

2025 - 2026 Law Foundation of  
Nova Scotia Annual Report



50 YEARS • 1976 - 2026





## This Place & People

### **Mi'kmaq Land Acknowledgement**

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) People first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

### **African Nova Scotian Acknowledgement**

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people who form part of over 52 historical land based communities, whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.



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# Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia was established in 1976 by amendment to the Barristers and Solicitors Act (now the Legal Profession Act, 2004, c. 28, s. 1.). Its central purpose is to receive and distribute interest earned on lawyers' pooled trust accounts in accordance with its mandate. It is the only foundation in Nova Scotia devoted solely to community law-related initiatives and legal education.

The objects of the Law Foundation are “to establish and maintain a fund to be used for the examination, research, revision and reform of and public access to the law, legal education, the administration of justice in the Province and other purposes incidental or conducive to or consequential upon the attainment of any such objects.”

The Foundation is administered by a board of up to nine members. The Governor in Council appoints up to five members. The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society appoints four. There were no changes in board member appointments in 2025-2026. By year end March 31st there was a full complement of nine members of the board with no vacancies awaiting appointment.

## Appointed by the Governor in Council:

Paulette Anderson  
Laura Broz, SECRETARY  
Lee-Ann Conrod  
Erica Koresawa  
Shehu Mustafa

## Appointed by the Council of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society:

Christena McIsaac  
Dwight Rudderham KC, CHAIR  
Douglas G. Ruck KC, TREASURER  
Catherine S. Walker KC, VICE-CHAIR

The Governor in Council appoints the chair from the members of the board, upon the joint recommendation of the Attorney General and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society.

The board meets 3 – 4 times per year and reviews grant applications for the following fiscal year at its winter meeting.

During 2025-2026, the Foundation employed one part-time staff member at eighty per cent time.

Mary D. Hamblin, Executive Director

**Please visit [nslawfd.ca](http://nslawfd.ca) for more information.**

# Chair's Message

## Reflecting on 50 Years of Impact

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, this milestone offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the Foundation's remarkable journey—five decades of strengthening access to justice and enriching the legal landscape of our province.

Since its establishment, the Foundation has been dedicated to advancing legal education, supporting public understanding of the law, and improving the administration of justice. The impact of our grantees and funded initiatives can be seen and felt across communities throughout Nova Scotia.

This anniversary also invites gratitude — to all those who have helped build and sustain the Foundation's success. We extend our sincere appreciation to our many partners, including the Nova Scotia Barrister's Society, for their continued collaboration and trust. Our many partners' commitment and insight have helped shape programs and initiatives that deliver meaningful and lasting benefits to Nova Scotians.

We also take this occasion to recognize and thank all past Chairs, Board members, and staff who have contributed their time, knowledge, and passion over the years. Their dedication has guided the Foundation through periods of change and growth, establishing the strong foundation on which we proudly stand today.

As we look ahead, the Foundation remains steadfast in ensuring that our work continues to reflect our statutory objects and strategic priorities. We are deeply mindful of our responsibility to support innovative and effective approaches to legal education and access to justice, particularly for those most in need of legal support.

Our revenues, largely derived from interest earned on lawyers' trust accounts, naturally fluctuate with changes in interest rates. To maintain stability and ensure continuity of support for our grantees, the Foundation prudently manages a reserve investment. This reserve allows us to fulfill our commitments and sustain funding even during periods of lower interest returns. Full financial details and disclosures are available in the financial section at the end of this Report, as well as online at [nslawfd.ca](http://nslawfd.ca).

As we celebrate five decades of service, we do so with immense pride in what has been achieved and with optimism for what lies ahead. Together—with our partners, the legal community, and the many organizations we support—we will continue to promote fairness, access, and justice for all Nova Scotians.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DR', written in a cursive style.

**Dwight Rudderham KC**

Chair, Board of Governors  
Law Foundation  
of Nova Scotia

# History of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia was created in 1976. The first Board of Governors was appointed in September 1976, and R.J. Downie, KC, was appointed Chair commencing November 1, 1976. The first full meeting of the Law Foundation Board was held on May 4, 1977.

The Foundation received its first revenue from interest on lawyers' trust accounts in October 1977 – an amount of \$25,545. It received \$150,951 during its first full year of operation, for the fiscal period ending March 1979.

The Foundation was not in a position to make grants until May 1978, when a grant of \$63,000 was approved to fund the Continuing Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia. Since these early days, the Foundation has invested \$71 million in access-to-justice initiatives, legal education, and community legal supports.

