

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

For the period  
April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025



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Community Advocacy & Legal Centre



## Board Chair's report

As I reflect on the past year, the quiet yet consistent nature of CALC's work is most remarkable. From providing summary advice, representing clients in tribunal hearings, and delivering workshops, to filing appeals and advocating for law reform, CALC remains a steady presence supporting individuals and our community in accessing justice and exercising their rights.

CALC's staff have provided direct assistance to hundreds of individuals and families facing issues related to tenancy, employment, social benefits, and human rights. Our outreach clinics in rural and under-served areas increased access to legal advice and representation.

The Board recognizes the dedication of our staff, whose expertise, commitment, and compassion continue to make a tangible difference in our community.

Over the past year, the Board has focused on strengthening governance practices and ensuring alignment with CALC's strategic goals. The Board conducted a comprehensive review of its governance

policies and undertook governance training to refresh and strengthen its role in providing strategic leadership for the organization. These efforts have positioned CALC to respond effectively to emerging community needs and sector-wide challenges. CALC has maintained financial stability amidst this period of economic uncertainty, enabling the continuation and expansion of essential programs.

We were once again successful in securing grants to continue important and specialized work including addressing sexual harassment in the workplace and supporting victims of gender-based violence. Alongside our clinic partners, we continue to advocate for consistent funding that reflects the needs in our communities.

This year, we thank departing board members Petra LePage, Peter Dudding, and Wendy Gale for their service to the Board over the past number of years. Each has served the Board with distinction and grace, sharing their time, energy, and expertise to the great benefit of the Board and the organization.

Special recognition goes to departing board member Rick Helman, who completed his second full term and nearly a decade of continuous service to the Board as Treasurer. I am particularly grateful for Rick's patient, consistent, and good-humoured approach, and his dedication to the Board and the organization over these many years.

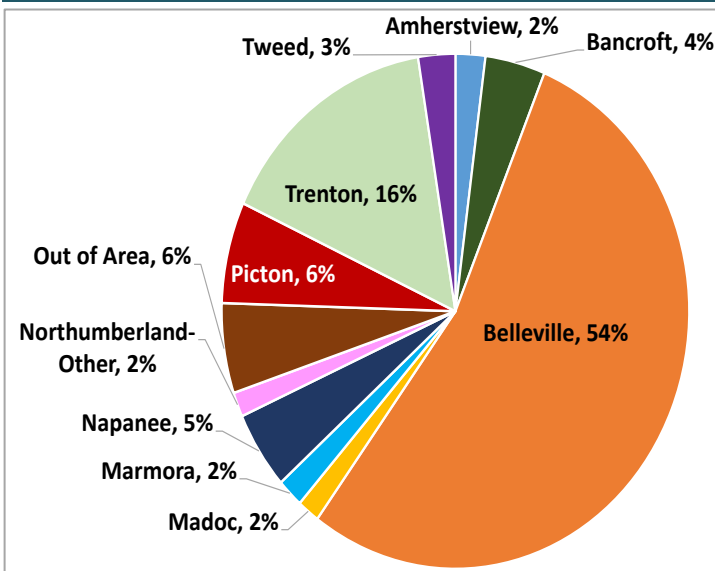
As we say farewell and thanks to departing board members, the Board also welcomes new members, and the enthusiasm and expertise that each brings.

Looking ahead, the Board's priorities in the upcoming year includes refreshing our strategic plan and strengthening reporting that demonstrates our impact in the community.

We eagerly anticipate another year of providing excellent service and working alongside many community partners to achieve our mission of enhancing access to justice in our communities.

*Steve van de Hoef, Board Chair*

### Where our clients come from: Our Satellite Areas



## Executive Director’s report

I am pleased to share our annual report. As the number of clients helped continues to rise, this year underscores once again just how vital community-based legal services are.

By engaging directly with clients and organizations every day, we see firsthand how legal issues intersect with the local context. This allows us to tailor our services in ways that traditional legal systems often cannot, making our legal support more relevant, respectful, and effective. Community presence also means we can spot emerging problems quickly. Whether it’s a pattern in evictions or in the barriers to accessing income benefits, community integration means we can spot and respond to these issues with speed.

This kind of early intervention prevents worsening legal harm, helps keep families housed, protects workers, and stabilizes incomes. Showing up in-person (sometimes on their doorstep) can be the only way to ensure clients have access to the services they need, when they need them.

