

HRLSC | Human Rights Legal Support Centre

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

2022-2023

Annual Report

Land Acknowledgement

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC or Centre) provides services throughout Ontario and has lawyers located in Toronto, Guelph, Hamilton, London, Thunder Bay, and Windsor.

Accordingly, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, Attawandaron and Leni-Lunaape, the Métis homeland and particularly the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The place now called Ontario is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and operate in this land.

The HRLSC also recognizes and acknowledges 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

Land Acknowledgement	0
Message from our Chair	2
Message from our Executive Director	4
Mandate and Services	5
Organizational Activities	7
Organizational Projects	18
Analysis of Operational Performance.....	20
Performance Measures.....	26
Risk Analysis.....	27
Current Mandate Letter Priorities.....	28
Analysis of Financial Operations.....	31
HRLSC Board of Directors	33
Audited Financial Statements.....	34

Message from our Chair

With the celebration of the historic 60th year of Ontario's *Human Rights Code* (Code) and resumption of regularly scheduled mediations and hearings at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), we had the opportunity to take stock of the HRLSC's many accomplishments in 2022-2023. In addition to our ongoing participation at the HRTO, we appeared before the Divisional Court and the Ontario Court of Appeal. We rolled out modernized digital tools to enhance our service delivery, welcomed new staff and board members, and commemorated our significant work as legal mentors and social justice stewards supporting the important human rights principles envisioned by the Code for Ontario.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the HRLSC appeared in several cases of critical importance to the Code, including for example:

- ❖ *Briggs v. Durham (Police Services Board)*, 2022 ONCA 823: the continuation of a case from 2017 involving the HRTO's dismissal of an application by Mr. Briggs, who alleged racial profiling by police, after the respondent Durham Police Services Board claimed that Mr. Briggs signed a settlement which barred the case from proceeding.
- ❖ *Weilgosh v. London District Catholic School Board*, 2022 HRTO 1194: the HRLSC provided representation to an applicant whose workplace discrimination case became a lightning rod for determining the jurisdictional boundaries of the HRTO in relation to unionized workplaces, which had been called into question by the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling of *Northern Regional Health Authority v. Horrocks*.

Additionally, the HRLSC successfully petitioned for the ground-breaking *Haseeb v. Imperial Oil* case to be heard before the Ontario Court of Appeal after arguing the case previously at the Divisional Court in 2022. The HRLSC will report on the positive appeal outcome for this case in next year's annual report. The Centre is ready to meet legal challenges to its successful decisions in the cases above in the coming year as well.

In 2022-2023, the HRLSC looked to ambitiously grow its service delivery capacity and its public profile. Our bright and dedicated staff worked with community partners and digital media creators to find new, accessible and engaging ways to share our resources, including through our remodelled website, speaking engagements and outreach activities, such as the continuation of the HRLSC's poster distribution. Key to the HRLSC's continued operations have been the resolve and determination of intake and legal staff. Despite finite resources, these staff members supported clients through difficult times, including the post-pandemic landscape and found innovative ways to assist in ensuring that these individuals' human rights were respected.

The Board's Public Awareness Committee (PAC), under the valued leadership of Vice-Chair Mary Joe Freire, have been developing an active public education campaign to disseminate much-needed information to clients, members of the public and other relevant organizations serving rights-seeking communities about the HRLSC and the Ontario's human rights three-pillars system. This campaign builds off the moment of the previous year's distribution of informational posters across the Ministry of the Solicitor General's (SOLGEN) correctional facilities. This expanded

campaign increased the number of organizations the HRLSC engaged with to include legal clinics and other community organizations serving potential rights-seeking individuals.

Along with the PAC, our Board was a source of much activity in 2022-2023. Our newest cross-appointed member Sandi Bell joined our board and brings extensive experience as an advocate for disability rights and in the fight against racial injustice. We also wish to thank and commend our longest serving board member Patrick Nadjiwan, first appointed in 2009, for his steadfast commitment, incisive and practical guidance, humour and wisdom in helping the Board perform its duties.

In 2022-2023, the HRLSC rolled out a new website and prepared for the complementary deployment of a Client Portal system early in the next fiscal year. These platforms will allow the HRLSC to scale its services in an increasingly digitizing world, pairing our web experience with around-the-clock access for clients to their intake information and Client Portal profiles. The launch of the website was also part of a broader effort to engage with the public and to showcase the skills and credentials of the HRLSC.

A special highlight of the HRLSC's community engagement efforts was our November 1st symposium, titled "From Classroom to Case Law," commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Code. Over 125 people attended this event in-person and on-line as esteemed panelists reflected on the HRLSC and our Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program's (ADIP) contributions to building a human rights culture in Canada. This event brought together Ontario's Attorney General, as well as members of the Three Pillars of our human rights system (the HRTO and the Ontario Human Rights Commission), faculty and staff from Osgoode Hall Law School, former and current ADIP students, as well as community partners and professional colleagues from across the province.

Through our high calibre advocacy work and the stewardship of future legal professionals in the field of human rights, the HRLSC has an indispensable role, both in Ontario's delivery of access to justice and in protecting the dignity and human rights of people across the province. In order to fulfill its goal of equality rights for all in housing, employment and services, the Province must protect and invest in the HRLSC's essential Ontario-wide mandate.

As I said during our "Classroom to Case Law" symposium, we at the HRLSC are a small, but mighty organization. I submit our exemplary work this year, through this annual report, as a testament to the effectiveness of the HRLSC in serving Ontarians. This annual report speaks to the extraordinary power and potential of the Centre, when given the tools and resources, to resolve disputes and provide human rights redress in the public interest to the people of Ontario in their time of distress. I am very privileged to collaborate with such an incredible group of professionals on the staff team and Board who creatively work to reduce discrimination and advance equity in the province. I give my thanks to our funders, our staff and board for supporting our continued operations in 2022-2023.

Sincerely,

Ena Chadha

Message from our Executive Director

Over 16,500 individuals who sought assistance regarding experiences of discrimination and harassment received legal advice and support services from the HRLSC this past fiscal year.

Every day our staff assist with individuals who face discrimination – including individuals whose employment may be threatened because of age and or a disability; individuals who are treated poorly because of their place of origin; or individuals who are denied housing because of their race, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation.

Individuals in this province continue to experience discrimination contrary to the *Code*. As Ontario continues to move towards a post pandemic recovery phase, the HRLSC remains ready to help all who need our assistance; to help them understand and enforce their rights. This past year, our staff conducted more than 1,500 in-depth legal interviews, attended approximately 350 mediations and settled almost 250 applications at various stages of the human rights process.

I continue to be amazed at what our staff are able to accomplish on our limited budget. In this resourcefulness I see the exciting opportunities that will be before us once our efforts to secure the necessary funding for our ongoing operations are realized.

The HRLSC continues to seek innovative ways to reach and interact with our clients and stakeholders. This past year we were pleased to launch our new website, which includes a user-friendly interface that will enable Ontarians to easily access the HRLSC's resources. We also launched a Client Portal which will allow users to complete and submit intakes at their own convenience at any time. These platforms will allow the HRLSC to scale its services in an increasingly digitizing world.

This past year also saw our Chair, Ena Chadha, recognized for her long-standing career as a human rights lawyer. Ena received both national and provincial honours including the Ontario Bar Association's Award for Distinguished Service. We are so very fortunate to have our dedicated board members, representing diverse regions of the province, to advocate for and guide the HRLSC as we continue to navigate a post pandemic Ontario.

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated staff who, every day, give their very best to ensure that individuals who experience discrimination contrary to the *Code* receive the guidance, support and legal services necessary to redress the harm they have experienced. Our success would be impossible without each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Sharmaine Hall

Mandate and Services

The HRLSC is an independent agency funded by Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) to provide human rights advice and legal support services throughout Ontario.

Legislative Mandate

Under Ontario's Human Rights Code, the HRLSC provides free and confidential legal advice, support services and representation to individuals whose rights may have been violated under the Code.

Vision

The HRLSC strives to be a leader in advancing equality, in protecting human rights, and in supporting every person's right to live and work with dignity and respect.

Mission

The HRLSC advances equality and protects human rights by providing a range of accessible, high quality legal advice and support services to those who have faced discrimination contrary to the Code.

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination under the Code generally means treating someone differently and unfairly because of a personal characteristic. Sometimes a rule or practice unintentionally singles out particular people and results in unequal treatment. This type of unintentional discrimination is called "constructive" or "adverse effect" discrimination.

There are 17 personal characteristics for which discrimination is prohibited under the Code. These grounds are protected in five distinct areas of society, known as social areas under the Code.

Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Ancestry
- ❖ Citizenship
- ❖ Colour
- ❖ Creed (religion)
- ❖ Disability
- ❖ Ethnic origin
- ❖ Family status
- ❖ Gender expression
- ❖ Gender identity
- ❖ Marital status
- ❖ Record of offences (in employment)
- ❖ Place of origin
- ❖ Race
- ❖ Sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment)
- ❖ Sexual orientation
- ❖ Receipt of social assistance (housing)

Social Areas of Activities for Discrimination

- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Contracts
- ❖ Services, goods and facilities
- ❖ Unions or occupational and professional associations

HRLSC Services

The HRLSC provides free legal advice and support services to individuals across Ontario who may have experienced discrimination based on one or more of the grounds prohibited under the *Code* in relation to one or more of the protected social areas.

The HRLSC helps people who have human rights concerns by:

- ❖ Providing legal services in 140 languages including French, American Sign Language, Cree, Oji-Cree, Mohawk, and Ojibway;
- ❖ Offering a toll-free telephone advice service that helps callers: identify if they have experienced discrimination, harassment, or reprisal; understand their options; and decide if they should take legal action;
- ❖ Assisting clients with:
 - Early resolution of situations involving discrimination, harassment, or reprisal;
 - Filing human rights applications, motions, and submissions at the HRTO;
 - Negotiating settlements;
 - Attending HRTO mediations and hearings;
 - Enforcing HRTO orders;
 - Representation at judicial reviews and appeals;
- ❖ Providing a pathway to Ontario's human rights legal system through up-to-date and user-friendly online resources available on the HRLSC website and social media platforms;
- ❖ Conducting educational outreach to community and service organizations to increase understanding of prohibited discrimination and harassment, the rights and responsibilities set out in the *Code*, and Ontarians' legal options; and
- ❖ Ensuring Indigenous people can receive legal advice and support from an Indigenous staff person. The HRLSC provides Indigenous peoples with culturally appropriate, safe, and accessible services.

“

Once again, I can't thank you enough for all you've done here, I'm appreciative beyond words. Keep up the great work!

- HRLSC client

”

Organizational Activities

Speaking Events and Public Legal Education

Activities of the HRLSC's Chair of the Board of Directors:

- ❖ Provided training to the Sexual Harassment and Resource Exchange (SHARE) team on workplace sexual harassment investigations best practices.
- ❖ Represented the HRLSC as one of two masters of ceremony for the “From Classroom to Case Law” event in partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School.
- ❖ Keynote Speaker at ARCH Disability Law Centre’s AGM presentation “Reflecting on 40 Years of Disability in the *Human Rights Code*.”
- ❖ Spoke at the OBA’s Trans Day of Remembrance Reception to honour and remember individuals harmed by anti-trans prejudice.
- ❖ Special Guest Speaker for Western University Faculty of Law event called “Systemic Racism in Canadian Policing: The Past, Present and Future” hosted by Visiting Lecturer Sunil Gurukh.
- ❖ Supreme Court Law Review Co-author of “Does the SCC give a ‘Freak’ about Disability Dignity: The Inclusion Fallacy 25 years after *Eldridge*”.

