



Community Legal
Assistance Society

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Advancing Dignity, Equality
and Justice since 1971

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2023-2024 period saw increasing challenges for the people we serve, including rising inflation as several BC cities were cited among the most expensive for renters in Canada. During this period we represented, advised, informed and connected with over 8,000 people in need of legal services, information and education.

Our core programs continued to meet growing demand through a combination of growth through increased and diversified funding, and more effective delivery which included the continued implementation of new case management software. The BC Human Rights Clinic completed more hearings than ever before, due to increased funding in the previous year from the Ministry of the Attorney General which enabled the BC Human Rights Tribunal to address its case backlog, with more resources for the Clinic to meet the downstream demand for services. The Community Law Program continued to see high demand from renters losing their housing, and engaged in several systemic law reform cases. The Mental Health Law Program is in its second year of significant three-year additional grant funding from Legal Aid BC, and it has met the rising need for representation by increasing its lawyer and advocate staff.

We undertook new projects during the year, ended one, and explored how we operate in the post-COVID-19 pandemic world. CLAS launched the Sexual Harassment Advice Response and Prevention (SHARP Workplaces) Legal Clinic in March 2020, just before the global pandemic, in partnership with the Ending Violence Association of BC and funded by the Department of Justice Canada. Despite the challenging circumstances of launching a program when the world was shut down, SHARP Workplaces delivered much-needed legal advice and support to a significant number of people and created strong community partnerships and excellent training for external lawyers working with the project. Federal funding for the project ended in March 2024 and we wound down the project; however, at the time of writing, funding applications have reopened, and we are confident that new funding will be granted for the continuation of this critical work.

During 2023, CLAS was contracted by the Government of British Columbia, through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, to provide brief, independent legal advice to persons who experience sexual assault in British Columbia with funding from the Government of Canada. Stand Informed Legal Advice Services assists clients to understand their legal options and make informed decisions.

CLAS completed a project entitled *The New Landscape: systemic inequities in the post-COVID-19 virtual environment*, which provided a report with recommendations on adapting CLAS systems for those experiencing systemic inequalities when accessing legal help, including meeting low-barrier, in-person and rural/remote needs, funded by the Community Services Recovery Fund.

Thank you to our committed and dedicated volunteer board of directors. One of our long-serving board directors, William “Bill” Black, will be retiring this year from the board. On behalf of all of us, we would like to thank Bill for his incredible 29 years of service on our board, and his dedication and commitment to the vision and mission of CLAS. Bill has served in the joint role of board Secretary and Treasurer for many years. His wisdom, guidance, and huge depth of legal knowledge, particularly in the human rights field, will be sorely missed.

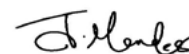
Thank you also to all the funders of our core programs and projects, without whom we could not do this work.

And finally, thank you to the enduring, inspiring, dedicated and passionate staff of CLAS, who are the heart of all we achieve.

Sincerely,



Jane Dyson
Chair



Jacqui Mendes
Executive Director

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Our Vision

Dignity, Equality and Justice for All

Our Mission

CLAS respects the dignity of all in our community and works towards positive social change by providing legal assistance and advancing the law to address the critical needs of those who are disadvantaged or face discrimination.

Our Values

Compassion: We believe in fostering an environment that is respectful and understanding of our clients and co-workers.

Leadership: We strive to be leaders in housing, income security, workers' rights, mental health, and human rights.

Accessibility: We believe everyone should have access to, and benefit from, the justice system.

Service: We serve the community by working with other groups to promote and advance dignity, equality and justice for all.

Our Funders

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our core funders:

The **Law Foundation of BC** funds our Community Law Program, Community Advocate Support Line, and David Mossop, KC Public Interest Articling Fellowship.

Legal Aid BC funds our Mental Health Law Program.

The **Ministry of Attorney General** funds our Human Rights Clinic.

The **Department of Justice Canada** funds our SHARP Workplaces Program and our Stand Informed Legal Advice Services through the **BC Ministry of Public Safety** and the **Solicitor General**.

The **City of Vancouver** provides us with a significant subsidy for our office space under its Bonus Amenities Program.

