














LEGAL **HELP** CENTRE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2-3	<b>Who We Are</b>	
4	<b>President's Message</b>	
5	<b>Executive Director's Message</b>	
6	<b>Our Team</b>	
7-9	<b>Mission Impact</b>	
10	<b>Our Students</b>	
11	<b>Our Volunteers</b>	
12	<b>Jo-Anne M. Findlay Memorial Award</b>	
13	<b>Our Supporters</b>	
14	<b>Financial Highlights</b>	
15	<b>Contact Us</b>	



# WHO WE ARE

Legal Help Centre of Winnipeg, Inc. (LHC) is a non-profit organization that supports underserved individuals by providing legal supports, assistance and empowerment for those representing themselves in court, and referrals to helpful community resources. LHC takes an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving, engaging students from the faculties of law, social work, criminal justice, and human rights to help deliver its mission.



We are committed to creating an accessible and welcoming space where people can receive support, students can develop practical skills, and volunteers can contribute meaningfully to the community. This inclusive environment is central to our mission and values.



---

The Legal Help Centre offers services to Manitobans from our offices in Winnipeg which are on Treaty 1 territory, traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

## VISION

All people have equal access to justice.

## MISSION

Improving access to legal and social service resources for socially and economically disadvantaged members of the community by providing legal support, education, and referrals in partnership with students and volunteers.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1



2



3



4

### ACCESSIBILITY



We strive to be available to everyone. All programs and services, policy and procedures, and methods of operation aim to be as inclusive as possible.

### EMPOWERMENT



We aim to empower those we work with by sharing knowledge and tools to navigate systems in a way that builds confidence and explains processes. We want all those we work with to have the support, tools, and information they need to address their concerns.

### TEAM APPROACH



We find strength in our diversity and value the contributions of everyone on our team. We take an interdisciplinary approach, learning from each other's input and perspective. Our team approach is bolstered by strong communication, a supportive atmosphere, and diversity.

### FLEXIBILITY



We approach our work and the challenges we encounter with flexibility. Responding to the needs of our clients, we start with openness, looking for where and how we can be helpful. Our responses can be "outside the box" creative, and draw on the resources around us.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



This past year has been a time of meaningful growth, and it feels as though we are now stepping into a new phase of momentum and progress. Throughout it all, we have continued to provide exceptional service to the public. In the past year alone, we assisted more than 5,200 individuals—an achievement made possible by the dedication of our outstanding volunteers, staff, and donors. Their commitment remains the foundation of our ability to serve the community at this scale.

We were deeply saddened by the passing of Richard Scott, a long-serving board member, leader, and champion of the Legal Help Centre. He will be greatly missed and long remembered.

We were honoured this past year to be selected as the charity partner for the Manitoba Bar Association’s Mid-Winter Conference. We also strengthened awareness of our work by highlighting inspiring student experiences in partnership with the University of Manitoba’s Faculties of Law and Social Work. In addition, we are thankful to have participated in meaningful discussions with the Law Society of Manitoba as part of the Access to Justice Initiative.

We are excited about the future and encouraged by the new strategic plan we’ve recently developed to guide our organization in the years ahead. This vision reflects where we’ve come from, where we are today, and where we aspire to go.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for an important milestone as we embark on a move to a new office space. This move marks a significant step forward in strengthening our ability to serve the community and we look forward to sharing it with you in the months to come. Thank you for another year of support in ensuring everyone has access to justice.

Sincerely,

Katherine L. Bueti, K.C.

## A MESSAGE FROM LHC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A relieved client recently left our office saying, “I’m so glad that I came in for help.” This simple statement captures the heart of our work, being there when people need us most.

This year, we experienced a remarkable 63% increase in client appointments compared to our last reporting year. More than ever, people are turning to us for support, guidance, and reassurance during challenging times. Our dedicated staff and students work tirelessly to help clients move from feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and uncertainty to a place of calm, empowerment, and confidence.

