

Recommendations for the Business of Law amidst COVID-19

Here are some recommendations to lawyers and students who have seen their firms experience a significant reduction in revenue.

1. Apply for every conceivable federal or provincial grant, program, or other relief available for individuals and small businesses. These programs are summarized in the links below:

[Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses](#)

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/for-business>

<https://employmentjourney.com/canada-pei-financial-help-in-response-to-covid-19/>

2. Speak with commercial lenders about interest relief or deferral of loan payments without interest.
3. Speak with landlords about rent reduction or deferrals.
4. Speak with your accountants and financial advisors.
5. Seek remote bookkeeper services in the event you or your bookkeeper is quarantined.
6. Speak to insurers about policies and business interruption insurance for COVID-19. If no business interruption coverage is available then consider improvements that can be made to the existing policy. Also consider products by other insurers.
7. Be aware of the six-month student loan deferrals without interest accruing available by the federal and provincial governments.
8. Apply for utility and property tax deferrals.
9. Be aware of Employment Standards resources regarding layoff and termination of employment and Occupational Health and Safety sick day expansion. Keep in mind the requirements for lawyers and students to keep the Law Society aware of any change of their contact details, membership status or suspension of articles.
10. Make sure that all staff are coping well (emotionally, financially, technologically). It is recommended that lawyers should keep in touch with their staff working remotely without getting too intrusive or into areas that could be problematic under any circumstances.
11. Be particularly cautious about phishing attempts and deal cautiously with any emails that are out of the ordinary or that contain instructions to send money or share passwords and contact information. There has been a spike in hacker and fraud activity trying to take advantage of the disruption/panic surrounding the pandemic.

Lawyers who have experienced a sudden loss of revenue may be more tempted to respond to these types of attacks.

12. Keep up-to-speed on issues affecting your practice areas and solutions that others have developed. In this time, simply marketing to the same industry or segment of the population the lawyer always has and where the need for legal services has been greatly reduced is probably not productive. This might be a time for lawyers to tap into their professional associations (Canadian Bar Association, trial lawyers associations, etc.).
13. Consider business opportunities that will arise once the pandemic is over. Research the kinds of legal services that will likely be in high demand and how to be best prepared to provide them.
14. Stay in touch with existing clients and see how they're doing. Give clients regular updates of any legal developments and discuss strategies that can be implemented once the pandemic is over. For example, many commercial real estate lawyers who stayed in touch with clients during the 2008/2009 financial crisis, even though the clients could offer them no work, benefitted greatly when the industry recovered.
15. Consider debt relief for clients. Now may not be the time to be aggressively pursuing outstanding statements of account. Obviously, this should be considered on a client by client basis.
16. Make sure that you're well prepared for the next possible disaster or pandemic. If you haven't considered any disaster planning before this pandemic, then it is recommended to do so in the event there is another pandemic next fall. Document any processes that worked well or areas for improvement.
17. Remember that Homewood Health is here to help. If you, your students or your families are struggling from economic pressure, isolation, or any type of anxiety or depression, resources are available to help. A: Help is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-663-1142. You can also reach Homewood Health, the assistance provider online by clicking [here](#). This program is available to all lawyers, their employees and family members.