We also receive continued support, financial and otherwise, from a large number of individuals and groups. We thank each and every one of them for their generous assistance!



(Images left to right) Jennifer Nason and Jason Biring, lawyers with the Mental Health Law Program; CLAS Board Directors at the 2023 Annual General Meeting; Jacqui Mendes, Executive Director.

Our Board of Directors

The CLAS Board of Directors sets our policy and strategic directions. Our volunteer Board is made up of a unique mix of lawyers, community representatives and one law student.

OFFICERS

Jane Dyson, Chair
Maia Tsurumi, Vice-Chair
William Black, Secretary/
Treasurer

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Gloria Cardinal
Gyda Chud
Miguel Mendez
Sharon Mohamed

LAWYERS

Emilio Abiusi, LSLAP
Lora Anjos
Robin Elliot, KC
Bridget Gilbride
Bethany Hastie
Adam Munnings
Grace Pastine, KC

Our Staff

(April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024)

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Jacqui Mendes, Executive Director
Rick Liu, Finance Director
Svetlana Khakhleva, Office Manager
Abigail Foster, Office Assistant
Katherine Delany, Receptionist

LEGAL ADVOCATES

Atoosa Aghbayat
Lisa Ferguson
Destiny Gu
Brett Haughian
Tanya Lovrich
David Mossop, KC
Sohrab Rezaei
Aleena Sharma

LAWYERS/STUDENTS

Dante Abbey
Sonia Abdul Zahir
Aleem Bharmal, KC
Jason Biring
Jonathan Blair
Manjeet Chana
Debra Febril
Laura Johnston
Sepideh Khazei
Jennifer Khor
Kevin Love
Coral Lyster
Midhath Mahir
Lauren Marshall
Aditi Master

Alison Moore
Jennifer Nason
Yanni Nicolidakis-Mustafa,
Articling Student
Helen Parker
Holly Popenia
Maud Rozee
Danielle Sabelli
Meredith Shaw
Cayleigh Shiff
Celia Taylor,
Articling Student
Alanna Tom
Laura Track
Alison Ward

SUPPORT STAFF

Tori Clark
Desirée Deza
Angela Emam
Raihana Gill
Leah Goodridge
Inara Guerra
Elizabeth Korompai
Angela Leung
Jasmine Maxwell
James O Leannachain
Nejla Pekmezovic
Justine Stanley
Margaret Szadkowska
Erika Szulc
Seifemichael Terefe
Neeti Tewari
Darian Wingfield

2023-2024

PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS



Debra Febril, Indigenous Lawyer, Human Rights Clinic, and Aleem Bharmal, lawyer, Human Rights Clinic.



Angela Leung, Jennifer Khor and Elizabeth Korompai, staff of SHARP Workplaces and Stand Informed Legal Advice Services.



Danielle Sabelli and Jonathan Blair, lawyers with the Community Law Program (photo by Brielle Morgan).



Lauren Marshall, Meredith Shaw, and Aleena Sharma, lawyers and legal advocates with the BC Human Rights Clinic.

COMMUNITY LAW PROGRAM

The Community Law Program at CLAS is a multidisciplinary centre of legal expertise that uses, advances, and reforms the law to protect the critical needs of those facing poverty. We envision a society where everyone can secure their essential rights with dignity and autonomy. CLP uses the law when it protects the basic needs of those facing poverty and works to change the law when it does not. The program is funded by the Law Foundation of BC.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Housing Security

The Community Law Program (CLP) successfully represented a tenant in an application for judicial review of a Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) decision that evicted her for having a pet. The court found that the RTB failed to assess whether the tenancy agreement prohibited pets, let alone whether this issue was so important that it justified taking away someone's home.

CLP also successfully represented a tenant when their landlord applied to contest an award to the tenant of over \$30,000 from the RTB due to the landlord's extensive renovations that exposed the tenant to asbestos. The court dismissed the landlord's application for judicial review and upheld the monetary award made in favour of our client.

