

# Message

from the President and Executive Director

Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) was established as the legacy project of the Law Society of Alberta during its centenary celebrations in 2007. PBLA's mandate is to promote the development of organized pro bono service delivery in Alberta. We engage lawyers in innovative projects and partnerships that make it easy and rewarding for them to become involved. Since 2007, PBLA has brokered several partnerships between law firms and organizations and initiated a number of projects. The volunteer work done by law firms and lawyers through these partnerships and projects has impacted the lives of countless Albertans.

2012 to 2013 was a year of exponential growth in our projects and services. Exciting new projects were developed in partnership with key stakeholders in the pro bono community. PBLA initiatives are successful due to the involvement and enthusiasm of our staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board, volunteer lawyers, and partnering groups who participate collaboratively in projects which provide additional options for people to receive pro bono legal services.

PBLA is the "path to possibilities" for lawyers to become involved in rewarding and meaningful pro bono opportunities, for law students who are considering pro bono as an extension of their learning and growth in the profession, and ultimately for Albertans who seek clarity and legal guidance on their journeys toward access to justice.

Thank you for continuing to travel the pro bono path with us. For those who have not yet joined the pro bono movement, we encourage you to become involved in the many opportunities to enhance access to justice in Alberta through pro bono legal services.

**Bruce Churchill-Smith**, QC, President

**Gillian D. Marriott**, QC, Executive Director



Bruce Churchill-Smith, QC, President



Gillian D. Marriott, QC, Executive Director

## Our objectives

PBLA's objectives are to promote access to the justice system in Alberta by creating and promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to persons of limited means by:

1. creating opportunities for Alberta lawyers to discharge their professional responsibilities to provide pro bono legal services;
2. improving the overall delivery of pro bono legal services by facilitating the integration and coordination of services provided by pro bono organizations throughout the province of Alberta;
3. ensuring province-wide access to high-quality pro bono legal services to persons of limited means by:
  - (i) supporting and improving the quality of existing pro bono programs;
  - (ii) working with existing pro bono legal clinics to assist them in providing pro bono services; and
  - (iii) fostering the development of new pro bono programs where needed;
4. enhancing the growth of a pro bono culture within the Alberta bar;
5. raising general public awareness of pro bono legal services to community organizations and persons of limited means who require legal services; and
6. raising the awareness of Alberta lawyers of the need for pro bono services and of the resources available to lawyers who are prepared to provide pro bono services.

## Thank you

Pro Bono Law Alberta's success is possible as a result of the support of many individuals and groups who work with us to improve access to justice to Albertans of limited means. Our pro bono community continues to grow and evolve. To all of you who continue to travel with us on the pro bono journey, thank you for your support.

## Our primary funders



SERVING  
the PUBLIC  
INTEREST

Alberta **LAW**  
FOUNDATION

## Our team

### Advisory Board

The Honourable Madam Justice M.S. Paperny  
The Honourable Madam Justice J.M. Ross  
The Honourable Mr. Justice R.A. Jerke  
The Honourable Judge A.H. Lefever  
The Honourable Judge John T. Henderson  
The Honourable John Major, C.C., QC  
Hon. Allan Wachowich, QC  
Donald Bishop, QC  
Cheryl Gottselig, QC  
Phyllis Smith, QC

### Staff

Gillian Marriott, QC, *Executive Director*  
Cecelia Frohlick, *Senior Program Manager*  
Myra Skerrett, *Executive Assistant*  
Kendall Moholity, *Program Manager, Volunteer Lawyer Services*  
Kaitlin Rowe, *Program Assistant, Volunteer Lawyer Services*  
Rebecca Hepner, *Program Assistant*  
Kyle McNeill, *Program Assistant*  
Nelson Osamudiamen, *Summer Student 2012*

