

Law Society
of British Columbia

2024
Annual Report



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Message from Jeevyn Dhaliwal, KC

2024 President

A year of unprecedented challenges, 2024 was also a year of determined progress. The introduction of Bill 21, the *Legal Professions Act*, presented a major shift in the legal regulatory landscape and sparked wide interest and thoughtful debate about how legal services are regulated, and why maintaining the profession's independence is essential to serving the public interest.

Even as the Law Society responded to this development, it remained focused on the priorities at the heart of its strategic plan and our mandate to protect the public interest and ensure a competent, ethical, and inclusive legal profession.

Around the Benchers table, we advanced meaningful work on Truth and Reconciliation actions, including progress on addressing the unique needs of Indigenous people within the Law Society's regulatory processes. Awareness and educational resources contributed to the Law Society's work toward improving access to justice and mental health in the legal community. We continued to build a regulatory framework that is both modern and principled. We updated the Code of Professional Conduct to reflect consistent gender-inclusive language and developed new resources to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in legal practice.

Our accomplishments were the result of a steady focus on our strategic direction and a shared commitment that our work must continue to be exercised with transparency, accountability, and a deep, abiding commitment to the public interest.

I am delighted to welcome our new CEO/Executive Director, Gigi Chen-Kuo. Gigi brings deep legal and corporate experience and a strong commitment to public service, I have every confidence she will guide the Law Society into its next chapter with strength, insight and innovation.

The Law Society remains committed to upholding the public interest in the administration of justice. The independence of the legal profession and the integrity of the rule of law have long been recognized as essential to public confidence in our legal system and it is vital that these principles continue to guide how we regulate in serving the people of BC.



JEEVYN DHALI WAL, KC

I would like to express my gratitude to the Law Society's incredibly dedicated staff and in particular, Don Avison, KC for his transformational leadership as CEO/ Executive Director over the past seven years. His thoughtful stewardship and principled approach have left a lasting impact on the organization and the profession.

Message from Gigi Chen-Kuo

CEO / Executive Director

2024 was a year of leadership transition as Don Avison, KC retired and I was appointed CEO/Executive Director at the end of the year.

It is a true privilege to join an organization that is dedicated to serving in the public interest and I want to express my gratitude for the warm welcome and support I've received from staff and Benchers, whose dedication and expertise are invaluable.

Through my years of executive, in-house counsel and board experience, I have played a key role in major governance changes, organizational transformation and implementation of large capital projects. I am eager to build upon the Law Society's foundation of excellence and look for opportunities to embrace new and innovative ways to further our public interest mandate, while taking the views of the public, legal profession and stakeholders into account.

In this 2024 Annual Report, you'll learn about how the Law Society fulfilled our regulatory functions, advanced our key priorities and made progress on our strategic plan, which concludes in 2025. Our Senior Leadership Team and Benchers will therefore be undergoing a planning process to inform the next strategic plan, which will guide our work beginning in 2026.

I am energized and committed to providing leadership and steady guidance to the team as we navigate this period of change together and continue to make a difference for the public and the legal profession.



GIGI CHEN-KUO

It is a true privilege to join an organization that is dedicated to serving in the public interest and I want to express my gratitude for the warm welcome and support I've received from staff and Benchers, whose dedication and expertise are invaluable.

About us

Our mandate is to protect the public

The Law Society of British Columbia is the licensing and regulatory body for the legal profession in BC. We protect the public by setting and enforcing standards for professional and ethical conduct for lawyers. We provide information and resources for lawyers and the public on the standards of conduct, the complaints and discipline process and hearings, which are conducted by the Law Society Tribunal.

The Law Society also brings a voice to issues affecting the justice system and the delivery of legal services in BC, including lawyer independence, the rule of law, Truth and Reconciliation, access to justice and mental health in the profession.

Territory Acknowledgement

The Law Society offices are located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, specifically the territories of the Skwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyʼəm (Musqueam) First Nations.

Our Mission

To serve the public interest by regulating the competence and integrity of legal service providers, promoting the rule of law and lawyer independence and improving access to justice.

Our Vision

To be a leading regulator that promotes a culture of innovation and inclusivity in responding to the challenges and opportunities in the delivery and regulation of legal services.

Our Values

Integrity: We act honestly and ethically.

Transparency: We are open in our processes and communications, and we report publicly on our decisions in a timely manner.

Inclusivity: We embrace and promote equity, diversity and inclusion and cultural respect within our leadership and staff, in the legal profession, the justice sector and with the public.

Objectivity: We apply data-driven solutions, make evidence-based decisions and measure our results.

Innovation: We are adaptive in our approach to regulation, with the goal of achieving efficient, fair and appropriate outcomes.

Responsiveness: We are aware of the changing needs of the public and profession and respond to such change.

Fairness: We treat the public and the profession respectfully and are consistent in the application of our policies, procedures and practices.

BC'S Top Employers

For the third year in a row, the Law Society of BC was named one of BC's Top Employers. This recognition highlights the dedication, commitment and hard work of our accomplished staff who, every day, contribute to the organization's mandate to protect the public interest by regulating the legal profession. The Law Society is proud to have built a strong culture based on our core values and collective goals.

Our Goals



Leading as an innovative regulator of legal service providers.



Working toward reconciliation.



Taking action to improve access to justice.



Promoting a profession that reflects the diversity of the public it serves.



