

Legal Services Society

This year, we hosted six workshops (in Prince George, Creston, Fernie, Fort Nelson, Duncan, and Atlin) and three conferences (Provincial Advocates Conference and Provincial Settlement Workers Conference in partnership with the Law Foundation, as well as a provincial training event in partnership with Ending Violence Association) with a total of 782 participants. We designed these workshops and conferences to reach out to intermediaries who pass on the information learned to their clients.

**Legal Aid Services Provided — 2014/15**

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Applications for legal representation	38,175	38,705	39,135
Referrals for legal representation	26,557	26,459	27,124
Referral rate	69.6%	68.4%	69.3%
Legal advice interactions <sup>1</sup>	131,934	133,128	135,561
Aboriginal Community Legal Worker interactions	1,247	1,128 <sup>2</sup>	1,051
Legal Information Outreach Worker interactions	8,199	8,216	8,935
PLEI publications distributed	154,450	221,097	199,479
Average LSS website visits/month	33,270	33,160	28,577
Average Family Law in BC website visits/month	86,460	65,648	32,570
Average Aboriginal website visits/month <sup>3</sup>	1,053	—	—
Total intermediaries reached through LSS workshops and conferences	782	846	408
Direct one-to-one client assists by Community Partners <sup>4</sup>	12,139	—	—

<sup>1</sup>Includes circuit counsel, duty counsel, Brydges Line, and Family LawLINE.

<sup>2</sup>This number has been restated from 745 to 1,125 due to a reporting error.

<sup>3</sup>Site launched in July 2014.

<sup>4</sup>This data was not collected prior to 2014/15.

## **Project Performance**

In 2014/15, LSS made significant progress on advancing major organizational projects along with its regular operational work.

Justice Innovation Transformation Initiatives (JITI) include five projects that pilot innovative criminal, family, and child protection legal aid services. In 2014/15, the Ministry of Justice began providing LSS with \$2 million annually for three years for this purpose. This initiative aligns with LSS goals 1 to 4 and TAP under integrity, service, cost consciousness, and accountability. These new projects provide British Columbians with low incomes with increased access to legal information and advice to help them resolve their legal problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. Four of the projects involve services for children and families. This focus reflects the board's priorities for more family legal aid services. In 2014/15, LSS launched the following JITI projects:

- Enhanced Family LawLINE to provide up to six hours of service with the same lawyer for a single legal issue, where previously people received three hours in total, with no continuity of service from the same lawyer;
- Expanded Family Duty Counsel at the Victoria Justice Access Centre (JAC) to provide people with early legal advice, in addition to supporting a variety of other services at the JAC;
- Meditation referral services to help people resolve family matters concerning property, debt, spousal support, or child-related issues without going to court;
- The Parents Legal Centre, located at the Vancouver Law Courts at Robson Square, to help parents or guardians reach collaborative resolutions to child-protection issues; and
- Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel services at the Port Coquitlam courthouse to help clients achieve early resolution of their criminal law matter by providing continuity of service from the same lawyer until the matter is resolved or a trial is scheduled.

In 2014/15, LSS continued developing our new Client Information System (CIS) set to launch in early 2015/16. CIS will replace our outdated business technology with a more efficient and cost-effective system that will support service delivery over the long term. This priority action aligns with LSS goal 3 and TAP under service and cost-consciousness. While CIS operates behind the scenes of our services, it drives our business processes and generates data to make strategic and operational decisions. In 2014/15, we made large strides towards the finish line of this multi-year project with a large allocation of staff time to achieve our deliverables.

The third major project in 2014/15 was work on MyLawBC, an interactive website that guides users to a resolution of their everyday legal issues. This project supports all of our goals and aligns with TAP under service and cost-consciousness. MyLawBC is an exciting and innovative project that involves an international partnership, as well as local collaborations with public legal education and information (PLEI) providers and key stakeholders. Guided pathways to legal information and resources lie at the heart of MyLawBC. The site also includes a negotiation platform where former partners can work to resolve family law issues through online dialogue and can develop an agreement together. LSS has made progress on developing both features and will continue working on them in 2015/16.

In addition to these three major projects, LSS conducted follow-up to the Workplace Environment Survey (WES) held in 2013/14 by exploring the results in focus groups and by beginning to develop a

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WES Action Plan for 2015/16. The goal of the action plan is to strengthen employee engagement, especially in light of the organizational project demands, which have placed a large strain on our internal operating capacity.

