

**Community Legal Assistance Services For
Saskatoon Inner City Inc**



**2022-2023
Annual
Report**

**123 20th Street West Saskatoon SK S7M 0W7
Phone: 306-657-6100 Fax: 306-384-0520
www.classiclaw.ca**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory, the territory of many First Nations, and the Homeland of the Métis.

Land acknowledgments are part of CLASSIC's intentional, mandated work, which is:

With a commitment to social justice, decolonization, and the dignity of all people, CLASSIC provides:

- Free legal services, programming and supports for people who experience poverty and injustice, and
- Internationally recognized clinical legal education to law and interdisciplinary students.

CLASSIC teaches new students about Canada's colonial history, reconciliation, and decolonization each semester. This work includes explanation around land acknowledgments.

As part of our education and work to promote ongoing growth, CLASSIC acknowledges that we all enter spaces, places and gatherings with different experiences, knowledge, understanding and confidence. We will take time to honour our work and will reflect, share and openly discuss our work, on our ongoing journey of learning. We are all lifelong learners.

CLASSIC knows this statement applies to all our work, and not only our work as teachers, as we are all learners.

TRC CALLS TO ACTION

CLASSIC recognizes that the TRC Calls to Action are to be read together. CLASSIC is committed to responding to the Calls to Action linked to our work. We can and are currently addressing the following calls:

#27,
28, 30

Justice #27, 28, 30

#50,
51, 52

Equity for Aboriginal People in the Legal System #51, 52, 53

MMIWG2S+

Calls to Justice

CLASSIC partnered with Dr. Rachel Lowen-Walker's Sallows Seminar in Human Rights on a project where students researched if Calls to Justice are being responded to overall by society. The students also made recommendations specific to CLASSIC that we are currently reviewing.



MESSAGE FROM CHANTELLE JOHNSON & BLAINE BEAVEN

Reflective practice is part of CLASSIC's culture. We continue to reflect on how COVID-19 and social policy decisions impact the community CLASSIC serves. This year was a transition into a more 'normal' existence. Unfortunately, 'normal' for many of our community members consists of houselessness and despair.

The Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program continues to present significant challenges to the communities CLASSIC serves. Individuals and families continue to fall through the cracks and experience increased hardship due to inadequate access to income support. Coupled with the lack of affordable, quality housing, this has created extreme distress for many of our clients. CLASSIC spent more time this year than ever before, through our legal and community support programs, assisting folks impacted by this reality.

Compounding these challenges, CLASSIC, like many other organizations, faced difficulties maintaining, obtaining and accessing crucial funding required to address the growing demand for its services within the community. Timely and predictable funding is crucial for organizations to fulfill their missions and effectively serve their communities. Unfortunately, CLASSIC faced two significant issues in this regard. CLASSIC's incoming funding for the 2022-23 fiscal year did not keep pace with the rising costs of operations due to inflation. Other critical funding commitments were received significantly late in the fiscal year, resulting in CLASSIC navigating much of the year with limited resources. Ultimately, these challenges resulted in CLASSIC scaling back essential staff positions.

Despite this reality, CLASSIC continued to work meet the needs of our clients, students, and community this year. As CLASSIC moves forward, we are committed to focusing on Priority and Objective 2a) of our Strategic Plan which is to work toward being able to plan long-term operationally and financially at CLASSIC.

SNAPSHOT OF 2022/2023

- CLASSIC resumed hosting Intensive Clinical Law students. This was the second year of a three-year Memorandum of Agreement between CLASSIC and the College of Law. We continued our pilot project of a reimagined student model to better lend CLASSIC's mission, vision, values, and priorities. Preliminary reflections are positive.
- As travel opened up, the demand for CLASSIC's immigration and refugee services skyrocketed. CLASSIC is the only free, full representation legal service provider for immigration and refugee matters in Saskatchewan. CLASSIC worked on 230 immigration and refugee files this year.
- Our work has gotten more complex. Many people need systems navigators to assist them to use technology they do not have access to. These systems changes have off-loaded responsibility to non-profits such as CLASSIC. We provide computer, phone, and other tech resources to people with our legal services. We need more resources to meet our values which are to be professional, transformative, resilient and client-centred. Our community needs allies now, more than ever.