Activities of the Executive Director:

- ❖ Moderated a panel on addressing systemic discrimination in Ontario at the “Human Rights @60” conference hosted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).
- ❖ Provided remarks at the Law Society of Ontario’s (LSO) “Six Minute Administrative Law” continuing professional development session.
- ❖ Participated in AMGEN’s Black History Month discussion panel as a guest speaker. Topics included the *Code*, cases involving various types of discrimination and harassment, as well as the HRLSC’s services.

Activities of the HRLSC’s Legal Staff:

- ❖ Two members of legal counsel and an Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program (ADIP) student spoke on panel discussions on notices regarding the early dismissal of applications at the HRTA and critical developments in damages and remedies at the OBA’s Annual Update on Human Rights.
- ❖ One of the HRLSC’s legal counsel co-chaired the 11th Annual Human Rights Summit for the LSO. At this same event, the HRLSC’s research counsel provided an update on the major case law changes in Ontario’s human rights system in 2022. A third lawyer from the HRLSC also sat on a panel discussion regarding preparing clients for the HRTA.
- ❖ The HRLSC was represented by a member of its legal counsel at the LSO’s “L’essentiel de la pratique en droit administratif” program and spoke about managing delays in administrative procedures.
- ❖ The HRLSC was represented at the OBA’s 21st Annual Current Issues in Employment Law by one of its members of legal counsel, who discussed an employer’s duty to accommodate employee absences.
- ❖ A member of the HRLSC’s staff provided public legal education on housing and the *Code* to staff at the Durham Community Legal Clinic.
- ❖ Staff for the Indigenous Services Outreach Committee (ISOC) completed 15 public legal education sessions for the Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services.

- ❖ A member of HRLSC's legal counsel and ISOC presented to the OBA on providing inclusive and accessible legal services relating to cultural competency and representing Indigenous clients.
- ❖ ISOC staff presented to the University of Windsor on the Code and Ontario's human rights system for the Turtle Island March Break camp.
- ❖ ISOC was present for three days of the Little Native Hockey League March Break tournament in Mississauga. ISOC members participated in a legal clinic and set up a table to share information about the Code and the HRLSC's services.

Partnerships and Programs

Indigenous Services

The Indigenous Services Outreach Committee (ISOC) provided culturally accessible human rights legal services to Indigenous individuals and communities. ISOC conducted this work through outreach at events and gatherings, public legal education with partner organizations, advisory work as members of consultative bodies and by providing summary advice and in-depth legal support to Indigenous clients. This work included providing services in multiple languages, including Cree, Oji-Cree, Mohawk, and Ojibway, as well as taking a trauma-informed approach to supporting clients.

The members of ISOC spent considerable time and resources building partnerships and working relationships with various organizations:

Indigenous Justice Division – Elders Council

ISOC worked with the Indigenous Justice Division staff from the Ministry of the Attorney General and discussed plans for a future Public Legal Education workshop to train Elders to provide support for applicants at hearings.

Tribunals Ontario – Indigenous Services

ISOC staff met with Tribunals Ontario in February to discuss and provide feedback on its Indigenous services.

Métis Nation of Ontario

The MNO worked with ISOC staff to build a public legal education workshop on carding and police.

Indigenous Friendship Centres – Indigenous Justice Coordinators

A member of the HRLSC's legal counsel on ISOC continued to support human rights training for members of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Outreach and Public Legal Education

During the 2023 March break, members of the ISOC as well as the SHARE team took part in a mobile legal clinic hosted at the Little Native Hockey League (LNHL) tournament in Mississauga. Members of ISOC circulated information about the HRLSC's services and provided public legal education presentations to tournament attendees. This was the first time that ISOC was present at the LNHL tournament and staff are looking to further develop ISOC's outreach activities and materials for future events.

Ontario Human Rights Commission – Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group

ISOC sat on the OHRC's Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group and participated in the Commission's strategic planning and engagement by providing input on content for new policy on:

- ❖ The discriminatory display of names, words, and images;
- ❖ The process and content of the OHRC's poverty consultation; and
- ❖ The approach to developing a policy statement on hiring based on Indigeneity.

Pro Bono Students Canada – Indigenous Human Rights Program Advisory Council

In 2022-2023, the HRLSC continued its support of the Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) program via training for law students enrolled in the Indigenous Human Rights Program. For this fiscal year, the PBSC program entered a slow-down period as it transitioned between program managers. ISOC members look forward to providing future legal trainings to students in the program upon its resumption.

SHARE

The Sexual Harassment and Resource Exchange (SHARE) is a Department of Justice funded program that provides legal education, intake and in-depth legal services to current and future workers about their legal and non-legal options in the face of workplace sexual harassment and assault.

In 2022-2023, SHARE increased its capacity to serve Indigenous and Francophone communities through the hiring of one Indigenous, as well as one bilingual Human Rights Advisor/Human Rights Representative. In addition to providing summary legal advice and information to callers, SHARE staff also conducted over 115 outreach and education events reaching over 1,874 participants. SHARE's outreach and education activities continued to be conducted through community organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other service agencies across Ontario. Outreach was directed towards youth, international students and Indigenous workers primarily through in-person and virtual presentations. These presentations addressed topics related to sexual harassment in the workplace and provided legal education.

Some activities of note for SHARE in 2022-2023 included:

- ❖ Signing an agreement with the Toronto District School Board to provide regular public legal education sessions to high school students.
- ❖ Addressing to a conference held by the Canadian Association of Colleges and University Student Services with a presentation on "Providing Culturally Competent Support to Indigenous Students Experiencing Workplace Sexual Harassment."
- ❖ Adding the 519 community centre, an organization that assists and supports the 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Toronto, as well as Legal Assistance of Windsor as sources of 'warm' referrals for human rights intakes.
- ❖ Developing and releasing a set of legal information booklets on its new website. This website, built off the initial HRLSC redesign project, was created as a supplemental project funded through the Department of Justice.

Barbra Schlifer Clinic

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic (the Clinic) provides legal services, counselling and interpretation for marginalized and racialized women and gender-diverse clients that have experienced violence.

The HRLSC and the Clinic continued co-referrals in 2022-2023. The HRLSC referred clients to the Clinic for services including family law and immigration legal advice, support through the family court process, and counselling services. The Clinic referred clients with human rights complaints to the HRLSC. These mutual referrals reduced client intake time and increased efficiencies for staff and clients in accessing remedies. The HRLSC received 15 warm referrals from the Schlifer Clinic in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program

The Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program (ADIP) entered its eleventh year of operation. ADIP continued its highly successful mentorship program providing students from Osgoode Hall Law School with hands-on experience at the HRLSC in anti-discrimination and administrative law. As with previous years, twelve students worked at the HRLSC during either the fall, winter and summer semesters, providing support on the Centre's intake phone lines and working with lawyer mentors.

Reflections on ADIP: From Classroom to Case Law

This year marked an occasion for the HRLSC to bring attention to its valuable partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School as Ontario reached a milestone in human rights history. As part of the HRLSC's celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Code, the Centre held a symposium with Osgoode Hall Law School to celebrate the work done by ADIP students and alumni. This symposium, titled, "From Classroom to Case Law," highlighted the importance of experiential learning in training the next generation of legal professionals within Ontario's human rights system and other fields of social justice law.

This symposium included several alumni as panelists who provided insights into how they had applied their ADIP training to their current positions in criminal, employment, labour and immigration law and policy. A running theme for each was how ADIP had provided a window into facilitating client-centred service in the legal field and beyond.

Held on November 1st, 2022, our "From Classroom to Case Law" event brought together ADIP alumni, former mentors, Osgoode Law School faculty that oversee the ADIP program, as well as former HRLSC staff and prominent figures in human rights in Ontario and Canada.

The conference started with an opening prayer performed by Indigenous knowledge keeper and Elder Pauline Shirt. Next, keynote guest speaker Kimberly Murray, the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools, spoke about the human rights community's responsibility to advance national efforts to reconcile historic injustices against Indigenous Peoples.

It was a message that resonated with the ensuing panel discussions. Speakers both celebrated what ADIP had accomplished as a collective and for the professional growth of alumni, while also focusing on the important work in support of access to justice and support for clients required within the field of human rights.

"I think more than anything, the ability to do this kind of work with the lawyers and to confidently bring my own voice to the process was a major takeaway and invaluable part of the experience that I had at ADIP," explained Ania Kwadrans, an ADIP alumni who is now working in immigration policy in Ottawa. "The second major takeaway was the

access to justice values of intake services and understanding how to operate in high volume and high-pressure environments.”

In the practitioner’s panel alumni and labour attorney Kendall Yamagishi echoed Kwadrans’s thoughts and noted how her experience on how HRLSC’s intake lines had assisted her previously as a criminal lawyer. “When I was going into [holding] cells at old city hall and sitting with this person who I’d never met before...it was like a reflex... I just had this sort of developed muscle memory about how to deal with those situations on the fly,” said Yamagishi.

ADIP’s Academic Director, Professor Bruce Ryder and the HRLSC’s Chair of the Board, Ena Chadha echoed the praise that the alumni panelists had for the program.

“The successful launch of this program and how we have come together speaks to the strength of our Centre’s conviction, our conviction in the service that we do for all Ontarians, and our dedication to our ADIP students,” said Chadha in her opening remarks for the conference.

“The people; they need to always be front and centre.”

- Special Interlocutor Kimberly Murray

Professor Ryder also reflected on the impact of the program: “ADIP alum frequently report that their experience working at the Centre has been formative to their professional careers and to their human rights informed practices.”

In their addresses, our keynote speakers affirmed the focus of ADIP’s work upon client-centred practice as well its impact on Ontario’s human rights system and the legal profession.

In his introduction of the Attorney General, the president of the South Asian Bar Association of Toronto (SABA Toronto), Devin Persaud, noted the historical importance of the human rights work done by ADIP especially for the members of his association. “It’s important that we not forget those sacrifices that our families made— our trailblazers made— in making sure that the Canadian society is reflective of its population.” (As part of its diversity initiatives, SABA Toronto acted as the sponsor for the symposium’s reception.)

“This conference today is titled From Classroom to Case Law,” remarked Murray. “For me, the case law has never come first. Lawyers don’t like to hear that. The case law has never come first. The *Onkwehon:we*, the people; they need to always be front and centre.”

“I would encourage you to be confident with your ideas, your experiences,” the Honourable Attorney General Doug Downey advised as the final speaker of the event, “For everybody who showed up here today, the experiences you have, there are probably a hundred people who wouldn’t even come in the building, so tell your experience, tell your truth and share it.”