Increasing confidence in the Law Society, the administration of justice and the rule of law.

About the Benchers

The Law Society's governing board of Benchers are responsible for the Law Society Rules, the Code of Professional Conduct for British Columbia and governance policies for the administration of the Law Society.

Twenty-five Benchers are elected by members of the legal profession and up to six are members of the public who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The president of the Law Society is a Bencher and serves a one-year term.

President: Jeevyn Dhaliwal, KC

First Vice-President: Brook Greenberg, KC

Second Vice-Presidents: Lindsay R. LeBlanc, KC (Jan - Nov)
Thomas L. Spraggs, KC (Nov - Dec)

Benchers
volunteer their
time to the Law
Society, which is
a considerable
commitment given
the frequent
meetings and
committee
responsibilities.

Benchers

Jeevyn Dhaliwal, KC
Brook Greenberg, KC
Lindsay R. LeBlanc, KC
Simran Bains
Paul Barnett
Aleem Bharmal, KC
Tanya Chamberlain
Nikki L. Charlton, KC
Jennifer Chow, KC
Christina J. Cook, KC
Cheryl D'Sa, KC

Tim Delaney
Brian Dybwad
Ravi R. Hira, KC
Sasha Hobbs
James A. S. Legh
Benjamin D. Levine
Dr. Jan Lindsay
Jaspreet Singh Malik
Jay Michi
Georges Rivard, KC
Michèle Ross

Gurminder Sandhu, KC
Thomas L. Spraggs, KC
Barbara Stanley, KC
James Struthers
Natasha Tony
Michael Welsh, KC
Kevin B. Westell
Gaynor C. Yeung, KC

Committees

Complainants' Review Committees

Credentials Committee

Discipline Committee

Executive Committee

Finance and Audit Committee

Practice Standards Committee

Innovation Sandbox Advisory Group

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Advisory Committee

Truth and Reconciliation Advisory
Committee

Task Forces

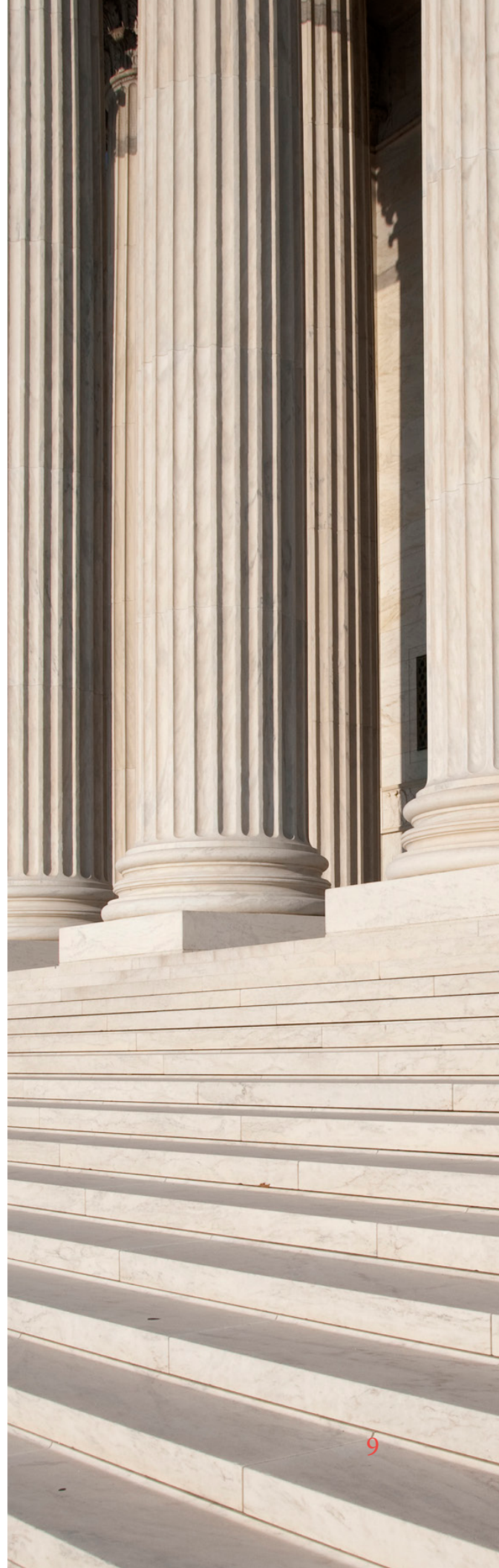
Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory

Matters Task Force

Lawyer Development Task Force

Mental Health Task Force

Trust Review Task Force



Progress on our priorities

Standing up for the rule of law and lawyer independence in BC

Since the BC government announced its intention to combine regulation of the legal profession under one regulator in 2022, the Law Society worked strategically to advocate for legislation that would preserve the independence of the Bar and its regulator, while protecting the public.

We repeatedly emphasized the importance of an effective governance structure with a majority of lawyers on the board, including a majority of elected lawyer directors, requested that existing amendments be brought into force immediately to allow for the licensing of paralegals and called for greater transparency and consultation with stakeholders.

When Bill 21 — the *Legal Professions Act* — received Royal Assent in May 2024, the Act contained flaws that would seriously compromise the independence of the legal profession and its regulator and erode the principles that ensure the rule of law is upheld in our province. As a result, after the bill received Royal Assent, the Law Society initiated litigation to challenge the constitutionality of the Act and sought injunctive relief to suspend the transitional provisions of the Act.