The Foundation owes a debt of gratitude to the individuals who volunteered their time and expertise to serve on the Board of Governors.

## In particular, the Foundation wishes to recognize those who served as Chair:

<b>1976 – 1979</b>	<b>R.J. Downie, KC</b>
<b>1979 – 1986</b>	<b>K. LeRoy Taylor, KC</b>
<b>1986 – 1996</b>	<b>A. William Cox, KC</b>
<b>1996 – 1998</b>	<b>Harry Wrathall, KC (Acting Chair)</b>
<b>1998 – 2000</b>	<b>Goldie Trager, KC</b>
<b>2000 – 2003</b>	<b>John McFarlane, KC</b>
<b>2003 – 2010</b>	<b>Christine McCulloch, KC</b>
<b>2010 – 2024</b>	<b>Robert G. MacKeigan, KC</b>
<b>2024 – present</b>	<b>Dwight Rudderham, KC</b>

ALL BOARD MEMBERS, INCLUDING CHAIRS, WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NOVA SCOTIA.

PAULETTE ANDERSON • JOSH ARNOLD, KC • LAURA BROZ • JOHN P. COCHRANE, KC • LEE-ANN CONROD • A. WILLIAM COX, KC • G.T.H. COOPER • C.E. DANIELSON • DWIGHT A. DOREY • J. STEWART DRURY, KC • R.J. DOWNIE, KC • FRANK L. ELMAN, KC • BARBARA FEENEY • E.J. FLINN, KC • PETER GREEN, KC • MEG GREEN • DARA L. GORDON • DEBORAH GASS • STEVE GRAHAM • DAVID W. GRUCHY, KC • JILL HAMILTON • SUZANNE HOOD, KC • ROBERT S. HUESTIS, KC • GEORGE W. HUDSON, C.A. • BURNLEY “ROCKY” JONES • GEORGE S. KHATTAR • SIMON J. KHATTAR, KC • ERICA KORESAWA • MARGARET M. MACKENZIE • VALERIE MACKENZIE • ROBERT G. MACKEIGAN, KC • MELINDA MACLEAN, KC • LEE ANNE MACLEOD • LEE-ANNE MACLEOD-ARCHER • JOHN C. MACPHERSON • JEAN C. MACPHERSON, KC • JOHN S. MCFARLANE, KC • CHRISTINE A. MCCULLOCH, KC • STEWART MCINNES, KC • J.W.E. MINGO, KC • DAVID A. MILNER, KC • SHEHU MUSTAFA • D. ARTHUR NICHOLS, KC • BRUCE NICKERSON, KC • KENT NOSEWORTHY • SENATOR DONALD H. OLIVER, KC • TOKUNBO OMISADE • ANNA PATON • MICHAEL K. POWER • IRVING C. PINK, KC • A. ROBERT SAMPSON, KC • R. MACLEOD ROGERS, KC • DOUGLAS G. RUCK, KC • DWIGHT RUDDERHAM, KC • JENNA SHADDOCK • HUGH K. SMITH • R.J. ROSS STINSON • K. LEROY TAYLOR, KC • J.D.F. THEAKSTON, KC • M. ESTELLE THERIAULT, KC • DR. ESMERALDA THORNHILL • M. GERARD TOMPKINS, KC • GOLDIE TRAGER • GRAHAM D. WALKER, KC • CATHERINE S. WALKER, KC • HARRY WRATHALL, KC

50 Years • Strengthening Justice **BY THE NUMBERS**

**\$71**  
MILLION

Invested in access-to-justice initiatives, legal education, and community legal supports since 1975.

**1,240+**  
GRANTS  
AWARDED

Supporting organizations, clinics, research, and public legal education across Nova Scotia.

**350,000+**  
NOVA  
SCOTIANS

Reached through programs funded over five decades—students, families, newcomers, and marginalized communities.

**120+**  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS

Collaborated with the Foundation to advance equity and improve legal services province-wide.

**50**  
YEARS

Of safeguarding a strong, independent, and accessible justice system.

# Revenue and Reserve Funds

## How the Law Foundation receives and uses its money

The Law Foundation’s income comes mainly from interest earned on money held in law firms’ general (or “pooled”) trust accounts.

