

**COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE  
SERVICES FOR SASKATOON  
INNER CITY INC.**

**2024/2025**

**A N N U A L  
R E P O R T**



# 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.

CLASSIC has a vision for a better future where people are supported by fair and equitable laws and systems, which allow them to thrive. 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.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

CLASSIC's vision is "a better future where people are supported by fair and equitable laws and systems, which allow them to thrive". There is considerable progress to be made in Saskatchewan to achieve this vision. The current environment presents significant challenges to realizing anything close to genuine social justice.

Demand for CLASSIC's services is high because we are Saskatchewan's only community legal clinic. Current social policies and systems do not adequately address the needs of the community CLASSIC works with and there are very limited front-line services for legal issues in our province.



**Chantelle Johnson and Blaine Beaven**

A key aspect of our vision for a better future is reflected in the second prong of our dual mandate: providing internationally recognized clinical legal education to law and interdisciplinary students. Students who come through our programs are often shocked by how unjust many systems are. As they step into the world and take on leadership roles, we hope they become advocates for change, challenging unjust systems and working towards a fairer future. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure a renewed service contract with the University of Saskatchewan, College of Law beyond this year. We will take at least a one-year hiatus from hosting the Intensive Clinical Law Program to assess future directions and opportunities. Some limited opportunities for students at CLASSIC will still be offered.

This year we reflected on the ongoing, growing access to justice crisis and proposed solutions for it. There is an increasing divide between people who can retain a private lawyer and those who cannot. At the same time, systems are becoming more complex and navigating them is overwhelming. Systems are largely inaccessible to individuals who lack access to a computer and the internet, have limited literacy or technological skills, or struggle with limited English proficiency.

Many 'solutions' for the access to justice crisis do not include front-line, client services or true policy alternatives. It is paradoxical that, on one hand, we are told that law is a noble and challenging profession, while on the other, many proposed solutions to the access to justice crisis involve non-direct service approaches, where self-represented individuals (or unrepresented, depending on preferred terminology) are expected to "manage their own legal matters." Front-line client services, like CLASSIC, represent some of the most effective and impactful solutions to the access to justice crisis. The following comments from CLASSIC's client-survey feedback form demonstrate this:

I would have taken the plea deal without CLASSIC. I am innocent and they ran my trial and we won.

I am truly amazed at all the things they have done for me. Quite stress free. Amazing services. I was so stressed out before I discovered CLASSIC. They eased me of a stressful situation. And did all the work for me. I would not have got it done otherwise.

Thank you for everything. If it wasn't for CLASSIC I would be lost.

Thank you so much CLASSIC. I got quality legal services.

My lawyer representative went out of her way to deliver my paperwork to the hospital and care-home. She also listened to my concerns.



# Meet the team

The people committed to promoting Social Justice



## Student Managers (4-12 hours per week)

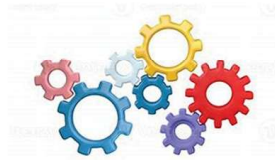
Estefan Cortes-Vargas

Fatima Ahmed

Tayler Hemsing

Trisha Esmeralda

Frank Chou



## Program and Legal Support

Nicole Daniels

Laura Marshall (PTE)

Susan Saville (PTE)

Lierin Mulder (PTE)



## Community Support

Alexa Van Volkenburg



## Volunteers

Pat Tondevold (PTE)

Janice Gingell (PTE,

officially retired February 28,

2025)



SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Legal

Farrah Linklater (lawyer as of

November 14, 2024)

Michelle MacDonald (as of

March 17, 2025)

Catriona Kaiser-Derrick

Nicholas Blenkinsop



## Leadership

Marshall Henley (PTE)

Tobi Graham

Chatelle Johnson



### Staff

back row (L-R): Nicholas, Pat, Catriona,  
Lierin, Janice, Laura, Marshall

front row (L-R): Nicole, Farrah, Chantelle,  
Alexa (missing Tobi)