### Board of Directors

Bruce Churchill-Smith, QC, *President (Calgary)*  
Kevin Feth, QC, *Vice President (Edmonton)*  
Brett Anderson, *Treasurer (Calgary)*  
Suzanne Alexander-Smith, *Secretary (Red Deer)*  
Walter Pavlic, QC, *CBA Representative (Edmonton)*  
Frederica Schutz, QC, *LSA Benchers Representative (Edmonton)*  
Ed Ma *(Calgary)*  
Scott Harling *(Lethbridge)*  
Jana Neal *(Calgary)*  
Chuck Meagher *(Calgary)*  
Allyson Jeffs *(Edmonton)*

ANNUAL REPORT 2012–2013



**Pro Bono Law Alberta**

Paths to possibilities

PBLA's mission is to improve access to justice by increasing the scope and availability of pro bono legal services for Albertans of limited means.

Pro bono legal services are intended to complement, not to replace a properly funded legal aid system.

401, 255 – 17 Avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2S 2T8

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



**Pro Bono Law Alberta**

Paths to possibilities

# Highlights of 2012-2013

PBLA continues to promote opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to Albertans in financial need, through the efforts of our staff, Board of Directors and Advisory Board, and with the support of the Law Society of Alberta and Alberta Law Foundation. Our projects and partnerships engage law firms, law students, pro bono clinics and the judiciary, all with a view to building the pro bono community to enhance access to justice for Albertans.

## Civil Claims Duty Counsel (CCDC)

*Volunteer lawyers helping people navigate the court system*

The CCDC Project is a joint initiative with Pro Bono Students Canada and 19 law firms. The project's goal is to provide legal assistance to Albertans engaged in civil proceedings before Provincial Court. Volunteer lawyers assist people with summary legal advice, forms completion, and procedural information.

As of March 2013, the following nine firms participate in CCDC (Calgary): McCarthy Tétrault LLP; Borden Ladner Gervais LLP; Dentons Canada LLP; Gowlings LLP; Bennett Jones LLP; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Norton Rose LLP; Miller Thomson LLP; and McMillan LLP.

Ten firms participate in Edmonton CCDC: Ackroyd LLP; Emery Jamieson LLP; Field LLP; Dentons Canada LLP; McLennan Ross LLP; Miller Thomson LLP; Parlee McLaws LLP; MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman LLP; Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer LLP; and Witten LLP.

It is anticipated that several more firms will come on board in the near future. Since the beginning of the project in October 2011, over 1500 people have been helped by almost 300 lawyers who have provided over 1700 hours of pro bono legal services (as of March 31, 2013).

## Volunteer Lawyer Services (VLS)

*Get grounded: do pro bono*

The VLS program was established in 1995 to address the legal needs of non-profit organizations throughout Alberta. PBLA has operated VLS since 2009 and in 2011 expanded the program to assist individuals by referral from pro bono clinics (Calgary Legal Guidance, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic, Children's Legal and Educational Resource Centre, Edmonton Community Legal Centre, Grande Prairie Legal Guidance, Lethbridge Legal Guidance) and Legal Aid Alberta. The variety of matched cases with individuals include family law matters, wrongful dismissals, civil litigation, immigration issues, insurance claims, and real estate disputes, while the majority of not-for-profits requested assistance with bylaw or contract review.

VLS continues to add members to its growing roster through encouraging lawyers to "get grounded" in their legal careers by volunteering their legal expertise through the VLS program. VLS lawyers choose the scope of involvement that works for them.

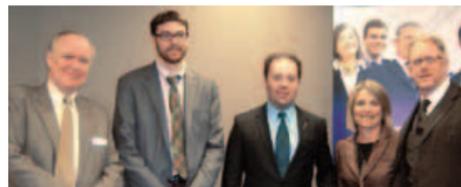
In the first quarter of 2013, nine new lawyers were added to the roster, and an additional nine were recruited to participate in Law Day 2013. As of March 31, 152 lawyers volunteer with several more lawyers assisting with special projects. By increasing the number of participating lawyers, VLS broadens its capacity to assist those in need of legal services.