THE TEAM

Staff:

Student Manager – Kailey Macknak (.3 FTE)
Initial Client Services Worker – Amy Starr
Administrative and Initial Client Service Assistant – Laura Marshall (.3 FTE)
Community Support Worker – Alexa Van Volkenburg
Legal and Client Services Coordinator – Susan Saville
Volunteer Lawyer – Janice Gingell (Walk-In Advocacy Clinic, .5 FTE)
Volunteer Lawyer – Pat Tondevoid (Walk-In Advocacy Clinic, .5 FTE)
Supervising Lawyer – Nicholas Blenkinsop
Supervising Lawyer – Catriona Kaiser-Derrick (joined February 2023)
Supervising Lawyer – Tom Baldry
Supervising Lawyer – Cara Merasty (until July 25, 2022)
Director of Finance – Marshall Henley (.5 FTE)
Director of Programs and Operations – Tobi Graham
Executive Director – Chantelle Johnson

Board Members:

Executive:

Chair: Blaine Beaven
Vice Chair: Michael MacDonald
Treasurer: Jared Lindgren
Secretary: Trish St. Onge

Directors:

Natasha Steinback
Benjamin Ralston
Jan King
Angela Daigneault
Dustin Ross Fiddler
Stephen Yee



Individuals who aided in CLASSIC's success

Consultants

Leif Jensen
Julie Shugarman
Kimberly Schmitke
Erin Beckwell

Contractors

Hanetsa Tesfai
Kim Pidskalny
Beverly Fullerton
Jordan Trotchie

Articling and Social Work Students:

Shane Varjassy (Law, May 2021 - 2022)
Connor StandingReady (Law, May 2021 - July 2022)
Holly Strohschein (Law, June 2022 - June 2023)
Mason Stott (Law, May 2022 - August 2022)
• Arit Ibok (Law, Secondment March 2023)

STEP:STUDENT TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAM

CLASSIC welcomed Intensive Clinical Law Students for the 2022 Fall term and the 2023 Winter term. We continued to pilot a redesigned student model developed in the previous year. Our goal through the pilot project is to provide a program to better lend to our vision, mission, values and priorities. We used lessons learned from the pandemic and our staff-only operations, to create a new clinical experience coupled with articling students. We will continue to test the redesigned student model next academic year during the last year of our current contract with the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan.

A special acknowledgement to **Professor Sarah Buhler**, who teaches the seminar associated with the Intensive Clinical Law program. Professor Buhler works with CLASSIC and community in many ways that go above and beyond her role as a professor.



Fall 2022 Term

L to R: Sam Rezazadeh, Kailey Macknak, Kelsey Leik, Hannah Pasloski, Darian Lonechild, Wendy Corden



Winter 2023 Term

L to R: Farrah Linklater, Adam Zajdel, Lisa Wanlin, Ainsley Chiverton, Matthew Taras, Alex Clarke

Thank you to the following people who made the students' experience better either through participation in their orientation or a session during their term:

Student Orientation & Training Sessions

Elder Joesph Naytowhow
Professor Gemma Smyth
Judge Brad Mitchell
Judge Donna Scott

Pamela Kovacs (Law Society SK)
Alan Kilpatrick (Law Society SK)
Valerie Payne (Law Society SK)
Tyler Young (Office of Residential Tenancies)
Dominic Sikora (Office of Residential Tenancies)



