

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1489)**

Head: (94) Legal Aid Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Support Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid (Thomas Edward KWONG)

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

My office has received from time to time requests for assistance from members of the public regarding legal aid services. Many help-seekers said that they were unsure about how to fill in the legal aid application forms and the documents to be submitted when applying for legal aid.

Of the Legal Aid Department's Estimate of \$1,673.7 million in 2021-22, has provisions been made for measures, such as recruitment of staff, to help answer enquiries from members of the public and assist them to fill in application forms. If yes, please provide the details, the manpower and expenditure involved. If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 52)

Reply:

The Legal Aid Department (LAD) attaches great importance to customer service. To facilitate members of the public to apply for legal aid, the Application and Processing Division provides an information and enquiry service through the Information and Application Services Unit (IASU).

Applicants who have queries or need help in completing the application forms are advised to approach our staff at the reception counters of IASU for assistance. Guidance notes on how to complete an application form and a checklist setting out the necessary accompanying documents are provided to the applicants along with the application form. Samples of completed application forms are available from our staff at the reception counter and may also be viewed or downloaded from LAD's website. In addition, leaflets regarding the eligibility criteria for legal aid are available at the counter and LAD's website.

Completed application forms and documents received by LAD are vetted by our staff. Where information/documents in support of an application is found missing, an interview will be arranged for the applicants so that they would be assisted in completing the application process and advised on the documents required to be submitted.

The expenditure on support and clerical services provided to the applicants is absorbed within the existing resource provisions of LAD.

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