

The Law Society of
Upper Canada

Barreau
du Haut-Canada



Retention of Women in Private Practice

Status Report | Spring 2012



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Background

In May 2008, Convocation approved nine recommendations to enhance the retention of women in the private practice of law.

These recommendations have resulted in approved initiatives designed to empower women to take charge of their careers and help maintain the viability of small law firms.

This status report outlines the progress made in implementing the nine Retention of Women in Private Practice recommendations and discusses the Career Coaching Program for women lawyers, an additional initiative adopted by the Law Society to retain women in private practice.

The recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1

The Justicia Project

That the Law Society implement a three-year pilot project (the “Justicia Project”) for firms of more than 25 lawyers and the two largest firms in each region, in which firms commit to adopting programs for the retention and advancement of women.

Recommendation 2

Direct Support

That the Law Society, in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate, provide direct support to women through programs such as a leadership and professional development institute and online resources. This recommendation includes the implementation of a change of status survey and the establishment of a Women’s Leadership and Professional Development Institute.

Recommendation 3

Contract Lawyers’ Registry

That the Law Society develop a five-year pilot project to promote and support contract lawyers to address the challenges women face in finding available and competent lawyers to maintain their practices during leaves of absence.

Recommendation 4**Parental Leave Assistance Program**

That the Law Society implement a three-year pilot Parental Leave Assistance Program, effective in 2009, as follows:

1. provide benefits to lawyers in firms of five lawyers or fewer, including sole practitioners, who have no access to other maternity/parental/adoption financial benefit programs under public or private plans;
2. provide a fixed sum of \$3,000 a month for three months (maximum \$9,000 per leave per family unit) to cover, among other things, expenses associated with maintaining their practice during a maternity, parental or adoption leave.

Recommendation 5**Resources for Women in Sole Practices and Small Firms**

That the Law Society provide access, in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate, to resources for women in sole practices and small firms through programs such as online resources and practice management and career development advice.

Recommendation 6**Beginning at Law School**

That the Law Society work with law schools to provide access to information and education opportunities about the practice of law, the business of law, types of practices, practising in diverse work settings and available resources.

Recommendation 7**Creation of Advisory Group**

That the Law Society create an advisory group of women lawyers from Aboriginal, Francophone and/or equality-seeking communities to assist with the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report.

Recommendation 8**Networking**

That the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee facilitate the development of networking strategies focused on the needs of women from Aboriginal, Francophone and/or equality-seeking communities in firms of all sizes.

Recommendation 9**Evaluation of programs**

That, after a period of three years of implementation of the programs, and after a period of five years of implementation of the Contract Lawyers' Registry, the Law Society assess the effectiveness of each program and identify further strategies for the retention and advancement of women in private practice (not discussed in this report).

The Justicia Project

That the Law Society implement a three-year pilot project (the “Justicia Project”) for firms of more than 25 lawyers and the two largest firms in each region, in which firms commit to adopting programs for the retention and advancement of women.

This innovative project — the first of its kind in Canada — was launched on November 17, 2008 and Justicia now has **58 participating firms**, including one large out-of-province firm. For information about participating law firms and the project, please consult the Law Society website at: www.lsuc.on.ca/with.aspx?id=635.

The firm Templeman Menninga LLP, located in Belleville, Kingston, Brockville and Whitby, joined the project in the fall of 2011 and the firm Scarfone Hawkins LLP, of Hamilton, joined in the winter of 2012.

Participating firms have been very engaged in the project through their firm representatives and Managing Partners. Most Managing Partners attended the launch meeting and reception, and the Managing Partners’ Summits held across the province. The firms are divided into the following three groups, based on their size and location:

- Outside of Toronto and Ottawa: co-chairs Treasurer Thomas Conway and lawyer Brad Smith
- Between 25 and 100 lawyers: co-chairs Bencher Linda Rothstein and lawyer Megan Shortreed
- 100 and more lawyers: co-chairs Past Treasurer Laurie Pawlitza and lawyer Kirby Chown.

The groups have been meeting regularly to discuss the project and develop valuable resources for participating law firms.

The Law Society surveys participating law firms to identify and establish benchmarks of policies and practices based on firm size.

Reports of the findings are available to participating firms and have been useful in the development of their own resources.

