



Legal Aid Saskatchewan

2022-2023 Annual Report



Legal Aid Saskatchewan Offices

Battlefords Area Office

Provincial Building, #L103 - 1192 102nd Street
North Battleford S9A 1E9
p: 306.446.7700 | f: 306.446.7598 | 1.877.441.4418
Acting Legal Director: Jonathan Bodvarson
Battlefords@legalaid.sk.ca

Meadow Lake Area Office

Unit #3, 101 Railway Place
Meadow Lake S9X 1X6
p: 306.236.7636 | f: 306.236.7634 | 1.800.461.8188
Legal Director: Lee Douglas
MeadowLake@legalaid.sk.ca

Melfort Area Office

PO Box 1748, 3rd floor, 107 Crawford Avenue East
Melfort S0E 1A0
p: 306.752.6220 | f: 306.752.6127 | 1.877.424.1901
Regional Legal Director: Deanna Harris
Melfort@legalaid.sk.ca

Moose Jaw Area Office

#113 - 110 Ominica Street West
Moose Jaw S6H 6V2
p: 306.694.3700 | f: 306.694.3738 | 1.877.424.1902
Legal Director: Tyne Hagey
MooseJaw@legalaid.sk.ca

Northern Area Office

Box 232, Mistasinihk Place, 1328 La Ronge Avenue
La Ronge S0J 1L0
p: 306.425.4455 | f: 306.425.4472 | 1.800.667.4095
Legal Director: Kimberly Earing, K.C.
Northern@legalaid.sk.ca

Prince Albert Area Office

1138 - 11th Floor, L.F. McIntosh Bldg, 800 Central Ave
Prince Albert S6V 6Z2
p: 306.953.2850 | f: 306.953.2866 | 1.877.424.1900
Legal Director: Fatima Sarwar
PrinceAlbert@legalaid.sk.ca

Regina City Area Office

#200, 1871 Smith Street
Regina S4P 4W5
p: 306.787.8760 | f: 306.787.8827 | 1.877.424.1897
Legal Director: James Struthers, K.C.
ReginaCity@legalaid.sk.ca

Regina Rural Area Office

#102 - 2400 College Avenue
Regina S4P 1C8
p: 306.787.1141 | f: 306.787.2316 | 1.877.424.1906
Interim Legal Director: David Couture
ReginaRural@legalaid.sk.ca

Saskatoon City Area Office

#1053 - 122 Third Avenue North, Sturdy Stone Centre
Saskatoon S7K 2H6
p: 306.933.7820 | f: 306.933.7827 | 1.877.424.1898
Acting Legal Director: Kim Armstrong, K.C.
SaskatoonCity@legalaid.sk.ca

Saskatoon Rural Area Office

#941 - 122 Third Avenue North, Sturdy Stone Centre
Saskatoon S7K 2H6
p: 306.933.7855 | f: 306.933.7854 | 1.877.424.1899
Interim Legal Director: Samantha Neill
SaskatoonRural@legalaid.sk.ca

South East Area Office

#101 - 1302 3rd Street
Estevan S4A 2V6
p: 306.637.4620 | f: 306.637.4625 | 1.877.424.1903
Regional Legal Director: Deanna Harris
Estevan@legalaid.sk.ca

Swift Current Area Office

307 - 350 Cheadle Street West
Swift Current S9H 4G3
p: 306.778.8272 | f: 306.778.8307 | 1.877.424.1905
Legal Director: Adrian McBride
SwiftCurrent@legalaid.sk.ca

Yorkton Area Office

#301 - 120 Smith Street East
Yorkton S3N 3V3
p: 306.786.1440 | f: 306.786.1405 | 1.877.424.1904
Regional Legal Director: Deanna Harris
Yorkton@legalaid.sk.ca

Head Office - Saskatoon

#400 - 201 21st Street East
Saskatoon SK S7K 0B8
p: 306.933.5300
f: 306.933.6764
headoffice@legalaid.sk.ca



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Letters of Transmittal



His Honour
The Honourable Russell Mirasty, SOM, MSM
Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan

May it please your Honour:

I have the pleasure to transmit to your Honour the Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission for the year ending March 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'B' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General



The Honourable Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Province of Saskatchewan

Dear Ms. Eyre,

It is my pleasure to forward to you the Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission according to The Legal Aid Act, depicting the affairs of the Commission in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kylie Head' in a cursive script.

Kylie Head, K.C.
Acting Chairperson





Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission

The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission (SLAC) is a governance board responsible for ensuring that the strategies, goals, priorities and directions of the organization are implemented through delegation from the board to Legal Aid Saskatchewan (LAS) management.

The Legal Aid Act provides for the appointment of 10 members:

- two members appointed by the Law Society of Saskatchewan;
- six members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council;
- one member who is an employee of the Ministry of Justice; and
- one member who is an employee of the Ministry of Social Services.

As of March 31, 2023 the Board of Commissioners are:



Raymond Wiebe, K.C.
Chair* (retired Dec 2022)
**Incoming Chair to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council*



Kylie Head, K.C.,
Acting Chair
Regina
Appointed by the Ministry of Justice



Rod Antonichuk
Saskatoon
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council



Victoria Elliott-Erickson
Prince Albert
Appointed by the Law Society of Saskatchewan



Kirsten Hnatuk
Saskatoon
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council



Ellen McGuire
Regina
Appointed by the Ministry of Social Services



Bev Poitras
Fort Qu'Appelle
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council



Colin Pullar
Regina
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

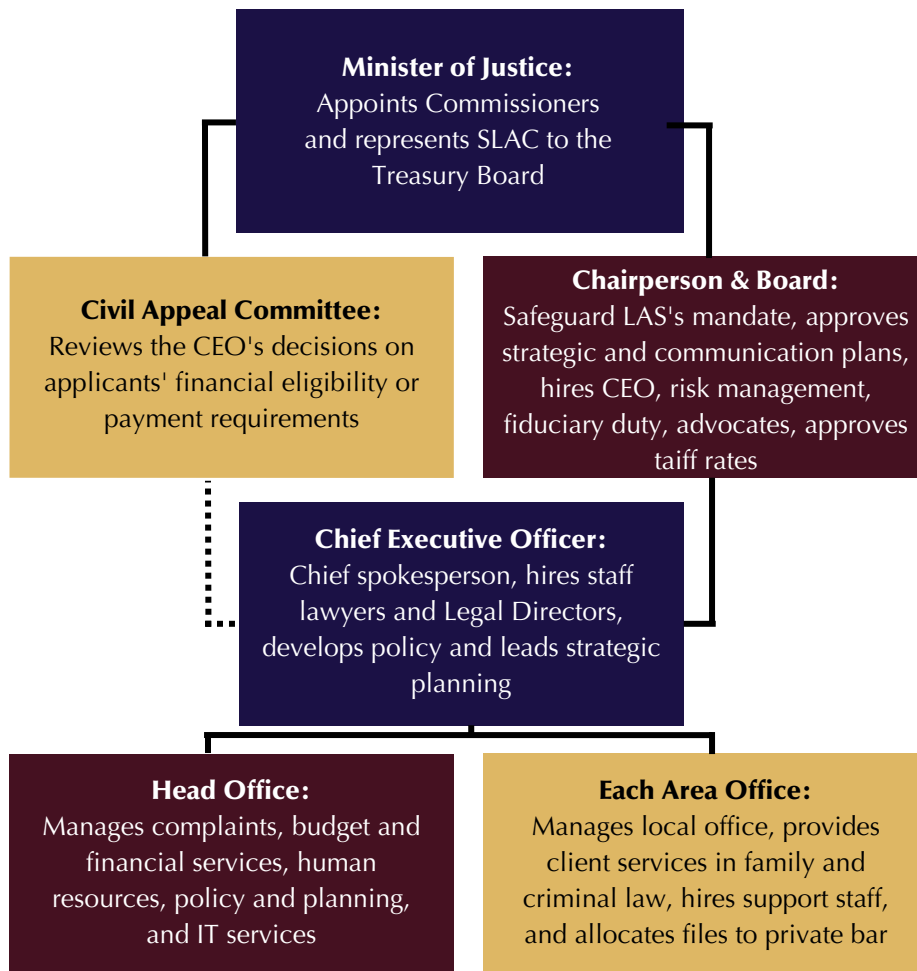


Ron Ratte
La Ronge
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council



Iffat Ritter
Saskatoon
Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

Organizational Structure



As of March 31, 2023, the Legal Aid Saskatchewan management team consists of:

Head Office:

- Jayne Mallin, Chief Executive Officer
- Jerome Boyko, Director of Finance and IT
- Kyla Shea, Director of Operations
- Olga Sadikova, Director of Human Resources
- Robert Grimsrud, General Counsel
- Cameron Schmunk, Director of Private Bar Services
- Joanne Khan, Practice Management Counsel
- Andrea Phillips, Indigenous Policy Counsel

Area Offices:

- Jonathan Bodvarson, Acting Legal Director, Battlefords Area Office
- R. Lee Douglas, Legal Director, Meadow Lake Area Office
- Deanna Harris, Regional Legal Director, Melfort, Yorkton & South East Area Offices
- Tyne Hagey, Legal Director, Moose Jaw Area Office
- Kimberly Earing, K.C., Legal Director, Northern Area Office
- Fatima Sarwar, Legal Director, Prince Albert Area Office
- James Struthers, K.C., Legal Director, Regina City Area Office
- David Couture, Interim Legal Director, Regina Rural Area Office
- Kim Armstrong, K.C., Legal Director, Saskatoon City Area Office
- Samantha Neill, Interim Legal Director, Saskatoon Rural Area Office
- Adrian McBride, Legal Director, Swift Current Area Office





Organizational Profile

Services

Full legal services are provided in adult and youth criminal matters and family law to financially eligible clients if the matter falls within Legal Aid Saskatchewan's range of matters and has a reasonable prospect of being resolved. Duty counsel services are provided to in-custody clients, regardless of financial status, at all 74 Provincial Courthouses and circuit points. Legal advice through the Brydges Line is available to those who are arrested or detained, regardless of financial status. Summary advice and information may be provided to anyone by a Legal Aid Saskatchewan lawyer about a wide range of matters if it involves no more than a brief interview or phone call.

Financial Eligibility

Applicants are financially eligible for service if:

- they are receiving income from Social Assistance, Band Assistance or the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability programs; or
- their financial resources are at Social Assistance levels; or
- the costs of obtaining the services from a private lawyer would reduce their financial resources to Social Assistance levels.

Staff Profile

Legal Aid Saskatchewan uses a staff lawyer model for providing legal services to most of its clients. In 2022-2023, staff lawyers handled 85% of full-services cases. Private bar lawyers handled the remainder, usually due to conflict of interest from past service or staff vacancies.

As of March 31, 2023, Legal Aid Saskatchewan had 175 staff positions located in 14 offices throughout the province. LAS has a unionized workplace, with 84.57% of staff represented by CUPE Local 1949. Managers and out-of-scope staff comprise the remaining 15.43%.

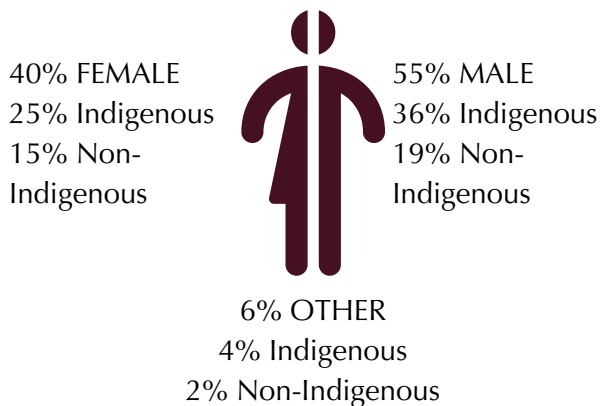
LAS is committed to hiring practices that will assist our organization in meeting the employment equity goals set by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC) as follows:

	LAS	SHRC
Self-declared Indigenous	15.43%	14%
Persons with disabilities	7.42%	22%
Women in underrepresented occupations	Lawyers: 58.62% Management: 57.89%	47%
Members of a visible minority group	14.28%	10.6%

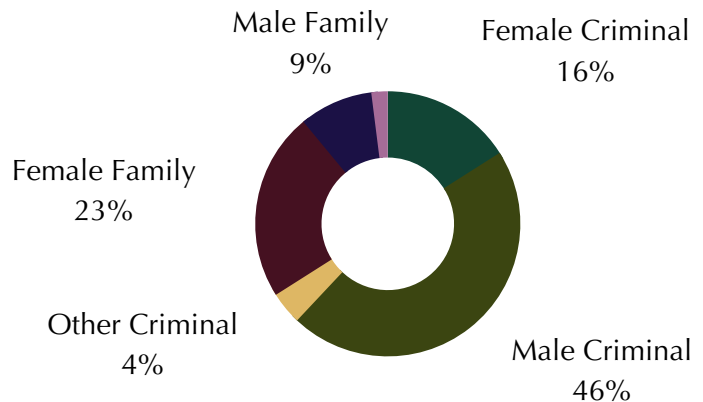
Who is served by Legal Aid Saskatchewan?

The following information is for all new service files opened in the fiscal year, including Therapeutic Courts. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, this totaled 16,740 files. Individuals who applied more than once for Legal Aid Saskatchewan's services are counted for each application.

Gender & Self Identification



Gender & Type of Service



Marital Status

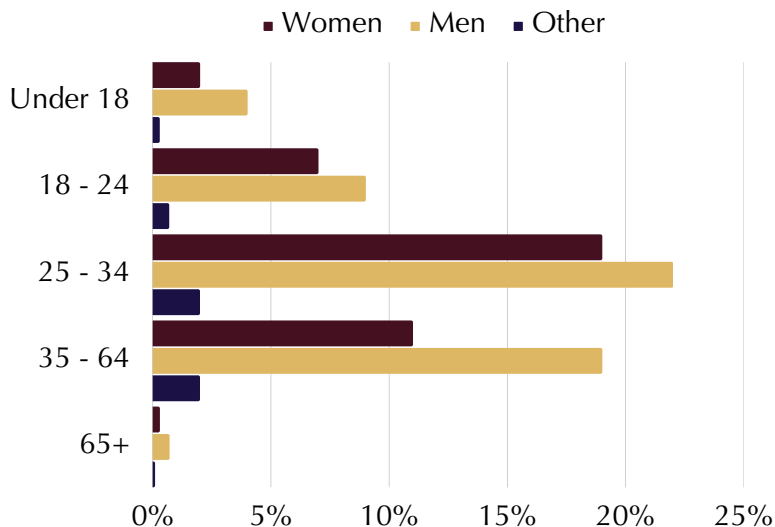


Married or Common Law
11%

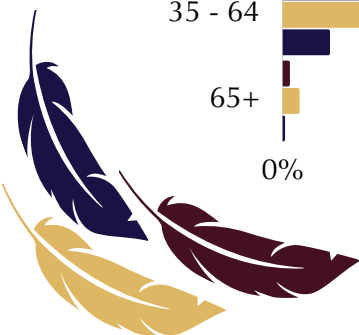


Single
89%

Gender & Age



Dependents





2022-2025 Strategic Priorities

The Legal Aid Act and The Legal Aid Regulations provide the legislative mandate for the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, also known as Legal Aid Saskatchewan (LAS).

In the fall of 2021, Legal Aid Saskatchewan CEO Jayne Mallin initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process to transition LAS from the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan to a new vision, mission, values and strategic priorities that establish the organization's goals. The 2022-2025 Strategic Priorities were approved the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission in June 2022.

Our Vision:

Inclusive, responsive justice in Saskatchewan.

Our Mission:

We are a publicly funded organization championing access to justice through professional legal services.

Our Values:

- **Compassion** – Our empathic approach respects every person's world view in a culturally responsive way, embracing individual diversity and dignity.
- **Collaboration** – We build trusted relationships that enable exceptional outcomes through aligned strengths and knowledge.
- **Courage** – We are fearless advocates leading transformation through innovation, continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence in legal services.
- **Commitment** – We are responsible for ethical practice, integrity, transparency and accountability of the resources entrusted to us.

We commit to ...

... a justice system where Legal Aid Saskatchewan is recognized and respected as a provincial and national champion in justice reform and access to justice. We are proud collaborators, problem solvers and risk-takers removing barriers to justice and pioneering innovative change – ranging from preventative programs, to specialized counsel, to expanded equitable services for a diverse population. In collaboration with our partners, we have inspired change to become Canada's model for access to justice. We are valued within the communities we serve and are celebrated as an essential and accountable service for the province of Saskatchewan.

... clients who have a streamlined, accessible pathway to trusted legal services. We ensure equitable and inclusive services are provided in a culturally responsive manner in a language of choice. Clients feel safe, well-informed and confident that their voice is honoured throughout their journey seeking justice. The support, legal advice, and representation clients receive are of the highest quality, with opportunities to partake in alternative dispute resolution.

... a work culture with a motivated, engaged team, committed to making a difference for those we serve. Our unique provincial model of legal services attracts the best of the best, allowing us to practice in a way that makes the greatest impact within our communities. We are all invested in our future success and take pride in achieving exceptional outcomes for our clients. We have embraced innovation and technology to offer our services most efficiently and effectively. We feel supported to bring our best everyday – through ongoing development, relevant resources and a positive work environment built on trusted relationships.

Our Priorities:



**Our clients (C)
experience inclusive
justice ...**

Client-Centered Experience

C1 Improve the client experience.

C2 Provide culturally responsive service.

C3 Seamless, innovative service delivery models.