Income Security

Severe summer heat can have serious health impacts for people with disabilities. CLP represented a client receiving provincial disability assistance who required an air conditioning unit during heat waves to avoid severe health complications. The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal determined that air conditioners could not be funded as a disability related payment. CLP represented the client in challenging this decision in court. The Ministry consented to our court application and agreed to reconsider its interpretation of the law.

CLP is also working to eliminate discrimination in BC's workers compensation system. This year, CLP finished a two-week trial under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter)* which challenged the discriminatory provisions that make it more difficult for workers to get workers compensation claims accepted for work-related psychological injury.



868

People received legal advice, information and representation.



15

Systemic public interest cases this fiscal year.

David Mossop, KC Public Interest Articling Fellowship

The Law Foundation of BC provides funding to CLAS for the David Mossop, KC Public Interest Articling Fellowship. The funding enables CLAS to hire an articling student each year.

CLAS is able to provide the student with an extensive and well-rounded articling experience through rotational training in all of CLAS's programs. The student is assigned files they handle under the supervision of a lawyer, and also assists lawyers with their files through research, client support, and document preparation.

We are committed to ensuring that this experience equips the student with valuable skills, expertise and experience in various specialized areas of public interest law.

Freedom from Poverty-Related Discrimination

People living in supportive housing (subsidized housing with on-site supports) deserve safe and accessible housing just like everyone else. CLP is assisting several dozen tenants in a building with a broken elevator that creates serious accessibility issues for tenants with disabilities and their guests. CLP represents the affected tenants in a claim for compensation at the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Dignified and Autonomous Access to Critical Health Care Services

People with disabilities should have the right to control their own health care. Strict oversight and compliance with the law is necessary when governments try to force services on people without their consent. CLAS intervened in an appeal where the government applied for authorization to continue forcing services on an individual beyond the two-year limit set out in the *Adult Guardianship Act*. The court substantially adopted CLAS's position, agreeing that after two years a person must be given a chance to live autonomously.

CLP continues to represent the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) in a *Charter* challenge to the "deemed consent" laws in BC's *Mental Health Act*. Deemed consent means that people with involuntary status under the *Mental Health Act* have no right to make decisions about their psychiatric treatment. Nor do they have a right to involve a trusted friend, family member, or other representative in psychiatric treatment decisions. All involuntary patients are "deemed" to consent to all forms of psychiatric treatment – without any meaningful assessment of their ability to make treatment decisions – and can be forcibly administered psychotropic medications and electroconvulsive therapy. A trial has now been set for the spring of 2025.

The critical needs that CLP seeks to protect include:

- Housing security;
- Income for basic necessities;
- Dignified access to essential health care; and,
- Freedom from poverty-related discrimination.

We recognize that securing these critical needs is just a starting point, not an end point for meaningful participation in society. But we cannot begin to build a just and equitable society when people's fundamental needs continue to go unmet.

Our CLP staff, comprised of 5 lawyers, 1.6 full-time equivalent legal administrative assistants, and 1 intake coordinator, carried out the following work:

Systemic Law Reform

CLP's ongoing work in systemic law reform responds to the needs identified by people facing poverty. We use our legal skills and knowledge to promote the systemic change sought by individuals, organizations, and communities working to eradicate poverty. Last fiscal year, CLP represented clients in 15 systemic legal cases.

Direct Legal Advice and Assistance

Some clients may require legal advice or services that go beyond the mandate, resources, or capacity of community legal advocates and clinic lawyers. CLP can step in to provide direct legal services when someone's critical needs are threatened and there is no other service capable of providing the necessary assistance. Last fiscal year, CLP provided information, advice, or representation to 868 people.

Strengthening The Anti-Poverty Legal Network

CLP provides support and education year-round for community-based lawyers and legal advocates who work tirelessly with limited resources to meet an ever-increasing demand for legal services.

**Help us continue to provide legal services to British Columbians.
To donate, visit clasbc.net/donate or call 604-685-3425.**

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE SUPPORT LINE

The Community Advocate Support Line (CASL) is a vital legal support service for poverty law advocates throughout British Columbia, offering guidance on a wide range of poverty law issues.

These include residential tenancy and housing matters, income security (such as welfare law, disability assistance, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security), debt and consumer law, and workers' rights.

