Human Rights Legal Support Centre

2025-2026 Accessible Annual Report

Expanding Access, Strengthening Outcomes, and Advancing Human Rights

HRLSC | Human Rights Legal Support Centre
CAJDP | Centre d'assistance juridique en matière de droits de la personne

Ontario

11-19-2026

Land Acknowledgement

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

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

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2025-2026 HRLSC Year at a Glance:

Expanding Access, Strengthening Outcomes, and Advancing Human Rights

📞 RESPONDING TO GROWING DEMAND:

- 29,152 intake calls received
- 25,292 summary legal advice services provided
- 21% above the average annual intake volume of the previous five years

⚖️ CLIENT OUTCOMES:

- 95% client satisfaction with services
- 96% would recommend HRLSC services to others
- 43% increase in in-depth legal service interviews
- 65% increase in mediations attended
- 38% increase in total settlements
- 282 settlements achieved – highest in the past five years

🚀 STRATEGIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION

- Launch of Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS)
- Launch of the Mediation, Early Resolution & Experiential Training (MEET) Project
- Development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway in partnership with CLEO
- Introduction of a new Access to Justice Legal Counsel role focused on strengthening human rights system navigation supports, public legal information, and access to justice
- Completion of *Where Need Exceeds Reach* research initiative and launch of a client demographic data collection pilot to better understand who is accessing HRLSC services and identify potential service gaps

🏛️ SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

- Strengthened procedural fairness at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario through *Galace v. Winners Merchants International L.P.*, where the Divisional Court affirmed that applicants must have an opportunity to respond before cases are dismissed
- Clarified the legal test to be applied to jurisdictional matters under the *Code* through *Bokhari v. Top Medical Transportation Services*

🌐 PUBLIC REACH

- 20% increase in website traffic
- 16 positive media stories highlighting HRLSC initiatives, services, and client outcomes

🔧 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Successfully secured historic new $4.536 million Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant investment to expand service capacity and support implementation of the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan
- Completed transition to the Ministry of the Attorney General's Justice Technology Services, strengthening cybersecurity, technological resilience, and centralized IT support
- Implemented strategic initiatives to strengthen organizational sustainability and respond to growing demand for services

Client Quotes

> ⚖ "I want to say how grateful I am for you. Human rights violations are awful, and it is wonderful we have this resource. Having this resource should be a human right."

> 🕊 "We just need more of this in our society and I hope more people will support the centre, its function and need in our province."

> "[HRLSC staff member] was great at representing me and supporting me through the mediation process. She explained everything clearly and always reminded me of my options. I am extremely grateful for her support."

> ☺ "I can't recommend any sort of improvement because everything with the HRLSC went so smoothly and rapidly. Your staff were courteous and well informed and they've all helped me understand every step throughout the process from starting an application all the way to the end of a mediation/settlement."

>  "Thank you for defending my rights. Thank you for being the person who fought for me to obtain compensation. Thank you for being a beautiful person. From the bottom of my heart, thank you."

1. Introduction to the 2025-2026 Annual Report

1.1 Message from Executive Director

The 2025–2026 fiscal year marked an important period of growth, transformation, and impact for the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC). Demand for the Centre's services continued to increase significantly, reflecting both the ongoing prevalence of discrimination in Ontario and growing awareness of the supports available through the human rights system.

In 2025–2026, the HRLSC received 29,152 intake calls and provided 25,292 summary legal advice services, approximately 21 per cent above the average annual volume of the previous five years and comparable to the highest service levels achieved by the Centre despite operating with substantially fewer staff than in earlier years. At the same time, the Centre significantly expanded its provision of in-depth legal services, with legal service interviews increasing by 43 per cent over the previous year. Together, these results reflect both the growing demand for human rights legal services across Ontario and the dedication of the HRLSC's staff in responding to that demand, while expanding the range and intensity of legal services and supports available to clients.

The service trends described in this report also provide important insight into the nature of discrimination experienced by Ontarians. Disability-related discrimination continued to account for the largest share of matters brought to the Centre, while race-related discrimination remained the second-largest category of prohibited grounds identified at intake. Among race-related sub-grounds, Anti-Black racism remained the most frequently identified, followed by Anti-Muslim and Anti-Indigenous discrimination. These patterns serve as an important reminder that significant barriers to equality persist across Ontario and reinforce the continuing need for accessible human rights legal services, information, and supports.

As service demand continued to grow, the Centre remained focused on implementing the priorities of its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, strengthening service capacity, and improving access to justice for Ontarians experiencing discrimination. This year marked an important transition from planning to implementation. Through strategic investments, innovative partnerships, and the dedication of our staff, the HRLSC expanded its capacity to meet growing demand while continuing to advance important cases through strategic litigation before the Tribunal and the courts. Most notably, the Centre began implementing its $4.536 million Strategic Grant from the Law Foundation of Ontario, one of the most significant external investments in the Centre's history. Together with a previously awarded LFO Responsive Grant, this funding is supporting major initiatives in early intervention, mediation services, strengthening access to the HRLSC's legal services and human rights system navigation supports, service modernization, experiential learning, and organizational sustainability.

The Centre also continued to adapt its services in response to evolving needs within Ontario's human rights system. Building on priorities identified in the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, the Centre expanded its focus on early intervention, mediation, and dispute resolution in response to feedback from clients and stakeholders seeking more timely pathways to justice. These efforts have become increasingly important in a human rights system where mandatory mediation now plays a central role, and substantially fewer matters proceed to hearing than

was the case a decade ago. By strengthening supports available earlier in the process - including legal information, system navigation assistance, mediation services, and dispute resolution options - the HRLSC is helping individuals access meaningful legal assistance while continuing to provide representation in significant and complex cases before the Tribunal and the courts.

These investments are already producing measurable access to justice outcomes. Through the launch of our Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS) and Mediation, Early Resolution & Experiential Training (MEET) program, the Centre strengthened its ability to help individuals resolve disputes earlier and more effectively. The results were significant: the number of in-depth legal service interviews substantially rose over the previous year, mediations attended increased by nearly 65 per cent, and total settlements increased by 38 per cent to 282 settlements -- the highest number achieved by the Centre in the past five years. Notably, 242 of those settlements, representing approximately 86 per cent of all settlements achieved by the Centre during the year, occurred through mediation. These outcomes reflect the success of the Centre's efforts to enhance access to justice through earlier intervention and expanded mediation supports. The year's results also demonstrate that meaningful human rights outcomes are increasingly being achieved through a range of pathways, including legal information, pre-application support, mediation, negotiated settlements, strategic litigation, and court proceedings.

Partnerships continued to play a critical role in advancing the Centre's mission. Throughout the year, the HRLSC strengthened its collaborations with the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO), Osgoode Hall Law School, and Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). These partnerships (described in further detail in section 3.3 below) helped expand access to legal services, strengthen early resolution supports, improve human rights system navigation resources, support innovative approaches to improving access to justice in an increasingly complex human rights system facing growing demand and significant capacity challenges, and enhance experiential learning opportunities for future human rights practitioners.

The Centre also strengthened its commitment to evidence-informed decision-making. During the year, we completed a research initiative (*Where Need Exceeds Reach* Report) designed to identify communities experiencing elevated levels of discrimination while remaining underrepresented among those accessing the HRLSC's services. This work will help guide future outreach, service planning, and access to justice initiatives, ensuring that the Centre's resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact. Together with the operational and service data presented in this report, this research is also helping the Centre better understand both who is accessing our services, and where unmet need may exist.

At the same time, the HRLSC continued to advance human rights protections through legal advocacy, representation, strategic litigation, and dispute resolution. This included important successes before both the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and the courts. In *Bokhari v. Top Medical Transportation Services*, the HRLSC successfully intervened before the Divisional Court in a decision that reinforced procedural fairness and clarified the proper approach to assessing human rights applications at an early stage of proceedings. Alongside this work, the HRLSC's staff continued to achieve meaningful outcomes for clients through hearings, settlements, mediations, judicial reviews, and enforcement proceedings.

Despite increasing demand and ongoing pressures across the broader human rights system, the HRLSC continued to deliver high-quality services. In 2025–2026, 95 per cent of surveyed clients

rated the Centre's services as good or very good, while 96 per cent indicated that they would recommend the HRLSC's services to others experiencing discrimination. These results reflect the professionalism, expertise, and commitment of our staff, who remain at the heart of everything we do.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication and professionalism of the HRLSC's staff. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance, the Law Foundation of Ontario for its continued support and investment, the Ministry of the Attorney General for its ongoing collaboration, and our many community, academic, and system partners whose efforts help strengthen access to human rights justice across Ontario.

While important challenges remain, including increasing demand for services and capacity pressures across the human rights system, the HRLSC enters the next fiscal year with renewed momentum, expanded capacity, and a strong foundation for future innovation and impact. We remain committed to ensuring that all Ontarians can access the support they need to understand, assert, and protect their human rights.

Sincerely,

Remi Warner

Executive Director

1.2 Message from Chair

The 2025–2026 fiscal year was an important one for the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC), marked by continued growth in demand for services, significant organizational innovation, and meaningful progress in implementing the Centre's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. During the year, the Centre experienced the highest intake call volume in its history, underscoring both the continuing need for human rights legal services, and the importance of ensuring that the human rights system remains accessible, responsive, and effective.

As Chair of the Board of Directors, I am proud of the progress the Centre has made in advancing access to justice for Ontarians experiencing discrimination. Throughout the year, the Board focused on providing strategic oversight and governance while supporting the Executive Director and management team in strengthening the Centre's capacity to respond to growing service demands and an evolving human rights landscape.

This year, the HRLSC continued to deliver high-quality legal services and achieve meaningful outcomes for clients, while maintaining excellent client satisfaction rating despite increasing demand and system pressures. The Board was particularly encouraged by the Centre's success in implementing strategic initiatives designed to improve access to justice, strengthen organizational capacity, and respond to evolving needs within Ontario's human rights system. This included expanding early intervention and dispute resolution services, strengthening human rights system navigation supports, and implementing innovative approaches to service delivery in a human rights system facing growing demand and significant capacity challenges. These efforts contributed to substantial growth in mediation activity, legal service interviews, and settlements, demonstrating the practical impact of the Centre's strategic investments.

The Board also welcomed the Centre's continued emphasis on evidence-informed decision-making, including the use of operational data, service trends, and research initiatives to better understand demand, identify service gaps, and inform access-to-justice priorities.

The year also marked an important milestone in the Centre's relationship with government. In February 2026, the HRLSC and the Ministry of the Attorney General finalized a Memorandum of Understanding that clarifies respective roles, responsibilities, accountability expectations, and operational relationships. The Board welcomed this development as an important step in supporting effective governance, accountability, and constructive collaboration while respecting the Centre's legislated mandate and operational independence.

The HRLSC also continued to make important contributions to the development of Ontario's human rights system through its legal services, strategic litigation, and dispute resolution work. Decisions arising from matters supported by the Centre helped advance access to justice, procedural fairness, and the effective interpretation and application of the Human Rights Code. These contributions reinforce the Centre's important role within Ontario's human rights framework and its broader commitment to promoting substantive equality.

At the same time, the cases supported by the Centre this year serve as a reminder that discrimination remains a lived reality for many Ontarians. Matters involving racial discrimination, workplace sexual harassment, disability-related barriers, and other forms of unequal treatment continue to adversely affect individuals and communities across the province. The settlement reached on behalf of the estate of Kingsley Reid and the decision in *Cloutier v. Back Country Tours Inc* are but two examples of the Centre's efforts to ensure that individuals facing discrimination have meaningful access to justice through effective legal representation, strategic

advocacy, and, where appropriate, early resolution. Beyond securing remedies for individual clients, cases such as these contribute to broader efforts to address systemic barriers, promote accountability, and reinforce the protections guaranteed by Ontario's Human Rights Code.

The Board was also pleased to see the continued strengthening of the Centre's partnerships with organizations such as the Law Foundation of Ontario, Osgoode Hall Law School, and Community Legal Education Ontario. These collaborations have supported innovative approaches to improving access to justice, strengthened early resolution supports, expanded opportunities for experiential learning, and enhanced resources that help Ontarians navigate an increasingly complex human rights system.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Executive Director Remi Warner, whose appointment as the Centre's permanent Executive Director during the reporting period marked an important leadership milestone for the organization, and to the management and executive team and all of the HRLSC's staff for their professionalism, dedication, and unwavering commitment to serving Ontarians. Their work continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals seeking to assert and protect their human rights.

I would also like to recognize the contributions of departing Board members Gary Pieters and Martial Moreau, whose service and commitment to the Centre have been greatly valued. At the same time, we were pleased to welcome Bryan Beatty to the Board this fiscal year, and look forward to welcoming additional members in the coming year as we continue to strengthen the Board's capacity and expertise.

As we look ahead, the Board remains committed to supporting the Centre's continued evolution as a responsive, innovative, and sustainable organization dedicated to advancing access to justice and strengthening Ontario's human rights system. While challenges remain in helping all those who need our vital services, the accomplishments of the past year provide a strong foundation for the work ahead and reinforce the important role of the HRLSC in Ontario's human rights ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Ena Chadha

Chair of the HRLSC

2. Mandate and Services

2.1 Code-Related Discrimination

The HRLSC helps people who experience discrimination, harassment, or reprisal under Ontario's *Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*").

Discrimination under the *Code* happens when someone is treated unfairly because of a personal characteristic protected by law. These protected grounds include disability, race, sex, age, family status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, citizenship, and religion, among others (full list available on our website here).

Some forms of discrimination are intentional, while others may happen without intent due to lack of awareness, systemic barriers, or failure to understand the duty to accommodate. For example, in addition to direct and intentional discrimination against an individual, discrimination can also occur when a rule, policy, or practice has a negative effect on someone because of a protected ground, or when a person's needs are not properly accommodated.

For discrimination to be covered by the *Code*, it must also happen in one of five protected social areas:

- Housing
- Employment
- Services, goods, and facilities
- Contracts
- Vocational or occupational associations

2.2 The HRLSC's Mandate

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre advances equality and protects human rights by providing a range of accessible and high quality legal and support services to those who have faced discrimination contrary to Ontario's human rights laws.

Vision

The HRLSC is committed to advancing an equitable society where everyone lives with dignity and respect and upholds and promotes human rights.

Mission

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

Values

Equity and Inclusion – The HRLSC will establish policies and priorities for the delivery of services that take into account the historic disadvantages faced by individuals and communities identified by a ground of discrimination under Ontario's *Human Rights Code*. Priority will be

given to providing legal assistance to members of marginalized communities and to individuals who would be most disadvantaged in self-advocating for equality rights.

Excellence – The HRLSC delivers independent, responsive, high-quality and high-impact legal services and supports and pursues learning, knowledge-sharing and innovation.

Integrity – The HRLSC is principled, accountable and transparent in our communications, decisions, work, and use of resources.

Accessibility – The HRLSC is committed to providing legal and support services in a manner that is free of barriers, including physical and functional barriers, as well as barriers created by geography, language, and by process. The HRLSC will be responsive to the geographic, cultural, linguistic and accessibility needs of its diverse client communities.

2.3 Services

The HRLSC provides free and accessible legal services for individuals seeking to address human rights issues under the *Code*.

For individuals seeking to address experiences of discrimination or harassment, the HRLSC provides legal information, summary legal advice, and assistance in understanding available options for asserting their rights, seeking redress, and pursuing justice under Ontario's human rights system. This includes support at the earliest stages of the human rights process, such as guidance regarding human rights and responsibilities, early intervention strategies, dispute resolution options, and the preparation of Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) applications and related documents.

For individuals who have filed applications with the HRTO, the HRLSC provides legal representation and advocacy. This may include mediation and settlement negotiations, proceedings before the HRTO (including preliminary matters, hearings, reconsiderations, and enforcement proceedings), as well as judicial reviews and appeals before the courts.

The HRLSC also provides services designed to help individuals navigate Ontario's human rights system, including online resources, self-help tools, and other supports that improve access to legal services and assist individuals in understanding and exercising their rights under the Code.

3. Activities and Partnerships

3.1 Strategic Plan Update

In 2025–2026, the HRLSC entered the second phase of its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan implementation, with a focus on launching and scaling initiatives aligned with the Plan's priorities. Key areas of work include expanding early intervention, mediation, and dispute resolution services; strengthening organizational data capacity; modernizing technological infrastructure; improving access to the HRLSC's services and human rights system navigation supports; diversifying funding sources; and enhancing Board governance.

Central to this work was continued collaboration and partnership-building across Ontario's human rights system. During the year, the HRLSC launched several significant initiatives funded through grants provided by the Law Foundation of Ontario, including new Early Intervention and Mediation Services and the Mediation, Early Resolution & Experiential Training (MEET) Project. The Centre also expanded access to justice legal services and system navigation supports through a dedicated Access to Justice Legal Counsel position.

Additional progress included the continued development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway, an innovative online tool designed to assist individuals in preparing and filing applications with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Development of the tool was substantially completed during the fiscal year, with public launch occurring in the first quarter of 2026–2027.

The HRLSC also advanced several initiatives aimed at strengthening evidence-informed planning and improving access to justice for communities experiencing barriers to service access. These efforts included the completion of the report *Where Need Exceeds Reach: Ranking Equity Gaps in Ontario's Human Rights Service System,* and the launch of a demographic data collection pilot, both of which are discussed further below.

Access to Justice Insights

As part of its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan priority to improve access to the HRLSC's services for marginalized communities disproportionately affected by discrimination, the HRLSC undertook a significant research initiative examining potential equity gaps in service utilization. This work resulted in the report *Where Need Exceeds Reach: Ranking Equity Gaps in Ontario's Human Rights Service System*.

The report represents a first attempt by the HRLSC to systematically compare indicators of potential human rights need with patterns of service utilization. Drawing on Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario Application data, and the HRLSC's service utilization data, the analysis examined whether communities reporting higher levels of discrimination were accessing the HRLSC's services at rates proportionate to their apparent level of need.