**through effective
processes and
partnerships (P) ...**

Champions for Access to Justice

P1 Enhance LAS reputation and visibility.

P2 Advance reconciliation principles in justice reform.

P3 Sponsor partnerships for holistic response & system change.



**supported by
an engaged team
(T)...**

Purpose-Driven Teams Producing Exceptional Outcomes

T1 Strengthened organizational culture and staff engagement.

T2 Improve staff recruitment and retention.



**and effective
stewardship (S) of
our resources.**

Accountable and Responsive Stewards

S1 Proactive and responsive decision making.

S1 Optimize funding.

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Dear stakeholders,

I am delighted to present my annual CEO message, reflecting on the achievements and progress our team has made during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. As we are implementing our strategic plan – which is built upon our four pillars of clients, processes and partnerships, teams, and stewardship – we remain committed to our vision of inclusive, responsive, and equitable justice in Saskatchewan.

The past year has been a transformative journey as we embraced our new strategic objectives, aligning them with our mission to champion access to justice through professional legal services. Throughout this report, you will witness our unwavering commitment to our values of Compassion, Collaboration, Courage, and Commitment, also known as the Four Cs.

Under our client pillar, we have prioritized enhancing our client-centered experience and implementing seamless, innovative service delivery models. To achieve this, we initiated a project to review and improve our client intake processes, ensuring a more streamlined and accessible experience for those we serve. As of the writing of this report, we have just received recommendations and are developing a process for moving forward.

In line with our commitment to culturally responsive service, we hired an Indigenous Policy Counsel who is strengthening our efforts to provide services that align with the needs and values of Indigenous communities. Our recent creation of the Gladue Submission Guide and enhancements to our Gladue database showcase our dedication to addressing the unique challenges Indigenous clients face. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of these resources, we provided staff training, including lunch and learn sessions and trauma-informed lawyering coaching.

Recognizing the importance of collaboration, we continue to foster a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, private bar colleagues, the Law Society of Saskatchewan and the community to form our Gladue database committee. This partnership has played a pivotal role in supporting an important appeal on Gladue rights, demonstrating our commitment to advancing our commitment to TRC Calls to Action, by addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in detention.



Jayne Mallin
CEO

Additionally, we participated in securing the release of Nerissa and Odelia Quewezance on bail, pending the outcome of a Ministerial Review. This engagement exemplifies our dedication to ensuring fair and equitable outcomes within the legal system.

Furthermore, we have embraced the concept of upstream, restorative models of service, training our family lawyers in mediation to support the provincially mandated mediation before litigation effort. These mediation services have proven instrumental in providing our clients with the necessary support to redefine their family relationships. We look forward to developing measurable outcomes metrics, such as fewer issues requiring litigation and decreased frequency of court appearances. Ultimately, Legal Aid Saskatchewan's mediation services foster the positive communication skills necessary to co-parent, and the children involved benefit from watching their parents cooperate and problem-solve.

“ We have achieved remarkable progress in employee engagement. Our exceptional human resources team has increased our engagement scores by seven points, a feat that typically takes organizations five years to accomplish. This achievement is a testament to our onboarding and orientation efforts, performance evaluation framework, and investment in mental health support, learning opportunities, and team-building activities. ”

Not only did we improve our engagement score, but with our staff's input, we were recognized by HRD Canada as one of Canada's Best Places to Work 2023. In May 2023, we also submitted our application for Saskatchewan's Top Employers 2024 competition, the results of which will be announced this coming fall.

Despite the challenges the legal profession faces in recruitment and retention, we have dedicated efforts to attract law students as summer students, and engaging them in the articling process. We have actively participated in job fairs at various educational institutions. We are cultivating partnerships with the University of Saskatchewan College of Law to showcase the value of working with us.

Our commitment to our teams extends to our administrative professionals, who are integral to our organization and often the first face, or voice, our clients encounter. We are actively exploring ways to provide them with development and career opportunities. Intentional recognition of our staff's commitment is being built into our organizational culture as we move forward into 2023-2024, and I look forward to meaningful dialogue with our staff to determine the ways in which we value their work resonates with them.

As accountable and responsive stewards, we have embarked on the private bar modernization initiative, ensuring meaningful consultation with our valued private bar lawyers. This initiative, combined with legislative amendments and new service rules, reinforces our commitment to proactive and responsive decision-making that supports our private bar service providers. These measures optimize our funds and responsibly allocate resources where they are most needed.





I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our esteemed Commission for their invaluable oversight and governance. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in our efforts to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, particularly through the exceptional work carried out by the TRC Committee of the Commission. Together, we are striving to advance truth, reconciliation, and healing.

A special thank you to our outgoing SLAC Chair, Raymond Wiebe, for his six-and-a-half years of steady leadership, and to Kylie Head, Vice-Chair, who stepped into the Acting Chair role upon Mr. Wiebe's retirement in December 2022.

I would also like to sincerely thank our funders: the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, and the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan. With their financial support and belief in our mission, we are able to deliver on our commitment to access to justice. Their investment in our organization is a testament to the importance of our work.

Furthermore, I warmly welcome our new Minister of Justice, Bronwyn Eyre, and eagerly anticipate working together to develop and deliver on her mandate. Minister Eyre's leadership and vision will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of justice in Saskatchewan.

To our Head Office team, thank you for driving change and developing the infrastructure that reflects the maturity of our organization. Your contributions are invaluable.

To our leadership team in the Area Offices, thank you for leading with integrity and compassion, and for ensuring our services are delivered in accordance with our operational standards and meet our strategic objectives.

To all our stakeholders, partners, and supporters, I extend my deepest thanks for your continued belief in our organization and the pursuit of inclusive, responsive, and equitable justice. Together, we will continue our journey towards a more just society.

In conclusion, I express my deepest appreciation to our exceptional staff who pour their hearts and souls into the work they do. You truly are the heart and soul of our organization, and it is through your dedication that we make a difference in the lives of our clients and the community. I also extend my gratitude to our private bar and community partners for their unwavering support. We will continue nudging the system forward.

Thank you,

Jayne Mallin
Chief Executive Officer
jmallin@legalaid.sk.ca

Strategic Priorities Report

The 2022-2023 fiscal year was the first year of our new strategic plan. Our work during this time focused on creating a solid foundation by building the infrastructure needed and completing process reviews necessary for establishing the innovative initiatives we will be bringing forward in future years.

The following report reviews some of the essential work our team has achieved during this foundational year and demonstrates how our operational goals support our strategic pillars.



Client-Centered Experience

During the strategic planning process, former and current clients were surveyed for their opinions about what is working and what is not working, both within Legal Aid Saskatchewan and the justice system as a whole. Respondents submitted a range of positive and negative feedback, as well as suggestions and recommendations for service delivery.

Clients' perception of what is working with the legal system include Legal Aid Saskatchewan staff, alternatives to court and sentencing, and community programs. Clients' perception of what can be improved in the legal system include the level of racism and stigma, access and eligibility issues, and timeliness of service.

As of January 2022, 61 % of Legal Aid Saskatchewan clients are satisfied with their experience with our organization.

To support our strategic priority of a client-centered experience, Legal Aid Saskatchewan accomplished the following key initiatives during the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

Recruited for the Position of Indigenous Policy Counsel

Legal Aid Saskatchewan aims to build culturally responsive service for our clients. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, our HR department recruited an Indigenous Policy Counsel (IPC) to lead the development and implementation of Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Indigenous justice strategies. This portfolio includes creating tools and programs to support our lawyers with culturally responsive services, building relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples around the province, facilitating justice services improvements, and policy development. LAS' IPC started this role in January 2023, and throughout the last quarter of the fiscal year achieved numerous foundational steps to support our Indigenous justice strategies.





Completed a Client Intake Process Review

During the strategic planning consultations with clients, we heard that while Legal Aid Saskatchewan has excellent, skilled staff who provide high-quality services, the intake process needs refining. The client intake process review was first introduced to all staff during Legal Aid Saskatchewan's 2022 conference, during which staff had the opportunity to review the current process, identify issues faced by both clients and employees, and brainstorm possible procedural changes.

In the last quarter of 2022-2023, LAS undertook an on-site client intake process review with each Area Office to examine how our clients become our clients and how we can improve their experiences. The intention of this review is to create a better client experience and help support our purpose driven teams. Standardizing the intake process will work to improve clients' perceptions of LAS and provide a more seamless client experience for them. The recommended courses of action will be implemented beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Legislative Amendments and the Creation of Service Rules

Effective February 1, 2023, The Legal Aid Act amendments came into force. These amendments include improvements to certain definitions, terms and references, and also provide for more specific ability of Legal Aid Saskatchewan in determining and maintaining the composition of our private bar panel. Our private bar panel members provide valuable services for approximately 15% of our clients (most often attributed to conflicts of interest or staff vacancies). The legislative amendments allow for the establishment of service rules, which are designed to explicitly detail the expectations of our private bar panel members, just as our staff lawyers have reference to the collective bargaining agreement and code of conduct.