While the court acknowledged that the Law Society had established a serious question to be tried, Justice Gropper concluded we had not established irreparable harm because our expertise was needed in the “transitional planning” process of the Act. Therefore, in accordance with the Act, work commenced to establish the transitional board, Indigenous Council and Advisory Committee who are currently overseeing the establishment of the first rules of Legal Professions BC.

Advancing access to justice

The Law Society and lawyers in BC continue to play a vital role in advancing access to justice.

In 2024, 49.2 per cent of lawyers who responded to the access to justice survey at the end of the Annual Practice Declaration reported providing pro bono, low bono or legal aid services — demonstrating a sustained commitment to serving those in need.

Altogether, these efforts added up to over 312,000 hours of pro bono work across the province that year. Beyond direct legal services, many lawyers contribute their skills in other impactful ways, such as mentoring new lawyers, delivering public legal education, serving on community boards and tribunals and supporting equity-deserving groups — all in alignment with their professional responsibilities under Section 2.2-2 of the *Code of Professional Conduct for British Columbia*.

Lawyers also contribute significantly through financial channels. In 2021, \$18.1 million from interest on lawyers' trust accounts was directed to the Law Foundation to support access to justice initiatives. In addition, the Law Society commits approximately \$4 million annually to services such as Courthouse Libraries BC, CanLII and non-profit legal programs including Rise and Access Pro Bono.

These efforts collectively showcase the legal profession's strong and ongoing dedication to serving the public.

On average,
lawyers who
reported offering
pro bono services
in 2024
contributed 56
hours per person,
with the most
common supports
including
summary legal
advice, document
preparation and
advocacy.

/ Indigenous initiatives



Benchers wear orange shirts at their meeting ahead of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

This year, we continued to make meaningful strides toward our key priority of advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. As part of a multi-year plan to implement the recommendations of the Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters report, we made progress in a number of areas.

Internally, we made changes to ensure our processes are accessible and culturally safe for all Indigenous people, including providing cultural-safety and trauma-informed training for our staff. In 2023, the Law Society hired an Indigenous Navigator who offers support and guidance to Indigenous complainants and witnesses throughout the complaint, investigation, resolution and hearing processes. This work includes addressing systemic barriers, incorporating Indigenous protocols and supporting staff with culturally competent, trauma-informed approaches.

Externally, staff responsible for Indigenous initiatives travelled to communities across BC to engage with Indigenous groups, enhance awareness of the Law Society's role and services, build relationships and participate in workshops and opportunities for learning.

We engaged with various local organizations, including the Elders Gathering, the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC, the Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society, Indigenous Justice Centres, BC Corrections Adult Custody Division, the Métis Nation BC Law Forum, the BC Corrections: Making Connections Conference, the BC First Nations Justice Council Forum and First Nations Courts in New Westminster and North Vancouver.



PHYLLIS WEBSTAD



DR. MARIE WILSON

Phyllis Webstad and Dr. Marie Wilson

In October, we welcomed Phyllis Webstad, founder of the Orange Shirt Day movement and the Orange Shirt Society, for a powerful presentation to staff and Benchers.

Phyllis shared her personal experience at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School, where her new orange shirt was taken on her first day — a moment that inspired the Orange Shirt Day movement and the "Every Child Matters" message. Her presentation helped deepen our understanding of the ongoing impacts of residential schools and colonization in Canada.

In September, we welcomed Dr. Marie Wilson, a distinguished journalist and commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

Dr. Wilson provided staff with invaluable insights into her experiences working on the TRC and her ongoing efforts to advance its 94 Calls to Action, and shared reflections from her book *North of Nowhere: Song of a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner*, which offers a powerful account of her time as the only non-Indigenous and female commissioner of the TRC.

Exploring Truth and Reconciliation

We continued to support learning and raise awareness through LawCast BC episodes centered on Truth and Reconciliation. In the episode "Indigenous Reconciliation," the Law Society's Senior Advisor, Indigenous Engagement discussed the implementation of recommendations from the Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Task Force and introduced the important new role of the Indigenous Navigator.

In another episode, "A Conversation with Orange Shirt Society Speaker Hank Adam," we heard from an intergenerational residential school survivor and speaker with the Orange Shirt Society. He shared his powerful personal story, reflecting on the enduring impacts of residential schools and offering meaningful insights into how the legal profession can support reconciliation.

Pulling Together Canoe Journey

The Law Society is honoured to participate annually in the Pulling Together Canoe Journey alongside Indigenous youth, leaders, police, military and community groups. This meaningful journey cultivated cultural understanding and strengthened relationships between public service agencies and Indigenous Peoples.

Participants embraced the experience by participating in Indigenous events, camping together, sharing meals and working collaboratively.

“What this journey affirmed for me is that reconciliation isn’t something we can only approach through policy or statements — it has to be felt, lived and practised. Participating in Pulling Together allowed me to witness the power of cultural exchange and to carry back stories and insights that will shape how I think about my work going forward.”

- Canoe Journey participant.



Diversity and inclusion initiatives

Film screening: *But I Look Like a Lawyer*

In recognition of Asian Heritage Month in May, we partnered with FACL BC to screen their documentary *But I Look Like a Lawyer*. The film highlighted the discrimination, stereotyping and bias faced by members of the Pan-Asian legal community while also promoting intercultural awareness and competency.