Community legal clinics like ours serve as a bridge between individual cases and systemic solutions. Our systemic advocacy is grounded in what our clients are actually experiencing. That real-time insight makes us credible and effective when pushing for policy and law reforms, as we frequently did this year.

Some highlights from our work:

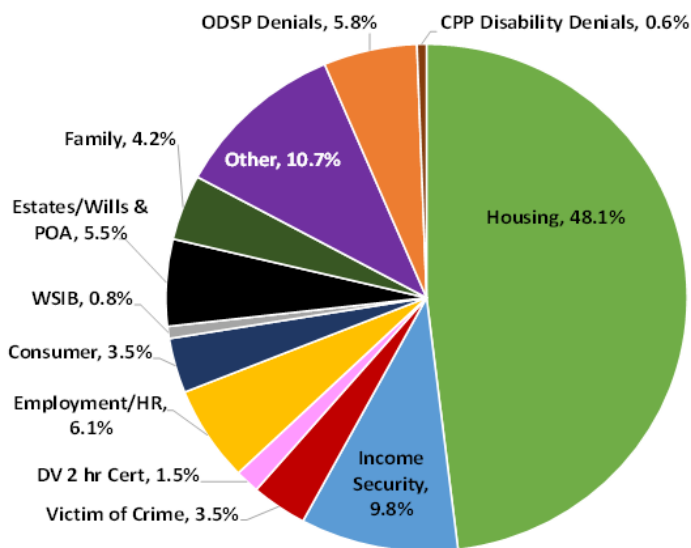
- We helped 6,961 people
- We recovered just over two million dollars for our clients
- We provided 34 workshops on a wide range of legal topics, which were attended by nearly 1,100 people. We distributed hundreds of pamphlets and other public legal education materials. Tipsheets on our website were downloaded over 55,000 times.
- We worked on advocacy and law reforms campaigns related to the Canada Disability Benefit, fairness in repayment of pandemic benefits, digital accessibility at administrative tribunals, procedural fairness and human rights protections in legal procedures related to social assistance benefits, improving protections for consumers, and supporting the rights of people who are unhoused and living in encampments.

We are grateful for the continued support of Legal Aid Ontario, our primary funder, as well as for municipal and federal funding that has allowed us to do homelessness prevention work and to support survivors of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The ongoing support for our work from the communities we serve is also deeply felt and appreciated.

As a final note, you may notice some overlap between last year’s report and this one. We’re adjusting to a new reporting cycle, and this year reflects that transition. Thank you for your patience.

*Lisa Turik, Executive Director/Lawyer*

### 2024-25 Individual Client Service Statistics - % Type of Legal Issue ALL CALLS FOR HELP RECEIVED



“DV” = Domestic Violence, “POA” = Powers of Attorney

## Helping people with consumer and debt law problems

We continue to receive calls for assistance by people targeted by frauds and scams. This year saw an increasing number of scams on social media platforms, as well as complaints about predatory lenders, improper practices by collection agencies and vehicle repair issues.



Each year we receive a large number of calls from people targeted by home improvement and related financing scams. However, more recently, we have seen an influx of inquiries for legal advice and assistance regarding used vehicle purchase and financing agreements and related breaches of the *Consumer Protection Act, 2002*.

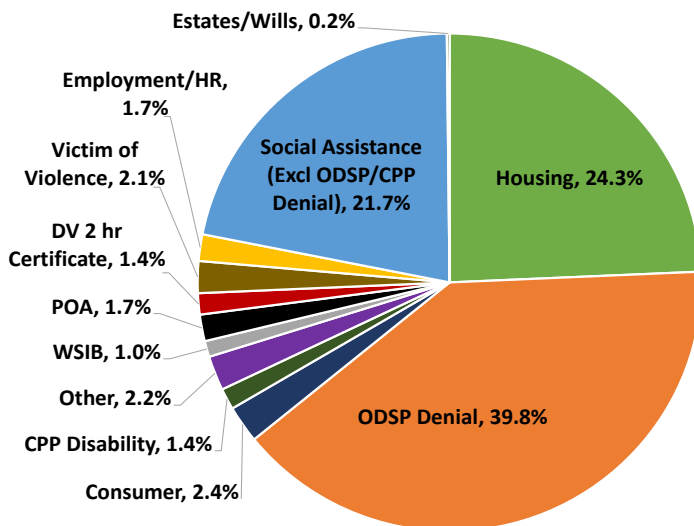
We provide legal advice and resources to empower people to solve their issues, assist with filing complaints with the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, and we can sometimes represent in Small Claims Court.