Poverty law advocates provide free legal information, advocacy, and representation to low-income individuals in the community. CASL and advocates are funded by the Law Foundation of BC (Law Foundation).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The 2023/2024 fiscal year marks a significant milestone for CASL as it is the first full year with more than one staff member. For many years, CASL was staffed solely by one full-time lawyer.

However, thanks to increased funding for a pilot project from the Law Foundation, CASL was able to expand its team in December 2022, adding a part-time lawyer and a part-time legal administrative assistant to its existing staff.

In the spring of 2023, CASL conducted a survey among advocates across BC to determine how best to support them. Based on their feedback, CASL launched a series of monthly warm referral workshops in May 2023.

These workshops are designed to help advocates understand the work of different legal service organizations in BC, build connections with their staff, and facilitate warm referrals within the poverty law network. This year, CASL hosted eight referral workshops, with over 240 advocates attending live sessions, and many more accessing resources such as slide decks and archived recordings.

Beyond the warm referral workshops, CASL also developed and delivered four substantive training workshops on various legal topics, reaching approximately 225 advocates.



287

Number of legal issues for which CASL provided BC advocates with one-on-one support.

Three of these workshops were recorded and made available for advocates to view at their convenience. In addition to direct training, CASL enhances the legal expertise of community advocates by actively participating in online discussion forums, including PovNet, an online community that addresses poverty and promotes access to justice for vulnerable residents of British Columbia.

This year, CASL also increased its outreach efforts by offering orientation meetings to all new Law Foundation-funded advocates, ensuring they are aware of CASL and other available support services, and fostering a sense of community. CASL lawyers conducted one-on-one orientation meetings with 14 new advocates this year.

Finally, CASL staff engaged in consultations and committees with various ministries and tribunals that work closely with advocates to address operational, policy, and systemic challenges in their casework. CASL regularly prepares training materials for advocates and serves on the Board of Directors of PovNet, further strengthening connections among poverty law advocates throughout BC.



Alison Ward, CASL Program Supervisor and lawyer.

12

Training workshops provided by CASL to BC advocates.

465

Advocates reached through training workshops.

14

Orientations conducted with new advocates.

CASL helps advocates with their casework on behalf of clients across BC.

BC HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC

The BC Human Rights Clinic (Clinic) is operated by the Community Legal Assistance Society and funded by the BC Ministry of Attorney General. The Clinic provides free legal assistance to people with provincial human rights complaints as well as public legal education and information.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Justice For Racialized Workers

Every year, the Clinic assists many clients who've been impacted by racism at work. This year, we won two important cases on behalf of racialized clients who were discriminated against by their employers based on their race.

In the first, our client was a young Black girl who was singled out for suspicion at work. Her employer confronted her about a shortage in the cash register, moved her to cleaning and food prep duties, and denied her a reference letter when she resigned due to the discrimination.

The BC Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) accepted our submissions from the Clinic and agreed that anti-Black bias and stereotypes informed the employer's conduct.

In the second, our client was a young, racialized woman from rural India and a newcomer to Canada. Her first job in Canada was at the Respondent's gas station and like many newcomers to Canada, she was unfamiliar with Canadian employment and human rights laws.

Her employer underpaid her for years and failed to compensate her for many hours of overtime and vacation pay. The Tribunal agreed with us that the employer had taken advantage of her trust and lack of awareness of her rights, and found that this amounted to discrimination based on her race, colour, ancestry, and place of origin.



1,515

Number of inquiry line callers that were assisted.

Human Rights Education

Human rights education is a key part of the Human Rights Clinic’s mandate. Through our education work, we make human rights law accessible, meaningful, and understandable to the public.

This was a banner year for the Clinic’s education work. In 2023/24, we delivered 43 educational workshops and training sessions to 1,752 participants – approximately one-and-a-half times the number of sessions as last year, and nearly triple the number of participants. Clearly, our education services are in high demand!

Audiences for our workshops this year included the Family Network for Deaf Children, Aboriginal Housing Management Association, and REACH Community Health Centre. We also did presentations and trainings for articling students at the Everyone Legal Clinic, law students delivering clinical services through their law school, and legal advocates serving low-income people across the province.