Participating firms have committed to developing processes to compile and maintain their own gender data, and most firms are now collecting and maintaining such data. Although firms do not have to report the results of the gender data collection to the Law Society or publicly, firms find this information useful in tracking their own progress and developing their own programs.

To work effectively, firm representatives have created a number of working groups to develop resources in the core areas in which Justicia firms have committed to implement policies and programs (written policies to address parental leaves, tracking gender demographic data, flexible work arrangements, career advancement into partnership, business development initiatives and leadership skills development for women). The following working groups have been collaborating with law firms to develop best practices and guides for participating firms:

- The Compensation Working Group developed options relating to: compensation during and following leaves of absences; bonuses; reviews and billings; and the impact of leaves on admission to partnership. The working group also reviewed the maternity and parental leave guides and provided advice on format and content.
- The Firm Checklist Working Group developed *Preparing for a Lawyer’s Pregnancy or Parental Leave – Guide for Law Firms*.



- The Ramp Down Ramp Up Working Group developed options to assist lawyers who leave and return to private practice. The options were included in the guides on pregnancy and parental leaves. The Working Group also developed the *New Parent Tool Kit Template*.
- The Flexible Work Arrangements Working Groups (one working group for small and medium firms and one for large firms) developed best practices and implementation models for flexible work arrangements within firms. The Groups also worked with Deloitte to develop a template to calculate the profitability of flexible work arrangements.
- The Gender Data Collection Working Group developed best practices to maintain quantitative and qualitative information about lawyers in law firms.
- The Career Advancement Working Group developed two guides, for lawyers and firms, to assist women lawyers in progressing from junior associates to partners.
- Two new working groups have been created: the Business Development Working Group and the Leadership Working Group. The groups began their work in December 2011.

Because of the extraordinary work of the Justicia firm representatives, numerous resources are now available for participating firms and are posted on the Justicia web portal, available to participating law firms. The guides and templates are available in formats that can be manipulated by law

firms. The following resources have been developed to date:

- *Career Advancement into Partnership: Guide for Law Firms*
- *Career Advancement into Partnership: Guide for Associates*
- *Justicia Flexible Work Arrangements Profitability Model*
- *Guide to Assist Law Firms and Lawyers in Developing Successful Flexible Work Arrangements*
- *Gender Data Collection – Guide for Law Firms*
- *Gender Data Collection Template*
- *Summary of Firm Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policies*
- *Report of the Survey of Justicia Out of GTA and Ottawa Firms*
- *Report of the Survey of Justicia Firms of Under 100 Lawyers*
- *Report of the Survey of Justicia Firms of Over 100 Lawyers*
- *New Parent Tool Kit Template*
- *Preparing for a Lawyer's Pregnancy or Parental Leave – Guide for Law Firms*
- *Guide to Assist Law Firms in Developing Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policies for Associates*
- *Guide to Assist Law Firms in Developing Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policies for Partners*
- *Law Firm's Self-Assessment Tool*

A Justicia icon has also been developed as a visual identity symbol and has recently been trademarked.

In the fall of 2011, the Law Society held the annual Managing Partners' Summits in Toronto and Ottawa. Managing Partners' Summits were also held in Barrie, Sudbury and Hamilton in January and February 2012.

2011-2012 Managing Partners' Summits

<p>Toronto November 23, 2011</p>	<p>Approximately 40 Managing Partners or delegates were in attendance. The founders and participants in Legal Leaders for Diversity — Mr. David Allgood, Executive Vice-President and General Counsel, Royal Bank of Canada; Mr. Kenneth Fredeen, General Counsel, Deloitte & Touche LLP; Mr. Av Maharaj, Vice-President and Chief Counsel, International, Kellogg Company; and Ms. Dorothy Quann, Vice-President and General Counsel, Xerox Canada Ltd. — participated in a panel discussion facilitated by Kirby Chown.</p>
<p>Ottawa November 28, 2011</p>	<p>Approximately 18 Managing Partners and firm representatives were in attendance. Co-Chairs Treasurer Thomas Conway, then-Treasurer Laurie Pawlitza and Heather Williams were in attendance. Mr. Kenneth Fredeen, General Counsel, Deloitte & Touche LLP, made a presentation facilitated by Kirby Chown.</p>
<p>Sudbury January 17, 2012</p>	<p>Treasurer Thomas Conway and Brad Smith met with Managing Partners and firm representatives to discuss the progress of Justicia in Sudbury and Thunder Bay.</p>
<p>Barrie February 27, 2012</p>	<p>Then-Treasurer Laurie Pawlitza, Treasurer Thomas Conway, Bencher Jacqueline Horvat and Brad Smith met with Managing Partners and law firm representatives to discuss the progress of Justicia in that area.</p>
<p>Hamilton February 28, 2012</p>	<p>Treasurer Thomas Conway and Brad Smith met with Managing Partners and law firm representatives to discuss the progress in that area.</p>

