



PATH TO POSSIBILITIES

2023 - 2024

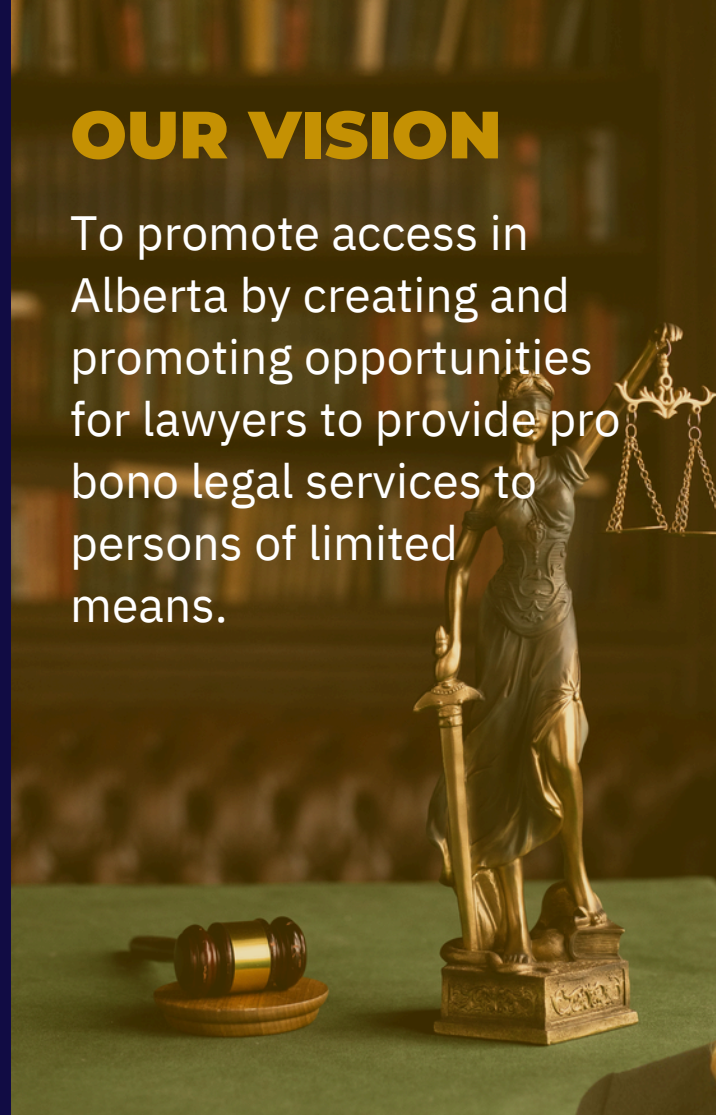
ANNUAL
REPORT

OUR MISSION

is to be a leader and valued partner in fostering pro bono contributions by the legal community to facilitate access to justice for Albertans.

OUR VISION

To promote access in Alberta by creating and promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to persons of limited means.



HISTORY

Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) was launched in 2007 as a legacy project of the Law Society of Alberta in recognition of its 100th anniversary celebrations. Consultations were undertaken with representatives from existing and proposed pro bono clinics around Alberta and the Law Society of Alberta's Pro Bono Committee.

Today, PBLA continues to facilitate access to justice by creating opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services through our court-based legal assistance programs, volunteer lawyer services roster, brokered partnerships on legal initiatives, and more.

Our Strategic Direction for 2021-2024 contemplates action in the following areas:

Pro Bono Engagement
Research
Organizational Health



PATH TO POSSIBILITIES

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Thank You
Our Team and Partners

Message from the **PRESIDENT**

KAREN FELLOWES

**KC, PRESIDENT
PRO BONO LAW ALBERTA**

On behalf of the Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) Board, I am pleased to present our Annual Report. PBLA has undergone some exciting changes in the past year, particularly with the arrival of our new Executive Director, Hyder Hassan. We are excited to see the new energy, ideas and passion for access to justice from Hyder and his team. A special thanks goes out to our board member Marija Bicanic, who acted as Interim Executive Director for several months before Hyder's arrival. Her invaluable experience, good judgment and hard work are much appreciated by everyone on the Board and staff.



Under Hyder's direction, we are rebuilding our capacity and resources and through the Courthouse programs, pop-up legal clinics and other initiatives. Our Courthouse based programs' ability to provide pro bono services to Albertans of limited means was severely hampered by the Courthouse closures which occurred from March 2020-September 2022. We were not able to return to full in person Courthouse program delivery until April 2023. However, we are excited to see volunteers re-committing and re-engaging through multiple channels, and the number of clients being served is continuing to rise.

At the Board level, we just completed the first part of our Strategic Planning process which will guide us over the next three years. We are tackling some big issues including our vision, mission and mandate, and how PBLA can help to bridge the gaps in the access to justice equation. It's a complicated issue, and we are working with our funders and other strategic partners and stakeholders to envision an exciting and transformative future.

Our Board also welcomed several new Board members over the past year, including Steve Nelson, Christine Laing, Sharilyn Nagina KC and Doug Yoshida, KC. Welcome to the Board and thank you for your commitment to PBLA and access to justice issues in Alberta. Thank you. We also extend our gratitude to Pam Morrell and Kene Ilochonwu KC for their service, as they transition off the Board.

As always, I want to give a special thank you to our funders, the PBLA staff and all our volunteers. We look forward to working with you and celebrating your efforts over the next year.