A group we work with frequently is the Immigrant Services Society of BC. Every year, they train immigrant and newcomer women to become peer support workers through their IWSP leadership training program. Each year, we present to a new group of women about BC’s human rights protections, with a focus on their application to immigrants and refugees, women, and newcomers to Canada.

Increasing Access to Summary Legal Advice

The Clinic’s Short Service Clinic (SSC) provides critical legal advice to people who have made or are thinking of making a human rights complaint. It helps people understand how the law applies to their situation, what processes might be available, and assesses whether they have a human rights complaint. SSC also outlines their options and helps to decide on a course of action. Where a person’s concern does not appear to be a matter for the Tribunal, we provide referrals to other resources and supports.

This year, in response to the overwhelming demand for the SSC, we moved the appointments from Mondays to Wednesdays to avoid canceling appointments on statutory holidays. This added over 100 available appointments annually.

We piloted increased appointments each day by assigning additional staff to the SSC. It has been crucial to helping people understand their rights, determine whether they have a complaint of discrimination, and decide what to do next. The SSC helps keep complaints with no prospect of success out of the human rights system and provides people with other options, resources, and referrals.

1,752

Participants received training in 43 educational workshops.

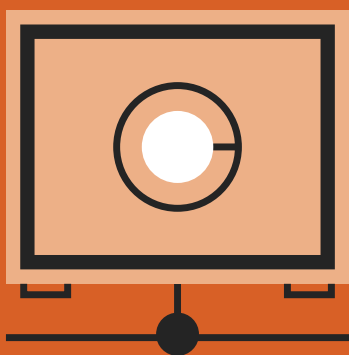
880

Short Service Clinic appointments provided.

140

Summary Advice files completed.

HUMAN RIGHTS MATTER BLOG



The Clinic Blog covers legal information, news, and important human rights cases.

To read the blog, visit: bchrc.net/rights_matter

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@bchrc



Laura Track, Director of the Human Rights Clinic and lawyer.

Want to Learn More?

Learn more about education workshops and sign up for a free lunch and learn on our website: bchrc.net/services/education-and-workshops/

The Human Rights Clinic is supported in their work by 10 lawyers and legal advocates, 3 support staff, 1 intake coordinator, and our Inquiry line officer.

The BC Human Rights Clinic services include:

Telephone Inquiry Line – General information about human rights and complaints process, Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:00pm.

Short Service Clinic - Half-hour appointments in-person or by telephone to anyone in BC every Wednesday. Lawyers and advocates assist complainants at any stage of the process, including before a complaint is filed.

Summary Advice (Legal Consultations) – One to two-hour meetings with a lawyer or advocate to provide legal information and advice to people whose complaint has been accepted for filing by the Tribunal.

Legal Representation – Representation for qualifying clients at mediations, hearings, and other steps in the complaints process.

Public Legal Education - Helping people understand their rights and their options for seeking accountability and redress if those rights are violated. Educating those with responsibilities under human rights law, including employers, human resources professionals, landlords, and other service providers, about their duties to prevent discrimination and address it when it arises.

MENTAL HEALTH LAW PROGRAM

The Mental Health Law Program (MHLP), funded by Legal Aid BC, provides free legal representation to British Columbians who are detained under the *BC Mental Health Act (MHA)* and have a right to a hearing before the Mental Health Review Board (MHRB). MHLP also provides representation to those who are detained under the Mental Disorder provisions of the *Criminal Code of Canada (Criminal Code)*, who appear before the BC Review Board (BCRB).

Involuntary Detention Provisions Under the BC Mental Health Act

MHRB hearings provide an important independent review to determine whether a person meets the criteria for being an involuntary patient, and around whether an involuntary patient should be heard to possibly regain their autonomy over medical decisions affecting their body and personal integrity. MHLP works with people who are detained to help them understand why they have been detained and how to present their case. For MHRB hearings outside of the Lower Mainland, MHLP maintains a roster of lawyers to provide representation throughout the province and in remote areas. Demand for representation at MHRB hearings continues to rise year after year.