The findings suggest that need and service utilization are not always aligned and that some communities experiencing higher levels of discrimination may be underrepresented among the HRLSC's service users. In particular, the analysis identified significant potential equity gaps among certain racialized and ethnocultural communities, highlighting the importance of targeted, community-informed approaches to improving access to HRLSC services and supports.

KEY FINDING

Communities reporting higher levels of discrimination do not always access HRLSC services at corresponding rates, reinforcing the need for targeted, community-informed access to justice initiatives that reduce barriers and improve awareness of, access to, and navigation of HRLSC services.

The report reinforces the importance of complementing service expansion with targeted strategies designed to reduce barriers to access, strengthen human rights system navigation supports, and improve awareness of the HRLSC's services in currently underserved communities. Its findings are helping to inform the HRLSC's ongoing efforts to strengthen access to justice through evidence-informed planning, strategic partnerships, enhanced service pathways, and community navigation supports, tools and resources.

As implementation of the Strategic Plan continues, the Centre will build on this work to better understand and address barriers to service access while maintaining strong service capacity for all Ontarians experiencing discrimination.

Demographic Data Collection Pilot

In 2026, the HRLSC launched a demographic data collection pilot to strengthen its understanding of who is accessing its services, and to support more evidence-informed planning and decision-making.

The pilot expanded the collection of demographic information in key areas, including socio-economic status, race, and gender, and generated valuable insights into both service user characteristics and opportunities to enhance the Centre's data collection practices and infrastructure. The initiative also helped establish a stronger foundation for future analysis of service utilization patterns, potential equity gaps, and barriers to accessing the HRLSC's services and supports.

Together with the findings from *Where Need Exceeds Reach*, this work represents an important step in strengthening the HRLSC's capacity to use data to inform service planning, partnership development, and targeted access to justice initiatives. As the Centre continues to refine its data collection and analytical capabilities, these efforts will help support a deeper understanding of who is accessing the HRLSC's services, identify potential gaps in service reach, and inform strategies to improve equitable access for communities experiencing discrimination.

3.2 2025-2026 Public Legal Information, System Navigation Support and Engagement Activities

The HRLSC took part in more than 15 significant external activities (sharing information about the HRLSC and its services to audiences of 10 attendees or more) in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, related to five broad categories:

Indigenous Services Outreach Committee

The work of the Indigenous Services and Outreach Committee continued through targeted training, speaking engagements, and participation in community events. These activities were focused on engaging First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, and strengthening relationships

with Indigenous communities and improving access to the HRLSC's legal services and human rights supports for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals. Highlights of this work included delivering human rights training at Thessalon First Nation in September of 2025, and attending the launch of the release of the Toronto Resource Handbook by the Law Society of Nunavut, in October of 2025.

Access to Justice Public Engagement Activities

The HRLSC began its work to advance access to justice through targeted activities focused on public awareness, community engagement, and collaboration with our three pillar partners. Highlights of this work included delivering a presentation to over 70 attendees during Legal Aid Ontario's *Access to Justice Week* in October 2025 and participation in a panel discussion organized by Scarborough Community Legal Services in March 2026, which examined issues of anti-Black racism, employment law, and human rights protections.

Public Legal Information and Capacity Building

Public legal information sharing and system navigation support efforts continued through the delivery of accessible and specialized training to community members and legal service providers. A key highlight of this work included training delivered to 129 Legal Aid Ontario clinic caseworkers, in collaboration with the LAO Clinic Resource Office on *Negotiations, Settlements, and Mediations at the HRTO* in October 2025.

Representing the HRLSC

The Chair of the HRLSC continued to champion the Centre through a range of speaking engagements during the 2025–2026 fiscal year. These included appearances as a panelist for Skills Council of Canada, the Brampton Board of Trade Workforce Recharge Conference, speaking engagements with law associations and academic institutions, including the South Asian Bar Association and the University of Windsor Faculty of Law Mental Health Justice Clinic seminar, as well as the Canadian Bar Association's "Conducting an Investigation: Critical Skills Series" seminar.

Continuing Professional Development

The HRLSC supported continuing professional development through participation in major sector-wide learning events, supporting knowledge-building for the HRLSC's staff as well as other legal professionals operating in Ontario's human rights system. This included hosting and delivering presentations at the Law Society of Ontario's *14th Annual Human Rights Summit* in December 2025, offering summaries of recent human rights case law at the HRTO. Staff provided a similar presentation at the Ontario Bar Association's *Annual Update on Human Rights* in May 2025.

3.3 Partnerships

Law Foundation of Ontario, Community Legal Education Ontario, and Osgoode Hall

During the reporting period, the HRLSC continued implementation of two substantial Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO) funded initiatives designed to improve access to justice within Ontario's human rights system. Together, the Centre's two-year $250,000 Responsive Grant and three-year $4.536 million Strategic Grant represent one of the largest external investments

in the HRLSC's history, and are supporting major service innovations focused on early intervention, dispute resolution, experiential learning, service modernization, and human rights system navigation.

Through the LFO-funded Mediation, Early Resolution and Experiential Training (MEET) project, the HRLSC expanded its long-standing partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School. Building on the success of the Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program (ADIP), which provides 12 law student placements annually, MEET created up to six additional experiential placements each year, focused on mediation, negotiation, and early dispute resolution. Together, these programs appreciably expanded experiential learning opportunities for future human rights practitioners while enhancing the Centre's capacity to support clients navigating the human rights system. Students received practical training and mentorship from the HRLSC's legal staff while supporting mediation preparation, legal research, client service delivery, and early resolution activities.

Through the LFO Strategic Grant, the HRLSC launched its Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS) initiative. Developed in response to stakeholder feedback, increasing demand for services, and the introduction of mandatory mediation at the HRTO, EIMS expanded the Centre's capacity to provide early intervention, summary legal advice, system navigation assistance, application support, mediation preparation, dispute resolution services, and representation. These initiatives contributed to an approximately 90 per cent reduction in the Centre's mediation services waitlist.[1]

The HRLSC also continued development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). The Guided Pathway is an online self-help tool designed to assist individuals in preparing and filing applications with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, helping improve access to the human rights system for individuals who may otherwise face barriers navigating the application process.

Together, these innovative initiatives reflect the HRLSC's commitment to providing multiple pathways to justice, including legal representation, early intervention, dispute resolution, and human rights system navigation supports, in a human rights system facing growing demand, increasing complexity, and significant capacity challenges.

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic (BSCC) provides trauma-informed legal services, counselling, and multi-lingual interpretation, undertaking system-change work to support women and gender-diverse clients who have experienced violence. In the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC and BSCC continued a reciprocal referral relationship, with the HRLSC referring clients to the BSCC for family and immigration legal services, court process support, and counselling. The BSCC also referred clients with human rights complaints to the HRLSC. These mutual referrals reduced intake time and improved staff capacity to assist clients with both legal options and related wellbeing supports.

[1] This is based on a comparison of the HRLSC mediation services waitlist at Responsive Grant project launch in January 2025 (approximately 50 individuals) and January 2026 (5 individuals), when HRLSC prepared an Interim Report on the LFO Responsive Grant.

Ontario Human Rights System Three Pillar Partners

Ontario Human Rights Commission

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC continued regular engagement and collaboration with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) through leadership-level meetings, advisory participation, information sharing, and discussions regarding emerging human rights issues and trends. Engagement occurred at multiple levels, including between the HRLSC's Chair and the OHRC's Chief Commissioner, as well as between Executive Directors and Legal Directors. These discussions supported ongoing information sharing, improved understanding of developments within Ontario's human rights system, strategic litigation information sharing, and identification of opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of each organization's respective mandate.

The HRLSC also continued to participate as an observer member of the OHRC's Community Advisory Group (CAG), which brings together social justice organizations and other stakeholders to provide advice on the OHRC's strategic priorities. Through its Indigenous Services Outreach Committee (ISOC), the HRLSC also continued to participate in the OHRC's Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group. These engagements support ongoing dialogue, relationship-building, and collaboration within Ontario's human rights system.

Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

In the 2025–2026 fiscal year, approximately 66% of online referral traffic to the HRLSC's website originated from the Tribunals Ontario website, reflecting the continued importance of direct referral pathways between the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) and the HRLSC.

Throughout the year, the HRLSC and HRTO’s leadership maintained regular engagement through three-pillar and other senior-level meetings. These discussions facilitated the exchange of information and data regarding applicant needs, service utilization patterns, application trends, and developments affecting Ontario's human rights system. The HRLSC also participated in HRTO consultations regarding proposed updates to Rules and Procedures, including changes associated with the introduction of mandatory mediations. Ongoing engagement between the organizations supported responsiveness to evolving practices and procedures and contributed to a shared understanding of emerging issues affecting applicants and the broader human rights system.

The HRLSC’s client surveys continued to identify the HRTO, OHRC, and HRLSC websites as the primary means by which individuals learned about the HRLSC’s services, underscoring the importance of digital service channels and ongoing collaboration across Ontario's human rights system.

Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program

The HRLSC's long-standing partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School continued to grow during the 2025–2026 fiscal year through both the Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program (ADIP) and the new Mediation, Early Resolution & Experiential Training (MEET) initiative, supported by funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario.

ADIP entered its 15th year of operation and continued to provide 12 full-time student placements annually. Through the program, students receive mentorship from the HRLSC’s counsel and gain practical experience in human rights law, including client intake, legal research, application drafting, mediation preparation, hearings, and exposure to the administrative law process from start to finish, as well as opportunity to conduct in-depth human rights research.

Building on the success of ADIP, the MEET initiative created up to six additional experiential placements annually focused on mediation, negotiation, early intervention, and dispute resolution. Working under the supervision of the HRLSC's legal staff, MEET students supported mediation preparation, legal research, client service delivery, and early resolution activities while developing specialized skills in human rights dispute resolution.

Together, ADIP and MEET provide up to 18 experiential law student placements annually, representing a significant investment in developing the next generation of human rights lawyers and dispute resolution practitioners, while enhancing the HRLSC's capacity to deliver services and support multiple pathways to justice within Ontario's human rights system.

Indigenous Services and Outreach Committee Partnerships

Key activities included:

- **Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group (IRAG):** Ongoing participation, including updates from the OHRC on policies related to Indigenous identity and healthcare discrimination.
- **Indigenous Community Working Group (ICWG):** Continued work on documenting the HRLSC's Reconciliation Journey for publication.
- **Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO):** Maintained collaboration and referral pathways, including through the Prison Project.
- **Patient Ombudsman:** Provided information on referrals to the HRLSC's services.
- **Chiefs of Ontario:** Continued sharing information about the HRLSC's services.
- **Kinoomaadziwin Education Body:** Delivered training on the *Human Rights Code*.
- **Debwewin Summer Law Program:** Continued to offer the Debwewin Summer Law Program in collaboration with the Indigenous Justice Division at MAG.
- **Indigenous Human Rights Program (PBSC & OFIFC):** Delivered training, supported referral coordination through the HRLSC client portal, and improved access to culturally safe services.
- **Thessalon First Nation:** Provided *Human Rights Code* training and information; identified the HRLSC as a future resource and referral partner.

4. Operational Performance

4.1 Case Summaries

The HRLSC provides legal representation and support across multiple stages of the human rights process, including early intervention, rights assertion, mediation, settlement negotiations, hearings before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), enforcement proceedings, judicial reviews, and appeals. Depending on the circumstances, clients may achieve meaningful outcomes through legal advice, rights assertion guidance and support, demand letters, negotiated resolutions, or formal legal proceedings. Some decisions and settlements also include public interest remedies, such as changes to hiring practices or training and education, to prevent similar discrimination from happening in the future. The examples below highlight some of the matters supported by the HRLSC during the reporting period.

Early Intervention and Rights Assertion

Not all human rights matters require a formal application, mediation, or hearing to achieve meaningful results. Throughout the reporting period, the HRLSC's staff assisted individuals in asserting their rights through legal advice and early intervention such as demand letters relating to accommodation requests.

In many cases, these efforts helped resolve disputes before formal proceedings became necessary. Outcomes included securing workplace accommodations, addressing barriers to equal treatment, and facilitating constructive dialogue between parties. While many of these matters do not result in public decisions or settlements, they represent important access to justice outcomes for individuals seeking practical and timely resolutions to human rights concerns. By helping parties address concerns at an early stage, these interventions prevent disputes from escalating into formal HRTO proceedings, reducing demands on Ontario's human rights system and use of public resources. Early resolution also benefits individuals by ending conflict, uncertainty and ongoing harm more quickly, enabling people to move forward with greater stability and confidence.

Pregnant employee secures settlement following workplace termination
Sex (pregnancy)/employment

A factory employee was terminated shortly after disclosing her pregnancy and requesting workplace accommodation. When she initially began experiencing pregnancy-related complications she was temporarily accommodated with modified duties. After two weeks, her employment was terminated during what the employer described as a six-month probationary period, citing performance concerns.

The HRLSC assisted the employee in negotiating a settlement with the employer before a mediation through the HRTO was held.

Condominium resident secures accessibility accommodations and compensation
Disability/housing

A condominium resident with a mobility-related disability required the use of a wheelchair and rollator walker. Prior to moving in, she requested accommodations, including an accessible

parking space at a lower cost and automatic doors for her unit entrance and garbage chute room. She was advised that she would be responsible for the costs.

The HRLSC assisted the resident in negotiating a settlement with their condominium corporation before a mediation with the HRTO was held.

Mediated Settlements

Financial Compensation from Store Where Accessibility Allegedly Fell Short

Disability/Goods, services, facilities (store)

The applicant, a man who uses a wheelchair frequently, shops at a local store where the ramp is only accessible by going through a parking lot. The applicant felt it was dangerous because he was not visible to cars. The store arranged to bring product out if the applicant called ahead, but the applicant alleged the store often didn't pick up their phone when he called.

The HRLSC represented the applicant and was able to negotiate a settlement with the store.

Black Senior reaches settlement with OPP in case of alleged racial profiling

Race/goods, services and facilities (policing)

Kingsley Reid, a 63-year-old Black man from Clarksburg, was forcefully arrested following an alleged altercation with his white neighbour, in which Reid had called police. In investigating the case, OPP officers allegedly only spoke with Reid's neighbour before entering Reid's apartment, tasering him, and taking him into custody. Reid was charged with three criminal offences, but found not guilty of all charges.

The HRLSC represented Reid in his HRTO application, which alleged racial profiling by the OPP. The parties reached a settlement before the hearing of the case was completed. Sadly, Kingsley Reid passed away shortly after reaching this settlement agreement.

The settlement included both monetary and non-monetary terms and resolved allegations of racial profiling and discriminatory treatment in the provision of policing services.

Negative reference letter for student who complained about racism

Race/goods, services, facilities (school)

The applicant was a Black student who had applied to attend a specialized high school operated by the respondent school board. The applicant had received a negative reference from the acting principal, which stated the applicant was untrustworthy and dishonest. The applicant believed this negative reference was influenced by her previous complaints against a fellow student who she alleged called her a racial slur.

The HRLSC negotiated a settlement for the applicant with the school board, which included improved training for its staff and messaging around the Board's anti-Black racism efforts.

Hearings

Blind job candidate wins $28k after employer rejected him over accommodation request

Disability/Employment

In the case of *Burggraaf v. Convergys CMG Canada ULC*, 2025 HRTO 2599, the HRLSC successfully represented Erik Burggraaf, a blind job candidate who passed the initial job interview and screening process, only to be rejected weeks later because of his disability. Burggraaf had asked Convergys for accommodation of his disability in order to work with the software of its client, AT&T. The HRTO found that Convergys failed to show undue hardship in providing accommodation and had not meaningfully consulted with AT&T or Burggraaf before deciding internally to reject his job application.

The decision reinforces employers' obligations to meaningfully consider accommodation requests during the hiring process and confirms that assumptions about disability-related limitations cannot substitute for individualized assessment.

The HRTO ordered the respondents to:

- Pay $20,000 in compensation for injury to dignity, feelings, and self-respect;
- Pay $8,472 in lost wages; and
- Develop new human rights and accommodation policies specifically addressing the hiring of blind applicants, with a focus on the interview process.

Worker awarded $32,500 by HRTO after suffering two months of sexual harassment

Sex and Sexual Harassment, Solicitation/Employment

In the case of *Cloutier v. Back Country Tours Inc*, a woman from Fergus, Ontario who was employed as a tour guide was awarded over $32,500 after enduring two months of sexual harassment at the hands of the owner and other staff while working for an adventure tourism company in the Muskoka and Haliburton regions. The HRLSC represented the applicant in her successful human rights application against Back Country Tours and its owner, Dudley Hookong.

The HRTO found that as the sole owner of Back Country Tours, Hookong and the company were "jointly and severally liable for subjecting [Cloutier] to a poisoned work environment, sexual harassment, and sexual solicitation or advances."

The Tribunal ordered:

- $32,500 compensation for injury to dignity, feelings, and self-respect.

Judicial Reviews

HRLSC intervention affirms proper evidentiary tests for disability discrimination applications at HRTO

Disability/Employment

This judicial review arose from *Bokhari v. Top Medical Transportation Services*, 2022 HRTO 1424, where the applicant alleged disability discrimination following an ankle injury. The HRTO

dismissed the application at a preliminary stage, finding it lacked jurisdiction because the injury did not constitute a "disability" under the *Human Rights Code*.

The HRLSC intervened to address access to justice concerns and the Tribunal's use of an improper evidentiary test at the early stage of proceedings.

The Divisional Court held that the HRTO overstepped its role by assessing the merits of the alleged disability at the preliminary stage. At that stage, the Tribunal's task was limited to determining whether the application alleged on its face a case of discrimination connected to a prohibited ground, which the applicant did. The Court clarified that questions about the genuineness or sufficiency of disability evidence must be addressed later in the process.