Message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

HYDER HASSAN

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PRO BONO LAW ALBERTA**

Dear Friends and Supporters of PBLA,

As the new Executive Director of Pro Bono Law Alberta, I am honored to present our Annual Report. This past year has been a period of significant learning and growth for PBLA. With rising unprecedented increase in self-represented litigants, our dedicated team is working tirelessly to rebuild our capacity and resources, ensuring that we continue to provide essential pro bono services to Albertans.



Our team has gone through a transformational period during the pandemic and recovering from the post-pandemic closures of the courthouse. We have also incurred several one-time expenses in this fiscal year to pursue our vision and stabilize our post-pandemic operations, which resulted in a strategic deficit budget.

It is a privilege to pursue the Vision and Mission of PBLA, which has a rich history, having been established by the Law Society of Alberta in 2007. We believe that by continuously learning and adapting, we can better meet the needs of those seeking access to justice. I look forward to working with our board, funders, private sector, government, civil society groups and my management team to increase the public good and access to justice.

Finally, I want to thank our funders, PBLA staff, and all our volunteers for their continued support and adaptive leadership. Special thank you to our Board President Karen Fellowes for her dedication and countless volunteer hours to advance my onboarding. Let's work together to progress access to justice for all Albertans!

PRO BONO PROGRAMMING

POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS

COURT-BASED PROGRAMS

Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) administers two court-based programs - the Civil Claims Duty Counsel (CCDC) Project, and the King's Bench Court Assistance (KB Amicus) program. Both programs provide summary legal assistance to self-represented litigants (SRLs) engaged in civil proceedings in Alberta Court of Justice and the Court of King's Bench, both in Calgary and Edmonton.

Assisted by volunteer law students and volunteer lawyers, both programs provide legal advice, document support, procedural and referral information, and in the KB Amicus program, court assistance in morning chambers. Both programs are administered in partnership with several law firms, in-house counsel, government legal departments, Pro Bono Students Canada, Student Legal Assistance, Student Legal Services of Edmonton, as well as independent lawyers, articling students and law students, along with internationally trained lawyers.

Since April 2023 PBLA has reverted to the pre-pandemic format of delivering the court-based programs in person. While the program is now delivered only in-person and applications accepted only at the Courthouses in Calgary and Edmonton, much of the program scope and process remains the same. SRLs with civil matters in the Alberta Court of Justice and Court of King's Bench who apply for assistance and meet program criteria are able to receive up to 30 minutes of free legal advice from a volunteer lawyer. In addition, SRLs with civil matters in the Court of King's Bench Applications Judge and Justice Chambers, can receive assistance with regular morning chambers applications in person through the KB Amicus Program.

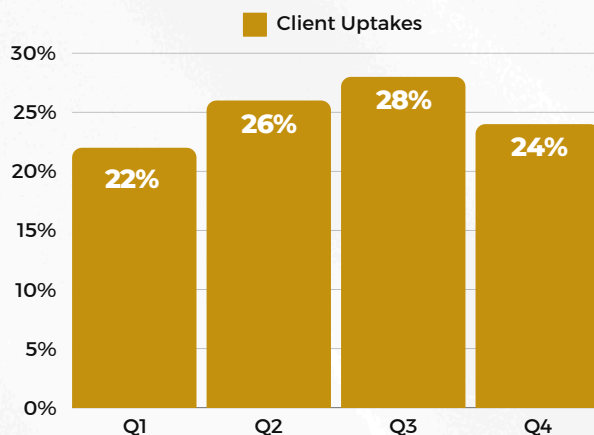
For those seeking in-person assistance at the Calgary and Edmonton courthouses, no appointment or pre-registration are required. The program operates on a first-come, first-served basis.

VOLUNTEER LAWYER SERVICES ROSTER PROGRAM

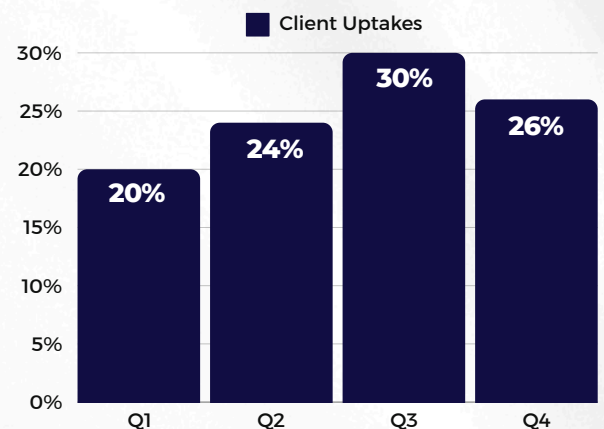
Our Volunteer Lawyer Services (VLS) Roster Program facilitates connections between volunteer lawyers and non-profits or charities with distinct legal needs. Our roster lawyers have the autonomy to determine the extent of pro bono services they offer, ensuring flexibility that aligns with their schedules. Throughout 2023-2024, our volunteers assisted several non-profits, including drafting a procurement agreements, providing counsel on governance matters, and assisting with charity status registration.

PRO BONO ENGAGEMENT

- From April 2023 to March 2024, The CCDC program attracted 311 volunteer lawyers who provided over 1,598 hours of pro bono legal services to 1,867 individuals.
- During the same period, The KB Amicus program attracted 350 volunteer lawyers who provided over 1,725 hours of pro bono legal services to 1,552 individuals.
- PBLA's court-based programs continue to attract interest from law firms, in-house counsel, governmental legal departments and individual lawyers. A total of 40 law firms were involved in the court programs this year.