We also undertook work on the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) Services evaluation, designed to help LSS better understand whether current services are meeting the needs of clients with child protection matters, and to identify opportunities to improve the efficacy of LSS CFCSA services. This project is significant because it is the first time LSS's child protection services have been evaluated in this way. In 2014/15, we collected information from LSS clients and a wide range of key stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The evaluation will conclude in 2015/16 with a final report and recommendations.

Overall satisfaction with legal aid continues to be rated positively by the majority of clients according to our triennial client services survey. Qualifying for a lawyer correlates strongly to clients' overall satisfaction with their legal aid experience; 76% of those who were provided with a lawyer say they are satisfied with the experience, compared to 41% who applied but did not get a lawyer. Similarly, case outcome also impacts how clients feel about LSS. Almost three-quarters (72%) of those whose case was fully resolved or who were found not guilty in a criminal case say they are satisfied with LSS, versus 61% of those whose case was partially resolved and 51% of those clients whose case is unresolved or (if a criminal case) were found guilty. When it comes to the ease of reaching someone at legal aid and filling out the required forms (i.e., accessibility), evaluations from LSS clients are generally positive and reflective of 2011 results. The helpfulness of legal aid services continues to be rated highly by clients, especially by clients receiving representation services.

### ***Goals, Strategies, Measures, and Targets***

LSS has four goals guiding our strategic and operational decisions. We first introduced these goals in 2008/09 after a broad consultation process that involved discussions with the LSS board, staff, and community members on the priorities for legal aid renewal, the future direction of legal aid in BC, and the society's vision, mission, and values. Our goals are client-centred and outcome-focused, as we believe these are the best approaches for delivering high quality, effective, and cost-conscious services in accordance with our mandate. These goals align with the strategic direction of the Ministry of Justice as well as the Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP). The table on the following page illustrates this alignment.

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**LSS Goal Alignment**

LSS Goal	Ministry Strategic Goal Alignment	TAP Alignment
Goal 1: People with low incomes who have legal issues use LSS services.	Goal 1: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is fair; Goal 2: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia protects people.	Service; Respect; Integrity
Goal 2: People with low incomes get help with related legal issues so they can solve and prevent legal problems.	Goal 1: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is fair; Goal 2: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia protects people.	Service; Respect
Goal 3: LSS manages resources soundly.	Goal 3: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is sustainable.	Cost-consciousness; Appropriate Compensation; Integrity; Accountability
Goal 4: LSS provides leadership in justice innovation.	Goal 3: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia is sustainable. Goal 4: The justice and public safety sector in British Columbia has the public's confidence.	Cost-consciousness; Service

**Goal 1: People with low incomes who have legal issues use LSS services.**

LSS needs to ensure our services are accessible, address the needs of clients, are culturally appropriate, and that the public is aware that these services are available.

**Strategies**

- Make it easier for clients to access legal aid services.
- Partner with Aboriginal and other underserved communities to deliver services that support positive client outcomes.
- Support service partners and front-line workers to deliver effective and efficient services.

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**Performance Measure 1.1:** Percent of clients satisfied with the accessibility of LSS services

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of clients satisfied with the accessibility of LSS services <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	73%	69%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Client Services Survey. The 2013/14 survey was postponed to 2014/15 due to financial pressures. The next survey is scheduled for 2017/18.

**Performance Measure 1.2:** Percent of clients satisfied with the helpfulness of LSS services

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of clients satisfied with the helpfulness of LSS services <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	68%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Client Services Survey. The 2013/14 survey was postponed to 2014/15 due to financial pressures. The next survey is scheduled for 2017/18.

**Performance Measure 1.3:** Percent of clients satisfied overall with LSS services

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of clients satisfied overall with LSS services <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	66%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Client Services Survey. The 2013/14 survey was postponed to 2014/15 due to financial pressures. The next survey is scheduled for 2017/18.

Overall, client satisfaction with the accessibility and helpfulness of LSS services and support shows that we are providing clients with the services they need when and where they need them, fulfilling our mandate to help people solve their legal problems and to facilitate access to justice. Targets are set based on a reasonable expectation of improvement over results in baselines or the previous survey.

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**Goal 2: People with low incomes participate in solving and preventing legal issues.**

Clients who are actively involved in resolving their legal issues tend to find more positive and lasting solutions.

**Strategies**

- Support service partners to inform clients about legal aid services and their rights.
- Support front-line workers to inform clients about legal aid services and their rights.

**Performance Measure 2.1:** Percent of clients satisfied with LSS support to help them participate in resolving their legal issues

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of clients satisfied with LSS support to help them participate in resolving their legal issues <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	63%	66%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Client Services Survey. The 2013/14 survey was postponed to 2014/15 due to financial pressures. The next survey is scheduled for 2017/18.

