

HRLSC Human Rights Legal Support Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

CAJDp Centre d'assistance juridique
en matière de droits de la personne

Ontario 

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre provides services throughout Ontario and has lawyers located in Toronto, Guelph, Hamilton, London, Thunder Bay, and Windsor. Accordingly, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabeg, Attawandaron and Leni-Lunaape, the Métis homeland and particularly the Mississauga of the Credit. The place now called Ontario is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and operate in this land.

The HRLSC also recognizes and acknowledges we are in the territory subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Anishinaabeg and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the land and waters of the Great Lakes region.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (“HRLSC”), we are pleased to present the Attorney General of Ontario with 2019 - 2020 Annual Report.

Human rights concerns are experienced by many Ontarians at some point in their lives; whether it is as an employee facing discrimination because of disability, a family being harassed in their rental housing because of their religion, a student being sexually harassed at a co-op placement or a shopper racially profiled in a store. The HRLSC’s services are integral to the human rights system, helping to ensure that claims of discrimination are heard, addressed and resolved, making Ontario a stronger and more equitable place to live and work.

One of the HRLSC’s cases this year particularly underscored the need for robust human rights systems and protections to address and dismantle racial discrimination. The case involved a six-year old Black child who was restrained and handcuffed at her wrists and ankles by the police at her school. The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario found the “officers’ actions were an overreaction” arising out of subconscious racial biases and, consequently, that the student’s human rights were violated.

One of the significant challenges the HRLSC managed through this year was the loss of our project funding for the Mediation Program. The Mediation Program, which had been in place for five years, increased the HRLSC’s capacity to provide legal support to individuals filing a human rights application and to those needing representation at human rights mediations. Despite the need to scale back services, satisfaction with our

services remained tremendously high, with 97% of responses to our surveys rating our services as good or very good.

The HRLSC will continue to seek the support of our funder to ensure that we have the resources necessary to maintain high level legal services for Ontarians.

In March 2020, facing the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HRLSC continued offering its services by becoming fully remotely operational within two weeks of Ontario's declaration of a state of emergency.

Four board members, Mary Gusella, Nancy Gignac, Kowthar Omar and Gilles LeVasseur, finished their terms this year. Mary and Nancy were long serving members, who guided the HRLSC with thoughtfulness and wisdom in its start-up and growth years. Kowthar and Gilles joined us later and brought keen interest and new perspectives. As we expressed appreciation and goodbyes to these previous board members, we welcomed a new member, Mary Joe Freire.

We are grateful to all the board members for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and expertise. We also want to thank the HRLSC's staff, located the across the province, for their dedication, compassion and hard work through this challenging and unpredictable year. Their expertise, fortitude and engagement with the issues and the HRLSC's clients are the core of our organization and our work on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Ena Chadha, Chair



Sharmaine Hall, Executive Director



WHAT WE DO:

OUR MANDATE AND SERVICES

The HRLSC is an independent agency funded by the Government of Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General.

MANDATE

The HRLSC advances equality and protects human rights by providing a range of accessible, high quality legal and support services to those who have faced discrimination contrary to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination means treating someone differently and unfairly because of a personal characteristic such as race, disability, age or gender.

Grounds of discrimination

The *Human Rights Code* prohibits unfair treatment in specific areas of our lives that is based on any of the following personal characteristics.

- Race
- Ancestry
- Citizenship
- Disability
- Family status
- Gender identity
- Age
- Receipt of public assistance¹
- Sex, including sexual harassment and pregnancy
- Colour
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Creed (religion)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender expression
- Marital status
- Record of offences²

Areas covered by the *Code*

The *Code* provides protection from discrimination in five areas of daily life, known as social areas.

- Employment
- Housing
- Services, goods and facilities
- Contracts
- Membership in a union or vocational association

¹ This ground applies only to claims about housing.

² This ground applies only to claims about employment.

OUR SERVICES

The HRLSC provides free legal help to individuals across Ontario who have been subjected to discrimination in a social area that is covered by the *Code*. The HRLSC helps people who bring their human rights concerns to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (the “Tribunal” or HRTO).

- We offer a **toll-free telephone advice service** that helps callers to identify discrimination, understand their options, and decide if they should take legal steps.
- Our **legal services**, including advice and representation, assist clients with:
 - **filing human rights applications** at the Tribunal
 - **negotiating settlements;**
 - **attending mediations and hearings** at the Tribunal; and
 - **enforcing** a Tribunal order after a successful hearing or negotiated settlement.
- Our **online tools and guides**, along with our social media platforms, provide a gateway to Ontario’s human rights legal system.
- Our **services for Indigenous people** assist those who want to access the human rights process in Ontario and receive free legal help from an Indigenous staff person at the HRLSC. We provide this service in recognition of the fact that Indigenous peoples have not traditionally used the human rights process as the western legal perspective is foreign to the worldviews of many Indigenous peoples. The HRLSC is committed to providing Indigenous people with a culturally appropriate and accessible service.

ACTIVITIES

Partnerships and programs, notable cases and settlements, media coverage and organizational projects provide an overview of the HRLSC's endeavours this year.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

Increasing awareness and creating connections

New Services for Survivors of Workplace Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange (SHARE)

In the fall of 2019, with funding from the **Department of Justice Canada**, the HRLSC began detailed planning for the implementation of [*SHARE*](#), a new service to support workers who have been sexually harassed or assaulted at work. [*SHARE*](#) will launch in April 2020.

[*SHARE*](#) will offer free, culturally safe and accessible support services, including information and advice about all available legal and community resource options to assist survivors in making informed decisions about which, if any, steps they would like to take to address their concerns about being subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace.

"All workers have the right to work in safe environments that are free from discriminatory gender and sexual harassment."

SHARE

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic Partnership

The HRLSC's partnership with the Schlifer Clinic, which began a few years ago, continued this year through [SHARE](#). The partnership allows the Schlifer Clinic to refer their clients directly to [SHARE](#) to give them quick access to legal information and advice. This system of direct referral ensures that clients don't have to repeat their stories multiple times when accessing legal and support services.

Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Eliminating Racial Profiling in Law Enforcement

The HRLSC was pleased to support the Ontario Human Rights Commission's new [Policy](#), which makes specific recommendations about identifying and preventing both individual and systemic racial profiling in law enforcement. It is the first policy of its kind in Canada.

"Racial profiling is a daily reality for Black people in Ontario. Whether driving, shopping or simply walking down the street, they face unjustified invasive and discriminatory behaviour, scrutiny and treatment."

Sharmaine Hall, HRLSC's Executive Director

Law Student Program

Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program (ADIP)

Each year, the HRLSC welcomes 12 students (6 each semester) from Osgoode Hall Law School's intensive program. This energetic collaboration provides development opportunities for the students and the HRLSC.

- Students develop specialized knowledge of anti-discrimination law.
- Participating in the human rights application process from beginning to end allows students to build transferable litigation and mediation skills.
- Students gain practical experience with front line legal services.
- The HRLSC gains increased intake service capacity.

"Thank you for providing us with such a valuable learning experience [...] for sharing your knowledge and expertise so openly with us [...] Most importantly, we take away from our experience at the Center a sense of community and solidarity in this line of work. Getting to work in a collaborative and supportive environment with people who are dedicated to defending human rights was inspiring".

ADIP Student

Indigenous Services

Outreach and Advisory Initiatives

Mobile Legal Clinic and Public Legal Education

Indigenous services staff in London continued to participate in the Indigenous Mobile Legal Clinic, hosted by N’Amerind Friendship Centre. The Clinic offers free legal consultations to local Indigenous community members in several areas, including human rights. HRLSC staff also provided a legal education session at N’Amerind as part of our ongoing partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group

The HRLSC’s Indigenous Services Outreach Committee joined the Advisory Group this year. This group brings in-depth knowledge of discrimination and inequality experienced by Indigenous people and guides the OHRC’s decision-making as it seeks to show how the vision of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* can be used to understand, interpret and implement human rights for Indigenous peoples under Ontario’s *Human Rights Code*.

Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) - Indigenous Human Rights Program Advisory Council

The HRLSC’s Indigenous services staff are on the Advisory Council that will guide the design and launch and later evaluate PBSC’s pilot program over the next two years.

HRLSC Staff in the Community

Legal Education and Training

The HRLSC is pleased to participate in community and continuing legal educational programs. This year's forums and panels included:

- the annual **Human Rights Summit** at the Law Society of Ontario;
- a panel on addressing the experiences of Black students on campus for **Afrofest** at the University of Windsor;
- training for the staff of the **Worker's Action Centre**;
- a workshop on human rights as part of the **Canadian National Institute for the Blind's** Educate to Advocate initiative;
- a session on the *Human Rights Code* and the duty to accommodate for a **Disability Law** class at York University;
- training on workplace dispute resolution at **Osgoode Law School**;
- a presentation about the changes that were made to the procedures at the Human Rights Tribunal at the **Ontario Bar Association**;
- a presentation about Ontario's human rights system at Ryerson University's **Access to Justice Week**;
- a workshop at **George Brown College** for a human rights course on housing and homelessness; and
- a presentation on Ontario's Human Rights System to a Politics, the Law and Judicial Process in Canada class at **York University**.

NOTABLE SETTLEMENTS

Settlements can change policies and practices

Hospital to Ensure Deaf Patients Have ASL Interpretation

A woman who is deaf was not provided with an ASL interpreter or any other communication supports when she visited the emergency department of a hospital.

The HRLSC negotiated a settlement that included:

- provision, upon request, of American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation through Video Remote Imaging (VRI) to any person who is deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing who is seeking services at the hospital's emergency department or urgent care clinic;
- training and a tip sheet for clinic and emergency department staff on how to arrange for VRI; and
- \$3,750 in general damages.

Training on Racial Bias in School

A racialized student had been bullied at school, including racially focused taunts, threats and physical violence. No actions were taken by the school with respect to this bullying.

A few months later, the two white classmates who had bullied the student alleged the student had now bullied them. The school's response was entirely different to the complaints of the white classmates. The school did a full investigation into these complaints.

The HRLSC negotiated a settlement that included:

- training on unconscious racial bias for the school staff and administration;
- letter of regret from the Principal; and
- \$16,000 in general damages.

Police Service Agrees to Pilot Project for Sexual Assault Cases

A 21-year old was sexually assaulted by an acquaintance at a dinner at her friend's house. She reported the assaults to the police and was told a month later that her case had been deemed 'unfounded'.

The HRLSC negotiated a settlement that included:

- a process for reviewing all claims of sexual assault that do not result in charges being laid, including review by a panel that includes violence against women advocates;
- an annual report that outlines the findings of the reviews, including the recommendations made and the actions taken in response;
- publicly available annual reporting on the progress of this pilot project; and
- human rights training for the officers involved.

NOTABLE CASES

Cases decided at Tribunal hearings

Tribunal finds police racially discriminated against six-year-old Black girl restrained and handcuffed at school

JKB v. Peel (Police Services Board), [2020 HRTO 172](#)

Two officers from Peel Regional Police carried a six-year-old Black girl to the office of her school, laid her on her stomach and handcuffed her wrists and ankles. She remained cuffed for 28 minutes. The decision by the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario on February 24, 2020, described the ordeal as a "a clear overreaction" and stated that while the officers had a legitimate duty to maintain safety "this did not give them licence to treat the applicant in a way that they would not have treated a White six-year-old child in the same circumstances."

"This case shows how implicit racial bias, and untrained officers can be a recipe for disaster. Police Service Boards across the province must take concrete steps to ensure that Black children, like all other children, are treated with compassion and respect."

Roger Love, HRLSC lawyer

The applicant and her family are protected under a publication ban.

Citizenship and Work Eligibility

Haseeb v. Imperial Oil Limited, [2019 HRTO 1174](#)

Mr. Haseeb was an international engineering student at McGill University. Upon graduation, he would become eligible for a three-year post graduate work permit. During his final term at McGill, he applied for an entry level position with Imperial Oil. Imperial Oil offered him a position. Shortly after, Imperial Oil revoked its job offer because he did not have permanent status in Canada but only a three-year work permit.

The HRLSC represented Mr. Haseeb at his liability and remedy hearings. In its liability decision in 2018, the Tribunal found that the requirement was discriminatory on the grounds of citizenship and acted as a complete bar to anyone who is not a citizen or permanent resident. The decision also stated that the permanent residency/citizenship requirement was not genuine, or bona fide, because it was not rationally linked to the performance of the job.

In its remedy decision in August 2019, the Tribunal awarded Mr. Haseeb \$15,000 in general damages and \$101,363.16 for lost wages. Public interest remedies were not ordered by the Tribunal because of the Respondent's evidence that, in response to the Tribunal's 2018 decision, it had changed its recruitment and hiring policies and procedures to remove the permanent residency/citizenship requirement.

Pregnant Assistant Fired

Mannen v. Dr. Monika Spolia Dentistry Professional Corporation, [2019 HRTO 774](#)

Three months after she started working as a dental assistant, Ms. Mannen found out that she was pregnant and told her supervisor about it. A week later, she was asked to train a new assistant and her employment was terminated.

The Tribunal found that Ms. Mannen's employment had been terminated because of her pregnancy and awarded her \$20,000 in general damages and \$929.85 in lost wages and ordered the employer to provide training to staff on human rights and develop a workplace human rights policy.

In the Media

Informing the public

The HRLSC's cases regularly receive media coverage, which helps to inform and educate the public about human rights issues and discrimination, the human rights system and our services.

Our notable cases received news coverage and our services were mentioned in a variety of columns and publications this year.

"If you need assistance navigating this situation, you should contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre or an employment lawyer who can advise you . . ."
Toronto Star column

- [Global News](https://globalnews.ca/news/6619593/girl-handcuffed-peel-police-human-rights-tribunal-ruling/): <https://globalnews.ca/news/6619593/girl-handcuffed-peel-police-human-rights-tribunal-ruling/>
- [City News](https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2019/09/20/policy-tackling-racial-profiling-in-law-enforcement-unveiled/): <https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2019/09/20/policy-tackling-racial-profiling-in-law-enforcement-unveiled/>
- [Toronto Star](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/03/27/worker-rights-live-chat-toronto-employment-lawyer-hermie-abraham-answers-your-questions-monday-at-noon-et.html): <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/03/27/worker-rights-live-chat-toronto-employment-lawyer-hermie-abraham-answers-your-questions-monday-at-noon-et.html>
- [Sudbury Star](https://www.thesudburystar.com/news/local-news/race-a-factor-when-cops-handcuffed-black-girl-6-at-school-tribunal/wcm/c2a56e81-fc75-443b-adf3-1e7a9e9ecbae): <https://www.thesudburystar.com/news/local-news/race-a-factor-when-cops-handcuffed-black-girl-6-at-school-tribunal/wcm/c2a56e81-fc75-443b-adf3-1e7a9e9ecbae>

ORGANIZATIONAL PROJECTS

Internal and external projects

Schulich School of Business

Enterprise Consulting Project

A team of MBA students from Schulich partnered with the HRLSC on a project with the dual aims of providing the HRLSC with **recommendations for the use of technology to increase website engagement and streamline intake services**, while giving the students valuable practical experience in data analysis and process innovation and improvement.

