



# REALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS TOGETHER

## **Empowering Access to Justice**



Ontario 

HRLSC | Human Rights Legal Support Centre

CAJDP | Centre d'assistance juridique  
en matière de droits de la personne



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre provides services throughout Ontario and operates from its central office in Toronto. Accordingly, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabeg, Attawandaron and Leni-Lunaape, the Mushkegowuk and particularly the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, as well as the 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory now called Ontario. This place is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples, from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and operate on this land.

The HRLSC also recognizes and acknowledges that we are in the territory subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Anishinaabeg and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the land and waters of the Great Lakes region.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the HRLSC . . . . . **1**

Strategic Plan Introduction from  
Our Chair and Executive Director. . . . . **2**

Plan Development and Acknowledgements . . . . . **3**

Our Strategic Plan. . . . . **4**

Priority 1: Improve Service Access and  
Options for People Across Ontario . . . . . **7**

Priority 2: Provide Leadership in  
Ontario’s Human Rights System . . . . . **8**

Priority 3: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness  
and Sustainability . . . . . **9**

Priority 4: Be an Employer of Choice . . . . . **10**

Our Vision, Mission and Values . . . . . **11**

Five Year Outcomes . . . . . **12**



# ABOUT THE HRLSC

People in Ontario face discrimination based on disability, race, sex, creed, ancestry, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and other identified characteristics set out in the province's *Human Rights Code* (*Code*). The Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) is Ontario's leading publicly funded human rights organization, tasked with helping support individual Ontarians to claim and protect their human rights.

Established in 2008 under the *Code*, the HRLSC is one pillar of Ontario's human rights system, alongside the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) and the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

# STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2023, the HRLSC initiated a strategic planning process to identify our priority areas – those where proactive and sustained work can have an impact. We engaged more than 180 individuals, including staff, clients, human rights service providers, community organizations, partners and funders, through focus groups, interviews and surveys. We heard about growing discrimination and listened to concerns about the critical importance of our human rights legal support services in this context. We also heard that the HRLSC, as a trusted and credible organization, is uniquely positioned to advance a more equitable society.

Our new strategic plan is our vision for the future. It builds on our history of successes and inspires us for the future. With this plan we commit to data-driven and evidence-informed approaches that are grounded in people’s lived experience, building our organizational capacity and investing in our employees. Successfully delivering on this plan requires us to leverage our collective expertise and work collaboratively – with the OHRC, the HRTO, and our Indigenous, human rights, community and educational partners. In doing so, we will provide leadership in Ontario’s human rights system and improve access to human rights supports and service options for people across Ontario, especially for those who are most marginalized and vulnerable to discrimination.

Sincerely,



**Remi Warner**  
Interim  
Executive Director



**Ena Chadha**  
Chair of the Board



# PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the HRLSC's new Strategic Plan was a collaborative, consultative process involving the HRLSC's stakeholders, clients, Board and Staff. We reflect with immense gratitude on the time and thought put into our consultation process by the stakeholders we engaged throughout the province and beyond.

We are grateful for the engagement of our clients, staff, members of our Board, as well as the following organizations in this process:

- 2 Spirited People of the First Nations
- Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
- BC Human Rights Clinic
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights
- Canadian Human Rights Association
- Chiefs of Ontario
- Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
- Community Justice Collective
- Community Legal Education Ontario
- Don Valley Community Legal Services
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario
- HIV AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario
- IAVGO Community Legal Clinic
- John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington & Area
- Justice for Migrant Workers
- Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic
- Legal Aid Ontario
- Metis Nation of Ontario
- Ministry of the Attorney General
- Ontario Human Rights Commission
- Osgoode Hall Law School
- Parkdale Community Legal Clinic
- Pro Bono Students Canada
- The 519
- University of Toronto Faculty of Law
- University of Windsor Faculty of Law
- Workers Action Centre

Moreover, we are grateful to our consultants Fay Faraday at Vision and Results and Sonja Nerad at SN Management for their hard work consulting with stakeholders and facilitating the subsequent discussions that have led to the publication of this Strategic Plan.



# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## Fall 2023

Board Initiates Strategic Planning Process

## November 2023

Stakeholder Focus Groups and Consultation, Client Survey

## February, March, April 2024

Staff Interviews, Focus Group, Survey, Half-Day Workshop

## March 22, 2024

Board All-Day Strategic Planning Day

## May 30, 2024

Staff Review of Plan & Feedback

## May 31, 2024

Board Approval

## Summer/Early Fall 2024

Management Retreat & Implementation/Change Management Planning

## November/December 2024

Implementation Plan Drafts

## January 2025

Strategic Plan Rollout

# MISSION

Empower people and communities who have experienced discrimination by providing legal services and supports, strengthening people's capacity to navigate the human rights system and advancing access to and the attainment of justice in Ontario.



# VISION

Advancing an equitable society where everyone lives with dignity and respect and upholds and promotes human rights.



# PRIORITIES

## Improve access and service options for people across Ontario



- Increase and improve access to legal services and supports for people in Ontario, especially those who are most marginalized and vulnerable to discrimination
- Enhance the availability of early intervention/resolution service options to strengthen our service continuum

## Provide leadership in Ontario's human rights system



- Improve our capacity to use data, client feedback and evidence to inform decisions and service delivery
- Strengthen the HRLSC's leadership role in its support of persons seeking human rights justice to advance systemic change, law reform, jurisprudence, reconciliation and experiential education.

## Enhance organizational effectiveness and sustainability



- Strengthen organizational infrastructure
- Increase organizational funds and revenues and diversify revenue and funding sources
- Strengthen the Board's governance capacity

## Be an employer of choice



- Improve employee recruitment and retention
- Enhance workplace health and wellbeing



## Priority #1

# IMPROVE SERVICE ACCESS AND OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE ACROSS ONTARIO

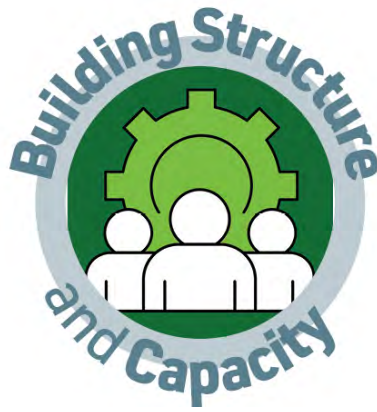
- Increase and improve access to legal services and supports for people in Ontario, especially those who are most marginalized and vulnerable to discrimination
- Enhance the availability of early intervention/resolution service options to strengthen our service continuum



## Priority #2

# PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN ONTARIO'S HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

- Improve our capacity to use data, client feedback and evidence to inform decisions and service delivery
- Strengthen the HRLSC's leadership role in its support of persons seeking human rights justice to advance systemic change, law reform, jurisprudence, reconciliation and experiential education



## Priority #3

# ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Strengthen organizational infrastructure
- Increase organizational funds and revenues and diversify revenue and funding sources
- Strengthen the Board's governance capacity



## Priority #4

# BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

- Improve employee recruitment and retention
- Enhance workplace health and wellbeing



# VISION

We are committed to advancing an equitable society where everyone lives with dignity and respect and upholds and promotes human rights.

# MISSION

Our role is to empower people and communities who have experienced discrimination by providing legal services and supports, strengthening people's capacity to navigate the human rights system and advancing access to and the attainment of justice in Ontario.

# VALUES

## **Equity and Inclusion**

We treat everyone with dignity, respect and compassion, and work collaboratively to eliminate barriers and advance a just society.

## **Excellence**

We deliver independent, responsive, high-quality and high-impact legal services and supports and pursue learning, knowledge-sharing and innovation.

## **Integrity**

We are principled, accountable and transparent in our communications, decisions, work and use of resources.



# FIVE YEAR OUTCOMES:

- ✓ People have improved access to services and supports
- ✓ People have more service options
- ✓ Clients are satisfied
- ✓ Decision making is data-driven and evidence-informed
- ✓ HRLSC is engaged in more strategic partnerships
- ✓ HRLSC provides leadership in human rights analysis and strategy

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