In the past, this interest was kept by the banks. But 50 years ago, though an initiative led by the Barristers’ Society of Nova Scotia, the province followed the lead of other provinces and countries and dedicated the use of this money to enhance public access to justice, legal reform and legal education. This approach was enshrined in legislation in 1976, and it is consistent across the country. Each province and territory has a law foundation.

## How the amount of money is determined

The amount the Foundation receives from the banks depends on two things: How much money is sitting in

firm’s trust accounts at any given time, and the interest rates (called the prime rate) set by banks.

Trust balances and interest rates change over time. This means that the Foundation’s revenue can go up or down, and sometimes quickly. For example, in 2020, the Foundation received \$3.5 million, while in 2021, it dropped to just \$700,000.

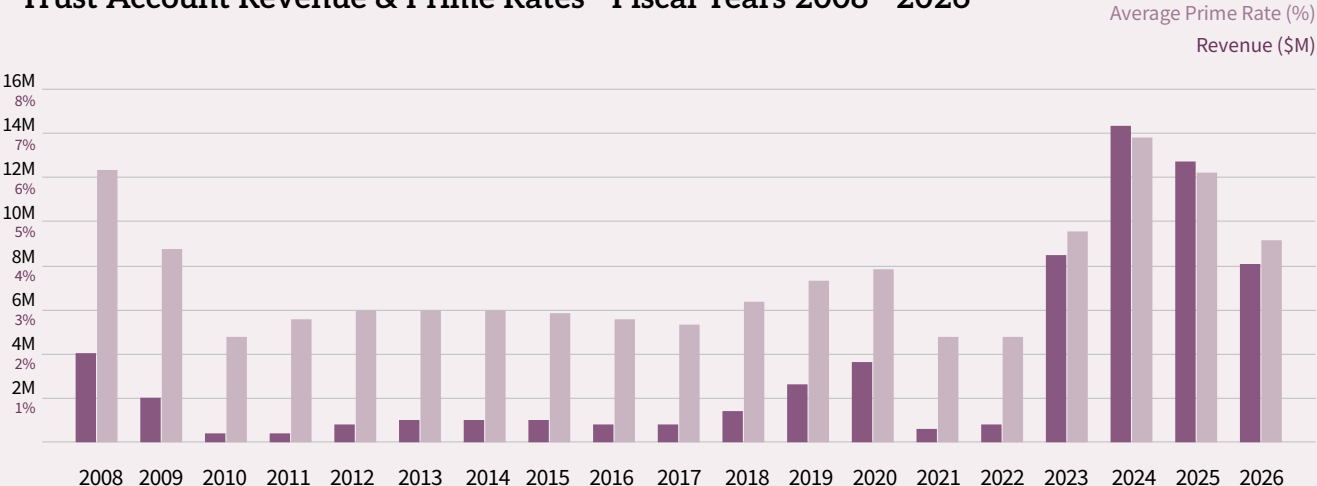
When revenue is high, the Foundation can increase its funding to organizations. When revenue drops, it may need to reduce grants or draw on a reserve investment fund to provide the board approved level of funding.

## How this money is used

The Foundation supports projects that aim to

- enhance public access to the law
- support legal education, research and reform
- improve and reform the administration of justice
- provide scholarships to individuals studying law.

Trust Account Revenue & Prime Rates - Fiscal Years 2008 - 2026



### How the reserve investment fund helps keep grants stable

Because the Law Foundation’s income can rise and fall quickly, it created a reserve investment fund in 1986 to provide stability.

When interest rates fall, the Foundation’s revenue can drop sharply. The reserve investment fund protects the Foundation from having to make sudden cuts to grants or having to pause funding altogether.

### How the reserve investment is used

When income is too low to cover approved grants, the Foundation withdraws money from the reserve investment fund. This has happened several times over the years. For example, after the 2008–2010 drop in interest rates, the Foundation used the reserve to