The HRLSC will be considering the one-time and ongoing costs and available funding to determine the feasibility of advancing the project's recommendations.

Audit and Accountability

Review

The Ontario Internal Audit Division reviewed the human rights system as part of the 2019-2020 Ontario Public Service-Wide Audit Plan. One phase of the review assessed the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the HRLSC's operations. We expect to receive the report from the system wide review in 2020-2021.

Strategic Plan

Update

The HRLSC began the process of reviewing and updating its strategic plan this year to respond to new and emerging opportunities and challenges throughout the province and the human rights system.

Responding to the Pandemic

COVID-19

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and as the outbreak evolved throughout the latter part of the fiscal year, the HRLSC:

- published information on our website; and
- quickly adapted the information provided to callers to our inquiry lines regarding common *Code*-based human rights concerns.

The pandemic had far reaching effects on many aspects of community life, including the workplace, housing and public services, such as medical services and schools. Human rights concerns we heard about in the context of the pandemic included:

- workers suspected of having COVID-19 simply because of their race, place of origin or disability;
- employment-related health and safety issues; and
- issues related to family status, including accommodations for workers with childcare responsibilities who were working at home.

The HRLSC is committed to working to protect those who are disproportionately impacted and to addressing discrimination that might arise during or after emergency or unexpected situations.

ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

An agile service model and comprehensive data collection underpin the HRLSC's responsiveness to changing environments and service demands.

SUMMARY

Results

- The HRLSC's service volumes decreased in many service areas. Indigenous service volumes remained high.
- Settlement rates at mediations and hearings remained consistent with or higher than previous years.
- Client satisfaction rates increased from previous years.

Factors that impacted results

- The withdrawal of project funding for the Mediation Program, contributed to the reduced service volume.
- Backlogs and delays at the Tribunal likely caused the decline in requests for service for hearings, and, to a lesser degree, mediations.
- The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the decline in requests for services in all areas during February and March 2020.
- Staff turnover on the intake lines and among senior counsel reduced capacity to respond to initial inquiries and provide legal representation.
- Retaining mid-level staff contributed to the high settlement and satisfaction rates and the flexible service model helped to manage the impact of changes.

STATISTICS

Providing legal services to thousands of people each year

19,084 Initial inquiries answered

13,409 Individuals received free legal assistance about a potential *Human Rights Code* infringement

1,841 Individuals received in-depth legal services from our lawyers and legal representatives

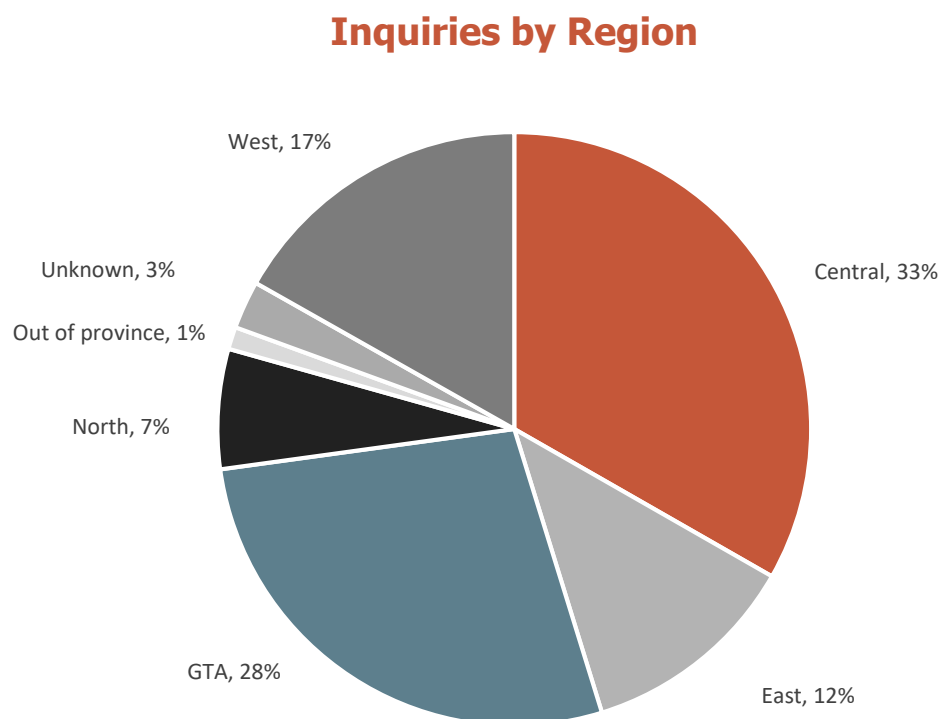
367 Mediations attended

368 Cases settled throughout the process—before a claim was filed, before or at mediation or before a hearing

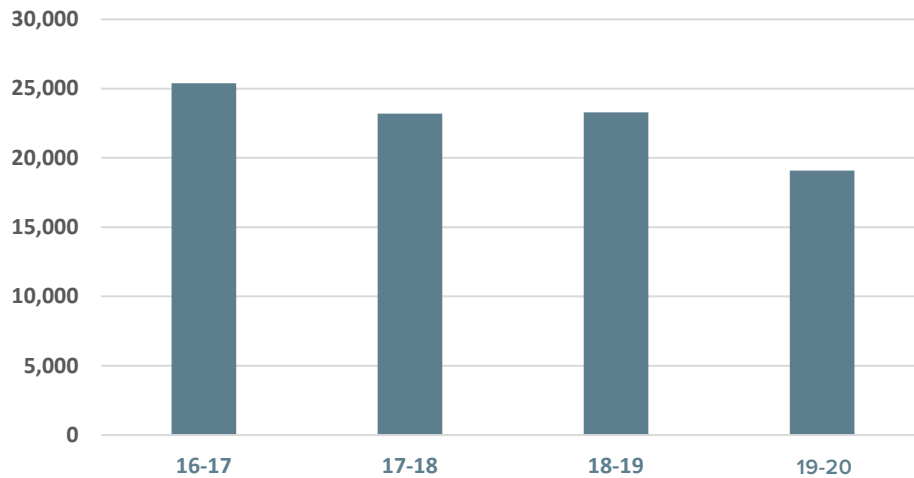
279,598 Visits to our website

Inquiries About Human Rights and Discrimination

Responding to inquiries from across Ontario



Number of Inquiries Answered



The number of responses to initial inquiries (or intakes) decreased by 17% from the previous year. There were decreases in the number of incoming inquiries (i.e. intake service demand) and the HRLSC's capacity to respond to inquiries (i.e. intake services provided).

- Externally, there were fewer requests for hearing and mediation services because of scheduling delays at the Tribunal. The HRLSC saw a reduction in the number of inquiries received in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (the last two months of the fiscal year), while noting that an increasing number were related to COVID-19 concerns.
- Internally, less in-depth legal service available required the inquiry line staff to spend more time with callers, which increased the length of calls and reduced the number of inquiries that could be answered. Turnover of inquiry line staff also periodically reduced our capacity.