We have helped consumers, including vulnerable seniors, with cancellation of contracts that were unfair, misleading

and contrary to the *Consumer Protection Act, 2002*. This year we helped our clients save more than \$105,000 exiting these types of contracts.

In the fall of 2023, the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery launched a consultation to address problems arising from Notices of Security Interests (NOSIs), including consumer harm from their improper use. People subject to a NOSI often had to pay large sums to remove it when selling their home or seeking credit. NOSIs were also used in mortgage fraud and by bad actors targeting vulnerable seniors, often tied to pressured sales of items like furnaces or water heaters. The consultation was welcome, as many of our clients unknowingly had NOSIs registered on their homes. Along with other legal clinics, we filed submissions in support of stronger consumer protections and limits on NOSIs. On June 6, 2024, the *Homeowner Protection Act* came into effect, banning NOSIs for consumer goods such as furnaces and water heaters, and retroactively deeming existing ones expired. This reform is an important step in protecting consumers, especially vulnerable homeowners.

### 2024-25 Individual Client Service Statistics - % Type of Legal Issue FULL OR LIMITED REPRESENTATION



"DV" = Domestic Violence, "POA" = Powers of Attorney

### CALC IN THE NEWS

**Legal clinic says Tribunal Ontario's technology accommodations program not delivering as promised**

The clinic says it has filed more than 30 requests on behalf of clients without a single approval

By Jessica Maish / 05 Dec 2024 / Share

More than a year after Tribunals Ontario introduced a program to provide computers and other remote hearing equipment to applicants in need, one of the tribunals it oversees has repeatedly and arbitrarily rejected applicants' requests for such technology accommodations, a local @law attorney.

[Law Times article about tech accommodations – Dec 5/24](#)

**Change the talk to end the violence: vigil organizers**

Organizers of Friday's vigil stand behind photos of the 14 women murdered Dec. 6, 1989 in Montreal. Standing from left were Natalie O'Toole of Three Oaks, Amy Dufresne, Sexual Assault Centre for Quinte and District, Michelle Lake, Victim Services-Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington Counties, Sharon Powell, Community Advocacy & Legal Centre, and Sheila Liff, Red Cedars Shelter. PHOTO BY LUKE HENRIY

A vigil Friday in Belleville honoured the memories of victims of intimate-partner violence and came with calls to change the rising level of toxicity in how women are spoken about and treated by men.

[Intelligencer Article about Dec 6 Day of Remembrance vigil](#)

## Fighting for income security

Our income security work includes cases with Canada Pension Plan-Disability, Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), tax benefits (including Disability Tax Credit, Child Tax Benefits) and seniors' benefits (including Canada Pension Plan Retirement, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement). We were busy this year with over 565 total cases.

ODSP appeals account for a significant amount of the volume. We had about 230 new cases this year. We were able to achieve very good outcomes for our clients with 86% success on appeals. Importantly, over 50% of our files settled before a hearing, which saves our clients considerable stress and gets retroactive benefits to them faster. We recovered \$1,325,606 in retroactive benefits for people with disabilities. On average, clients who are successful in their appeals received \$575 more per month compared to OW.

During the pandemic the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT) moved all hearings to zoom. The SBT hears all appeals related to Ontario's social assistance programs including OW and ODSP. We represent clients there regularly; last year we attended over 125 hearings with clients. Many of our clients do not have the devices needed to attend a digital hearing at home (i.e., a laptop, webcam, microphone, and internet); others cannot do a hearing from home because they lack adequate privacy, do not know how to use a computer (let alone zoom), or do not have a stable internet connection. We hosted 42% of hearings in our Belleville office for clients who could not do their hearing from home and worked with community partners outside of Belleville to accommodate several more clients.

Although Tribunals Ontario launched an initiative in 2023 called Mobile Access Terminals (MAT) to support clients who want to participate in a digital hearing, none of our requests for MAT were approved this year. Through a Freedom of Information request in 2024, we learned that Tribunals Ontario had never approved a request for MAT at the SBT and had no policies, procedures or guidelines for the program. In late 2024 we filed an Ombudsman Complaint on behalf of our clients about the lack of

transparency and accessibility to this program. We understand the Ombudsman's investigation into the MAT program is still ongoing.

