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October 1, 2020

Ms. Mary Joe Freire
Chair, Board of Directors
Human Rights Legal Support Centre

Email: maryjoe.freire@gmail.com

Ms. Sharmaine Hall
Executive Director
Human Rights Legal Support Centre

Email: shall@hrlsc.on.ca

Dear Ms. Freire and Ms. Hall:

As you begin planning for 2021–22, I am pleased to write to you in your capacities as Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Director of the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) to provide you with a letter setting out expectations and direction for the HRLSC in the year ahead. Pursuant to the requirements of the *Agencies and Appointments Directive*, this letter sets out my expectations for the HRLSC for the 2021–22 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow board members undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for HRLSC ensures that HRLSC will continue to provide human rights legal services to individuals who have experienced discrimination contrary to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies, and directives. I thank both of you for your willingness to serve.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. This includes:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- operating within your agency's allocations
- identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability
- identifying and pursuing efficiencies and savings

- complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, Realty Interim Measures, and Agency Office Location Criteria

2. **Transparency and Accountability**

- abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- adhering to requirements of the *Agencies and Appointment Directive*, and responding to audit findings, where applicable
- identifying appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability

Risk Management

- developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to emergency situations such as COVID-19

3. **Workforce Management**

- optimizing your agency's workforce to enable efficient and effective fulfilment of government priorities, while enhancing customer service standards
- streamlining back office functions to ensure that all available resources are redirected towards the critical front-line services that Ontarians depend upon

4. **Data Collection**

- improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing, and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery
- supporting transparency and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate

5. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for the provision of services online and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition
- using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including COVID-19

In addition to these government-wide priorities, I expect the HRLSC to focus on:

1. **Responsible Use of Funds**

- ensuring transparency and value for money in the delivery of high-quality human rights legal services while continuing to identify options for the provision of cost-effective agency operations

2. **Service Standards**

- meeting or exceeding the service standards already established by the HRLSC and ensuring they continue to be reflected in the agency's accountability documents

3. **Income Testing**

- consistent with reviews and advice provided, exploring the development of a framework for the introduction of mandatory income testing, similar to Legal Aid Ontario, to ensure that vulnerable Ontarians who need your services most receive it

Through these measures, we can continue to ensure that HRLSC is continuing to fulfill its mandate to provide human rights legal services to individuals who have experienced discrimination contrary to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

I thank both of you and your fellow board members for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. Should either of you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Jane Mallen, Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Policy Division, either by telephone at 647-622-5147 or by email at jane.n.mallen@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Downey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Doug Downey
Attorney General