In November 2011, Convocation approved the extension of the Justicia Project for a period of two years.

Direct Support

That the Law Society, in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate, provide direct support to women through programs such as a leadership and professional development institute and online resources. This recommendation includes the implementation of a change of status survey and the establishment of a Women's Leadership and Professional Development Institute.

This recommendation focuses on conducting a change of status survey and on the establishment of a Women's Leadership and Professional Development Institute. The online resources are developed through the Justicia Project for medium and large firms and through the Women's Resource Centre for smaller firms, as described under Recommendation 5.

Change of Status Survey

In 2008, the Law Society of Upper Canada retained The Strategic Counsel to undertake a longitudinal study with lawyers who change their professional legal status. The 2009 *Change of Status Quantitative Study — Report of Research Findings* was released publicly and is available on the Law Society website in the Retention of Women initiatives section at www.lsuc.on.ca/media/convmay10_change_status_report.pdf.

The report provides findings from an online survey among a sample of Law Society lawyers who changed status in 2009. In total, 5,263 lawyers filed a change of status with the Law Society in 2009 and a total of 1,257 respondents completed the survey, a strong response rate of 31 per cent.

The 2010 *Change of Status Research Report* is also available online at www.lsuc.on.ca/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147485267. Among the 5,179 lawyers who filed a change of status with the Law Society in 2010, 1,214 completed the survey for a strong response rate of 29 per cent.

The findings of the surveys are used to inform the Retention of Women in Private Practice Working Group and the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee in the development of policies and initiatives. The findings are also used in presentations and conferences about the legal profession and have received media attention. The Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee decided to continue to survey lawyers who change their status and to produce a report in three years.

The Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee decided in 2012 to begin gathering data about paralegals. As a result, since February 2012 the Change of Status Survey is conducted with paralegals.

Women's Leadership Institute

Since 2009, the Law Society held a number of events in the context of the Women's Leadership Institute. The most significant was the Women Lawyers' Symposium — *Fostering and Celebrating Success*, held in Ottawa on February 5, 2010. With approximately 100 participants from across the province, the symposium allowed women to network and attend workshops on the business of law. The symposium was well received and participants indicated an interest in continued networking opportunities in Ottawa.

The Law Society also partnered with the Women's Law Association of Ontario in 2010 to hold a panel discussion entitled *Guide to Success: A Dialogue with Women in Law*. The panel discussion allowed

women lawyers to hear about the experiences of senior women in various sectors of the legal profession.

In the fall of 2010, the Law Society launched a workshop series in Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor and London. The Law Society works in partnership with law associations across the province, such as the County of Carleton Law Association (CCLA), Women's Law Association of Ontario (WLAO), South West Region Women's Law Association (SWRWLA) and others.

The "workshops" or events in the series were "Meet the Treasurer" events in Toronto (November 2010), Ottawa (November 2010), Windsor (February 2011) and London (October 2011). All events were well received with approximately 60 participants in Toronto, Windsor and London, and 80 plus in Ottawa.

The Law Society also participated as a sponsor at the Canadian Bar Association's two-day conference entitled *Leadership Conference for Professional Women: Skills for Success* held on January 28-29, 2011 in Toronto. The conference was designed by women lawyers for all professional women. It provided women with tools to enhance productivity and job satisfaction.

Then-Treasurer Pawlitzka, Lawyer Liaison Counsel Alison Hurst, and Equity Advisor Josée Bouchard, have also attended and organized numerous speaking engagements with law associations and law schools to discuss, among other topics, the Retention of Women in Private Practice Project.

