

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 we have 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.

The scope of PBLA's projects is province-wide involving many stakeholders. We organized a Legal Grounds Advice Clinic in the Wood Buffalo Region (Fort McMurray) as part of Law Day in May 2013. PBLA also: hosted the third annual Legal Grounds Advice Clinic in partnership with Norton Rose Fulbright in Calgary; led the annual Pro Bono Stakeholders' Round Table; hosted meetings for Managing Partners of law firms in Edmonton and Calgary; and held Raising the Pro Bono Bar events in Grande Prairie and Edmonton.

PBLA continues to provide administration and management to the Civil Claims Duty Counsel (CCDC) project in both Calgary and Edmonton, which in this fiscal year engaged 360 lawyers and provided legal services to over 2500 people. In addition, we launched the new Queen's Bench (QB) Amicus project as a pilot in October 2013 which has now expanded to 10 firms offering volunteers for three shifts per week at the Calgary Courts Centre. To date, over 500 people have received legal assistance through the efforts of these volunteer lawyers.

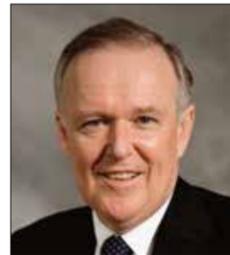
PBLA continues to promote the many and varied pro bono volunteer opportunities in the province through presentations to law firms and Section meetings of Canadian Bar Association (CBA) Alberta Branch, a regular column in Law Matters, news bytes in the Law Society of Alberta (LSA) e-bulletin, Pro Bono Network News and at pbla.ca.

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.

Thank you for continuing to travel the pro bono path with us. For those who have not yet joined this 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

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



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ANNUAL REPORT 2013–2014



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.

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The impact of volunteers

Many lawyers in Alberta volunteer their skills and expertise to improve access to justice. In 2013-2014, through various programs and projects administered by PBLA, **723 lawyers** and **109 law students** were actively engaged in assisting approximately **3500 clients**. The client number is an estimate based on report forms and evaluations received and is a conservative figure. We just want to say *thanks*.



Pro Bono Law Alberta

Paths to possibilities

Highlights of 2013-2014

PBLA continues to focus on helping Albertans by promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services. PBLA's 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 and Queen's Bench Amicus

Volunteer lawyers helping people navigate the court system

CCDC is a joint initiative with Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) and several law firms in Calgary and Edmonton. The goal of the project is to provide legal assistance to Albertans engaged in civil proceedings in the Provincial Court. Volunteer lawyers meet with people to assist them by providing summary legal advice and procedural information and also assistance with completing court forms.

Since the beginning of the project in October 2011, over 2500 people have been helped by 360 lawyers (226 in Calgary, 134 in Edmonton) who have provided almost 2000 hours of pro bono legal services (as of March 31, 2014).

In 2013-2014 the following 14 firms participated in Calgary CCDC: McCarthy Tétraut LLP; Borden Ladner Gervais LLP; Dentons LLP; Gowlings LLP; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Norton Rose Fulbright LLP; Miller Thomson LLP; McMillan LLP; Scott Venturo LLP; Bennett Jones LLP; Osler LLP; McLeod Law LLP; Stones Carbert Waite LLP and Burnett Duckworth & Palmer LLP.

Twelve firms participated in Edmonton CCDC: Ackroyd LLP; Emery Jamieson LLP; Field LLP; Dentons LLP; McLennan Ross LLP; Miller Thomson LLP; Parlee McLaws LLP; MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman LLP; Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer LLP; Witten LLP; Ogilvie LLP and Chomicki Baril Mah LLP.

QB Amicus launched as a pilot in October 2013 and has expanded with the support of the following Calgary firms: Bishop & McKenzie LLP; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Borden Ladner Gervais LLP; Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP; Dentons LLP; Heenan Blaikie LLP; McCarthy Tétraut LLP; McLeod Law LLP; Norton Rose Fulbright LLP; Gowlings LLP; Miller Thomson LLP; BDO and Grant Thornton.

QB Amicus aims to improve access to justice for self-represented litigants appearing in Queen's Bench Justice and Masters Chambers. Volunteer lawyers act as *amicus curiae* and are assisted by law students. They help the court understand the issues raised and the positions taken by unrepresented litigants. The project also includes a "storefront" office where self-

represented litigants can receive summary legal advice regarding their Chambers application, in a manner similar to CCDC. Between October 2013 and March 2014, 509 people were assisted through this program.

Managing Partners Meetings

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 the table to learn about pro bono initiatives in Alberta and how they can become involved.

Pro Bono Stakeholders' Round Table

Sharing of information and leveraging resources

PBLA hosts an annual meeting to allow pro bono stakeholders to network and share best practices on pro bono service delivery. This year, 49 people from 24 organizations participated, expanding the dialogue between groups with similar mandates in assisting Albertans with access to justice. Since 2006, PBLA has organized and hosted seven provincial round table meetings.

