

September 2016

31 – 2016

NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION

[PBOonline](#) is Legal Aid Manitoba's (LAM's) internet-based certificate management system, developed in-house by our Information Systems Department. In September 2013, we asked four private bar panel members to help us test the system by using PBOonline to receive their LAM certificates.

On April 1st, 2014, PBOonline became the sole method of certificate delivery to private bar panel members. It has greatly simplified and accelerated the process of legal aid certificate issuance, acceptance of certificates by counsel, and file/disbursement requests and authorizations.

Applying for Legal Aid Electronically

In December 2014, LAM began testing an electronic application for legal aid. Since September 2015, all applicants who attend LAM's Winnipeg Application Centre apply for legal aid using the electronic application.

Since December 2015, all applicants who attend LAM's Winnipeg Courts Application Centre (300E Law Courts Complex), Winnipeg Courts Interview Room (302A Law Courts Complex) and LAM's Regional Area Offices in Brandon, Dauphin, The Pas and Thompson, apply for legal aid using the electronic application.

The electronic application looks similar to the original paper form; however, applying for legal aid electronically is more efficient and cost-effective than using paper applications. The applicant's information on a paper application must be manually entered into our database by our staff. The electronic application eliminates this redundancy and improves processing time as the applicant's electronic application is automatically entered into LAM's database.

The electronic application also allows supporting documents (proof of income, court documents, informations, etc.) to be uploaded and submitted with it. The overall quality of applications is improved because the system prompts interviewers to enter and include the information required by LAM to efficiently assess eligibility for legal aid.

An applicant's signature can be entered by means of a touch screen or a signature pad (Topaz Systems, T-L460-HSB-R). If an applicant cannot sign (i.e. application taken over the telephone or at an institution with barriers that do not allow the applicant access to an electronic device for signature), the electronic application includes an attestation section that can be completed to replace the need to have the applicant physically sign.

This innovation has improved the quality of applications received by LAM, and has resulted in further operational efficiencies and cost savings at the Winnipeg and Regional Area Offices.

Effective September 12, 2016, the electronic application for legal aid was made available for use by private bar panel members through PBOonline (top left hand corner of your task list).



We encourage all private bar panel members to use the electronic application whenever possible. If you require assistance with the electronic application form, please contact pbhelpdesk@legalaid.mb.ca.

LAM acknowledges that because internet access is required to use the electronic application, there may be circumstances where it is impossible or impractical to do so. Attached please find a copy of the most recent version of [LAM's paper application](#); please use this version of the legal aid application if you are unable to access the electronic application.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU USE THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION OF THE [LEGAL AID APPLICATION](#) AS OLDER VERSIONS ARE OUTDATED AND MAY NO LONGER BE APPLICABLE/ACCEPTABLE.

Judicious Use of Technology

LAM continues to seek opportunities to reduce unnecessary expenses associated with printing and regular mail. We encourage our stakeholders and the profession to deliver correspondence/documents to us via [email](#) or [facsimile](#) as opposed to regular mail.

Since September 2015, all faxed documents (including paper applications for legal aid) received by the Administration Office, Winnipeg Area Office and our Regional Area Offices are automatically converted into an electronic PDF file. Hard copies of these electronic files (paper applications included) are not printed unless absolutely necessary. These electronic PDF files are uploaded into LAM's database, PBOonline, and/or delivered to a specific addressee(s) electronically.

This innovation, (developed in-house by our Information Systems Department) removes the redundancy of having a staff person scan hard copy documents (including applications for legal aid) into LAM's database, and has reduced costs associated with printing, copying, and the need to create and maintain physical files.

We thank all of our stakeholders for assisting LAM in meeting its mandate of delivering legal services to low income individuals and groups in a cost-effective and efficient manner. We request your continued assistance in helping us achieve our strategic objectives by delivering correspondence/documents to LAM via [email](#) or [facsimile](#) instead of regular mail whenever possible and, in particular, when a paper application for legal aid is submitted.

Paper applications for legal aid can be submitted via [email](#) or [facsimile](#) to the Area Office servicing your region.

PBOnline Statement of Accounts

On January 15, 2016, LAM began testing an upgrade to PBOnline that allows private bar panel members to interactively create and submit electronic statements of account to LAM for processing and payment.

This innovation (developed in-house by our Information Systems Department) has greatly simplified and accelerated the process of submitting, assessing, and paying private bar statements of account.

Given the positive initial test results, we are now encouraging all private bar panel members to begin submitting statements of account through PBOnline in advance of April 1st, 2017.

Effective April 1, 2017, LAM will require that all private bar statements of account be created and submitted electronically to LAM for processing and payment, through PBOnline.

WE URGE ALL PRIVATE BAR LAWYERS TO VIEW THE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO TUTORIAL REGARDING THE ABOVE-NOTED UPGRADE TO PBONLINE AT:

<http://www.legalaid.mb.ca/for-lawyers/pbonline>

FURTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED BY CONTACTING:

pbhelpdesk@legalaid.mb.ca

FOR ASSISTANCE SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO BILLING AND/OR TARIFF QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT

legalaccounts@legalaid.mb.ca

LEGAL AID REGULATION AMENDMENT

The Legal Aid Regulation, Manitoba Regulation 225/91, has been amended by [Regulation 128/2016](#).

Section 24 is amended by striking out "30 days" and substituting "14 days"