

ANNUAL REPORT

2018 - 2019



Pro Bono Law Alberta

Paths to possibilities

Message from the President

This year was a time of significant transition and change for Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA). On a bitter-sweet note, we bid farewell to Kendall Moholityny, who left the role of Executive Director in 2018. We are grateful for the wise and passionate leadership she provided to PBLA. We also welcomed Nonye Opara into her new role as Executive Director and look forward to many years of her able stewardship.

The Board continues to be strategically focused as we work to strengthen the organization and leverage our provincial mandate. Lawyer engagement in pro bono continues to be the main objective for PBLA, but increasingly we participate in multi-stakeholder discussions around access to justice. For example, PBLA participated in the consultation process that facilitated the creation of the new governance and funding agreement for Legal Aid Alberta - the first sustainable funding and governance framework in the history of Alberta's legal aid program. PBLA also continues to be a leader in the Access to Justice Collaborative, which brings together many pro bono organizations to foster stakeholders' cooperation, efficiencies and public policy advocacy. We look forward to ongoing conversations with existing and new stakeholders in the spirit of furthering a

stronger collective identity for the pro bono sector.

We are excited to be hosting the next National Pro Bono Conference in Calgary in the fall of 2020. The conference provides a platform for engagement with local and national access to justice stakeholders and an exchange of ideas and experiences. Just as importantly, the conference also draws attention to the shared challenges facing the pro bono sector in Canada.

The upcoming year is the last of our three-year strategic plan for 2018-2020. As we move towards another planning cycle, we remain committed to further our goal to be a leader and valued partner in the access to justice space in Alberta.

On behalf of my fellow directors and staff of PBLA, thank you for your commitment to our successes this year. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Feth', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Feth, QC
President

Message from the Executive Director

What an exciting year it has been! We accomplished much despite various operational challenges. Guided by our strategic goals, we are proud of the strides we have taken to broaden pro bono engagement within the legal profession; build and maintain relationships with other pro bono and justice-based organizations; sustain programming; and maintain organizational excellence.

Through the work of our dedicated staff, tireless volunteer contributions from lawyers, articling and law students across the province, and the invaluable partnerships that support the framework for program delivery, we continued to run our signature programs and met most of our operational targets and priorities.

Towards the end of 2018, we launched our presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to broaden our engagement with members of the legal profession and other stakeholders in the pro bono and access to justice sectors. We encourage you to follow us if you have not already done so.

Through our Civil Claims Duty Counsel and Queen's Bench Court Assistance programs and hundreds of volunteer hours, thousands of self-represented individuals received free legal

advice, document and in-chambers assistance at the Calgary and Edmonton courthouses.

After 10 years in our former office, we moved our command centre into a larger (and more beautiful!) location to better meet with our staffing and operational needs. We are grateful to the Law Society of Alberta and the Alberta Law Foundation for generously supporting this move.

On behalf of the PBLA team, thank you for your past and ongoing support. We are committed to doing new things and finding new ways of doing to achieve our mission. I invite you to join the pro bono train - volunteer, donate and connect with us online and offline. As you pore through the next few pages of our report, I hope you are inspired and energized by the milestones we have achieved with your support, and we can count on your continuing commitment to the work we do.



Nonye Opara

Nonye Opara
Executive Director

Programs

Civil Claims Duty Counsel Project

The Civil Claims Duty Counsel Project (CCDC) provides legal assistance to Albertans engaged in civil proceedings in Provincial Court in Calgary and Edmonton. PBLA administers CCDC in partnership with several law firms in Calgary and Edmonton, Pro Bono Students Canada (Calgary and Edmonton Chapters), Student Legal Assistance, Student Legal Services of Edmonton, as well as individual lawyers, articling students and law students. Volunteer lawyers



(Then) Executive Director Kendall Moholinty at the 2018 Pro Bono Law Alberta Annual Celebration and Volunteer Appreciation event in Calgary

provide summary legal advice, help with court forms, procedural information and other brief services. In the 2018 - 2019 fiscal year, more than 780 volunteer lawyers, articling students and law students provided over 2,500 hours of pro bono legal services to more than 3,900 individuals.

Queen's Bench Court Assistance Program

The Queen's Bench Court Assistance Program (QB Amicus) assists self-represented litigants with civil matters appearing in Queen's Bench Justice and Masters Chambers in Calgary and Edmonton. In the courtroom, volunteer lawyers act as *amicus curiae* to assist individuals with their appearance before the court, thus streamlining court processes for unrepresented litigants. The program also includes a "storefront" at which volunteer lawyers provide summary legal advice regarding Chambers applications and other civil matters in the Court of Queen's Bench. In 2018 - 2019, more than 380 volunteer lawyers, articling students and law students provided over 1,500 hours of pro bono legal services to more than 1,800 individuals.