This impactful documentary continues to cultivate understanding and dialogue within the legal profession and beyond. We are grateful for the opportunity to host this important screening and thank FACL BC for their dedication to equity and inclusion.



FACL BC MEMBERS

Celebrating Vancouver's queer history

To celebrate Pride Week with staff, we hosted a Lunch & Learn session featuring Glenn Tkach, a passionate storyteller and leader of The Really Gay History Tour.

During this engaging event, attendees enjoyed an inspiring presentation that highlighted Vancouver's rich and diverse 2SLGBTQIA+ history. Glenn celebrated unsung heroes such as fearless drag kings, two-spirit warriors, trailblazing queer church ministers and dedicated transgender crime fighters who have played a vital role in shaping the social fabric of our city.



GLENN TKACH

Inclusive language practice resource

The Law Society's Inclusive language practice resource was updated in 2024 after receiving valuable feedback and ideas from the profession. This resource is intended to support legal professionals in their use of inclusive language and was developed in consultation and collaboration with legal professionals and stakeholders working in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion.



Mental health initiatives

Supporting mental health in the legal profession

Improving legal professionals' mental health is a key priority for the Law Society. We recognize that lawyers who take care of their mental and physical well-being are better positioned to deliver effective legal services and maintain public trust in the legal profession.

In February, approximately 500 participants attended the second installment of the Mental Health Forum, hosted by the Law Society and the Continuing Legal Education Society of BC. This virtual event equipped legal professionals with strategies to support their mental well-being and provided practical guidelines for employers aiming to foster a healthy workplace.

Throughout the year, we published a variety of mental health articles that covered topics such as burnout, depression, stress, substance use issues, discrimination and Indigenous legal professionals' well-being. We further discussed harassment, discrimination and bullying in the LawCast BC episode with Sarah Sharp, Equity Advisor, about her role in supporting those who have experienced or witnessed these issues in the legal profession.

We also advocated for issues that may affect the legal profession in the future. In May, Vice-President Brook Greenberg, KC published an opinion piece urging government to reconsider the stigmatizing and harmful legislation contained in the Legal Professions Act that would allow for the legal regulator to force medical treatment on licensees, among other flaws.

We continue to provide mental health resources to legal professions through our Lawyer Well-Being Hub. The hub offers easy access to information, videos, tools and resources for lawyers and their families, including LifeSpeak, a digital wellness platform that provides anonymous 24/7 access to mental health content.

In addition, the Lawyers Assistance Program of BC offers confidential counselling, peer support and referral services to help individuals manage personal challenges such as substance dependence, stress, anxiety, depression and more. Free counselling is also available through TELUS Health One.

Highlights from 2024

Professional Conduct: Protecting the public

The core functions of the Professional Conduct and Discipline department include the intake of complaints, investigations, complaint resolutions, addressing competency issues in the Practice Standards Program and overseeing discipline processes — including hearings, Rule 4-29 resolutions and consent agreements.

2024 was a strong year for disciplinary outcomes, with six disbarments, 18 suspensions and three fines. Additionally, five lawyers resigned in the face of discipline and gave undertakings not to reapply for a minimum of five years or more. Conditions of such resignations include additional steps and approvals to become reinstated, such as a credentials hearing, which further protects the public. Fifty-nine per cent of serious matters that would ordinarily go to a hearing were resolved through alternative, more efficient and cost-effective avenues, while still maintaining appropriate disciplinary actions and public transparency.

We continue to utilize innovative programs that have resulted in positive outcomes:

CONSENT AGREEMENTS:

These agreements allow lawyers who would otherwise face a citation to enter into an agreement with the Law Society and resolve the matter without a hearing. Summaries of the agreements are posted on our website, and the discipline outcomes agreed upon are consistent with hearing panel outcomes.

ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS:

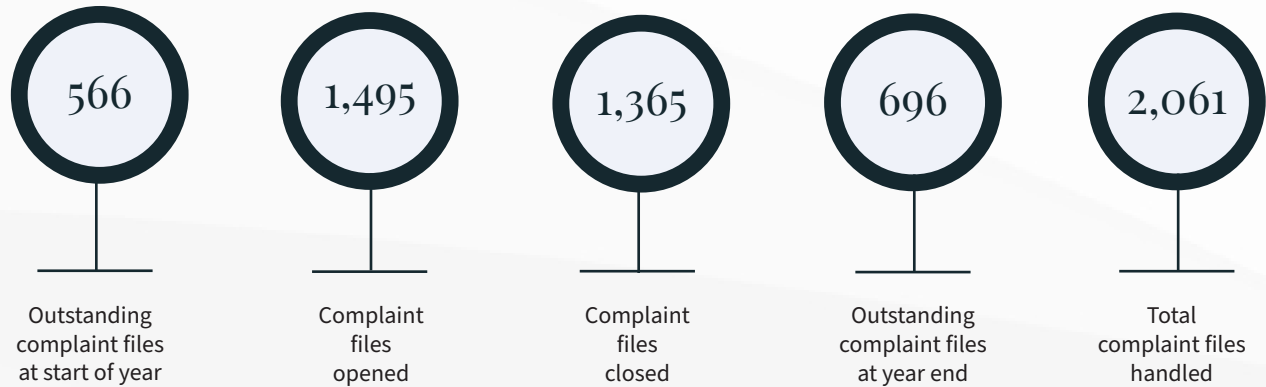
This pilot program diverts lawyers under investigation from the regular disciplinary process — when deemed appropriate — to one focused on supporting and managing underlying health issues.

ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES PROGRAM:

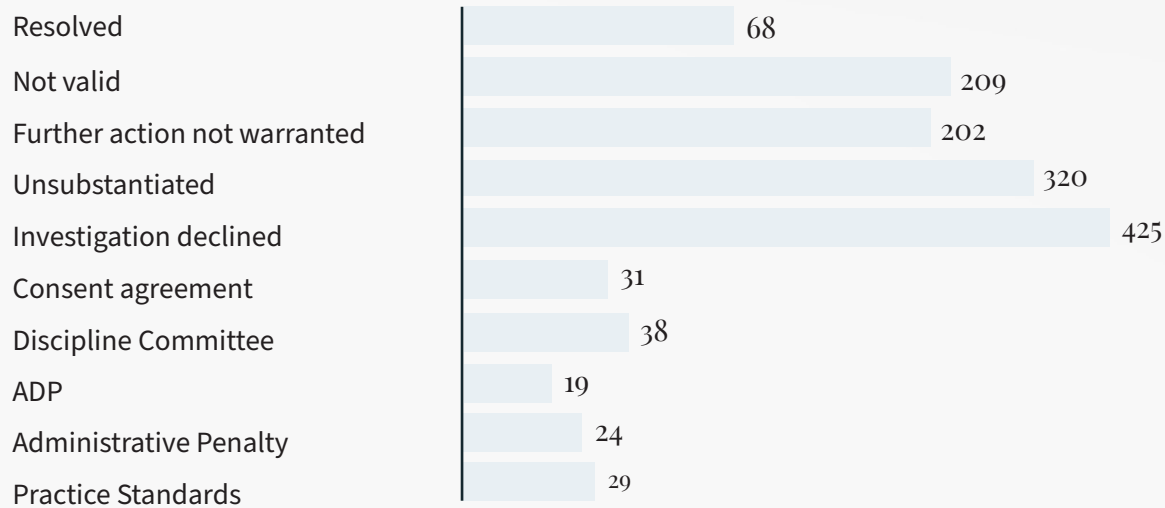
This regulatory tool enables the Law Society to address certain breaches of its Rules with appropriate and proportionate sanctions.

COMPLAINTS

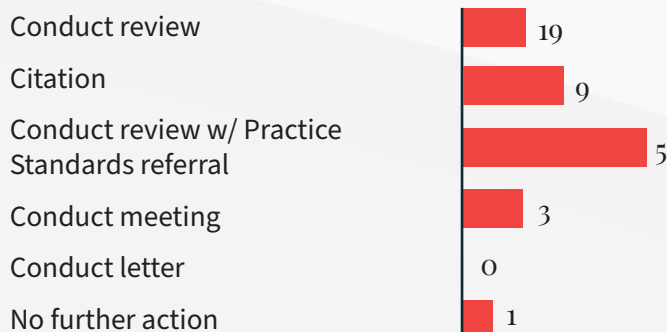
Numbers include unsubstantiated complaints



COMPLAINTS RESULTS



DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE



REFERRALS TO DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The decrease in referrals is due largely to the implementation of new processes, including consent agreements, administrative penalties and the Alternative Discipline Process.

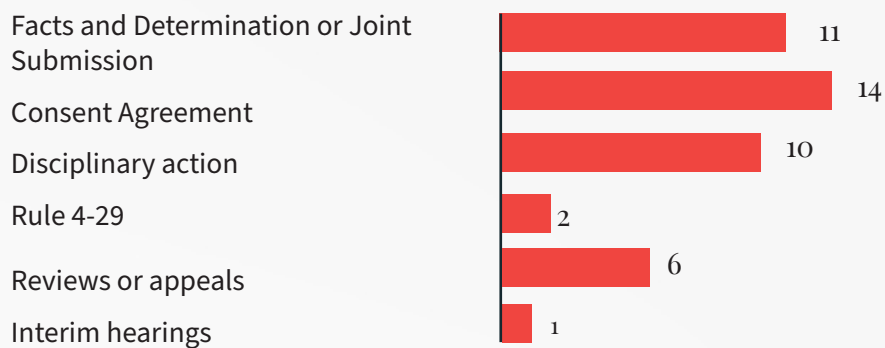
2024	38
2023	45
2022	84
2021	87
2020	132

HEARING OUTCOMES

Completed hearings include all matters resulting in a decision or consent agreement summary pursuant to which a sanction was ordered or agreed to.



TOTAL HEARINGS



Practice Advice

Practising law requires working in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment that presents unique and often difficult challenges on a daily basis.

The Practice Advice team exists to support legal professionals with these challenges by responding to inquiries about ethics and practice management issues while also developing valuable practice resources.

In 2024, Practice Advice focused on building out existing support tools and creating new ones to address topical legal issues. We marked the two-year anniversary of the Advice Decision-Making Assistant (ADMA), a free online solution-explorer tool designed in-house at the Law Society that provides guidance on questions of professional responsibility. New features were added to ADMA in 2024, including pages on client identification and verification, mental health support and tackling the challenges of practising law.