CCDC 2023 - 2024



KB AMICUS 2023 - 2024

HOW WE MADE THE DIFFERENCE

PROJECT STATISTICS

CIVIL CLAIMS DUTY COUNSEL

Documents Prepared

562



Individual Volunteer Lawyers

311



Volunteer Lawyer Hours

1,598



Referrals Made

431



Representations

101



Individuals Assisted

1,867



KING'S BENCH COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Documents Prepared

573



Individual Volunteer Lawyers

350



Volunteer Lawyer Hours

1,725



Referrals Made

404



Representations

595

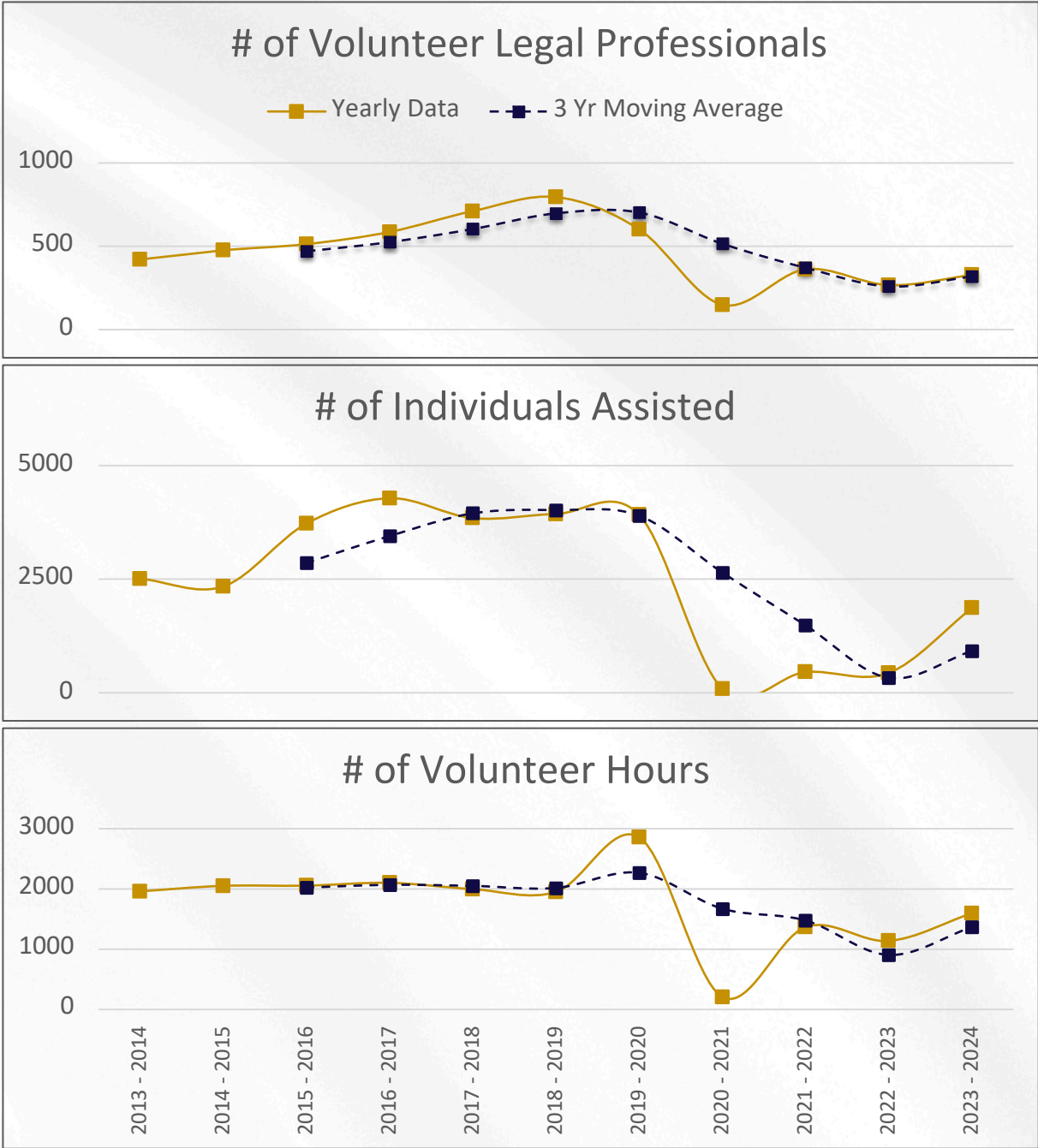


Individuals Assisted

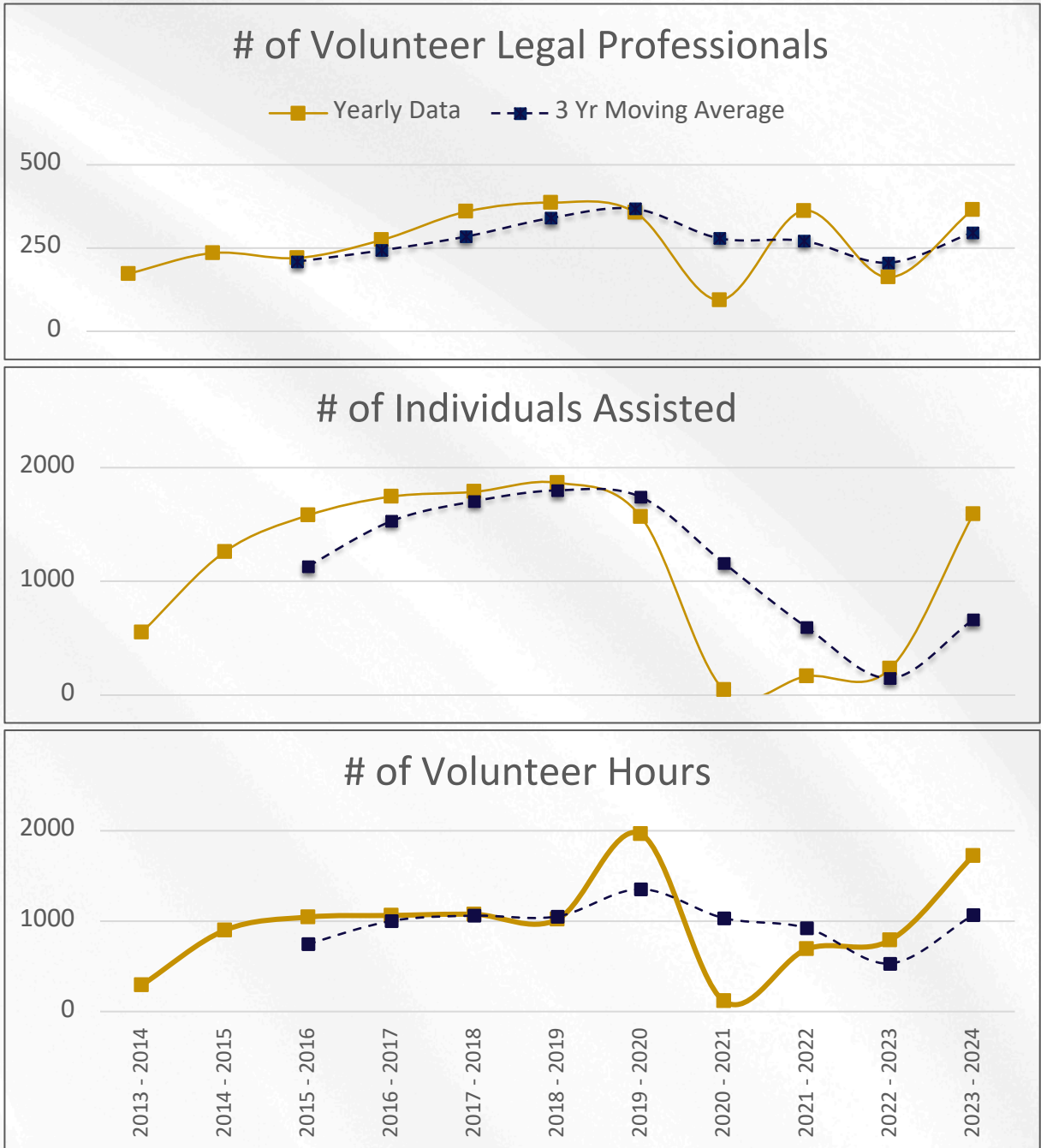
1,552



CIVIL CLAIMS DUTY COUNSEL



KING'S BENCH COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIALS

CIVIL CLAIMS DUTY COUNSEL

“Very professional. Spoke to me in layman terms. Was easy to understand him as he spoke in a manner i was able to comprehend”

“Best help from here, wrote everything down & now I know what to do!”

“This program of volunteer lawyers is very helpful for our communities here in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to get knowledges about specific cases and know what to do in any matter. Thank you!”

“Extremely helpful, exceeded my expectations”

“Excellent experience, very valuable. The volunteer lawyer was extremely helpful and knowledgeable & approachable. This is a VERY valuable service. Thank you”

KING’S BENCH COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

“Thank you for the service and helping the self-represented litigants”

“I travelled 500 kms and waited 3 hours to get helped, but the lawyer that took my case was to the point and clarified what I was in doubt. Thank you!”

“Very patience, good listener, understood problem, and provided advise. Thanks”

