



September 2021

## Notice of the Profession 48 - 2021

### Financial Eligibility - Guideline Increase

All Legal Aid Plans across Canada have some form of official financial eligibility guideline or cut-offs indicating income beyond which applicants are not normally entitled to legal aid.

Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) is pleased to announce that on September 21, 2021, the Management Council of LAM approved an increase to LAM's financial eligibility guidelines as follows:

Family Size	Fully Eligible	Agreement to Pay
1	\$26,500	\$38,500
2	\$33,000	\$51,000
3	\$40,500	\$59,500
4	\$49,200	\$69,200
5	\$56,000	\$76,000
6	\$63,000	\$83,000
Greater than 6	\$70,000	\$90,000

The increased income thresholds will apply to legal aid applications dated on or after October 1, 2021 and match our full eligibility to the most recent Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) amounts in Canada. This increase in eligibility will increase access to Justice for many Manitobans who would otherwise have been required to pay for legal services.

### Changes to the Agreement to Pay Program (ATP)

In response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic impact of pandemic restrictions, in early 2020 LAM reduced the initial payment amounts for ATP clients and instituted a payment holiday (NTTP 44 - 20 ).

Effective in October 2021, clients currently in the ATP program will be asked to recommence their \$100.00 monthly contributions. Clients who are newly entering the program will once again be asked to make their initial payments of \$400.00 - \$700.00.

Clients will also be provided with the new full eligibility guidelines and an opportunity to request a financial review to determine if they are now eligible for legal aid assistance without payment.

### **Application Fee**

LAM took the additional step of waiving our \$25.00 application fee in response to the pandemic restrictions and in light of office closures and work from home efforts in 2020. Our offices have re-opened and LAM will begin asking clients to once again pay the \$25.00 application fee commencing October 1, 2021.