



GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

Framework and Summary

Updated: July 17, 2025

As a registered society incorporated under the provincial Societies Act, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) is an organization independent from government but is accountable to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General (Minister) and to the Law Society of Alberta (LSA).

The July 16, 2025 [Governance Agreement](#) (GA) replaces the previous agreement dated September 6, 2024, and builds on foundational principles established in earlier agreements from 2019 and 2024.

Mandate and Role

LAA is an independent organization that is accountable to the Minister and LSA for the operation of LAA and the Legal Aid Plan. It provides essential legal services for eligible Albertans to ensure access to justice. It advances the public interest by helping people resolve their legal problems through a cost-effective, innovative, and flexible program within an affordable funding envelope.

Governance

A board of directors is appointed by the LSA to supervise and direct the management of LAA in accordance with sound governance practices and establish required policies.

Provision of Legal Services

LAA has flexibility in delivering legal services through a hybrid staff/roster lawyer model in a cost-effective, innovative, and flexible manner.

The legal aid services are described in Appendix II of the [GA](#). Removal of a service requires at least 12 months written notice from the Minister, with exceptions, including some of the services funded pursuant to a federal/provincial cost sharing agreement.

LAA Accountabilities

Reporting

LAA to provide:

- An annual report and audited financial statements within 90 days of end of the fiscal year
- New legal practice standards
- Reasonably requested information by the LSA or the Minister
- Monthly reports including financial statements
- Agenda and minutes, including decisions, of any Board meetings to the Minister or LSA if requested

Oversight of legal services

LAA to review: legal counsel billings, strive to improve quality and efficiencies, and use ALF statutory funding for a contingent reserve to support the provision of legal services

Consultation

LAA to engage with appropriate stakeholders to gain input on certain operational changes.

Quality assurance

Ensure there are quality assurance and service delivery protocols and procedures to ensure certain outcomes are achieved.

Budget and business planning

- Prepare a one-year budget, with projections for years 2 and 3, for submission to the Minister by September 30th
- Prepare a three-year business plan (in practice, submitted with the budget).
- Prepare an enterprise risk management plan, a business continuity plan, a service delivery and case management framework, a quality assurance audit report, and evaluations of legal aid services.
- Provide any rule changes submitted for Minister approval with the exception of changes that are administrative in nature.

Tariff Review

LAA to review the tariff periodically to ensure it is fair and reasonable through consultation with stakeholders.

Transparency

Parties agree to principles of transparency, mutual respect and consultation, and will communicate prior to any public facing action that would reasonably result in the Minister having to respond publicly.

Collaboration

Meetings as needed, but at least annually. The three parties may meet to address any issues that affect provision of legal aid services, including changes in provincial policy, the state of the economy, justice reform, and LAA financial needs.

Funding Legal Aid

Based on the approved budget, the Minister shall pay Legal Aid Alberta four instalments within the first five business days of April, July, October and January of each fiscal year.

If the approved annual estimates of the Ministry are reduced, the Minister shall pay a reduced amount. The Minister and Legal Aid Alberta shall meet, and Legal Aid Alberta shall submit a revised budget and three-year business plan based on agreed projections of volumes, costs, and service schedule.

Indemnification

Board members acting in good faith are indemnified for unfunded liabilities for outstanding

certificates and the Minister would not commence an action for such payment.

Dispute Resolution

The parties remain committed to the principles of collaboration and open communication. In the event of a dispute, the parties shall provide written notice outlining the nature of the dispute and any proposed solutions, and shall make reasonable efforts to resolve the issue in good faith.

If the matter is not resolved through these efforts, the parties shall jointly appoint a mediator within 20 working days of the initial notice. Mediation shall be completed within 30 working days of the mediator's appointment. All communications made during the dispute resolution process shall be without prejudice.

Important Timelines

Term of agreement: July 16, 2025 to July 15, 2030

90 days after the end of fiscal year: Annual report including audited financial statements

September 30th of each year: Budget and business plan submitted to Minister for approval

At least every 2 years: **1.** Minister and LAA in collaboration review the tariff. **2.** Minister in consultation with clients and stakeholders review the Financial Eligibility Guidelines

At least once annually: All parties to meet to discuss any issues impacting legal aid services or relating to Legal Aid