



ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE LEGAL AID

AN ALLIANCE OF ♦ACLCO♦FOLA♦CLA♦FLA♦LSO ♦OBA♦RLA♦TAS♦MHLC

April 29, 2019

Attorney General of Ontario
The Honourable Caroline Mulroney
720 Bay Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9

Dear Attorney General,

As indicated in my previous letter, I am writing to you with respect to your government's decision to eliminate funding for refugee and immigration services provided through Legal Aid Ontario.

The Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid (ASLA) is alarmed at your termination of provincial and Law Foundation of Ontario funding for immigration and refugee law services. We ask that funding be restored and that the province seek to resolve its demands for greater federal funding without disrupting service.

Refugees are seeking protection from violations of basic human rights, which engages the Charter of Rights. If refugees are left without legal representation in the hearing and litigation process, they could face unjustified deportation and its consequences, including torture and death. Immigrants facing deportation often have substantial ties to Ontario, sometimes having lived most of their lives here. Refugees and immigrants facing potential detention and deportation urgently require representation.

Ontario should not refuse them critically needed services based on a dispute with the federal government.

The provision of legal services in determining status is also an integral part of the settlement process. When refugees and immigrants are allowed to settle here, they can become proud and productive contributors to Ontario's society and economy.

Accordingly, I am asking that you reconsider providing provincial funding and lift restricting Legal Aid Ontario to only relying on federal funds, which restricts Legal Aid Ontario from relying on both provincial and Law Foundation funds.

On an urgent basis, we ask that the Government of Ontario at least provide immediate funding to restore services while it seeks to resolve its dispute with the federal government over funding levels, and we assure you that the ASLA is actively asking the federal government to engage in a constructive and non-disruptive resolution of this dispute.

We look forward to discussing this at the meeting referred to in my previous letter and will be available for a meeting at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lenny Abramowicz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lenny Abramowicz
Chair
Association for Sustainable Legal Aid

cc Charles Harnick, Chair of Legal Aid Ontario

On behalf of our member organizations:
Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario
Federation of Ontario Law Associations
Criminal Lawyers Association
Family Lawyers Association
Law Society of Ontario
Ontario Bar Association
Refugee Lawyers Association
The Advocates' Society
Mental Health Legal Committee