

Limited Scope Representation

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is limited scope representation?

Limited scope representation is when a lawyer assists or represents you with part, but not all, of your legal problem. The lawyer will be given a certificate from Legal Aid for a limited number of hours, and that will be the amount of time he or she will be given to assist you with a portion of your problem. You and the lawyer will enter into a written agreement that will set out the tasks that you will be responsible for and the tasks the lawyer will be responsible for.

2. When/How do I get a lawyer?

In order to receive limited scope representation, you must apply for it and be approved by Legal Aid. Apply early to avoid unnecessary delay. The lawyer who is appointed will have expertise in the area of law that you are dealing with and the lawyer will have received specialized training in helping people represent themselves.

3. How much time will I get?

Each client who is provided legal representation through Legal Aid will be given 7.5 hours with a lawyer. Within that time you and the lawyer will work on resolving the particular problem for which you received a certificate.

4. How does this benefit me? How will this help me?

There are different things that you can do to assist in your own legal representation. For example, you can gather and compile documentary information for your lawyer who will then draft the required court documents for you. Taking an active role in the process will lower the cost of your legal representation and provide you with more control over your legal problem.

5. Is my lawyer going to be in court?

At your first meeting, you and the lawyer will figure out whether or not it would be necessary for him or her to appear in court for you. If it is decided that the lawyer should appear in court, it will be to speak to the portion of your legal problem that you both agreed on. The lawyer will inform the court of the nature and boundaries of his or her limited scope representation.

If your limited scope representation does not include court appearances then you will be responsible for attending those court appearances. In court, Judges expect you will conduct yourself as would a lawyer and according to the Alberta Rules of Court. Please consult with the lawyer about what is expected of you, before the scheduled court appearance.

6. What happens if I need more time?

If your legal problem has not been completed within the time allotted, and more time is needed to finish it, talk to the lawyer about it. In order to receive additional time, Legal Aid must approve it; additional time will not be provided unless it is specifically requested by the lawyer.

7. Am I getting help with all my legal problems?

No. Limited scope representation is designed to provide you with legal assistance for only a portion of your legal problem. You and the lawyer can work together to develop a plan to help you resolve the aspect of your problem that you really need a lawyer's direction on.

8. How much will this cost me?

Each legal problem is allotted a certain number of hours for the lawyer to complete it. You will have to pay the Legal Aid rate for the hours that are used to complete your legal problem. The current hourly rate for limited scope representation is \$84/hour.

9. What type of help can I get?

Limited scope representation is not suitable for all types of legal problems. The service that you receive will depend on the type of legal problem you are dealing

with and your specific needs. The lawyer can provide limited scope representation in the following legal areas: guardianship, parenting/access, and child support.

10. What happens if the other side has a lawyer?

The other side having a lawyer does not mean you will need to have a full certificate rather than a limited scope certificate. You will still be able to deal with portions of your problem on your own. Where it is appropriate the limited scope lawyer will have to contact the other lawyer to let them know that he or she is assisting you. For example, if the lawyer is helping you with a short appearance in court, then they will have to let the other lawyer know the beginning and end date of his/her involvement with you.

11. Am I getting a real lawyer?

Even though the lawyer may only represent you in a limited fashion, he or she is a real lawyer. The lawyer who will be assigned to represent you will either be a staff lawyer from Legal Aid or a lawyer from the private bar. All lawyers practicing in Alberta are members of the Law Society of Alberta.

12. What will be expected of me?

It is important that you take responsibility for your legal problem and work with the lawyer you have to maximize the time you are given. It is important that you work hard to learn what you can to understand what legal solutions are available to you. Read the material you are given, complete tasks the lawyer assigns you in a timely fashion, and ask questions when you need something clarified. Remember, you will be held to the same standard as lawyers with respect to courtroom etiquette and document drafting.