### Articling Student

Farrah Linklater

June 2023–  
November 2024



### Summer Students

L to R: Tayler Hemsing, Amy Lalonde,  
Estefan Cortes-Vargas, Trisha  
Esmeralda, Nicole Wickenberg,  
Veronica Dirk-Pothier (missing Fatima  
Ahmed)

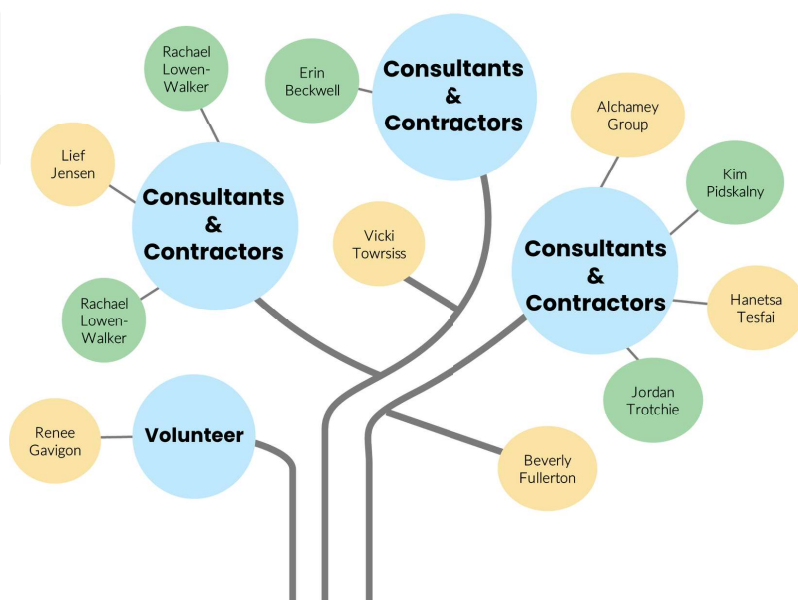


# MEET THE TEAM (CONTINUED)

## Board Members



## Individuals who aided in CLASSIC's mission



## KARAOKE AND LIP SYNC BATTLE FUNDRAISER

After a 5 year hiatus, and working with Spark Bookings, CLASSIC hosted a Karaoke and Lip Sync Battle Fundraiser again. It was sold out event and a night filled with talent, laughs, and great vibes. Thanks to the brave 9 acts, (listed below), and our celebrity judges, Joseph Naytowhow, Cheryl L'Hiondelle, and Brady Knight. We would like to thank the following people for their participation:

- The Elvis' - Lakefield LLP (lip sync)
- Ambrose - Ambrose (karaoke)
- CKD - Catriona Kaiser Derrick (lip sync)
- The Kerri Froc Experience - Kerri Froc (karaoke)
- All that Jazz - Emma Wintermute (lip sync)
- The Quintets - Quint staff (karaoke)
- Rainmaker - Student Managers at CLASSIC (lip sync)
- Gregger as Axl Rose - Gregger (also the MC for the night) (karaoke)
- Josh & the Groovy Gang - Intensive Clinical Law and Social Work students (lip sync)

**Thanks to the 50/50 winner, Sarah Buhler for donating all the winnings back**

The acts raised a total of  
**\$9054.69** in pledges

The event had a total of  
**\$12, 500** in sponsorships  
\*See last page of this report  
for sponsors

The event had a total of  
**\$8,150** in ticket sales

# STEP: STUDENT TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Intensive Clinical Law Program is an educational approach where law students work on real client files under the direct supervision of staff lawyers. Their experience includes meeting with clients, executing file work and attending court and hearings. Clinical legal education is steeped in reflective practice based on pedagogy and promotes social justice.

