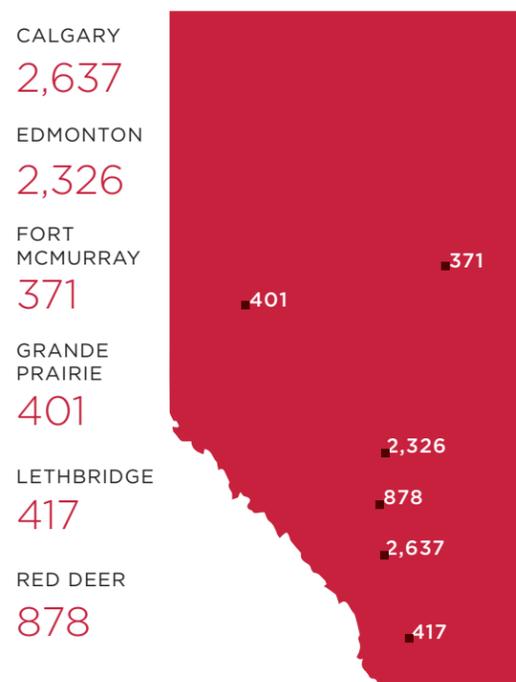
As a core element of our service, we provide lawyers in courtrooms across Alberta. Duty Counsel lawyers provide information, guidance, and legal advice prior to an individual's first court appearance in adult, family and youth matters. In many cases, Duty Counsel lawyers can advocate on behalf of the individual.

A total of 12,082 certificates were issued to lawyers in more than 70 communities across the province, assisting Albertans with their legal issues, regardless of their income. The certificates issued in 2018-2019 are a slight increase from the previous fiscal year when 11,490 certificates were issued.

A total of 8,341 Adult Criminal Law Duty Counsel certificates were issued, an increase of 16% from 2017-2018. Certificates issued for Family Law saw a decrease of 25% to 2,941 from 3,914; Child Welfare certificates also declined by 52% to 83 from 173 from the previous year.

Duty Counsel lawyers help ensure Albertans are served in a manner that provides the best outcome — while making the most efficient use of the court's time. Duty Counsel is a free service available to all Albertans, regardless of income.

### 2019 DUTY COUNSEL LOCATION TOTALS



### TOTAL CERTIFICATES ISSUED

12,082



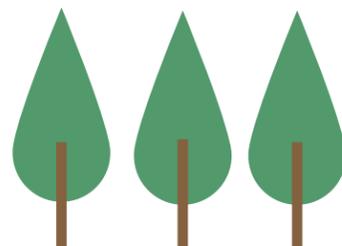
16%

INCREASE IN ADULT CRIMINAL LAW DUTY COUNSEL CERTIFICATES



**DANE BULLERWELL**  
APPELLATE LAWYER

Alberta is fortunate to have diligent judges, fair-minded prosecutors, and zealous defence lawyers. But despite everyone's best efforts, our criminal justice system sometimes makes mistakes. An appeal not only helps fix an error for the individual who has been wronged — it is one of the most tangible reflections of our society's commitment to the rule of law. My work, and the work of our appellate courts, helps reassure Albertans that our courts are getting it right



### ALBERTANS ASSISTED BY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE BAIL PROGRAM

26,710



**DAVE LLOYD**  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE BAIL LAWYER

Alberta is an excellent place to live because Albertans value the ideals of fairness and protecting each other. These ideals inspire me in my work at Legal Aid Alberta every day. We achieve these ideals by taking concrete, real-world action, which is what I do when I explain things to a client who doesn't understand our complex system, when I advise a client who feels lost, when I speak for a client who can't find a voice. For me, working for Legal Aid means helping to build and maintain an Alberta that I want to live in, an Alberta that I'm proud of.

### BRYDGES CALLS RECEIVED

23,122



4%

INCREASE IN CALLS RECEIVED FROM 2017-2108

## JUSTICE OF THE PEACE BAIL PROGRAM

The Justice of the Peace Bail Program launched across the province in three phases in 2018. After a pilot program in 2016 to determine the benefits of the program, the provincial government made funding available in April 2018 for LAA to begin hiring up to 23 Duty Counsel lawyers for the program.