“The advice and help from Amicus is always outstanding. We could not have done this on our own without Amicus help”

“Definitely appreciate lawyer trying to assist & be helpful. Always a random draw in terms of area of specialization/level of knowledge, but worth a try! Also limited in terms of time – can only explain so much“

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & INITIATIVES

THE WILLS CLINIC

The Wills Clinic at the Kerby Center is a free monthly will clinic assisting with the completion of a will, enduring power of attorney and personal for eligible low income seniors.

PBLA and Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) partnered on this important initiative and together with the Kerby Centre in Calgary, PBLA and PBSC ran the clinic during October, November, February and March 2023/2024. As the project is supported by PBSC who are all University of Calgary Law Students, the Wills clinic will not run during the summer.

Approximately 60 clients were served at the Wills clinic by volunteer lawyers from multiple law firms.

ALBERTA COURT OF JUSTICE TRIAL PILOT PROGRAM WITH MCCARTHY TÉTRAULT LLP

The ACJ (Alberta Court of Justice) Trial Program, a collaboration between Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) and McCarthy Tétrault LLP, aims to provide legal representation to unrepresented individuals of limited means who have an upcoming civil trial scheduled in the Court of Justice. This pilot program was initiated in June 2023 with the first case being identified in October 2023.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our volunteer lawyer and law student, the client (plaintiff) was successful in being awarded the full damages sought in her civil claim. A total of 60.3 volunteer hours were spent by 1 lawyer and 1 law student. The pilot program was very successful.