The decision provides important guidance regarding the proper test for preliminary screening at the HRTO and strengthens access to justice for applicants seeking to have discrimination claims heard on their merits.

HRTO ordered to continue processing application of HRLSC client after Divisional Court Ruling

Disability/Employment

In *Galace v. Winners Merchants International L.P.*, the Divisional Court overturned the HRTO's dismissal of a disability discrimination application brought by a long-term retail employee who alleged a failure to accommodate her disability. The unanimous Court found that the Tribunal acted unfairly by issuing contradictory directions regarding required medical evidence, and then relying on an earlier direction to dismiss the case.

After initially requiring medical documentation in 2022 and later confirming in 2024 that no further evidence was needed, the HRTO dismissed the application in 2025 as an abuse of process without notice or an opportunity for the applicant to respond.

The HRLSC represented the applicant employee on judicial review, arguing that the dismissal breached procedural fairness. The Court agreed, holding that the HRTO could not reverse its own directions without giving the applicant a chance to address the issue. The application has been reinstated and will proceed before a different HRTO adjudicator.

The decision reinforces the importance of procedural fairness in human rights proceedings and provides guidance regarding the Tribunal's obligations when managing accommodation-related evidence.

Enforcements

Securing a favourable decision is only one step in achieving justice. The HRLSC also assists clients in enforcing HRTO orders where respondents fail to comply voluntarily, helping ensure that remedies awarded by the Tribunal are meaningful and effective in practice.

HRLSC Collects for Client in Employment Discrimination Application

Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression/Employment

In *S.R. v. DLPH Hambleton Group Inc. (aka Burger King Franchise 3566),* 2024 HRTO 1491*,* the applicant alleged discrimination by the respondent with respect to employment based on sex, gender identity, and gender expression, contrary to section 5 of the *Human Rights Code*.

The HRTO granted the application on October 24, 2024, and ordered the following remedies:

- $4,095.85 for lost wages, less applicable statutory deductions;
- $26,000 for injury to dignity, feelings, and self-respect; and
- paying unpaid post-judgement interest for these damages.

In January 2026, the HRLSC successfully enforced the HRTO order, and the applicant received payment from the respondent in an amount of almost $32,500 in full satisfaction for the debt owed to the applicant under the HRTO order.

HRLSC Enforces HRTO Order Finding School Employee Breached the *Code*

Race, Colour, Creed, Ethnic Origin/Goods, Services, Facilities (school)

In *A.A. v Canizalez*, 2023 HRTO 1353, the applicants (a father and son) alleged harassment by the respondent, a school staff member, based on comments made regarding their race, colour, creed and ethnicity during the son's drop off at his school.

The HRTO later dismissed the respondent's request for a reconsideration of the HRTO decision, 2024 HRTO 1862.

The HRTO ordered the following financial remedies for the respondent's violation of the *Code* and for injury to the applicants' dignity, feelings, and self-respect:

- pay the applicants $6,000.00 as monetary compensation; and
- paying unpaid post-judgement interest for these damages.

In March 2026, the HRLSC successfully completed enforcement of the HRTO order against the respondent. The applicants received payments of over $6,300 as a result of a successful garnishment proceeding in the Small Claims Court in full satisfaction of the amounts owed under the HRTO order.

4.2 Media Coverage

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

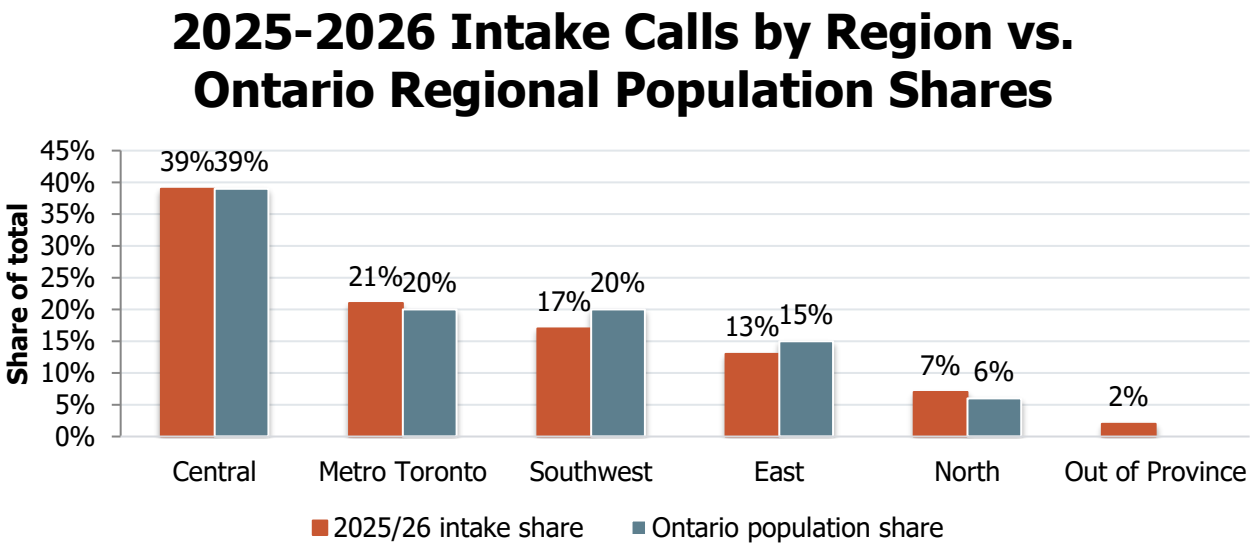
Story Headline:	Publication/Media Outlet and Date:	Description:
Ontario Law Foundation greenlights $4.5 million grant for Human Rights Legal Support Centre	The Law Times, Thursday, August 20, 2025	Discusses successful Strategic Grant provided by the Law Foundation of Ontario to the HRLSC.
Blind Ontario man awarded $28,000 after tribunal finds workplace discrimination	CTV News, Saturday, November 29, 2025	An interview and feature article that focuses on applicant Erik Burggraaf, his experience of discrimination and response to the HRTO

		decision in favour of his application.
Blind St. Catharines man hopes human rights tribunal ruling inspires others	St. Catharines Standard, Saturday, November 22, 2025	Local coverage of the case of *Burggraaf v. Convergys CMG Canada ULC*, 2025 HRTO 2599 emphasizing the applicant's experience and the significance of the ruling for persons with disabilities seeking to assert their rights under the Human Rights Code.
Blind job candidate human rights tribunal	CBC News, Tuesday, December 9, 2025	Feature article examining barriers faced by blind job applicants and the broader implications of the *Burggraaf* decision for accessible hiring practices and workplace accommodation.
Woman wins human rights case	The Highlander, Thursday, January 8, 2026	Article summarizing the *Cloutier* decision and highlighting the role of the human rights system in addressing workplace sexual harassment and discrimination. Focuses on key facts and the $32,500 monetary award, with quotes from the HRLSC on the successful decision.

4.3 Statistics (2025-2026)

Region

Intake Calls by Region Compared with Ontario Population Share



In 2025–2026, the HRLSC's intake calls were broadly aligned with Ontario's regional population distribution. Central Ontario accounted for 39% of intake calls and 39% of the provincial population, showing direct proportional alignment. Toronto was slightly overrepresented among intake callers, accounting for 21% of intakes compared with 20% of the population, while the North was also modestly overrepresented at 7% of intakes compared with 6% of the population. The Southwest and East were somewhat underrepresented, accounting for 17% and 13% of intakes respectively, compared with 20% and 15% of the provincial population.

HRLSC / HRTO Regional Comparison

Region	HRLSC Intake Calls*	HRTO Applications**
East	13%	14%
Central	39%	33%
Toronto	21%	24%
Southwest	17%	16%
North	7%	6%
Other / Unassigned	2%	8%

Table Notes:

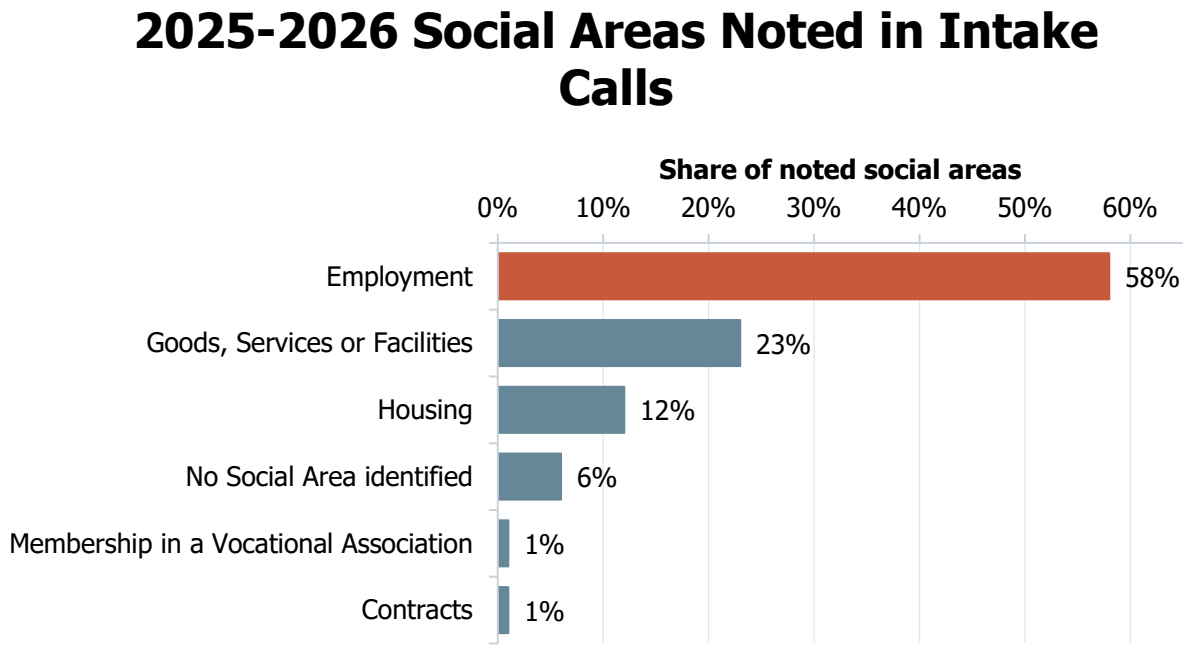
*Percentages based on 7,193 intake calls for which region was specified.

**Percentages calculated based on 2,557 applications pertaining to 2025/26 Q1 and Q2 data; data for the remaining quarters was not available at the time of this writing. Source: HRTO Open Data - Applications Received - Region.

The regional distribution of the HRLSC's intake calls was broadly similar to the regional distribution of the HRTO's applications in 2025–2026 Q1 and Q2, with some notable differences. Central Ontario accounted for 39% of the HRLSC's intake calls, compared with 33% of the HRTO's applications, a six percentage-point difference indicating that Central Ontario represented a larger share of the HRLSC's intake activity than of HRTO application activity. Toronto showed the opposite pattern, accounting for 21% of the HRLSC's intake calls and 24% of HRTO applications, while the East, Southwest, and North were closely aligned across the two measures. The largest difference appears in the Other/Unassigned category, which accounted for 2% of HRLSC intake calls but 8% of HRTO applications; this category should be interpreted cautiously because it may include cases where regional information was missing, unavailable, or not assigned in a directly comparable way. Because the HRTO's figures are based on Q1 and Q2 data available at the time of the HRLSC writing this year's Annual Report, the comparison should be treated as a partial-year system comparison rather than a final full-year assessment.

Social Areas

Social Areas Noted in Intake Calls



Employment remained by far the most frequently identified social area in the HRLSC's intake calls in 2025–2026, accounting for 58% of noted social areas. Goods, services or facilities was the second-largest category at 23%, followed by housing at 12%. Together, employment, goods/services/facilities, and housing accounted for 93% of noted social areas, indicating that the HRLSC's intake activity continues to be highly concentrated in these three areas of Code-related concern. Membership in a vocational association and contracts each accounted for 1%, while 6% of intake calls had no social area identified. This distribution is consistent with the broader pattern seen in prior HRLSC and HRTO reporting, where employment remains the largest area of human rights concern.

HRLSC / HRTO Social Area Comparison

Social Area	HRLSC Intakes*	HRTO Applications**
Employment	58%	54%
Goods, Services and Facilities	23%	30%
Housing	12%	12%
Contracts	1%	2%
Membership in a Vocational Association	1%	2%
No Social Area	6%	1%

Table Notes:

*Percentages based on 26,295 intake calls.

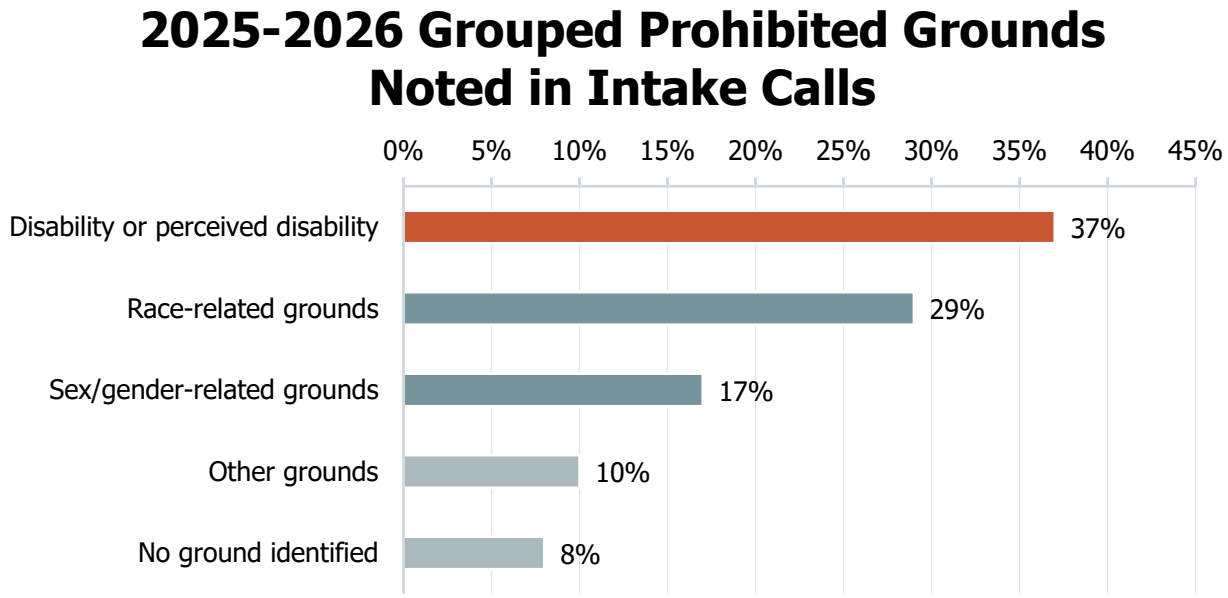
**Percentages calculated based on 2,638 applications pertaining to 2025/26 Q1 and Q2 data; data for the remaining quarters was not available at the time of this writing. Source: HRTO Open Data - Applications Received - Social Area Cited.

The social-area distribution of the HRLSC's intakes was broadly similar to the distribution of HRTO applications in 2025–2026 Q1 and Q2, particularly for employment and housing. Employment accounted for the largest share in both datasets, representing 58% of HRLSC intakes and 54% of HRTO applications, while housing accounted for 12% in both. Goods, services and facilities represented a larger share of HRTO applications than HRLSC intakes, at 30% compared with 23%, a seven percentage-point difference. The HRLSC's intakes were also more likely to have no social area identified, at 6% compared with 1% of HRTO applications.

Overall, the comparison suggests broad alignment between the HRLSC's intake activity and HRTO application patterns across the main social areas, while also showing some differences between early-stage intake and formal application data.

Prohibited Grounds

Prohibited Grounds Noted in Intake Calls



Disability or perceived disability was the largest prohibited-ground category that callers identified as their related concerns in 2025–2026, accounting for 37% of the grouped prohibited-ground distribution. Race-related grounds were the second-largest category at 29%, followed by sex/gender-related grounds at 17%. Other grounds accounted for 10%, while no ground was identified in 8% of the grouped distribution. Overall, the distribution shows that disability, race-related, and sex/gender-related matters made up the large majority of grouped prohibited-ground categories noted at intake.

Note: Disability relates exclusively to the single prohibited ground of disability; race-related grounds includes race, colour, ancestry, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, and creed; sex/gender-related grounds includes sex/gender, pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual solicitation/advances/reprisals, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation; other grounds includes age, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, association with a protected ground, reprisal, and threat of reprisal; no ground identified indicates that no Code ground was identified in the intake record. Because the above chart presents grouped categories, its percentages should not be compared directly with the detailed prohibited-grounds table below. The detailed table reports the percentage of intakes citing each individual ground; for example, one intake caller could cite both race and colour and therefore be counted under both individual grounds in the detailed table. "No ground identified" indicates that no Code ground was identified in the intake record.

Prohibited Grounds: HRLSC / HRTO Comparison

Prohibited Grounds Noted in Intake Calls (2025/26)	Number	% of Intake Calls Citing Ground	HRTO Comparison**
Disability	16,219	63.8%	58%
Race	5,318	20.9%	30%
Sex, Including Sexual Harassment and Pregnancy	3,425	13.5%	17%
No Grounds	3,410	13.4%	1%
Reprisal or Threat of Reprisal	2,196	8.6%	34%
Colour	1,762	6.9%	19%
Family Status	1,730	6.8%	14%
Ethnic Origin	1,603	6.3%	22%
Place of Origin	1,476	5.8%	16%
Age	1,411	5.6%	12%
Creed	1,243	4.9%	8%
Ancestry	790	3.1%	15%
Sexual Orientation	591	2.3%	5%
Citizenship	570	2.2%	8%
Gender Identity	489	1.9%	8%
Association	447	1.8%	6%
Sexual Solicitation, Advances or Reprisals	445	1.8%	8%
Receipt of Public Assistance	390	1.5%	3%
Gender Expression	353	1.4%	6%
Marital Status	344	1.4%	5%
Record of Offences	107	0.4%	1%

Table Notes:

*HRLSC percentages are calculated based on 25,421 intakes. Percentages may exceed 100% because intake calls may cite more than one prohibited ground.

