

TARGETING CRIMINAL COURT DELAY

McGuinty Government Focuses On Seven Initiatives For Better, Faster Justice

NEWS

May 27, 2009

Seven initiatives to tackle delays in the criminal court process have been identified during the first phase of Ontario's *Justice on Target* strategy.

These [seven initiatives](#) focus on moving straightforward cases through the justice system faster through better coordination so that more resources can be focused on cases that need them the most. The initiatives were developed by all of the justice participants who make important contributions to the work that is being done every day as part of our justice system.

The Ontario Courts of Justice [Action Sites](#) in Newmarket, North York and London will each determine the best way to roll out the following initiatives to best meet their specific needs:

- **On-Site Legal Aid and Simplified Online Application Process** – Ontarians will be able to apply for Legal Aid on-site and on-line. This will cut the time needed to process applications by clients who clearly qualify for Legal Aid.
- **Two-Stage Disclosure** – An initial disclosure package will ensure that everyone has the information they need to make timely decisions and minimize unnecessary delays.
- **Meaningful First Appearances** – Parties will agree if any work can be done up front so that the first court appearance makes real progress towards the resolution of the case.
- **Three-Appearance Standard** – Parties will know that there is a “three-appearance standard” for straightforward cases. This will allow resources to be redirected to complex cases.
- **Crown Access Commitment** – All parties will commit to exploring a resolution early in the process.
- **Increased Availability of Plea Courts** – Help to ensure plea courts are available when an accused wants to plead guilty at a scheduled appearance.
- **Direct Accountability** – Measures to hold offenders directly accountable to their community rather than going through the traditional court process. New strict guidelines will ensure that decisions regarding direct accountability measures are made earlier in the process – before the first appearance, if possible.

QUOTE

“We have been listening to the people who work in our courthouses every day. They've helped us identify ways to get the simple things done faster, so that we can focus more resources on the cases that need them the most, including cases that pose the greatest risk to public safety. Together, we have an opportunity to create a faster, more effective criminal justice system in Ontario – for all justice participants, victims, witnesses and the public who pay for it.”

– Chris Bentley, Attorney General

QUICK FACTS

- The [Justice on Target strategy](#) sets a four-year target to reduce by 30 per cent the number of days and appearances required to complete a criminal case.
- A 30 per cent reduction by 2012 will mean half-a-million fewer court appearances every year simply to adjourn the proceedings to another date.

LEARN MORE

View [criminal court statistics](#) in your local community through *Justice on Target*.
Read more about the [seven initiatives](#) developed by the three initial Action Sites.
Read more about [what people are saying](#) about *Justice on Target*.
View [video](#) of the Attorney General speaking about *Justice on Target*.

Erin Moroz, Ministry of the Attorney General,
Minister's Office, 416-326-1785
Brendan Crawley, Ministry of the Attorney General,
Communications Branch, 416-326-2210

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