## Students of CLASSIC

The future advocates for Social Justice



### Summer Students

Taylor Hemsing  
Trisha Esmeralda  
Veronic Dirk-Pothier  
Amy Lalonde  
Fatima Ahmed  
Estefan Cortes-Vargas



### Fall Term 2024

Frank Chou  
Dominique  
Panko



### Winter Term 2025

Brooke Cross-Worobec  
Hannah Bouvier  
Ravleen Saini  
Fantasia Barnes  
Josh Delainey  
Megan Roesch



### Social Work Practicum

Larissa Demerais

College of Law Professor Sarah Buhler, 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. We will continue to work with her this year to present options to the college for possible future partnerships with the College of Law

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 Sarah Buhler  
Professor Gemma Smyth  
Judge Brad Mitchell  
Judge Lisa Watson  
Pamela Kovacs (Law Society SK)  
Alan Kilpatrick (Law Society SK)  
Valerie Payne (Law Society SK)  
Tyler Young (Office of Residential Tenancies)

We also appreciate the dedication and volunteer hours that the Pro Bono Students Canada provide

### Pro Bono Students Canada Volunteers

Hannah Jorgenson  
Gavin Devonald  
Amber Adams  
Iryna Kutska  
Frank Chou  
Geena Holding  
Kendall Kleisinger



# CLASSIC Service Areas

## Walk-In Advocacy Clinic

Full legal representation for clients who experience poverty and injustice and meet the eligibility criteria.

## Legal Advice Clinic

Summary legal advice to self-represented or unrepresented individuals from volunteer lawyers in the community.

## Community Support Program

System navigation primarily in the areas of housing and SIS/SAID (Ministry of Social Services) and crisis/emotional support.

## Student Training and Education Program

The Intensive Clinical Law Program (ICLP), Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC), and Social Work Practicum (BSW).



# CLASSIC'S VALUES

**PROFESSIONAL** We are committed to the highest standards of competence and ethical practice. This requires us to be good listeners and engage in self-reflective practice and evaluation. It also means that we live intension – acknowledging that as a legal clinic we are part of a system that causes suffering and inequity. Our approach to professionalism informs how we educate our students as well as our commitment to take care of ourselves and each other as we work towards a more just community.

**TRANSFORMATIVE** Everything about how we approach the law challenges the system. We teach, research and engage in social-justice, antiracist and trauma-informed lawyering. By definition, this requires that we acknowledge and challenge the role that we, along with certain laws, policies and legal institutions, have played in reinforcing colonialism and other forms of inequality and oppression.

**RESILIENT** CLASSIC makes a difference in our clients' lives. The courage and resilience of our clients inspires us – and underscores our commitment to ensuring that CLASSIC's model, and its ability to meet our clients' needs, is viable, even as it grows and evolves.

**CLIENT-CENTRED** We recognize that our clients, from a diversity of backgrounds and communities, are experts in their own lived experiences. We work with and in community to ensure that our clients' voices are heard, and to approach the challenges faced by our clients holistically, and in context. We are committed to learning from our clients and stakeholders, through reciprocity and respect.

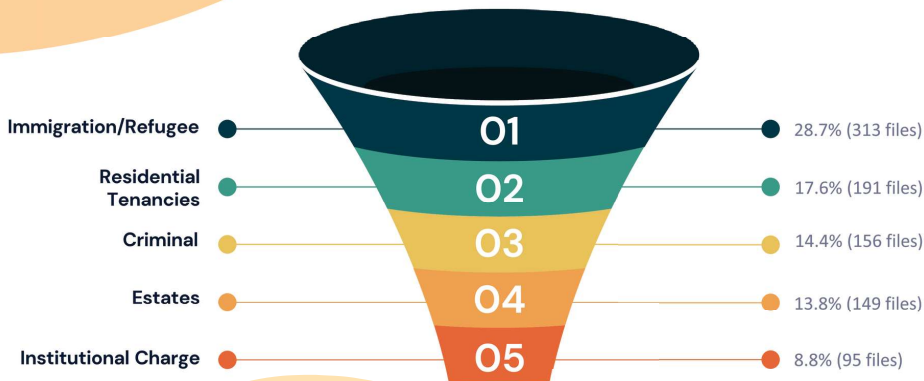


# WALK-IN ADVOCACY CLINIC

CLASSIC's Walk-in Advocacy Clinic (WAC) provides full legal representation in approximately 20 areas of law to people who experience poverty and injustice. This program works in tandem with the Intensive Clinical Law Program with students working on assigned client files under the direct supervision of staff lawyers. Of the **1083 client files** CLASSIC assisted with in 2024 - 2025, 904 files were in our top 5 areas of law.

