



Ministry of the Attorney General
Court Services Division
Annual Report 2004/05

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Message from the
Deputy Attorney General

The Court Services Division is a large, operational Division within the Ministry of the Attorney General, with a broad and important mandate. The Division provides courts administrative services to the largest and busiest court system in Canada. At 183 court locations across the province, court staff provide public information and filing services at court counters, maintain court records, provide courtroom support for the judiciary, manage juries, deliver civil and family mediation programs and enforce court orders, among other services.

Quality customer service is a high priority for the Division, and this year the Division implemented an annual survey to assess client satisfaction with court counter services. The survey results consistently indicated high levels of client satisfaction across the province. Details on the survey are outlined in this report.

This success is attributable to the staff and management of the Division who are dedicated to serving the public by ensuring the high quality of Ontario's court services.

It is also founded on the strong collaborative working relationships that have developed between the Division

and the judiciary, the bar and many other participants in the justice system. The Ministry is committed to respecting and building on these relationships.

The following pages provide details on the Division's achievements over the past year and outline the Division's commitments for the future. As part of our focus on customer service, I invite comments on the initiatives outlined in this report from members of the public. Please feel free to contact the Ministry by email at attorneygeneral@jus.gov.on.ca.

I congratulate the Division on its performance and I look forward to continued support from the Court Services Division as the Ministry works to improve the justice system in Ontario.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Segal'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Murray Segal
Deputy Attorney General
April 2005



Forward *by the*
Assistant Deputy Attorney General

I am pleased to present our Annual Report on the operations of the Court Services Division for the fiscal year April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005. The Court Services Division is mandated to provide a modern and professional court service that supports accessible, fair, timely and effective justice services. The following pages outline some of the initiatives that the Division has undertaken this fiscal year to meet this mandate.

A central theme this year has been improving access to justice in Ontario. CSD introduced a fee waiver process in civil, small claims and family court matters, to ensure that low-income litigants are not denied access to justice due to their financial circumstances. Family Law Information Centres were expanded province-wide to improve access to information. The Division actively participated on Chief Justice McMurtry's Accessibility Committee and made investments to accommodate persons with disabilities. The use of video technology was expanded to ensure access to justice in remote communities, especially in Northern Ontario. Jury deliberation rooms were renovated to provide comfortable, ergonomic facilities for jury members as they perform their essential public service and new courthouse signage was installed to increase the visibility of court locations.

The Division also concentrated on identifying and modeling best practices and good management. The 2004 Divisional Learning Event provided an opportunity for court managers to share best practices for the criminal courts, and CSD began implementing new best

practices as part of the Criminal Case Management Protocol. The Division has been working in consultation with the judiciary and court users to develop measures by which to judge our performance, and has implemented our first annual customer satisfaction survey to help us better meet the needs of court users.

Effective communication was identified as essential to the Division, particularly given the large number of interdependent justice system stakeholders that interact with the courts on a daily basis. Our Divisional Management Committee met in October 2004 for a planning session on how to improve internal and external communications and this topic will be the focus of the next Divisional Learning Event planned for 2005.

Details of these, and many other Divisional initiatives, are outlined in this report. This report also includes our Five-Year Plan setting out our commitments for the future and detailed statistics on court activity for the past five years. I trust you will find this an informative overview of the various ways the Court Services Division is working to ensure high quality court services are provided to the public, the judiciary and our many stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra Paulseth". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Debra Paulseth
Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division
April 2005