**Performance Measure 2.2:** Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support to increase their ability to engage clients in solving their legal issues

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support to increase their ability to engage clients in solving their legal issues <sup>1</sup>	N/A	44%	N/A	N/A	N/A	46%	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2015/16.

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**Goal 3: People with low incomes get help with related legal issues so they can solve and prevent legal problems.**

Clients' legal problems often arise from or lead to other problems such as health, housing, and debt issues. By working with other service providers to help clients get support for these issues, LSS can improve client outcomes as well as reduce clients' use of justice, health, and social services over the long term.

**Strategies**

- Collaborate with service partners to assess and refer clients to services for their related legal issues.
- Support front-line workers to assess and refer clients to services for their related legal issues.

**Performance Measure 3.1:** Percent of clients satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them to address their related legal issues

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of clients satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them to address their related legal issues <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	52%	59%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Client Services Survey. The 2013/14 survey was postponed to 2014/15 due to financial pressures. The next survey is scheduled for 2017/18.



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**Performance Measure 3.2:** Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support for increasing their ability to help clients address related legal issues

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support for increasing their ability to help clients address related legal issue <sup>1</sup>	N/A	33%	N/A	N/A	N/A	35%	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2015/16.

**Performance Measure 3.3:** Percent of lawyers who support the integrated approach to providing legal aid service

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of lawyers who support the integrated approach to providing legal aid service <sup>1</sup>	N/A	67%	N/A	N/A	N/A	69%	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2015/16.

Measures 3.1 and 3.2 assess the effectiveness of the support provided by LSS to clients and lawyers to help clients address their legal issues. Measure 3.3 indicates the level of support from lawyers in advancing this goal. Targets are set based on a reasonable expectation of improvement over results in baselines or the previous survey.

**Goal 4: LSS manages resources soundly.**

LSS must manage resources effectively and efficiently to ensure we are achieving the optimum benefit for the society's clients within available funding.



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**Strategies**

- Foster employee engagement and organizational communication.
- Engage with and develop stronger relationships with legal aid lawyers.
- Improve information technology systems to respond to a changing environment.
- Improve the nimbleness and flexibility of LSS business processes to support capacity.

**Performance Measure 4.1:** Overall average employee engagement

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Overall average employee engagement <sup>1</sup>	67	N/A	69	N/A	N/A	N/A	70

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Workplace Environment Survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2016/17.

**Performance Measure 4.2:** Percent of lawyers satisfied with the overall support provided by LSS

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of lawyers satisfied with the overall support provided by LSS <sup>1</sup>	N/A	60%	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the triennial Tariff Lawyer Satisfaction Survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2015/16.

**Performance Measure 4.3:** Number of new lawyers taking more than three referrals in the first six months

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Number of new lawyers taking more than three referrals in the first six months <sup>1</sup>	86	64	73	60	53	60	60

<sup>1</sup> Data is from our client information system and financial database.

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**Performance Measure 4.4:** Budget-to-actual expenditure variance

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Budget-to-actual expenditure variance <sup>1</sup>	-1.10%	-1.73%	-2.26%	1.5%	-0.95%	1.5%	1.5%

<sup>1</sup> Data is from our client information system and financial database. To determine our budget-to-actual variance, we use the following calculation: Variance = 1 – (actual/budget).

**Performance Measure 4.5:** Percent of the public that supports the provision of legal aid services

Performance Measure	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of the public that supports the provision of legal aid services <sup>1</sup>	91%	95%	93%	>90%	94%	>90%	>90%

<sup>1</sup> Data is from our annual Public Opinion Poll.

High employee engagement in the public sector, tracked by measure 4.1, is linked to improved service for clients. Measures 4.2 and 4.3 qualitatively and quantitatively assess our progress on maintaining a sustainable supply of lawyers to provide services to clients across BC. Maintaining a low budget-to-actual expenditure variance, measure 4.4, shows that we are effectively managing expenditures. Sustained public support for legal aid, measure 4.5, reflects public confidence in our services and how well we manage the organization. Targets are set based on a reasonable expectation of improvement over results in baselines or the previous survey.

**Goal 5: LSS provides leadership in justice innovation.**

LSS believes that innovation is needed to bring about the fundamental justice system changes required for clients to achieve timely and lasting resolutions to their legal issues.

**Strategies**

- Promote outcomes-based justice innovation initiatives.
- Pilot evidence-based legal aid initiatives to improve access and outcomes.
- Communicate LSS’s strategic direction to stakeholders.