We also supported nearly 40 clients who received notice of an ODSP eligibility review (called a "medical review") to complete the process. Clients on ODSP who do not complete their medical review on time are cut off benefits. Many of the clients who approached us for help did not have a primary care provider who could complete the medical review paperwork. We were able to help most clients get an extension of time to complete the review, but the shortage of primary care in our community means this is just a bandaid over a bigger problem.

<b>ODSP Denial Success Rate</b>	<b>86.1%</b>
<b>Average Retroactive ODSP Award</b>	<b>\$5,944</b>
<b>Total Income Security Recoveries (Apr 2024-Mar 2025)</b>	<b>\$1,738,711</b>

CALC also continued as one of the eastern region representatives on the provincial Steering Committee for Social Assistance (SCSA). SCSA is an inter-clinic organization that works to be a liaison and advocate between the government, the SBT, and legal clinics on social assistance issues and law reform activities. We continued to work with SCSA to identify and address social assistance issues of systemic importance.

Last, our community has continued to struggle enormously with the ongoing refusal by the provincial government to increase social assistance rates to adequate levels. Ontarians on Ontario Works (OW) saw no increase for a sixth year in a row. Individuals on OW only get \$733 a month. This certainly does not cover all basic necessities including housing, food, clothing, transportation and a phone, especially when the cost of living keeps going up. Ontario's OW rates are the second lowest welfare rates in Canada. We continue to call on the provincial government to increase social assistance rates.

## Reaching out: Promoting legal literacy and access to justice

Our legal literacy initiatives this year included legal information sessions, presenting at lunch and learns, university/college classes and conferences about our work, publishing two [newsletters](#), and posting a variety of tipsheets and legal information on our [website](#), on [Facebook](#) and on [X](#). In total, our tipsheets had over 55,000 downloads this year (between April 2024 and March 2025).

We continued to offer both in-person and virtual workshops on legal rights. These workshops are free. We provided 34 workshops to nearly 1,100 people on topics including sexual harassment at work, tenants' rights, workers' rights, wills and powers of attorney, justice & health, social assistance, and consumer rights, as well as the types of services CALC provides. We believe that educating people about their legal rights promotes legal empowerment and is necessary for access to justice- after all, you can't exercise rights you don't know you have.

Workshops also provide opportunities for participants to ask questions. We bring pamphlets, tipsheets, and materials with our contact information that participants can take home. This year we presented to many different community groups and organizations including local high schools and colleges, university students, seniors' residences, and community service providers like the Quinte Learning Centre, Gateway Community Health Centre, Community Living, and women's shelters. We also

attended a Justice Circle on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Workshops are typically organized in partnership with a community agency or group, fostering relationships and connections with their staff.

We attended community events such as the seniors' fair and Doc Fest (sponsoring "The Day Iceland Stood Still").

Any group can call us and request a free presentation on legal rights or the services we provide. You can also fill out our online form at <https://bit.ly/CALC-Speaker>.



A special thank you to Deirdre McDade (pictured above), former CALC lawyer/Co-Director of Legal Services, who organized and spoke at many of our presentations.

### Our Newsletter

Our semi-annual clinic newsletters were created in-house, and sent out in the May and Oct 2024.

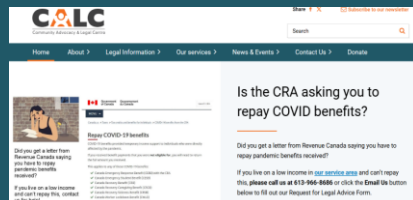


They were also posted to our social media accounts and put on our website.

Over 2,045 copies went to subscribers and clients by mail, email or online.

### 58,500 Visitors to Website

Our website hits remain high. Over 58,500 individuals visited the site for the past year. Pages viewed were over 100,000. Our *Emergencies—Are You Homeless* and *Write to Your MP/MPP* pages were the most popular with over 10,000 and 5,800 views, respectively.



The most popular downloads were *Tenant Privacy Rights* (7,200 downloads), *Benefits Available to People Receiving Income Support* (5,500), and our *Tenant v Tenant Guide* (3,800).

### Reaching further with social media



As of March 31, we had over 900 followers on X (Twitter).



Our Facebook page has over 1,245 followers.



We also have an Instagram page ([calc\\_belleville](#)) where we post information about gender-based violence. This page has 131 followers.

Follow us to get the latest legal news, information, and to stay tuned for upcoming events.

## Supporting survivors of gender-based violence



In 2024-2025, the number of clients seeking support from CALC's "Your Way Forward" (YWF) project doubled as word spread about our program in the community.