As part of the *Articling & Beyond* program in November 2010 and 2011 (an event designed to bring law students together with sole and small firm practitioners from across the province), a panel discussion was dedicated to issues related to women

in private practice. Over 60 women law students and lawyers participated in the discussion each year.

Then-Treasurer Pawlitzka also participated in a number of panel discussions on women and the law, including an International Women's Day event at Queen's Law School in March 2011. She was also the keynote speaker at the SWRWLA Fall 2010 retreat, where she discussed the Retention of Women in Private Practice project.

The Law Society, in partnership with the WLAO, hosted on May 4, 2011 the WLAO's 5th Annual Alternative Careers for Women in Law program entitled *You're a Lawyer – Now What? Alternative Careers for Women in the Law*. The popular program was offered again on May 15, 2012.

The Law Society also partnered with the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations to present the 2011 *Women's Bar Leadership Summit: Strengths Across Borders*. The Law Society hosted the conference on August 5, 2011, and it was attended by approximately 100 women lawyers. Then-Treasurer Pawlitzka, Josée Bouchard and Heather Williams presented on the progress of the Justicia Project.

Then-Treasurer Pawlitzka, Kirby Chown and Josée Bouchard also attended the Barreau du Québec's first Managing Partners' Summit to present on the Justicia experience in Ontario. Approximately 20 Managing Partners participated.

In May 2012, the Law Society participated in and sponsored the University of Toronto's conference, *Women in Transition: Returning to Legal Practice or Considering an Alternative Career in Law*.

Recommendation 3

Contract Lawyers' Registry

That the Law Society develop a five-year pilot project to promote and support contract lawyers to address the challenges women face in finding available and competent lawyers to maintain their practice during leaves of absence.

The Contract Lawyers' Registry is available online and includes resources and a list of available lawyers from across the province who are interested and available to provide legal services on contract. There are approximately 150 lawyers currently registered on the site. Since inception of the program in 2009, approximately 130 individuals have requested information about the postings and approximately 375 profiles have been requested.

This site provides helpful resources for sole and small firm practitioners who require the assistance of a contract lawyer while taking

maternity, parental or other types of leave. The site is also used by lawyers who require assistance for a large trial or a demanding file, or for any other reasons.

The Contract Lawyers' Registry offers specific tools to help lawyers hire a contract lawyer, including sample contract clauses, a contract checklist, as well as information about issues to consider when entering into a contract.

To consult the site, join the registry, or retain a contract lawyer, please visit <http://rc.lsuc.on.ca/jsp/contractLawyer/index.jsp>.

Recommendation 4

Parental Leave Assistance Program

That the Law Society implement a three-year pilot Parental Leave Assistance Program, effective in 2009, as follows:

1. provide benefits to lawyers in firms of five lawyers or fewer, including sole practitioners, who have no access to other maternity/parental/adoption financial benefit programs under public or private plans;
2. provide a fixed sum of \$3,000 a month for three months (maximum \$9,000 per leave per family unit) to cover, among other things, expenses associated with maintaining their practice during a maternity, parental or adoption leave.

The Law Society launched the three-year pilot parental leave assistance program to enable more lawyers to stay in practice after the birth or adoption of a child. Effective March 12, 2009, the Parental Leave Assistance Program provides financial benefits to practising lawyers who are partners in firms of five or fewer lawyers and meet the eligibility criteria.

Under the program, the Law Society provides a fixed sum of \$750 a week to eligible applicants for up to 12 weeks

(maximum \$9,000 per leave, per family unit) to help cover, among other things, expenses associated with maintaining their practice during a maternity, parental or adoption leave.

In January 2010, the federal *Employment Insurance Act* was amended to provide self-employed persons special benefits including maternity, parental, adoption, sickness, and compassionate care benefits. These benefits were previously available only to wage-earners and salaried workers.

The new legislation came into effect on January 1, 2010, and benefits became payable in January 2011. Self-employed persons need to opt into the Employment Insurance plan and pay premiums for at least one year before they can claim benefits. The Law Society has continued to offer the Parental Leave Assistance Program, which presently coexists with the federal EI Special Benefits plan.