**Social Work
Practicum Student**
Chad McFarland

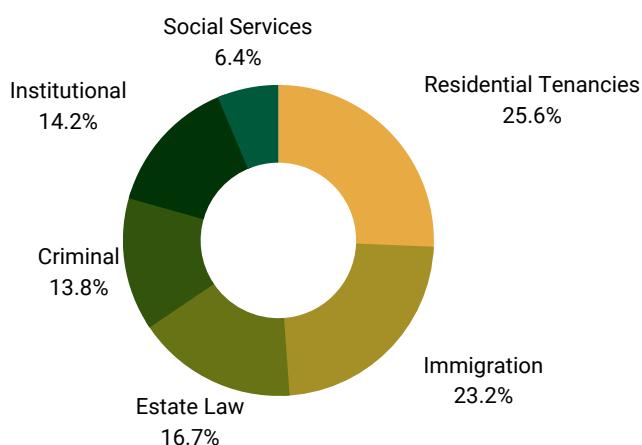
Pro Bono Students Canada Volunteers Community Legal Education, Project ID & LACs

Hannah Jorgenson
Courtney Neufeld
Seemab Chaudhary
Amanda Eberle

WALK-IN ADVOCACY CLINIC (WAC)

CLASSIC's Walk-in Advocacy Clinic (WAC) provides full legal representation to people who experience poverty and injustice in approximately 20 areas of law. This program works in tandem with the Student Training and Education Program (STEP) with students working on assigned client files under the direct supervision of staff lawyers. Of the **926** client files CLASSIC assisted with in 2022 - 2023, 737 files was in our top 6 areas of law, while the remaining 189 files were in other areas as demonstrated below.

Top 6 areas of Law



Other areas of Law

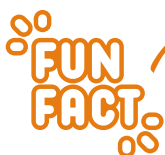
The remaining legal work conducted through the WAC was comprised of the areas listed below

- Administrative
- Adult Guardianship
- Civil
- Day School
- Employment Law
- Human Rights
- Income support
- Institutional Complaint
- Project ID
- SGI
- Small Claims
- Workers Compensation

changing the student model struck a better balance and we served more clients!

CLASSIC only denied 10 applications due to capacity

Thank you to volunteer lawyers, Pat and Janice, for stepping up this year when we were short-staffed. They served 154 clients this year!



Gender:
 Male - 52.4%
 Female - 47.4%
 Non-binary - .1%
 Trans - .1%

Age Range:
 18 - 29 - 152 (16.4%)
 30 - 44 - 343 (37%)
 45 - 59 - 223 (24.1%)
 60- 74 - 146 (15.8%)
 75+ - 30 (3.2%)
 did not disclose - 32 (3.5%)

926 client files were served through the WAC

417 files opened in 2022-2023

53.4% clients identified as Indigenous and 23.6% identified as Immigrant/Refugee

509 files were carried over from 2021-2022

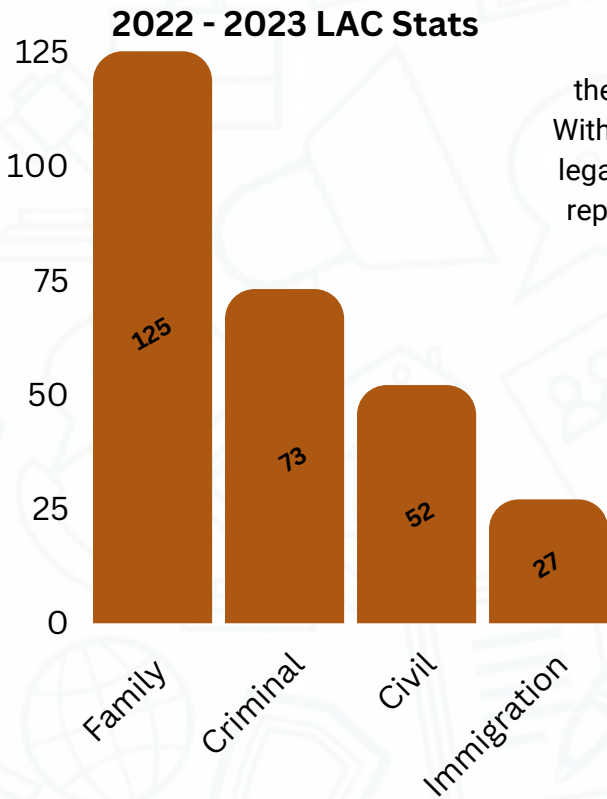


LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC (LAC)

