

Frequently Asked Questions on Legal Aid Manitoba

➤ Do I Qualify Financially for Legal Aid?

Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) provides legal help to people who are financially eligible and have cases with merit. This can include people who are working.

❖ Financial Guidelines

Legal Aid will look at your financial situation, including:

- Income
- Assets such as a home or RRSPs
- Debts
- Whether or not money will be available to pay legal fees at the end of the case

LAM use the guidelines below to decide if you are financially eligible for legal aid and whether or not you will receive legal aid for free. You may be required to pay for all of your legal aid services through the Agreement to Pay (ATP) program (see below).

These are guidelines only. LAM assesses each applicant individually.

Family Size	Gross Family Income
1	\$26,500
2	\$33,000
3	\$40,500
4	\$49,200
5	\$56,000
6	\$63,000
7+	\$70,000

➤ Financial Guidelines – Agreement to Pay (ATP) Program

You may qualify for the ATP program if you:

Have the ability to pay for all of your legal costs at legal aid rates. Agree to make interest-free, monthly payments to pay back LAM. These are guidelines only. LAM assesses each applicant individually.

❖ GUIDELINES

Family Size	Gross Family Income
1	\$38,500
2	\$51,000
3	\$59,500
4	\$69,200
5	\$76,000
6	\$83,000
7+	\$90,000

➤ Is legal aid available in my community?

Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) serves Manitobans in over 40 communities surrounding these major cities:

- Winnipeg
- Brandon
- Dauphin
- The Pas
- Thompson

➤ Are legal aid lawyers real lawyers?

Yes. Staff lawyers at LAM are professional lawyers in good standing with The Law Society of Manitoba. They have the same training and professional qualifications as private bar lawyers.

➤ **How long it takes to complete a legal aid application?**

You must complete your application in person at an Application Centre or other designated location such as a Courthouse. You will meet with an interviewer to review your documents and complete the application form. The process usually takes one hour. There may be a wait as LAM accepts applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

To save time, you can start the application process by filling in the legal aid application on your computer. You must complete it in person at one of our Application Centres or over the telephone within 30 days.

➤ **Can I get legal aid if I have a job?**

Yes. You may qualify for legal aid even if you have a job. Your financial situation will determine whether or not you receive legal aid for free. You may be required to pay for all of your legal costs at legal aid rates. Either way, legal aid is usually more affordable than hiring a private bar lawyer.

➤ **Who will be my lawyer?**

Some private bar lawyers accept legal aid clients. If you choose to work with a private bar lawyer, be sure to tell that lawyer at the start that you want to apply for legal aid.

If you do not choose a lawyer, LAM will choose one for you.

➤ **Can I change a lawyer?**

Once a lawyer has been appointed to represent you, LAM will consider allowing you to change lawyers only in exceptional circumstances, such as your lawyer is moving away.