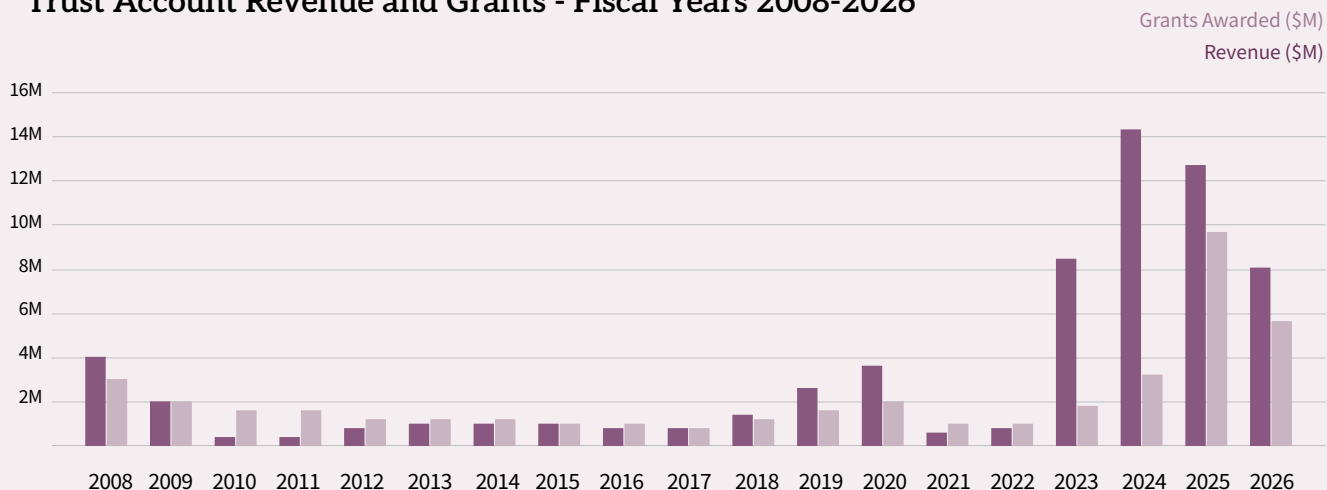
maintain grant levels. And during the COVID-19 period (2020–2022), revenue fell by eighty-two per cent, and the Foundation again relied on the reserve investment to continue funding although grants were limited then to just nineteen applicants and those grants were cut by twenty per cent from the previous year.

### Balancing grants and sustainability

The Foundation tries to balance holding money for the future with providing relatively consistent funding for grantees. This approach helps avoid sudden changes in funding for organizations that may rely on the Foundation.

Today, the reserve investment fund remains a key part of the Foundation’s ability to fund projects.

## Trust Account Revenue and Grants - Fiscal Years 2008-2026



# Grants to be Disbursed in 2026-2027

## Core Grants

<b>Access to Justice and Law Reform Institute of N.S</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<i>Access to justice research and reform, review of provincial laws &amp; recommendations for improvement, modernization and reform</i>	
<b>Antigonish Women's Resource Centre</b>	<b>92,020</b>
<i>Justice Matters for Women, an outreach program that provides law-related information and support for women and adolescent girls in Antigonish &amp; Guysborough Counties</i>	
<b>Avalon Sexual Assault Centre</b>	<b>123,220</b>
<i>Legal information &amp; education, training workshops, support services and policy work aimed at improving the criminal justice process for victims of sexual violence</i>	
<b>Concilio Prison Ministry</b>	<b>80,000</b>
<i>For inmates at Springhill Institution and their families, Concilio offers an innovative approach to re-integration of long-term offenders into the community</i>	
<b>Coverdale Justice Society</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<i>Coverdale continues to provide critical support and specialized services to women and gender-diverse individuals navigating the justice system in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Dalhousie Legal Aid Service</b>	<b>275,000</b>
<i>Pro bono legal services for marginalized populations; community development and law reform; and, an educational experience for 3rd year law students</i>	
<b>East Coast Environmental Law Association</b>	<b>115,000</b>
<i>Public interest environmental law services for Nova Scotians, including legal education resources in accessible formats available to the public at no cost</i>	
<b>Elizabeth Fry Cape Breton</b>	<b>165,000</b>
<i>Support for women in prison, plus programs and services for women charged with offences or at-risk in the community; law reform and community education</i>	
<b>Elizabeth Fry Mainland</b>	<b>149,600</b>
<i>Support for women in prison, plus programs and services for women charged with offences or at-risk in the community; law reform and community education</i>	
<b>EPIC (Educational Program Innovations Charity) Society</b>	<b>55,000</b>
<i>Programs for youth in conflict with the law &amp; support for parents, including after-school and specialized help</i>	