Volunteer Lawyer Services (VLS)

Get on board: do pro bono

The VLS program matches volunteer lawyers who provide pro bono legal services to charitable organizations and individuals living with low income. The program assists individuals by referral from pro bono clinics. Lawyers on the VLS roster have the opportunity to decide how many files to volunteer for, and the amount of time they wish to contribute. The VLS Program Manager can tailor volunteer opportunities to meet the needs and schedule of the volunteer. In the first quarter of 2014, 18 new lawyers joined the VLS roster, and there are currently 204 on the volunteer list.



Thank you to Norton Rose Fulbright LLP for your participation in Legal Grounds Advice Clinics for three years in a row!

Legal Grounds Advice Clinics

Fresh coffee, free legal advice

Legal Grounds Advice Clinics are a "one stop shop" for people with legal questions to meet with a volunteer lawyer for a 30-minute confidential appointment over a cup of coffee. This past year, clinics were held in Fort McMurray and Calgary in collaboration with community stakeholders. 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.

Pro Bono Students Canada Calgary and Edmonton Chapters

Engaging a new generation of lawyers

In an effort to nurture 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 the students, not only provide students with meaningful experience and individuals with much-needed legal assistance, they also provide the volunteer lawyers with mentoring opportunities.

Key projects include:

- Civil Claims Duty Counsel
- QB Amicus
- Immigration Project
- Emergency Protection Order Project
- Family Law Project

Legal Clinic at 1000 Voices

Working together to streamline legal services

The Legal Clinic at 1000 Voices is a groundbreaking and innovative collaboration between PBLA, Legal Aid Alberta (LAA) and Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG). Located at the Genesis Centre, it provides a convenient location for people to access legal services in northeast Calgary. CLG and LAA handle the administration of the clinic. Volunteer lawyers provide free legal advice to individuals in various areas of law.

The clinic is supported by staff of 1000 Voices at the Genesis Centre. 1000 Voices is a community of agencies working together to assess and assist those in need of a variety of services.

Centre for Newcomers (CFN) Legal Clinic

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

The CFN Legal Clinic is a partnership between PBLA, CLG, CFN, Gowlings, the Family Law Office (FLO) of Legal Aid Alberta and PBSC. Volunteer lawyers from Gowlings and FLO provide assistance on a variety of legal issues related to immigration and family law. CLG manages the clinic. CFN provides space and support services.

This year, 32 volunteer lawyers and 10 law students assisted 146 clients with various legal matters. The partnership is a successful collaboration that provides unique opportunities for the volunteer lawyers and builds on community cohesion.

Community Pro Bono Partnership

New partnership provides much-needed support in the community

The Discovery House Legal Clinic was founded on a partnership between PBLA and Widdowson Kachur Ostwald Menzies LLP (WK Family Lawyers and Mediators). This collaboration gives individuals the opportunity to connect with lawyers about their family law concerns. Clinics are held on a monthly basis with half-hour consultation sessions available for up to eight clients. The lawyers are committed to the sensitivity of clients' needs which in turn makes clients feel heard and supported. Volunteer lawyers also provide free summary legal advice for clients of Discovery House and present legal education sessions on a variety of family law topics for clients and staff.



Barbara Poole and Allison Mclauchlan (Discovery House); Brett Shikaze; Gillian Marriott, QC; Eileen Bell (Discovery House); Marcus Sixta; Michelle Bailey; Sherry Kachur, QC; Barb Widdowson, QC. We wish to acknowledge and thank the following WK volunteer lawyers who are also involved in the project: Krysta Ostwald, Scot Menzies, Wanda Dawson, Sandra Hudson and Heidi MacIntosh.

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.

Statement of financial position

As at March 31, 2014

	2014	2013
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	117,453	167,332
Accounts receivable	4,166	-
Goods and services tax recoverable	5,331	5,856
Prepaid expenses	14,275	12,141
	141,225	185,329
LONG-TERM INVESTMENT	100,000	100,000
EQUIPMENT	-	5,941
	241,225	291,270
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	13,030	19,818
Deferred revenue	-	31,200
Deferred contributions	10,645	13,781
	23,675	64,799
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS RELATED TO EQUIPMENT	-	2,539
	23,675	67,338
NET ASSETS		
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED	100,000	100,000
UNRESTRICTED	117,550	120,531
INVESTED IN EQUIPMENT	-	3,401
	217,550	223,932
	241,225	291,270

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, 2014

	2014	2013
REVENUE		
Program grants	605,134	617,852
Donations	15,719	13,103
Judges dinners	42,200	39,000
	663,053	669,955
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	11,583	8,776
Amortization	5,941	8,457
Board insurance	1,368	1,125
Consulting	13,106	11,334
Equipment	2,066	6,013
Insurance	1,176	1,174
Judges dinners	5,712	4,430
Memberships	903	901
National Conference	1,851	29,752
CURRENT	37,652	29,453
Printing	9,279	6,678
Professional development	10,161	16,228
Professional fees	12,570	11,185
Program cost Clinic and Program Outreach	35,932	46,703
Program cost Volunteer Lawyer Services (VLS)	42,935	50,127
Rental and operating cost	58,916	54,406
Salaries and wages	378,733	368,414
Travel and meeting	38,193	45,842
Website	4,954	3,560
	673,031	704,558
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	(9,978)	(34,603)
OTHER INCOME	3,596	3,487
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	(6,382)	(31,116)