**HRTO comparison figures are based on 2,638 applications received in Q1 and Q2 of 2025–2026, covering April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2025. Full-year 2025–2026 HRTO prohibited-grounds data were not available at the time of publication. HRLSC intake data and HRTO application data are related but not directly equivalent, as they reflect different stages of the human rights process.

Disability was the most frequently cited prohibited ground in the HRLSC's intake calls in 2025–2026, appearing in 16,219 intakes, or 63.8% of intakes. Race was the next most frequently cited individual ground at 20.9%, followed by sex, including sexual harassment and pregnancy, at 13.5%. Compared with HRTO Q1 and Q2 application data, the HRLSC's intakes showed a higher share of disability-related matters, while HRTO applications showed higher shares for

several race-related and procedural grounds, including reprisal or threat of reprisal, race, ethnic origin, colour, place of origin, and ancestry. The difference in the "no grounds" category is also notable: no grounds were identified in 13.4% of the HRLSC's intakes, compared with 1% of HRTO applications, which likely reflects the earlier screening and advice stage at which HRLSC intakes occur. This differential clearly signals the value of the HRLSC's early advice services in helping prospective applicants assess the merits of their concerns and avoid pursuing claims that are unlikely to meet the requirements of the *Code*. Overall, the table shows that disability remains the leading ground at intake, while also highlighting important differences between early-stage HRLSC intake data and formal HRTO application data.

Disability Related Sub-Grounds, 2025-2026

Disability Related Sub-Grounds, 2025-2026	# of sub-grounds noted in intakes	% of intakes citing sub-ground*
Disability or Perceived Disability - Physical	7,387	29.1%
Disability or Perceived Disability - Mental/Emotional	6,635	26.1%
Disability or Perceived Disability - Intellectual/Developmental	1,870	7.4%

Table Note:

*Percentages are calculated based on 25,421 intakes.

Among disability-related sub-grounds noted in HRLSC intakes in 2025–2026, physical disability was the most frequently cited, appearing in 7,387 intakes, or 29.1% of all intakes. Mental/emotional disability was also frequently cited, appearing in 6,635 intakes, or 26.1% of all intakes. Intellectual/developmental disability was cited less often, appearing in 1,870 intakes, or 7.4% of all intakes. These figures show that disability-related intake activity spans multiple forms of disability, with physical and mental/emotional disability-related concerns representing the largest components. Because some intakes may identify more than one disability-related sub-ground, these percentages indicate the frequency with which each sub-ground was cited and should not be summed as a single total.

Race Related Sub-Grounds

Race Related Sub-Grounds, 2025-2026	# of sub-grounds noted in intakes	% of intakes citing sub-ground*
Anti-Black Racism	1,369	5.4%
Anti-Muslim Discrimination	314	1.2%
Anti-Indigenous Discrimination	289	1.1%
Anti-South Asian Racism	190	0.7%
Anti-East Asian Racism	136	0.5%
Antisemitism	81	0.3%
Other Race-Related Discrimination	33	0.1%

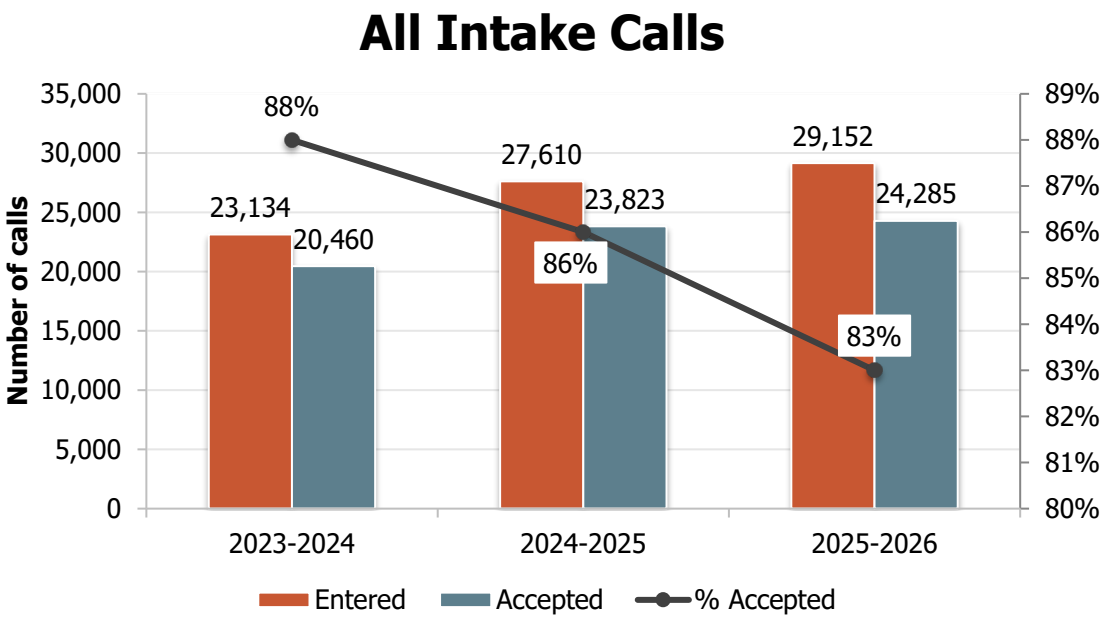
Table Note:

*Percentages are calculated based on 25,421 intakes. "Other race-related discrimination" includes Anti-Latino, Anti-Middle Eastern, Anti-Southeast Asian, and Anti-White.

Among race-related sub-grounds noted in HRLSC intakes in 2025–2026, Anti-Black racism was the most frequently cited, appearing in 1,369 intakes, or 5.4% of all intakes. Since the HRLSC began tracking Anti-Black Racism as a distinct race-related sub-ground in 2018–2019, it has consistently been the most frequently reported race-related sub-ground among individuals seeking assistance from the Centre. Anti-Muslim discrimination and Anti-Indigenous discrimination were the next most frequently cited race-related sub-grounds, appearing in 314 and 289 intakes respectively. Anti-South Asian racism, Anti-East Asian racism, and antisemitism were cited less frequently, while other race-related categories together accounted for 33 intakes. Overall, the data shows that Anti-Black racism remains the largest identified race-related sub-ground in the HRLSC's intake activity, while also demonstrating that race-related discrimination is reported across multiple communities and forms of discrimination. Because some intakes may identify more than one race-related sub-ground, these percentages indicate the frequency with which each sub-ground was cited and should not be summed as a single total.

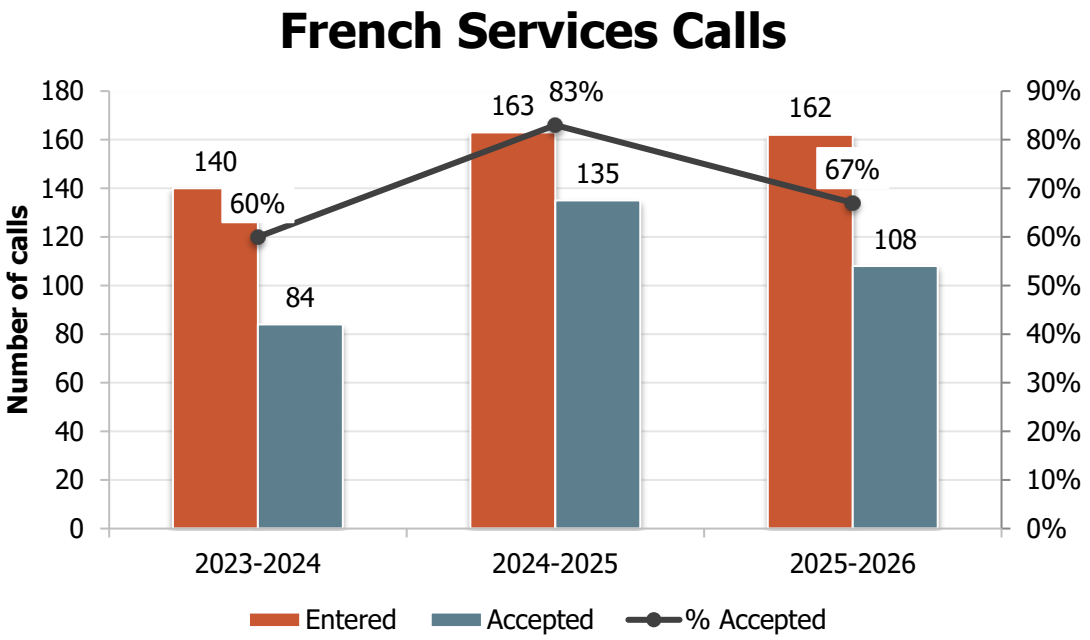
Initial Phone Calls Received and Accepted

All Intake Calls



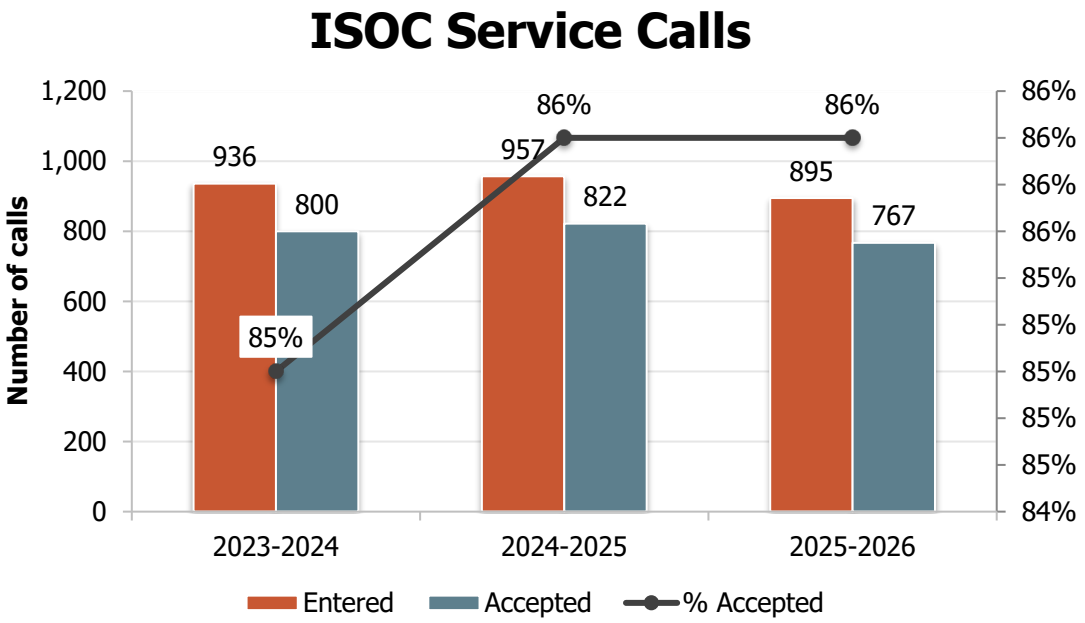
The HRLSC received 29,152 intake calls in 2025–2026, up from 27,610 in 2024–2025, representing a 5.6% increase in total call volume. The number of accepted calls also increased, from 23,823 to 24,285, meaning the Centre answered 462 more calls than in the previous fiscal year. However, because total call volume increased faster than accepted calls, the acceptance rate declined from 86% to 83%. Taken together, the data show continued growth in front-end demand for the HRLSC's services, alongside some pressure on the Centre's ability to maintain the prior year's call-acceptance rate. As the Centre continues to implement its strategic priority of improving access and service options across Ontario, accepted-call volume and acceptance rates remain important indicators of front-end service accessibility. Notably, the increased demand likely also correlates with the HRTO's implementation of mandatory mediation and the HRLSC's expanded emphasis on early dispute resolution services, both of which encourage individuals to seek legal information and assistance at an earlier stage and consider alternate dispute resolution. While these trends suggest growing public awareness of, and engagement with, early resolution pathways, they also underscore the need for sufficient resources to ensure the HRLSC can continue to meet rising demand to provide timely, effective support to Ontarians seeking to understand and enforce their human rights.

French Services Calls



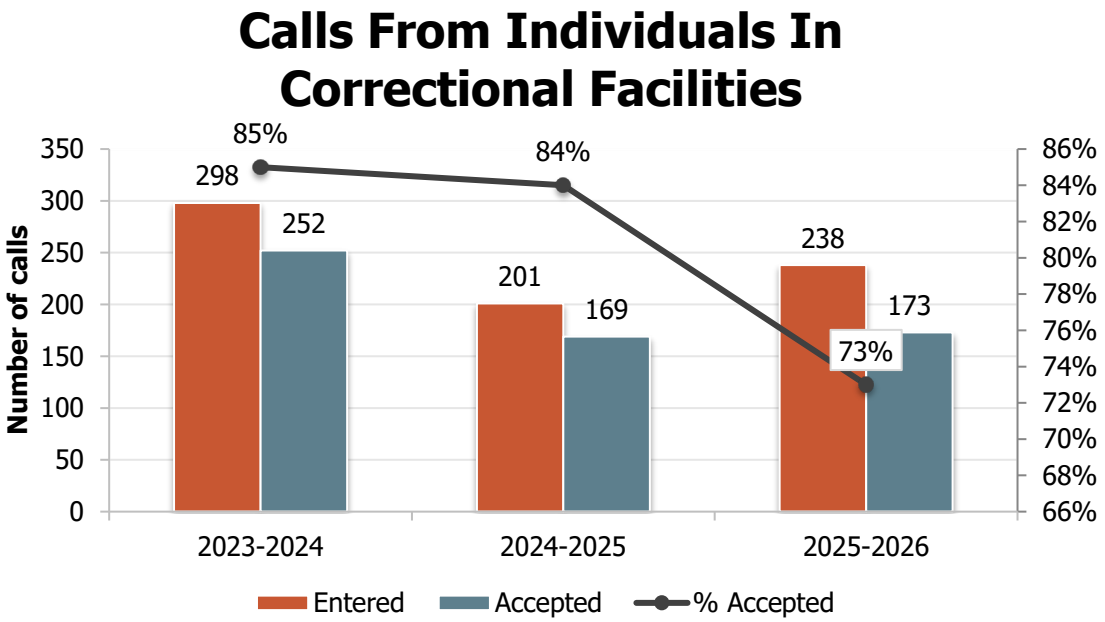
French service call volume remained stable in 2025–2026, with 162 calls entered compared with 163 in 2024–2025. However, accepted French service calls declined from 135 to 108, and the acceptance rate fell from 83% to 67%. This represents a meaningful decline in the proportion of French service calls accepted, despite essentially unchanged call volume. Given the relatively small number of French-language service calls received annually, year-over-year fluctuations should be interpreted cautiously. Nevertheless, the decline warrants monitoring as part of the Centre's broader commitment to accessible services in both official languages.

ISOC Service Calls



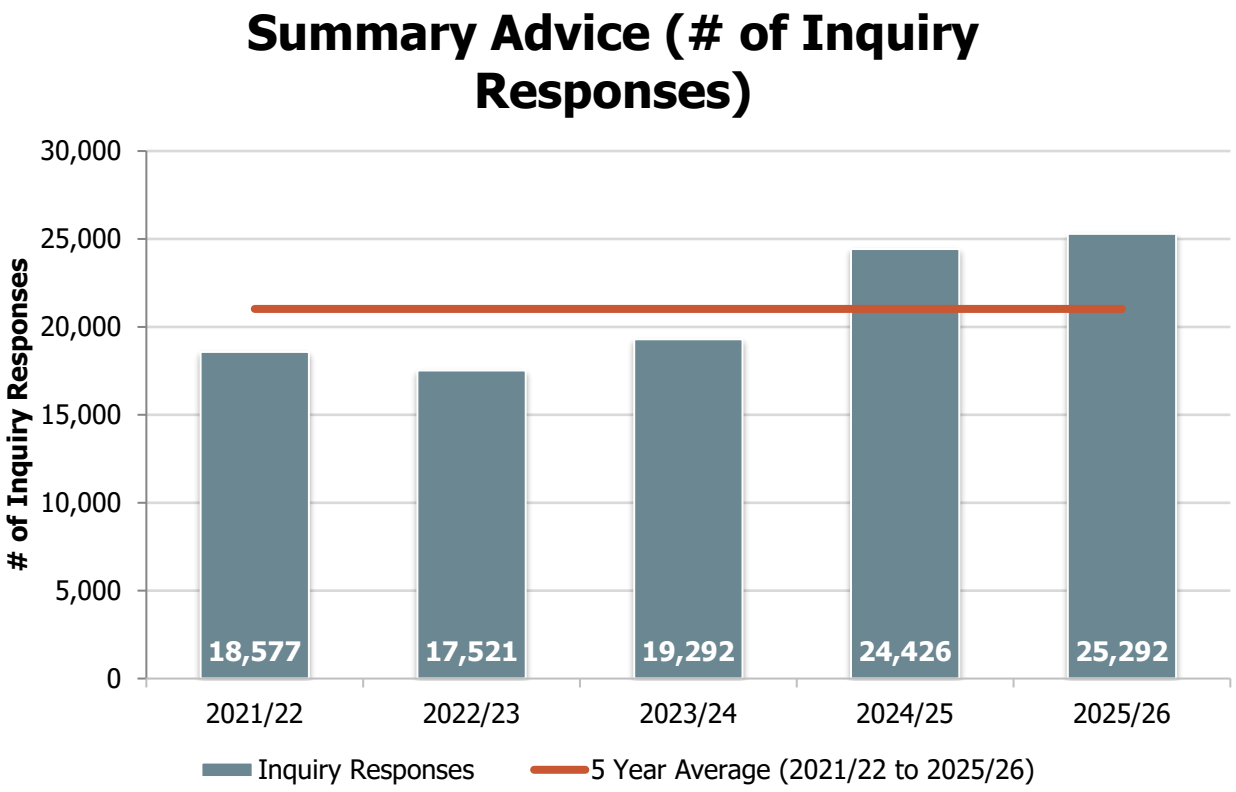
ISOC service calls declined modestly in 2025–2026, from 957 entered calls in 2024–2025 to 895, a 6.5% decrease. Accepted calls also declined, from 822 to 767, while the acceptance rate remained stable at 86%. This suggests that although the volume of ISOC service calls was lower than in the previous year, the Centre maintained a consistent response rate to calls received through this service stream. The stable acceptance rate indicates that the decline was driven by lower call volume rather than by a reduced proportion of calls being accepted.