<b>Halifax Refugee Clinic Association</b>	<b>145,000</b>
<i>A pro bono legal clinic to assist financially eligible refugee claimants</i>	
<b>IB&amp;M Indigenous Blacks &amp; Mi'kmaq Dal Law</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<i>A legal education initiative to increase the representation of Indigenous Blacks &amp; Mi'kmaq people in the legal profession</i>	
<b>King's County Seniors' Safety Program</b>	<b>24,000</b>
<i>A program to provide legal, safety &amp; security information on an individual and group basis to seniors in King's County</i>	
<b>Leave Out Violence (LOVE)</b>	<b>40,000</b>
<i>Helps equip vulnerable and at-risk youth with the skills and supports needed to build stable, positive futures</i>	
<b>Legal Information Society of N.S. (LISNS)</b>	<b>300,000</b>
<i>Programs providing Nova Scotians with pro bono access to legal information &amp; resources to increase access to justice</i>	
<b>Mainline Needle Exchange</b>	<b>89,651</b>
<i>A legal education program to reduce recidivism; help for drug users and services providers in court and correctional institutions</i>	
<b>Pro Bono Students Canada</b>	<b>40,000</b>
<i>Law students volunteer their time to provide legal services to public interest community organizations</i>	
<b>reachAbility</b>	<b>121,512</b>
<i>BOSS24 (Building on Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness) is a program that delivers emotional regulation and anger management supports to marginalized citizens</i>	
<b>Stepping Stone Association</b>	<b>58,000</b>
<i>Court support and assistance for current or former sex trade workers; workshops for sex trade workers and the legal community; community education</i>	

**SUBTOTAL: CORE GRANTS \$2,303,003**

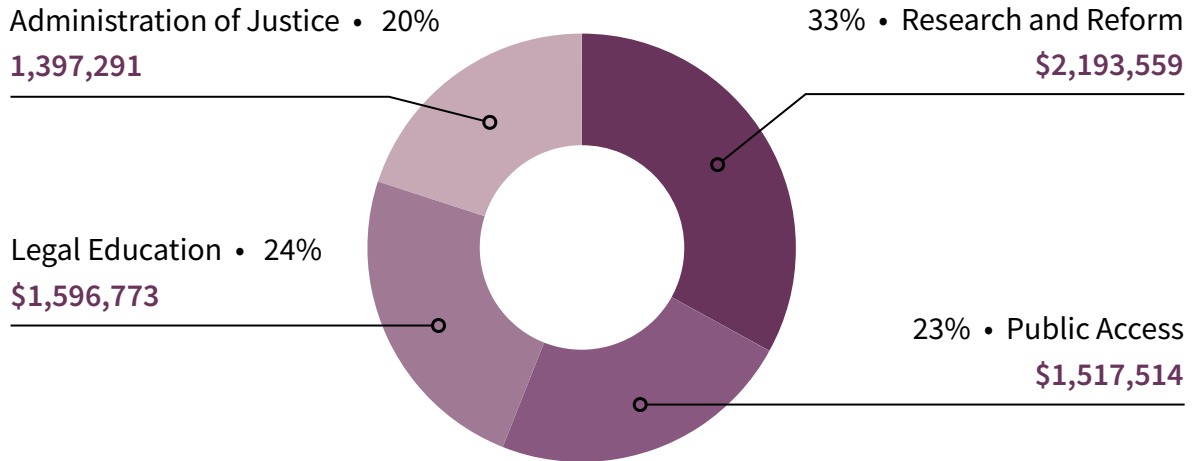
## Special Project Grants

<b>Bar Society (Nova Scotia Barristers' Society DEI Project)</b>	<b>250,000</b>
<i>A project to reduce systemic discrimination in the Nova Scotia justice system, the legal profession and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society</i>	
<b>Bar Society (Nova Scotia Barristers' Society Education Project)</b>	<b>55,000</b>
<i>Development of an African Nova Scotian competency training program – phase 3 – for the legal profession in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Bar Society (Nova Scotia Barristers' Society - Library)</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
<i>Library revitalization project to enhanced library access, including for lawyers in rural areas and for small and solo practitioners.</i>	
<b>Black Law Students Dalhousie</b>	<b>30,000</b>
<i>National conference support for black law students attending the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University</i>	
<b>African NS Decade for African Descent (DPAD)</b>	<b>175,800</b>
<i>Internship program encouraging black youth to enter the legal profession</i>	
<b>Canadian Bar Nova Scotia (CBA-NS)</b>	<b>159,500</b>
<i>Rural Practitioners Support Project</i>	
<b>Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)</b>	<b>30,000</b>
<i>CNIB's Know Your Rights project continues to promote and build on its successful initiative to provide practical, plain language legal information in equitable formats to support individuals who are blind, deafblind, or have low vision</i>	
<b>CanLII Nova Scotia</b>	<b>126,112</b>
<i>Integrating Indigenous law and aboriginal law in Nova Scotia and Canada, Phase I</i>	
<b>Centre for Law and Democracy</b>	<b>51,985</b>
<i>Legal research law review human rights Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Centre for Law and Democracy</b>	<b>58,085</b>
<i>Access to Information Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Centre for Migrant Workers Nova Scotia</b>	<b>143,961</b>
<i>A project to continue to provide legal navigation for vulnerable migrant workers in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Community Justice Society HRM</b>	<b>377,975</b>
<i>Phase 3 of a restorative justice project to address and prevent conflict in schools and community</i>	
<b>Dalhousie Legal Aid Mental Health Initiative</b>	<b>115,000</b>
<i>Project working for reform in correctional facilities for inmates with mental health challenges</i>	