The service rules ensure our private bar partnership operates and delivers services in the same quality and efficient way of our staff lawyers. This consistency contributes to an improved client experience.

The following operational metrics support our commitment to cultivating a client-centered experience.

Improve the client experience

Number of clients qualifying for legal aid services

To qualify for Legal Aid Saskatchewan services, an individual must be financially eligible, have a legal problem that is covered by Legal Aid Saskatchewan guidelines, and the legal problem must have professional merit, in the opinion of Legal Aid Saskatchewan.

Between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, 21,171 applications for legal aid service were received. Of these, 17,932 individuals qualified.

- **2021-2022:** 15,229 individuals qualified for legal aid services
- **2020-2021:** 13,407 individuals qualified for legal aid services

**2022-2023:
17,932 individuals
qualified for legal
aid services**

Percentage of clients assigned to a lawyer within 7 days of application

85 % of clients with criminal law matters were assigned to a lawyer within 7 days of application

67 % of clients with family law matters were assigned to a lawyer within 7 days of application

Percentage of clients speaking to a lawyer within 21 days of application approval

Of the 17,932 clients approved for legal aid services, 74% of clients with criminal law matters and 67% of clients with family law matters spoke to their assigned lawyer within 21 days of application approval.

The average wait time can be affected by a variety of factors, such as lawyer case load, staff vacancies, or missing or incomplete client paperwork. This metric does not include duty counsel service.

2022-2023: 71.5 %

2021-2022: 71 %

2020-2021: 56 %

2019-2020: 61 %

2018-2019: 72 %





Number of intake calls answered within 2.5 minutes

2022-2023: 78.7%

2021-2022: 64.07%

2020-2021: 79%

2019-2020: 75%

The Application Centre received 29,564 phone calls in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Of those, 2,189 callers disconnected before speaking with an Eligibility Officer.

The remaining 27,375 were handled by the Eligibility team.

21,544

Number of intake calls answered within 2.5 minutes

1m 26s

Average wait time in minutes per caller

New full service files opened

	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
	Staff	Private Bar	Staff	Private Bar	Staff	Private Bar
Criminal Adult	8,724	1,821	7,121	2,621	6,048	937
Criminal Youth	1,336	189	1,169	223	892	80
Family	2,792	337	3,018	821	1,879	204
Child Apprehension	677	106	523	199	536	90
	13,529	2,453	11,831	3,863	9,355	1,311

Other services provided

	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
	Staff	Private Bar	Staff	Private Bar	Staff	Private Bar
Duty Counsel Advice	50	14,796	39	13,948	42	13,686
Summary Advice	67	-	111	-	156	-
Duty Counsel Service (Adult)	7,578	1,850	8,764	2,259	6,113	2,469
Duty Counsel Service (Youth)	436	92	422	27	531	14
	8,131	16,738	9,336	16,234	6,842	16,169

Number of complaints

Legal Aid Saskatchewan investigates all complaints that are received in writing to our Head Office. These complaints include concerns about eligibility as well as client service. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Legal Aid Saskatchewan Head Office received 82 complaints – 42 were related to eligibility matters and 40 were about client service. Forty-nine of the complaints were resolved by March 31, 2023. Twenty-two are still under investigation. This metric will serve as a baseline moving forward.

Provide culturally responsive service

Clients experiencing culturally responsive service

Part of the Indigenous Policy Council's role is to lead the strategic objective of culturally responsive service for clients. With approximately 65% of our clients self-identifying as Indigenous, it is necessary for LAS to have in place the capacity to respond to the issues of Indigenous clients and communities. As one such response, our Indigenous Policy Council is implementing numerous initiatives in order to increase the number of Gladue factors being brought before the Courts through the Gladue Database resource for lawyers, the Gladue Submission Guide, and cultural Lunch and Learn sessions for staff.

LAS is working with the Federal government to implement IRCAs in Saskatchewan. These Independent Race and Culture Assessments will provide context for the criminal behaviour of Black accused and will inform sentencing in a culturally responsive way. The objective of these reports, similar to Gladue Reports, is to address the overrepresentation of Black people in our justice system. LAS has had meetings with the ANSJI (African Nova Scotian Justice Institute) where IRCAs were founded, and will be raising awareness with staff and stakeholders on the importance of these federally funded assessments.

Seamless, innovative service delivery models

Files resolved by mediation

Effective July 1, 2022, family law matters that come to court in Saskatchewan are required to attempt a family dispute resolution process by the close of pleadings before they may continue with any further court proceedings. Family dispute resolution includes:

- mediation;
- collaborative law processes;
- family arbitration; or
- the use of a parenting coordinator where there is an existing order or agreement.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, LAS completed 121 files / 60 mediations.

Since 2021, the LAS mediation team has assisted 69 families.

Thank you to ADR Saskatchewan for funding to support the training of additional mediators.

As of March 31, 2023 Legal Aid Saskatchewan has a mediation team of seven staff lawyers. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, 160 applications were made for mediation services. Sixty-two certificates were filed with the Early Family Dispute Office indicating a joint mediation meeting occurred. Some mediations involve more than two parties. In other circumstances, one party fails to engage, and the matter is redirected to Court. In 2023-2024, two more staff lawyers will receive approval from the Ministry of Justice to work as a mediator, and five more Legal Aid Saskatchewan staff lawyers will begin their mediation training.

“ Thank you for your help in facilitating us to communicate. We ate together at a restaurant for the first time in four years to celebrate (our child's) birthday. ”

– a recent Legal Aid Saskatchewan client served by the LAS mediation team



CPD hours annually related to mediation

Mediation in family law matters allows for better outcomes and more personalized choices for all parties and their families. Mediation training enhances communication skills and is resolution-based, which means it is less time-consuming, less stressful and less expensive for parties who would otherwise attend court. Mediation also encourages collaboration between parties and allows for full participation by the parties most knowledgeable of the matters at hand.



400 CPD hours
in 2022-2023
related to mediation

To support our commitment to innovative service delivery, Legal Aid Saskatchewan lawyers dedicated 400 CPD hours towards mediation in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This included:

- a presentation by the LAS mediation team to all lawyers at our annual staff conference; and
- five staff lawyers who completed mandatory mediation training.

Comfort level with technology to support our work

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Legal Aid Saskatchewan IT department implemented several new and upgraded technological and connectivity supports for employees to access. This is the foundation of our long-term digitization project. In the upcoming fiscal years this digitization project will include disclosure and digital file practice management.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Legal Aid Saskatchewan IT department undertook several initiatives to ensure connectivity and mobility. Some of these initiatives include:

- **eTicket Help Desk:** This feature allows for consistent incident tracking. It has also accommodated process-driven HR services such as on and offboarding of employees.
- **Organization-wide equipment refresh:** This large project was accomplished with zero touch deployment, a key feature of Cloud technology.
- **Area Office Wi-Fi:** Rollout began January 2023 and is expected to continue into the summer months. This includes both corporate Wi-Fi and a separate BYOD Wi-Fi network in each Area Office.
- **Company Portal App:** This provides employees with a user-self-service capability to install apps to their company-managed laptop.
- **LAS Applications** available for user-owned devices ensures on-the-go connectivity.
- **Advanced spam, malware and phishing email protection** via Exchange Online and Windows Defender for endpoints, increasing LAS' information security.
- **Dragon Dictation:** Improves flexibility for dictation by removing the reliance on dictation hardware.

Technology connectivity

Legal Aid Saskatchewan strives to provide work from anywhere technology connectivity wherever possible to empower users. A summary of current connectivity initiatives includes:

- Legal Aid Saskatchewan is providing Wi-Fi connectivity for BYOD and corporate-owned devices at all Area Offices by the end of 2023. All Courthouses are providing Wi-Fi to Staff Lawyers.
- Employees can connect to LAS Office 365 applications without the VPN, and perform file shares and use printers with VPN. The IT department is working to remove this reliance on VPN for file shares by migrating to SharePoint by the end of the 2023. Printing tasks will continue using VPN, however LAS is working towards a paperless future.

Number of staff using mobile technology

226

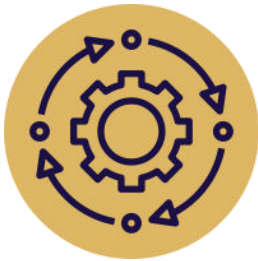
Legal Aid Saskatchewan
laptops

84

Number of BYOD devices
using LAS O365 apps

15

Number of LAS-managed
smart phones



Champions for Access to Justice

What do people think of when they hear “Legal Aid Saskatchewan”? Is our work with marginalized people appreciated in the communities we serve? Do our funders see the value in the services we provide related to the democratic right for access to justice?

The work our employees do for our clients and to make the justice system effective for all often goes unrecognized. We are committed to making our successes known and to build upon community relationships to enhance our services.