## Top 5 areas of Law

Practiced at CLASSIC 2024-2025



**CLASSIC retained =**

**\$105,852**

**CLASSIC obtained =**

**\$142,292.36**

\*retained = saved clients from paying

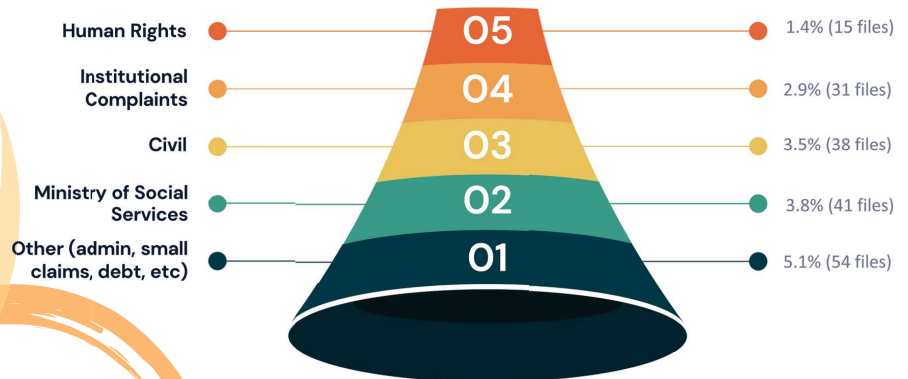
\*obtained = money and damages awarded to clients

577 applications were made to CLASSIC requesting full legal representation. 156 were denied primarily due to capacity and 38 were withdrawn primarily due to loss of contact.

- CLASSIC opened 418 new files
- CLASSIC carried over 318 files
- CLASSIC closed 346 files

## Remaining areas of Law

Practiced at CLASSIC 2024-2025



CLASSIC continues to see an upward trend of judicial reviews and appeals generated through our work. In 2024-2025, CLASSIC did over **170** appeals and judicial reviews including at the Supreme Court of Canada level.

Thanks to Janice Gingell and Pat Tondevold for volunteering their time and knowledge at CLASSIC. Throughout their years of volunteering, they have served over 300 clients!

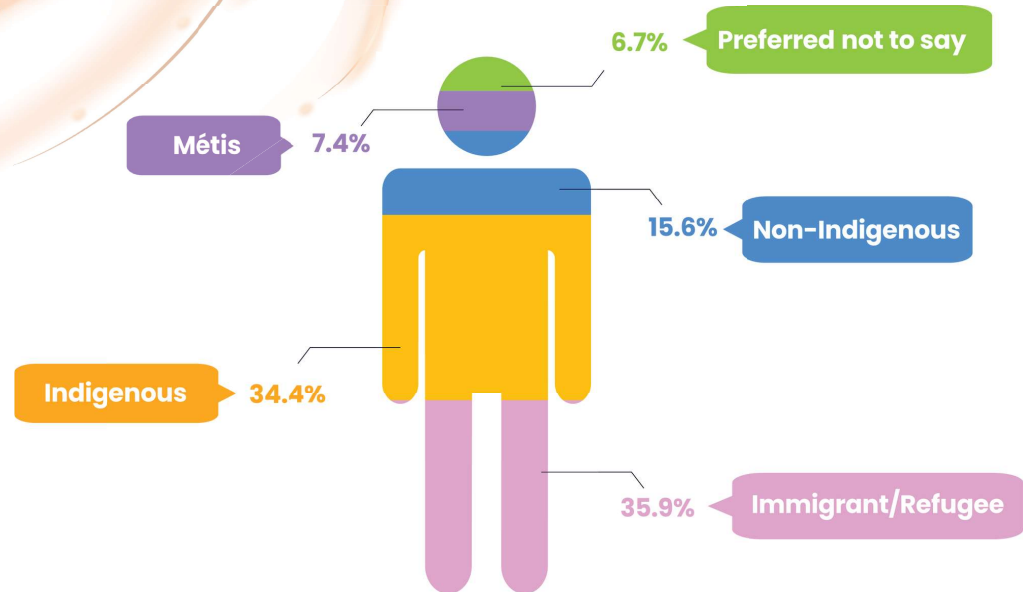
We would like to recognize Janice Gingell. She officially retired, for the second time, on February 28, 2025. Janice's dedication and years of service to CLASSIC are greatly appreciated. Janice is missed at the office. We wish her all the best in the next chapter of her story.