PBLA's court-based programs continue to attract interest from law firms, in-house and governmental legal departments, individual lawyers and law students. A total

of 33 law firms, one government and three in-house legal departments were involved in Calgary and Edmonton this year.

Volunteer Lawyer Services Roster Program

The Volunteer Lawyer Services Roster Program (VLS) tries to match volunteer lawyers with charitable organizations and individuals requiring legal services but who are unable to afford it. In 2018 - 2019, PBLA reviewed the VLS Roster Program and made the strategic decision to discontinue the individual side of the service. PBLA is relaunching the VLS Roster Program in May 2019 with a renewed commitment to improve access to pro bono legal services for non-profit organizations by trying to match these organizations to the VLS Roster. This past year, volunteer lawyers provided several groups and individuals with pro bono legal services for matters relating to reviews of by-laws and other governance documents, and employment.

Statement of Financial Position

As of March 31, 2019

	2019	2018
Assets	443,341	344,954
Liabilities	182,693	93,996
Net Assets	260,648	250,958

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31, 2019

	2019	2018
Revenue	657,359	630,054
Expenses	652,698	587,432
Other income	5,029	3,896
Expenses (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	9,690	46,518

For a copy of PBLA's audited financial statements email info@pbla.ca.

Our Impact

Civil Claims Duty Counsel



754

**VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS &
ARTICLING
STUDENTS**

3,931



**INDIVIDUALS
ASSISTED**



41

**VOLUNTEER LAW
STUDENTS**



1,501

**DOCUMENTS
PREPARED**



892

**REFERRALS
MADE**



2,525.5

**VOLUNTEER
HOURS**

Our Impact

Queen's Bench Court Assistance



354

**VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS &
ARTICLING
STUDENTS**

1,867



**INDIVIDUALS
ASSISTED**



32

**VOLUNTEER LAW
STUDENTS**



597

**DOCUMENTS
PREPARED**



308

**REFERRALS
MADE**



1,504

**VOLUNTEER
HOURS**

Legal Community Engagement

Calgary Legal Advice Clinic

The eighth annual Calgary Legal Advice Clinic in partnership with the Calgary Public Library, Norton Rose Fulbright (Canada) LLP and Calgary Legal Guidance took place in November 2018. This event is held in conjunction with Law Connect, the Calgary Public Library's annual public legal education resource fair.

We had the pleasure of hosting the event at the new Calgary Central Library, which was a draw to the public and volunteers alike. Throughout the day, volunteer lawyers and articling students provided about 100 members of the public with free document and legal assistance in the areas of family, civil, employment law and more.

Collaboration in the Access to Justice Sector

PBLA continued to foster greater communication and collaboration among pro bono sector organizations in its capacity as steward and co-chair of the Access to Justice Collaborative. The Collaborative, which is also comprised of representatives from the Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic, Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, Edmonton Community Legal Centre, Student Legal Assistance, Student Legal Services of Edmonton, Youth Law at The Alex (formerly

CLERC), and the Centre for Public Legal Education, provides a platform to share best practices and discuss issues of mutual interest. In November 2018, PBLA hosted the annual Collaborative Roundtable, which brought together participants and staff lawyers to share experiences in the sector and best practices. We were also joined by (then) Minister of Justice & Solicitor General Kathleen Ganley, representatives from Legal Aid Alberta who shared details of the new legal aid governance agreement, and the President of the CBA-Alberta Branch to present the Agenda for Justice document, which outlined the most pressing issues in the justice sector ahead of the 2019 election.

In 2018-19, PBLA also participated in the Justice Sector Constellation, CBA-Alberta's inaugural Access to Justice Week, the CBA-Alberta Access to Justice Committee, and the Legal Aid Alberta Stakeholders Consultation meetings, which wrapped up in fall 2018.

Legal Community Engagement

Promoting a pro bono ethic and opportunities for legal community engagement in pro bono activities continues to be a major focus for PBLA. With the hiring of our new Manager of Community Engagement and Communications,

Legal Community Engagement

we have introduced a number of new channels of engagement with the legal community as a whole, including the launch of our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and *Pro Bono Network News*, PBLA's bi-monthly email newsletter for volunteers and stakeholders.

Engaging with the next generation of lawyers is also a priority, and we regularly connect with law students at the



Staff and Board Members from Calgary Legal Guidance and Pro Bono Law Alberta at the 2018 National Pro Bono Conference in Vancouver

faculties of law at the University of Alberta and University of Calgary, and with articling students at CPLED presentations.

In October 2018, PBLA staff and Board members attended the 2018 National Pro Bono Conference in Vancouver, hosted by Access Pro Bono. Attendees were able to connect with lawyers, volunteers, and pro bono and public legal education staff from around the country, and hear about exciting programs taking place at pro bono organizations and legal clinics across Canada. Calgary is set to host the next National Pro Bono Conference in 2020, and the PBLA team is excited to welcome our friends and colleagues from Canada's pro bono and access to justice sector.