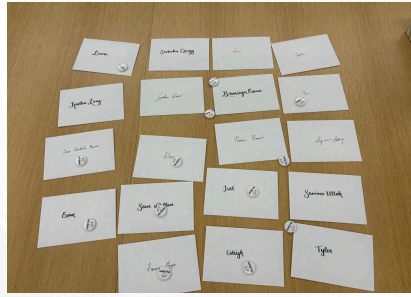
CALGARY LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC (CLAC)

The 13th annual Calgary Legal Advice Clinic (CLAC), hosted in cooperation with our partner organizations which include Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP (NRF), Shell, Calgary Public Library, and Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG), was held on December, 12th 2023, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The clinic offered up to 30-minutes of free legal advice sessions to Calgarians in select areas of law, accommodating both pre-booked and walk-in clients.

A total of 41 volunteer lawyers, along with 4 paralegals and legal assistants, participated in the clinic. A 120 clients were pre-booked their appointments, 81 clients showed up, and 24 clients walked in on the clinic day. This resulted in 105 clients being assisted with their legal matters relating to civil, family, landlord & tenant, criminal, immigration, employment and wills & estate.

Client evaluations showed that 90.6% of CLAC clients have a better understanding of their legal rights now than before attending the clinic. Similarly, Client evaluations showed that 90.6% of CLAC clients have a better understanding of their legal responsibilities now than before attending the clinic.





Lunch and Learn Events in Edmonton and Calgary

The Lunch and Learn gatherings in Edmonton and Calgary provided platforms to introduce our new Executive Director and offer exclusive previews of our Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, aiming to revolutionize our operations.

Anticipating the swift pace of technological advancement, PBLA has been diligently developing a cutting-edge CRM system designed to propel us into a new era of legal assistance. This system promises to redefine the pro bono legal services landscape in Alberta, embodying our commitment to innovation, efficiency and empowering self-represented litigants to navigate their legal challenges.

Through advanced digitization techniques, the CRM system will provide accessibility and convenience for both our clients and volunteers. Moreover, this digital transformation will enable us to conduct conflict checks and maintain follow-up notes efficiently, ensuring personalized support for every individual we serve.

The Lunch and Learn events in Edmonton and Calgary provided an opportunity for the attendees to share their feedback, suggestions and ideas with the new Executive Director.



IMMIGRATION CLINIC

The Free Legal Immigration Clinic 2024, was held at the Calgary Central Library on February 6, 2024, from 2:00 PM to 7:30 PM in collaboration with civil society, government and private sector partners. This significant event highlighted a collaborative effort within the legal community to assist individuals in navigating the complexities of immigration law.

Notable attendees included the Minister of Immigration Muhammad Yasseen, stakeholders, government officials, and legal professionals, all offering their expertise and support to address critical legal challenges. Key partners included the Alberta Law Foundation, Community Legal Clinic, Mustard Seed, ACT, CCIS, and the Center for Newcomers.

The clinic received 134 applications, and due to overwhelming demand, a follow-up webinar was scheduled to address general concerns not requiring a full 30-minute consultation. The clinic successfully assisted 50 clients (32 pre-booked and 18 walk-ins), with 40 clients attending the webinar. The event was covered by City News and Calgary CTV News, further highlighting its impact.



**SCAN TO PLAY
THE HIGHLIGHTS**



IMMIGRATION WEBINAR

PBLA hosted a targeted immigration advice webinar, bolstered by the support of two volunteer lawyers and two volunteer paralegals fluent in both English and Ukrainian. This session directly addressed the needs of 40 participants, providing invaluable guidance and clarity on complex immigration matters. Through focused expertise and proactive engagement, we empowered individuals to navigate their immigration challenges with confidence and informed decision-making, reinforcing our commitment to accessible and impactful community support.



**SCAN TO PLAY
THE HIGHLIGHTS
OF THE CUAET TALK**



**SCAN TO PLAY
THE HIGHLIGHTS
OF THE Q&A WEBINAR**

DESIGN THINKING LAB

Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) hosted the Task Force - Design Thinking Lab 2024 at the Calgary Public Library's BMO Community Room.

This strategic roundtable, titled "Pro Bono Law Alberta Task Force - Design Thinking Lab 2024," aimed to address the rising number of self-represented litigants in Alberta courts by uniting private sectors, government, and civil society to explore innovative solutions for equitable access to justice.

Diverse attendees included representatives from CLG, ECLC, PBSC, Shory Law, Action Dignity, ACT Alberta, the University of Calgary, Student Legal Services, and the Law Society of Alberta.

The workshop facilitated small team ideation, focusing on the surge of self-represented litigants through a systemic lens to identify patterns, underlying structures, and mental models.