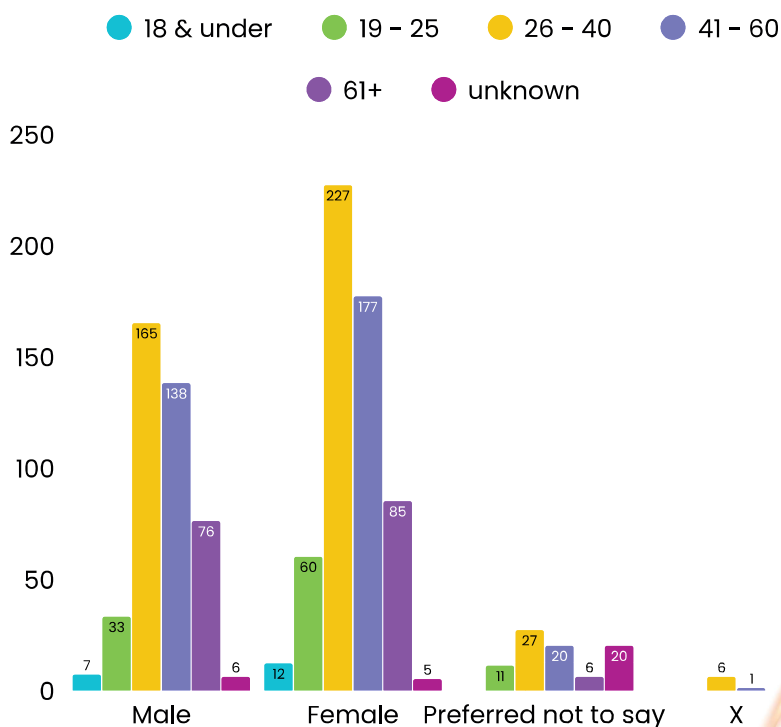
# WHO DID CLASSIC PROVIDE FULL LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO?

CLASSIC works with a diverse community of individuals and families. Our Philosophy of Practice recognizes that our clients come from many different communities and cultures and that we must learn from these communities and cultures in order to be good advocates. We also recognize that our clients are experts in their own lived experiences. Below are some demographic statistics for the 2024-2025 WAC fiscal year.

## Background of Individuals served



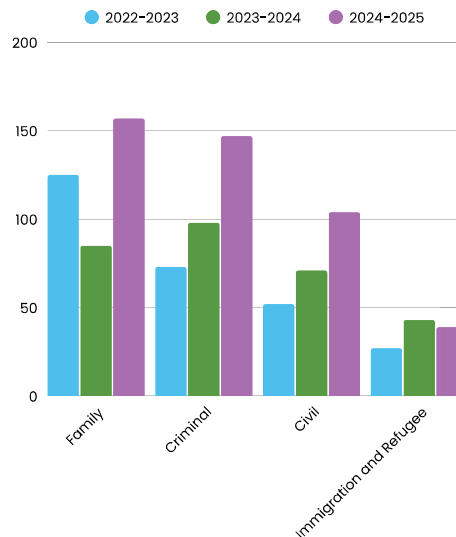
## Age and gender of individuals served



Our clients' legal issues are not always the central challenges they face. We will seek to understand and approach the challenges faced by our clients holistically, and in context (Article 3).

# LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC (LAC)

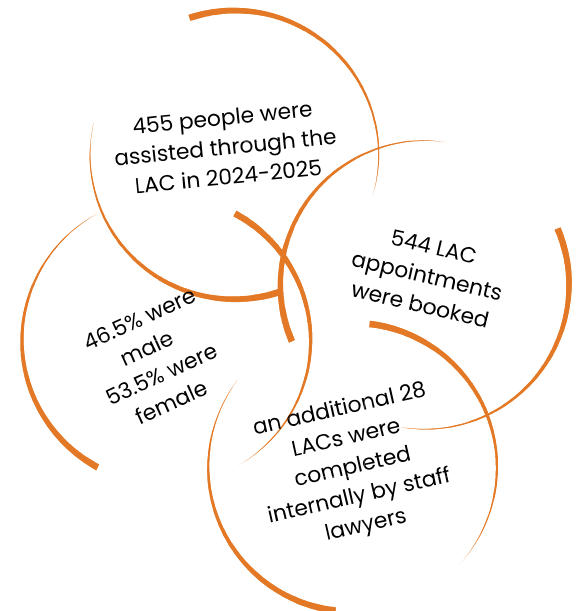
CLASSIC's Legal Advice Clinic (LAC) works in partnership with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan (PBLs) to provide unrepresented or self-represented individuals with free summary legal advice from practicing lawyers in the areas of criminal, family, immigration and civil law.



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.

This year, CLASSIC partnered with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan (PBLs) to host free legal advice clinics out of CLASSIC. This pilot project was implemented in July 2024 with CLASSIC hosting a total of 6 clinics, assisting 15 community members.



## Volunteer Legal Advice Clinic Lawyers

Jonathan Adams  
Gillian Gough  
Kimbal MacMillan  
Michael MacDonald  
Curtis Clavelle  
Don McIvor, K.C.  
Mark Galambos  
Siera Paterson\*

Michelle MacDonald  
Tayler-Anne Yee  
Terry Zakreski, K.C.  
Chris Gratton  
Davida Bentham  
Melissa Nicolls  
Nicole Bree  
Deb Hopkins

THANK YOU!

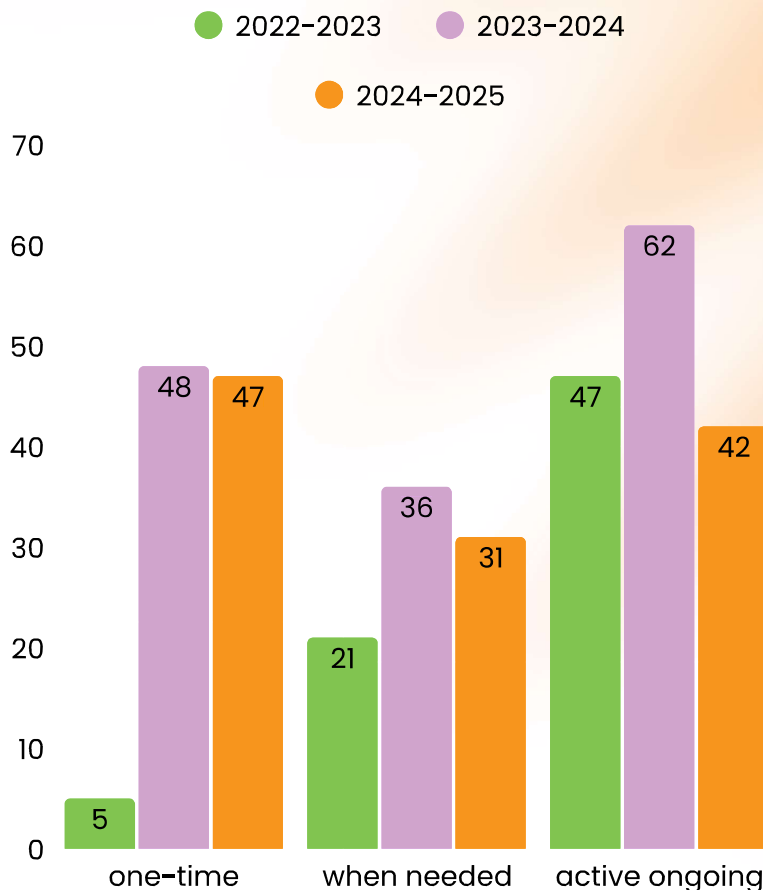
\*With the housing crisis and houselessness continuing to rise in Saskatoon, CLASSIC partnered with a volunteer lawyer, to offer legal advice sessions to community members who did not meet our eligibility criteria for Residential Tenancies matters. This is an initiative that CLASSIC will pilot for the next year. This initiative started on February 26 and completed 9 ORT LACs in 2024-2025.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSP)