The largest group of the over 300 clients that we served experienced intimate partner violence and were seeking advice and support in family law. For many of these clients, we were a first point of contact with the family legal system, which can often feel overwhelming and confusing. We helped them to understand their rights and options, and to plan their next steps in moving towards safety, financial security, and wellness. This included helping them to draft documents necessary to start family law matters.

We also served a significant number of clients who were victims of sexual and/or intimate partner violence and were involved as witnesses in criminal proceedings. For many of these clients, we offered information and advice in working with police and the court system, including how to stay safe during legal proceedings.

Other groups of clients included those with housing needs who relied on our help to take steps like ending a lease as they escaped from abuse.

Another group were victims of fraud and financial abuse who, with our help, were able to reverse decisions by which they had been denied benefits and to regain control of their financial affairs. We also helped in other areas of law including representing clients before the Human Rights Tribunal.

Beyond direct client service, we organized a successful Education Day in Bancroft that brought together service providers, educators and the police to discuss the legal issues our clients faced. We also provided public legal education sessions at community agencies in our region.

We are grateful for the funding that CALC received from the Federal Department of Justice for the YWF project over the last four and half years. Unfortunately, our funding for the program is scheduled to end in March 2026, and we do not know if it will be extended. Despite this, CALC remains committed to serving survivors through our existing services, and as we continue to explore ways to extend or secure new funding for the YWF program.

Please continue to contact us for information about the YWF project and how it can help you or someone you know.



## Continuing to raise awareness about sexual and domestic violence

CALC continues to have a strong presence on the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence (QCCAV) - a group that promotes education, training and awareness about sexual and domestic violence. Sub-committees we support: Sharon Powell – Membership; Claire McMenemy – Research & Advocacy.

We once again co-sponsored our local Take Back the Night event with other organizations, part of a world-wide effort to end sexual violence against women and victim blaming.

We also take part annually in the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women* on December 6 to commemorate the lives of the 14 women murdered in 1989 at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal.

# Housing: Creating stability with a shaky foundation

Housing issues continue to dominate the day to day calls at CALC, accounting for nearly 50% of the cases our clinic helps with. Keeping a roof over our clients' heads remains a top priority, as people continue to struggle with housing affordability and supply.

As always, we believe early intervention is key to keeping people housed. Our services are focused on reaching people as soon as possible during the eviction process.



We continue to provide immediate referrals and information to all tenants through our tenant hotline process. Intake staff provide some information to all callers immediately (such as where to get financial help for arrears). Callers are then

triaged to speak with a legal worker either immediately or within 2 business days, depending on the urgency of the tenant's issue. All tenants receive a referral to [Stepstojustice.ca](http://Stepstojustice.ca) where they can access further information about the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the Landlord & Tenant Board while they wait for their call from a legal worker.

However, due to space limitations, we have to prioritize making this space available to tenants without phone or internet access. We continue to provide resources on using zoom and navigating the Landlord & Tenant Board portal.

We also continue to update the housing resources and tip sheets on our [website](#) and we provide public legal education sessions on housing rights and responsibilities. Community groups, social service agencies, and tenant organizations are welcome to contact us to come and speak about housing rights and responsibilities. Please call us or use our [online request form](#).

**CALC** Need Help to Pay the Rent?  
Community Advocacy & Legal Centre  
Updated: December 2024 Page 1 of 2

**HASTINGS COUNTY**  
Housing and Homelessness Fund (HHF): 1-866-433-0338 or 613-712-9830  
Financial help may be available for rent arrears, hydro or heat deposits or arrears, emergency accommodation for homelessness, and last month's rent deposits. Call to see if you qualify.

**How to apply:**  
If you are not on social assistance: Call the number for HHF above. You will be asked to provide information about your income.  
If you are on Ontario Works: Contact your caseworker, Ontario Works phone numbers are:  
Belleville 1-800-267-0575 Bancroft 1-866-569-1341  
Madoc 1-866-434-4028 Quinte West 1-800-367-5777  
If you are on Ontario Disability Support Program: Contact your caseworker first, 613-962-0562 or 1-800-267-4555, and then call HHF.  
Hydro or Heat Arrears: LEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance Program) or Winter Warmth Program  
To apply for LEAP contact your utility. Contact information can be found on your bill. In North Hastings contact United Way of Chatham-St. Lawrence County at 349-5134 (4167).  
Warmth (gas only) contact 613-712-9830

Community Transit  
Financial assistance for things like rent, heat, hydro, applies on a  
Belleville 613-962-8070 N. Hastings/Bk  
Centre Hastings 613-473-2258