Through long hours of hard work and collaboration between multiple stakeholders, the Calgary Police Services area launched in early May. This was followed by Alberta North and South in August, and the Edmonton Police Services area in mid-September.

The service is offered 16 hours a day, 7 days a week by a team of Duty Counsel lawyers based out of offices in Calgary and Edmonton. Using high-tech video and audio technology, lawyers to receive disclosure via a secure electronic system, and video conference into the courtroom with their clients.

Since the program fully launched in the midst of the fiscal year, current data collection doesn't provide a full snapshot conducive to the LAA Annual Report, and will be reported on in more detail in 2019-2020.

## BRYDGES DUTY COUNSEL

Brydges Duty Counsel is a telephone service offered to all Albertans free of charge. Any person who is detained or arrested in Alberta has the right to speak to a lawyer and receive advice.

This telephone service is available 24-7 to provide advice on the client's Charter rights and criminal law matters, and translation services are available in over 100 languages.

We continue to see steady demand for the Brydges Duty Counsel. In 2018-2019, there were 23,122 calls received from Albertans. This represents a 4% percent increase in calls received. The total number of calls received represents a mix of adult and youth criminal, with the majority being adults calling in for legal advice. LAA staff youth lawyers also take calls from youth 24-7.

## EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER PROGRAM

An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is a legal tool intended to protect Albertans experiencing family violence. It is a civil order granted under the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* giving victims of family violence a legal mechanism to protect themselves against an abuser.

EPOs can give victims exclusive possession rights to things like property, pets, vehicles, debit cards, etc. and require abusive family members to stop interacting with victims protected under the EPO.

In 2018-2019, a total of 8,171 assists were provided to Albertans in getting an EPO. This total includes assisting 2,957 children across the province, supporting predominately women escaping violence at home.

In total, 1,933 EPOs were issued, a slight decrease from the previous fiscal year, when 1,828 protection orders were issued.

Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) saw an increase in the number of people assisted in 2018-2019 as a result of greater focus on domestic violence throughout the judiciary and increased awareness of the program within the judiciary and general public.

While LAA doesn't have statistics for the entire province, an evaluation of the program in Calgary from 2015 to 2018 determined that 95% of clients felt that obtaining an EPO protected them from experiencing violence.

# 95%

CLIENTS WHO FELT THEY WERE PROTECTED FROM EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE BY GETTING A PROTECTION ORDER

EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS ISSUED

# 1,933

NUMBER OF ASSISTS TO ALBERTANS

# 8,171



**BERNADETTE LABRIE**  
LAWYER, TEAM LEAD

We often work with a very vulnerable clientele, whether that vulnerability springs from poverty, physical or mental illness, lack of knowledge about the legal system, unfamiliarity with the English language and/or Canadian culture, or other factors.

In doing my job, I believe that the justice system is able to function more efficiently and with the benefit of having all of the information needed to make sound decisions regardless of the client's income, social status, language or other personal factor. I believe that Legal Aid Alberta lawyers are also uniquely situated to bring issues and solutions into the public arena that might not receive as much attention if we were absent.

## INDIGENOUS SERVICES

To support LAA efforts relating to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Report Calls to Action, LAA is developing an Indigenous Strategy. The Indigenous Action Plan will support LAA to offer a more concentrated, knowledgeable, and 'made-in-Alberta' approach to Indigenous services in both rural and urban Alberta.

There are currently two Indigenous programs running within Legal Aid Alberta:

- 1 A Memorandum of Understanding with the Siksika First Nation, which offers culturally relevant Duty Counsel legal advice and support for Adult and Youth Criminal matters, as well as Family Court. Brief services are also provided to members of the Nation. This service has been successfully operating over the past 20 years.
- 2 A federally funded Metis Youth Advocacy Program which is currently in its first year of programming. The focus of this program is on developing an improved service delivery model for Metis youth and generating increased awareness of the need for measures that are more culturally appropriate and community based when it comes to the sentencing of Metis youth.



