



Left to right: A participant listens in while paralegal Stacie Gin (standing) discusses an affidavit with Jennifer Lin, duty counsel.

# Amici Curiae CV

[www.legalformsbc.ca](http://www.legalformsbc.ca)

Current to May 8, 2018

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**Powered by paralegals and assisted by the legal community, Amici Curiae Friendship Society helps British Columbians prepare their legal forms for free.**



## Overview

Accessing the legal system independently is a challenge for ordinary British Columbians. Most people do not know how to properly prepare their own legal forms for a court or a tribunal matter, yet more are resolving legal matters on their own.

Amici Curiae is a non-profit society offering workshops that help the public complete the legal forms necessary to present a matter to court or a tribunal. No legal advice is given. The public service paralegal programme was launched by Dom Bautista, Executive Director of Law Courts Center, a continuing professional development provider, encouraged by then Supreme Court of BC Chief Justice Donald Brenner. The first workshop was held in February 8, 2011, in partnership with Access Pro Bono BC and the Ministry of the Attorney General Justice Access Centre (Vancouver). Since then, workshops have been established through a network of strategic partnerships.

## Key features of the legal forms workshops

- The free workshops are open to the public.
  - Appointments are confidential and are at least one hour long.
  - Individuals can return as needed.
  - There is no income test.
- Our workshops help people complete their legal forms in *non-criminal* legal matters at the:
  - BC Court of Appeal
  - Supreme Court of BC
  - Provincial Court of BC
  - Federal Court
  - Tribunals (ie BC Human Rights and Civil Resolution).

### *Type of workshops*

- Workshops are held in easy to access locations, which include:
  - Atira Women's Resource Society
  - Battered Women's Support Services (undisclosed location in Vancouver)
  - Carnegie Community Centre
  - Temporary Foreign Workers with Uncontested Divorce Applications
  - Vancouver Justice Access Centre
  - Vancouver Public Library Oakridge Branch.

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### ***Nature of workshops***

- Workshops are held mostly on Wednesday evenings (Temporary Foreign Workers workshops are on Saturday mornings).
- Each workshop has its own schedule; generally workshops are held between January to November. Emergency services are available.
- Services at workshops are provided by a team of volunteers that includes:
  - Paralegals who work one-on-one with clients to complete their forms
  - Lawyers who review the forms for completeness; lawyers do not give summary legal advice.
  - Law librarians who conduct legal research when required.
  - Law firm accountants who help with financial statement affidavits.

### ***How to book appointment***

- Individuals must have an appointment. They may call 778.522.2839 or write to: legalformsbc@gmail.com.
- An intake coordinator will answer within two business days to decide if we can help the person.

## **References**

[Here](#) is a message from former Chief Justice of BC Finch 3/21/11:

*I welcome the creation of the Paralegal Pro Bono Program and Access Pro Bono's partnership with the Law Courts Center in its evening Pro Bono Paralegal Program at the Vancouver Justice Access Centre. The Program is unique in Canada in engaging paralegals as primary pro bono legal service providers who work under the supervision of a lawyer to provide assistance to those who would otherwise find themselves with no help at all.*

[Here](#) is a message from Attorney General of BC Anton 10/2/15:

*I also want to commend your commitment to the Amici Curiae Pro Bono Paralegal Program – and the decision to expand your work to include service to Temporary Foreign Workers needing help in preparing uncontested divorce applications. With the upcoming opening of the Battered Women's Support Services Clinic and the Court of Appeal Clinic, the important work of the Pro Bono team will continue with even greater results.*



## Board of Directors

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