Calls from Individuals in Correctional Facilities



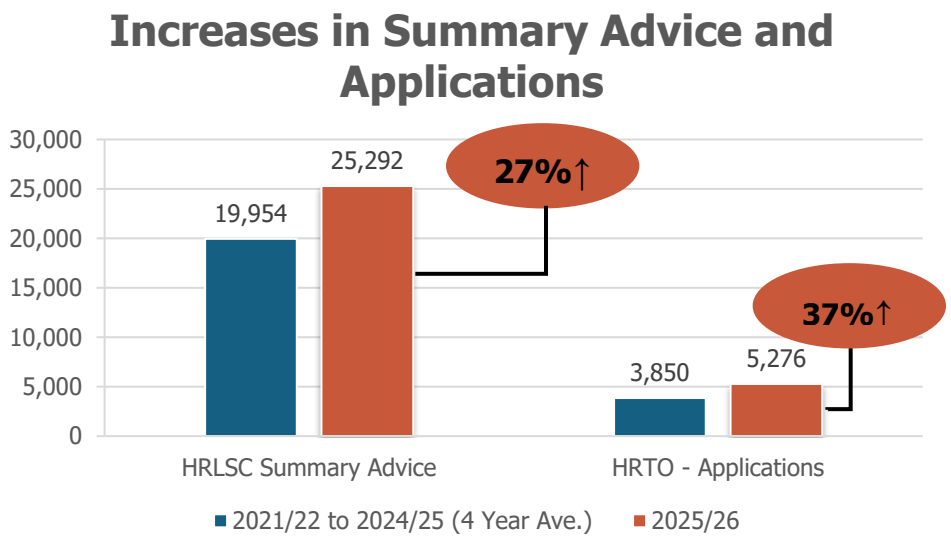
Calls from individuals in correctional facilities increased from 201 in 2024–2025 to 238 in 2025–2026, an 18.4% increase in calls entered. Accepted calls increased only slightly, from 169 to 173, while the acceptance rate declined from 84% to 73%. This pattern shows increased demand through the correctional-facility service line, combined with a lower proportion of calls accepted. The increase in demand coupled with a lower acceptance rate warrants continued monitoring, particularly given the access to justice importance of this service stream and the Centre's strategic commitment to improving access for people who are most marginalized and vulnerable to discrimination.

Summary Advice – Number of Inquiry Responses



The HRLSC provided 25,292 summary advice inquiry responses in 2025–2026, up from 24,426 in 2024–2025, a 3.5% year-over-year increase. This was also well above the five-year average of 21,022 inquiry responses. Summary advice remains one of the Centre's core front-end services, helping individuals understand whether their concerns may fall under the *Code* and what options may be available to them. The continued increase in inquiry responses reinforces the sustained demand for accessible human rights legal information and early-stage advice, and aligns with the Centre's strategic priority of increasing and improving access to legal services and supports across Ontario.

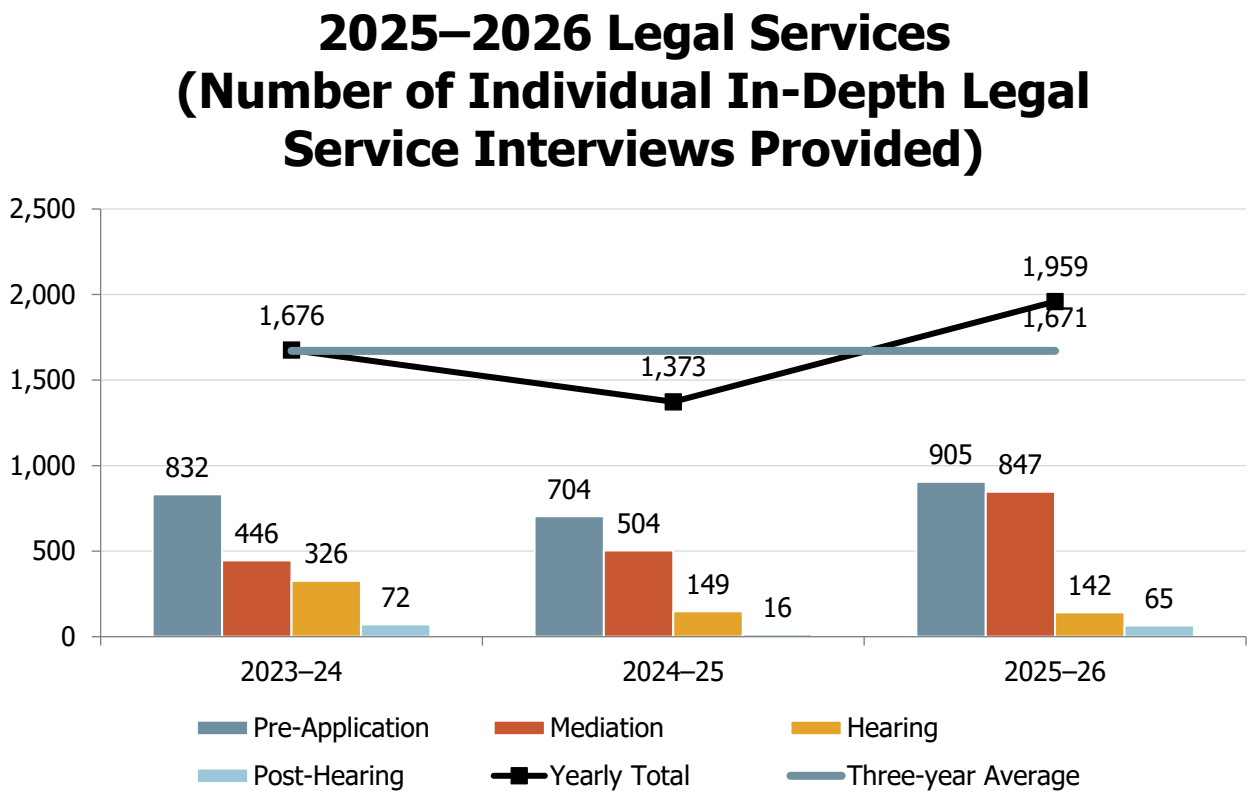
Increases in Summary Advice and HRTO Applications



The comparison between the HRLSC's summary advice and HRTO applications suggests that increased HRLSC inquiry activity occurred within a broader context of rising demand across Ontario's human rights system. HRLSC summary advice reached 25,292 inquiry responses in 2025–2026, which is 27% higher than the prior four-year average of 19,954. The HRTO applications figure is provisionally estimated at 5,276, which is 37% higher than the prior four-year average of 3,850; this HRTO figure should be interpreted cautiously because it is annualized from Q1 and Q2 data rather than based on a complete fiscal year. While the two measures are not directly equivalent, they are broadly consistent with increased public use of human rights redress pathways and help contextualize the continued growth in the HRLSC's front-end service activity. This comparison also supports the Centre's strategic emphasis on using data and evidence to understand service demand and inform service delivery.

The data in the above-noted two charts also suggest that more Ontarians are seeking assistance before commencing formal HRTO proceedings, signalling that individuals are reaching out to the HRLSC to make better informed decisions about their human rights in advance of filing applications. Early summary legal advice helps clarify expectations, identify jurisdictional issues to pursuing a claim, offers self-help measures to support the resolution of disputes before they escalate and guides individuals to the most appropriate alternate options or services. The growing use of summary advice services may also reflect increasing public awareness of the HRLSC and confidence in its role as the province's primary source of human rights system navigation assistance. This growth in demand highlights the importance of ensuring that the HRLSC has sufficient resources and capacity to offer timely access to high-quality legal support and advice. By helping Ontarians better understand their rights at the earliest possible stage, the HRLSC's summary advice services promote access to human rights justice and enhance the effective functioning of Ontario's human rights system as a whole.

Legal Services – In-Depth Legal Service Interviews

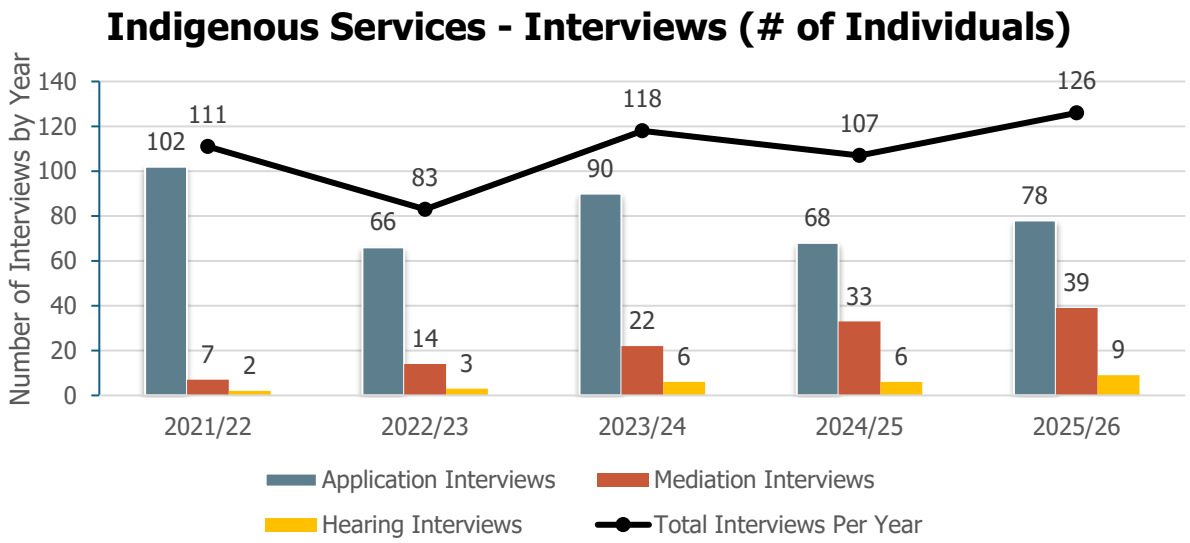


The HRLSC provided 1,959 individual in-depth legal service interviews in 2025–2026, up from 1,373 in 2024–2025, a 43% increase. The increase was driven primarily by pre-application interviews, which rose from 704 to 905, and mediation interviews, which rose from 504 to 847. This growth reflects expanded service capacity at the pre-application and mediation stages, including additional staff resources, increased mediation-focused capacity, and expanded student-supported service delivery. The increase in mediation interviews also occurred in the context of the HRTO's introduction of mandatory mediation as of June 1, 2025, which increased the demand for mediation-related support within the Centre's service continuum.

By contrast, hearing-related interviews remained comparatively low, declining slightly from 149 to 142 and remaining well below the 326 recorded in 2023–2024. The reasons for this trend may reflect a range of factors, including developments within the broader human rights system, changes in the volume and timing of hearing activity before the HRTO, and evolving patterns of demand for legal services. Notably, the Centre expanded its legal counsel complement during the year and substantially increased overall in-depth legal service activity, including through the implementation of its EIMS and MEET initiatives. At the same time, the Centre experienced significant growth in mediation, early intervention, and other litigation-related work, including judicial reviews before the courts. The HRLSC will continue to monitor these trends to ensure resources remain aligned with client needs and evolving patterns of demand across the human rights system.

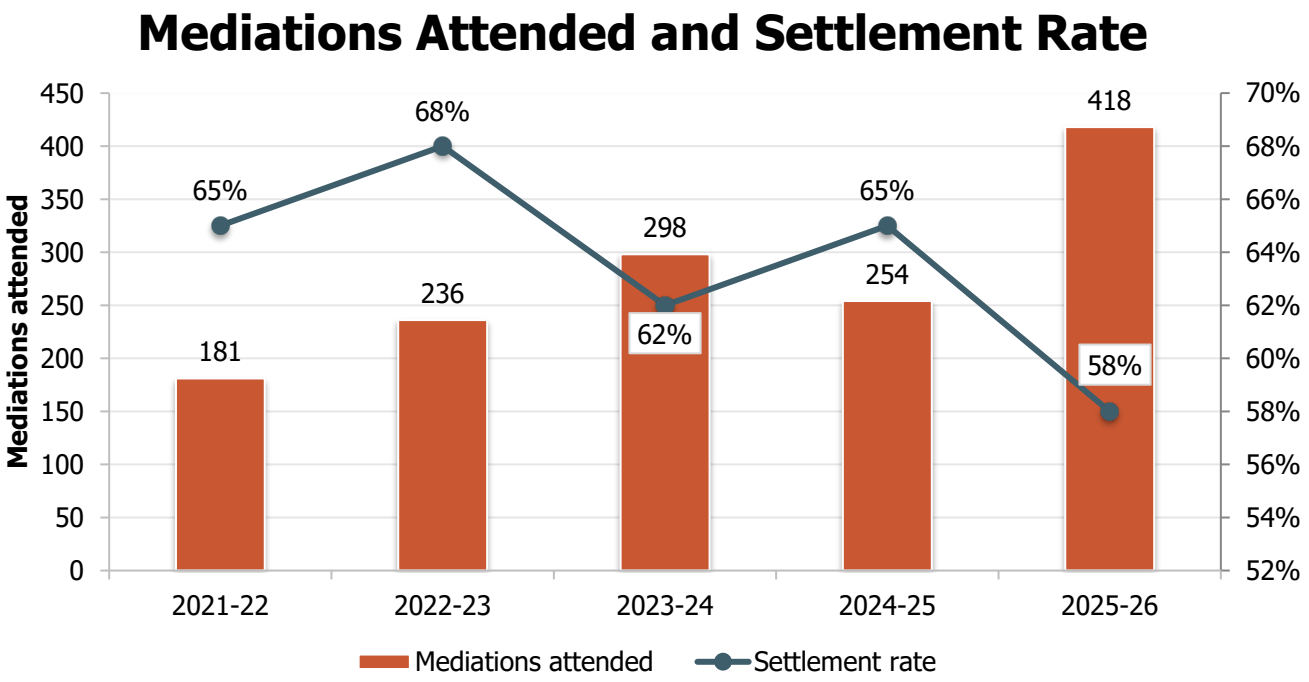
Overall, the data demonstrates a substantial expansion of in-depth legal service activity, with the strongest growth occurring in pre-application and mediation-related services. Hearing-related interviews remained comparatively stable, while growth in mediation, early intervention, and other litigation-related work reflects evolving service demands and the increasing importance of multiple pathways to justice within Ontario's human rights system.

Indigenous Services



In 2025/26, Indigenous Services provided 78 application interviews, 39 mediation interviews, and 9 hearing interviews. Application interviews remained the largest category, increasing from 68 in 2024/25 to 78 in 2025/26, while mediation interviews also increased from 33 to 39. Hearing interviews rose from 6 to 9, marking the highest hearing-interview count shown in the five-year period. Overall, the data show increased Indigenous Services interview activity across all three service types in 2025/26, with the strongest volume continuing to be concentrated in application-stage support. The increase in mediation and hearing interviews also suggests that Indigenous Services continued to support clients beyond the initial application stage and across later points in the HRTO process.

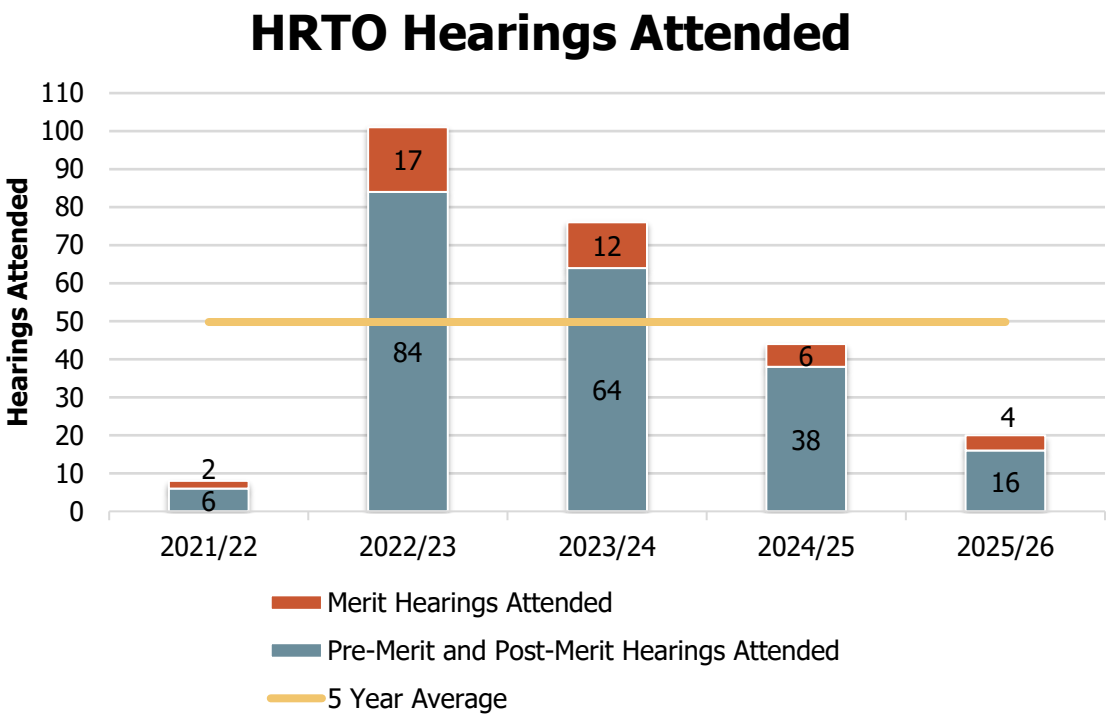
Mediations Attended and Settlement Rate



The HRLSC attended 418 mediations in 2025–2026, up from 254 in 2024–2025, representing a 64.6% increase. This increase reflects both expanded HRLSC capacity for mediation representation (with increased staffing positions in this area supported by LFO funding) and a broader human rights system context in which mediation has become more central to the HRTO process. Although the settlement rate declined from 65% to 58%, nearly six in ten mediations attended by the HRLSC still resulted in settlement. The lower settlement rate should also be interpreted in light of the expanded volume and changing nature of mediation activity: as more matters proceed to mediation, including matters where mediation is compulsory rather than voluntarily pursued by the parties, the overall settlement rate may reasonably be expected to moderate. At the same time, the substantially higher mediation volume meant that the number of mediated settlements increased, from approximately 165 in 2024–2025 to approximately 242 in 2025–2026. These 242 mediation settlements represented approximately 86% of all settlements achieved by the Centre during the fiscal year.