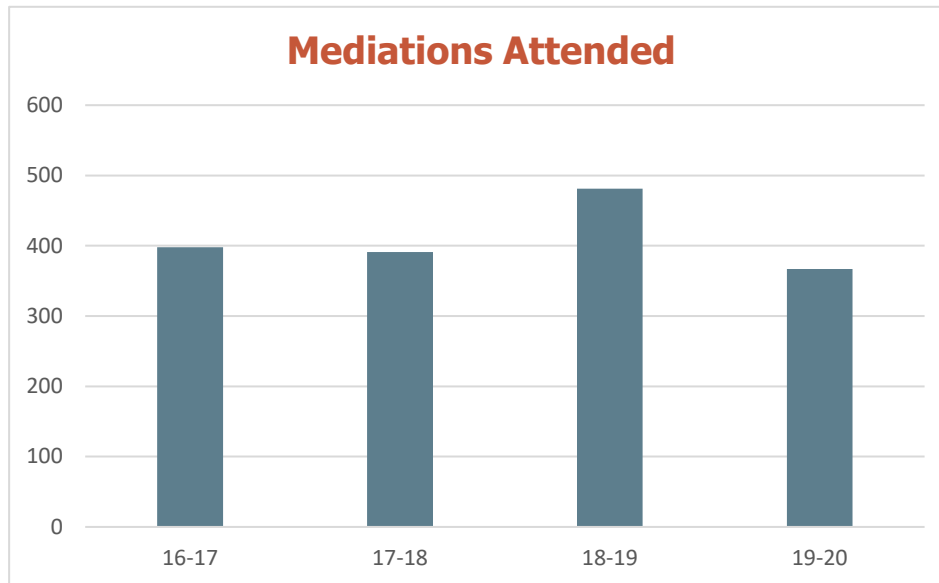
In-Depth Legal Services



The HRLSC provided in-depth legal services to 1,841 individuals filing human rights applications or attending a Tribunal mediation or hearing. This was an expected decrease in services, mainly due to the loss of our project funding for the Mediation Program.

- The service reduction for early stage (or application) interviews was expected to match the 50% staffing loss. The actual reduction for in-depth application interviews was 41% from last year. These better than expected results were due to managing vacancies to allow a higher level of staffing for part of the year and retention of experienced staff in this service area.

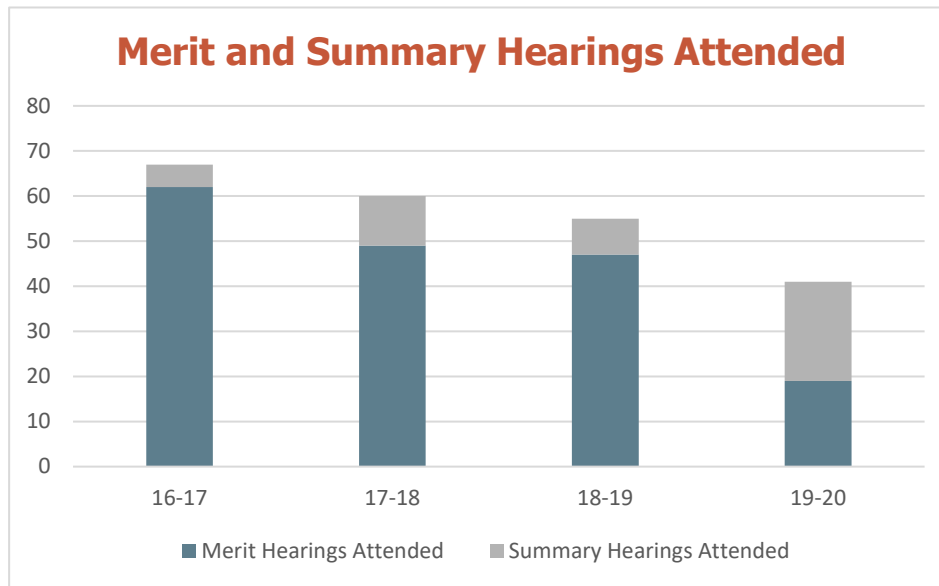
Representation at Mediations



We provided legal representation for mediations to 367 people, almost 70% of those who contacted us about their mediation.

- The decrease was primarily a consequence of the loss of counsel positions due to the funding reduction, as well as a decrease in the number of mediations held by the Tribunal.
- Scheduling coordination with the Tribunal helped the HRLSC to plan and allocate staffing to respond to periodic fluctuations in the number of mediations held and contributed to achieving these results.

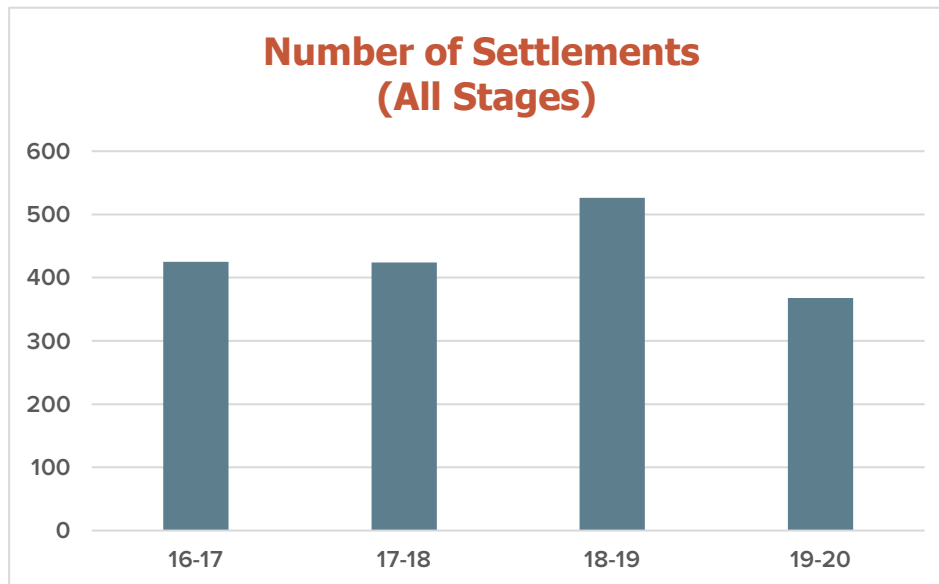
Representation at Hearings



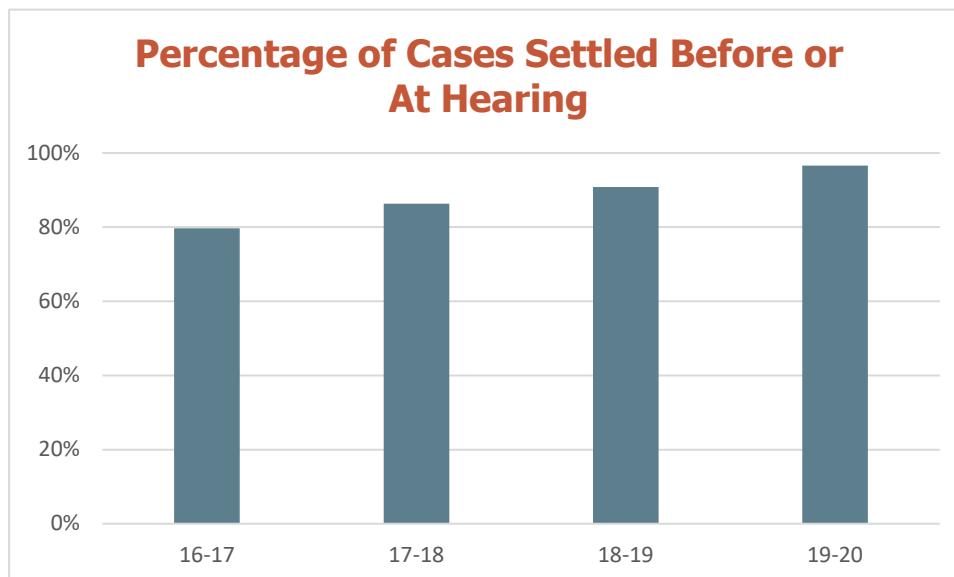
This year HRLSC counsel provided representation at 19 merit hearings (fewer than in previous years) and 22 summary hearings (more than in previous years).