From their remarks, it was clear our alumni panelists were ready to meet these challenges. In particular, knowing other ADIP students were in the field striving to make the same positive changes gave a practitioner panel member and ADIP alumni Njeri Damali-Sojourner optimism for the future of Ontario's human rights system.

"I know that I'm speaking to someone that has sound legal education," said Sojourner-Damali, "somebody who understands and respects the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, somebody who has developed the diligence of practice that the lawyers at the Centre have developed and someone that I can work with collaboratively and creatively to get to a solution."

We are thankful for the contributions of Elder Pauline Shirt, who opened and closed this symposium and to Osgoode Professional Development for providing the space, equipment and staff to provide an event that accessible to both in-person and online participants.

We are grateful for the participation of our keynote speakers Special Interlocutor Kimberly Murray and Attorney General Dough Downey and our panelists. First and foremost, amongst our panelists, our ADIP panelists Njeri Damali-Sojourner, Kendall Yamagishi and Ania Kwadrans, our thanks for your time and insights. Additionally, we thank our panelists from Osgoode Hall's faculty Professors Sonia Lawrence and Faisal Bhabha as well as former ADIP mentor Roger Love. For our panelists Raj Anand who took time away from his role as a Partner at WeirFoulds and Michael Gottheil who made time in his busy schedule as the Canadian Human Rights Commission's accessibility commissioner to speak with us. We would also be remiss to not mention the work of moderating discussions handled by Lisa Cirillo of the Law Foundation of Ontario and Justice Andrew Pinto.

We also are grateful to our reception sponsor SABA Toronto and the work of Osgoode Hall Law School's Dean Mary Condon without whose support we could not have held our event.

Lastly, we thank our Executive Director Sharmaine Hall, as well as our Chair Ena Chadha and Osgoode's ADIP director Professor Bruce Ryder, and our staff members Sharon Hughes and Juleene Pollard, summer student Angel Xing and volunteer Tej Dhanoya, all of whom helped develop and coordinate this event.

To all those in attendance both online and in-person from our government and community partners, other ADIP alumni, as well as professional colleagues and acquaintances, we appreciate your attendance and interest in this event and the joint work of the HRLSC and Osgoode Hall Law School in the continued operation of ADIP.

Ontario Human Rights Commission – Community Advisory Group

The HRLSC continued to be a member of the OHRC's Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG represents diverse constituencies including community service providers, representatives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, individuals with lived experiences relating to discrimination prohibited under the *Code*, social justice organizations in Ontario, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission and provides advice relating to the OHRC's strategic priorities. In its role as a CAG member, the HRLSC provided insights from its service delivery.

Collaboration with HRTO

In the 2022-2023 fiscal period, Tribunals Ontario and the HRLSC joined forces to ensure that information pamphlets about the Centre's services were included as part of the HRTO's correspondence with service users. The HRLSC supplied educational inserts to be included as part

of the HRTA's materials so that all applicants can connect with the Centre for early assistance. The HRLSC also provided materials and suggestions for information about its services on the HRTA's website. The information provided through these inserts and on the HRTA's website will direct this content's viewers to related information on the HRLSC's website.

Notable Hearings

Valiquette v. BPM Enterprises Ltd. (Tim Horton's), 2023 HRTA 53

The applicant was 61 years old and had worked for the respondent for over 18 years when she was fired. The applicant believed that she was fired because of her age and the work accommodations she requested that stemmed from knee and shoulder injuries. The respondent denied any discrimination, arguing the applicant's employment was terminated without cause because she was medically incapable of performing the essential duties of her job, even with accommodations up to the point of undue hardship.

The HRTA dismissed the allegations of discrimination with respect to age but upheld the application on the ground of disability.

The HRTA awarded the applicant:

- ❖ \$25,000 in general damages, noting the termination of employment had a serious impact on the applicant given her age and length of employment with the respondent; and
- ❖ Lost wages from the termination of her employment to the date of the applicant's knee surgery.

Matheus v. McCann, 2023 HRTA 77

The applicant was a food processing engineer, originally from Ecuador, with a masters' degree from an accredited Canadian university. He was in his mid-twenties when he was hired by the corporate respondent, a food processing company that produces liquid sweeteners.

The applicant alleged that shortly after starting work with the corporate respondent he was repeatedly harassed by the personal respondent (the owner of the company). The personal respondent would make disparaging comments about Ecuadorians, stating they were lazy and only want to get paid without doing any work. During a disagreement the two men had, the personal respondent told the applicant that he could 'go back to where he came from.' The applicant also alleged the personal respondent made comments related to his age, stating he was too young and stupid to know what he was talking about.

The applicant wrote a formal complaint letter to the personal respondent which set out his concerns regarding the treatment he had received and expressly cited the Code. The applicant alleged that when he gave the personal respondent the letter, the personal respondent said: "I knew you were that type of person. If you want to play that game, let's play that game." Two weeks later, the applicant's employment was terminated.

The respondents disputed the applicant's allegations of harassment and reprisal but gave conflicting answers as to the reason for the termination of his employment. The personal respondent testified that he fired the applicant due to poor performance but the Record of Employment the applicant was provided stated he had quit, which left the applicant ineligible for employment insurance benefits.

The HRTA accepted the applicant's version of events and:

- ❖ Awarded the applicant \$20,000 in general damages as well as special damages to compensate the applicant for lost income;
- ❖ Ordered the personal respondent to complete the Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Human Rights 101" training; and
- ❖ Ordered the corporate respondent to retain an expert to develop a human rights and anti-harassment policy.

[Amoako v. Truong, 2022 HRTO 902](#)

The applicant was a third-year university student looking for an apartment to rent from the respondent, a landlord. The respondent arranged for the applicant to view the apartment.

The applicant testified that she called the respondent the following day while she was on her way to see the unit. She alleged the landlord asked for her ethnicity and she responded: "African Canadian." He then told her the room was no longer available. When she asked why, he said he had previously had a bad experience with Black people and it was 'nothing personal.'

The respondent acknowledged he asked the applicant what her background was but denied asking her what her ethnicity was and claimed that the applicant voluntarily told him she was of African descent. The respondent claimed he texted her the address and agreed to show her the unit knowing she was Black. The respondent and a witness both testified that during the process of rescheduling a viewing for the applicant, someone else had been shown the room and put down a deposit.

The HRTA found that the respondent did ask the applicant about her ethnicity but accepted the respondent's testimony that the unit had already been rented by his mother before the applicant had the opportunity to view the unit. The HRTA still found, however, that the applicant's race was a factor in the decision not to rent the room to her.

The HRTA awarded the applicant:

- ❖ \$2,000 in general damage for the violation of her rights under the Code.

A Transformative Case for Ontario's Human Rights System

The HRLSC was instrumental in successfully establishing that unionized workers can pursue human rights claims and are not restricted to grievance processes. The HRLSC's advocacy in *Weilgosh v. London District Catholic School Board* was key in helping the HRTA decide that it did not lose jurisdiction simply because a grievance process was triggered.

[Weilgosh v. London District Catholic School Board, 2022 HRTO 1194](#)

In this case, the HRTA considered requests to dismiss two applications based on the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Northern Regional Health Authority v. Horrocks*, 2021 SCC 42. In reviewing Manitoba's *Human Rights Code*, the Supreme Court noted the statute must show the Manitoba legislature intended for the MHRC to have concurrent jurisdiction with labour arbitrators in order to displace the exclusive jurisdiction provided by the Labour Relations Act. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Horrocks* found that labour arbitrators in Manitoba have exclusive jurisdiction over all matters in unionized workplaces that relate to the collective agreement between the employer and union.

The two applicants both worked in unionized environments. The first applicant, who retained the Human Rights Legal Support Centre as legal counsel for their application, was a teacher for the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB). The second applicant was a police officer with the Peel Regional Police Services. Both filed applications with the HRTO about issues arising in their workplace. Both applicants' unions had also filed grievances about these workplace issues, under the collective agreements that governed their workplaces.

After the release of the *Horrocks* decision, the employers in both matters filed requests to dismiss both applications. The employers argued *Horrocks* should apply in Ontario and that the HRTO had no jurisdiction over applications filed by unionized employees. The HRTO heard both requests together and appointed a three-member panel for the proceeding.

The HRTO concluded that:

- ❖ Unlike with the Manitoba *Code*, the powers under section 45 and 45.1 of Ontario's *Human Rights Code* allowed the HRTO to defer and dismiss applications in the *Code* provided evidence of legislative intent for concurrent jurisdiction over human rights matters; and
- ❖ Based on *Weilgosh*, the HRTO had concurrent jurisdiction to decide claims of discrimination and harassment falling within the scope of a collective agreement. Unionized employees in Ontario still have the choice of pursuing human rights claims by way of a grievance or an application to the HRTO.

Notable Settlements

Alleged Employer Reprisal against Employee after Harassing Behaviour and Comments

The applicant, an Indigenous woman, was an employee of the respondent, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. One of the respondent's managers made several sexualized comments in the workplace in the applicant's presence. He also made several inappropriate comments related to the applicant's ancestry. When she responded to one of his comments, he filed a formal complaint of "reverse racism" against her.

The applicant subsequently made a formal complaint of her own against the manager, advising the respondent of the manager's inappropriate comments. The respondent investigated her complaint. Three months after the applicant filed her complaint, the respondent provided her with a brief, two-page report that did not fully address all of her concerns. The respondent then terminated her employment that same day.

The applicant agreed to a settlement for:

- ❖ \$28,544.00 in general damages; and
- ❖ \$6,345 in special damages, for lost wages.

Allegations of Sexual Harassment of Tenant on ODSP

The client is a single mother living on social assistance. She lived in a Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) subsidized housing unit with her children. The client alleged that a landlord's staff person had sexually harassed her over several months.

The client had fallen into rent arrears. Her landlord alleged that there was extensive damage in the rental unit that made it unliveable. Her landlord threatened to revoke her RGI subsidy and evict her.

The settlement agreement included:

- ❖ Payment of general damages to the client;
- ❖ The transfer of the client to another RGI unit and maintenance of her RGI subsidy and housing;
- ❖ A waiver of the client's rent arrears; and that
- ❖ The landlord would develop a policy to address and investigate complaints of sexual harassment.

Judicial Reviews and Appeals

Briggs v. Durham (Police Services Board), 2022 ONCA 823

This appeal case followed a settlement between then human rights applicant Joseph Briggs and respondent the Durham Police Services Board. From the perspective of Briggs, the settlement covered a single application, while Durham argued in a later HRTO hearing that the settlement covered two separate applications. These applications covered alleged racial profiling that Briggs had experienced at the hands of Durham police over several years.

The HRTO initially ruled in favour of Durham and dismissed the application that Briggs believed was not included in the settlement, which Durham had argued was covered in the agreement. However, following this ruling, Briggs requested a judicial review, which set aside the HRTO's decision to dismiss his application, effectively re-awarding him the damages provided in the original hearing ruling. Durham decided to appeal this ruling to the Ontario Court of Appeal.

The Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed Durham's appeal, agreeing with the Divisional Court that the HRTO's decision was unreasonable. The Court of Appeal also found the Divisional Court did not make a mistake in substituting its own decision for that of the HRTO and that it was appropriate for the Divisional Court not to send the matter to the HRTO. In its decision the Court of Appeal cited the extensive delay in time that had occurred since Briggs filed the first application and the seriousness of the allegations of racial profiling he raised before the HRTO, to which he was entitled a final resolution. Additionally, the Court noted that the matter did not relate to an issue over which the HRTO had any special expertise and that the Court could resolve the issue itself.

Gardener v. Abell Pest Control Inc., 2023 ONSC 2026

The applicant arrived at the offices of the HRTO around 4pm on August 29, 2019, intending to file their HRTO application in person. She had to file her application with the HRTO that day to meet the one-year timeline for filing applications as set out in section 34(1) of the Code.

The applicant had an electronic copy of her application, on a USB stick, but needed a paper copy of the document to file it in person at the HRTO office. The HRTO provided the applicant with access to a computer and printer but, due to technical issues, they were unable to provide a paper copy of her application until 5:20pm. The HRTO staff refused to accept the application at that time as it was after 5pm.

Due to a family emergency, the applicant was unable to attend the HRTO office again to file the application until September 5, 2019.

In *Gardener v. Abell Pest Control Inc.*, [2022 HRTO 278](#), the HRTO dismissed Gardener's application due to delay, because she missed the deadline for filing set out in the Code. The HRTO found she

did not have a good faith reason for the delay, which would allow for the acceptance of a late-filed application under section 34(2) of the *Code*.

This dismissal was upheld by the HRTO on reconsideration: *Gardener v. Abell Pest Control Inc.*, 2022 HRTO 794.

Gardener then filed an application for judicial review of both HRTO decisions with the Divisional Court. In *Gardener v. Abell Pest Control Inc.*, 2023 ONSC 2026, the Court agreed with Gardener that both of the HRTO's decisions were unreasonable.

The Court held that the HRTO should have found the application had been filed on time, given Gardener's efforts to file on August 29, 2019. Alternatively, the HRTO had the discretion to accept the application after 5pm.

The Court, with respect to the appropriate remedy, substituted its own decision for that of the HRTO. The Court declared that Gardener's application was timely and should be allowed to proceed through the HRTO's process.

In the Media

A key aspect of the HRLSC's work is providing public education and information about human rights in Ontario. The HRLSC makes itself available for comment on the HRTO process, our services and with the permission of our clients, discussion of human rights claims.

Here is a snapshot of this fiscal year's media coverage:

- ❖ [How do you handle an employee with health problems?](#) Determining undue hardship for employees with health problems, which refers to the HRLSC's How-to Guides.
- ❖ [What are your legal rights when your job is harming your mental health?](#) determining undue hardship for employees with mental health disabilities which quotes the HRLSC's online resources.
- ❖ [Human Rights Tribunal extended protected ground of citizenship to include permanent residency: Court](#): analysis of the *Haseeb v. Imperial Oil* Divisional Court review.
- ❖ [Property owner ordered to remove tenant snow removal from lease agreements](#): covering the hearing decision for *Scocchia v. Sokol*, 2022 HRTO 1418
- ❖ [The hidden hate on campus: We tracked incidents at colleges and universities and found a growing problem](#): an investigative report with comment from the HRLSC's Chair, Ena Chadha.

For measurements and evaluation of the HRLSC's 2021-2022 media exposure, please see our "Performance Measures" section.

Organizational Projects

Website Launch

After the challenges faced during COVID-19 and several years of work developing new digital and online tools to supplement the HRLSC's work, the Centre completed the redevelopment and modernization of its website.

The HRLSC's new website incorporates a more user-friendly interface, making it significantly easier for people in Ontario to access the resources that they need from the Centre. This new website also helps clients find answers to their questions about the *Code* at their own pace and broaden public awareness of our services. These features highlight the new website's alignment with the priorities set out by the MAG's 2021-2022 Mandate Letter, which call on the HRLSC to further grow its services through innovative practices and tools.

The changes to our website include:

- ❖ An updated “decision tree” feature for clients to learn about their rights and find out if their situation falls under the *Code*: This feature empowers clients to learn about their legal options and provides them with linked resources for self-directed research;
- ❖ Upgraded accessibility features that improved the current structure of the HRLSC's website with new search and navigation features, as well as restructured page layouts that supported a client-centred browsing experience; and
- ❖ Increased visibility of the HRLSC site through SEO optimization to better reach members of the public and potential clients.

The Client Portal (discussed below) will also tie into the HRLSC's new website. Clients will be able to move directly from our online resources to the portal where they can create an intake profile that will be reviewed by intake staff.

Client Portal Launch

By the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal period, the HRLSC was poised to launch its Client Portal system and awaited some final technical work to be done by the vendor developing the required online platform. The Client Portal will allow clients to start and maintain intake requests through our website and a new online database that works off of the HRLSC's existing Client Tracking Tool.

Like our newly launched website, the Client Portal system is also in alignment with the priorities set out by MAG's 2021-2022 Mandate Letter for the delivery of digital services. This project has also been a focal point in our long-term vision for the HRLSC's service delivery model. The initial version of this new online tool will:

- ❖ Create client profiles with contact information;
- ❖ Complete and submit client intakes;
- ❖ Allow clients to upload relevant documents; and
- ❖ Provide access to clients' online profiles any time, excluding required site maintenance periods.

These features are directed at streamlining the intake process, ensuring that our staff can spend less time setting up profiles, contact details, gathering case information and accommodation requests and more time discussing human rights issues. Our staff will also have the ability to review the intake information and prepare for the discussion prior to calling clients. The Client Portal will launch early in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Public Awareness Campaign

As part of optimizing its organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery and redeploying resources to priority areas, the HRLSC embarked on a multi-faceted public awareness communications campaign. The campaign aims to engage and educate members of the public about the work of the HRLSC, and to empower rights seeking communities to use Ontario's human rights system. After its successful work providing informational posters for SOLGEN facilities across Ontario in 2021-2022, the HRLSC has expanded its outreach to include social and digital media content and community engagement, connecting with legal clinics and other community organizations. A key component of this campaign involved the HRLSC's recent "From Classroom to Case Law" symposium and reception (see "Organizational Activities").

Staff Training

The HRLSC provided staff with training in:

- ❖ Conflict resolution from TNG Community Services. Staff were provided additional training on subjects including verbal de-escalation and resolving workplace disagreements;
- ❖ Fostering Queer and Trans-Inclusive Spaces Training by the 519 community centre. This training broadly covered strategies for affirming queer and trans people. Staff heard about and discussed language (including a discussion on pronouns), terminology and the fundamentals of gender and sexuality diversity;
- ❖ Indigenous culture and practices, with a Summer Solstice Seasonal Feast and Teachings session organized by ISOC; and
- ❖ Workplace harassment investigations best practices provided by HRLSC staff and Chair.

The HRLSC also continued to provide the following trainings for new staff:

- ❖ The Path Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training;
- ❖ LivingWorks START Suicide Prevention E-Learning Course ;
- ❖ On Ontario's *Human Rights Code* and AODA regulations; and
- ❖ OHSA – Worker Health and Safety Awareness.

If I had no help from your team, I would be going into this fully unprepared and I would fail at explaining my point all together. A fair judgement was not something I would be able to reach as I would fail a lot before that itself. Thank you so much for everything. You guys help people who need it and have no help at all. You are my superhero.

- **HRLSC client**

”

Analysis of Operational Performance

Summary

The 2022-2023 fiscal period saw an uptick in representation before the HRTO in both hearings and mediations. There was a notable spike in the number of merit and other hearings attended by the HRLSC. This increase was in part due to the resumption of hearing and mediation scheduling at the HRTO.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal period the HRLSC also introduced a new tracking of other hearings (including, for example, summary and preliminary hearings) which will better reflect the work conducted by the Centre's legal staff when comparing yearly operational performance in future annual reports.

Lastly, the HRLSC continued to reach out to potential clients, support applicants and streamline intake services through its rollout of digital tools for clients, outreach and its communications and promotions work as part of its new public awareness campaign. The HRLSC also looks to track the impact of this work on its service delivery in upcoming annual reports.

By the Numbers:

Initial inquiries answered:

17,521

Individuals receiving in-depth legal assistance:

1693

Mediations:

236

Merit hearings:

17

Settlements:

242

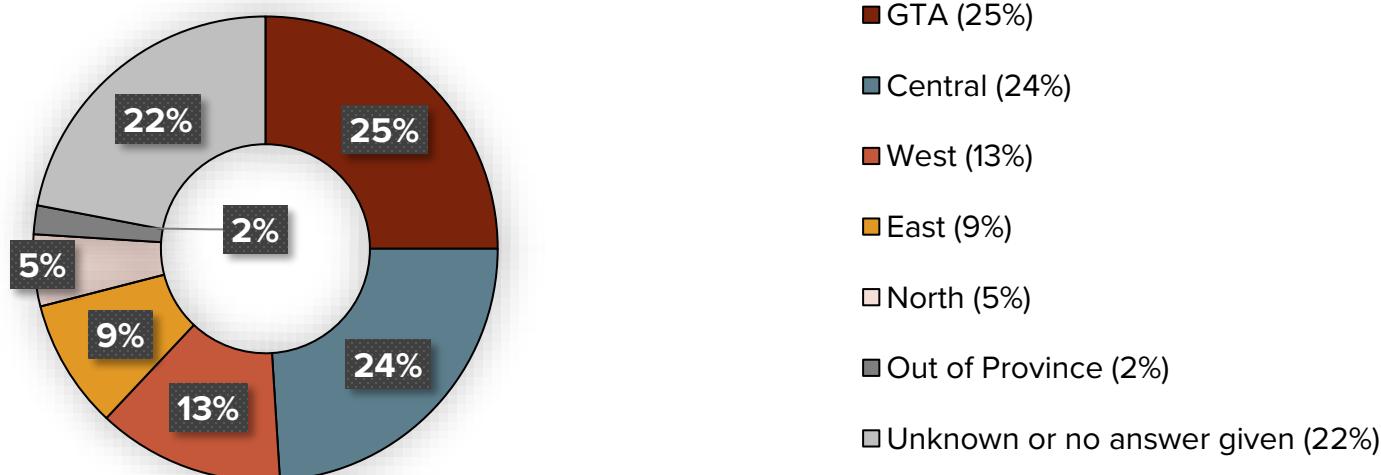
Visits to the HRLSC website:

170,187¹

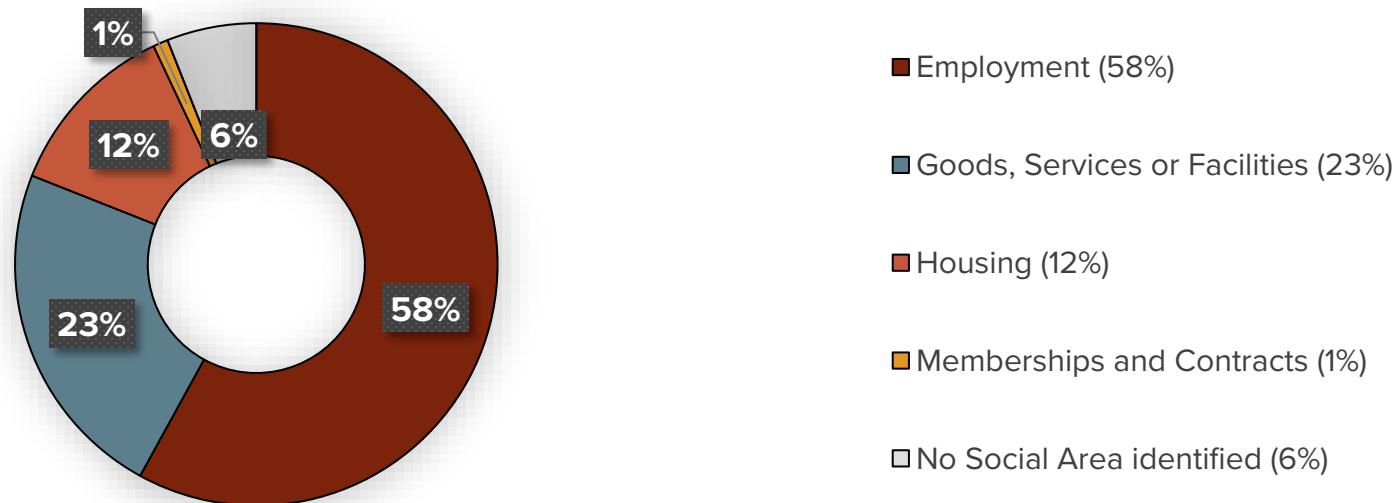
¹ These figures are incomplete for November 15, 2022, to January 19, 2023, due to the development process for new website and integration of a new analytics tool using different metrics for measuring traffic to HRLSC webpages.

Charts:

Intake – By Region

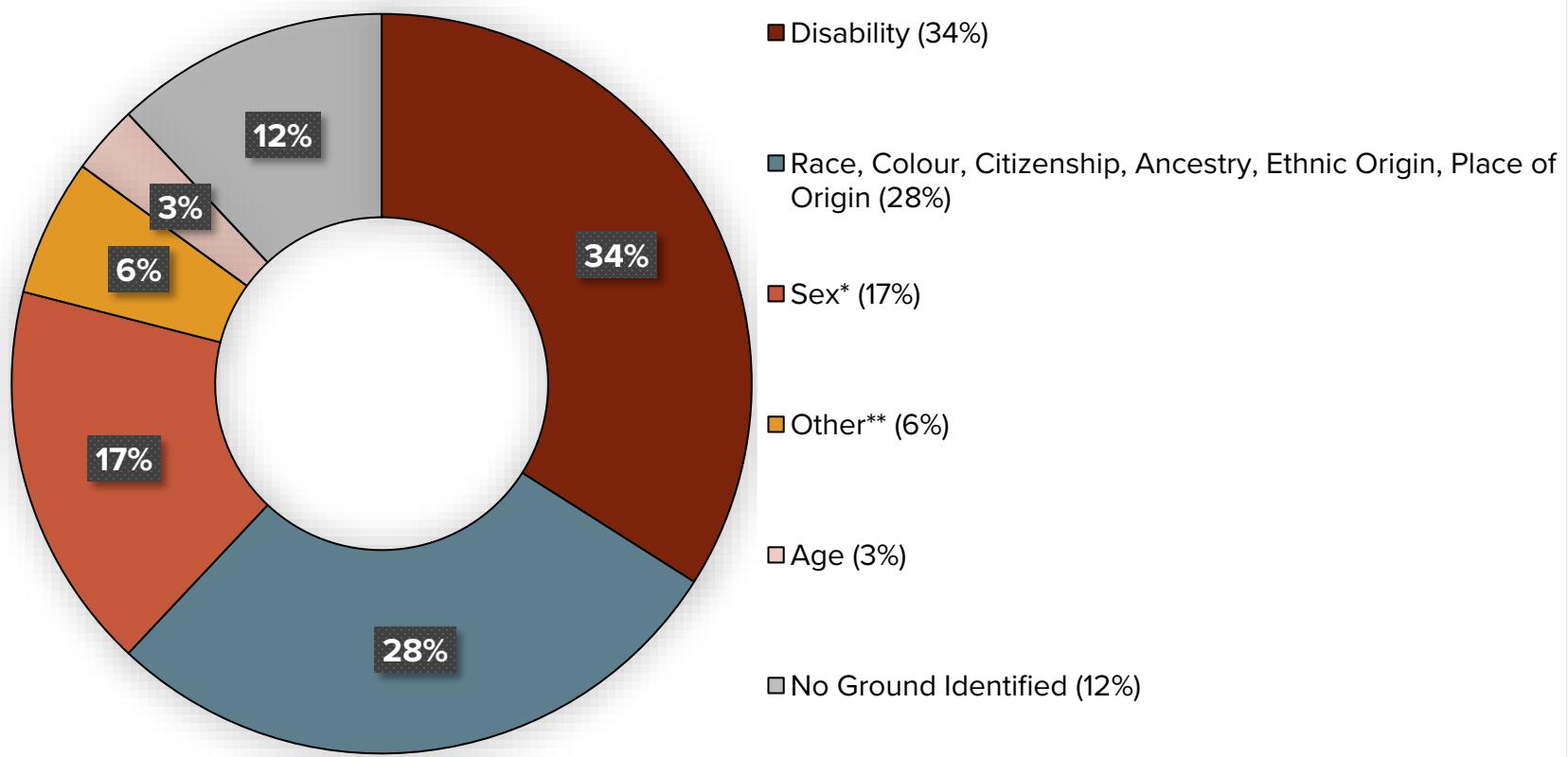


Intake – By Social Area



Charts:

Intake – Grounds of Discrimination

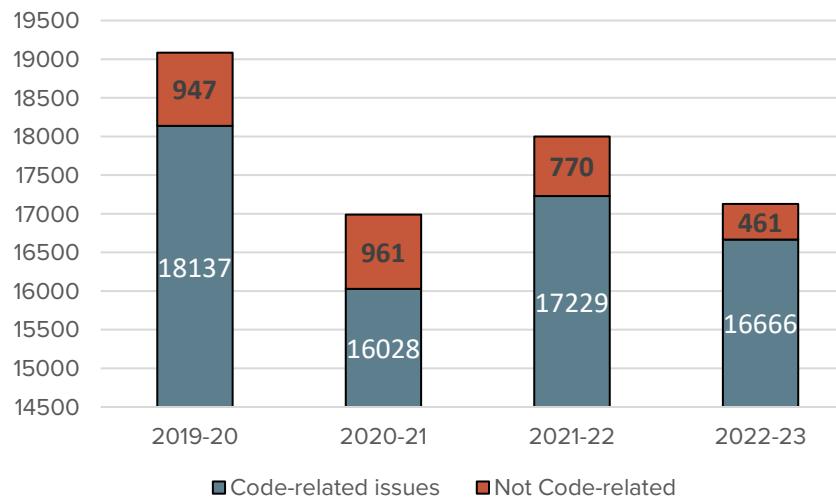


*Sex/Gender (Sexual Harassment, Sexual Solicitation, Pregnancy); Family Status; Marital Status; Gender Expression and Identity; and Sexual Orientation

**Association, Creed, Receipt of Public Assistance and Record of Offences, Reprisal or Threat

Charts:

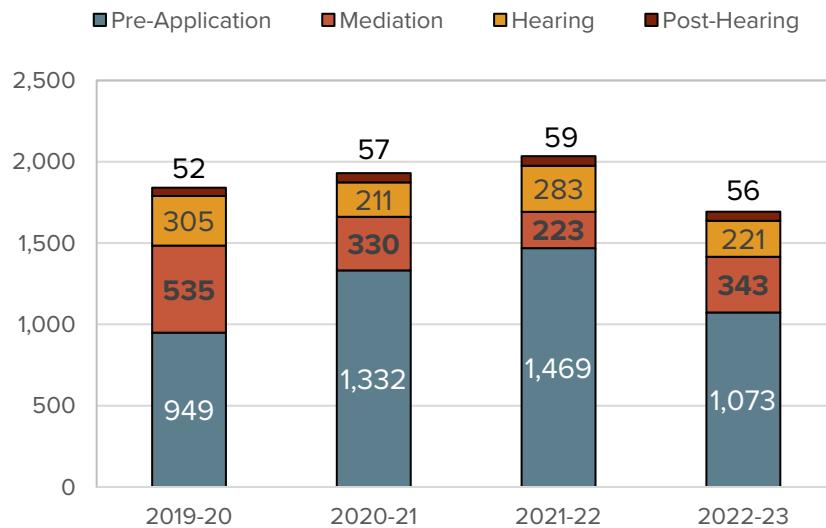
Summary Advice (# of inquiries)



In 2022-2023, the HRLSC saw a 40% reduction in the number of non-Code related intakes from 2021-2022. This is down from the most-recent high of 961 in 2020-2021. The number of Code-related cases was down slightly from the previous fiscal period at 16,666 calls taken.

The HRLSC seeks to increase the number of Code-related inquiries through its work with the HRTO to improve the referral process of applicants and potential applicants to the Centre (see the “Legal Services” section below for additional details). The HRLSC is also committed to addressing this issue through its public awareness campaign and anticipates that the rollout of its new website and Client Portal system will further streamline the intake process. These digital tools may potentially reduce the number of non-Code related inquiries and allowing for clients to create an intake with the HRLSC outside of the Centre’s usual office hours.

Legal Services (# of individuals)

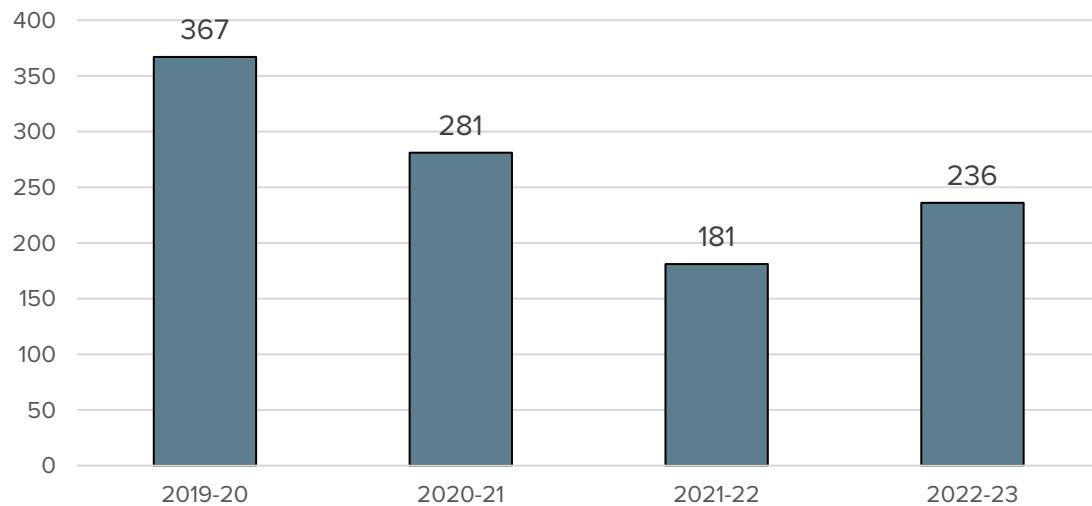


The HRLSC saw an increase in the number of legal services provided relating to mediations in 2022-2023, serving 343 individuals, in comparison to 2021-2022 where the Centre served 223 individuals. There was also a slight reduction in services rendered in hearings, with the HRLSC providing assistance to 221 people in 2022-2023 versus 283 people in 2021-2022. The highest difference in in-depth services rendered occurred in pre-application support, which saw a 27% reduction between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

The HRLSC seeks to address the fluctuations for its in-depth legal services for hearing and pre-application supports through the implementation Client Portal system and again, by promoting the Centre’s services through its public awareness campaign.