**OTHER HELP**  
Hastings Housing Programs Branch: Geared to income housing.  
Belleville 613-966-1311  
Next Step Housing Connection: provides landlord-tenant manager facing or expiring homelessness. (613) 712-9830  
Belleville 613-966-1748, ext 249 or 231  
Quinte West 613-392-1487, ext 339  
Yorkville (613) 613-989-1748, ext 333 (serving all of Hastings)

**EMERGENCY AFTER HOURS**  
Emergency housing & food, 6:30 pm to 8:30 am, weekends and h

**W W W . C O M M U N I T Y L E G A L C E N T R E . C A**  
158 George Street, Suite 1 Tel: 613-712-9830  
Belleville, Ontario Fax: 613-966-0255  
Rm 102

**CALC** Need Help to Pay the Rent?  
Community Advocacy & Legal Centre  
Updated: December 2024 Page 2 of 2

**PRINCE EDWARD AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON COUNTIES**  
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI): 1-866-715-7991  
The CHPI program helps people with rent arrears, housing emergencies and utility bills. You can only access help from this program once in a 12-month period. CHPI is run by Ontario Works.  
If you are on Ontario Works, contact your caseworker:  
(BAA): 613-354-0957 (PECC): 613-476-2382  
If you are not on Ontario Works (includes those on ODSP): 1-866-716-7991

Hydro or Heat Arrears  
If you are on social assistance contact your caseworker:  
LEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance Program) or Winter Warmth Program. To apply for LEAP contact your utility. Contact information can be found on your bill.  
Winter Warmth (gas only) to apply contact the behavior team 613-354-7633

Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington Social Housing  
Geared to income housing. Ask about rent supplement programs. 1-866-716-7991 or 613-354-5695

Next Step Housing Connection  
Provides intensive case management housing support services for those facing or experiencing homelessness. (613) 712-9830/613-354-7633  
In Prince Edward County, call 613-476-6415, ext. 677.

Prince Edward County Affordable Housing Corporation  
Mandates to increase the supply of affordable housing in PEC through a broad range of activities. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.pecahc.ca/>

Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington Addiction & Mental Health Services Housing First Program  
For people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Help with finding a home & rent supplements. Call to see if you qualify. 613-354-7888 (24/7)

Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington Social Services  
Emergency Assistance: You may qualify if you live in Ontario and are in a crisis/emergency situation without money for things like food and housing. You are not eligible if you are on Ontario Works or ODSP.

Emergency Housing Supports - Household Bills: This program provides financial assistance to low income households in emergency situations, such as rent or utility arrears or other immediate needs. For further services, call: 1-866-354-0957, ext. 2

**W W W . C O M M U N I T Y L E G A L C E N T R E . C A**  
158 George Street, Suite 1 Tel: 613-712-9830  
Belleville, Ontario Fax: 613-966-0255  
Rm 102

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[Housing Law](#)

**Questions about Housing Law?**

Eviction	Eviction process at the Landlord and Tenant Board
Getting legal help in Housing Law	Human rights in housing
Moving out	Paying rent
Privacy and harassment	Renting a new place to live
Repairs and maintenance	Shared housing
Tenant applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board	

stepstojustice.ca

Tenant Duty Counsel services at the Landlord & Tenant Board also remain in demand. This year we assisted over 240 tenants in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties with their hearings. We also continue to provide a space in our Belleville office with a computer, webcam, and microphone for tenants to use to access their zoom hearings.

We are also very grateful for the homelessness prevention funding we receive from Hastings and Prince Edward and Lennox & Addington Counties. This support allows us to broaden our financial eligibility criteria, enabling us to assist more tenants facing eviction. This includes those with very low incomes who nonetheless earn slightly above our typical income cutoffs and would be unable to pay for help from a lawyer or paralegal.

## Protecting workers' rights and compensating workplace injuries

Demand for workers' rights services and retained cases remained consistent with last year's levels. We recovered about \$79,000 for clients in claims related to human rights in the workplace, wrongful dismissal and workplace injuries.

We continued to receive calls from workers about failure to accommodate disability in the workplace; discrimination in the workplace on the basis of disability and/or sex; sexual harassment in the workplace and breaches of employment standards, including unpaid wages, as well as occupational health and safety issues.