Mental Disorder Provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada

People who have been found not criminally responsible for an offence by reason of mental disorder or unfit to stand trial are detained under the care of Forensic Psychiatric Services for treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The BCRB annually reviews whether an accused person still poses a risk to the public, and if so, how to balance their liberties against the paramount need for public safety. BCRB reviews are important because they follow an accused person's progress toward rehabilitation and allow them to safely recover and reintegrate back into society. MHLP works with our clients to help them understand the BCRB's mandate, the hearing process, and to articulate their case. As with MHRB hearings, BCRB hearings are an important opportunity for a person's voice to be heard.

The Mental Health Law Program employs 10 lawyers and legal advocates, and 5 support staff

The complexity and intensity of both MHRB and BCRB hearings has gradually increased over time. Hearings have been growing longer, with an increased focus on legal issues. We have been liaising with stakeholders within the Health Authorities, Forensic Psychiatric Services, both tribunals, and the Crown, as part of our continuing efforts to ensure a fair process and to improve the hearing experience for our clients. This is especially important given the stigma against people living with mental illnesses and the increased attention on these issues.

1,823

People were provided with legal advice and representation at MHRB hearings.

211

People were provided with legal advice and representation at BCRB hearings.

SHARP WORKPLACES

The SHARP Workplaces Legal Advice Clinic offered free legal advice to those experiencing workplace sexual harassment, funded by the Department of Justice Canada. Lawyers provided guidance on legal options and, in some cases, supported clients with limited legal services. Clients were also connected to additional resources.

SHARP partnered with the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) to offer free education and training to non-profits, small businesses, and the public on preventing sexual harassment and using trauma-informed approaches to handle complaints. Although funding ended in March 2024, CLAS has reapplied for funding to reopen SHARP Workplaces.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Supporting Unionized Workers

A client was sexually assaulted by a coworker, and male union staff attempted to silence her when she reported it. After the coworker was acquitted in a criminal trial, she filed a workplace grievance.

With our lawyer's assistance, she navigated the legal jargon from the assaulter's lawyer and the workplace investigator.

She understood her rights and was supported with case law to ensure procedural fairness. The client has since educated her employer and union on trauma-informed investigations and was asked to become a union shop steward to help develop safe workplace policies.

Male-Dominated Workplace Retaliation and Refusing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

In a male-dominated workplace, a client was sexually harassed and assaulted by her supervisor. Despite filing a complaint, and an investigation confirming the harassment, she was terminated.

The client sought legal advice on her settlement offer and did not want to sign an NDA. With our lawyer's help, she negotiated a higher settlement, extended benefits, increased funds for counseling, and avoided signing an NDA.

486

People attended educational sessions on workplace sexual harassment and clinic services.

179

People received legal information, legal advice, and support referrals.

70%

Clients able to take action to address sexual harassment or seek remedies.

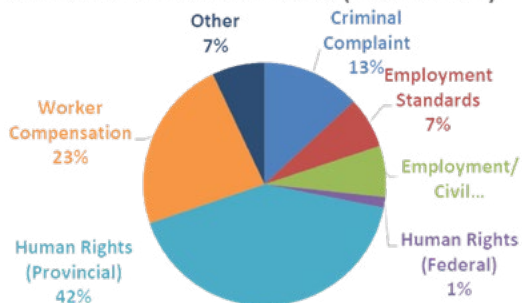
“ My lawyer was compassionate and knowledgeable, and took great care as to how he advised. He and his firm provided care and support through a terrible experience and guided us in empowering and knowledgeable ways. They also took care to use proper pronouns, and lead by example in support for women and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. ”

Supporting Complaints to be Accepted

A client was sexually harassed by her employer, including unwanted touching and demands for sex. Her employer also withheld pay and made demeaning comments about her religious and ethnic background.

She filed a BC human rights complaint, which the employer tried to dismiss. With our lawyer's help, the client successfully responded, and her complaint was accepted.