To support our strategic priority of champions for access to justice, Legal Aid Saskatchewan accomplished the following key initiative during the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

Launch of the Gladue Submission Guide

Over the past number of years, Legal Aid Saskatchewan has collaborated with the University of Saskatchewan in the establishment of the Gladue Rights Research Database. The database is designed to assist Indigenous peoples, their legal counsel, and others working within the justice system with information that aids in the protection of Gladue Rights. LAS Indigenous Policy Council is working with First Nations to complete the Community Profiles section by the end of 2023.





LAS has also produced an additional resource called The Gladue Submission Guide, which is a practical plain-language manual designed to help clients and their legal counsel prepare a Gladue submission.

The following operational metrics support our commitment to serving as champions for access to justice.

Enhance LAS reputation and visibility

Rebranding Project Led by LAS Employees

One of the first initiatives undertaken following the approval of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan was a logo rebranding project spearheaded by Legal Aid Saskatchewan employees. During the summer of 2022, all staff were invited to participate in a call for designs for a new logo that reflected our vision, mission and values. A group of volunteers assessed each entry and narrowed the pool to two designs, one prominently featuring a wheat sheath and the other entwined hands. LAS enlisted the services of Indigenous owned-and-operated Encore Graphic Design + Marketing to combine the two preferred designs into one and ensure the logo encapsulated our commitment to reconciliation.

The result, as shown throughout this report, includes a golden feather supported by two cupped hands. The golden feather is representative of Indigenous values of respect, honour, strength, courage and wisdom, while also mimicking the golden wheat sheath representative of Saskatchewan's agricultural strength. The two hands cupping the golden feather indicate a balance and support for Indigenous values and the Saskatchewan justice system.

Number of stories

Why is storytelling important? Sharing stories of Legal Aid Saskatchewan's work, team and values builds trust with our clients, community partners and stakeholders. The more we share, the more people get to know our culture and value.

The Legal Aid Saskatchewan LinkedIn account is used for advertising open job opportunities, promoting our work and achievements, and highlighting leadership and employees. Between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, Legal Aid Saskatchewan posted 95 stories on our LinkedIn page.

95

LinkedIn stories

Legal Aid Saskatchewan was mentioned or highlighted in 24 news publications and media announcements (provincial and national) during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

24

highlights in national & provincial publications

Advance reconciliation principles in justice reform

Culturally appropriate options offered and used by Indigenous clients

In addition to the Gladue Rights Research Database and The Gladue Submission Guide, LAS Indigenous Policy Council is investigating how LAS can participate in other initiatives including:

- introducing an eagle feather and smudging to all court rooms; and
- integrating Opikinawasowin (OPIK), an alternative dispute resolution process in the child welfare system, into client services.

Innovative ways in which Gladue factors are brought to Court

Whenever an Indigenous person is sentenced for a crime or asks for release on bail, the judge has a responsibility to consider their personal and background circumstances that relate to their experiences as an Indigenous person. These are called their Gladue factors, and are presented through a Gladue submission or report. This report helps explain to a judge the personal circumstances of an Indigenous person and tries to answer the questions, "How did this person get to this point in their life?" and "Are there appropriate options other than sending this person to jail?"

Gladue reports are usually written by a Gladue report writer. LAS partners with the FASD Network of Saskatchewan and the Integrated Justice Program for its Gladue writing services. Between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, a total of 24 reports were written. A separate group of volunteer writers completed another nine.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, LAS connected 31 clients with suspected or diagnosed FASD to the FASD Network/IJP for services, supports and Gladue reports

Legal Aid Saskatchewan is committed to increasing the understanding, importance, and use of Gladue across the province. Collaborating with a network of CBOs and agencies from around Saskatchewan to increase education, awareness and access to Gladue reports and Gladue submissions, LAS is hopeful that the utilization of Gladue principles will increase and lead to increased use of culturally relevant sentencing options for Indigenous clients.





Sponsor partnerships for holistic response and system change

Partnerships supporting service delivery

Community partnerships create a bridge between organizations and different services that enhance the help provided to clients and communities. Legal Aid Saskatchewan has collaborated with other community-based organizations – such as the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan and the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan – to provide informative Lunch and Learn opportunities for staff lawyers. Additionally, LAS has a valuable relationship with Public Legal Education Association (PLEA) with our CEO and one of our Legal Directors sitting on the Board of Directors. Partnerships exist with the FASD Network, the FSIN, the Integrated Justice Network, and many others at the local community level.

Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Indigenous Policy Counsel is working to cultivate partnerships with each First Nation throughout the province to improve LAS' service delivery and ensure these services are culturally responsive and client-centered. Several First Nations in Saskatchewan have given notice of entering into self-governance agreements with respect to child welfare. LAS' IPC will consult with these First Nations to develop a policy for the role LAS will play in respect to these agreements.

Services, meetings, strategies and priorities developed and/or implemented

A priority of the Indigenous Policy Counsel for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is to create and build relationships with First Nations and Tribal Councils in order to make use of their perspectives for Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Indigenous strategy development. During the final quarter of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, LAS' IPC connected with every First Nation and Tribal Council to coordinate introductory meetings. Several have taken place with more scheduled throughout the 2023 calendar year.

Consultations with community groups, such as Public Legal Education Association (PLEA) of Saskatchewan, the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan and Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan, are ongoing.

LAS belongs to various networks such as the A2J Network of Saskatchewan, ARN (Anti-Racism Network), Association of Legal Aid Plans, Canadian Bar Association and others that inform our work.

Law reform initiatives

Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Indigenous Policy Counsel is collaborating on engagement opportunities with staff for both law reform matters and other topics and policy areas. A key law reform initiative in which LAS plays an integral role is the ministerial review involving Nerissa and Odelia Quewezance, sisters held in custody for almost 30 years for a murder conviction. This review was ordered by Federal Justice Minister David Lametti in the summer of 2022. The advocating done by LAS and Innocence Canada in Court led to the conditional release of the Quewezance sisters in March 2023.



Purpose-Driven Teams Producing Exceptional Outcomes

At Legal Aid Saskatchewan, we are actively cultivating a positive workplace culture that is built upon meaningful work, open communication and core values. We commit to celebrating success and providing growth opportunities. We support the wellbeing of our team, knowing that this has a positive effect on our clients.

The 2022-2023 fiscal year was a pivotal time for cultivating a positive work culture for employees. In just 18 months, thanks to the commitment and legwork done by our HR department, LAS was successful with achieving a seven-point increase in our employee engagement rating. This increase signifies that the internal programs and policies in place to support our employees with their work, health and wellness are having a tangible impact to our overall workplace culture.

2022-2023 Employee Engagement Score: +7 points from previous

Legal Aid Saskatchewan has applied for recognition by HRDC Canada as a Best Place to Work, as well as the titles of Top 100 Employer in Canada and Saskatchewan. The success of our applications for these recognitions will be announced later this calendar year (fall 2023).

To support our strategic priority of purpose-driven teams producing exceptional outcomes, Legal Aid Saskatchewan accomplished the following key initiatives during the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

Streamlined Onboarding Orientation Program for all New Employees

The two-day onboarding orientation program was established in the final quarter of the 2021-2022 fiscal year and successfully hosted at regular intervals throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The purpose of an established orientation program is to ensure all staff have a thorough introduction to Legal Aid Saskatchewan, including our mission, our people and our programs. This process has a direct impact on employee retention rates. Our HR department and senior leadership guided 45 new employees and 4 Legal Directors through the orientation process in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

CTI Self-Care Training for all Employees

The self-care training program offered by the Canadian Training Institute is designed to help employees develop resiliency and create a personalized self-care plan. The program was launched as a trial with Head Office in Q3 of the 2022-2023 fiscal year and will continue to be offered to all Area Offices through 2023-2024. Through this program and its resources, employees work through a series of interactive modules to develop their personal resiliency and self-care plan. This initiative supports our strategic drivers of employee retention and organizational culture.

The following operational metrics support our commitment of fostering purpose-driven teams producing exceptional outcomes.





Strengthened organizational culture and staff engagement

Mechanisms to engage staff

Engaging employees is essential to retaining our top talent and a key piece to overall employee satisfaction. At an organizational level, engagement opportunities are available through:

- **Learn to Lead, Lead to Learn:** Open discussions focusing on various leadership topics held quarterly for all staff to participate.
- **Lunch and Learns:** This learning forum is facilitated internally by our Practice Management Counsel, Indigenous Policy Council, Staff Lawyers, and external presenters.
- **Town Halls:** These communication forums hosted by the CEO and senior management provides updates to staff on progress towards our strategic priorities.

At a local level, Legal Directors lead wellness committee activities, regular one-on-one meetings with staff, and encourage volunteer engagement with change initiatives. In addition to probation or trial reviews, all employees now have annual reviews as well and regular one-on-one meetings with their managers.

Improve staff recruitment and retention

Number of self-identified Indigenous employees

From the most recent Legal Aid Saskatchewan employee equity survey and from information gathered during new employee onboarding during the 2022-2023 fiscal year, 15.42% of employees self-identify as Indigenous.