Participants crafted aspirational "How Might We" (HMW) statements, voted on the most impactful, and brainstormed potential interventions. Key HMW questions addressed were: how to educate and advocate for government investment in the justice system, how to provide justice services at the local level, and how to attract lawyers to do pro bono work for self-represented litigants



**SCAN TO PLAY
THE HIGHLIGHTS**



LAWYERS AS LEADERS EVENT

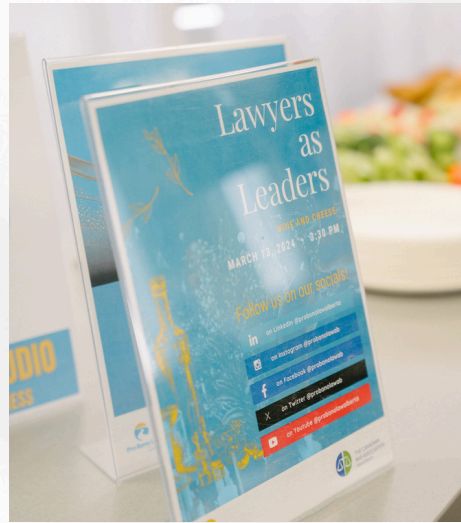
On March 13, 2024, from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM, Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) and the Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch (CBA) jointly hosted an event to honor Dr. Ian Holloway, PC KC PhD LLD, at the CBA offices. The event celebrated Dr. Holloway's remarkable contributions to academia, private practice, and public service, recognizing his profound impact on the legal landscape.

Notable individuals shared stories and inspirations about Dr. Holloway, including Chief Justice Ritu Khullar, Justice Blair Nixon, Oliver Ho, Gideon Christian, Eleanor Carlson, Wilma Shim, and Joel Tallerico. A recognition ceremony led by Karen Fellowes and the CBA was followed by an acceptance speech from Dr. Holloway.

The event concluded with a wine and cheese social, providing a relaxed atmosphere for attendees to socialize. This heartfelt celebration marked Dr. Holloway's retirement and honored his lasting legacy in the legal community.



**SCAN TO PLAY
THE HIGHLIGHTS**

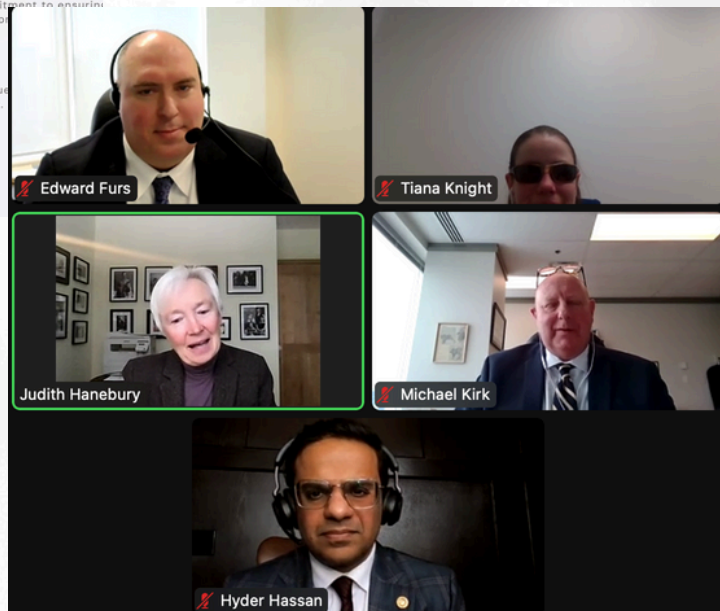
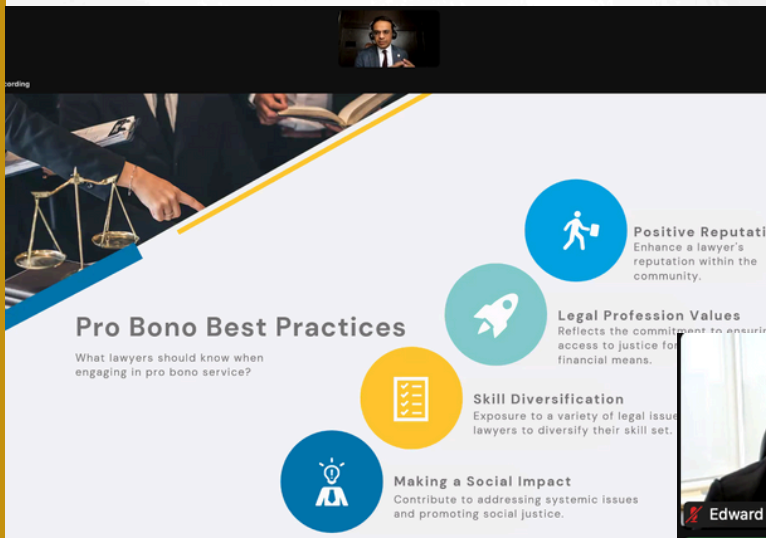


PROMOTING PRO BONO

PRO BONO OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

ACCESS TO JUSTICE WEBINAR

On February 6, 2024, from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM, was invited to present at the Access to Justice Week webinar hosted by the Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch (CBA). The theme of the event was “Best Practices for Pro Bono.” The webinar featured a presentation by PBLA’s Executive Director Hyder Hassan, who shared insights and best practices for engaging lawyers in pro bono work. The presentation focused on innovation in the pro bono sector, highlighting PBLA's new client management program and providing practical advice for lawyers offering pro bono services. Following PBLA's presentation, a panel discussion with active pro bono volunteers, including Edward Furs from Witten LLP, subject matter expert Judith Hanebury, Michael Kirk from Miller Thomson and Tiana Knight from Knight Molloy Patrick LLP provided further insights and experiences in pro bono work.