- The lower number of merit hearings was due in part to a 33% reduction in requests for representation at the hearing stage because of delays at the Tribunal.
- The loss of senior counsel through the year also reduced our capacity to provide representation at merit hearings.
- With reduced demand for merit hearing services, the HRLSC was able to provide more assistance at more summary hearings, representing at 22 summary hearings in 2019-2020 vs 8 the previous year.
- The HRLSC also increased its success in settling cases before a hearing. Only 3% of cases went on to a full merit hearing.

Settling Cases

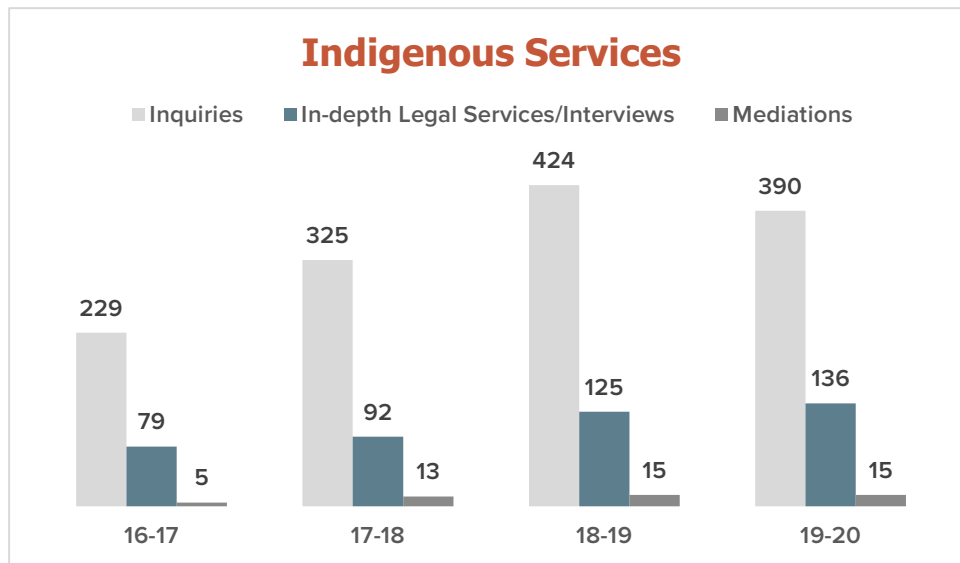


Settlements remove disputes from the Tribunal system, saving public and private costs of adjudication and increasing the speed and efficiency of the human rights system, while ensuring that applicants have legal help to address and remedy discrimination.



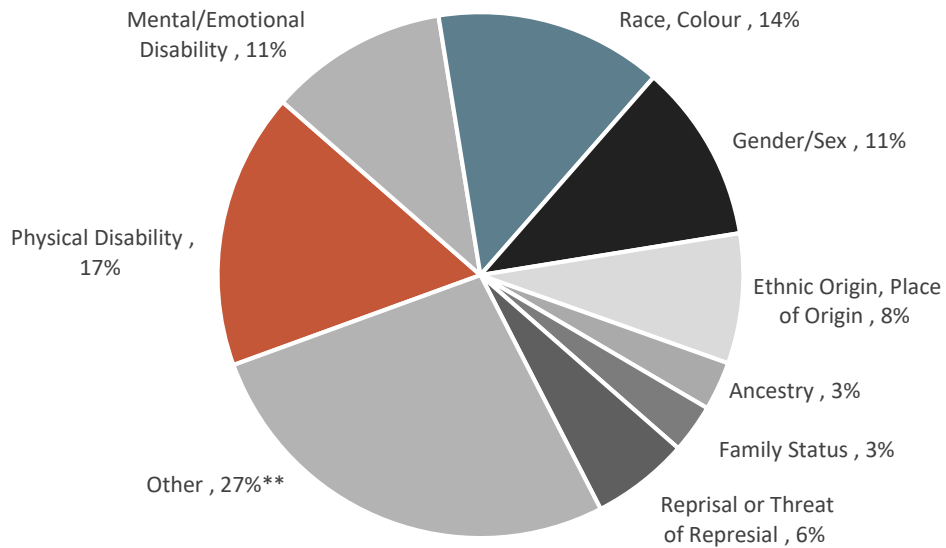
The percentage of hearing stage cases that settle before a hearing has increased consistently over the past four years. Expertise gained over the HRLSC's 12-year existence and relatively stable staffing among mid-level legal positions likely contributed to the high settlement rates this year.

Indigenous Services



The Indigenous services program continued to make a significant contribution to the HRLSC through 2019-2020, with service levels remaining relatively constant with the previous year. The HRLSC has Indigenous staff in Toronto, as well as in western and northern regions of the province. Their outreach initiatives and community connections are pivotal to the success of this program and the HRLSC's ability to continue to offer culturally appropriate services to Indigenous communities.

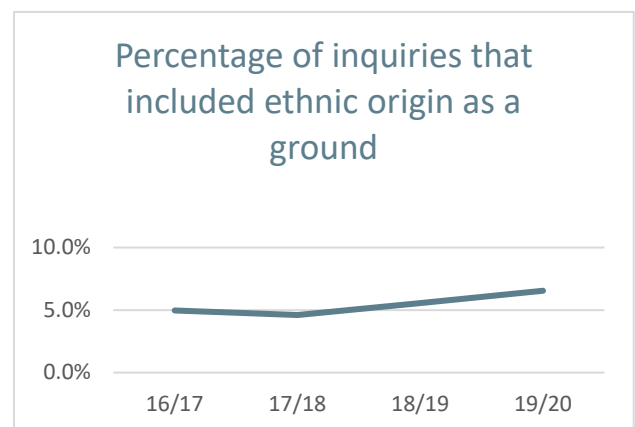
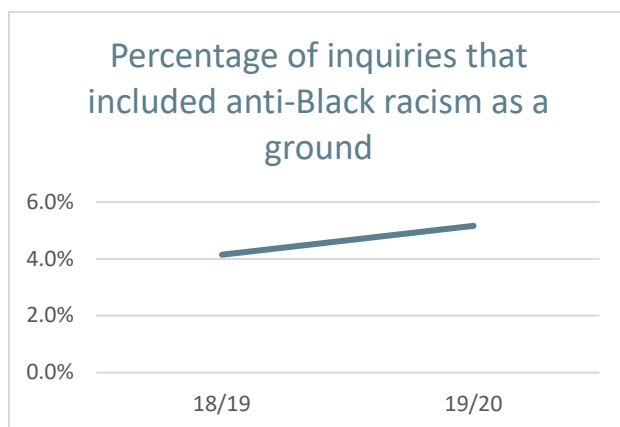
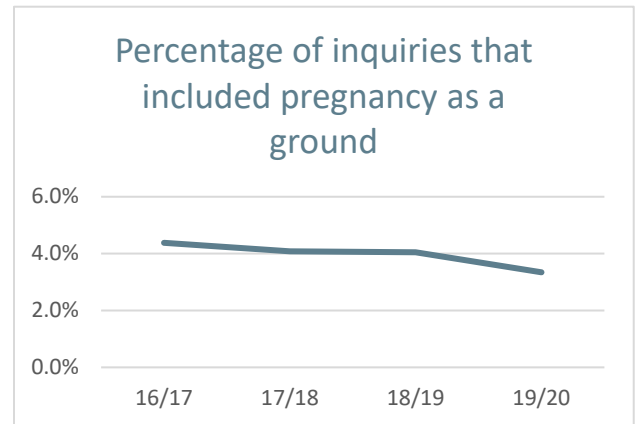
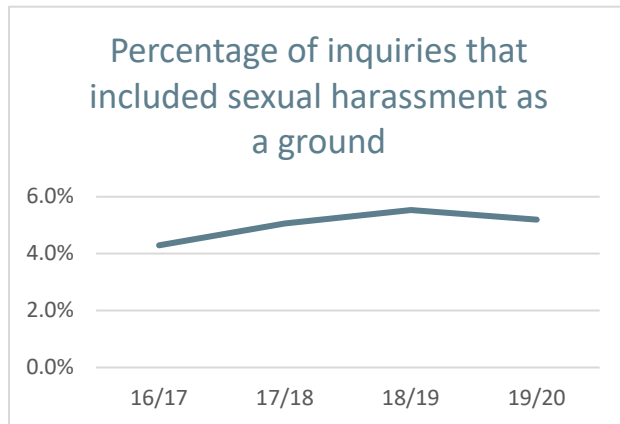
Most Common Grounds of Discrimination



*Includes: sexual harassment, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy.