15.42%
employees who self identify
as Indigenous

Number of applicants for positions

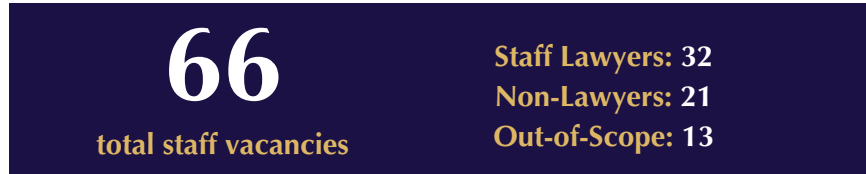
During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the average number of applications received for positions with Legal Aid Saskatchewan was 35.5. This includes all positions that were vacant and advertised.

- For every administrative position, an average of 144 applications were received
- For every lawyer position, an average of 3.84 applications were received

An average of
35.5
applications were received
for each posted position
with LAS

Staff vacancies

A position is considered vacant beginning on the day a person leaves the employment of Legal Aid Saskatchewan and ends on the date a new person starts in that same position. This vacancy rate does not include new positions. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, there were 66 staff vacancies.



Absenteeism

Sick days and unpaid leave are defined as time away from work (with or without pay) due to the illness of an employee or family member.

	2022-2023	5-year average
Lawyers:	10.3 days	8.84 days
Legal Assistants:	11.5 days	15.9 days
Admin Staff:	9.9 days	9.73 days
Out-of-Scope:	4.3 days	6.7 days



Time to fill an open position



The average amount of time it took to fill a position at Legal Aid Saskatchewan with an external candidate was 59.7 days. This is measured from the time the position is posted until the date the employee starts. This average will be used as a baseline in subsequent years.

- Average number of days to hire a lawyer: 64.25
- Average number of days to hire a non-lawyer: 43.3
- Average number of days to hire out-of-scope: 67

Cost to hire a new employee

There are several elements related to the cost of hiring a new employee. When a position is vacant, LAS hires casual/short term labour to fill the duties of that position and ensure our service delivery is maintained. There has been an increase of successful out-of-province applicants joining the Legal Aid Saskatchewan team, thus increasing the amount spent on relocation. With the hiring of our Human Resources Business Partner we have improved the hiring process and invested less on external recruiters to fill roles throughout the organization.



New hire retention rate

The percentage of new hires who remained employed with Legal Aid Saskatchewan over the course of the 2022-2023 fiscal year is 76.6%. This average will be used as a baseline in subsequent years.

76.6%

2022-2023 new hire retention rate



Mentor-mentee relationships

While we have informal mentor-mentee relationships in some Area Offices, Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Practice Management Counsel is currently developing a formal mentor-mentee program with the assistance of Legal Directors.



Accountable and Responsive Stewards

Legal Aid Saskatchewan is funded by appropriations from the provincial government, supported by federal government. The federal cost-share agreement applies only to criminal files, while the provincial government supplies funding for both criminal and family legal aid services. Legal Aid Saskatchewan commits to effective stewardship of the resources entrusted to us as champions for access to justice.

To support our strategic priority of accountable and responsive stewards, Legal Aid Saskatchewan accomplished the following key initiative during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Implementation of the Private Bar Billing Modernization Project

Legal Aid Saskatchewan conducted a review of our private bar lawyer services and payments process in order to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. The goal is to streamline the system and present best practices, for things such as standardizing approvals and payments. Standardized processes ensure efficient and consistent decision-making, response and payment to our valued private bar service providers, while remaining accountable to our mission. The development of a private bar billing portal will not only improve the process on the private bar side but will also introduce a reliable forecasting tool that supports our commitment to responsive decision making.

The following operational metrics support our commitment to the roles of accountable and responsive stewards.

Accountable and Responsive Stewards

Number of risks ranked medium or high without mitigation strategy.

Legal Aid Saskatchewan's General Counsel maintains a risk registry of all internal and external threats to the financial, operational, legal and reputational health of the organization. This registry is presented to the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission on a quarterly basis. During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Legal Aid Saskatchewan documented 11 risks in the risk registry. Of these 11 identified risks, all of them include a current and future mitigation strategy.



Percentage of permanent budget allocated to advance strategic goals

Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Department of Finance is currently restructuring its budget to ensure for the 2023-2024 fiscal year appropriate allocation of funds are directed towards our strategic priorities.

Percentage of private bar files completed within the tariff (no additional prep time authorized)

Beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Legal Aid Saskatchewan's Director of Private Bar Services has instituted a manual process to track this metric. As part of the Private Bar Billing Modernization project that is underway, LAS will easily be able to capture and analyze the percentage of private bar files completed within the tariff. Additional information captured with this process includes the number of files where additional requests were made, number of files where additional requests were approved, and the number of each category by law firm or lawyer. This work will inform any future tariff reviews.





Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the Commission's financial statements. This responsibility includes maintaining the integrity and objectivity of the Commission's financial records and presenting the financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting standards.

Management maintains an appropriate system of internal control, including policies and procedures, which provide reasonable assurance that the Commission's assets are safeguarded and that the financial records are relevant and reliable.

To ensure management meets its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control, the members of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission discuss audit and reporting matters with representatives of management at regular meetings.

The members of the Commission have also reviewed the financial statements with representatives of management. The members have approved in principle the Commission's financial statements for the year end March 31, 2023.

The Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan conducts an independent audit of the financial statements. Their examination is conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and includes tests and other procedures which allow them to report on the fairness of the financial statements. The Provincial Auditor's Report outlines the scope of the audit and the opinion.

Jayne Mallin
Chief Executive Officer

Ali Ahmed Jawaid
Acting Director, Finance and Information
Technology

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended March 31, 2023



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: The Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statement of operations and changes in accumulated surplus, statement of changes in net financial assets, and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission as at March 31, 2023, and the results of its operations, changes in net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards for Treasury Board's approval, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.



- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit.

Regina, Saskatchewan
June 29, 2023

Tara Clemett, CPA, CA, CISA
Provincial Auditor
Office of the Provincial Auditor

Statement 1

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at March 31

	2023	2022
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Financial Assets		
Cash	\$ 8,750,195	\$ 9,639,304
Accounts receivable	<u>19,087</u>	<u>88,293</u>
Total financial assets	<u>8,769,282</u>	<u>9,727,597</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities		
General	249,049	251,618
Private Solicitors' Fees	6,379,635	5,445,891
Employee Salaries and Benefits	790,742	791,314
Deferred Contributions (note 6)	<u>20,125</u>	<u>45,310</u>
Total liabilities	<u>7,439,551</u>	<u>6,534,133</u>
Net financial assets, (statement 3)	<u>1,329,731</u>	<u>3,193,464</u>
Non-financial assets		
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	87,869	82,704
Prepaid expenses	<u>225,555</u>	<u>193,958</u>
Total Non-financial assets	<u>313,424</u>	<u>276,662</u>
Accumulated surplus, (statement 2)	<u>\$ 1,643,155</u>	<u>\$ 3,470,126</u>

Contractual Obligations (note 7)
Contingent Liability (note 11)
(See accompanying notes)

Statement 2

**THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN ACCUMULATED SURPLUS
For the Year Ended March 31**

	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
	<u>(note 10)</u>		
Revenue			
Ministry of Justice	\$ 30,235,000	\$ 30,236,000	\$ 30,027,000
Grants	45,310	56,637	221,707
Other	<u>142,743</u>	<u>452,174</u>	<u>124,470</u>
Total revenue	<u>30,423,053</u>	<u>30,744,811</u>	<u>30,373,177</u>
Expense			
Salaries and employee benefits	20,127,172	19,995,428	17,849,719
Head Office administrative (schedule 1)	1,498,690	1,199,927	1,037,936
Area Office administrative and operating expenses (schedule 1)	2,047,843	2,380,281	1,989,872
Provision of legal services	7,104,400	7,857,615	7,118,157
Other legal expenses	207,250	151,201	166,809
Travel	811,700	923,218	511,912
Amortization of tangible capital assets	71,729	64,109	58,158
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	<u>---</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>---</u>
Total expense	<u>31,868,784</u>	<u>32,571,782</u>	<u>28,732,563</u>
(Deficit) surplus	<u>(1,445,731)</u>	<u>(1,826,971)</u>	<u>1,640,614</u>
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	<u>3,470,126</u>	<u>3,470,126</u>	<u>1,829,512</u>
Accumulated surplus, end of year (statement 1)	<u>\$ 2,024,395</u>	<u>\$ 1,643,155</u>	<u>\$ 3,470,126</u>

(See accompanying notes)

Statement 3

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS
For the Year Ended March 31