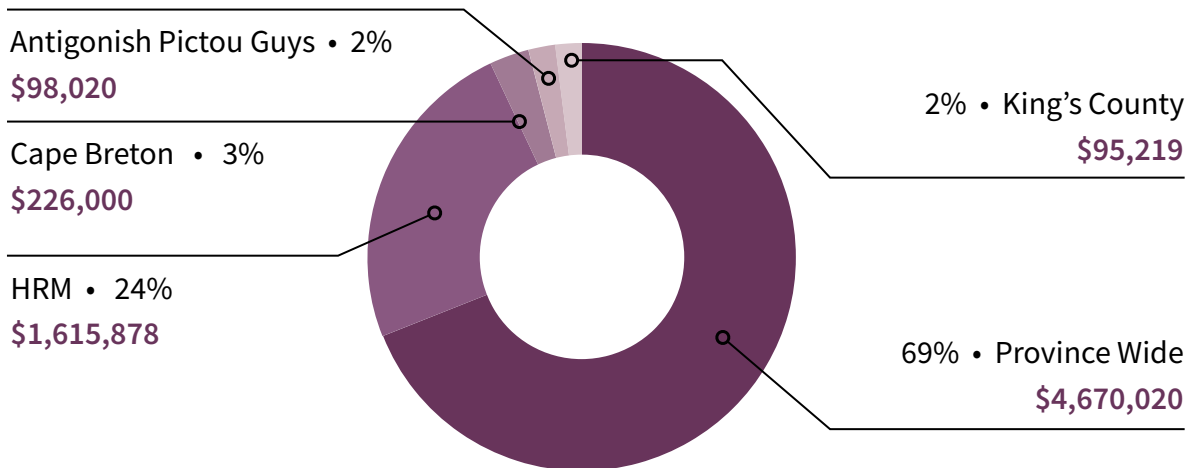
<b>East Coast Prison Justice</b>	<b>135,214</b>
<i>A project to improve conditions and provide inmates with legal information and resources to increase access to justice</i>	
<b>Evangeline - Berwick</b>	<b>65,219</b>
<i>Legal Access Support Program Annapolis Valley</i>	
<b>Halifax Workers Action Centre</b>	<b>125,000</b>
<i>Pilot project to reduce barriers to workplace justice by providing legal representation and advocacy for workers in employment disputes and workers' compensation claims</i>	
<b>Initio Legal Clinic at Dalhousie</b>	<b>250,000</b>
<i>The initio Technology and Innovation Law Clinic wants to provide low-cost legal services to early-stage start-ups; and, to provide learning opportunities for law students.</i>	
<b>LEVEL Justice – Indigenous and Black Youth phase 4</b>	<b>40,000</b>
<i>A legal education program to reach indigenous and Black Youth in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Legal Information Society of N.S. (LISNS)</b>	<b>105,000</b>
<i>Project Probate Pathway</i>	
<b>Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom at Schulich Law</b>	<b>99,805</b>
<i>Continued work with Indigenous communities and organizations in the areas of Indigenous law, governance and Indigenomics</i>	
<b>Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre Halifax</b>	<b>302,000</b>
<i>Exploring indigenous land concepts, research and development</i>	
<b>National Association of Women &amp; The Law</b>	<b>122,407</b>
<i>NAWL Project – Family Law Cases A2J</i>	
<b>Nova Scotia Legal Aid</b>	<b>242,000</b>
<i>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Project, phase 3</i>	
<b>Pacific Legal Education and Outreach</b>	<b>80,000</b>
<i>A law initiative for non-profits in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>Rainbow Refugee Society Halifax</b>	<b>94,710</b>
<i>Legal navigation for LGBT+2S refugees in Nova Scotia</i>	
<b>7th Step Society of Nova Scotia</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<i>Project Pro Social Maps and Roots – Youth Mentor</i>	
<b>YWCA Halifax</b>	<b>117,361</b>
<i>An accessible justice initiative to help women and girls in HRM with legal navigation</i>	