**GRACE AUGER**  
SIKSIKA NATION LAWYER

I believe in what I do and I get inspired by helping clients to feel confident and comfortable and not afraid. I enjoy my work in the courtroom and being able to speak for clients who are often too afraid to speak up for themselves.

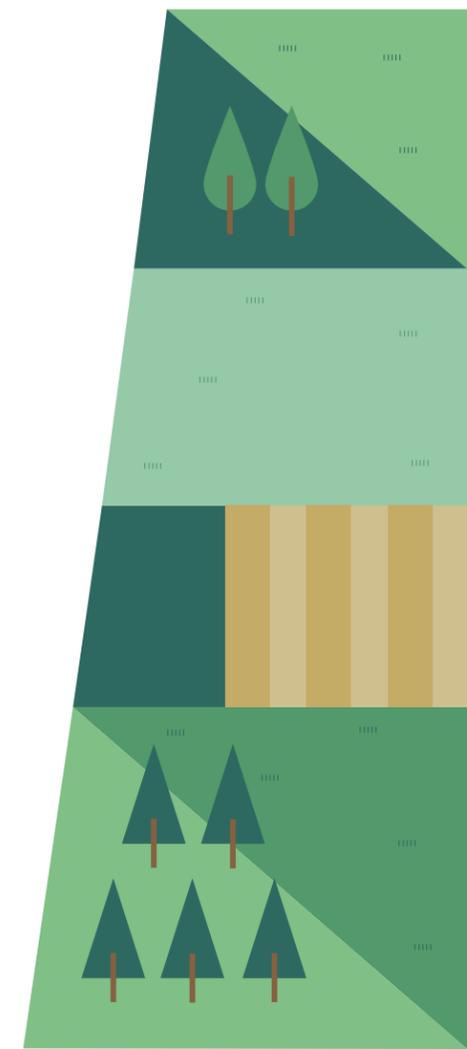
The work I do in the Siksika Nation office is very unique and assists many clients to provide them with access to legal information and offers approachable services, and also provides them with services which would not be available in the usual manner or would take more time to resolve or move forward. I appreciate being able to assist many people in conflict with the law and provide them with a fair process to protect their legal rights.



**DAVID ANDREWS**  
LAWYER

As both a Treaty Six and Metis Albertan, I am pleased to be able to work with an organization that is often in direct contact with Indigenous Albertans. Through doing good work and delivering quality legal services, I am ultimately providing a different example for people with a heritage similar to my own. Through my work with Legal Aid, I can promote equity and support fairness in a way that reflects my own values while protecting vulnerable people and frankly, allowing me to help people who need the help most.

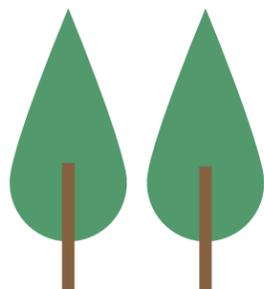
I truly believe we do good work and provide an essential service by ensuring fairness in the Justice System when people are detained and at their most vulnerable, regardless of who they are or where they come from in this province.



As a Centre of Excellence, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) is committed to professional development of its staff across the organization, sharing its expertise with the broader legal community. We are in a unique position to effectively improve the overall quality of the justice system in Alberta.

Over the course of the 2018-2019 fiscal year, LAA worked with community organizations, stakeholders, legal professionals and staff to provide educational and professional development opportunities that helped them better understand their role in the justice system and how they can better support Albertans who come into contact with the system.