CLASSIC’s Legal Advice Clinic (LAC) works in partnership with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan (PBLs) to provide unrepresented or self-represented individuals with free summary legal advice from practicing lawyers in the areas of criminal, family, immigration and civil law.

This clinic is for people:

- who experience poverty,
- do not qualify for full-representation legal services through CLASSIC’s Walk-in Advocacy Clinic,
- do not qualify for Legal Aid services, and
- cannot afford to retain a private lawyer.



The LAC does not provide full representation. LAC clients represent themselves in their legal matters. They receive advice through this clinic. Without the LAC, these individuals are completely on their own through their legal matter. This is particularly important with respect to family law, which represents a major portion of our LAC appointments, as evidenced above.

279 people were assisted through the LAC 2022-2023

389 LAC appointments were booked

Gender:
37.2% male
62.8% female

Thank you to the LAC Volunteer Lawyers

Volunteer Legal Advice Lawyers:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Jonathan Adams | Kojo Anaman |
| Ammy Murray | Kimbal MacMillan |
| Karina Jackson | Rochelle Wempe |
| Don McIvor, K.C. | Mark Galambos |
| Brenda Freriks | Terry Zakreski, K.C. |
| Chris Gratton | Davida Bentham |
| Mark Vanstone | |

COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORK (CSW)

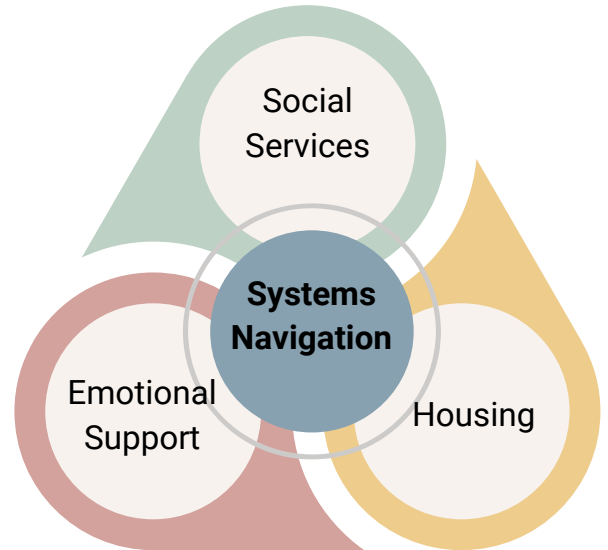
CLASSIC understands our clients' legal issues are not always the central challenges that they face. We will seek to understand and approach the challenges faced by our clients holistically, and in context." CLASSIC's Philosophy of Practice – Article 3

Systems Navigation

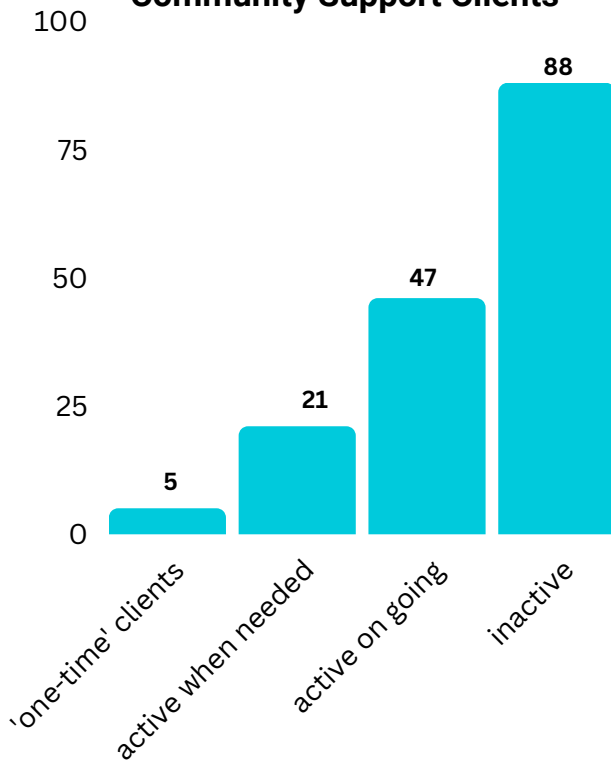
The systems navigation provided by CLASSIC Community Support Worker (CSW) involves:

- helping clients through increasingly complicated and complex systems,
- ensuring people are treated with dignity,
- advocating for peoples' rights, and
- ensuring people do not completely give up on these systems.

Increasingly, more non-profits need to hire systems navigator roles to walk with people through these systems.



Community Support Clients



Crisis Triage

One of the trends over the last year were individuals with 'one-time' access to services. About 30% of the people who work with the CSW come just 1 - 2 times when in crisis. The CSW assisted them with their urgent need and that concluded work with them.

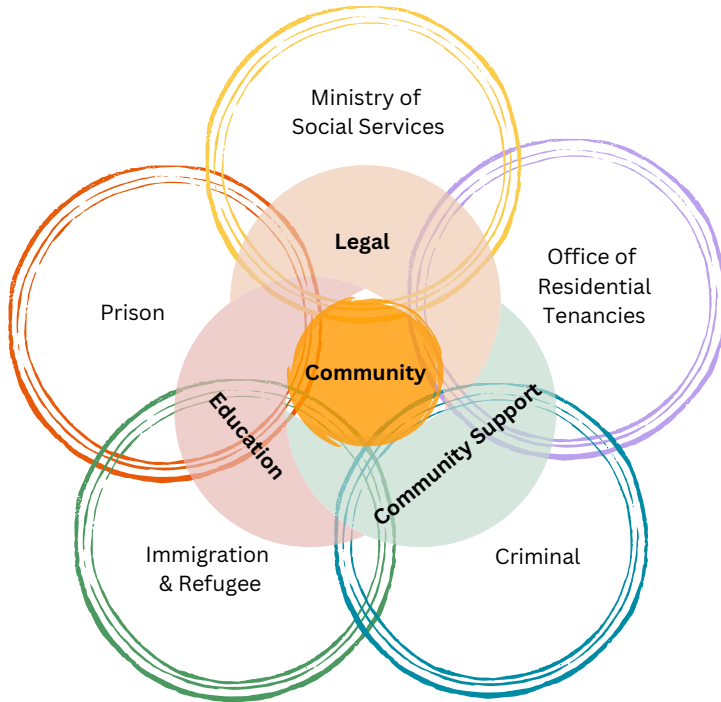
Just over half the people the CSW works with are on an intensive to semi-intensive basis. Interactions range from high crisis to more general check-ins. Often, the CSW walks with people as they navigate complex systems and emotions in their daily life. One of the largest crisis-based needs is housing and the complete lack of options to fill this need.

Another trend for in individuals accessing services is the increase in psychosis related symptoms. An increasing amount of people walk through CLASSIC's door exhibiting signs of delusions and/or hallucinations.



ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

CLASSIC arose from a systemic realization that people who experience poverty and injustice did not have many supports in Saskatchewan. CLASSIC's mere existence is a systemic response to a societal shortcoming. CLASSIC's values of being professional, transformative, client-centred, and resilient inform how we deliver our services. Our goal through full legal representation, summary advice, community supports, and our special projects, is to address as many individual and systemic needs as possible. Currently the special projects CLASSIC has includes Project ID and Community Legal Education



Phone calls:

- 33,230 phone calls per year, or
- on average, 2,800 phone calls per month or
- 132 phone call per day

people hours:
on average 22,000 hours per year

social media reach:
58,056 Facebook
1,533 Instagram

Using lessons learned during COVID-19, CLASSIC moved to hybrid models of provision of services to give community members more options. Providing service in more ways and changing our student model resulted in an 11.2% overall increase in clients served through our full legal representation clinic, the WAC.