	2023		2022
	Budget	Actual	Actual
	(note 10)		
Operating (Deficit) surplus	\$ (1,445,731)	\$ (1,826,971)	\$ 1,640,614
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(100,000)	(69,277)	(85,436)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	71,729	64,109	58,158
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	---	3	---
	<u>(28,721)</u>	<u>(5,165)</u>	<u>(27,278)</u>
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	(191,502)	(225,555)	(193,958)
Use of prepaid expenses	<u>191,502</u>	<u>193,958</u>	<u>191,503</u>
	<u>---</u>	<u>(31,597)</u>	<u>(2,455)</u>
(Decrease) increase in net financial assets	(1,474,002)	(1,863,733)	1,610,881
Net financial assets, beginning of year	<u>3,193,464</u>	<u>3,193,464</u>	<u>1,582,583</u>
Net financial assets, end of year (statement 1)	<u>\$ 1,719,462</u>	<u>\$ 1,329,731</u>	<u>\$ 3,193,464</u>

(See accompanying notes)

Statement 4

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the Year Ended March 31

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash (used in) provided by		
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Appropriation funds received	\$ 30,236,000	\$ 30,027,000
Cash received from grants	106,602	26,900
Cash received from other revenue	445,021	124,471
Cash payments for salaries and benefits	(20,026,388)	(17,809,281)
Cash payments for other suppliers	(4,657,197)	(3,674,217)
Cash payments for legal services	<u>(6,923,870)</u>	<u>(5,591,121)</u>
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities	(819,832)	3,103,752
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of capital assets	<u>(69,277)</u>	<u>(85,436)</u>
Net (decrease) increase in cash	(889,109)	3,018,316
Cash, beginning of year	<u>9,639,304</u>	<u>6,620,988</u>
Cash, end of year	<u>\$ 8,750,195</u>	<u>\$ 9,639,304</u>

(See accompanying notes)

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
March 31, 2023

The Legal Aid Act came into force on September 1, 1983 by Order in Council 1275/83 and continued The Saskatchewan Community Legal Services Commission as a body corporate under the name of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission (Commission). The purpose of the Commission is to provide legal services to persons and organizations for criminal and civil matters where those persons and organizations are financially unable to secure those services from their own resources.

1. Significant Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards published by the Chartered Professional Accountants Canada (CPA Canada). A statement of remeasurement gains and losses has not been presented in these financial statements because all financial instruments are measured at amortized costs. The following policies are considered significant:

a) Revenue Recognition

Revenues are recognized in the period in which the transactions or events occurred that give rise to the revenues and when collection is reasonably assured. All revenues are recorded on an accrual basis.

Other revenue is comprised of client contributions, cost recoveries, interest and miscellaneous receipts.

Externally restricted inflows are deferred contribution when restrictions are placed on their use by the contributor, and are recognized as revenue when used for their specific purposes.

Government appropriations are recognized in the period the transfer is authorized and any eligibility criteria is met.

b) Expenses

Expenses are reported on an accrual basis. The costs of services incurred during the year are expensed.

c) Provision of Legal Services Expense

Provision of legal services expense include amounts billed by private bar lawyers to the Commission and an estimate of amounts of services performed by lawyers but not yet billed to the Commission.

d) Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost, which includes amounts that are directly related to the acquisition, design, construction, development, improvement, or betterment of the asset. Normal repairs and maintenance are expensed as incurred. The tangible capital assets are reduced annually by an amount representing the consumed cost of the asset calculated on a straight line basis as follows:

- 2 -	
Office Equipment and Furniture	7 years
Legal Aid Information Network (LAIN)	
Development Costs	3 years

Tangible capital assets are written down when conditions indicate that they no longer contribute to the Commission's ability to provide services, or when the value of future economic benefits associated with the tangible capital assets is less than their net book value. The net writedowns (if any) are accounted for as expense in the Statement of Operations.

e) Financial Instruments

All financial instruments are measured at fair value upon initial recognition. Cash is measured at fair value. Accounts receivable, accounts payable, accrued liabilities, and deferred contributions are measured at amortized cost. The Commission does not have any embedded derivatives in host contracts.

f) New accounting standards not yet in effect

A new Canadian public sector accounting standard is not yet in effect for governments and has not been applied in preparing these financial statements. The Commission plans to adopt the new standard on the effective date and is currently analyzing the impact this will have on these financial statements.

The following standards will become effective as follows:

- PS 3400 Revenue (effective April 1, 2023), a new standard on how to account for and report on revenue.

g) New Public Sector Accounting Standards

- PS 3280 Asset Retirement Obligations (effective April 1, 2022), a new standard on how to account for and report a liability for asset retirement obligations.

The Commission considered this new standard and determined there is no impact for the period indicated above.

2. Financial Risk Management

The management of the Commission mitigates the risks associated with financial instruments with regular reporting to the members of the Commission.

Credit Risk:

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a transaction will fail to discharge an obligation and cause the other party to incur a financial loss. The Commission's exposure to credit risk is from the potential of non-payment of grants or accounts receivable. The credit risk on the receivables is not material as most grants are received from the provincial appropriations and the other receivables are comprised of small amounts from contributions from clients.

Liquidity Risk:

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Commission is unable to meet its financial commitments as they become due. The Commission manages the liquidity risk from the monthly appropriations it receives from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice.

Market Risk:

Market risk represents the potential for loss from changes in the value of financial instruments due to changes in the market conditions. The Commission does not have any exposure to market risk.

3. Capital Management

The Commission's objective when managing its accumulated surplus is to ensure adequate resources exist to support the operations and growth strategies of the Commission.

The Commission obtains its funding from provincial appropriations through the Ministry of Justice. The Commission does not have any debt.

The Commission monitors and assesses its financial performance by a monthly variance analysis of actual and yearly projections to approved budget. The budget and variance analysis is approved by the members of the Commission. The management of the Commission also provide an appropriation forecast to the Ministry of Justice.

4. Pension Plan

The Commission participates in a defined contribution pension plan for the benefit of its employees. The Commission's financial obligation is limited to making regular payments to match the amounts contributed by the employees for current service. Until November 15, 2022, contributions were made to The Staff Pension Plan for Employees of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission (Plan). Thereafter, the Commission transitioned from the Plan to the Saskatchewan Public Employee Pension Plan (PEPP).

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission, the Trustees of the Plan and the Union Executive was undertaken to recommence participation in PEPP. The decision was endorsed by the Commission on June 24, 2022.

An amendment to terminate the Plan was filed for approval with Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan (FCAA) and approval was made on February 27, 2023, by the Deputy Superintendent of Pensions – FCAA. The Plan account balances held with the fund custodian, Manulife, were transferred to PEPP on April 27, 2023.

The Plan is administered and sponsored by a joint trustees arrangement. The joint trustees consist of four members, two appointed by the Commission and two appointed by C.U.P.E. Local 1949. The Commission provides day-to-day administration for the Trustees without charge to the Plan. Certain administration expenses of the Plan are initially paid by the Commission and are subsequently refunded by the Plan. As at March 31, 2023, the Plan owed \$1,900, (2022 - \$nil) to the Commission.

The Commission's annual pension expense included in salaries and benefits for 2023 amounted to \$978,404 (2022 - \$879,484).

5. Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets are comprised of the following amounts:

	Office Equipment and Furniture	LAIN Development Costs	2023 Total	2022 Total
Opening cost	\$ 238,831	\$ 717,771	\$ 956,602	\$ 871,166
Additions during the year	69,277	---	69,277	85,436
Disposals during the year	<u>(26,565)</u>	<u>---</u>	<u>(26,565)</u>	<u>---</u>
Closing Cost	<u>281,543</u>	<u>717,771</u>	<u>999,314</u>	<u>956,602</u>
Opening Accumulated Amortization	238,818	635,080	873,898	815,740
Amortization during the year	9,897	54,212	64,109	58,158
Disposal during the year	<u>(26,562)</u>	<u>---</u>	<u>(26,562)</u>	<u>---</u>
Closing Accumulated Amortization	<u>222,153</u>	<u>689,292</u>	<u>911,445</u>	<u>873,898</u>
Net book value of Tangible capital assets	\$ <u>59,390</u>	\$ <u>28,479</u>	\$ <u>87,869</u>	\$ <u>82,704</u>

The Commission did not have any write downs of tangible capital assets during the year.

6. Deferred Contributions and Grants

Deferred operating contributions represent externally restricted grants and contributions for which the related expense have not been incurred.

	2023	2022
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 45,310	\$ 164,967
Add: Grant contributions received or receivable in the year		
Law Foundation of Saskatchewan	7,152	75,150
Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Legal Aid Endowment Fund Trust	24,300	26,900
Less: Amounts recognized as revenue in the year	<u>(56,637)</u>	<u>(221,707)</u>
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 20,125</u>	<u>\$ 45,310</u>

The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan approved two grants during the year to Legal Aid Commission totalling \$ 93,400. The Commission recognized \$7,152 as a receivable from the Foundation for expenses incurred for the Trauma Informed Lawyering professional development project grant.