Overall, the data show a significantly larger mediation workload, a higher number of matters resolved through mediation, and continued alignment with the Centre's strategic priority of enhancing early intervention and resolution service options.

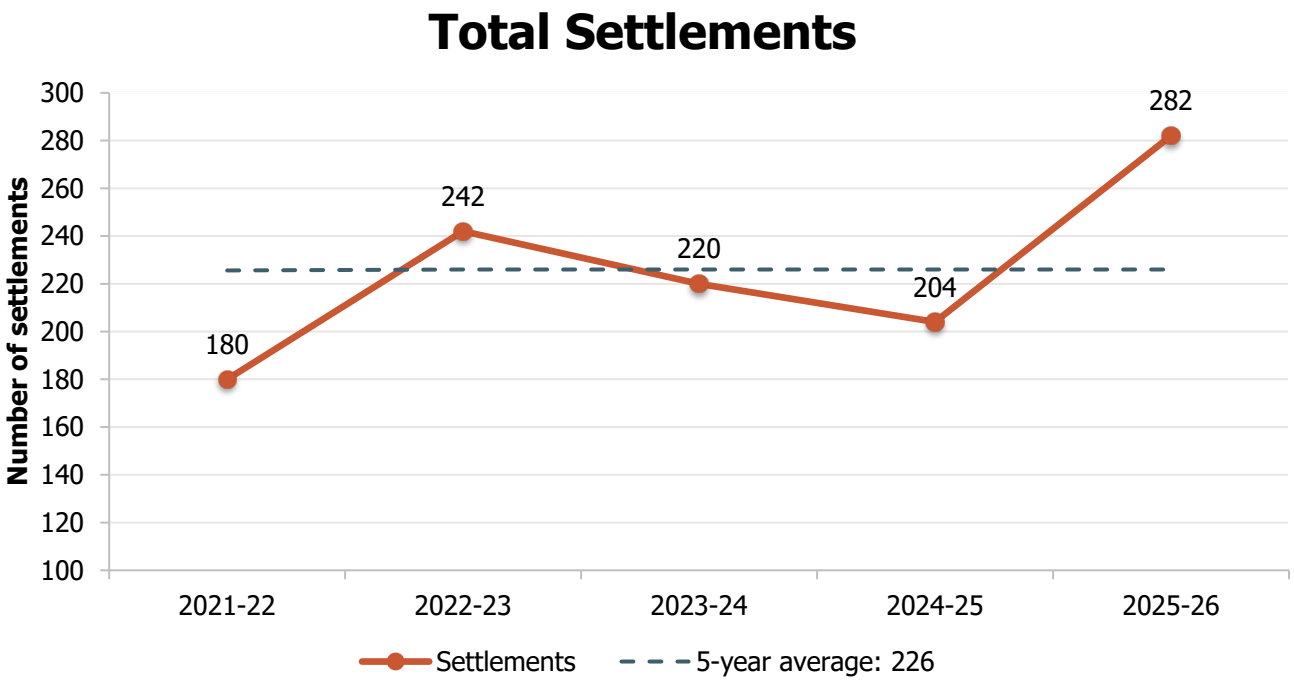
HRTO Hearings Attended



HRTO hearing attendance declined in 2025–2026, with pre-merit and post-merit hearings falling from 38 to 16 and merit hearings declining from 6 to 4. Total HRTO hearing attendance therefore fell from 44 hearings in 2024–2025 to 20 in 2025–2026, well below the five-year average of approximately 50 hearings. However, hearing attendance alone does not capture the full scope of the Centre's hearing-related legal work. In 2025–2026, although the HRLSC was retained for additional merit hearing matters and undertook hearing preparation work in that regard, these matters did not proceed to hearing because some settled before the hearing date and one was adjourned by the HRTO. This reflects the Centre's continued emphasis on resolving matters where appropriate, including on files that may otherwise have resorted to full litigation.

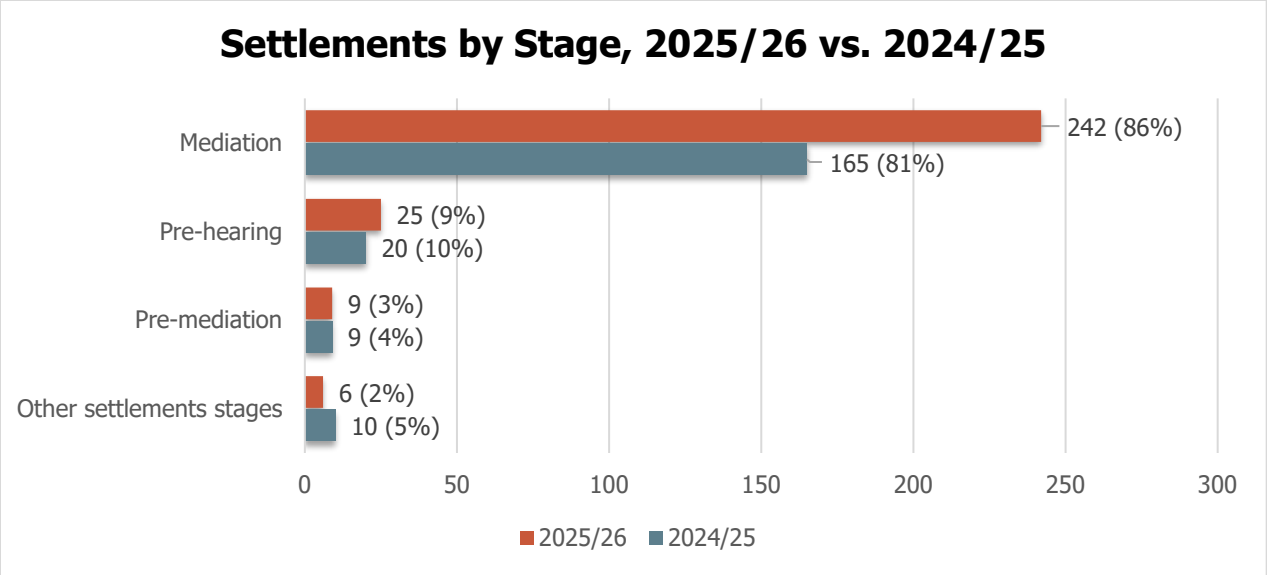
The reasons for the decline in hearing attendance are not yet fully understood and may reflect a range of factors, particularly developments within the broader human rights system, changes in the volume and timing of hearing activity before the HRTO, and evolving patterns of demand for legal services. Notably, the Centre increased its legal counsel complement during the year and substantially expanded overall in-depth legal service activity. At the same time, the HRLSC deployed resources to support significant growth in mediation, early intervention, and dispute resolution services through its EIMS and MEET initiatives, while also experiencing increased activity in other litigation-related work, including judicial reviews before the courts. These trends reflect both the HRTO's increased emphasis on mediation and the Centre's continued commitment to strategic litigation and access to justice initiatives. Overall, hearing attendance should not be interpreted as a complete measure of the Centre's litigation-related workload, strategic case selection, or hearing-stage legal activity. The HRLSC will continue to monitor these trends to ensure resources remain aligned with client needs and evolving patterns of demand across the human rights system.

Total Settlements



The HRLSC achieved 282 settlements in 2025–2026, an increase of 78 settlements (38.2%) from 204 settlements in 2024–2025. The result exceeded the five-year average of approximately 226 settlements and represented the highest number of settlements achieved during the five-year period shown.

The increase in settlements reflects a larger number of matters being resolved through the human rights system and is consistent with broader trends discussed elsewhere in this report, including increased mediation activity and the HRTO's introduction of mandatory mediation effective June 1, 2025.



A review of settlement outcomes by stage indicates that mediation accounted for the overwhelming majority of settlements in 2025–2026. A total of 242 matters resolved through mediation, representing approximately 86% of all settlements, compared with 165 mediated settlements, or approximately 81% of all settlements, in 2024–2025. By comparison, 25 settlements occurred before hearing, while relatively few settlements occurred at other stages of the process.

The year-over-year comparison suggests that the increase in overall settlement activity was driven primarily by growth in mediated resolutions. Of the 78 additional settlements achieved in 2025–2026 compared with the previous year, 77 occurred through mediation. The increasing prominence of mediation as a resolution pathway is consistent with both the HRTO's introduction of mandatory mediation and the Centre's strategic investments in mediation, early intervention, and dispute resolution services, supported in part through the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant and aligned with the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan.

Although settlement rates remain an important performance measure, the total number of matters resolved through settlement also provides an important indicator of access-to-justice outcomes. Together, these results suggest that more individuals were able to achieve resolution of their human rights matters in 2025–2026, while also highlighting the growing importance of mediation within Ontario's human rights system.

Judicial Reviews, Reconsiderations and Enforcement

Judicial reviews, reconsiderations, and enforcement proceedings continued to form an important component of the Centre's legal services through post-decision litigation and remedial work in 2025–2026. During the year, the HRLSC conducted 28 judicial review-related interviews, accepted two judicial review retainers, participated in four judicial review hearings, and achieved favourable outcomes in two significant court decisions. The Centre also resolved an additional judicial review matter through settlement.

The Centre further supported clients seeking reconsideration of Tribunal decisions and enforcement of Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario orders. During the reporting period, the

HRLSC conducted 13 enforcement-related interviews, provided representation in 8 enforcement matters, including 6 new enforcement retainers, and successfully enforced Tribunal orders in 2 matters. While enforcement files represent a relatively small proportion of the Centre's overall caseload, they play an important role in ensuring that successful applicants are able to realize the remedies awarded to them and that Tribunal decisions are given practical effect.

While judicial reviews, reconsiderations, and enforcement matters represent a relatively small portion of the Centre's overall caseload, they can have significant implications for both individual applicants and the broader human rights system. In 2025–2026, the Centre participated in an influential case involving an issue of broader public interest and systemic significance. In *Bokhari v. Top Medical Transportation Services*, the Court pronounced the applicable legal test for determining matters of jurisdiction. The Centre also successfully represented the applicant in *Galace v. Winners Merchants International L.P.*, which reinforced that compliance with the fundamental legal principles of the right to be heard and procedural fairness must be provided. Together, these matters reflected the Centre's strategic focus on litigation with the potential to advance human rights beyond the circumstances of any individual case.

These activities underscore the HRLSC's commitment to ensuring that Ontarians have meaningful avenues of redress for human rights violations. By assisting clients with the Tribunal post-decision stage processes, the Centre helps safeguard procedural fairness, due process and the effective implementation of remedies. This wrap-around approach to legal representation is critical to ensuring that successful human rights claims result in tangible outcomes and that procedural or legal errors in the adjudicative process can be appropriately reviewed and corrected. In doing so, the Centre strengthens public confidence in Ontario's human rights system and advances access to justice by helping to ensure that rights are accompanied by effective remedies and meaningful enforcement.

5. Performance Measures

5.1 Access to legal information & advice

Performance Measure: Ontarians who believe they have experienced discrimination have access to human rights legal information and advice.

Year	Performance Target: Intake calls answered	Performance Result
2025–26	80%	83%
2024–25	80%	86%

Although the percentage of intake calls answered declined from 86% in 2024–2025 to 83% in 2025–2026, the HRLSC continued to exceed its 80% performance target. The total number of calls answered increased from 23,823 in 2024–2025 to 24,285 in 2025–2026, meaning the Centre answered 462 more calls than in the previous fiscal year. The lower percentage result should be understood in the context of continued growth in overall call volume, with total intake

calls increasing from 27,610 to 29,152. Overall, the result shows that demand for the HRLSC's intake services continued to rise, while the Centre maintained performance above target.

5.2 High quality legal service provision and client satisfaction

Performance Measure: High-quality legal services are provided to Ontarians who have experienced discrimination.

Year	Performance Target: Clients rate services as good/very good, at least	Performance Result
2025–26	85%	95%[2]
2024–25	85%	100%

On a five-point response scale (very poor, poor, adequate, good, very good), the HRLSC exceeded its performance target of 85%, with 95% of surveyed clients rating the services they received as either "good" or "very good."

As part of the HRLSC's Strategic Plan priorities and ongoing efforts to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making, the Centre significantly enhanced its client feedback framework during 2025–2026 by introducing additional opportunities for client feedback at different stages of service delivery, including intake, in-depth legal interviews, and retained legal services. This expanded approach provides a more comprehensive and representative understanding of client experiences across the Centre's service continuum.

As a result, the number of client survey responses increased substantially, from 32 responses in 2024–2025 to 301 responses in 2025–2026. Client feedback remained consistently positive across all service stages.

Among intake respondents:

- 99% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the Centre's response to their first call
- 97% indicated that they would recommend HRLSC services to others experiencing discrimination

Interview-stage respondents similarly reported high levels of satisfaction:

- 94% rated the services received as good or very good
- 93% indicated that they would recommend the Centre's services to others

Among clients whose retained legal service files had concluded:

- 95% rated the services they received as good or very good
- 93% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided

[2] Beginning in 2025–2026, the HRLSC expanded its client feedback framework to collect survey responses at the intake, interview, and closed-file stages of service delivery. Prior years relied on feedback from clients whose retained legal service files had concluded. Results are therefore not directly comparable due to changes in survey methodology, respondent populations, and sample size.

- 95% indicated that they would recommend the Centre to others experiencing discrimination

While direct year-over-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution due to the significant expansion of the client feedback framework, the 2025–2026 results provide a substantially broader and more representative assessment of client experiences than was available in previous years. The findings demonstrate consistently high levels of client satisfaction, confidence in the quality of services provided by the Centre, and strong client willingness to recommend HRLSC services to others experiencing discrimination.

5.3 Early resolution of human rights cases

Performance Measure: Increased and quick access to justice for Ontarians and increased efficiency and capacity in the human rights system through early resolution of human rights cases, reducing costs for applicants, respondents, and taxpayers.

Year	Performance Target: Cases resolved at mediation stage	Performance Result
2025–26	70%	**58%**
2024–25	70%	**65%**

In 2025–2026, the Centre attended 418 mediations, 58% of which resulted in settlements. While this result fell short of the 70% performance target, the Centre attended substantially more mediations than in any of the previous four years. The result should also be considered in the context of the HRTO's introduction of mandatory mediation on June 1, 2025, which significantly expanded the role of mediation within the human rights system and changed the circumstances under which many matters proceed to mediation. As a result, settlement rates may not be directly comparable to those achieved in previous years when mediation participation was voluntary.

Despite the lower settlement rate, the number of mediation-stage settlements increased significantly, from approximately 165 in 2024–2025 to approximately 242 in 2025–2026. Although settlement rates remain an important performance measure, the total number of matters resolved through mediation also provides an important indicator of access to justice outcomes. Notably, mediation accounted for approximately 86% of all settlements achieved by the Centre in 2025–2026, underscoring the increasingly important role of mediation as a pathway to resolution within Ontario's human rights system. The result reflects both the increased volume of mediation activity and the continued importance of mediation as an early resolution pathway within the Centre's service continuum.

5.4 Overall Number of Cases Settled

Performance Measure: Increased and quicker access to justice for Ontarians and increased efficiency and capacity in the human rights system by resolving cases at all stages of the application process, reducing costs for applicants, respondents, and taxpayers.

Year	Performance Target: Cases settled at any stage of the application process	Performance Result
2025–26	200	282
2024–25	200	204

In 2025–2026, the Centre achieved 282 settlements at different stages of the application process, exceeding the performance target of 200. This represents an increase from 204 settlements in 2024–2025 and is also above the five-year average of approximately 226 settlements. The result reflects the highest number of settlements achieved during the last five-year period and a higher overall number of resolved matters for individuals seeking human rights remedies.

A review of settlement outcomes by stage indicates that mediation accounted for the overwhelming majority of settlements in 2025–2026, with 242 matters, or approximately 86% of all settlements, resolving through mediation. This result reflects the increasingly important role of mediation within Ontario's human rights system and is consistent with both the HRTO's introduction of mandatory mediation and the Centre's strategic investments in early intervention, mediation, and dispute resolution services, supported in part through the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant and aligned with the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. Together, these developments contributed to strengthening the Centre's continuum of early resolution services and expanding access to timely and effective pathways to justice.

5.5 Media coverage

Performance Measure: Ontarians are informed about discrimination, the human rights system and the HRLSC’s services.

