

## The Strategic Plan

### 2005 and Beyond

In January to March 2005, the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission held seven regional meetings with staff and stakeholders, using the Appreciative Inquiry process, to gain input into the planning for 2005 and beyond. This process will continue into the early part of 2005-2006.

### 2002-2005

The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission initiated a strategic planning process in 2001 to identify and address the Commission's needs and issues and creates a strategic framework and focus for the Commission. This resulted in the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's Strategic Plan in March 2002. It was reviewed and revised in March 2003 and in March 2004:

Goals	Objectives	Progress in 2002-03	Progress in 2003-04	Progress in 2004-05	Next Steps for 2005 & beyond
<b>Goal A: Work with Aboriginal People and Communities to shape legal services and set future directions.</b>	1. Legal Directors will set a timetable to meet at least once annually with Bands, Tribal Councils, and Metis organizations in their areas to discuss local legal aid issues.	Legal Directors drafted a letter to be sent to all Aboriginal organizations within each Area Offices boundaries. Most offices had sent letters to the organization. A few meetings took place during the fiscal year.	Legal Directors continued to send letters to Aboriginal organizations inviting discussions. More meetings took place in several areas of the province.  Issues were reported to the CEO.  Completed and transferred to operations.	Legal Directors continued to send letters to Aboriginal organizations inviting discussions. More meetings took place in several areas of the province.  Issues were reported to the CEO.	Objective is now operational.
	2. The CEO will review and make recommendations to the Commission regarding the findings of the Federal Project on Services to Aboriginal Peoples.	The Report recognized clients have a broader range of social needs, legal aid could develop closer relationships with other service providers, recognition of an inherent tension between the adversarial basis of the justice system and a collaborative approach, and the need for better co-ordination, contact and understanding.	Legal Directors considered these issues as they had ongoing discussions with Aboriginal organizations.  Completed and transferred to operations.	—	Objective is now operational.

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	3. A committee of the Commission, in consultation with staff, will outline a plan for initiating client focus groups with aboriginal women (in one each of the Remote, Urban and Rural areas) to seek their input on how to improve their access to legal aid services.	Combined with the work of the Client Satisfaction Committee of the Client Service Standards Implementation project, an external research firm was retained to conduct focus groups with Aboriginal women, focus groups with clients and personal interviews with clients.	The focus groups and personal interviews were conducted in May and June 2003, with a report delivered in fall 2003. The results are being reviewed and considered in future planning.  Completed and transferred to operations.	—	Objective is now operational.
	4. The CEO, in consultation with Saskatchewan Justice, will contribute to the development of the framework for evaluation of the Northern Cree Court.	Commission staff participated in the development of the evaluation framework and in the evaluation itself. The Commission received funding from Justice Canada for the first 20 months of the project to March 31, 2003.	Operational funding from the Saskatchewan government commenced April 1, 2003. Evaluation of the Legal Aid portion of the Cree Court project was completed effective March 2003.	The evaluation of Cree Court continues until 2005.	Objective is now operational.
	5. The Employment Equity Committee will devise a timetable to determine strategies to achieve the employment equity target of 12.2% aboriginal employees.	At March 2003, the Commission employed 14 employees (10%) who self-declared as Aboriginal.	At March 2004, the Commission employed 13 employees (9.1%) who self-declared as Aboriginal.	At December 2005, the Commission employed 16 employees (10.6%) who self-declared as Aboriginal.	Objective is operational.
	6. The Professional Development Committee will develop a schedule and curriculum for regular cross cultural and aboriginal issues training to be used both as part of a new staff orientation and as a component of an ongoing professional development program.	—	Included as a proposed activity in the Business Plan for Justice Canada's Investment Fund for 2004-05 and 2005-06.	Introductory session held at the September 2004 Staff Seminar. Five regional seminars held October 2004 to January 2005	Four regional seminars to be held April to May 2005. A follow-up seminar will be held at the Staff Seminar in September 2005.  Objective is operational.

