

provincial legal aid programs vary considerably in terms of formalities, scope of coverage and methods of providing the legal services. Some are established by legislative enactment while others exist and operate by way of informal agreements between the provincial government and the law society. Some programs provide for fairly comprehensive coverage in both criminal and civil matters while others at present encompass only criminal offences. Again, some plans operate on a fee for services basis whereas others rely partially or mainly on the services of state salaried lawyers. In some provinces a mixed system is in operation.

In 1971 the federal government entered the field and concluded an agreement with the government of the Northwest Territories for sharing the costs of providing legal aid in both criminal and civil matters for persons in the Territories financially unable to retain the services of a lawyer. This comprehensive legal aid program was implemented on August 17, 1971. In the Yukon Territory the legal aid program is a service operated by the territorial bar with the government paying the fees to lawyers who act for legal aid clients charged with criminal offences.

In August 1972, the federal government announced that it was prepared to enter into agreements with the provincial governments under which federal funds would be paid to the provinces to assist them in developing or expanding their legal aid programs in matters related to criminal law. Agreements have since been concluded with all the provincial governments. Amendments to these agreements provided that the federal government would contribute the lesser of 75 cents per capita of the provincial population or 90% of the program expenditures toward the costs of providing lawyers' services to eligible persons subject to criminal charges or proceedings under federal laws. These federal-provincial agreements enable the provincial governments to determine the method or methods by which legal services will be provided to persons who qualify for assistance, but in cases where an individual is charged with a criminal offence carrying a penalty of mandatory life imprisonment that person is entitled to retain a lawyer of his or her own choice. The agreements also ensure that a person otherwise eligible to receive legal aid will not be disqualified as a recipient only because he or she is not a resident of the province in which the criminal proceedings take place.

## The federal Department of Justice

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The Department of Justice of the Government of Canada is divided, for administrative and functional purposes, into a number of service areas. Lawyers working for the department may be assigned to sections, or work on such matters as jurimetrics or the federal court reports in Headquarters Legal Services, or as legal advisers to other government departments or agencies as part of Departmental Legal Services, or to offices in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax as part of Regional Legal Services. The sections within Headquarters Legal Services, each headed by a director, are described below.

**Advisory and Research Services.** This section is responsible for research and preparing legal opinions requested by the Government of Canada and its various departments and agencies.

**Civil Law.** This section conducts litigation and provides legal advice for the government on all matters of a non-criminal nature arising in the province of Quebec.

**Civil Litigation.** The lawyers in this section are responsible for the conduct of the non-criminal litigation involving the Government of Canada originating in those provinces where the common law prevails. This litigation includes customs and excise tax matters, expropriation cases, disputes over contracts, accident claims, suits for defamation and claims for breach of copyright.