Year	Performance Target: Obtain positive media coverage for stories of the HRLSC’s service	Performance Result
2025–26	7 Stories	16 Stories
2024–25	7 Stories	17 Stories

Positive media coverage of the Centre remained strong in 2025–2026, with 16 positive media stories, exceeding the performance target of 7 stories. This result was slightly lower than the 17 stories recorded in 2024–2025, but still reflected a sustained high level of public visibility for the HRLSC’s work. Continued media coverage was supported by successful HRLSC case outcomes, deliberate communications planning, and proactive media engagement. High-profile, public-interest cases, including *Burggraaf v. Convergys CMG Canada ULC*, 2025 HRTO 2599, helped generate public attention for the HRLSC’s work and for the experiences of clients seeking human rights justice.

6. Letter of Direction Priorities

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) shares its priorities with the HRLSC through Annual Letters of Direction. Agencies such as the HRLSC are asked to align their goals, objectives and strategic direction with these priorities. The Letters of Direction outline the general priorities for all agencies and specify the particularized priorities for the Centre.

The section below summarizes the government priorities for the HRLSC identified in MAG's 2025–2026 Letter of Direction, along with progress made on related initiatives during the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

6.1 Innovative

Simplify client/customer interactions and expand and optimize digital service offerings

- Continued development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), including major design, content, testing, and implementation activities associated with a new digital service intended to simplify navigation of the human rights system and assist individuals in preparing applications to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.
- Engaged in collaborative initiatives with relevant organizations to expand knowledge of, and access to, the HRLSC's early intervention supports and alternate dispute services in particular through the Law Foundation of Ontario and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University through funding and support of initiatives listed below.
- The HRLSC continues to realign its service model to offer clearly defined early intervention supports and alternate dispute services through the launch of its Mediation, Early Resolution & Experiential Training Project and Early Intervention and Mediation Services.

Improve client/customer satisfaction

- In the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC maintained a high level of client satisfaction, with 95% of surveyed clients rating the HRLSC's services as good or very good, exceeding the Centre's performance target.
- Through its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan priority regarding data-driven decision making, the HRLSC continues to collect and use client feedback to inform service delivery through improved feedback mechanisms and strengthened research capacity.

Share data with Supply Ontario, when requested

- The HRLSC continues to be responsive to Provincial requests for information and data. Regarding Supply Ontario, the HRLSC consistently shares relevant information on procurement spending, planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations in a timely manner.

6.2 Sustainable

Strengthen public service delivery by optimizing organizational capacity and directing existing resources to priority areas

- The HRLSC directed resources towards strengthening early intervention, mediation, and dispute resolution services through the implementation of its Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS) initiative and Mediation, Early Resolution and Experiential Training (MEET) initiatives, supporting the Centre's response to evolving HRTO processes, including mandatory mediation.
- The HRLSC continued development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) to create self-help opportunities for Ontarians.

Use public resources efficiently and prudently, operate within agency's financial allocations and responsibly manage workforce size

- Continued to operate within approved financial allocations while prudently managing workforce resources and aligning staffing decisions with organizational priorities and service demands.
- Continued implementation of the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, including initiatives designed to strengthen organizational capacity, support recruitment, retention, employee development and engagement, and ensure the efficient use of public resources within approved financial allocations.

6.3 Accountable

Develop and report on outcome-focused performance measures to effectively monitor and measure performance

- Continued to develop key performance indicators and strengthen performance measurement and reporting practices including in relation to access-to-justice outcomes.
- The HRLSC continues to comply with directions provided for its reporting within its Operational Business Plans and Annual Reports, and has collated robust data and information regarding services and operations.

Protect individual, business or organization data by actively managing data and cybersecurity and reporting Artificial Intelligence uses

- Continued strengthening of information technology governance and cybersecurity practices through Justice Technology Services (JTS) onboarding activities (discussed further in Section 6.4), ongoing review and updating of IT policies, and development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy to support the responsible, secure, and ethical use of emerging technologies.

Report all high risks including effective mitigation plans

- The HRLSC continued to maintain and monitor an organizational Risk Register identifying key strategic, operational, financial, legal, human resources, and reputational risks, together with mitigation strategies. Risk information was regularly reviewed by management and reported to the Board of Directors, Ministry of the Attorney General, and Treasury Board Secretariat through quarterly reporting processes and Memorandum of Understanding governance level briefings.

Align hybrid work policies with the OPS and identify and assess office optimization opportunities

- The HRLSC implemented a new In-Office Attendance Policy (subject to ongoing collective bargaining) and reported compliance to the Ministry of the Attorney General and Treasury Board Secretariat, as required, in alignment with applicable Ontario Public Service workplace directives and expectations.

Develop and encourage diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace

- The HRLSC continued implementation of Strategic Plan initiatives aimed at fostering an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist, and diverse workplace. These initiatives included mandatory equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Indigenous reconciliation-related trauma informed training for all new staff, ongoing learning opportunities for existing staff, and efforts to strengthen employee engagement and organizational culture.
- The HRLSC also continued to assess employee engagement, workplace culture, and staff experience through organization-wide staff surveys and related action planning processes, helping to inform future workplace equity, inclusion, accessibility, anti-racism, and employee engagement initiatives.

6.4 HRLSC Specific Priorities

2022-2023 TBS Mandate Review and Recommendations

Leverage client data and strengthen data collection to inform decision-making

- This year, the HRLSC continued efforts to strengthen the collection and analysis of client and service-related data to support evidence-informed decision-making. This included implementation of a demographic data collection pilot and completion of the *Where Need Exceeds Reach* research initiative, which used the HRLSC's service and demographic data to identify communities experiencing elevated levels of discrimination while remaining underrepresented among those accessing the HRLSC's services. Findings will inform future service planning, partnership development, and access-to-justice initiatives.
- As part of the HRLSC's efforts to better serve those most marginalized and vulnerable to discrimination, the Centre also continues tracking information on callers incarcerated in provincial corrections facilities, Indigenous services intakes and service delivery and French services. The HRLSC also continues to look at intakes based on prohibited grounds, social area and by region.

Collect better data on clients served to inform future considerations regarding the implementation of mandatory income testing

- The HRLSC continued implementation of recommendations arising from the 2022–2023 mandate review, including strengthening client data collection to support evidence-informed decision-making. During the reporting period, the HRLSC launched a demographic data collection pilot that expanded the collection of socio-economic and other demographic information, supporting future analysis of service utilization patterns, access barriers, and consideration of recommendations related to financial eligibility criteria.

Record information about applicants' circumstances, their discrimination claims and the reasons for providing or not providing a retainer for legal services in its client management system

- In addition to the data collection initiatives described above, the HRLSC continued to strengthen its case management, reporting, and quality assurance practices to support evidence-informed decision-making, transparency, and organizational learning.
- This included the introduction of enhanced case management and reporting requirements within the Centre's CTT system to improve documentation and analysis of client circumstances, service provision, and case assessment decisions. As one example, the HRLSC introduced new mediation representation recommendation and retainer tracking processes to support more consistent decision-making, aggregate reporting, and evaluation of mediation services.

Simplify eligibility criteria and conduct more comprehensive reporting on case assessment outcomes to improve the agency's transparency

- Completed the *Where Need Exceeds Reach* research initiative, which examined patterns of discrimination and service utilization to identify communities that may face elevated barriers to accessing the HRLSC's services. Findings from the project will inform future service planning, partnership development, outreach activities, and access-to-justice initiatives.
- Continued efforts to improve the documentation and integration of case assessment decisions within the Centre's case management system to support future aggregate analysis, reporting, and organizational learning.

2020 TBS Audit Recommendations

- With the migration of the HRLSC to the Ontario Public Service's Justice Technology Services (JTS) IT environment, the Centre completed a key recommendation arising from 2020 Treasury Board Secretariat audit. This multi-year initiative involved migration to the OPS technology network, deployment of new hardware, and centralization of key IT support services through the Ontario Public Service.

Development of Strategic Plan

- The HRLSC continued implementation of its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. Key initiatives advanced during the reporting period included the Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS) initiative, the Mediation, Early Resolution and Experiential Training (MEET) initiative, development of the Human Rights Guided Pathway, enhanced public legal information and system navigation resources, organizational capacity-building initiatives supported in part through funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, and development of a new Service Delivery Guideline on Strategic Litigation to support evidence-informed decision-making regarding strategic litigation priorities and opportunities for broader human rights impact.

Three-Pillar Partner Collaboration

- The HRLSC continued regular engagement and collaboration with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) through leadership-level meetings, consultations, advisory participation, information and data sharing, and discussions regarding emerging human rights system issues. These

activities supported ongoing alignment, understanding of system trends, and helped identify opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of each organization's respective mandate.

7. Risks

The HRLSC maintains an organizational Risk Register identifying strategic, operational, financial, legal, human resources, technological, and reputational risks together with corresponding mitigation strategies. The HRLSC monitors workforce and operational risks through its Human Capital Plan, annual Operational Business Plan (OBP), and environmental scanning activities. Risks are regularly reviewed by management and reported to the Board of Directors, the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) through quarterly reporting processes and Memorandum of Understanding governance level briefings.

This section outlines the HRLSC's assessment of risks related to workforce management, bargaining, competitiveness, sustainability, and HRTO operations.

7.1 Workforce Management

The HRLSC provides an assessment of the immediate risks to its workforce management through its annual reporting requirements set out in the Agencies and Appointments Directive, which includes the Human Capital Plan provided in its yearly Operational Business Plan (OBP), as well as through its ongoing maintenance and updating of a Risk Registry. This is reported quarterly to our provincial funder MAG, along with the Workforce Data and Human Resources Reporting.

Recruitment, retention, succession planning, and workforce sustainability continued to be identified as serious organizational risks during the reporting period, particularly in the context of heightened compensation pressures, competition for specialized legal talent, and broader public sector labour market conditions. To help mitigate these risks, the HRLSC continued implementation of Strategic Plan initiatives aimed at strengthening employee engagement, workforce planning, recruitment, and retention. During the reporting period, the Board approved a Compensation Philosophy intended to support equitable, transparent, sustainable, and competitive compensation practices and advance the Centre's objective of becoming an employer of choice.

The HRLSC also continued to monitor workforce-related risks associated with long-term organizational sustainability and maintained ongoing discussions with MAG and TBS regarding financial pressures, including compensation competitiveness, salary disparities, and annual wage increases. In addition, the Centre continued efforts to diversify funding sources and strengthen long-term organizational sustainability through implementation of its Strategic Plan, including the addition of a Resource Development Specialist position supported through the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant.

7.2 Bargaining

The HRLSC and OPSEU ratified the 2022–2024 collective agreement for non-legal unionized staff this past fiscal year. MAG provided one-time in-year funding to support these increases. The risk for 2025–2026 remains in managing and sustaining retroactive annual increases stemming from ratification. Bargaining will soon recommence for a new collective agreement, due to the protracted period of the 2022–2024 Collective Agreement negotiation, which was

only settled this past year. MAG and the HRLSC remain committed and continue to discuss these financial needs and are working together to mitigate and address the permanent long-term sustainability impact.

The HRLSC and OPSEU have commenced negotiations for the counsel bargaining unit as of 2024–2025. The HRLSC looks forward to working with its counsel and their new OPSEU bargaining agent to make the Centre an employer of choice as part of the HRLSC's five-year strategic plan and mandate. MAG and the HRLSC continue to collaborate to proactively mitigate the potential impact on the HRLSC's long-term permanent financial sustainability planning.

7.3 Financial Sustainability

Long-term financial sustainability remained a serious organizational risk during the reporting period. The HRLSC continued to monitor financial pressures associated with increasing demand for services, compensation and labour costs, inflationary pressures, and evolving operational requirements. Mitigation strategies included ongoing engagement with MAG and TBS, prudent financial management, multi-year planning and forecasting, pursuit of external funding and sponsorship opportunities, and implementation of partnership initiatives identified through the HRLSC's Strategic Plan.

During the reporting period, the Centre also advanced development of a funding diversification strategy, supported through funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, to identify opportunities for future resource development and strategic partnerships.

7.4 Service Demand and Organizational Capacity

The HRLSC continued to experience historically high demand for services during the reporting period. Sustained growth in intake volumes, legal advice requests, and mediation-related services created ongoing operational pressures and increased the importance of maintaining sufficient organizational capacity to meet client needs. The HRLSC continued to monitor workforce requirements and service demand trends and engaged with MAG and TBS regarding staffing levels, resource requirements, and long-term service sustainability.

Client survey feedback continued to identify shorter wait times and increased access to representation and support services as key areas for improvement, reinforcing the importance of ongoing efforts to expand organizational capacity and service delivery options.

7.5 HRTO Operations

The ongoing procedural and operational developments at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) continued to affect the nature and volume of legal services provided by the HRLSC during the 2025–2026 fiscal year. The HRLSC maintained regular engagement with Tribunals Ontario and HRTO leadership through one-on-one meetings, consultations, and quarterly Three-Pillar meetings involving the HRTO, OHRC, and the HRLSC. These engagements supported information and data sharing regarding emerging trends, applicant needs, and developments within Ontario's human rights system.

The introduction of mandatory mediation by the HRTO effective June 1, 2025, represented a significant operational change with implications for HRLSC service delivery, resource allocation, and demand forecasting. While the change created additional opportunities for early resolution of disputes, it also contributed to increased demand for mediation-related legal services, including legal advice, in-depth legal interviews, and representation at mediation. The HRLSC

continued to monitor these developments and adapt service delivery models, including through implementation of its Early Intervention and Mediation Services (EIMS) and Mediation, Early Resolution and Experiential Training (MEET) initiatives, to respond to evolving client and system needs.

7.6 IT Security

As is the case for all modern agencies, information technology and cybersecurity remained important organizational risks during the reporting period. The HRLSC continued to mitigate these risks through its migration to the Ontario Public Service's Justice Technology Services (JTS) environment, implementation of enhanced cybersecurity measures, ongoing review and updating of IT policies, development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, and regular monitoring of technology-related risks through its organizational Risk Register.

8. HR Impact

8.1 Workforce Composition and Organizational Capacity

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC continued implementation of strategic initiatives designed to strengthen organizational capacity and service delivery. This work was supported in part through temporary positions funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant, while maintaining the Centre's commitment to culturally responsive and accessible service delivery, including through Indigenous and Francophone staffing models.

The HRLSC's workforce complement during the reporting period consisted of 52.8 FTEs. Executive and management staffing remained relatively stable throughout the year, while grant-funded positions supported implementation of strategic initiatives and service enhancements.

The HRLSC continued to optimize its organizational capacity through implementation of its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, enabling the Centre to align staffing resources with evolving operational priorities, service demands, and access to justice objectives.

8.2 Recruitment, Retention and Organizational Capacity

Recruitment, retention, succession planning, and workforce sustainability continued to present challenges during the reporting period, particularly in the context of compensation pressures, competition for specialized legal talent, and broader public sector labour market conditions.

To address these challenges, the HRLSC continued implementation of Strategic Plan initiatives designed to strengthen employee engagement, workforce planning, recruitment, and retention. The Centre also continued efforts to diversify funding sources and strengthen long-term organizational sustainability through implementation of its Strategic Plan, including the addition of a Resource Development Specialist position supported through the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant.

The HRLSC continued to engage with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) regarding workforce sustainability, compensation competitiveness, and long-term funding requirements necessary to support delivery of the Centre's statutory mandate.

The HRLSC also continued implementation of externally funded initiatives supported through grants from the Law Foundation of Ontario. The *Leave No One Behind: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice* Responsive Grant provides funding to support early dispute resolution initiatives, including student placements and additional service capacity. The *Realizing Human Rights Together: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice* Strategic Grant provides multi-year funding to support a range of strategic initiatives and approximately 11.8 grant-funded positions through March 2028.

8.3 Labour Relations and Collective Bargaining

The HRLSC continued to maintain constructive labour relations with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), which represents both the Centre's non-lawyer and lawyer bargaining units.

During the reporting period, preparations commenced for bargaining a successor collective agreement for the non-lawyer bargaining unit following receipt of a Notice to Bargain in October 2024. Negotiations are anticipated to begin during the 2026–2027 fiscal year.

The HRLSC also continued collective bargaining with the lawyer bargaining unit. Following voluntary recognition of the bargaining unit in 2024, negotiations toward a first collective agreement commenced in February 2025 and continued throughout the reporting period. Interest arbitration is currently scheduled for Fall 2026.

The HRLSC remains committed to maintaining constructive labour relations and working collaboratively with bargaining agents to support a positive workplace and advance its strategic objective of becoming an employer of choice.

8.4 Human Resources Strategy, Compensation and Policy Development

During the reporting period, the Board approved a Compensation Philosophy intended to support equitable, transparent, sustainable, and competitive compensation practices across all occupational groups. The Compensation Philosophy supports the HRLSC's strategic objective of becoming an employer of choice while promoting fairness, equity, employee engagement, and long-term workforce sustainability.

The HRLSC also continued its job evaluation and compensation review initiatives and undertook further analysis of compensation disparities and market competitiveness. Discussions regarding long-term sustainability and workforce capacity continued throughout the reporting period.

The HRLSC also introduced a new In-Office Attendance Policy and continued to review and update human resources, accommodation, and workplace policies to support alignment with applicable Ontario Public Service directives and evolving organizational needs.

9. Financial Analysis

9.1 2025-2026 Budget vs Actuals

Expense	2025–2026 Budget	2025–2026 Actuals	Variance
Salaries	$3,802,978	$3,521,210	*$281,768*
Benefits	$872,221	$847,169	*$25,052*
Operating	$599,786	$1,037,085	*($437,299)*
Board	$61,215	$84,131	*($22,916)*
Total Expenses	$5,336,200	$5,489,595	*($153,395)*

2025–2026 Revenue: $5,896,559

9.2 Ministry Funding and Core Operations

The HRLSC's 2025–2026 financial statements were independently audited in accordance with the Agencies and Appointments Directive. The auditors confirmed that the Centre remained in good financial standing. A copy of the audited financial statements is included in Section 11 of this Annual Report. Total revenue for the year was $5,896,559 and total expenditures were $5,489,595, resulting in an operating surplus of approximately $406,964.