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<b>Goal B: Enhance Capacity for and access to Family Law Services</b>	1. The CEO will report on the feasibility of assisting with the provision of family law services through a call (referral) centre.	—	—	As part of the Justice Canada Investment Fund project on Call Centre feasibility, some initial research had been completed.	Deferred to new plan 2005 & beyond
	2. A committee of Legal Directors will determine the degree to which access to family law services is hampered by such things as geography, conflicts, and the unavailability of the private bar and will report to the CEO.	Area offices were surveyed.	The report of the Client Satisfaction Research Project was reviewed in fall 2003.	Funding for a survey of family law clients who did not proceed with legal aid services, was approved by the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Legal Aid Endowment Fund Trust.	The survey will be conducted in May 2005. Results will be reviewed for future planning.
	3. The CEO will review services for child protection clients provided by legal aid providers in other jurisdictions and will report her findings to the Commission.	Other legal aid plans were surveyed for projects undertaken. Projects are underway in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.	Evaluations of projects in other provinces are underway, but not yet final.	The evaluations of the projects in other provinces were considered. Service options in Saskatchewan will be considered and developed if feasible.	Objective is operational.
	4. The number of maintenance orders attained by each Area Office will be increased.	The Enhanced Maintenance Order project commenced September 2002 and by year end 43 files had been opened with 18 of those closed. Overall, 768 monthly maintenance orders, with an annual value of almost \$3 million, were reached. This was 18 more than the previous year.	The Enhanced Maintenance Order project opened 160 files with 104 files closed. Overall, 811 monthly maintenance orders, with an annual value of more than \$3 million, were reached. This was 43 more than the previous year.	Overall, 706 monthly maintenance orders, with an annual value of more than \$2.7 million, were reached.	Objective is now operational.

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	5. The CEO and individual Legal Directors will work together to implement, where appropriate, family law specialization in Area Offices and will study the feasibility of creating stand alone family law offices.	—	—	—	To be considered with activities in B2 - access to family law.
<b>Goal C: Enhance our Areas of Service</b>	1. Review and update or rationalize Legal Aid guidelines.	—	—	—	Deferred to new plan 2005 & beyond
	2. Determine the cost implications of an enhancement in the range of services offered.	—	—	—	Deferred to new plan 2005 & beyond
	3. The CEO and the Legal Directors will identify options for flexible intake procedures to improve access to services.	—	—	Legal Directors began some discussions.	Further research to be done.
	4. Determine ways to re-engage the private bar in Legal Aid services.	—	A survey of the private bar is included as a proposed activity in the Business Plan for Justice Canada's Investment Fund for 2003-04.	The survey of private bar members was completed in 2004.	The results will be reviewed for future planning.

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	<p>5. Explore innovative ways of providing access to clients using 'new' technology.</p>	<p>Area Offices were surveyed. An inventory of the Commission's current technology was updated.</p>	<p>SaskTel was approached concerning toll-free access for residential restricted phone access clients. The Commission monitored pilot projects using videotaped proceedings. A feasibility study for video conferencing and implementing a web-site is included as proposed activities in the Business Plan for Justice Canada's Investment Fund for 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06.</p>	<p>A new web-site (<a href="http://www.legalaid.sk.ca">www.legalaid.sk.ca</a>) was developed and then launched in March 2005.</p> <p>The use of a telephone interpreter service, which provides interpreters in over 140 languages, began in 2005.</p> <p>Satellite telephones were purchased for the two northern offices, but have not been satisfactory for client services.</p> <p>The video conferencing feasibility project was discontinued.</p>	<p>Completed and operational.</p>
	<p>6. The Commission will implement the findings of the Client Service Standards Report.</p>	<p>With funding from the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan, a Project Manager commenced in September 2002. Six staff committees began work on the Intake Process, File Management, Computer Supported Business Processes, Accessibility, Client Satisfaction and Accountability (Performance Standards and Measures)</p>	<p>The Law Foundation approved a grant for the second year of the project. Committees continued work until fall 2003. Additional committees were planned to begin work on Competencies and Professional Development.</p> <p>The project was delayed in October 2003 pending further discussions with the Union.</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Deferred to 2005 &amp; beyond</p>

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<b>Goal D: Improve the Work Environment</b>	1. The CEO will seek the input of the Legal Directors regarding management development plans.	Issues and options were identified.	Work on this objective was linked to the proposed additional Client Service Standards committees that were planned to begin work on Competencies and Professional Development.  The project was delayed in October 2003 pending further discussions with the Union.	A project to develop an Employee Planning and Development process for out-of-scope employees began in 2005 following development of the Competencies for Legal Directors, Central Office Managers and Central Office Support Staff.	The Employee Planning and Development process for out-of-scope employees will be developed and employees trained in its use.
	2. The CEO and a Commission sub-committee will revise and improve the employee recognition program.	The previous recognition program was suspended and a more individualised approach will be developed and implemented by the CEO.	—	—	Completed and operational.
	3. The Professional Development Committee will revise (or develop if necessary) an orientation program for new employees.	An Orientation Manual for new employees was developed and distributed to each Area Office.	—	—	Completed and operational
	4. The Professional Development Committee will provide the CEO with an outline of a comprehensive Professional Development plan.	—	Work on this objective was linked to the proposed additional Client Service Standards committees that were planned to begin work on Competencies and Professional Development.  The project was delayed in October 2003 pending further discussions with the Union.	A project to develop an Employee Planning and Development process for out-of-scope employees began in 2005 following development of the Competencies for Legal Directors, Central Office Managers and Central Office Support Staff.	The Employee Planning and Development process for out-of-scope employees will be developed and employees trained in its use.