PBLA is committed to increasing organizational awareness, knowledge and cultural competency of the local indigenous context in which we operate. To this end, we held a Blanket Exercise for our Board of Directors, staff and stakeholders in November 2018 which was hosted by Tim Fox, Director of Indigenous Relations at the Calgary Foundation. The Blanket Exercise was a powerful activity and a crucial step in advancing our organization's response to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Pro Bono Law Alberta's success is possible through the support of many law firms, volunteer lawyers, articling students, law students, community stakeholders, project partners, court administration, donors and funders.

Board of Directors

Kevin Feth, QC, President (Edmonton)

Karen Fellowes, Vice President
(Calgary)

Jana Neal, Treasurer (Calgary)

Scott Harling, Secretary (Lethbridge)

Brett Anderson, (Calgary)

Ed Ma (Calgary)

Dr. Anna Lund (Edmonton)

Corie Flett, LSA Bencher Representative
(Fort McMurray)

Scott Matheson (Edmonton)

Eleanor Carlson (Calgary)

Ana Dzitac (Red Deer)

Marija Bicanic (Calgary)

Chris Rickards, QC (Red Deer)
to June 2018

Advisory Board

The Hon. Madam Justice M.S. Paperny

The Hon. Madam Justice J.M. Ross

The Hon. Mr. Justice R.A. Jerke

The Hon. Mr. Justice J.T. Henderson

The Hon. Judge A.H. Lefever

The Hon. John Major, C.C., Q.C.

The Hon. Allan Wachowich, Q.C.

Donald Bishop, Q.C.

Bruce Churchill-Smith, Q.C.

Cheryl Gottselig, Q.C.

Phyllis Smith, Q.C.

Staff

Nonye Opara, Executive Director
(as of September 15, 2018)

Kendall Moholityn, Executive Director
(to September 14, 2018)

Lee-Anne Wright,
Manager, Community Engagement
and Communication

Myra Skerrett, Office Administrator

Vasil Dimitrov, Program Coordinator
(Calgary)

Rukaiyat Lawal, Program Coordinator
(Edmonton)

Tina Cai, Summer Student 2018

Program Partners

A Farber

Ackroyd LLP

Anderson James McCall

Association of Women Lawyers

Bishop and McKenzie LLP

Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

Brenda Strafford Centre for the
Prevention of Domestic Violence

Brownlee LLP

Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP

Calgary Chamber of Voluntary
Organizations

Calgary Public Library

Canadian Bar Association -
Alberta Branch

Carbert Waite LLP

CBM Lawyers LLP

City of Edmonton Law Branch

Dentons Canada LLP

Discovery House Family Violence
Prevention Society
DLA Piper (Canada) LLP
Emery Jamieson LLP
Family Law Office
Field LLP
Foster Iovinelli Beyak Kothari
Foster LLP
Gowling WLG
Grant Thornton LLP
Greg Rodin Professional Corporation
GSD Law Group LLP
Hudson & Company Insolvency
Trustees Inc.
Imperial Oil
JSS Barristers LLP
Legal Aid Alberta
Legal Education Society of Alberta
McAllister LLP
McCarthy Tétrault LLP
McLennan Ross LLP
McLeod Law LLP
McMillan LLP
Miller Thomson LLP
MJM Barristers
MLT Aikins LLP
MNP LLP

Norton Rose Fulbright LLP
Ogilvie LLP
Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
Parkland Fuel Corporation
Parlee McLaws LLP
Parmar Law
Randhawa Law Office
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Resolution and Court Administration
Services
Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer LLP
Sivia Law Office
Scott Venturo Rudakoff LLP
Stikeman Elliott LLP
Walsh LLP
Wellspring Calgary – Money Mentors
Program
Witten LLP
WK Family Lawyers & Mediators
Women's Centre of Calgary
YMCA of Northern Alberta Wood
Buffalo Region

Pro Bono Community

Calgary Legal Guidance
Central Alberta Community
Legal Clinic

Centre for Public Legal Education
Alberta
Edmonton Community Legal Centre
Fort McMurray Community
Legal Clinic
Grande Prairie Legal Guidance
Lethbridge Legal Guidance
Medicine Hat Legal Help Centre
Pro Bono Students Canada
Calgary and Edmonton Chapters
Student Legal Assistance
Student Legal Services of Edmonton
Youth Law at The Alex

Funders

Alberta **LAW**
FOUNDATION



United Way
Calgary and Area
Building a great city for all.

Our **mission**

PBLA engages the legal community to increase access to pro bono legal services for Albertans in need.



Pro Bono Law Alberta

Pro Bono Law Alberta
Suite 301, 255 17 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2S 2T8

403-541-4804
info@pbla.ca
www.pbla.ca

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