New practice resources were also developed on topics such as holds on trust cheques, certified cheques and bank drafts; guidance for virtual verification of a client's identity; and top tips for lawyers supervising staff. The inclusive language practice resource was also updated to ensure its content reflects current terminology and usage.

The Practice Advice team understands that mental well-being is an important aspect of equipping legal professionals to handle the challenges of their work, where both the demands and stakes can be high. With this in mind, they also expanded the resources available to lawyers through LifeSpeak, a digital wellness platform that offers anonymous access to a range of mental health supports. In 2024, the digital library grew to include a wider range of wellness-related issues and resources on topics like grief, anger, resilience and the connection between stress and sleep.



Policy

Legal policy decisions must be data-based, evidence-driven and informed by the views of the public and the profession.

The Law Society's Policy team advises Benchers, advisors and the organization when these decisions are made.

A notable effort on behalf of the Policy team in 2024 was the facilitation of consultations on proposed changes to the Federation of Law Societies' Model Code of Professional Conduct. These valuable consultations were held in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #27, which calls upon Canada's law societies to ensure legal professionals receive proper Indigenous cultural competency training.

The Policy team also provided support to Benchers in making significant progress toward one of the Law Society's key objectives — promoting a profession that reflects the diversity of the public it serves — by revising our approach to demographic data collection and use to identify and address systemic inequities in our regulatory processes and within the profession.

In collaboration with the Justice Education Society, the Policy department put together two lessons on the rule of law and lawyer independence for Grade 10 social studies classes, which are now publicly available at lawlessons.ca, to incorporate more information about rights and obligations and the role of lawyers and judges into school curricula.

Additionally, a number of timely updates were made to the *Code of Professional Conduct for British Columbia* regarding consistent use of gender-inclusive language and technological competence.

Lastly, the Policy team assisted in making a crucial update to the Law Society Rules regarding virtual client identification and verification. Lawyers may now identify clients virtually, provided they use reliable technology to confirm that the individual's government-issued photo ID is genuine and confirm that the name and photo are those of the individual in the ID.

Excellence in the legal profession



SHIRINA EVANS

Indigenous Scholarship

The Indigenous Scholarship is open to Canadian Indigenous students enrolled in full-time studies and aims to enhance the representation of Indigenous lawyers in BC by supporting their legal education.



SOPURUCHI GODSFRIEND
CHRISTIAN

In 2024, we awarded the Indigenous Scholarship to Shirina Evans, who identifies as a woodland nêhiyaw iskwew (Cree woman) and is originally from Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan.

Law Society Scholarship

The Law Society Scholarship for Graduate Legal Studies supports law graduates pursuing full-time graduate legal studies that will benefit the student, the province and the legal profession in BC.

In 2024, we awarded the Law Society Scholarship to Sopuruchi Godsfriend Christian.



VANESSA LOCKE

Law Society Gold Medal

The Gold Medal is awarded to graduating law students from Thompson Rivers University, the University of Victoria and the University of British Columbia faculties of law who have achieved the highest cumulative grade point average over their respective three-year programs.



INDIGO SMART

In 2024, we awarded the Law Society Gold Medal to Vanessa Locke (Thompson Rivers University), Indigo Smart (University of Victoria) and Christopher Bantle (University of British Columbia).



CHRISTOPHER BANTLE

Lawyer development

Empowering the lawyers of tomorrow: PLTC Program

The Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC) is a full-time, 10-week course with classes held three times a year at offices throughout BC.

The classes are taught primarily online by practising lawyers who volunteer to share their expertise and full-time faculty members with years of teaching experience.

In 2024, the Law Society of BC collaborated with the law societies of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan to develop the Western Canada Competency Profile (WCCP).

This foundational document will guide future lawyer training, Bar admission program development and experiential learning across the western provinces. The WCCP establishes a shared benchmark for lawyer competencies, marking the first step in a broader, multi-year initiative. While no immediate action is required from articling students or principals, the Law Society will continue to provide updates and resources as implementation progresses.

**NUMBER OF
STUDENTS CALLED
TO THE BAR**

669

The legal profession at a glance

NEW BC LAWYERS

Year	Male	Female	No gender selected
2024	146	219	358
2023	237	309	298
2022	366	441	113
2021	398	459	-
2020	377	413	-

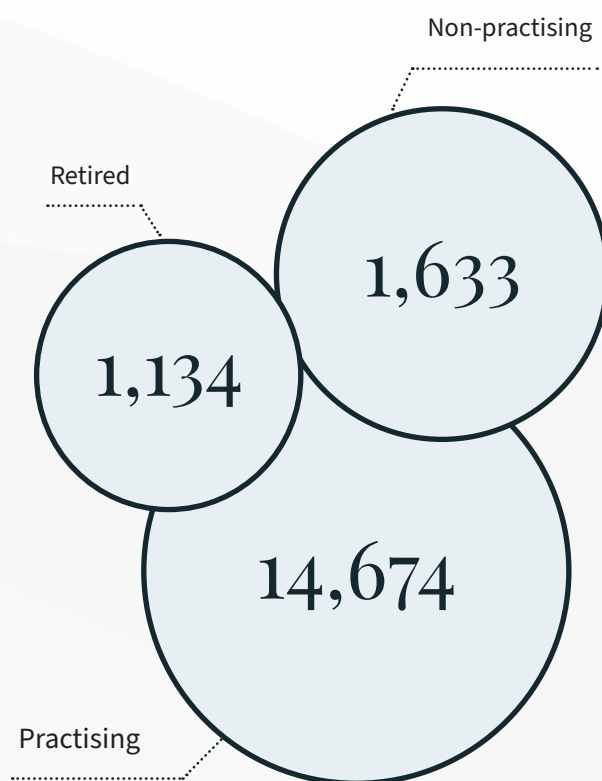
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PRACTISING LAWYERS