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) remains the HRLSC's primary source of operating revenue. During the reporting period, the Centre also received one-time in-year funding from MAG over and above the HRLSC's annual $5,336,200 base funding to address the benefit premium increase, sustain historical 1% annual increases for counsel, 9% over 3-year period for non-lawyer group (2022-2024), and support ongoing IT operational commitments aimed at further securing HRLSC's IT environment.

The operating surplus was attributable to the receipt of this funding near fiscal year-end (March 2026), which limited the Centre's ability to deploy all resources within the reporting period, together with the utilization of previously deferred funding associated with strategic projects.

Salaries and benefits continued to represent the largest component of the Centre's expenditures, reflecting the labour-intensive nature of the HRLSC's mandate and service delivery model. The Centre continued to actively monitor and manage salary, benefit, and operating expenditures throughout the year to ensure effective stewardship of public resources while supporting service delivery and strategic priorities.

Operating expenditures exceeded budget during the reporting period due primarily to Justice Technology Services (JTS) onboarding activities, cybersecurity enhancements, professional services, labour relations costs, and other strategic initiatives. The HRLSC continued to pursue operational efficiencies through increased use of digital service delivery tools, technology

modernization initiatives, centralized IT services through JTS, and ongoing review of organizational processes and resource allocation.

Board expenditures were higher than budget due primarily to increased governance activities associated with implementation of the Agencies and Appointments Directive and reporting requirements, completion of a new Memorandum of Understanding with MAG, strategic planning activities, development of new Board governance policies and procedures, establishment of new Board committees, changes in board composition, and oversight of significant organizational issues and initiatives.

In addition to MAG funding, the HRLSC continued to leverage external funding partnerships to support strategic initiatives, service innovation, and organizational capacity-building.

Long-term financial sustainability remains an important strategic consideration for the Centre. The HRLSC continues to engage with MAG and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) regarding future funding requirements, compensation pressures, inflationary impacts, and increasing demand for services. During the reporting period, the Centre also continued implementation of its resource development strategy and pursued external funding opportunities and partnerships to support organizational capacity and strategic priorities.

While temporary funding support from MAG and external funding secured through the Law Foundation of Ontario have helped the Centre respond to immediate operational pressures and maintain service capacity, these funding sources are time-limited and do not address the underlying challenge of long-term financial sustainability. The Board continues to be concerned that the Centre's permanent base funding, established in 2008, has not kept pace with increasing demand for services, compensation pressures, inflationary impacts, and rising operating costs. Absent a more sustainable long-term funding model, the Centre will need to reassess staffing levels, organizational capacity, and service delivery options in future years. This remains a significant strategic and operational consideration as demand for human rights legal services continues to increase.

9.3 External Funding and Strategic Investments

Law Foundation of Ontario Responsive Grant

Expense	2025–2026 Actuals
Salaries	*$73,728*
Benefits	*$16,501*
Operating	*$34,136*
Total Expenses	***$124,365***

During the reporting period, the HRLSC continued implementation of the Law Foundation of Ontario Responsive Grant, *Leave No One Behind: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice*.

The grant supports early dispute resolution initiatives, student placements, and additional service capacity intended to improve access to human rights justice.

The grant provides funding of $250,000 for the period January 20, 2025, to January 19, 2027. During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC incurred expenditures of $124,365 under this initiative.

Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant

Expense	**2025–2026 Actuals**
Salaries	*$469,191*
Benefits	*$87,676*
Operating	*$38,664*
Total Expenses	***$595,531***

During the reporting period, the HRLSC commenced implementation of the Law Foundation of Ontario Strategic Grant, *Realizing Human Rights Together: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice*. This multi-year grant provides $4.536 million in funding from September 8, 2025, to March 31, 2028, to support strategic initiatives and temporary staffing resources aligned with the HRLSC's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan.

The grant supports a range of initiatives intended to strengthen access to human rights justice, organizational capacity, service innovation, public legal information aimed at enhancing early system navigation, early intervention and dispute resolution services, and strategic partnerships. During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the HRLSC incurred expenditures of $595,531 under this initiative.

10. Agency Appointees: Attendance and Remuneration

Name	Position	Date First Appointed	Current Term and Expiration Date	Board meeting Attendance	Total Annual Remuneration (per diem)
Ena Chadha	Chair	February 21, 2018	August 19, 2024 – August 18, 2026	May 29, 2025 July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 October 29, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$50,374.00
Mary Joe Freire	Vice-Chair	February 20, 2020	July 22, 2024 – July 21, 2026	May 29, 2025 July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 October 29, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$6,750.00
Martial Moreau	Treasurer	May 26, 2020	May 26, 2025 – May 25, 2026	May 29, 2025 July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 October 29, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$7,808.97
Evelyn Ball	Member	June 11, 2020	June 11, 2025 – June 10, 2026	July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 October 29, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$2,437.50
Name	**Position**	**Date First Appointed**	**Current Term and Expiration Date**	**Board meeting Attendance**	**Total Annual Remuneration (per diem)**

Sandi Bell	Member and Cross-Appointee (OHRC)	March 23, 2023	March 23, 2025 – March 22, 2028	May 29, 2025 July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 February 11, 2026	$2,437.50
Tamar Witelson	Member	February 8, 2018	February 20, 2025 – February 19, 2028	May 29, 2025 August 19, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$3,937.50
Michelle Tan	Member	May 26, 2020	May 26, 2025 – May 25, 2028	May 29, 2025 July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 October 29, 2025 December 8, 2025 February 11, 2026	$3,187.50
Gary Pieters	Member and Cross-Appointee (OHRC)	March 25, 2021	March 25, 2023 – March 24, 2026	July 15, 2025 August 19, 2025 December 8, 2025	$750.00
Bryan Beatty	Member	September 4, 2025	September 4, 2025 - September 3, 2028	October 14 October 21 October 29 December 8	$1,312.50

Note: Remuneration is provided in accordance with applicable Government of Ontario directives and Public Appointments Secretariat requirements. The Chair's remuneration reflects significant governance responsibilities undertaken throughout the year beyond attendance at formal Board meetings. During the reporting period, these responsibilities were expanded by the implementation of the new Agencies and Appointments Directive and reporting requirements, and included negotiation and execution of a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of the Attorney General, development and implementation of new Board governance policies and procedures, establishment of Board committees, Board recruitment and succession activities, including onboarding of new Board members and recruitment of a permanent Executive Director, labour relations oversight, funding and organizational sustainability matters, such as involvement with Law Foundation of Ontario grant applications and ongoing engagement with government, human rights system partners, and existing and potential external funders.

11. Audited Financial Statements

(see PDF version for Statements)

Human Rights Legal Support Centre
Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2026

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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, 2026, 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, 2026, 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.

BDO Canada LLP, a Canadian limited liability partnership, is a member of BDO International Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, and forms part of the international BDO network of independent member firms.

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
June 29, 2026

Human Rights Legal Support Centre
Statement of Financial Position

March 31	2026						2025				
	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario MEET	Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Assets											
Current assets											
Cash	$ 1,431,931	$ 96,058	$ 1,087,710	$ -	$ -	$ 2,615,699	$ 184,200	$ 167,802	$ -	$ -	$ 352,002
Short-term investments (Note 2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	410,064	-	-	-	410,064
Accounts receivables	3,288	-	-	-	-	3,288	114,018	-	-	-	114,018
Interest receivables	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,801	-	-	-	28,801
HST recoverable	92,778	46	2,992	-	-	95,816	262,727	-	11,109	-	273,836
Prepaid expenses	75,519	-	10,815	-	-	86,334	120,220	-	-	-	120,220
Interfund balance	(755,717)	(10,150)	(153,687)	-	919,554	-	(489,323)	(12,158)	(11,109)	512,590	-
	847,799	85,954	947,830	-	919,554	2,801,137	630,707	155,644	-	512,590	1,298,941
Capital assets (Note 3)	1,482	-	-	-	-	1,482	44,068	-	-	-	44,068
	$ 849,281	$ 85,954	$ 947,830	$ -	$ 919,554	$ 2,802,619	$ 674,775	$ 155,644	$ -	$ 512,590	$ 1,343,009
Liabilities											
Current											
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 781,799	$ 3,281	$ 65,767	$ -	$ -	$ 850,847	$ 607,293	$ 750	$ -	$ -	$ 608,043
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	67,200	82,673	882,063	-	-	1,031,936	67,200	154,894	-	-	222,094
	848,999	85,954	947,830	-	-	1,882,783	674,493	155,644	-	-	830,137
Net Assets											
Operating fund (Note 8)	282	-	-	-	-	282	282	-	-	-	282
Law Foundation of Ontario MEET	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internally restricted fund	-	-	-	-	919,554	919,554	-	-	-	512,590	512,590
	282	-	-	-	919,554	919,836	282	-	-	512,590	512,872
	$ 849,281	$ 85,954	$ 947,830	$ -	$ 919,554	$ 2,802,619	$ 674,775	$ 155,644	$ -	$ 512,590	$ 1,343,009

On behalf of the Board of Directors:

Director

Director

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

Human Rights Legal Support Centre
Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31	2026						2025				
	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario MEET	Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Revenue											
Ministry of the Attorney General	$ 5,854,424	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 5,854,424	$ 5,614,298	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 5,614,298
Department of Justice Canada	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(46,248)	-	(46,248)
Law Foundation of Ontario	-	122,221	580,937	-	-	703,158	-	45,107	-	-	45,107
Interest income	31,036	2,144	14,594	-	-	47,774	50,278	824	-	-	51,102
Other income	11,099	-	-	-	-	11,099	5,678	-	-	-	5,678
	5,896,559	124,365	595,531	-	-	6,616,455	5,670,254	45,931	(46,248)	-	5,669,937
Expenditures											
Salaries and wages	3,521,210	73,728	469,191	-	-	4,064,129	3,763,044	9,978	(50,261)	-	3,722,761
Employee benefits (Note 5)	847,169	16,501	87,676	-	-	951,346	852,054	2,180	4,248	-	858,482
Services	783,982	1,136	36,547	-	-	821,665	714,512	773	(68)	-	715,217
Communication	105,955	-	-	-	-	105,955	114,564	-	-	-	114,564
Province wide service delivery	4,876	-	-	-	-	4,876	6,648	-	-	-	6,648
Travel	3,414	-	-	-	-	3,414	2,850	-	-	-	2,850
Supplies and equipment	79,234	-	2,117	-	-	81,351	94,773	-	-	-	94,773
Board expense	84,131	-	-	-	-	84,131	63,213	-	-	-	63,213
Amortization	35,100	-	-	-	-	35,100	37,558	-	-	-	37,558
Loss on disposal	24,524	-	-	-	-	24,524	-	-	-	-	-
Project expenses	-	33,000	-	-	-	33,000	-	33,000	-	-	33,000
	5,489,595	124,365	595,531	-	-	6,209,491	5,649,216	45,931	(46,081)	-	5,649,066
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	$ 406,964	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 406,964	$ 21,038	$ -	$ (167)	$ -	$ 20,871

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

Human Rights Legal Support Centre
Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31

	2026						2025					
	General Operations MAG	**Law Foundation of Ontario MEET**	**Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS**	**Department of Justice Canada**	**Internally Restricted Fund**	**Total**	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Net assets, beginning of year	**$ 282**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ 512,590**	**$ 512,872**	$ 231,411	**$ -**	$ -	$ 260,590	$ 492,001
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	**406,964**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**406,964**	21,038	**-**	(167)	**-**	20,871
Interfund transfer (Note 1)	**(406,964)**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**406,964**	**-**	(252,167)	**-**	167	252,000	**-**
Net assets, end of year	**$ 282**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ 919,554**	**$ 919,836**	$ 282	**$ -**	$ -	$ 512,590	$ 512,872

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

	2026						2025				
	General Operations MAG	**Law Foundation of Ontario MEET**	**Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS**	**Department of Justice Canada**	**Internally Restricted Fund**	**Total**	General Operations MAG	Law Foundation of Ontario	Department of Justice Canada	Internally Restricted Fund	Total
Cash provided by (used in)											
Operating activities											
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	**$ 406,964**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ 406,964**	$ 21,038	$ -	$ (167)	$ -	$ 20,871
Amortization	**35,100**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**35,100**	37,558	-	-	-	37,558
Loss on disposal	**24,524**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**24,524**	-	-	-	-	-
Changes in non-cash working capital balances											
Accounts receivable	**110,730**	**-**	**-**	-	-	**110,730**	(114,018)	-	-	-	(114,018)
Interest receivable	**28,801**	**-**	**-**	-	-	**28,801**	(28,801)	-	-	-	(28,801)
HST recoverable	**169,949**	**(46)**	**(2,992)**	**11,109**	**-**	**178,020**	(91,570)	-	(268)	-	(91,838)
Prepaid expenses	**44,701**	**-**	**(10,815)**	**-**	**-**	**33,886**	(56,130)	-	-	-	(56,130)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	**174,506**	**2,531**	**65,767**	**-**	-	**242,804**	(43,517)	750	(95,447)	-	(138,214)
Deferred revenue	**-**	**(72,221)**	**882,063**	-	-	**809,842**	(45,000)	154,894	-	-	109,894
	995,275	**(69,736)**	**934,023**	**11,109**	**-**	**1,870,671**	(320,440)	155,644	(95,882)	-	(260,678)
Investing activities											
Interfund transfers	**(140,570)**	**(2,008)**	**153,687**	**(11,109)**	**-**	**-**	(19,204)	12,158	7,046	-	-
Purchase of capital assets	**(17,038)**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**(17,038)**	(5,198)	-	-	-	(5,198)
Proceeds from (purchase of) investments	**410,064**	**-**	**-**	-	-	**410,064**	(410,064)	-	-	-	(410,064)
	252,456	**(2,008)**	**153,687**	**(11,109)**	**-**	**393,026**	(434,466)	12,158	7,046	-	(415,262)
Increase (decrease) in cash during the year	**1,247,731**	**(71,744)**	**1,087,710**	**-**	**-**	**2,263,697**	(754,906)	167,802	(88,836)	-	(675,940)
Cash, beginning of year	**184,200**	**167,802**	**-**	**-**	-	**352,002**	939,106	-	88,836	-	1,027,942
Cash, end of year	**$ 1,431,931**	**$ 96,058**	**$ 1,087,710**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ 2,615,699**	$ 184,200	$ 167,802	$ -	$ -	$ 352,002

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

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, Law Foundation of Ontario MEET Fund, Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS 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 Law Foundation of Ontario MEET Fund ("LFO MEET") is an externally restricted fund to provide funding for the "Leave No One Behind: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice, Supporting Early Human Rights Dispute Resolution" project. The Centre entered into an agreement with the Law Foundation of Ontario to fund this project for the period from January 20, 2025 to January 19, 2027.

The Law Foundation of Ontario EIMS Fund ("LFO EIMS") is an externally restricted fund to provide funding for the "Realizing Human Rights Together: Empowering Access to Human Rights Justice" project. The Centre entered into an agreement with the Law Foundation of Ontario to fund this project for the period from September 8, 2025 to March 31, 2028.

The Department of Justice Canada Fund ("DOJ") was an externally restricted fund that expired on 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 $406,964 (2025 - $252,167) from the operating fund.

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 Law Foundation of Ontario ("LFO") for the LFO MEET and LFO EMIS projects. 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.

The Centre received revenue from the Department of Justice Canada. The amounts were recorded as revenue when received or receivable. All of the funds received were restricted as to use for purposes as set out in the funding agreement. This project expired on March 31, 2024.

Deferred revenue

Deferred revenue consist of funding received relating to restricted revenue from the MAG and LFO. These funds will be recognized as revenue in the ensuing fiscal year corresponding with the period in which the related expenses are incurred.

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.

1. **Significant Accounting Policies (continued)**

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.

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.

2. Short-term Investments

Short-term investments consist of Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs). In the prior year, the GIC's had an interest rate of 4.25% and matured on June 11, 2025.

3. Capital Assets

	2026		2025	
	Cost	**Accumulated Amortization**	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Computer equipment	**$ 8,206**	**$ 6,724**	$ 631,243	$ 587,175
Furniture and fixtures	**4,150**	**4,150**	4,150	4,150
	$ 12,356	**10,874**	$ 635,393	$ 591,325
Net book value		**$ 1,482**		$ 44,068

4. Deferred Revenue

	2026	2025
Balance, beginning of the year	**$ 222,094**	$ 112,200
Less: amounts recognized as revenue in the year	**(1,221,382)**	(221,356)
Add: restricted amounts received related to the following year	**2,031,224**	331,250
Balance, end of year	**$ 1,031,936**	$ 222,094

5. 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 8.3% (2025 - 7.4%) of earnings up to the CPP yearly pension maximum entitlement ("YPME") and 11.5% (2025 - 10.5%) for earnings above the YPME. The Centre contributed $354,038 (2025 - $311,610) to the plan which is recorded in employee benefits in the statement of operations.

6. 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.

7. Economic Dependence

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

8. Operating Fund

The Centre has expended grants received as follows:

	2026	2025
Revenue - Ministry of Attorney General	**$ 5,854,424**	$ 5,614,298
Interest and other income	**42,135**	55,956
Operating expenses (excluding project expenses)	**(5,489,595)**	(5,649,216)
Amortization included in operating expenses	**35,100**	37,558
Loss on disposal of capital assets	**24,524**	-
Purchase of capital assets	**(17,038)**	(5,198)
	$ 449,550	$ 53,398

Reconciliation of net assets:

	Capital	Operating	**Total**
Net assets, beginning of year	$ 44,068	$ (43,786)	**$ 282**
Surplus of revenue over expenditures for the year	-	406,964	**406,964**
Funds transferred to capital fund	(42,586)	42,586	-
Funds transferred to internally funds restricted	-	(406,964)	**(406,964)**
Net assets, end of year	$ 1,482	$ (1,200)	**$ 282**

9. 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 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 to a maximum of $2,615,699 (2025 - $352,002).

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.

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.

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