## Genesis Legal Services Pilot Project

*Working together to streamline legal services*

Genesis is a groundbreaking and innovative collaboration between PBLA, Legal Aid Alberta, and Calgary Legal Guidance. The project connects people in northeast Calgary to legal services provided by lawyers on a broad range of civil legal issues. The 1000 Voices at the Genesis Centre is a community of agencies working together to assess and assist those in need of a variety of services. The 1000 Voices at the Genesis Centre supports the Legal Clinic at 1000 Voices through providing space for the clinics.

The lawyers at the six drop-in legal clinics, held as the pilot between January and April 2013, assisted 57 clients with various legal matters including civil, family, immigration, and social benefits. It is anticipated that the legal clinics will continue. In addition, legal education seminars and self help clinics will be offered.



Raising the Pro Bono Bar is an opportunity to introduce new lawyers and articling students to pro bono volunteer opportunities. Bruce Churchill-Smith, QC (PBLA); Timothy R. Ross (McLeod Law); The Honourable Jonathan Denis, QC; Gillian Marriott, QC (PBLA) and Jeff Wise, QC (CBA Alberta) at Raising the Pro Bono Bar, Calgary, February 28, 2013.



Thanks to the volunteer team from Norton Rose LLP for their participation at the Legal Grounds Advice Clinic, Calgary, October 17, 2012.

## Legal Grounds Advice Clinic

*Fresh coffee, free legal advice*

The Legal Grounds Advice Clinic is a "one stop shop" for people with legal questions. They meet with a volunteer lawyer for a 30-minute confidential appointment over a cup of coffee.

The environment is comfortable and friendly, and is an innovative and unique way for lawyers to participate in pro bono service.

This past year, Legal Grounds Advice Clinics were held in Lethbridge, Blairmore, Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Brooks.

This clinic model allows more people to receive legal services in the community, increases awareness in the local bar about the need for pro bono, and provides lawyers the opportunity to volunteer in their community. Legal Grounds Advice Clinics also allow PBLA to further strengthen its relationship with the pro bono clinics that co-host these clinics.

Since the first Legal Grounds Advice Clinic in October 2011, 412 people have received legal advice in five communities around Alberta.

## Pro Bono Stakeholders' Round Table

*Sharing of information and leveraging resources*

PBLA hosts an annual Round Table to allow pro bono stakeholders to meet, network, and share best practices on pro bono service delivery.

This year, new organizations were invited to take part, expanding the dialogue between groups with similar mandates to Albertans with access to justice. Since 2006, PBLA has been involved in six provincial Round Table meetings.

## Meetings for Managing Partners

*Encouraging law firm commitment to pro bono*

Each year, PBLA hosts meetings for Managing Partners of Calgary and Edmonton law firms. The meeting is an opportunity to inform law firms about PBLA's projects and initiatives, and to recruit their lawyers thereby increasing the capacity for pro bono services to low income Albertans.

Each year, new law firms are invited to learn about pro bono initiatives in Alberta. This year, meetings were held in Edmonton in October 2012 and in Calgary in March 2013.

## CFN Legal Clinic

*Thinking "out of the box" to engage lawyers in new opportunities for pro bono service*

The Centre for Newcomers (CFN) Legal Clinic is a partnership between PBLA, Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG), CFN, Gowlings, the Family Law Office (FLO) of Legal Aid, and Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC).

The clinic operates the 2nd Wednesday evening of the month in northeast Calgary. PBLA has recruited volunteer lawyers from Gowlings and FLO to provide assistance on legal issues related to immigration and family law. CLG handles day-to-day management of the clinic and has provided training sessions to the Gowlings lawyers on immigration law. CLG has provided mental health awareness and intake and assessment training for all volunteers. In addition, CLG has provided training for CFN employees and mentorship for PBSC students.

From Gowlings' perspective, the project is a huge success and is a perfect fit for their volunteer lawyers, who are primarily solicitors. The project partners have set up the organizational structure for the clinic in collaboration with CFN, making it easy for Gowlings and FLO lawyers to volunteer. Over time, the participating Gowlings lawyers have expanded their legal skill set including learning a new area of law.