Charts:

Mediations Attended



The number of mediations from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 increased by 30%. The number reflects an increase in the mediations scheduled by the HRTA during the COVID-19 reopening period.

“

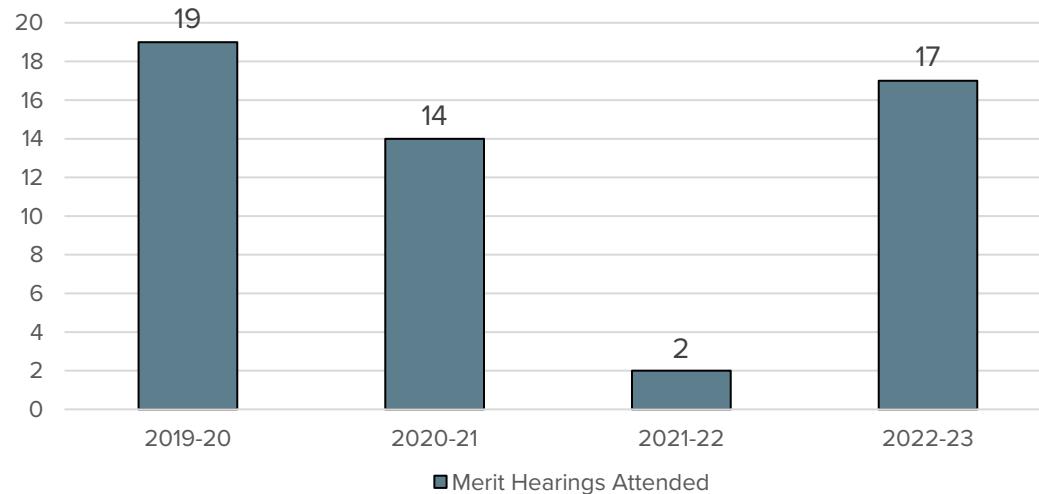
I had to read the email 3 times for it to register what I was reading.

I am so happy that this chapter is coming to an end, and a positive one for me.

- HRLSC client

”

Hearings Attended



The HRLSC saw a 750% increase in the number of merit hearings from the previous year, jumping from 2 to 17. Again, this higher number can be attributed to increased activity at the HRTA during Ontario's reopening plan following closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“

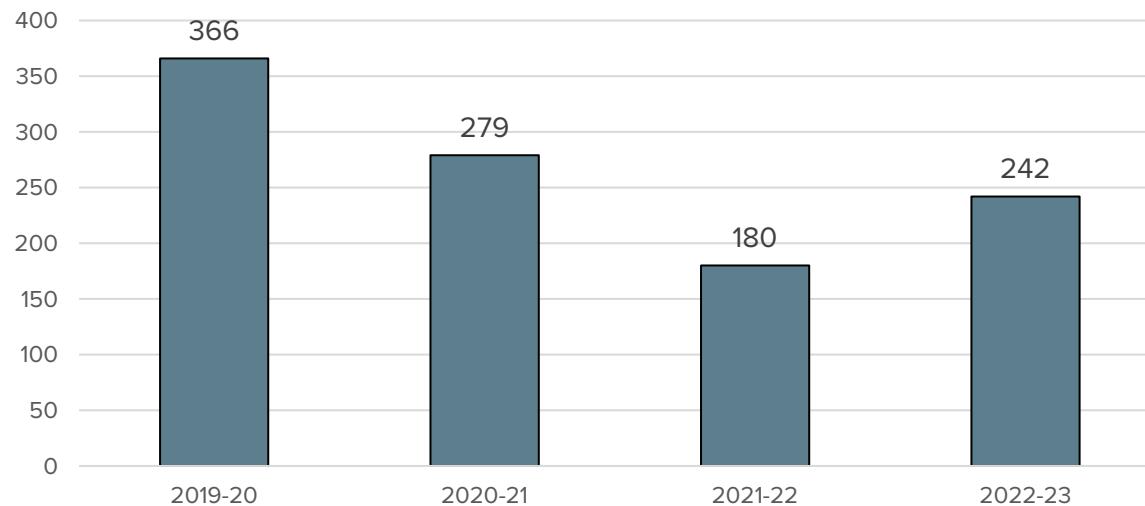
This moment feels like... if some people treat us unfair, it doesn't define [our] world, [and] there are people who will work towards correcting that.

- HRLSC client

”

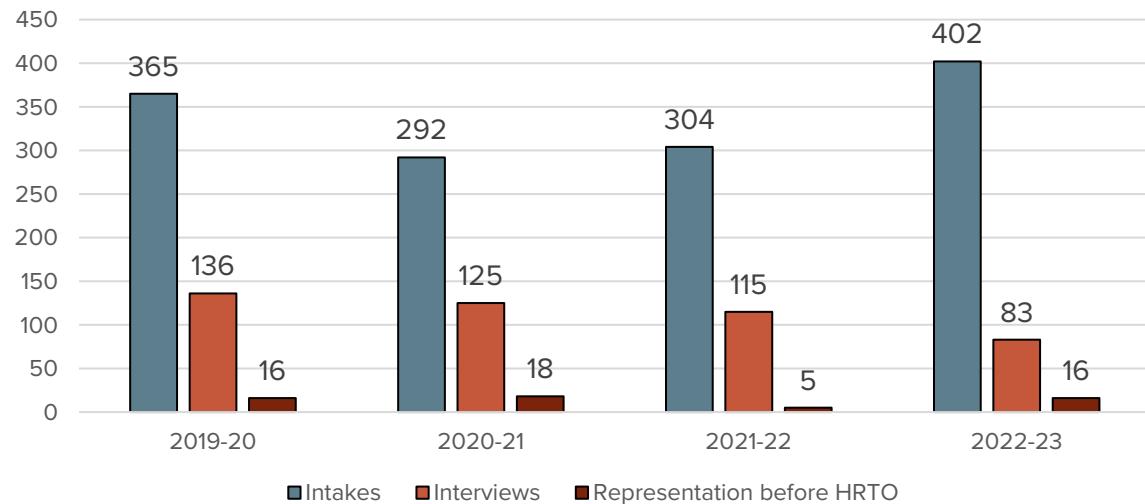
Charts:

Total Number of Settlements



The number of settlements grew between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal periods by 34%. The majority of these settlements came from the mediation process. However, with the reintroduction of hearings in 2022, the HRLSC also saw a 150% increase in the number of settlements in the pre-hearing and hearing stages.

Indigenous Services



The number of intakes taken by the HRLSC's Indigenous Services staff remained steady in 2022-2023 and grew by over 30% from the previous fiscal period. The number of times ISOC staff represented clients before the HRTO also grew by 220% over the same period of time. These trends are in line with the HRLSC's data relating to its service delivery for this time period.

Performance Measures

2022-2023 Achievements

Telephone Answer Rates:

Target: 80% | Result: 87%

Answer rates for phone inquiries continued to be higher than the yearly targets set for the HRLSC. The cloud-based phone system implemented by the HRLSC in 2021 continued to ensure responsive service for clients in 2022-2023.

Settlement Rate at Mediation:

Target: 70% | Result: 68%

The percentage of mediations resulting in settlements in 2022-2023 fell just short of its target by 2% but achieved a slightly higher result than in the previous fiscal period. To address this, the HRLSC will continue to advocate for an increase in mediations conducted at the HRTA.

Clients who Rated Service as “Very Good” or “Good.”

Target: 85% | Result: 98%

In 2022-2023, the HRLSC again recorded high approval ratings from clients using the Centre’s services. Almost 100% of clients rated the HRLSC’s service as ‘good’ or ‘very good,’ which also reflected in the 100% client satisfaction rating with their first interaction with the HRLSC and 85% satisfaction with the final results of mediation and hearing outcomes. These exemplary ratings, which confirm the HRLSC consistently exceeds performance expectations, also demonstrate the HRLSC’s work ethic and commitment to human rights justice.

Percentage of Cases Settled at Hearing:

Target: 75% | Result: 75%

Three quarters of cases that proceeded to an HRTA hearing in the 2022-2023 fiscal period were settled at the hearing, meeting this year’s target.

Positive Human Rights Stories in the Media:

Target: 15 | Result: 6

The HRLSC remained a fixture for referrals and mentions within the legal community resulting in several positive mentions in print media in the 2022-2023 fiscal period. While the HRLSC continued to seek positive coverage for its successful decisions and activities, the opportunities for publicity resulting from its legal representation of clients were limited in 2022-2023. With several pending decisions at the Court of Appeal in the next fiscal year, as well as the renewed scheduling of hearings at Tribunal, the HRLSC is optimistic that greater media coverage will follow in the 2023-2024 period.

Risk Analysis

Workforce Management

The static nature of the HRLSC's budget has furthered its inability to retain and recruit human rights professionals. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the HRLSC continued to experience significant workforce turnover amongst its permanent positions, and in addition, turnover of staff hired to fill its temporarily vacant positions. As a result, during the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the HRLSC was required to recruit for approximately 23% of its legal counsel positions and 30% of its front-line intake staff positions. The recruitment of new staff due to workforce turnover, particularly in legal counsel positions, has continued to directly impact the organization's performance with the HRLSC reporting notable declines in its settlement rate during periods of workforce turnover.

The HRLSC is working with MAG to increase funding to ensure future capacity to hire and retain critical staff positions.

Competitiveness and Sustainability

The HRLSC continues to feel the effects caused by delays in updating its budget to keep in step with the costs of operating as a province-wide organization. To meet its obligations as set out in the MAG's Mandate Letter, the HRLSC has had to be creative in their use of the limited funds provided. However, the continuing financial situation consistently challenges the HRLSC to maintain its service delivery models and leaves no room for further innovation.

With respect to finances, to fulfill its obligation under the Mandate Letter and enhance its digital service delivery, the HRLSC would benefit from the ability to complete a thorough assessment of the initiatives it has thus-far launched in recent fiscal periods. However, the HRLSC does not have the resources nor the in-house expertise to carry out that assessment, thus leaving it with the inability to appropriately determine further opportunities to realize operational efficiencies.

HRTO Operations

Operations at the HRTO have had a significant impact on the HRLSC's achievements. For several years, the HRTO reduced the number of hearings and mediations scheduled, resulting in a reduction of related services provided by the HRLSC's staff. The HRTO has recently accelerated scheduling and it is anticipated that the HRLSC will experience growth in its attendance at mediations and hearings in the coming reporting period.