** Includes all other grounds.

Changing Grounds



3

The HRLSC tracks specific grounds of discrimination in our cases to help us understand needs and plan our services. We identified a few changes in our data this year.

- The proportion of requests for services is generally increasing for claims of sexual harassment or discrimination because of ethnic origin or anti-Black racism.
- The proportion of requests for services for claims of discrimination because of pregnancy is declining.

We began collecting statistics for inquiries related to COVID-19 in March 2020.

³ Data only available for the last two fiscal years.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Ambitious goals to assess our results and service quality

2019-2020 Achievements

75% **84%**
TARGET ACHIEVED

Percentage of Hearing Cases Settled at a Hearing

The settlement rate at hearing was over the target. Retention of mid-level legal staff likely contributed to this result. When combined with the number of cases that settled before a hearing started, the settlement rate was 97%.

95 **86**
TARGET ACHIEVED

Number of Cases Settled Before or at Hearing

The target was not met due to fewer requests for HRLSC's hearing services because of delays at the Tribunal. The delays at the Tribunal were not anticipated and therefore not taken into consideration when the target was set. Additionally, the loss of two senior counsel also reduced our capacity to take on hearing stage cases. The HRLSC will monitor the Tribunal's hearing schedule and may adjust its target to better reflect a realistic number of hearing cases that can be expected and taken on.

66% **66%**
TARGET ACHIEVED

Settlement Rate at Mediation

The percentage of cases settled at mediation was maintained at the target rate, despite the reduction in capacity to provide representation due to the loss of our project funding for the Mediation Program. This continues to be an ambitious target, higher than was achieved in many previous years, and higher than what is generally achieved in Tribunal mediations.

70% 68%
TARGET ACHIEVED

Telephone Answer Rate

The HRLSC telephone answer rate was slightly below our target. The lower answer rate was due mainly to talk times on our inquiry lines being, on average, almost two minutes longer than the previous year. Longer talk times were due to the reduction in staffing for in-depth legal services as a result of the budget cut. The reduced capacity to provide in-depth legal services meant that the inquiry line staff spent more time answering questions on the initial call. The loss of experienced staff members, which was an indirect result of the loss of funding, was also a factor in the answer rate, as significant time is needed to train front line staff in this specialized area of law. The HRLSC continues to develop and pilot, within existing resources, staffing frameworks and IT tools to augment our inquiry line service.

70% 96%
TARGET ACHIEVED

Clients Who Rated Service as Good or Very Good

Although the HRLSC's feedback ratings are generally high, client feedback was exceptionally positive this year. Most clients indicated in the surveys that they were pleased with the legal assistance they received from the HRLSC. A general theme was the importance of there being "... **somewhere to go when facing** discrimination...". Suggestions for improvements included having more staff, shorter wait times and more assistance earlier in the process. Additionally, outside of client surveys, staff regularly receive thank you notes and other positive feedback from clients.

2 26
TARGET ACHIEVED

Positive Human Rights Stories in the Media that Featured the HRLSC's Legal Services

The HRLSC's cases and services continued to receive media coverage this year, exceeding the target. Most media coverage was in Ontario. Fewer cases received coverage this year, likely due to the loss of our Communication Coordinator position, the lower volume of cases and, late in the year, COVID-19.

RISK EVENTS

Many of the identified potential risks materialized this year. The most significant events were the result of externally driven circumstances.

1. Maintaining services after the loss of project funding for the HRLSC's Mediation Program

- The project funding loss resulted in reduced service capacity.
- The loss of our Communications and Outreach Coordinator position reduced our capacity to generate and maintain effective communication and outreach material and initiatives.

This risk was mitigated by planning service reductions and spreading them over several areas to lessen their impact on clients and the human rights system. The high settlement and satisfaction rates indicate that the mitigation strategies were effective.

2. Turnover among staff and inability to retain or replace lawyers

- The loss of staff also impacted our capacity to provide legal services most significantly at the early stage (answering inquiries) and at the later stage (representing clients at hearings).
- The HRLSC continues to face the challenge of retaining experienced lawyers; with a static permanent budget we are unable to maintain competitive salaries.

This risk has been mitigated by filling vacant positions with newly called lawyers. However, this practice is not a sustainable way to provide salary increases. To avoid the likelihood of layoffs, the HRLSC will continue to

seek the Ministry's support to address this looming hardship.

3. Service disruptions due to external factors

- The delays and backlogs at the Tribunal and the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our services this year.

Obtaining information from the Tribunal about their mediation and hearing scheduling plans was helpful with planning and prioritizing the HRLSC's staffing throughout the year.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on service demand and delivery near the end of the fiscal year, the HRLSC responded quickly to move staff in all areas to work from home with minimal service loss. This was due to the HRLSC's:

- flexible and nimble service model that allows for pivots in service priorities or delivery methods;
- modern IT systems; and
- experience with remote workers and practical approach to continuity planning.

4. Potential labour disruption

Labour negotiations were planned and managed with a cooperative approach and concluded successfully.

5. Potential negative media attention

Negative media coverage is an ongoing and unpredictable risk inherent to providing legal services to the public. The HRLSC's case selection criteria and team approach support the effective management of this risk.

ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Cost Allocation

Funding Source	Expense	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
Ministry of the Attorney General					
	Salaries & Benefits	86%	86%	87%	87%
	Operating	14%	13%	13%	13%
	Board	1%	1%	1%	1%
Department of Justice Canada (new)					
	Salaries & Benefits				70%
	Operating				30%

The proportion of expenses for staffing, operating and Board costs remained consistent with previous years.

Salaries and benefits continue to be the highest proportion of the HRLSC's costs. The HRLSC has effectively managed funds to maintain stability in each major budget area over the past four years to optimize service delivery and accurately reflect service costs. Expenditures and costs are monitored and assessed to ensure appropriate and balanced allocations in each budget area to support and maximize services.

Cost Summary

	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
Ministry of the Attorney General				
Salaries & Benefits	5,057,423	4,968,821	4,880,405	4,180,009
Operating	940,589	734,415	749,922	603,024
Board	36,521	41,040	25,919	32,223
Total	6,034,533	5,744,276	5,656,246	4,815,256
Department of Justice Canada (new)				
Salaries & Benefits				170,999
Operating				71,676
Total				242,675

The HRLSC had been working with a reasonably static budget from 2016 to 2019 and the withdrawal of the project funding for the Mediation Program in the 2019-2020 fiscal year created fiscal challenges in maintaining competitive salaries and adequate staffing levels.

The funding reduction caused the elimination of positions, which resulted in lower costs in 2019-2020. Temporary vacancies caused by staff turnover also contributed to the lower salary and benefit costs.

The lower costs in operating expenses were due mainly to significantly lower travel and regional office costs as a result of the staff reductions, fewer hearings due to the delays at the Tribunal, and, later in the year, the COVID-19 pandemic. The lower regional office costs were due to the ongoing initiative to move regional staff to home offices. This move to home offices began a few years ago, well before the pandemic.