Recently, we completed a strategic planning process that will guide us over the next three years, helping us build on our strengths and grow our impact. As we look to the future, we are excited to take a major step by relocating to a new location. We look forward to keeping you updated as the move progresses.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors, partners, volunteers and community supporters. We greatly appreciate our partnership with the University of Manitoba’s Faculties of Law and Social Work, which are essential to the success of our programs, and we are grateful to continue welcoming students from the University of Winnipeg’s Criminal Justice and Human Rights programs. Your commitment enables us to continue offering essential legal assistance to those who need it most.

Together, we’re building a more just future—thank you for being part of this vital work.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kasia James'.

Kasia James,  
Executive Director

# OUR TEAM

## 2024/2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

7

---

Katherine L. Bueti, K.C. (President)	Sandra Guevara-Holguin
Dr. Tracey Bone (Vice-President)	David Silver
Adonia Manaire, CPA, CA (Treasurer)	Jennifer Nembhard
Robin Dwarka	Ghislaine Alleyne
Nick Slonosky	Nicole Smith
Dr. Richard Jochelson	Lily Deardorff
Dr. Kelly Gorkoff	Dr. Matthew Hamilton
Travis DeLaronde	Andre Crate - Advisor

## LHC STAFF

As of March 31, 2025

7

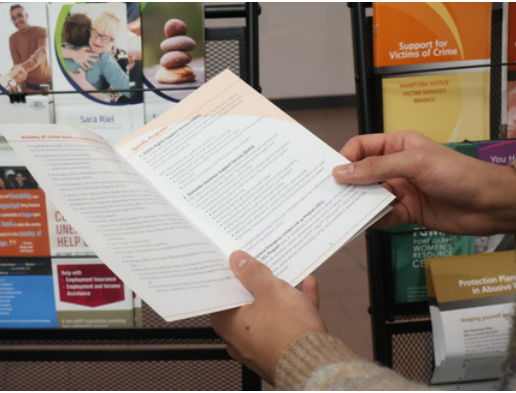
---

Kasia James, Executive Director  
Danielle Magnifico, Legal Director  
Daniel Hildebrand, Staff Lawyer  
Shasta Benaim, Staff Lawyer  
Jolomi James, Articling Student  
Angela Prieto, Administrative Assistant



LHC staff enjoying a holiday celebration together.

# MISSION IMPACT: IN OUR CLIENT'S WORDS



## BUILDING CONFIDENCE



“I was being pressured by a large corporation to accept less compensation than I felt I was entitled to receive. I came to LHC to discuss my situation and received a lot of useful information and help from the students and staff. I was so grateful to receive LHC’s assistance and it helped me move forward in my settlement negotiations with confidence.” - Joe

## A PATH FORWARD



“I came to LHC at a time when I was dealing with a very stressful legal problem. The students and staff at LHC treated me with respect and helped me come to grips with the reality of the problem I was facing. The whole LHC team went above and beyond what I was expecting, and I’m so grateful that I’ve been able to find a path to putting the problem behind me.” – Victoria

Please note that client names were changed for privacy reasons.

# MISSION IMPACT: FATIMA'S STORY

---

Imagine moving halfway around the world, adapting to a new culture and language—then facing a complex legal problem in an unfamiliar system. That's the reality for many clients who turn to Legal Help Centre's drop-in clinic for support.

Originally from Somalia, Fatima resettled in Canada as a single mother of five after fleeing her home country as a refugee. Her husband had disappeared during the conflict, leaving her to rebuild her life on her own.

When Fatima sought passports for her two youngest children to visit family abroad, she faced several barriers: she spoke no English and relied on her teenage son to interpret; her children lacked birth certificates; and she had no documentation confirming her husband's death or a legal separation.

A student from LHC helped Fatima prepare a family court Petition to obtain the authority to apply for passports and travel with her children. The student also assisted in drafting an affidavit explaining the circumstances of Fatima's husband's disappearance and filed a motion to waive the usual service requirements.

7

Thanks to this support, Fatima secured her children's passports just in time for an important family trip. She and her children were very grateful for the help they received at LHC.



