

Important changes to family law services during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in changes to family court operations and services in Ontario.

Court appearances are now by teleconference or videoconference

In-person court appearances are now limited. You may appear in court by teleconference or videoconference. Contact the courthouse nearest you for more information. A list of courthouses is available on the Ministry of the Attorney General website at: https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses/



Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) services

Legal Aid Ontario offices are closed to in-person services. Services are provided by telephone only and their hours have been extended and are available Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

LAO has waived the eligibility requirements for a family law matter including issues involving a Children's Aid Society. You can receive up to 20 minutes of free legal advice by phone.

Contact Legal Aid at **1-800-668-8258** or visit <https://www.legalaid.on.ca/>



Law Society of Ontario - Emergency Family Law Referral Line in Covid-19

If you do not have a lawyer and you think that you have an urgent family court matter, the Law Society of Ontario (LSO) has an emergency family law referral line: **416-947-3310** or **1-800-268-7568**. You can receive up to 30 minutes of free legal advice from a Family Law lawyer.



Family Law Information Centres (FLIC) services

In-person services from Family Law Information Centres (FLIC) at family courts are currently unavailable. You can instead contact Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) by phone at **1-800-668-8258**. FLICs provide information on:

- divorce, separation and other family law issues
- court processes
- family dispute resolution
- community resources



Mandatory Information Program for family court cases

The Mandatory Information Program which must be attended by anyone involved in a family court case is no longer offered in-person and must be taken online. The program provides information on:

- separation and divorce and its effects on families
- the family court process
- family dispute resolution
- community resources and programs

Mediation Services for Family court cases

If you have a family court case, the free mediation services are now offered through Zoom. A list of mediators who are offering mediation services through Zoom is at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/family-mediation-service-providers>



Guide for people representing themselves in family court during COVID-19

The Ontario Court of Justice has provided "A guide for Self-Represented family litigants During COVID-19". It is available here: <https://www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/files/guide-srl-family-EN.pdf>



Disclaimer - This is general information only. If you need legal advice, you should contact a lawyer.