



## October 27 is Duty Counsel Day

Duty Counsel are lawyers paid by Legal Aid BC to give legal advice to people going to court without lawyers in criminal, family, child protection, and immigration law matters. They provide a crucial service, both to people needing help with legal issues and to Canadian courts, by explaining options and giving people legal advice early in court proceedings when they do not have other access to a lawyer.

Each Canadian province and territory has its own arrangement for Duty Counsel. In BC, Duty Counsel are lawyers in private practice who are retained by Legal Aid BC to serve as Duty Counsel.

Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie said, “Duty counsel play an integral role in the justice system. Duty counsel provide free advice about legal rights and court procedures to many people involved in Provincial Court family and criminal matters. This direct provision of services not only helps people understand the legal issues they face and how the court system works, it helps the Court provide a forum for justice that is accessible, fair, and efficient.”

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