CLASSIC understands our clients' legal issues are not always the central challenges they face. CLASSIC's Community Support Worker (CSW) assists community members with their nonlegal needs primarily through systems navigation. Having a holistic and inter-disciplinary team makes us more client-centred, effective and meets more of the needs for the community members.

## Community Support clients



This year the CSW worked with 120 community members, 73 remained active and carried into the next year.

Systems navigation is the largest area of work. The CSW assisted community members:

- navigate Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS)/Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID),
- with housing system navigation including locating, viewing and filling out rental applications, and
- through community street outreach.

The CSW started attending Station 20 West one morning a week in 2025, to reduce barriers for people to access help with housing and income assistance system navigation. The CSW has connected with 36 people through this initiative.

In March, during the biggest overdose crisis in Saskatoon's history, the CSW started checking in with people who appeared to be houseless around CLASSIC. On these walk-about, the CSW checked in with over 100 people while handing out snacks, water, and Narcan kits. She also talks with people to see if they are in need of any assistance and so they know they are cared about.

COMMUNITY

# SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

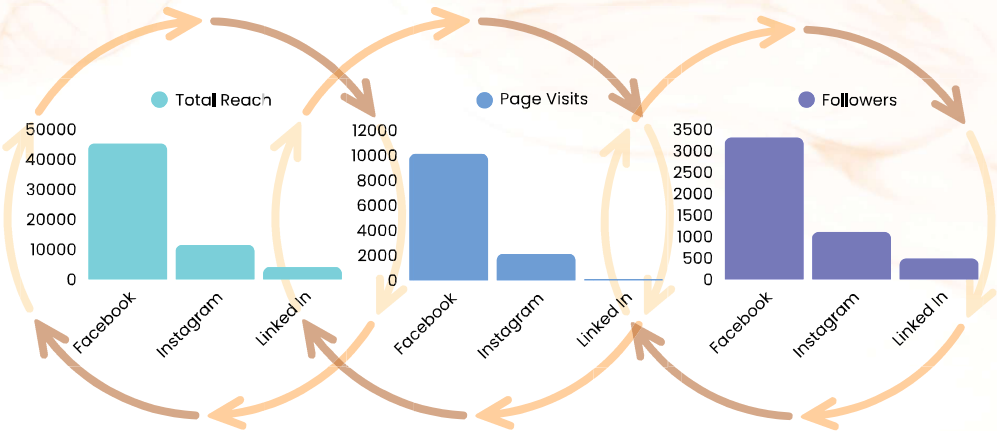
## Special Project- Project ID

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 and “Project ID” was born. Through our clinics in 2024-2025, **187** birth certificate applications and **45** health card applications were submitted for individuals to obtain their ID.



## Social Media

CLASSIC’s social media continues to be in high demand, especially the “Know Your Rights” posts. In 2024-2025 our social media reached many people:

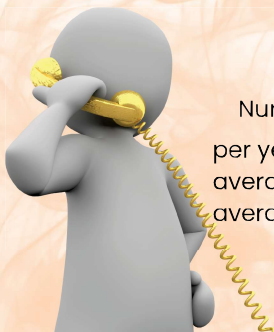


## Research

CLASSIC is a natural research hub. This year we partnered multiple projects related to the work we do. They include:

- “A Safe and Affordable Place to Call Home: A Multidisciplinary Longitudinal Outcomes Analysis of the National Housing Strategy” (Funded by CMHC and SSHRC) led by a team at Carleton University.
- “People, Places, Policies, Prospects: Affordable Rental Housing for those in Greatest Need” (Funded by SSHRC, CLASSIC’s part is led by a team at CUISR).
- “Access to Justice for Renters in Saskatoon” – funded by Pathways to Equity, led by Sarah Buhler, in partnership with CLASSIC.
- “Housing Law from the Ground Up” funded by SSHRC, Principal Investigator is Anna Lund and Sarah Buhler is a Co-PI.
- “Clinical Law Training Materials for Lawyers, Supervisors and Mentors”, funded by the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan, partners with Gemma Smyth from University of Windsor and Sarah Buhler, University of Saskatchewan.