**SUBTOTAL: PROJECT GRANT APPLICANTS \$4,402,134**

## Grants by Mandate



## Grants by Region



**\$6,705,137**  
TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED 2026-2027

# Grantee Stories

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**In their own words**



## Access To Justice And Law Reform Institute Of Nova Scotia

At its core, the Institute responds to two pressing challenges: access to justice and legal reform. Geography, income, and circumstance can all shape a person’s ability to access the legal system. For many Nova Scotians, particularly those in rural communities, access to justice can be difficult to obtain. By tackling both access to justice and law reform together, the Institute helps to ensure that justice is not only available, but relevant and responsive.

Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has been critical in making this work possible. The Institute’s activities span a wide range of initiatives, each contributing to a more informed and just society. Its law reform work this year includes examining how to simplify probate and administration processes, making them less expensive and complex for families during difficult times. The Institute’s law reform agenda is also addressing complex issues such as the availability of spousal support and matrimonial property for former spouses and the challenges that arise when children are moved across jurisdictions and the Hague Convention does not apply.

Equally important is the Institute’s role in public and

continuing legal education. By producing accessible resources—such as guides for common-law couples, parenting plans, and manuals about meeting with lawyers—it helps people make informed decisions before problems escalate. Its work on family violence, including an online case index and specialized training materials, strengthens the capacity of both legal professionals and community service providers to respond to family violence situations that arise in a family law case. Partnerships with organizations focused on migrant workers’ rights and judicial education further extend their work in public and continuing legal education.

One particularly powerful example of this forward-looking impact is the Institute’s course on trauma-responsive lawyering and intimate partner violence. By equipping law students with the skills to understand and respond to the realities of survivors, the Institute is helping to shape a legal culture that is more humane and effective.

Looking ahead, the Institute aims to deepen its understanding of the evolving justice needs of Nova Scotians and expand its reach.

**Ilana Dodi Luther, Executive Director**  
 Access to Justice & Law Reform Institute of Nova Scotia

For more information go to [lawreform.ns.ca](http://lawreform.ns.ca)

## Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre And Sexual Assault Services Association

In rural Nova Scotia, where distance, limited services, and economic pressures can isolate individuals from the help they need, the Justice Matters for Women program is a lifeline—bringing legal knowledge, advocacy, and empowerment directly to women and girls who might otherwise go without.

Delivered by the Antigonish Women’s Centre & Sexual Assault Services, the program is rooted in a simple but transformative idea: that understanding your rights is the first step toward exercising them. For women in Guysborough and Antigonish Counties—particularly those facing poverty, violence, or isolation—access to clear, reliable legal information can be the difference between vulnerability and stability.

Each week, the program meets women where they are—literally and figuratively. With a consistent presence in communities like Guysborough, Canso, Sherbrooke, Goshen, and Antigonish, the outreach worker provides in-person, phone, and virtual support. By establishing satellite spaces in familiar community locations such as malls, hospitals, and municipal buildings, the program removes barriers that often prevent rural residents from seeking help. It replaces intimidation with accessibility.

But the program does more than provide information—

it builds pathways. Acting as a trusted guide, the outreach worker connects women to critical services including legal aid, victim services, income assistance, housing supports, and employment resources. In communities where navigating systems can feel overwhelming, this kind of personalized support ensures that women are not left to face complex legal and social challenges alone.

Funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has enabled the program to expand both its reach and its impact. Each initiative strengthens not just individuals, but the broader community’s capacity to respond to harm and prevent it. And the program fosters collaboration among local organizations, creating a network of care that amplifies its impact across the region.

The true value of this work, however, is best understood through the lives it changes. One woman, facing intimate partner violence and financial dependence, reached out for help. Through the outreach worker’s support and coordination with community partners, she was able to access safe housing, financial assistance, and legal aid. Today, she is living safely, rebuilding her independence, and navigating the legal system with confidence and support.