Q1	FAMILY	Hosted Annual Advocates Event bringing together support workers from various agencies to discuss services, referral processes, issues facing the community, and common barriers to service.
	FAMILY	Training session for Roster and Staff lawyers on Representation of Children in High Conflict Parenting matters. A combined total of 56 staff and roster lawyers attended the training session.
	FAMILY	Planned and facilitated a week's worth of educational events during Indigenous Awareness week
	FAMILY	Presentation to attendees from shelters, immigrant services, counseling agencies, and government services regarding EPO issues. There were 50 participants in attendance.
	FAMILY	Presentations to Morinville RCMP and Victim Services, Resolution and Court Administration Services, and RCMP Central Alberta Domestic Violence Coordinator regarding the work LAA does with domestic violence
		Intergenerational Historic Trauma and its Impact on Aboriginal Clients in the Justice System training sessions were provided to roster and staff lawyers. A total of 110 roster and 10 staff lawyers attended the training sessions.
		Co-host of Siksika Law Day
Q2		Articling students started their placement with LAA.
		LAA participated in the University of Alberta Law School Career Day.
	FAMILY	Training session for roster and staff lawyers re: Representation of Children in High Conflict Parenting matters. 14 staff and 37 roster lawyers attended the training session.
	CRIMINAL	Participated in Criminal Justice Summit to discuss Jordan decision impacts and other criminal justice issues.
		De-escalation of Potentially Violent Situations training provided to staff lawyers.
Q2+ Q3		Multiple tours of the Edmonton courthouse with Alberta MLAs and key stakeholders to educate on the services that LAA provides.
Q3		Training session conducted by LAA family lawyer for LAA youth lawyers regarding Protection of Children Abusing Drugs (PChADs).
	FAMILY	Staff lawyers attended Diverse Voices Domestic Violence Conference.
	FAMILY	Staff lawyer participated in Calgary Police Services (CPS) Recruit Training exercises related to EPOs. The lawyer assisted CPS trainers with some issues with their training scenarios and made suggestions how to use their existing training framework to teach general skills that will assist the recruits when they become officers in the field.
	FAMILY	Staff lawyers presented regarding EPOs and the <i>Protection Against Family Violence Act</i> as part of the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Family Violence training to members of the RCMP, Edmonton Police Service, Calgary Police Service, Crown, Provincial Court and QB clerks, and RCAS.
Q4	CRIMINAL	LAA hosted Junior Counsel Criminal Law Conference. 52 roster lawyers and 3 articling students attended the conference, and 15 senior criminal lawyers (members of the Bar and judiciary) comprised the panel.
		De-escalation of Violence training provided to staff lawyers.



## STUDENTS

LAA provides multiple opportunities for post-secondary students to complete work placements as part of their education. Student opportunities throughout the 2018-19 fiscal year include:

- Articling Students – Three articling students began one year placements in early July 2018. Students complete a rotation through the various practice areas, including Family, Adult Criminal, Youth Criminal, and in-house Corporate.
- Criminology/Criminal Justice Students – Four students completed a three-month placement with Justice Navigators. Duties included writing reports for court, advocacy and mentorship to clients, and assisting clients with basic needs
- Student Mentorship
  - Canadian Bar Association (CBA) – One student was mentored by a LAA lawyer through the CBA Mentorship program. The student shadowed the lawyer in court and the lawyer answered general questions about the legal profession and their role.
  - University of Calgary Legal Clinic – One LAA lawyer provided on-going mentorship to student lawyers as they worked on files assigned to them through the Calgary Legal Clinic.
- Low Income Individuals – Five students completed a four-month rotation to provide legal support in the delivery of legal services to low income individuals and other marginalized groups. This placement program is administered in conjunction with the Edmonton Community Legal Centre, with the supervising lawyer being from LAA.
- Mental Health Court – Eleven students completed a practical portion of a Mental Health Course by attending Mental Health Court with a LAA lawyer.



APPENDIX A:  
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

Financial statements  
March 31, 2019



# Independent auditor's report

To the Board of Directors of  
**The Legal Aid Society of Alberta**

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Legal Aid Society of Alberta (the "Society"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2019, and statements of changes in net assets (liabilities), revenue and expenses and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Legal Aid Society of Alberta as at March 31, 2019, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organization.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information, and in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

We obtained the Annual Report prior to the date of this auditor's report. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact in this auditor's report. We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Responsibilities of management and those charged with governance for the financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Society's financial reporting process.



### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Society's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Society to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Edmonton, Canada  
May 31, 2019

*Ernst & Young LLP*

Chartered Professional Accountants



# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

## Statement of financial position

[in thousands of dollars]

As at March 31

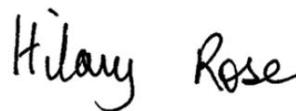
	2019	2018
	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash and restricted cash <i>[note 3]</i>	12,665	1,000
Accounts receivable	28	164
Goods and Services Tax receivable	937	646
Prepaid expenses	133	172
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>13,763</b>	<b>1,982</b>
Capital assets, net <i>[note 4]</i>	6,306	7,939
	<b>20,069</b>	<b>9,921</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Bank indebtedness <i>[note 5]</i>	—	1,194
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,782	2,787
Accrued vacation pay	1,158	1,047
Current portion of deferred lease inducements	408	414
Provision for unbilled services provided on outstanding certificates <i>[note 6]</i>	12,650	7,940
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>17,998</b>	<b>13,382</b>
Deferred contributions <i>[note 7]</i>	5,823	1,000
Deferred lease inducements	1,400	1,810
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>25,221</b>	<b>16,192</b>
Commitments and contingencies <i>[notes 6 and 8]</i>		
<b>Net assets (liabilities)</b>		
Internally funded capital assets	6,306	7,939
Unrestricted	(11,458)	(14,210)
<b>Net assets (liabilities)</b>	<b>(5,152)</b>	<b>(6,271)</b>
	<b>20,069</b>	<b>9,921</b>

See accompanying notes

On behalf of the Board of Directors:



Deanna Steblyk  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Legal Aid Alberta



Hilary Rose  
Director, Board of Directors  
Legal Aid Alberta

The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

**Statement of changes in net assets (liabilities)**

[in thousands of dollars]

Year ended March 31

	<b>2019</b>		
	<b>Internally funded capital assets</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance, beginning of the year</b>	7,939	(14,210)	(6,271)
Excess of revenue over expenses	—	1,119	1,119
Purchases of capital assets	879	(879)	—
Amortization of capital assets	(2,512)	2,512	—
<b>Balance, end of the year</b>	<b>6,306</b>	<b>(11,458)</b>	<b>(5,152)</b>

	<b>2018</b>		
	<b>Internally funded capital assets</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance, beginning of the year</b>	9,220	(14,282)	(5,062)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	—	(1,209)	(1,209)
Purchases of capital assets	1,182	(1,182)	—
Purchases of capital assets using restricted contributions	(336)	336	—
Amortization of capital assets	(2,098)	2,098	—
Retirement of capital assets	(29)	29	—
<b>Balance, end of the year</b>	<b>7,939</b>	<b>(14,210)</b>	<b>(6,271)</b>

See accompanying notes

# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

## Statement of revenue and expenses

[in thousands of dollars]

Year ended March 31

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Province of Alberta	104,100	88,429
Alberta Law Foundation grant	—	2,905
Recoveries from clients	4,708	3,832
Interest and other	1,073	479
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>109,881</b>	<b>95,645</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Roster		
Legal aid fees and disbursements		
Criminal adult	39,639	39,415
Family and civil	16,563	15,721
Duty counsel	4,502	2,656
Child welfare	3,016	2,284
Criminal youth	1,373	1,492
Immigration and refugee	450	434
	<b>65,543</b>	<b>62,002</b>
Increase in provision for unbilled services provided on outstanding certificates <i>[note 6]</i>	4,710	290
	<b>70,253</b>	<b>62,292</b>
Other program expenses <i>[note 9]</i>		
Legal representation - staff lawyers	23,544	21,020
Client services – intake and assessment	6,463	6,270
Management, general, and administration	8,502	7,272
	<b>38,509</b>	<b>34,562</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>108,762</b>	<b>96,854</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>1,119</b>	<b>(1,209)</b>