Please note that client names were changed for privacy reasons.

# MISSION IMPACT: PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our signature program, our Drop-In Clinic, continued to be a cornerstone of service delivery, with a 63% increase in client meetings compared to the previous period. This growth reflects the ongoing demand for accessible legal support, which now includes in-person drop-in sessions, telephone appointments, and a new further consultation appointment option introduced in January 2025 to meet client need.



**3134** telephone and email inquiries



**2128** client appointments (including in-person, telephone and further consultations).



**1718** referrals to community partners



**852** hours donated by volunteer lawyers and admin support volunteers

Legal Help Centre continued to support clients across a broad range of legal issues. Matters related to family law and civil law accounted for just over half of all client interactions this reporting year.

Types of Client Matters in 2024-25



- |              |                    |                    |               |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| ■ Family     | ■ Civil            | ■ Wills/Estate/PoA | ■ Small Claim |
| ■ Employment | ■ Criminal         | ■ RTB/Housing      | ■ Immigration |
| ■ MPI        | ■ Protection Order | ■ Social Service   | ■ Other       |
| ■ Conflict   | ■ PGT              |                    |               |

# OUR STUDENTS

---

## OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR 2024–25 STUDENT TEAM

Each year brings its own unique challenges and opportunities, but one constant remains: the dedication and impact of our student volunteers. Their energy, compassion, and commitment are at the heart of the Legal Help Centre’s ability to serve the public.

We are deeply grateful for the students from law, social work, criminal justice, and human rights programs who work together to meet the growing demand for legal information, advocacy, referrals, and social support. Their interdisciplinary collaboration not only strengthens the assistance we provide to clients, but also enriches their own learning and professional development.

---

### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

For Bharat Rai, who recently completed his third-year as a law student at Robson Hall, an externship at Winnipeg’s Legal Help Centre became more than just a learning opportunity, it was a chance to truly connect with people in need. Through hands-on work at drop-in clinics, he discovered the impact of compassion in legal practice.



Bharat, LHC Extern in 2024-25.

“You’re not just applying legal concepts,” he shared, “you’re listening to real people, helping them feel heard and supported.” The experience deeply shaped his understanding of justice and inspired him to return in his final year, committed to building a career rooted in community care.

# OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are essential to fulfilling our mission. Their commitment, skills, and generosity make a meaningful impact on everything we do. From seasoned legal professionals to those offering valuable administrative support, every volunteer plays a vital role, and there's always room for more passionate individuals to join our community.



Volunteer Lawyer Trevor Brown and law student Cameron.

We are deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, and Committee members, whose strategic insight, guidance, and advocacy are integral to the success and visibility of our work. LHC also benefits immensely from the generous support of dedicated practicing lawyers who volunteer their time to mentor and collaborate with our students. This diverse and experienced group of professionals enables our Centre to address a broad range of legal issues, creating a dynamic and valuable learning environment for the next generation of lawyers.

## Thank you to our Clinic Volunteer Lawyers

Alex Bainov	Heather Wadsworth	Megan Spencer	Sandi Phillips
Alastair Clarke	Heidi Dyck	Mel Labossiere	Sarah Thurmeier
Alison Bennet	Hilary Taylor	Mercedes Ayala	Sarah Grafton
Alexis Ohms	Kaisha Thompson	Mikaela Bauerlein	Sarah Gravelines
Alicia Sawka	Katherine L. Bueti, K.C.	Morgan Jackson	Sarah Sharp
Andrew McDonald	Kelby Loeppky	Monica Adeler	Sharyne Hamm
Amy Robertson	Kelsey Brooks	Nalini Reddy	Shimon Segal
Chau Tran	Kelsey Schade	Nicole Wilson	Simone Marcoux
Clayton Stewart	Kendra Goertzen	Norm Yusim	Stacey Ennis
Daniel Minuk	Kim Soul	Orest Suchy	Stacey Soldier
Dean Scaletta	Leah Unruh	Paul Edwards	Sue Ahn
Eleanor Wiebe	Leiba Feldman	Rebecca Sherman	Tanya Keller
Gerald Jewers	Lynda Troup	Rhoni MacKenzie	Trevor Brown
Gerrit Theule	Mara Koven-Lapointe	Richard Bars	William Gardner
Gordon Lillie	Marvin Giesbrecht	Riley Nolan	

# JO-ANNE M. FINDLAY MEMORIAL AWARD



Award Recipient Bharat Rai, LHC ED Kasia James, Colin Findlay,  
Award Recipient Dylan Brown.