Board costs were higher this year as vacant Board positions from the previous year were filled. The Board costs were exceptionally low in 2018-2019 due to vacancies.

Expenses for the *SHARE program*, funded by the Department of Justice Canada, reflect partial year costs, as the program became operational partway through the fiscal year.

Costs are effectively managed through monitoring, analysis and responsive and timely decision-making, which is supported with an agile service delivery model. The most significant financial challenge for the HRLSC continues to be maintaining adequate staffing to maintain services and competitive salary levels to retain staff.

FULFILLMENT OF MANDATE LETTER

Priority

Support the Ministry of the Attorney General's priorities by promoting access to justice, finding efficiencies and improving the services of Ontario's court and adjudicative tribunal systems. Continue to carry out the agency's responsibilities as set out in the *Human Rights Code*.

Support the government's evidence-based decision-making framework to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable.

Support the government's Open Government initiative to demonstrate a more open and transparent government including the application of the Open Data Directive.

Continue to manage the Mediation Program and make best efforts to meet performance targets.

Continue to build on the work that has begun with the cross appointments with the OHRC and the joint work with the OHRC and HRTO to improve Ontario's human rights system and reporting on its progress.

Achievement

- Responded to more than 19,000 inquiries about discrimination, providing legal information
- Provided in-depth legal services to almost 2,000 individuals; represented more than 300 applicants at mediations and hearings
- Maintained high rates of settlement before or at mediations or hearings
- Received consistently high client service ratings

- Collected and analyzed service data and trends to inform planning
- Operational performance sustained within available resources
- Financial and human resource strategies proven effective in bolstering sustainability

- Comprehensive open data available on HRLSC's website

- Mediation Program produced increased service levels and settlements over its five-year existence
- Unable to sustain service levels due to elimination of funding; despite this settlement rates were maintained in 2019-2020

- HRLSC/OHRC MOU signed in 2018
- HRLSC supported OHRC's policy on eliminating racial profiling in law enforcement
- No new cross appointment has been announced since November 2019.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Our Board

The HRLSC's Board members have been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for the following terms.

Appointee	Total Remuneration 19 - 20	Per Diem Remuneration Rate
Ena Chadha , Chair February 21, 2018 to February 20, 2021	\$ 14,376.40	\$566
Patrick Nadjiwan September 17, 2009 to December 11, 2020	\$ 1,875.00	\$375
Nancy Gignac September 17, 2009 to November 24, 2019	\$ 1,125.00	\$375
Mary Gusella September 17, 2009 to November 24, 2019	\$ 1,125.00	\$375
Karen Drake August 17, 2017 to August 16, 2020	\$ 1,875.00	\$375
Tamar Witelson February 8, 2018 to February 19, 2022	\$ 1,875.00	\$375
Gilles LeVasseur February 21, 2018 to February 20, 2020	\$ 2,812.50	\$375
Kowthar Omar February 21, 2018 to February 20, 2020	\$ 2,062.50	\$375
Mary Joe Freire February 21, 2020 to February 19, 2021	\$ 187.50	\$375
Total	\$ 27,313.90	not applicable

Our Staff

The HRLSC's staff members bring diverse professional experience and knowledge to our team. Our lawyers and paralegal staff are committed human rights advocates who come from community legal clinics, employment law firms, Legal Aid Ontario, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of the Attorney General and many community organizations.

HILBORN

LISTENERS. THINKERS. DOERS.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2020

HILBORN_{LLP}

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Directors of Human Rights Legal Support Centre

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Human Rights Legal Support Centre (the "Centre"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2020, and the statements of operations, net assets and 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 Centre as at March 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

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 Centre 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 the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, 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 ability of the Centre 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 Centre or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the financial reporting process of the Centre.

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 the 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.

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements (continued)

- 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 internal control of the Centre.
- 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 ability of the Centre 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 Centre 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 that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.



Toronto, Ontario
July 28, 2020

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Statement of Financial Position

March 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	900,095	570,586
Accounts receivable	15,249	7,033
HST recoverable	57,522	57,761
Prepaid expenses	61,280	115,114
	<u>1,034,146</u>	<u>750,494</u>
Long-term assets		
Property and equipment (note 4)	174,065	53,948
Intangible assets (note 5)	18,119	40,615
	<u>192,184</u>	<u>94,563</u>
	<u>1,226,330</u>	<u>845,057</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	407,814	385,380
NET ASSETS (note 6)	<u>818,516</u>	<u>459,677</u>
	<u>1,226,330</u>	<u>845,057</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Director

Director


Martial Morneau

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Statements of Operations

Year ended March 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenues		
Ministry of the Attorney General	5,122,700	5,821,400
Legal Aid Ontario	-	174,555
Department of Justice Canada	339,709	-
Other income	10,562	13,671
	<u>5,472,971</u>	<u>6,009,626</u>
Expenditures		
Salaries and wages	3,446,220	4,131,045
Employee benefits (note 7)	733,790	837,776
Services	390,994	418,489
Communications	82,123	95,251
Province wide service delivery	40,268	74,152
Travel	34,365	82,812
Supplies and equipment	56,413	63,711
Board expenses	32,223	41,040
Legal Aid Ontario - project expenses	-	174,555
Department of Justice Canada - project expenses	243,771	-
Amortization	53,965	98,402
	<u>5,114,132</u>	<u>6,017,233</u>
Excess of revenues over expenditures (expenditures over revenues) for year	<u>358,839</u>	<u>(7,607)</u>

Statements of Net Assets

Year ended March 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
Net assets, beginning of year	459,677	467,284
Excess of revenues over expenditures (expenditures over revenues) for year	358,839	(7,607)
Net assets, end of year	<u>818,516</u>	<u>459,677</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Excess of revenues over expenditures (expenditures over revenues) for year	358,839	(7,607)
Item not affecting cash		
Amortization	55,062	98,402
	413,901	90,795
Change in non-cash working capital items		
Decrease (increase) in accounts receivable	(8,216)	26,886
Decrease (increase) in HST recoverable	239	(15,459)
Decrease in prepaid expenses	53,834	10,014
Increase in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	22,434	8,595
Decrease in deferred grant - Legal Aid Ontario	-	(151,645)
	482,192	(30,814)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(152,683)	(14,526)
Net change in cash	329,509	(45,340)
Cash, beginning of year	570,586	615,926
Cash, end of year	900,095	570,586

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2020

Nature of operations

Human Rights Legal Support Centre (the "Centre") was established December 20, 2006, as a corporation without share capital as a result of Royal Assent being granted to Section 45.11 of the *Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006*. The legislation took effect on June 30, 2008 and the Centre opened on that day.

The Centre is not a Crown agency, but is designated as an operational service agency and reports to the Ministry of the Attorney General ("MAG"). The Centre is independent from, but accountable to the Government of Ontario. Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between the Centre and the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario, the objectives of the Centre are:

- (a) to establish and administer a cost-effective and efficient system for providing support services, including legal services, respecting applications to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal under Part IV of the Code; and
- (b) to establish policies and priorities for the provision of support services based on financial resources.

The Centre is a not-for-profit organization, as described in Section 149(1)(l) of the *Income Tax Act*, and therefore is not subject to either federal or provincial income taxes.

1. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and are in accordance with Part III of the *CPA Canada Handbook - Accounting*, and in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. The financial statements have been prepared within the framework of significant accounting policies summarized below:

(a) Revenue recognition

The Centre follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions, which include government grants.

The Centre receives revenue from the MAG. The amounts are recorded as revenue when received or receivable. All of the funds received are restricted as to use for purposes set out in the MOU.