See accompanying notes

# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

## Statement of cash flows

[in thousands of dollars]

Year ended March 31

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	1,119	(1,209)
Items not involving cash		
Amortization of capital assets	2,512	2,098
Loss on disposal of capital assets	—	29
Amortization of leasehold inducements	(416)	(396)
Provision for unbilled services	4,710	290
Changes in non-cash operating working capital		
Accounts receivable	136	378
Goods and Services Tax receivable	(291)	(32)
Prepaid expenses	39	216
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	995	(1,603)
Accrued vacation pay	111	(33)
<b>Cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>8,915</b>	<b>(262)</b>
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Purchases of capital assets	(879)	(1,182)
Reduction in capital assets from restricted contributions	—	420
<b>Cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(879)</b>	<b>(762)</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Proceeds from lease inducements	—	12
Restricted contributions received for reserve	4,823	1,000
Restricted contributions received for capital assets	—	(420)
<b>Cash provided by financing activities</b>	<b>4,823</b>	<b>592</b>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash during the year</b>	<b>12,859</b>	<b>(432)</b>
Cash, beginning of year	(194)	238
<b>Cash (bank indebtedness), end of year</b>	<b>12,665</b>	<b>(194)</b>
<b>Cash (bank indebtedness) represented by:</b>		
Cash and restricted cash	12,665	1,000
Bank indebtedness	—	(1,194)
	<b>12,665</b>	<b>(194)</b>

See accompanying notes

# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

## Notes to financial statements

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

### 1. The organization

The Legal Aid Society of Alberta [the "Society"], registered as a society under the laws of the Province of Alberta, operates by agreement between the Society, the Law Society of Alberta and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General of the Province of Alberta to assist individuals of modest means in obtaining legal services in criminal and civil matters. The current governance agreement, which became effective on April 1, 2011 and expired on March 31, 2016, was initially extended to March 31, 2017 and subsequently extended to March 31, 2019. A new governance agreement becomes effective April 1, 2019 and expires on March 31, 2024. Under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act* (Canada), the Society is exempt from income tax.

### 2. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Part III of the *CPA Canada Handbook – Accounting*, which constitutes generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations in Canada, and includes the significant accounting policies described hereafter.

#### Revenue recognition

The Society's primary sources of funding are contributions from the Province of Alberta and the Alberta Law Foundation, recoveries from clients, and interest and other income.

The Society follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Contributions are recognized in the accounts when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when initially recorded in the accounts. Externally restricted contributions are deferred when initially recorded in the accounts and recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are recognized.

Externally restricted contributions for the acquisition of capital assets are recorded as deferred capital contributions and recognized as revenue as the related assets are amortized over their useful lives. Restricted contributions for the purchase of capital assets that will not be amortized are recognized as a direct increase in net assets.

Recoveries from client recipients of legal aid services cannot be reasonably estimated in advance due to the uncertainty of collection. Accordingly, these recoveries and contributions are recorded as revenue when received.

Interest and other income are recognized as revenue when earned.

#### Expense recognition

Legal aid fees and disbursements are eligible for payment in respect of services authorized on issued legal aid certificates. The Society records the estimated value of services provided, but not submitted for payment, on outstanding certificates in the period in which the services are provided. Legal expenses include amounts billed to the Society by lawyers and an estimate of amounts for work performed but not yet billed.

# The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

## Notes to financial statements

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

### Allocation of other program expenses

The expenses of each function include personnel and other expenses that are directly related to the function. General support and other expenses are not allocated, except for rent, which is allocated to functions by head count.

### Financial instruments

Financial instruments, including accounts receivable, goods and services tax rebate receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and accrued vacation pay, are initially recorded at their fair value and are subsequently measured at amortized cost, net of any provisions for impairment.

### Cash and restricted cash

Cash and restricted cash include cash and restricted cash related to deferred contributions.