To be eligible for benefits under the Parental Leave Assistance Program, the applicant must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- be a birth parent (mother or father) or an adoptive parent (mother or father);
- be a member in good standing;
- be a sole practitioner or a partner in a firm of five lawyers or fewer;
- cease to engage in remunerative work or to practise law during the leave for which he or she is receiving payments under the Parental Leave Assistance Program; and
- have no access to other maternity, parental, or adoption financial benefits under a public or private plan.

Lawyers who meet the above eligibility criteria are also eligible for the Parental Leave Assistance Program if they have not opted to receive EI Special Benefits; have entered into an agreement with the Canada Employment Insurance Commission, but are in the one-year waiting period for EI Special Benefits; have opted to receive the EI Special Benefits, but have terminated their agreement; and are still eligible to claim EI Special Benefits but have signed an affidavit indicating that they forego any EI Special Benefits.

To find out more about the Parental Leave Assistance Program, please visit www.lsuc.on.ca/with.aspx?id=2147487024.

The following tables provide an outline of approved and completed applications by gender and practice type and by type of leave, as of March 31, 2012.

Approved & Completed Applicants by Gender and Practice

Gender	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Female, Small Firm	8	7	13	2	30
Female, Sole	27	47	33	2	109
Male, Small Firm	5	2	3	0	10
Male, Sole	10	12	11	0	33
Total	50	68	60	4	182

Approved & Completed Applicants by Type of Leave

Type of Leave	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Birth of Child	48	60	56	3	167
Adoption	1	2	1	0	4
Miscarriage	0	0	2	0	2
Medical prior to Birth	1	6	1	1	9
Total	50	68	60	4	182

In November 2011, Convocation approved the extension of the Parental Leave Assistance Program for another year to allow the Law Society to complete an assessment of the program.

Recommendation 5

Resources for Women in Sole Practices and Small Firms



That the Law Society provide access, in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate, to resources for women in sole practices and small firms through programs such as online resources and practice management and career development advice.

The Law Society launched the Women's Online Resource Centre (WORC) in December 2010. The WORC includes practical, online resources for women, such as a list of legal organizations for women lawyers, information about work-life balance, mentoring, marketing and networking, and resources for sole and

small firm practitioners. The WORC also includes a section on returning to practice, as recommended by the Return to Practice Working Group. To consult the site, please visit <http://rc.lsuc.on.ca/jsp/worc/index.jsp>.

The WORC is extensively promoted and its use is monitored.

Recommendation 6

Beginning at Law School

That the Law Society work with law schools to provide access to information and education opportunities about the practice of law, the business of law, types of practices, practising in diverse work settings and available resources.

Between 2009 and 2012, representatives of the Law Society, including the Lawyer Liaison Counsel, the Equity Advisor, the Aboriginal Initiatives Counsel, other Law

Society staff members and benchers visited all of the Ontario law schools, where they have met with female law students and presented on women's issues.

Throughout the past years, the Lawyer Liaison Counsel has organized and participated in a series of Women & the Law panel discussions at law schools throughout Ontario, including the Faculties of Law at the University of Windsor, the University of Western Ontario, the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University.

In November, 2010 and 2011, the Law Society, in partnership with the Ontario Bar Association and the County & District Law Presidents' Association, hosted the symposia *Articling & Beyond – Finding Work that Works for You*. Law students and recent calls to the Bar from across the province and sole and small firm practitioners throughout Ontario attended. The symposia were a great success with 250 students and recent calls and 130 firms participating each year.

The goals of these events were twofold. The primary goal was to provide law

students with information and resources to encourage them to explore a variety of articling and career options. The secondary goal was to build awareness about issues such as the “greying of the Bar” in communities outside of the GTA, and the importance of creating articling opportunities in smaller communities beyond the GTA. As part of *Articling & Beyond*, the Law Society held each year a panel discussion dedicated to issues related to women in private practice. Over 60 women law students and lawyers participated in the discussions.

The Equity Advisor made a presentation to all first-year law students at the University of Ottawa. Approximately 380 students in English Common Law and 100 students in French Common Law attended. The presentation included an overview of the Retention of Women in Private Practice Project.

Recommendation 7

Creation of
Advisory
Group

That the Law Society create an advisory group of women lawyers from Aboriginal, Francophone and/or equality-seeking communities to assist with the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report.