ADVICE ON LEGAL OPTIONS (% OF CASES)



Campaign Against the Misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

SHARP Workplaces and its sister project, Stand Informed, continued advocating against the use of NDAs to silence complainants of sexual harassment and assault. We focused efforts on raising awareness on NDA harms in presentations to community groups, lawyer trainings, and developing a tip sheet for workers and a tip sheet for employers.

As part of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada working group, SHARP Workplaces is developing policy recommendations for model legislation that jurisdictions across Canada may consider adopting to prevent the misuse of NDAs.

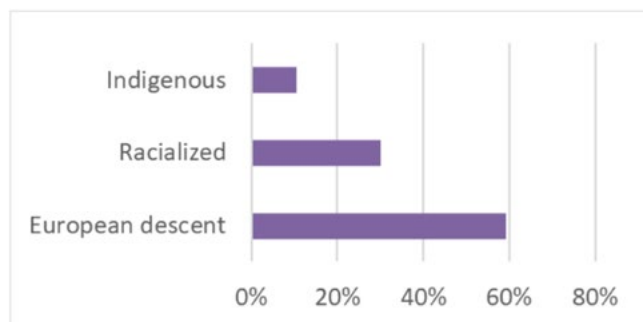
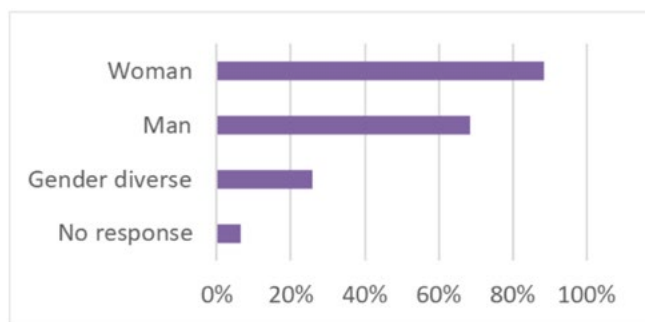
More information on the problem of NDAs, the campaign, and ways to support the campaign can be found at: clasbc.net/FightMisuseofNDAs



Client Demographics

Our clients came from all backgrounds and worked across all sectors. Women overwhelmingly continue to be subjected to sexual harassment.

Sales and services, traditionally roles occupied by women, was the occupational sector most represented, with male-dominated trades and related occupations second.



STAND INFORMED

LEGAL ADVICE SERVICES

Sexual assault is common but often goes unreported. In British Columbia, 37% of women over 15 have experienced sexual assault, with young women, Indigenous women, and LGBTQ2S+ individuals being disproportionately affected. Yet, only 6% of these assaults are reported to police (Statistics Canada 2021).

Stand Informed offers free brief legal advice to anyone in British Columbia who has experienced sexual assault. Formally launched in October 2023 after a soft launch in July, the service is funded by the Department of Justice Canada through a contract with the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Lawyers trained in relevant legal areas, the social context of sexual assault and trauma-informed approaches, provide clients with legal advice and connect them to additional supports.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Supporting Clients to Pursue Legal Options

The client was assaulted in his youth by a person in position of power and trust. The assault was reported to the police, but the client was not ready to participate in the investigation at that time.

With the assistance of his lawyer, the client was able to reach out to other people who were abused by the assailant. The client is now exploring a civil suit against the assailant with the other survivors and has also contacted the RCMP to re-open the criminal investigation.

Making Sense of Consent

A client was troubled by an incident from years ago and uncertain about whether it was consensual. After discussing the law of consent with our lawyer, the client realized they had not consented, which brought relief and opened the possibility of sharing the experience with loved ones.

SHARP and Stand Informed are supported by three lawyers, and two support staff in their work.

46

Number of community groups and service providers Stand Informed connected with.

286

People attended educational outreach sessions.

122

People received legal information, legal advice, and support referrals.



COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE SOCIETY
COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
MARCH 31, 2024

\$

	Operating Fund	Reserve Fund	2024	2023
ASSETS				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash	2,306,492	44,597	2,351,089	499,293
Accounts and funding receivable	128,281	-	128,281	82,707
Prepaid expenses	40,498	-	40,498	29,032
Funds due from operating fund	-	461,080	461,080	212,571
	2,475,271	505,677	2,980,948	823,603
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	6,303	-	6,303	-
	2,481,574	505,677	2,987,251	823,603
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Accounts, payable and accrued	122,653	-	122,653	176,354
Un-expensed funds (Note 5)	1,915,271	-	1,915,271	200,108
CLAS unallocated donations	-	44,597	44,597	44,597
Government remittances payable	2,923	-	2,923	3,492
Deferred contributions	4,978	-	4,978	-
Funds due to reserve fund	461,080	-	461,080	212,571
	2,506,905	44,597	2,551,502	637,122
NET ASSETS	(25,331)	461,080	435,749	186,481
	2,481,574	505,677	2,987,251	823,603

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Jane Dyson Board chair

William W. Black Treasurer

COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE SOCIETY
COMBINED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

\$

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
REVENUE		
Grants		
Canadian Red Cross – New Landslide Project	66,457	-
Legal aid BC Grant funding	512,305	-
Department of Justice Canada	518,650	504,750
PSSG – Stand Informed Project	120,101	-
Law Foundation – CASL	258,114	230,000
Law Foundation – core services	933,689	900,000
Law Foundation – articling fellowship	62,917	70,000
Legal Aid BC Core funding	1,475,500	1,502,000
JAG – HRC (government transfer)	<u>1,567,000</u>	<u>1,400,328</u>
	5,514,733	4,180,578
Amortization of deferred contributions	1,192	-
Community Group Funding – Legal Supervision	18,497	17,928
Donation and Cost awards	116,954	34,608
Education costs recovered	3,590	5,911
ELC Contract	-	23,985
EVABC Contract	73,125	73,125
Health Justice Project	97,027	112,383
Interest income and miscellaneous	225,387	76,059
Pleo Contract	-	3,280
Povnet Contract	6,480	6,480
UBC/UVIC Work Placement Program	-	11,250
	<u>6,056,985</u>	<u>4,972,087</u>

COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE SOCIETY
COMBINED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, continued
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

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	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Ad hoc lawyer costs	601,980	505,279
Amortization	1,304	-
Audit and accounting	28,848	28,750
Bank charges	2,030	1,615
Board expenses	1,578	8,410
Client disbursements	74,390	43,123
Communication and fundraising	31,560	688
Education and training	1,188	4,178
ELC Contract	-	17,029
Equipment purchase	5,040	107,744
Equipment rental and maintenance	110,171	122,762
EVABC Contract	28,725	43,915
Evaluation	10,111	2,000
GST paid (net)	21,139	16,678
Health Justice Project	-	111,303
Insurance	14,161	12,485
Legal, professional, consultant fees	67,465	26,774
Library	9,392	8,277
Office	91,810	127,018
Professional development	18,987	17,858
Pleo Contract	-	1,116
Professional dues and insurance	95,224	69,570
Rent and sublease operating costs	173,590	141,745
Salaries, employee benefits and contractors	4,377,755	3,490,422
Telephone	18,360	16,146
Travel	22,333	12,651
	<u>5,807,141</u>	<u>4,937,536</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>249,844</u>	<u>34,551</u>



Advancing Dignity,
Equality and Justice
Since 1971

Community Legal Assistance Society

Suite 300-1140 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4G1

BC Human Rights Clinic
Community Advocate Support Line
Community Law Program
Mental Health Law Program
SHARP Workplaces
Stand Informed

Phone: 604-685-3425

Toll Free: 1-888-685-6222

Fax: 604-685-7611

Email General Enquiries: contact@clasbc.net

Websites: clasbc.net / judicialreviewbc.ca



@clasbc @clasbc

BC Human Rights Clinic

Phone: 604-622-1100

Toll Free: 1-855-685-6222

Fax: 604-685-7611

Website: bchrc.net

Email General Enquiries

infobchrc@clasbc.net

Email Requests for Representation

Intakebchrc@clasbc.net

Our work in the 2023-2024 fiscal year was made possible through generous contributions from the following funders:



CLAS is located on unceded Coast Salish territory, including the lands belonging to the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilwətaʔ4 /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.