### Capital assets

Purchased tangible and intangible assets are recorded at acquisition cost. Contributed tangible and intangible capital costs are recorded at fair value at the date of the contribution. Amortization is determined using the following annual rates and methods over the estimated useful lives of the assets as follows:

#### *Tangible assets*

Furniture	Straight-line over 7 years
Equipment	Straight-line over 7 years
Computer hardware	Straight-line over 4 years
Leasehold improvements	Straight-line over term of lease

#### *Intangible assets*

Computer software	Straight-line over 5 years
-------------------	----------------------------

Amortization for Furniture and Equipment has been revised to straight-line over 7 years as management believes this is a better estimate of their useful lives [2018 – 10% and 20% declining balance respectively]. The effect of the change in estimates is an increase in amortization expense of \$268 for the year ended March 31, 2019.

### Deferred lease inducements

Deferred lease inducements represent leasehold improvement allowances paid or payable by landlords. Such inducements are amortized on a straight-line basis over the remaining term of the lease and recorded as a reduction of rent expense.

The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

**Notes to financial statements**

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

**3. Cash and restricted cash**

Restricted cash relates to deferred contributions [note 7].

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Cash	6,842	—
Restricted cash	5,823	1,000
	<u>12,665</u>	<u>1,000</u>

**4. Capital assets**

	2019		2018	
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Cost	Accumulated amortization
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Tangible assets</b>				
Furniture	930	919	930	638
Equipment	455	200	275	229
Computer hardware	1,847	904	2,528	1,576
Leasehold improvements	2,784	1,110	6,934	4,934
	<u>6,016</u>	<u>3,133</u>	<u>10,667</u>	<u>7,377</u>
<b>Intangible assets</b>				
Computer software	6,918	3,495	9,340	4,691
	<u>12,934</u>	<u>6,628</u>	<u>20,007</u>	<u>12,068</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		<u>6,306</u>		<u>7,939</u>

Equipment with a cost of \$95 [2018 – nil] and leasehold improvements with a cost of \$59 [2018 – nil] were not available for use at the year-end and amortization has not yet commenced. During the year the Society removed the cost and accumulated amortization of fully amortized assets as follows: equipment \$71, computer hardware \$1,080, computer software \$2,590, and leasehold improvements \$4,209.

## The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

### Notes to financial statements

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

#### 5. Bank indebtedness

The Society had an overdraft facility [the "Facility"] with Alberta Treasury Branches for a maximum amount of \$2,500, bearing interest at 19.25% per annum. The Facility was available from March 26 to April 6, 2018, and was unsecured.

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Bank overdraft	—	416
Cheques issued in excess of funds on deposit	—	778
	<u>—</u>	<u>1,194</u>

#### 6. Provision for unbilled services provided on outstanding certificates

The provision for services provided by members of the private bar that have not been billed on outstanding certificates is estimated at year-end using a method that incorporates historical average costs and time frames to complete similar cases. Management believes this is a better estimate than median costs – which were used in 2018. The impact is to increase the liability recorded as provision for unbilled services on outstanding certificates and reduce the amount disclosed as future costs by the same amount. The total expense for the year ended March 31, 2019 related to the increase in provision for unbilled services provided on outstanding certificates was \$4,710 [2018 – \$290]. As at March 31, 2019, the Society had approximately 21,937 [2018 – 18,686] outstanding certificates issued to the private bar with an estimated liability of \$12,650 [2018 – \$7,940].

The estimated liability is subject to measurement uncertainty. Measurement uncertainty exists when there is a variance between the recognized amount and another reasonably possible amount. Due to the uncertainty involved in the estimation process, there will likely be a difference between the estimated and actual liability and the difference may be material.

In addition to the liability for unbilled services provided to March 31, 2019 on outstanding private bar certificates, the Society estimates the future costs to complete private bar and Society lawyer certificate files. As at March 31, 2019, there is an estimated \$27,130 [2018 – \$28,700] that will be incurred on approximately 25,194 [2018 – 22,240] outstanding certificates issued to the private bar and the Society's lawyers over and above both the billings paid to date and work performed but not yet billed. Due to the uncertainty in the estimation process, there will likely be a difference between the estimated and actual costs to complete outstanding certificates and the difference may be material.