PROMOTING PRO BONO

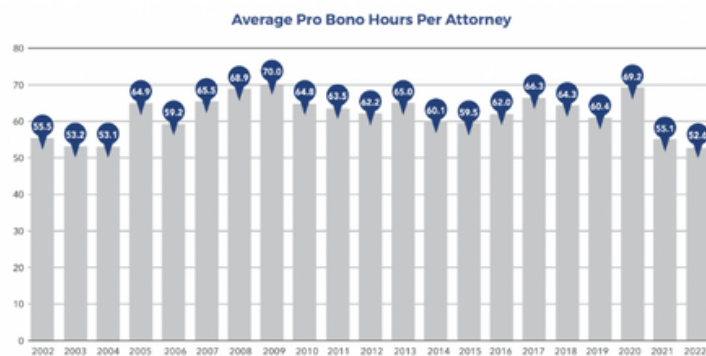
PRO BONO OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

CONFERENCES

PBLA’s proposal was accepted at the 2024 MIE National Conference for Legal Aid Managers. PBLA co-presented with the Pro Bono Institute and the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland. The session, titled "Managing Pro Bono Volunteers" took place on April 10, 2024, from 2:45 PM to 4:00 PM. PBLA shared best practices on how to increase post-pandemic pro bono lawyer engagement, use of technology in optimizing operations, utilizing design thinking approaches to engage sector partners, and creating opportunities for pro bono volunteers to serve self-represented litigants in the courts.



PRO BONO ENGAGEMENT DOWN AT LAWYER LEVEL



PROMOTING PRO BONO

PRO BONO OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & NATIONAL LEGAL AID MANAGER'S TRAINING

PBLA engaged with Pro Bono Ontario's new ED, joined regular meetings with Pro Bono colleagues from BC, ON, SK, and QC. As part of onboarding in the sector, attended North American legal aid management training, met the legal counsels for Amazon, HP, and Pro Bono Microsoft, and Pro Bono Counsel Norton Rose.



MEDIA OUTREACH

1,287
calls received



923
emails received



META (INSTAGRAM + FACEBOOK)

33.7K
total reach



5,075
total engagement



317
new followers



X (TWITTER)

17K
total reach



444
total engagement



103
new followers



LINKEDIN

35K
total reach



4,052
total engagement



342
new followers



SCAN TO PLAY
THE NEWS REPORT BY



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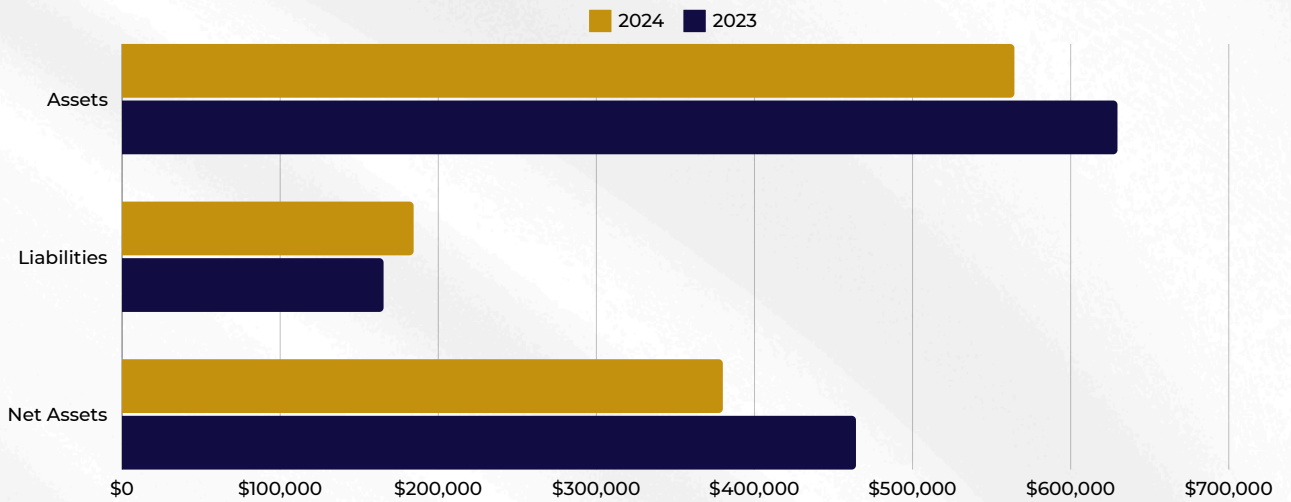
OUR POSITION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Financial Position

