

March 23, 2020

Dear NSLA Clients, Applicants, Community Partners & Stakeholders:

RE: NOVA SCOTIA LEGAL AID SERVICES

As a result of enhanced directives from the Province of Nova Scotia and the state of emergency, Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA) Offices are now closed to the public. We are providing the information below to assist you with contacting our offices, or in referring Nova Scotians to our service.

- Although NSLA Offices are closed to the public, as an essential service, we will continue to help Nova Scotians who require our services.
- Although our physical offices are closed, staff are working remotely, and office main lines are operational. NSLA Offices can be reached by telephone, or email. A list of offices can be found at <https://www.nslegalaid.ca/legal-aid-offices/>
- Voicemail and email accounts will be regularly monitored.
- If a Legal Aid client has an upcoming court matter, they should contact their lawyer regarding their court date if they have not already heard from them.
- If an individual does not have a lawyer, NSLA Duty Counsel may be able to assist and the individual should call their local Legal Aid Office.
- Information regarding court dates in the various courts can be found on the NS Courts website at https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures
- If an individual does not have a lawyer and has a Provincial Court date in Halifax or Dartmouth, they can obtain further information and assistance by filling out the form on our website at <https://www.nslegalaid.ca/need-help-adjourning-a-halifax-or-dartmouth-provincial-court-date>
- If an individual has an appointment at a NSLA Office, they should call the office so other arrangements can be made. Appointments with NSLA may be held by telephone or video if possible.

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- Applicants for legal aid services can apply online at <https://www.nslegalaid.ca/online-application/>. Until April 6, 2020, NSLA Offices will only be processing applications for urgent matters. With an expected increase in the volume of online applications, we ask applicants to please be patient in waiting to hear from NSLA regarding their application.
- All outreach into communities by Legal Aid staff will be suspended until further notice.
- Online chats with a lawyer for family and social justice matters will continue. Family law chat are held every Tuesday from 3-5 pm and every Wednesday from 3-5 pm for income and housing issues. Click on the chat button on our website to start <https://www.nslegalaid.ca/>
- Telephone Duty Counsel will continue to be available 24/7 for individuals arrested or detained by police. Individuals who are in custody and wish to access this service should advise the detaining officer.
- NSLA Offices will not be staffed so please do not send anything via fax to our offices.
- Please be patient when contacting NSLA and expect delays in receiving a response to telephone calls, emails or an application. As a result of changes in service due to COVID-19, there will be a large increase in the volume of calls, emails and online applications which staff must handle.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation during this time.

Yours sincerely,



Megan Longley, QC
Executive Director