Age	Male	Female	No gender selected
20-39 years	2311	2643	527
40-54 years	2535	2394	145
55-64 years	1392	874	27
65+ years	1340	314	12

DEMOGRAPHICS

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Aboriginal/Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit)	2.8%	3.0%	2.9%	3.12%	3.09%
Racialized/Person of colour	17.6%	18.75%	19.73%	21.16%	21.24%
Person with a disability	2.3%	2.6%	3.11%	3.61%	3.97%
Do not identify with any these characteristics	52.3%	52.6%	50.33%	47.57%	46.35%
Choose not to answer this question	21.1%	18.9%	19.27%	19.52%	20.29%

STATUS OF LAWYERS REGISTERED WITH THE LAW SOCIETY



Areas of legal practice in BC

TYPE	# OF LAWYERS
Civil litigation – plaintiff (including commercial, other non-motor vehicle)	3170
Administrative (including labour, immigration, regulatory bodies)	2593
Family (excluding incidental real estate, wills and estates)	2770
Civil litigation – defendant (including commercial, other non-motor vehicle)	2087
Wills and estates	1667
Commercial – other	1078
Criminal	1340
Corporate	1335
Real estate – residential (including lending)	697
Motor vehicle – plaintiff	489
Creditors’ remedies – defendant (including builders’ liens, foreclosure, insolvency)	484
Creditors’ remedies – plaintiff (including builders’ liens, foreclosure, insolvency)	421
Real estate – commercial (including development)	280
Mediation/Arbitration	341
Commercial lending transactions – borrower (may include a real estate component)	176
Tax	189
Motor vehicle – defendant	145
Commercial lending transactions – lender (may include a real estate component)	126
Intellectual property	176
Property Management – residential or commercial	126
Securities (reporting companies)	52

Trust Assurance Program

All BC lawyers who handle trust funds for their clients are subject to rigorous trust assurance standards set out in the Law Society Rules. Our robust Trust Assurance Program is designed to ensure lawyers handle trust funds appropriately through regular compliance audits. These audits are randomly selected with the overall goal of auditing each firm at least once within a four-year or six-year cycle, depending on the firm's area of practice.

In 2024, the Trust Assurance Program continued to utilize innovative data analytics technology developed internally by the Law Society. Our audit team data analysts used technology and cloud-based systems to help improve audit processes and efficiencies, which resulted in a decrease of disruptions to law firms. The team also continued to collaborate with other jurisdictions to improve processes to our audit program.

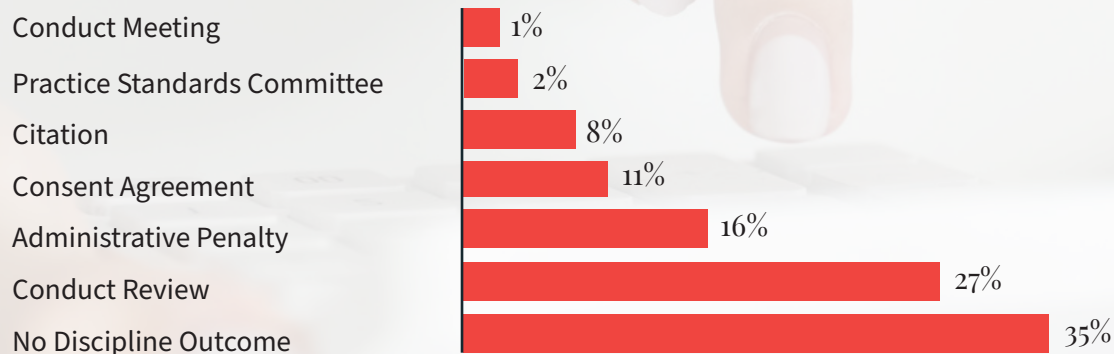
COMPLIANCE AUDITS CONDUCTED

560

TRUST REPORTS & AUDITS REFERRED FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT INVESTIGATION

89

OUTCOME OF REFERRALS CLOSED 2021-2024



LSBC Tribunal

Message from Herman Van Ommen, KC, Tribunal Chair

This past year presented both progress and challenges as we worked to fulfill our core mission: ensuring fair, impartial and timely resolution of matters brought before us.

Timeliness remains a key concern. Delays in hearings can prolong uncertainty, impact the well-being of participants and undermine trust in the Tribunal's processes. Equally important is the promptness of decisions, which helps parties understand outcomes, follow directives and pursue further legal steps if necessary. Recognizing these concerns, the Tribunal continues to implement strategies to improve efficiency and reduce delays.

In 2024, we strengthened our commitment to timeliness by reinforcing clear timelines and promoting adherence to procedural rules. We encouraged participants to resolve matters early or, if that was not possible, to move forward without delay. Adjudicators were also reminded of the importance of issuing decisions promptly. These efforts yielded progress: 86 per cent of decisions were issued within 90 days of the parties' final submissions. However, this improvement did not yet translate to a reduction in the overall time to resolve citations, which on average exceeded 2.5 years. Addressing this remains a priority for 2025.