In May 2009, the Women’s Equality Advisory Group (WEAG) was created and is composed of 10 women with expertise in issues related to equality and diversity.

The WEAG meets regularly to discuss activities and resources arising out of the Retention of Women in Private Practice Project. Jacqueline Beckles is Chair and

Sue-Lynn Noel is Vice-Chair of WEAG. The WEAG recommended a list of resources to be included in the Women’s Online Resource Centre and is consulted about ongoing projects. The WEAG participated in the review of *Preventing Harassment, Discrimination and Violence in the Legal Workplace – A Guide to Developing Policies for Law Firms and Legal Organizations*.

Networking

That the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee facilitate the development of networking strategies focused on the needs of women from Aboriginal, Francophone and/or equality-seeking communities in firms of all sizes.

The Law Society facilitates the development of networking opportunities by holding approximately 10 Public Education Equality and Rule of Law events and five continuing professional development programs with organizations such as the Aboriginal Legal Services of Ontario, the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO), ARCH Disability Law Centre, B'nai Brith Canada, the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, the Feminist Legal Analysis Committee of the Ontario Bar Association, the South Asian Bar Association of Toronto, the Indigenous Bar Association, the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Official Languages Committee of the OBA, the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee of the Ontario Bar Association, the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario and the Women's Law Association of Ontario.

The Law Society also sponsors events or partners with associations to organize external events that facilitate networking opportunities, such as the Women's Law Association of Ontario annual President's Award gala, the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers' gala reception, the annual AJEFO conference and the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund breakfast events.

In addition, the Equity Committee organizes networking events with the Equity Advisory Group (and now also the Women's Equality Advisory Group) to ensure continued dialogue between committee members and the advisory groups.

International Women's Day

Every year, the Law Society hosts an event and reception in the context of International Women's Day. The events are organized in partnership with the Women's Law Association of Ontario, the Feminist Legal Analysis Section of the Ontario Bar Association, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, and the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. In March 2011, the event included the film screening of a documentary entitled *Constitute!* about the creation of Sections 15 and 28 of the *Charter*.

In addition, intergenerational feminist voices discussed the journey of feminism in Canada and its popularity now and in the future. Using the new book *Feminist Journeys/ Voies féministes* as a basis for discussion, speakers were asked to comment on the status of feminism. The panel examined the question of why few women self-identify as feminists and why many have done so over the years. Feminists and experts discussed their journeys, reflected on the richness of the past 50 years of feminism and looked at what the future holds.

In March 2012, the Law Society's International Women's Day event focused on how women are depicted in the media. A trailer for the documentary *Miss Representation* was shown before panellists at the March 7 event began answering questions posed by moderator and CBC Radio host, Marcia Young.

Evaluation of programs

That, after a period of three years of implementation of the programs, and after a period of five years of implementation of the Contract Lawyers' Registry, the Law Society assess the effectiveness of each program and identify further strategies for the retention and advancement of women in private practice.

The Equity Initiatives Department provides monthly progress reports on the implementation of the Retention of Women in Private Practice Project to the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee. It is expected that the programs developed in that context will be assessed at the end of the pilot period to identify further strategies for the

retention and advancement of women in private practice.

The Law Society is assessing the Parental Leave Assistance Program and will report to the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee in the fall of 2012. The Law Society is also conducting a survey with Justicia law firms.

Return to Practice Project – Career Coaching Program

In December 2011, the Law Society adopted the Career Coaching Program, a program for women lawyers who meet specified eligibility criteria to receive, without charge, up to six hours of career coaching from a qualified career coach.

The purpose of the Career Coaching Program is to assist women lawyers who are sole practitioners or in firms of five lawyers or fewer to maintain their practice while taking a maternity, parental or compassionate leave. The program is structured to allow for two hours of coaching prior to the leave to assist women lawyers in ramping down their practice; two hours during the leave to assist women lawyers in maintaining their practice during the leave; and two hours following the leave, to assist with the reintegration into practice.

The program was launched April 2, 2012 with 14 coaches appointed to provide the services. The coaches are located across Ontario and services may be offered in French or English. The following resources are available:

- Eligibility Guidelines
- Application forms
- Qs and As and information on the website.

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