Special Projects

Project ID

Having identification is a basic starter for many aspects of life. Through community consultations, CLASSIC identified the need for many community members to obtain ID. From there "Project ID" was born. **102** individuals obtained ID through our clinics in 2022-2023.

Community Legal Education

CLASSIC provides Community Legal Education in areas of law we are experts in, which are not served through our friends at PLEA. This year CLASSIC hosted:

- 4 - PBSC Student Volunteers
- 1 - Training Session for students
- 12 - Community Legal Education Presentations to **137** participants

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS (CONT'D)

Cases, Appeals and Judicial Reviews

Examples of systemic work through cases, appeals and judicial reviews this past year include, but are not limited to:

Office of Residential Tenancies (ORT)

- advocating at Court of King's Bench to develop a fulsome test of what is "just and equitable" for a landlord's actions,
- advocating for adherence to procedural fairness by the ORT regarding:
 - challenging rehearing process when someone misses their hearing,
 - in-person hearings vs. over the phone and making both available in addition to providing information about both options,
 - allowing individuals to physically file evidence vs. only going through the online portal,
 - challenging barriers to appealing decisions from hearings,
 - access and usage of the online portal,
- advocacy around the publication of names with results of hearing, and
- the ORT has the jurisdiction to consider and apply the Human Rights Code.

Immigration

- advocating for procedural fairness regarding refugee claims in Canada, and
- advocacy around consideration of the definition of spouse for spousal sponsorship.

Ministry of Social Services

- advocacy around what the Government interprets to be "net income" with respect to CERB and challenging how child support is considered by Income Assistance,
- advocating for consideration of human rights in Income Assistance matters, and
- Advocating around general requirements of procedural fairness through the decision making processes in the Ministry of Social Services, and subsequent appeals.

Prison

- advocacy around:
 - access to medication and opioid antagonist therapy,
 - lack of therapy and counselling for individuals, and
 - procedural fairness in general.

Community Engagement and Participation

CLASSIC walks in different communities and is connected to those communities in many ways. Examples include:



CLASSIC



tenacity

[tuh-nas-i-tee] *noun*

the quality of being very determined; persistent forward momentum with a game plan; to never stop trying to achieve a goal even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

<https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/729174305/tenacity-definition-printable-office>



perseverance

[pur-suh-veer-uhns] *noun*

persistence in doing something despite difficulty, obstacles, or delay in achieving success. the ability to finish what you started even when all seems lost.

<https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/1042605296/perseverance-definition-print-home>



THANK YOU

Service Contract & Grant Partners:

Law Foundation of Saskatchewan
University of Saskatchewan, College of Law
The Social Innovation Lab on Gender and Sexuality at the University of
Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice
Community Initiatives Fund
United Way of Saskatoon and Area
City of Saskatoon
Merlis Belsher Fund
Saskatoon Community Foundation
Saskatchewan Ministry of Immigration and Career Training
Department of Justice Canada
Indigenous Solidarity Working Group - Canadian Union of Public
Employees - Local 3906

Donors / Sponsors over \$2500

Affinity Credit Union
Anonymous Donor
Sisters of St. Joseph
The Canadian Bar Association, Sk. Branch

Individual Donors

CLASSIC thanks all our individual
donors for your continued support



Community Legal Assistance Services For Saskatoon Inner City Inc



123 20th Street West Saskatoon SK S7M 0W7
Phone: 306-657-6100 Fax: 306-384-0520
www.classiclaw.ca