#### 7. Deferred contributions

As part of the current governance agreement ending March 31, 2019, the Province of Alberta required that at least \$2,500 be deferred and held for non-forecasted or unbudgeted costs. The new governance agreement, effective April 1, 2019, requires that the Society defer and hold all amounts received from the Alberta Law Foundation, to a maximum amount to be agreed annually with the Province of Alberta [currently \$8.5 million], for non-forecasted or unbudgeted costs. As part of the new governance agreement negotiations the Society agreed to begin this practice in 2019.

The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

**Notes to financial statements**

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

	2019		2018	
	Province of Alberta	Alberta Law Foundation	Total	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance, beginning of the year</b>	1,000	—	1,000	—
Amounts received during the year	—	4,823	4,823	1,000
<b>Balance, end of the year</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>4,823</b>	<b>5,823</b>	<b>1,000</b>

**8. Commitments and contingencies**

**[a] Commitments**

The Society is committed under operating leases for office premises to make annual payments in the following amounts for the next five years and thereafter:

	\$
2020	2,392
2021	2,416
2022	2,420
2023	2,156
2024	1,691
Thereafter	25
	<u>11,100</u>

**[b] Contingencies**

During the ordinary course of business activities, the Society may be contingently liable for litigation and claims from clients, suppliers and former employees. Management believes that adequate provisions have been made in the accounts where required. Although it is not possible to estimate the extent of potential costs and losses, if any, management believes that the ultimate resolution of such contingencies will not have a material adverse effect on the financial position or results of operations of the Society.

## The Legal Aid Society of Alberta

### Notes to financial statements

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

#### 9. Other program expenses

Other program expenses reflected in the statement of revenue and expenses, classified by object, are as follows:

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Salaries and benefits	30,495	27,875
Amortization of capital assets	2,512	2,127
Occupancy	2,124	2,209
Outside services	1,000	741
Computer	903	361
Office operating and supplies	556	419
Travel	252	228
Legal disbursements	238	190
Communication	230	223
Goods and Services Tax not refundable	199	189
	<b>38,509</b>	<b>34,562</b>

Rent expense has been allocated to other program expenses as follows:

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Legal representation – staff lawyers	1,348	1,357
Client services - intake and assessment	430	499
Management, general, and administration	346	353
	<b>2,124</b>	<b>2,209</b>

#### 10. Related parties

Certain members of the Board of Directors provide certificate services to the Society. These legal services are provided in the regular course of business under the same tariff of fees as other lawyers. During the year, directors provided certificate services of \$476 [2018 – \$536] to the Society and their respective firms provided additional certificate services of \$749 [2018 – \$1,109].

#### 11. Legal Aid Foundation of Alberta

Legal Aid Foundation of Alberta [the “Foundation”] was incorporated on February 7, 2013 under the *Business Corporations Act* of Alberta. During the year ended March 31, 2019, the Foundation filed the required legal forms with the Corporate Registry for dissolution and also filed the tax forms necessary to revoke its charitable status. The Foundation is awaiting confirmation on both actions. As part of this process, assets of \$2 were distributed to registered charities in accordance with the Foundation bylaws. As at March 31, 2019, The Foundation had assets of nil [2018 – \$2].

**The Legal Aid Society of Alberta**

**Notes to financial statements**

[dollar amounts in thousands]

March 31, 2019

**12. Financial instruments**

**Credit risk**

The Society's exposure to credit risk, represented by the carrying amount of accounts receivable, results from the risk that one party to the financial instrument may cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Society monitors outstanding balances regularly and allows for uncollectible amounts when determined.

**Interest rate risk**

The Society is subject to interest rate risk with respect to its investments because the fair value will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. The risk is low given the high liquid nature of the instruments and their relatively short terms to maturity.

**Liquidity risk**

The Society is exposed to the risk that it will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with its financial liabilities.

**13. Comparative figures**

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the presentation adopted for the current year.



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