

# LEGISLATIVE RETURN



SUBMITTED BY: Hon. Laura Lang, Minister of Justice

1. On [date], [MLA]
  - asked the following question during the Oral Question Period at page(s) [page numbers] of *Hansard*
  - submitted the following written question – WQ No. #
  - gave notice of the following motion for the production of papers – MPP No. #

RE: [subject]

OR

2. This legislative return relates to a matter outstanding from discussion with Carmen Gustafson, Member for Riverdale North on December 16, 2025 related to:
  - Bill No. 200  Second Reading  Third Reading
  - Committee of the Whole: Vote 08 JusticeMotion No. # RE: I wonder if the minister could provide an update on legal aid programming, staffing, and funding levels at page(s) 164 of *Hansard*.

The response is as follows:

Thank you, MLA Gustafson for the thoughtful question on Legal Aid. I appreciated your informed and constructive questions during budget debate in the December 2025 sitting of the Legislative Assembly. I hope that together we can engage in constructive political debate that informs improvements to the territory's Justice system. I look forward to further discussions on the issues facing Yukoners and the Yukon's approaches to challenges facing the justice system.

As of March 2, 2026, Yukon Legal Services Society (YLSS) provides full legal aid services across the Yukon in areas of criminal, family and child protection law. The budget for the society in 2025-26 is \$3,475,142. This funds 11 staff lawyers and the Executive Director. Legal Aid is currently staffed with nine lawyers while two positions remain vacant. We are working with the society to address the recruitment challenges that underlie these capacity issues. YLSS has indicated that one of the main challenges is retaining experienced criminal law lawyers, as criminal law is about 70% of the YLSS' caseload. To meet the current demand for services, the YLSS has retained lawyers from the private bar to manage conflict files and overflow.

The YLSS has taken steps to recruit qualified candidates by posting on local and national job boards and has engaged a professional recruiter to search for an experienced criminal law lawyer. Recruitment efforts have been moderately successful with three lawyers hired since Fall 2025. The YLSS will apply to the Yukon Law Foundation for a grant to help fund the recruiter's fees.

In 2025, due to low staffing levels, the YLSS had to adjust the delivery of family law services to only cover mandated family law matters such as child protection, applications where no pre-existing orders exist, and cases where the health or safety of a child or parent is at risk. Duty counsel services to Family Chambers have been paused. We are working with the society address their in-house capacity so that these services may resume.

I hope this information explains the current state of the YLSS' resourcing and staffing. During debate of the Department of Justice's supplemental budget, you mentioned research you had reviewed on the effectiveness of compulsory treatment programs. If you would forward the references to this research, I would be happy to provide it to Department of Justice officials to consider as they recommend approaches to these issues in the Yukon.

March 26/26  
Date

J. Lang  
Signature