As of March 31, 2024

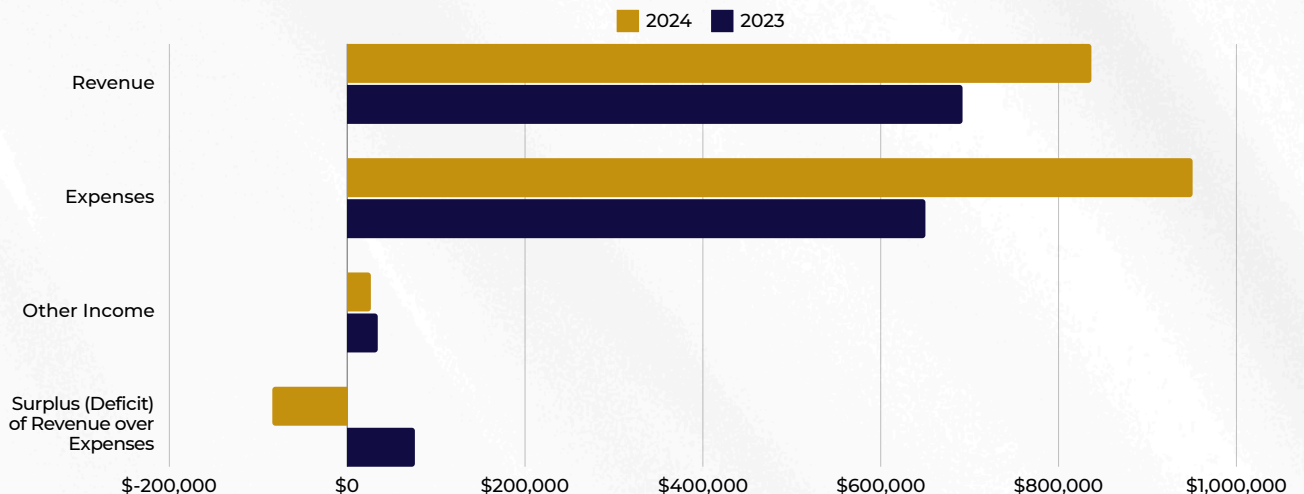
| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Assets | \$564,415 | \$629,607 |
| Liabilities | \$184,417 | \$165,407 |
| Net Assets | \$379,998 | \$464,200 |



Statement of Operations

For the year ending March 31, 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Revenue | \$836,921 | \$692,022 |
| Expenses | \$950,741 | \$650,265 |
| Other Income - Interest Income | \$29,618 | \$12,313 |
| Other Income - National Conference Income | \$0 | \$22,052 |
| Surplus (Deficit) of Revenue over Expenses | -\$84,202 | \$76,122 |



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

PBLA is currently in the implementation phase of the CRM system. Specifically after completing deployment of the system. PBLA is focused on increasing CRM adoption to enhance volunteer management, client intake, communication, documentation, and reporting.

This system will significantly improve support for self-represented litigants, particularly low-income and vulnerable Albertans. By leveraging this technology, PBLA will boost internal staff capacity, facilitating more effective community-facing initiatives. This increased capacity and technological integration will enable PBLA to adapt its governance and operations to better meet community needs and respond to the evolving dynamics in court and legal service delivery.

THANK YOU

OUR TEAM AND PARTNERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Fellowes, KC, President (Calgary)
Ed Ma, KC, Vice President (Calgary)
Steve Nelson, Treasurer (Calgary)
Robert Philp, KC (Edmonton)
Robert Neilson (Edmonton)
Kene Ilochonwu, LSA Bencher Representative (Calgary)
Brett Anderson (Calgary)
Hsiu Yan Chan (Calgary)
Marija Bicanic (Calgary)
Eleanor Carlson, Secretary (Calgary)
Judith Hanebury, KC (Calgary)
Shay J. Vanderschaeghe (Red Deer)
Usman Mahmood (Calgary)

ADVISORY BOARD

Chair: The Honourable Mr. Justice Rodney A. Jerke, (Court of King's Bench, Lethbridge)
The Honourable Madam Justice M.S. Paperny (Court of Appeal, Calgary)
The Honourable Mr. Justice John T. Henderson (Court of King's Bench, Calgary)
The Honourable Madam Justice J.M. Ross (Court of King's Bench, Edmonton)
The Honourable Judge A.H. Lefever (Alberta Court of Justice, Edmonton)
The Honourable John C. (Jack) Major C.C., KC (Bennett Jones LLP, Calgary)
The Honourable Allan H. Wachowich, KC (Edmonton)
Phyllis A.L. Smith, KC (Emery Jamieson LLP, Edmonton)
Cheryl C. Gottselig, KC (Burnett Duckworth & Palmer LLP)
Bruce Churchill-Smith, KC (Calgary)

STAFF

Hyder Hassan, Executive Director (Calgary)
Alexandra Weipert, Manager of Partnerships (Calgary)
Bilal Sikander, Advisor (Calgary)
Ray Sequeira, Manager, Finance (Calgary)
La Salette Encarnacion, VLS and Program Coordinator (Edmonton)
Marija Bicanic, Interim Executive Director to September 2023 (Calgary)

PROGRAM AND PROJECT PARTNERS

- Bishop & McKenzie LLP
- Blakes, Cassels & Graydon LLP
- Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
- Brownlee LLP
- Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP
- Carbert Waite LLP
- City of Edmonton Law Branch
- Dentons Canada LLP
- DLA Piper (Canada) LLP
- Edmonton Police Service
- Field LLP
- Goodfellow & Schuettlaw
- Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP
- Imperial Oil
- JSS Barristers LLP
- Witten LLP
- McAllister LLP
- McCarthy Tétrault LLP
- McLennan Ross LLP
- McLeod Law LLP
- McMillan LLP
- Miller Thomson LLP
- MLT Aikins LLP
- MNP LLP
- Morrison LLP
- Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP
- Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
- Parlee McLaws LLP
- Scott Venturo Rudakoff LLP
- Sharek Logan van Leenen LLP
- Shell
- Stikeman Elliott LLP
- Verjee Law

PRO BONO COMMUNITIY

- Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta
- Calgary Legal Guidance
- Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
- Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta
- Edmonton Community Legal Centre
- Fort McMurray Community Legal Clinic
- Grande Prairie Legal Guidance
- Lethbridge Legal Guidance
- Medicine Hat Legal Help Centre
- Public Interest Law Clinic
- Student Legal Assistance
- Student Legal Services of Edmonton

OUR FUNDERS





PATH TO POSSIBILITIES



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