Since the project launched, 14 Gowlings volunteers have committed over 130 hours to the project. According to the volunteers, the two hours a month at the clinic are a "reality check" that keeps them grounded in their profession and gives them the opportunity to help someone dealing with a stressful legal matter. Lawyers from the FLO office have provided volunteer legal support to family law clients seeking assistance. The partnership is a collaboration providing unique opportunities for volunteer lawyers and builds on community cohesion.

As of March 31, 2013, 32 lawyers and eight students from Pro Bono Students Canada have assisted 112 people at the CFN Legal Clinic.



Erin Runnalls and Jim Peacock, QC (Gowlings); Gillian Marriott, QC (PBLA); Honourable A.G. Vickery, Chief Judge; Ed Ma (CLG and PBLA Board) at the Meeting for Managing Partners and Pro Bono Colleagues, March 20, 2013.

## Pro Bono Students Canada

*Engaging a new generation of lawyers*

In an effort to instill a pro bono ethic in the profession and provide valuable practical experience to law students, PBLA creates volunteer opportunities for law students at both the University of Calgary and University of Alberta through various projects.

These projects, developed collaboratively by PBLA and students, not only provide students with meaningful experience and low-income clients with much-needed legal assistance, they also provide the volunteer lawyers with mentoring opportunities. The projects include:

- Civil Claims Duty Counsel Project
- Human Rights Project
- CFN Legal Clinic
- Emergency Protection Order Project
- Innocence Project

## Partnership with Wood Buffalo Region and Suncor Energy Foundation

*The new frontier of pro bono in northern Alberta*

In January 2013, PBLA received a grant from Suncor Energy Foundation to establish a legal initiative in the Wood Buffalo/Fort McMurray area.

PBLA visited Fort McMurray and hosted two meetings for local agencies as well as a reception for the legal community to discuss the potential for a new legal service initiative such as the Legal Grounds Advice Clinic and to garner support for an initiative of this magnitude.

Response from over 25 agencies and 11 members of the legal community was very positive and a Legal Grounds Advice Clinic is planned for May 25, 2013.

## Statement of financial position

As at March 31, 2013

	2013	2012
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash	167,332	195,698
Short term investment	100,000	100,000
Goods and services tax recoverable	5,856	6,163
Prepaid expenses	12,141	15,437
	285,329	317,298
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	5,941	14,398
	291,270	331,696
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	19,818	42,250
Deferred revenue	31,200	15,000
Deferred contributions	13,781	5,000
	64,799	62,250
<b>DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS</b>		
<b>RELATED EQUIPMENT</b>	2,539	14,398
	67,338	76,648
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>INTERNALLY RESTRICTED</b>	100,000	100,000
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	120,531	155,048
<b>INVESTED IN EQUIPMENT</b>	3,401	-
	223,932	255,048
	291,270	331,696

For a copy of the audited financial statements of PBLA contact: 403-541-4804 or info@pbla.ca

## Statement of operations

For the year ended March 31, 2013

	2013	2012
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Program grants	617,852	609,830
Donations	13,103	4,803
Judges dinners	39,000	29,200
	669,955	643,833
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Advertising and promotion	8,776	3,430
Amortization	8,457	3,114
Board insurance	1,125	1,125
Consulting	11,334	9,743
Equipment	6,013	1,330
Insurance	1,174	1,055
Judges dinners	4,430	3,071
Memberships	901	1,211
National Conference	29,752	-
Office	29,453	34,160
Printing	6,678	9,282
Professional development	16,228	14,648
Professional fees	11,185	10,738
Program cost Clinic and Program Outreach	46,703	33,502
Program cost Volunteer Lawyer Services (VLS)	50,127	74,078
Rental and operating cost	54,406	62,557
Salaries and wages	368,414	334,782
Travel and meeting	45,842	48,149
Website	3,560	5,513
	704,558	651,488
<b>DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS</b>	(34,603)	(7,655)
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	3,487	3,156
<b>DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	(31,116)	(4,499)