Income from other external sources is recorded as revenue when received or receivable provided the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured. Funding received for future periods are deferred and recognized, as stipulated by the funding agreement.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(b) Property and equipment

The costs of property and equipment are capitalized upon meeting the criteria for recognition as a capital asset; otherwise, costs are expensed as incurred. The cost of property and equipment comprises its purchase price and any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use.

Property and equipment are measured at cost less accumulated amortization and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortization is provided for on a straight-line basis at rates designed to amortize the cost of the capital assets over their estimated useful lives. The annual amortization rates are as follows:

Computer equipment	3 years
Furniture and fixtures	5 years

Property and equipment is tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that its carrying amount may not be recoverable. If any potential impairment is identified, the amount of the impairment is quantified by comparing the carrying value of the capital asset to its fair value. Any impairment of the capital asset is recognized in income in the year in which the impairment occurs.

An impairment loss is not reversed if the fair value of the capital asset subsequently increases.

(c) Intangible assets

The costs of intangible assets are capitalized upon meeting the criteria for recognition as an intangible asset, otherwise, costs are expensed as incurred. The cost of a separately acquired intangible asset comprises its purchase price and any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use.

Intangible assets are measured at cost less accumulated amortization and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortization of application software is provided for on a straight-line basis at rates designed to amortize the cost of the intangible assets over their estimated useful lives. The annual amortization rates are as follows:

Client tracking tool	5 years
Computer software	3 years

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(c) Intangible assets (continued)

An intangible asset is tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that its carrying amount may not be recoverable. If any potential impairment is identified, then the amount of the impairment is quantified by comparing the carrying value of the intangible asset to its fair value. Any impairment of the intangible asset is recognized in income in the year in which the impairment occurs.

An impairment loss is not reversed if the fair value of the intangible asset subsequently increases.

(d) Financial instruments

(i) Measurement of financial instruments

The Centre initially measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at fair value adjusted by the amount of transaction costs directly attributable to the instrument.

The Centre subsequently measures all of its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost.

Amortized cost is the amount at which a financial asset or financial liability is measured at initial recognition minus principal repayments, plus or minus the cumulative amortization of any difference between that initial amount and the maturity amount, and minus any reduction for impairment.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include cash and accounts receivable.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

(ii) Impairment

At the end of each year, the Centre assesses whether there are any indications that a financial asset measured at amortized cost may be impaired. Objective evidence of impairment includes observable data that comes to the attention of the Centre, including but not limited to the following events: significant financial difficulty of the issuer; a breach of contract, such as a default or delinquency in interest or principal payments; and bankruptcy or other financial reorganization proceedings.

When there is an indication of impairment, the Centre determines whether a significant adverse change has occurred during the year in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows from the financial asset.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(d) Financial instruments (continued)

(ii) Impairment (continued)

When the Centre identifies a significant adverse change in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows from a financial asset, it reduces the carrying amount of the financial asset to the greater of the following:

- the present value of the cash flows expected to be generated by holding the financial asset discounted using a current market rate of interest appropriate to the financial asset; and
- the amount that could be realized by selling the financial asset at the statement of financial position date.

Any impairment of the financial asset is recognized in income in the year in which the impairment occurs.

When the extent of impairment of a previously written-down financial asset decreases and the decrease can be related to an event occurring after the impairment was recognized, the previously recognized impairment loss is reversed to the extent of the improvement, but not in excess of the impairment loss. The amount of the reversal is recognized in income in the year the reversal occurs.

(e) Management estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the current period. Actual results may differ from these estimates, the impact of which would be recorded in future periods.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognized in the year in which the estimates are revised and in any future years affected.

(f) Pension plan

The Centre, through the sponsorship of the MAG, is a participating employer to a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by the Ontario Pension Board ("OPB") for employees of the province of Ontario. In accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, as sufficient information is not available to the Centre to use defined benefit plan accounting, the Centre accounts for the pension plan as a defined contribution pension plan. The Centre expenses pension contributions when made.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

2. Financial instruments

The Centre is exposed to financial risks in its financial instruments as described below.

The financial instruments of the Centre and the nature of the risks to which it may be subject are as follows:

Financial instrument	Risks				
	Credit	Liquidity	Market risk		
			Currency	Interest rate	Other price
Cash	X				
Accounts receivable	X				
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities		X			

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 Centre reduces its exposure to credit risk associated with cash by holding it at a major Canadian bank. The Centre's main credit risk relates to its accounts receivable. The Centre has exposure to credit risk in cash and accounts receivable to a maximum of \$900,095 (2019 - \$570,586).

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Centre cannot repay its obligations when they become due to its creditors. The Centre meets its liquidity requirements by preparing and monitoring detailed forecasts of cash flows from operations, anticipating investing and financing activities and holding assets that can readily be converted into cash.

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk is comprised of currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Centre is not exposed to significant market risk.

Changes in risk

There have been no changes in the Centre's risk exposures from the prior year.

3. Economic dependence

The Centre derives its primary operating revenues from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

4. Property and equipment

		2020	
	Cost \$	Accumulated Amortization \$	Net \$
Computer equipment	544,475	370,410	174,065
Furniture and fixtures	4,150	4,150	-
	548,625	374,560	174,065
		2019	
	Cost \$	Accumulated Amortization \$	Net \$
Computer equipment	391,792	337,844	53,948
Furniture and fixtures	4,150	4,150	-
	395,942	341,994	53,948

5. Intangible assets

		2020	
	Cost \$	Accumulated Amortization \$	Net \$
Client tracking tool	668,030	652,924	15,106
Computer software	141,059	138,046	3,013
	809,089	790,970	18,119
		2019	
	Cost \$	Accumulated Amortization \$	Net \$
Client tracking tool	668,030	637,447	30,583
Computer software	141,059	131,027	10,032
	809,089	768,474	40,615

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

March 31, 2020

6. Grant revenue allocation

The Centre has expended grant funds received as follows:

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue - Ministry of Attorney General	5,122,700	5,821,400
Other income	10,562	13,671
Operating expenses (excluding project expenses)	(4,870,361)	(5,842,678)
Amortization included in operating expenses	53,965	98,402
Purchase of property and equipment	(152,683)	(14,526)
	<u>164,183</u>	<u>76,269</u>

Reconciliation of net assets

	Capital \$	Operating \$	Total \$
Net assets, beginning of year	94,562	365,115	459,677
Excess of revenues over expenditures (expenditures over revenues) for year	(55,062)	413,901	358,839
Funds transferred to capital fund	<u>152,683</u>	<u>(152,683)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>192,183</u>	<u>626,333</u>	<u>818,516</u>

7. Pension plan

The Centre, through the sponsorship of the MAG, is a participating employer to a defined benefit plan administered by the Ontario Pension Board ("OPB") for employees of the province of Ontario. Based on contribution rates as set by the OPB, the Centre matches employee contributions to the plan at the rate of 7.4% (2019 - 6.9%) of earnings up to the CPP yearly pension maximum entitlement ("YPME") and 10.5% (2019 - 10%) for earnings above the YPME. The plan is being accounted for as a defined contribution plan as there is not sufficient information to follow the reporting requirements of a defined benefit plan. The Centre contributed \$293,536 (2019 - \$274,318) to the plan which is recorded in "employee benefits" in the statement of operations.

8. Impact of Global Pandemic

In March 2020, the global pandemic of the virus known as COVID-19 led the Canadian Federal government, as well as provincial and local governments, to impose measures, such as restricting foreign travel, mandating self-isolations and physical distancing and the closure of non-essential businesses. The Centre is considered an essential service and is continuing service their clients with minimal impact on overall operations with appropriate measures in place.

Because of the high level of uncertainty related to the outcome of this pandemic, it is difficult to estimate the impact on the financial position and results of operations for future periods. No adjustments have been made in the financial statements as a result of these events.

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