This award exists thanks to the generous donations made in Jo-Anne's memory, and it reflects her deep commitment to volunteerism, access to justice, and the values that guide the Legal Help Centre.

In 2025, LHC was proud to recognize two exceptional recipients of the Jo-Anne M. Findlay Memorial Award for Volunteerism: Dylan Brown and Bharat Rai. After careful deliberation, the selection committee found it impossible to choose just one individual, as both students demonstrated remarkable dedication, compassion, and impact in their volunteer work at the Legal Help Centre.

Their contributions reflect the spirit and values Jo-Anne embodied: kindness, collaboration, and a deep commitment to serving the community. Jo-Anne was not only a dependable and generous volunteer but also a compassionate leader whose legacy continues to inspire those who follow in her footsteps.

Dylan and Bharat each brought unique strengths to their roles at LHC. Dylan approached his work with empathy and professionalism, tackling complex legal issues while prioritizing human connection and client-centered advocacy. His involvement extended beyond LHC, showing a consistent dedication to community well-being. Bharat, drawing from extensive experience in social services and volunteerism, offered calm, culturally sensitive support to clients facing challenging circumstances. His interdisciplinary, inclusive approach exemplified Jo-Anne's vision of accessible justice.

# OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you for supporting LHC's mission to make justice more accessible.

## ORGANIZATIONS

Aqueduct Foundation  
IG Wealth Management  
Gift Funds Canada  
Government of Canada - CSJ Program  
Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg  
Maple Leaf Construction Ltd.  
Pro Bono Students Canada  
The Law Society of Manitoba  
The Manitoba Bar Association  
The Manitoba Law Foundation  
The University of Manitoba - Faculty of Law  
The University of Winnipeg  
The Winnipeg Foundation

## LAW FIRMS

Bennet Waugh Corne  
Evans Pollock Family Law  
Fillmore Riley LLP  
Hill Sokalski Walsh LLP  
MLT Aikins LLP  
Pitblado LLP  
Taylor McCaffrey LLP  
Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP  
Wolseley Law LLP

## PRIVATE DONORS

Phillip Charles  
Valerie Freeland  
Tina Lerner  
Elliot Leven  
William Leyva Concepcion  
Devin Morrow  
Julia Negrea  
Susan Prentice  
Colleen Suche  
Eleanor Wiebe  
Norm Yusim



# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Condensed Statement of Operations

	2025	2024
<b>REVENUE:</b>		
Donations	\$349,861	\$371,652
Donations in-kind	3,750	51,250
Grant revenue	152,758	159,284
Amortization of deferred contributions	5,973	3,563
Interest income	<u>18,533</u>	<u>18,866</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$530,875</b>	<b>\$604,615</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
Salaries and benefits	\$459,637	\$395,229
Administration	19,370	33,051
Amortization	7,951	7,849
Rent	46,031	45,000
Office	45,650	61,171
Other	<u>8,216</u>	<u>7,097</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$586,855</b>	<b>\$549,397</b>
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$(55,980)</b>	<b>\$55,218</b>

These condensed financial statements do not contain all of the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on LHC's financial position, results of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows, reference should be made to the complete financial statements of LHC as at and for the year ended March 31, 2025 on which KPMG LLP expressed an opinion without reservation in their report dated June 25, 2025. Audited financial statement are available upon request.



**LEGAL HELP CENTRE**

**Email: [info@legalhelpcentre.ca](mailto:info@legalhelpcentre.ca)  
[www.legalhelpcentre.ca](http://www.legalhelpcentre.ca)**