To help workers, we provide a range of services including self-help resources, legal advice, limited retainer services and full representation before various adjudicative boards and tribunals, including the Ministry of Labour, Ontario Labour Relations Board, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, Workplace Safety & Insurance Board and Workplace Safety & Insurance Appeals Tribunal.

We continue to work with community partners and local stakeholders to identify and respond to needs of vulnerable workers in the community. We regularly participate in meetings and are active in the Quinte Local Immigration Partnership (QLIP) Newcomer Workers Working Group.

Over the past year there were several legislative developments:

- changes to the *Employment Standards Act* including:
  - increased maximum fines for violating the Act, and
  - an amendment prohibiting employers from requiring an employee to provide a certificate from a qualified health practitioner as evidence of entitlement to *ESA* sick leave;
- minimum wage increased to \$17.20/hour (to be increased to \$17.60 effective October 1, 2025).

Additionally in April 2024, the Ontario Government started consultation on a new job-protected leave for employees experiencing serious or critical illnesses. Under this leave an employee with at least 13 weeks of service is entitled to an

unpaid leave of up to 27 weeks if the employee is unable to perform the duties of their position because of a serious medical condition.

In spring 2024, the Workplace Safety & Insurance Appeals Tribunal introduced procedural changes which provide shorter time frames in the appeal process and more options for alternative dispute resolution prior to hearing.

The Human Rights Tribunal also introduced changes to its Rules of Procedure and Practice Directions, providing for mandatory mediation and stricter conditions for time extension, rescheduling and adjournments. In the spring of 2025 we participated in consultations with the Tribunal on proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure. We also provided submissions in response to the Tribunal's stakeholder meeting, which we attended.

To develop strategy on systemic issues and our capacity to provide high quality services on individual cases, we participate in legal clinic Communities of Practice devoted to employment law and WSIB.

Earlier this year, CALC started work on an inter-clinic collaborative project involving 19 other legal clinics across the province to deliver legal advice for workers experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace in Ontario.

We also continue to update and add to the workers' rights-related tipsheets and other resources available on our [website](#).

## Justice & health partnerships: Where the social determinants and legal health meet

Our Justice & Health Partnership (JHP) project focuses on collaborating with local healthcare providers to identify and resolve legal issues that impact client health.

The project is grounded in the understanding that the areas traditionally addressed by community or poverty law – such as income security, housing, and employment – are also key social determinants of health. These issues have a profound impact on overall health outcomes, and many of them can be effectively addressed through legal intervention.

Our project thrived this year with 185 referrals and consultations from healthcare partners. We presented on the importance of legal health to more than 300 healthcare providers, including nursing students and medical residents.

JHP Calls by Area of Law	Total	% of Calls
Housing	51	27.6%
Income Security	47	25.4%
Other	21	11.4%
Power of Attorney	20	10.8%
Estates/Wills	12	6.5%
Consumer & Debt	10	5.4%
Workers' Compensation	8	4.3%
Victim of Crime	7	3.8%
Employment/Human Rights	5	2.7%
Family	4	2.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

We co-presented with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) in June 2024 at the Alliance for Healthier Communities' Annual Conference.

The session was well-attended, and participants left with practical skills on how to identify legal aspects of health problems and how to connect patients to low-barrier legal information and support.

The provincial Health Justice Community of Practice (COP) is made up of legal clinics (including CALC) that are engaged in justice and health work. In 2024, the COP applied to the Law Foundation of Ontario for funding to

hire a staff person to coordinate these health justice efforts and to organize a Health Justice Conference. We learned in December 2024 that our application was successful. CALC is involved in supervising the coordinator's work and the conference planning. The conference is tentatively scheduled for summer 2026.

We also helped develop content for a Health Harming Legal Needs curriculum for family medicine residents at three pilot sites in the Toronto-area. This project was led by staff from the Health & Justice Program at St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team, staff from CLEO, and the University of Toronto Department of Family & Community Medicine's Health Equity Leads. The curriculum combines asynchronous and real-time learning. It was co-delivered by CLEO facilitators and site-based health equity leads. It launched with the first group of residents in March 2025.

We also hosted nursing and occupational therapy students from Queen's University completing community development and health promotion placements as part of their coursework.

The nursing students created a presentation and accompanying resources for healthcare providers on human rights, discrimination, and drafting effective accommodation requests.

The occupational therapy students developed a social media strategy and resources for our project aimed at supporting survivors of intimate partner and family violence. They also worked on income security issues, including developing resources and guidance for individuals experiencing financial hardship due to CRA repayment of pandemic benefits.