## Phones



### PHONE CALLS

Number of total calls

per year	34,771
average per month	2,898
average per day	134

### PHONE CALLS

Time spent on the phone

seconds	5,027,520
Minutes	83,792
Hours	1,397
days	58
weeks	8
Months	2





# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

CLASSIC is often contacted to do presentations, be a research partner, present at conferences, and participate in community consultations and meetings. We try to attend where capacity permits. This year, CLASSIC participated in over **3000 hours** of events. Some highlights from 2024 - 2025 include:

- a presentation on the Good Samaritan Law and its Relationship with Human Rights at the National Addictions Awareness Week event hosted at Whitecap Dakota First Nation.
- Canadian Prison Law Conference
- Saskatchewan Trial Lawyers Association Conference
- Canadian Bar Association – Aboriginal Law Section meeting
- Legal Career Forums and Fairs
- Court of King's Bench En Banc
- the Saskatoon Community Foundation Board

CLASSIC engages with other community agencies and partners on a regular basis. Many of these interactions and meetings are in the interest of how to collectively provide the best possible services for community members. CLASSIC is connected with:

- Reconciliation Saskatoon,
- Rock your Roots,
- Interagency ED meeting,
- Nutana Collegiate,
- Self-Represented Litigants Working Group,
- Community Veterinary Outreach Clinics,
- College of Law CLASSIC Committee,
- Dean's Forum on Access to Justice,
- Community Cares,
- Inter-Agency Alliance,
- ACCLE (Association of Canadian Clinical Legal Education),
- Prison Law Working Group,
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership,
- Community Partner: People, Places, Policies & Prospects Partnership,
- Access to Justice Network,
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership,
- Core Competencies Working Group,
- Community Consultations,
- CBA Law Firm Showcase, and
- College of Law Career Forum.





# RECONCILIATION

CLASSIC is committed to a reconciliation journey. At each staff meeting, we learn a new Cree word linked to themes or trends in the community. We also engage in reflective practice so that we may start the process of confronting our own biases. The last Friday of each month is orange shirt day.

## SOME CLASSIC HIGHLIGHTS





Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Community Services Recovery Fund



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

Thank  
you



### Service Contract, Grant Partners, & other partners:

Law Foundation of Saskatchewan

University of Saskatchewan, College of Law

The Social Innovation Lab on Gender and Sexuality, University of Saskatchewan

Community Initiatives Fund

United Way of Saskatoon and Area

City of Saskatoon

Merlis Belsher Fund

Saskatoon Community Foundation, Quality of Life Grant

Department of Justice Canada

Community Services Recovery Fund

Future Generations Fund

Saskatoon Community Foundation and the Robert Steane Gift

Sask Energy

Legal Follies

Spark Bookings, Karaoke and Lip Sync Battle Fundraiser

### Donors / Sponsors \$750-\$2000

Andgo Systems

Johnathan Abrametz

Lakefield LLP

Brady Knight

McDougall Gauley LLP

McKercher LLP

Leah the Plumber

Hnatyshyn Gough

FASD Network

Law Society of Saskatchewan

The Legal Lifters Partnership

Deb Hopkins

Sophie Lovsin

Michelle Rajput

### Donors / Sponsors \$2000+

Sarah Buhler

Affinity Credit Union

Anonymous Donor

Sisters of St. Joseph

The Canadian Bar Association,

Sk. Branch

Law Society of Saskatchewan

### Individual Donors

CLASSIC thanks all our  
individual donors for your  
continued support

