

To: Legal Aid Ontario Panel Lawyers

Much has changed since March 2020 as everyone became more aware of the COVID19 virus outbreak and a state of emergency was declared in the province. At that time all LAO offices suspended all in person services, closed all offices and staff began working remotely.

LAO worked quickly to minimize the new challenges being faced by our clients who were wishing to access legal aid services, as well as the challenges faced by our panel lawyers and to support our staff who began providing services remotely.

To alleviate some of those issues LAO introduced some temporary COVID19 strategies. These have been posted on our website since that time and have been updated regularly. I would suggest that you review these links shown below:

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/covid-19-legal-aid-services/>

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/lawyers-legal-professionals/covid-19-ongoing-list-of-supports-for-lawyers/>

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/services/domestic-abuse/>

Your local district office continues to perform the same functions as before while staff are working remotely. Messages left are being returned by District Office staff.

LONDON DISTRICT OFFICE

Ph: 519-433-8179

Toll Free Ph: 1-877-449-4001

Fax: 519-433-6010

GenDOLondon@lao.on.ca

REMINDER: As the district offices are closed we would ask that all original signature documents such as Contribution Agreements, sec. 47 Directions etc. be forwarded to our Provincial Office at Legal Aid Ontario, 40 Dundas St. West, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2H1.

Our staff duty counsel offices continue to provide services by phone only. LAO is working to develop ways to continue to provide our services in conjunction with our justice partners as we look to the future. Messages left at our offices are being returned by the duty counsel staff.

LONDON CRIMINAL DUTY COUNSEL OFFICE

Ph: 519-660-5095 Fax: 519-675-1237

dcc.london@lao.on.ca

LONDON FAMILY DUTY COUNSEL OFFICE

Ph: 519-660-2308 Fax: 519-660-2415

GeneralEDC-London@lao.on.ca

LAO's contact centre continues to provide their services as before. They can be accessed by your clients and yourself (or your staff) as shown below:

CLIENT SERVICE CENTRE

Toll Free: 1-800-668-8258

Local: 416-979-1446

TTY: Use Bell's Relay Service

At 1-800-855-0511

LAWYER SERVICE CENTRE

Toll Free: 1-866-979-9934

Local: 416-979-9934

This message is meant to remind you that although we are working remotely and not seeing one another, we are still providing services, as well as to remind you to continue to regularly check the Legal Aid Ontario website for updates at www.legalaid.on.ca

Regards,

Kaitlyn McCabe

Director General – West District

NOTE: in July 2019 LAO introduced a district realignment that aligns with the OCJ Judiciary. The West District includes Windsor, Sarnia, Chatham, London, St. Thomas, Woodstock, Stratford, Guelph, Kitchener, Goderich, Owen Sound and Walkerton.