To support this goal, we will continue our case management program, which requires parties to meet early in the process to discuss the status of the file. We will also focus on improving the timely exchange of expert reports, which frequently caused adjournment requests in 2024.



HERMAN VAN OMMEN, KC

The LSBC Tribunal is an independent decision-making body.

The Tribunal manages, considers and decides disciplinary cases involving legal professionals and contentious applications of licensing candidates seeking to practise law in BC. It upholds the public interest in the administration of justice by acting in a manner that is fair, respectful and transparent. In 2023, the Tribunal continued to build on changes made the previous year to establish greater independence in support of its mandate.

Additionally, a new scheduling process for the sanction phase of hearings has been introduced. Panels will now provide their availability for the sanction hearing when issuing their Facts and Determination decision, with parties given five days to respond to the proposed dates.

In response to feedback from adjudicators and hearing participants, we are enhancing access to information about requesting changes to the presumptive hearing format if parties cannot agree. We have also upgraded our hearing room technology to better accommodate hybrid hearings, providing greater flexibility for participants.

Our commitment to improving processes is grounded in our broader duty to uphold the rule of law. At a time when public confidence in independent institutions is being tested, the Tribunal's role in delivering fair and impartial justice is more important than ever. The rule of law ensures decisions are made transparently, fairly and in accordance with established legal principles, reinforcing trust in the Tribunal's work.

It was my honour to serve as Tribunal Chair in 2024, and I look forward to continuing this important work with the support of our dedicated adjudicators and staff. Together, we remain committed to upholding the rule of law and serving the public interest through fair and impartial decision-making.

THIS COMMITMENT IS REFLECTED IN SEVERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

No one is above the law: The Tribunal applies the law equally to all parties, and our decisions are subject to appeal or judicial review.

Presumption of innocence: Legal professionals are presumed to have complied with their obligations unless proven otherwise.

Independent and impartial decision-making: The Tribunal holds public hearings, and adjudicators render decisions free from influence.

No retroactive application of laws: The Tribunal applies the laws in effect at the time of the alleged misconduct.

Transparent lawmaking: The *Legal Profession Act* and related rules are developed through open processes to ensure public access.

Fair conduct by the regulator: Discipline counsel must act with fairness, integrity and in the public interest.

Fair and timely hearings: The Tribunal is committed to conducting hearings efficiently and in accordance with natural justice.

Separation of powers: The Tribunal operates independently from the Law Society's administration to ensure impartiality.

Proportionate and justified sanctions: Sanctions are guided by established principles to ensure fairness.

Freedom to criticize: The public is free to express concerns about the Tribunal or the regulator.

Accessible laws and rights: All governing legislation, rules, practice directions and policies are available on the Tribunal's website.

Lawyers Indemnity Fund

Message from Su Forbes, KC, COO

We protected more lawyers and the public from a growing number of claims

In 2024, we continued to see an increased claims frequency: we received 1,369 claim reports, the highest number in LIF's 39-year history. In addition, we made over \$15 million in payments, again surpassing any previous year. Myriad factors drove this high volume: wills and estates and family law both hitting record high claims last year, and civil litigation and residential conveyancing continuing to generate the most claims. We expect this increase in claims frequency to continue.

We now protect more lawyers than ever before. Along with a growing number of private practice lawyers, the number of covered in-house lawyers increased from 138 to 454 since we granted them the option to purchase the policy over four years ago.

We are in a strong financial position to manage the higher volume of claims and payments. Revenue was up, and operating expenses were stable — less than 2 per cent higher than the previous year. We also ended 2024 with a well-diversified investment portfolio and net assets of \$153 million. Because of our financial position and the exceptional work of our claims team, the indemnity fee remained the same at \$1,800 for the eighth consecutive year.



SU FORBES, KC

The Lawyers Indemnity Fund (LIF) manages the Law Society's indemnification program, which protects BC lawyers and their clients.

The program provides professional liability (errors and omissions) coverage, trust protection coverage for dishonest appropriation (lawyer theft), trust shortage liability coverage (for specific social engineering frauds) and arranges a privacy/cyber insurance policy for most BC firms.

We provided exceptional service

Lawyers who report a Part A claim or potential claim for negligence complete a Service Evaluation and Risk Management survey after we close their file.

Feedback surveys received in 2024 demonstrate that 94 per cent of lawyers were “very satisfied” with our service and the results achieved.

With respect to a claim we pay under Part B for lawyer theft, we send a Service Evaluation survey to the claimant on closing the file. We paid \$108,147 to 13 claimants in 2024 for Part B claims. Feedback surveys in the past five years demonstrate a high satisfaction rate of 100 per cent.

We continued responding to new practice risks

We analysed claims data and advised lawyers of specific claim trends in Notices to the Profession. We warned the profession of new iterations of social engineering and real estate frauds and scams. We stayed current and relevant, advising lawyers of the risks of Generative AI and keeping up with developments ourselves by adopting certain AI research and practice tools.

We repaired mistakes

In 2024, we repaired 25 per cent of all errors reported to us. By rectifying these mistakes, we prevented losses for clients, allowed their lawyers to continue to represent them and saved the fund hundreds of thousands of dollars.

/ Impact and support

The Law Society provides funding and support to the following organizations:



Innovation Sandbox