## View from the frontlines

This past year, CALC saw more than 6,960 people reach out to us for help, a 9% increase over the previous year.

The Intake Team is responsible for the frontline service to clients - triaging cases and legal issues and providing appropriate resources and community referrals.

We have three full-time intake workers and a receptionist. In the summer we also had a law student provide intake support. We also have a full-time Legal & Administrative Coordinator who helps with tasks related to our ODSP cases.

Our receptionist greets clients and inquires about the reasons they contacted CALC. If it's a legal issue we help with, clients are sent to speak with an intake worker to complete a full interview. If it is not something we can help with, reception provides referrals and resources.

Clients reach us by phone, [webform on our website](#), or by walking into our Belleville office. Our service standard is to respond to voice messages within 24 hours and webforms within 48 hours. These standards are met 100% of the time.



We also have a [special webform](#) for third parties who are requesting legal help on behalf of others. This form is used often by service providers and community agencies requesting help for their clients. We can either speak to the service provider to give general legal information or we get consent to contact the client directly to give legal advice on their specific issue.

During the April 2024 to March 2025 period, we received 324 calls from service providers.

CALLS FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS		
Area of Law	Total	% of All
Housing	102	31.5%
Income Security (incl EI)	86	26.5%
Other	38	11.7%
POA	26	8.0%
Estates/Wills	21	6.5%
Consumer	13	4.0%
Employment/HR	10	3.1%
Victim of Crime (including 2hr Emergency Domestic Violence Certificate)	10	3.1%
Family	9	2.8%
WSIB	9	2.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Our intake and reception staff also participate in a number of CALC special projects, including:

- Gender-Based Violence Project
- Wills and Powers of Attorney Project
- Case Management and Systems Navigation Project

The Case Management and Systems Navigation Project continues from a pilot project started last year. The intake staff leading that project will assist clients with tasks that are related to their legal issue but are not a legal issue that would need a paralegal or lawyer to deal with. For instance, the intake worker may help a client call the CRA to request certain documents or get information that is necessary for the legal worker to resolve their legal issue. Our staff have also supported clients to apply for government benefits to increase their income (Ontario Works, seniors' benefits, child tax benefits), and at other times have helped clients track down important legal documents.

The Intake Team also participates in provincial and community-based committees and assists with training and mentoring students on intake and administrative tasks.

# Community Advocacy & Legal Centre



158 George Street, Level 1  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3H2  
<https://communitylegalcentre.ca>

Phone: 613-966-8686  
Toll-Free: 1-877-966-8686  
Fax: 613-966-6251  
Email: [contact@calc.clcj.on.ca](mailto:contact@calc.clcj.on.ca)

## Board of Directors at March 31, 2025

<b>Chair</b>	Steve van de Hoef
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Samantha Kompa
<b>Treasurer</b>	Rick Helman
<b>Secretary</b>	Wendy Gale
<b>Members</b>	Sheila Braidek Jennifer May-Anderson Peter Dudding Petra LePage

## Client services rated highly!

Clients who retain us formally provide feedback through a survey.

Of the clients returning the surveys between April 2024 and March 2025, 100% would refer us to others and 97.8% said our help made a difference in their lives.

## Staff (as of March 31, 2025 – includes full-time, part-time and special project staff)

Ahaan Azavedo	Elizabeth Bechard	Justin Chong	Dana DeMille	Chloe Dick
Carolyn Hamilton	Samantha Hayward	Karen McClellan	Claire McMenemy	Elizabeth Mena
Taylor Minato	Lynda Morgan	Abby Nolan	Sharon Powell	Brittany Prytulka
Lisa Turik	Keith M. Villanueva			

<b>Summer Law Students:</b>	Matthew Fullerton	Tamara Hohenkerk	Shayna Maharaj	
<b>Queen's Externs (Nursing):</b>	Danika Lapierre	Kayla Marshall	Zara Pezzin	
<b>Queen's Occupational Therapy Students:</b>	Angelica Bregg	Erika Brown	Trent Sanders	Mira Wirzba

### From our clients:

"The service was amazing...I felt accommodated and understood the entire time. Each question was answered quickly, in a way I could understand, and I felt prepared for the tribunal despite my anxiety...Thank you!"

"The level of professionalism and competence were so high and the level of engagement with the client (me) so caring and clear."

"Your services are very professional. I appreciate all you have done for me."

"Everything was as close to perfect as possible."

## Our work this year would not have been possible without support from the following funders:



Individual Private Donations