“

Well, I can say as many thank-yous as I want, and I know even after that I will not be able to explain how much I appreciate your help.

- *HRLSC client*

”

Current Mandate Letter Priorities

The HRLSC's vision, mandate, and core values are aligned with the priorities of the government of Ontario and expectations of MAG. These priorities are communicated to the HRLSC by MAG via its yearly mandate letters.

In MAG's mandate letter to the HRLSC for the 2022-23 fiscal period, it outlined several key focuses for the Centre. The chart below outlines how the HRLSC met those MAG priorities in the 2022-2023 fiscal period.

Governance: Risk Management

- The HRLSC's Board structure provided effective risk management through the operation of its committees that are struck as needed.
 - The Board's finance committee continued to provide recommendations on the best practices, compliance of the HRLSC and risks arising in relation to matters assigned.
 - The Board's executive steering committee ensured the discussion and focus of board meetings in a way that best managed time and provided attention to pertinent discussion items related to the HRLSC's organizational performance.
 - The HRLSC's Board formulated an internal risk committee for the purposes of identifying, assessing, understanding and communicating risk issues.
- Members of the HRLSC's executive and management teams attended the Treasury Board Secretariat's Enterprise Risk Management Roundtable Community of Practice.
- The HRLSC's executive team, management and Board monitored and assessed operations on a quarterly basis.
- The HRLSC identified potential or actual risks and commenced the implementation of mitigation plans.
- Through its reporting, the HRLSC's staff ensured the communication of all potential or actual risks to the HRLSC Board of Directors as well as MAG.

Governance: Transparency and Accountability

- The HRLSC's Board received orientation as well as training on risk management and governance principles.
- The HRLSC also continued to have an annual external audit, which is included in its annual report and submitted to MAG.

Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- The HRLSC operated within its budgetary allocation and in accordance with the *Agencies and Appointment Directive*.
- The Board continued to respond diligently to the recommendations in the HRLSC's 2020 Audit Report.
- The HRLSC held all official Board business virtually, to reduce travel and lodging expenses.
- Through its Board, the HRLSC continued to assess other methods of cost efficiencies.

Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- The HRLSC's staff prepared to roll-out our Client Portal system, which seeks to streamline the onboarding process for clients and reduce time required for calls and waiting in the phone queue.
- The HRLSC launched a new website, supporting a more user-friendly platform with tools and design features to help direct clients to important Centre resources and information.
- The HRLSC provided web content to the HRTO to support client referrals.
- The HRLSC shared promotional materials with legal clinics to share with potential client referrals and to encourage additional collaboration with the Centre's staff on public legal education opportunities.

Data Collection

- The HRLSC prepared to utilize a new Client Portal system to make services more client-focused and accessible, allowing clients to update their profile and submit documents.
- The HRLSC procured improved analytics for its website, as well as existing metrics including data from its Client Tracking Tool and cloud-based phone service.
- The HRLSC continued its requisite operational and financial reporting through its published materials shared on its website and with MAG.
- The collection of statistical information from its services and communications helped inform the decision-making of the HRLSC's management and Board.

Diversity and Inclusion

- The HRLSC provided ongoing professional development for staff and its Board in accordance with its commitment to advance equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice.
- Through its internal and external communications, the HRLSC acknowledged, celebrated and educated staff and members of the public on numerous cultural, equity and social justice-based subjects.
- The HRLSC continued to provide learning opportunities for its employees through compulsory equity, diversity and inclusion focused trainings.
- The HRLSC promoted staff wellbeing through the HRLSC 's mental health and wellness hub.
- The HRLSC updated its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The HRLSC provided support for celebrations and observances organized by ISOC including the summer solstice and fall equinox.
- The HRLSC ensured accessible multi-language services for clients.

Workforce Management

- The HRLSC maintained an adaptive and dynamic human capital plan with a view to preserve service delivery.
- The HRLSC continued to ensure it had Indigenous and Francophone staff at every level of service and support their capacity to provide services to clients requiring linguistic and cultural accommodations.

“ I wanted to send out a letter to you to let you know of my amazing experience with [the HRLSC's staff]. From my first call, I felt heard and understood and kept reassuring me and making sure I was comfortable throughout the process leading up to mediation. I could tell she cared. Thank you!

I also just met [the HRLSC's staff], and what a pleasure. They were able to pick up the case and present it like a pro I could tell he did a thorough job learning about my case. His ability to listen and communicate and his empathy also made me feel calm and confident. Thank you!

I never knew when this day would come; when I can close this chapter and finally move on. I want to let you know [your staff] are brilliant and wonderful people. I am very thankful to this organization for the legal support and helping me conclude this matter.

I hope they are recognized for their great work.

-HRLSC client

”

Analysis of Financial Operations

Cost Allocation

The HRLSC in the 2022-2023 fiscal period effectively managed funds to maintain stability in each major budget area and optimize service delivery. The results accurately reflect service costs:

Expense	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Salaries and Benefits	87%	85%	84%	85%
Operating	13%	14%	15%	14%
Board	1%	1%	1%	1%

Salaries and benefits continued to be the highest allocation of the HRLSC's costs during the 2022-2023 fiscal period.

Expenditures were monitored and assessed to ensure appropriate and balanced allocations in each budget area in order to support and maximize services in a cost-effective manner.

Cost Summary

Expense	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Salaries and Benefits	\$4,180,009	\$4,319,934	\$4,501,831	\$4,512,115
Operating	\$603,024	\$722,768	\$811,747	\$750,875
Board	\$32,223	\$46,896	\$53,037	\$69,419
Total	\$4,815,256	\$5,089,598	\$5,366,615	\$5,332,409

Analysis

The HRLSC is pleased to report that despite continued financial challenges and with significant fiscal uncertainty, we managed to maintain our service standards with respect to legal and client services.

The HRLSC is required to have an annual and independent external audit in accordance with the *Agencies and Appointments Directive*. The auditors for this year's report confirmed that the HRLSC is in good standing and that the Centre derives its primary operating revenue from MAG. The HRLSC has realigned funds in the 2022-2023 fiscal period to support board-approved critical one-

time projects to enable the Centre to fulfill its mandate. The audited financial statement approved by the Board of Directors is attached to the end of this annual report.

Costs for the 2022-2023 fiscal period were effectively managed through monitoring, analysis and timely decision-making supported by the HRLSC's agile service delivery model.

The HRLSC continues to make efforts to find cost efficiencies, such as utilizing digital platforms and outsourcing administrative work. Where needed, the HRLSC redeployed resources to priority areas by optimizing our organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery and back-office support.

The HRLSC's operating expenses during the 2022-2023 fiscal period continued to run at moderate levels and the Centre made budget realignments to address its immediate operational needs. However, the HRLSC is concerned with the impact of the rate of inflation upon its operations and will continue to discuss this matter with MAG.

All of the HRLSC's staff have served the three-year moderation period capping wage increases to 1% per-year in accordance with *Bill 124, Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*. MAG has provided the HRLSC with one-time funding to support the 1% increase paid in 2022-2023 for the lawyer group.

The HRLSC and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union's current collective agreement has expired as of December 31, 2021. The parties have commenced bargaining for a new collective agreement.

The HRLSC's Board members continue to participate in governance related initiatives in response to government reviews and requests. Therefore, increased board participation resulted in higher board-related costs in 2022-2023. The Board serves as a bridge to other organizations within the justice system and interacts extensively with MAG and the other two pillars of the human rights system, the HRTO and OHRC. In this work with fellow community and government partners, the Board promotes additional potential opportunities for efficiencies.

The most significant financial challenge for the HRLSC in 2022-2023 continued to be staff retention, primarily due to non-competitive salaries. The HRLSC continues to meet with MAG to address these financial inequities. Without an increase to the HRLSC's permanent base budget, reductions in staff and services will be required even as Ontarians' demand for legal advice and support on human rights issues increases.

The HRLSC also continues to engage in discussions with MAG about a more sustainable funding model.

HRLSC Board of Directors

The HRLSC's Board of Directors possess a wide array of relevant professional expertise and personal experience to best govern the Centre and realize its strategic vision. In 2022-2023, the HRLSC's Board continued to reflect the diversity of Ontario.

Board Member	Position	Term of Appointment	Total Remuneration for Fiscal Year
Ena Chadha	Chair of the Board	2021 – 2024	\$29,925.25
Mary Joe Freire	Vice Chair and Director	2021 – 2024	\$6,241.18
Patrick Nadjiwan	Director	2022 – 2023	\$5,269.04
Martial Moreau	Treasurer and Director	2022 – 2025	\$7,876.82
Evelyn Ball	Director	2022 – 2025	\$3,816.83
Tamar Witelson	Director	2022 – 2025	\$3,187.50
Michelle Tan	Director	2022 – 2025	\$2,437.50
Gary Pieters	Director	2023 – 2026	\$2,812.50
Sandi Bell	Director	2023 – 2025	\$0.00

Audited Financial Statements

**Human Rights Legal Support Centre
Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2023**

Contents

Independent Auditor's Report	2-3
Financial Statements	
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes to Financial Statements	7 -12

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of Human Rights Legal Support Centre

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Human Rights Legal Support Centre (the "Centre"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of operations and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Centre as at March 31, 2023, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Centre in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Centre's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Centre or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Centre's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements (Continued)

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Centre's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Centre's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Centre to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Oakville, Ontario
July 11, 2023

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Statement of Financial Position

March 31

2023

2022

	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Assets								
Current assets								
Cash	\$ 585,737	\$ 49,445	\$ -	\$ 635,182	\$ 620,023	\$ 55,286	\$ -	\$ 675,309
Accounts receivable					2,043			2,043
HST recoverable	67,726	6,892		74,618	82,092	5,587		87,679
Prepaid expenses	116,757	6,264		123,021	60,071	3,755		63,826
Interfund balance	(122,296)	(42,294)	164,590		(1,848)	(53,126)	54,974	
	647,924	20,307	164,590	832,821	762,381	11,502	54,974	828,857
Capital assets (Note 2)	25,474			25,474	75,871	2,194		78,065
	\$ 673,398	\$ 20,307	\$ 164,590	\$ 858,295	\$ 838,252	\$ 13,696	\$ 54,974	\$ 906,922
Liabilities								
Current								
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 441,995	\$ 37,776	\$ -	\$ 479,771	\$ 562,888	\$ 48,602	\$ -	\$ 611,490
Net Assets	231,403			231,403	275,364			275,364
Operating fund (Note 6)								
Department of Justice Canada		(17,469)		(17,469)		(34,906)		(34,906)
Internally restricted fund			164,590	164,590			54,974	54,974
	231,403	(17,469)	164,590	378,524	275,364	(34,906)	54,974	295,432
	\$ 673,398	\$ 20,307	\$ 164,590	\$ 858,295	\$ 838,252	\$ 13,696	\$ 54,974	\$ 906,922

On behalf of the Board of Directors:

Director

Director

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31

2023

2022

	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Revenue								
Ministry of the Attorney General	\$ 5,383,150	\$ -	\$ 5,383,150	\$ 5,336,200	\$ -	\$ 455,040	-	\$ 5,336,200
Department of Justice Canada		511,744			511,744			455,040
Other income	23,294			23,294		352		352
	5,406,444	511,744		5,918,188	5,336,552	455,040		5,791,592
Expenditures								
Salaries and wages	3,714,993	343,579		4,058,572	3,687,374	365,064		4,052,438
Employee benefits (Note 3)	797,122	62,816		859,938	814,457	59,760		874,217
Services	525,605	68,298		593,903	558,671	52,399		611,070
Communication	92,347	11,812		104,159	135,652	13,628		149,280
Province wide service delivery	12,622			12,622	15,010			15,010
Travel	7,294			7,294	342			342
Supplies and equipment	62,610	5,608		68,218	52,805	5,267		58,072
Board expense	69,419			69,419	53,037			53,037
Amortization	50,397	2,194		52,591	49,267	3,292		52,559
Consulting			8,380	8,380			99,276	99,276
	5,332,409	494,307	8,380	5,835,096	5,366,615	499,410	99,276	5,965,301
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year								
	74,035	17,437	(8,380)	83,092	(30,063)	(44,370)	(99,276)	(173,709)
Net assets, beginning of year	275,364	(34,906)	54,974	295,432	305,427	9,464	154,250	469,141
Interfund transfer (Note 1)	(117,996)		117,996					
Net assets, end of year	\$ 231,403	\$ (17,469)	\$ 164,590	\$ 378,524	\$ 275,364	\$ (34,906)	\$ 54,974	\$ 295,432

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended March 31

2023

2022

	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total	General Operations MAG	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Cash provided by (used in)								
Operating activities								
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year								
\$ 74,035	\$ 17,437	\$ (8,380)	\$ 83,092	\$ (30,063)	\$ (44,370)	\$ (99,276)	\$ (173,709)	
Amortization	50,397	2,194	-	52,591	49,267	3,292	-	52,559
Changes in non-cash working capital balances								
Accounts receivable	2,043	-	-	2,043	1,178	-	-	1,178
HST recoverable	14,366	(1,305)	-	13,061	(15,480)	(2,337)	-	(17,817)
Prepaid expenses	(56,686)	(2,509)	-	(59,195)	1,635	760	-	2,395
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(120,893)	(10,826)	-	(131,719)	207,607	8,896	-	216,503
Accounts payable -MAG	-	-	-	-	(50,335)	-	-	(50,335)
	(36,738)	4,991	(8,380)	(40,127)	163,809	(33,759)	(99,276)	30,774
Investing activities								
Interfund transfers	2,452	(10,832)	8,380	-	(98,580)	(696)	99,276	
Purchase of capital assets	-	-	-	-	(47,769)	-	-	(47,769)
Increase {decrease})	2,452	(10,832)	8,380	-	(146,349)	(696)	99,276	(47,769)
in cash during the year	(34,286)	(5,841)	-	(40,127)	17,460	(34,455)	-	(16,995)
Cash, beginning of year	620,023	55,286	-	675,309	602,563	89,741	-	692,304
Cash, end of year	\$ 585,737	\$ 49,445	\$ -	\$ 635,182	\$ 620,023	\$ 55,286	\$ -	\$ 675,309

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

1. Significant Accounting Policies

Nature of Operations

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre (the "Centre") was established December 20, 2006 as a corporation without share capital as a result of Royal Assent being granted to Section 45.11 of the *Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006*. The legislation took effect on June 30, 2008 and the Centre opened on that day.

The Centre is not a Crown agency, but is designated as an operational service agency and reports to the Ministry of the Attorney General ("MAG"). The Centre is independent from, but accountable to the Government of Ontario. Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between the Centre and the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario, the objectives of the Centre are:

- (a) To establish and administer a cost-effective and efficient system for providing support services, including legal services, respecting applications to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal under Part IV of the Code; and
- (b) To establish policies and priorities for the provision of support services based on financial resources.

The Centre is a not-for-profit organization, as described in Section 149(1)(l) of the *Income Tax Act*, and therefore is not subject to either federal or provincial income taxes.

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit-organizations. The financial statements have been prepared within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below:

The Centre maintains an Operating Fund, Department of Justice Canada Fund and an internally restricted fund.

The day to day activities of the Centre are recorded in the Operating Fund which is funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General ("MAG").

The Department of Justice Canada Fund ("DOJ") is an externally restricted fund to provide funding for a specialized team to provide free legal advice and public legal education information to individuals across Ontario who have experienced sexual harassment at work. The Centre entered into an agreement with the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada to fund this project for the period from July 3, 2019 to March 31, 2024.

The internally restricted fund was established, by the Board of Directors to fund projects. This fund is financed by appropriations from the operating fund. During the year, the Board of Directors approved a transfer of \$117,996 (2022 - **\$Nil**) from the operating fund.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

1. Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Revenue Recognition

The Centre follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions, which includes government grants.

The Centre receives revenue from the MAG. The amounts are recorded as revenue when received or receivable. All of the funds received are restricted as to use for purposes set out in the MOU.

The Centre receives revenue from the Department of Justice Canada. The amounts are recorded as revenue when received or receivable. All of the funds received are restricted as to use for purposes as set out in the funding agreement.

Capital Assets

The costs of capital assets are capitalized upon meeting the criteria for recognition as a capital asset; otherwise, costs are expensed as incurred. The cost comprises its purchase price and any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use.

Capital assets are measured at cost less accumulated amortization and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortization is provided for on a straight-line basis at rates designed to amortize the cost of the capital assets over their estimated useful lives. The annual amortization rates are as follows:

Computer equipment	3 years
Furniture and fixtures	5 years

Capital assets are tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that its carrying amount may not be recoverable. If any potential impairment is identified, the amount of impairment is quantified by comparing the carrying value of the capital asset to its fair value. Any impairment of the capital asset is recognized in income in the year in which the impairment occurs.

Financial Instruments

All financial instruments are initially recognized at fair value and subsequently at amortized cost. Financial assets are tested for impairment when changes in circumstances indicate that the asset could be impaired. Transaction costs are expensed for those items remeasured at fair value at each statement of financial position date and charged to the financial instrument for those measured at amortized cost.

Impairment

At the end of each year, the Centre assesses whether there are any indications that a financial asset measured at amortized cost may be impaired. Objective evidence of impairment includes observable data that comes to the attention of the Centre, including but not limited to the following events: significant financial difficulty of the issuer; a breach of contract, such as a default or delinquency in interest or principal payments; and bankruptcy or other financial reorganization proceedings.

When there is an indication of impairment, the Centre determines whether a significant adverse change has occurred during the year in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows from the financial asset.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

1. Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Impairment (continued)

When the Centre identifies a significant adverse change in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows from a financial asset, it reduces the carrying amount of the financial asset to the greater of the following:

The present value of the cash flows expected to be generated by holding the financial asset discounted using a current market rate of interest appropriate to the financial asset; and
The amount that could be realized by selling the financial asset at the statement of financial position date.

Any impairment of the financial asset is recognized in income in the year in which the impairment occurs.

When the extent of impairment of a previously written-down financial asset decreases and the decrease can be related to an event occurring after the impairment was recognized, the previously recognized impairment loss is reversed to the extent of the improvement, but not in excess of the impairment loss. the amount of the reversal is recognized in income in the year the reversal occurs.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures during the current period. Actual results may differ from these estimates, the impact of which would be recorded in future periods.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognized in the year in which the estimates are revised and in any future years affected.

Pension Plan

The Centre, through the sponsorship of MAG, is a participating employer to a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by the Ontario Pension Board ("OPB") for employees of the Province of Ontario. In accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, as sufficient information is not available to the Centre to use defined benefit plan accounting, the Centre accounts for the pension plan as a defined contribution pension plan. The Centre expenses pension contributions when made.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

2. Capital Assets

	2023		2022	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Computer equipment	\$ 553,895	\$ 528,421	\$ 553,895	\$ 475,830
Furniture and fixtures	4,150	4,150	4,150	4,150
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$ 558,045	532,571	\$ 558,045	\$ 479,980
Net book value		<hr/>		<hr/>
		\$ 25,474		\$ 78,065
		<hr/>		<hr/>

3. Pension Plan

The Centre, through the sponsorship of the MAG, is a participating employer to a defined benefit plan administered by the Ontario Pension Board ("OPB") for employees of the province of Ontario. Based on contribution rates as set by the OPB, the Centre matches employee contributions to the plan at the rate of 7.4% (2022 - 7.4%) of earnings up to the CPP yearly pension maximum entitlement ("YPME") and 10.5% (2022 - 10.5%) for earnings above the YPME. The Centre contributed \$316,818 (2022 - \$299,801) to the plan which is recorded in employee benefits in the statement of operations.

4. Contingent Liabilities

The Centre is party to legal proceedings with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario which arise from normal operations. Actual liabilities with respect to these actions and proceedings cannot be determined. Management believes that they will be successful and any potential liability will not materially affect the financial position of the Centre. Any ultimate liability in respect of these legal proceedings will be accounted for as an expense in the year incurred.

5. Economic Dependence

The Centre derives its primary operating revenue from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

6. Operating Fund

The Centre has expended grants received as follows:

	2023	2022
Revenue - Ministry of Attorney General	\$ 5,383,150	\$ 5,336,200
Other income	23,294	352
Operating expenses (excluding project expenses)	(5,332,409)	(5,366,615)
Amortization included in operating expenses	50,397	49,267
Purchase of capital assets	(47,769)	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$ 124,432	\$ (28,565)

Reconciliation of net assets:

	Capital	Operating	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 75,871	\$ 199,493	\$ 275,364
Surplus of revenue over expenditures for the year		74,035	74,035
Funds transferred from capital fund	(50,397)	50,397	
Funds transferred to internally funds restricted		(117,996)	(117,996)
Net assets, end of year	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$ 25,474	\$ 205,929	\$ 231,403

7. Financial Instruments

Credit Risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Centre is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that a customer or counterparty to a financial instrument defaults on their financial obligations or if there is a concentration of transactions carried out with the same counterparty. The Centre's financial instruments that are exposed to concentrations of credit risk consist primarily of accounts receivable. The Centre is also exposed to credit risk arising from all of its bank accounts being held at one financial institution. The Centre has exposure to credit risk in cash and accounts receivable to a maximum of \$635,182 (2022 - \$677,352).

Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Centre encounters difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of operational liquidity requirements, the Centre will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction on the due date; will be forced to sell financial assets at a value, which is less than what they are worth; or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset. Liquidity risk arises from accounts payable and accrued liabilities. The Centre meets its liquidity requirements by preparing and monitoring detailed forecasts of cash flows from operations, anticipating investing and financing activities and holding assets that can readily be converted into cash.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

7. Financial Instruments (continued)

Market Risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in the market prices. Market risk is comprised of currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Centre is not exposed to significant market risk.

These risks have not changed from the prior year.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre
180 Dundas West, 8th Floor Toronto, Ontario, M7A 0A1
www.hrlsc.on.ca
Twitter: @HRLSC_ON
Facebook: @HRLSCOntario
ISSN 1923-0389