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	5. A committee of Legal Directors will identify issues regarding staff leaves to the CEO.	A report on types of leaves and issues was reviewed by Legal Directors. Further discussions will focus on recruitment, retention and retirement of staff.	—	—	Completed.
	6. A committee of Legal Directors and the CEO will investigate strategies to cut down on the need for staff travel.	—	—	—	Deferred until other issues resolved.
	7. The Commission may invite staff committees to report their project recommendations and results directly to the Commission.	The Chair and CEO will review this as necessary.	—	—	Completed and operational
	8. The CEO will make recommendations to the Commission regarding a compensation policy similar to that of other Saskatchewan Justice employees.	The in-scope employees Job Evaluation Plan was implemented in March 2002. The out-of-scope employees Job Evaluation Plan was implemented in fall 2002.	—	The final phased-in Pay Equity adjustment is April 1, 2005. A Temporary Salary Supplement was phased-in for Lawyers in 2005.	Completed and operational
	9. The CEO and a committee of Legal Directors will develop a strategy to deal with the recruitment, retention and retirement of staff.	—	The committee made recommendations which are under review.	Current strategies will be reviewed and reconsidered. The collective bargaining agreement was revised to allow for Temporary salary supplements.	Completed and operational

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<b>Goal E: Continue to provide and enhance criminal law services to young offenders and adults.</b>	1. Review and continue to consider the implications of the <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i> (YCJA), and participate on the YCJA Implementation Committee.	Many staff were sent to several training sessions on the new YCJA. A letter was sent to the Minister of Justice recommending the presumptive age in Saskatchewan be 16. However, it was set at 14. Staff participated in several discussions regarding the implementation of the new Act.	The implementation of the YCJA continues to be monitored in its first year of operation.  Completed and transferred to operations.	—	Completed and operational.
	2. Continue Legal Aid's participation in the development of the Youth Services Model.	The Prince Albert and Regina pilot projects are ongoing and staff have been involved in their operation.	—	—	Completed and operational.
	3. Develop an integrated Saskatchewan model for the delivery of legal services to all young offenders, which will utilize a 'youth team' approach wherever feasible.	—	—	Legal Directors discussed the issues and indicated that: - information for youth on entitlement to counsel should be provided (the new and revised brochures in English and French; as well as the new legal aid website should assist with this) - the workload implications of the <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i> be identified - factors relating to specialization in youth law need to be reviewed	Completed and transferred to operations
	4. Provide opportunities for staff to develop expertise in complex, serious criminal matters and encourage the sharing of that expertise.	—	—	Legal Directors discussed the issues and indicated that: - need to establish list of current and potential mentors from within legal aid - need to establish process for support	Further research to be done.

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	5. The CEO and Legal Directors will assess our methods of dealing with appeals.	—	—	Legal Directors discussed the issues and indicated that there is a need to research either designating one lawyer to do appeals or establishing an appeals office.	Further research to be done.
<b>Goal F: Enhance understanding of the roles and contributions of the legal aid system</b>	1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic communications strategy.	—	A Communications Policy was approved by the Commission in September 2003. The CEO developed a Communications Plan which has begun implementation.  Completed and transferred to operations.	A Communications Consultant was retained in 2004. The website <a href="http://www.legalaid.sk.ca">www.legalaid.sk.ca</a> was launched in March 2005.	Completed and operational.
	2. The CEO and a committee of Legal Directors will collect and review statistics currently kept by SLAC, by related governmental agencies, and by extra- provincial agencies and will determine what statistics we should gather and what procedures we should use to do so.	Staff reviewed current practices and surveyed Area Offices.	The committee made recommendations which are under review.	Legal Directors discussed the issues and as consensus was not reached, more discussion must occur.	Further research to be done.
	3. The CEO and a committee of the Commission will investigate and report to the Commission regarding sources of non-governmental funding (corporate sponsorship, public/private partnerships, partnering with other government agencies, etc.) for special projects.	—	—	Deferred due to receipt of Justice Canada's Investment Fund project dollars for 2003 to 2006	Deferred to new plan 2005 & beyond