The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Endowment Fund Trust approved grants totalling \$30,625. During the year, the Trust made a payment of \$24,300 to the Commission for these grants.

7. Measurement Uncertainty and Contractual Obligations

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Areas where estimates are made include accrued private solicitors' fees and the related provision of legal service expense, amortization of tangible capital assets, non-vesting sick leave benefits, and contingent liabilities.

These estimates are based on the best information available at the time of preparation of the financial statements and are reviewed periodically to reflect new information as it becomes available. Measurement uncertainty exists in these financial statements and actual results could differ from those estimates.

The provision for services provided by members of the private bar that have not been billed on outstanding appointments is estimated at year end using a method that incorporates historical average costs and estimated time frames to complete similar cases. In addition to the liability for services provided to March 31, 2023, the Commission estimates \$923,446 (2022 - \$660,790) will be incurred on approximately 3,028 (2022 – 2,414) outstanding appointments issued to the private bar over and above both the billings paid to date and work performed but not yet billed.

The Commission carries leases for office equipment. Minimum lease payments for the next five fiscal periods, not including taxes, are as follows:

2024	\$102,020	2027	---
2025	\$ 98,850	2028	---
2026	\$ 74,138		

8. Related Party Transactions

These financial statements include transactions with related parties. The Commission is related to all Saskatchewan Crown Agencies such as ministries, corporations, boards, and commissions under the common control of the Government of Saskatchewan, as well as its key management personnel and their close family members. Additionally, the Commission is related to organizations where they have key management personnel and/or their close family members in common. Transactions with these related parties are in the normal course of operations and are settled on normal trade terms.

Facilities, vehicle rentals, office supplies, and miscellaneous office services are acquired from a related party. These transactions are recorded at agreed upon rates and settled on normal trade terms. Other operating transactions with related parties are settled at prevailing market prices under normal trade terms. These transactions and amounts outstanding at year end are as follows:

	2023	2022
Expenses	\$ 2,234,023	\$ 2,134,766
Accounts payable	74,299	42,390
Accounts receivable	---	---

Each year, the Commission receives 99% of its operating revenue as a government transfer from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice recorded as appropriations, and 1% from grants

and other sources. The Commission depends on funding from these sources for the continuance of its operations. During the year the Commission received \$30,236,000 from the Ministry, (2022 - \$30,027,000).

In addition, the Commission pays Provincial Sales Tax on all its taxable purchases. The Commission also received transcripts services without charge from the Ministry of Justice.

During the year, the Commission made payments of \$127,242 (2022 - \$127,242) to the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission Benefit Plan Surplus Fund (Fund) that is set up under the collective bargaining agreement between C.U.P.E. Local 1949 (Union) and the Commission. As outlined in the agreement, the Fund is jointly administered by the Commission and the Union through the Labour Management Relations Committee. The Commission provides the Fund with day-to-day administration. The intent of the Fund is to cover increased premium costs of the extended health care benefits for members of C.U.P.E. Local 1949. The increased premium costs are initially paid by the Commission, and for the year the Fund reimbursed the Commission \$129,809 (2022 - \$124,472) for the increased premium costs. The Fund had a balance of \$513,711 (2022 - \$491,209) which is not included in the Commission's statement of financial position.

Other transactions with related parties and amounts due to or from them are described separately in these financial statements and the notes thereto.

9. The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Legal Aid Endowment Fund Trust

A Trust Deed exists between the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan and the Trustees of The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Legal Aid Endowment Fund Trust (Trust). The Trust was established with an endowment to assist in the Commission's mandate by:

- a) improving access to justice for persons whose own financial resources are inadequate;
- b) enhancing the ability of all Commission employees to provide legal aid service to clients, including education, research and the acquisition of research, teaching and library materials by the Commission;
- c) providing funds for research in legal and social areas related to legal aid and access to justice; and
- d) assisting otherwise in the Commission's mandate in ways not traditionally covered by government funding, and with particular emphasis on novel or innovative programs or delivery methods.

An endowment amount of \$2,100,000 (2022 - \$2,100,000) has been provided to the Trust and only the net income from the Trust is available for the beneficiaries. The transactions and amounts in the Commission's financial statements related to activities of the Trust at year end are as follows:

	2023	2022
Grants	\$ 49,485	\$ 54,600
Deferred contributions	20,125	45,310

The Trust has five trustees, three of which are members of the Commission. They include:

- The Chair of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission
- A commissioner of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, appointed by the Law Society of Saskatchewan
- A commissioner of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, appointed by the Minister of Justice (Saskatchewan)

The Commission has authorized the utilization of its staff as may be reasonably required from time to time to provide administrative support to the Trust at no fee.

10. Budget

These unaudited amounts represent the operating budget approved June 2022 by members of The Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission.

11 Contingent Liability

The Commission has one outstanding legal claim as at March 31, 2023. The impact and likelihood of the outcome cannot be reasonably determined at this time.

THE SASKATCHEWAN LEGAL AID COMMISSION
SCHEDULE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING EXPENSES
For the Year Ended March 31

		2023		2022
	Budget (note 10)	Actual		Actual
Head Office Administrative and Operating Expenses				
Leased accommodation	\$ 219,652	\$ 171,814	\$	152,835
Computer leases, maintenance, and support	278,422	248,601		180,724
Stationery and office supplies	56,500	31,628		14,621
Telephone	28,850	18,562		26,928
Postage	15,780	14,053		13,869
Photocopying	4,150	3,053		3,021
Periodicals	1,425	1,835		2,167
Expenses related to Endowment Fund Grant	45,310	49,485		54,600
Expenses related to Law Foundation Grant	---	7,152		81,671
Pandemic Expenses	50,000	4,878		43,184
Professional fees and legal costs	235,000	69,641		142,796
Other operating expenses	<u>563,601</u>	<u>579,225</u>		<u>321,520</u>
Total Head Office Administrative and Operating expenses (statement 2)	<u>\$ 1,498,690</u>	<u>\$ 1,199,927</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>1,037,936</u>
Area Office Administrative and Operating Expenses				
Leased accommodation	\$ 1,143,400	1,187,703	\$	1,081,910
Computer leases, maintenance, and support	160,266	339,675		148,243
Stationery and office supplies	153,500	177,795		165,478
Telephone	121,150	122,524		121,008
Postage	44,220	52,320		44,390
Photocopying	57,850	55,336		56,718
Periodicals	22,575	16,947		18,051
Other operating expenses	<u>344,882</u>	<u>427,981</u>		<u>354,074</u>
Total Area Office Administrative and Operating Expenses (statement 2)	<u>\$ 2,047,843</u>	<u>\$ 2,380,281</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>1,989,872</u>



Glossary

Alternative dispute resolution: Refers to the different ways people can resolve disputes without a trial.

Application: A formal written request for legal assistance. Related legal matters mentioned at the time of application are included on one application. Separate applications are counted for criminal, family, and to a very minor extent, civil and provincial offence matters.

Brydges Service: Refers to Duty Counsel Advice provided by telephone to detained persons by contract lawyers. This service is available to all individuals detained for a crime regardless of range of service or their eligibility for the full services of LAS.

Duty Counsel Advice: Immediate advice, by telephone or in person, to arrested or detained persons, irrespective of financial status, provided by a LAS staff lawyer or most likely through the Brydges Service.

Duty Counsel Service: Legal services provided by a lawyer to in-custody individuals where the person has not applied in writing requesting legal aid representation. Duty Counsel Service is provided irrespective of financial status and consists of either the entry of a guilty plea or a show cause hearing. If the client's case is not resolved, they are encouraged to apply for full-service representation.

Family Matters: Refers to proceedings related to divorce, separation, support, custody/access and other matters of a family law nature. These matters also include child protection proceedings.

Federal Criminal Matters (Adults): Refers to matters under the Criminal Code of Canada, Narcotic Control Act, Food and Drug Act or other Federal Statutes, if the proceedings are by way of indictment; or, if upon conviction and sentence, there is a likelihood of imprisonment or loss of livelihood.

Federal Criminal Matters (Youth) refers to matters under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Financial Eligibility: Refers to the process and decision made regarding an application based on the applicant's financial information about income, and dependents in assets; the decision can be in favour of or against eligibility.

Opened Files: These are applications that have been approved on or after April 1, 2022 and as of March 31, 2023 and have been worked on by a lawyer during this time frame. As of March 31, 2023, these files may be active, completed or abandoned by the client.

Summary Advice: Refers to the provision of legal advice, information or any other type of minimal legal service by a lawyer to an individual involving no more than a brief interview or telephone call.

Therapeutic Courts: Saskatchewan's Provincial Court has different Therapeutic Courts to address social and personal issues underlying or causing a person's criminal behaviour, such as addictions and mental illness. This includes Domestic Violence Court, Drug Treatment Court and Mental Health Court.







*Inclusive, responsive and equitable
justice in Saskatchewan.*