Anita Stewart, Executive Director,  
Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre &  
Sexual Assault Services Association

Marcia Connolly, Outreach Worker, Justice Matters  
for Women, Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre &  
Sexual Assault Services Association  
Justice Matters for Women extends the  
services of the AWRC&SASA

For more information go to [awrcsasa.ca](http://awrcsasa.ca)

“

*I am so grateful for the support I have from the women’s outreach program, I would not have known where to start when I left my abusive relationship, now I walk a little taller.*

Canso client, Antigonish Women’s  
Resource Centre

## Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

Avalon's Legal Support Program provides specialized, trauma-informed guidance to survivors of sexualized violence as they navigate the legal system. The program also works to reduce systemic barriers by building community awareness and engaging government and institutional stakeholders to strengthen survivor-centered responses.

Existing pathways for survivors seeking legal navigation support are often limited in their ability to provide a trauma-informed lens for folks who have experienced sexualized violence and wish to engage with the legal system. Avalon's Legal Navigation Model allows for service provision that not only provides navigation support for legal processes but continues support work with the client to connect them with existing resources in their community that address the material conditions of their real life, outside of the courtroom. The Legal Navigation Model allows survivors to receive the holistic support needed to allow them to meaningfully engage in and understand the legal process.

The Law Foundation grant fully supported Avalon's Legal Navigator role. This role directly supports community members who have experienced sexualized violence and also works closely with the Provincial

Government, Halifax Regional Police, Crown Attorneys, and other key stakeholders to enhance sexual assault response policies.

Some of the programming work undertaken this year included the following:

- One-on-one ongoing client work
- Creation of the Legal Toolkit project, a best practices guide for community organizations to provide legal support services based on Avalon's expertise
- Development of the Pathways to Justice Legal Support Fund, a one-time financial support for survivors of sexualized violence across Nova Scotia as they navigate their unique pathway to justice
- Ongoing engagement with Halifax Sexual Assault Response Team (HSART) and Sexual Assault Investigations Review Committee (SAIRC)

Moving forward, we are looking to expand our programming beyond the emphasis on one-on-one supports to include more options for group and short-term drop-in supports. We plan to engage other community organizations to host our Legal Navigator, which we are hoping will be less intimidating for survivors to access support and can help expand the reach of Avalon's services to marginalized community members.

**Sarah Rodimon, Executive Director**

For more information, go to [avaloncentre.ca](http://avaloncentre.ca)

## Inspiring Future Black and Mi'kmaq Lawyers Internship Program

In March 2026, the Inspiring Future Indigenous Black & Mi'kmaq Lawyers Internship Program returned for its second year. The program, run by the Nova Scotia chapter of the Canadian Black Lawyers Association, expanded its reach and deepened its impact across Nova Scotia in its second year. Held during March Break, the program welcomed a new cohort of African Nova Scotian, Black, Indigenous, and Mi'kmaq high school students for an immersive, week-long experience grounded in legal education, human rights, and mentorship.

For many participants, the internship marked a first: their first exposure to legal careers, their first time engaging with a legal mentor, and their first opportunity to see themselves reflected in the justice system. While most students entered the program with a strong interest but limited knowledge of legal pathways, they quickly built confidence through hands-on learning and meaningful connections.

Over 55 hours of programming, students explored how human rights are upheld, challenged, and advanced in Canada. Sessions on Indigenous law, African Nova Scotian law, the Rule of Law, and "Know Your Rights" provided a strong foundation, while experiential learning brought these concepts to life. Highlights included a full-day courtroom experience and a mini

moot led by Justice Diane Rowe, where students developed factums, sharpened critical thinking skills, and practiced oral advocacy.

Equally impactful was direct engagement with more than 10 legal professionals, institutions, and community leaders. Through visits to courts, law firms, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, the Public Prosecution Service, and the Schulich School of Law, students gained valuable insight into diverse legal careers and pathways. Mentorship opportunities, including a mentor mixer and law student panel, fostered a sense of belonging and possibility.

Cultural teachings and wellness sessions, including African and Mi'kmaw drumming, ensured the program remained rooted in community, identity, and holistic learning.

Sixteen students completed the program, collectively achieving 90 per cent of the program's target and earning a Personal Development high school credit. Delivered through a strong coalition of community and legal partners, the internship continues to serve as a vital pipeline, equipping young people with the knowledge, confidence, and support to pursue careers in law and to become informed, empowered advocates for human rights in their communities.

**Lola Williams-Afolabi, President, CABL-NS**

For more information, go to [cabl.ca](http://cabl.ca)

## The Canadian Legal Information Institute (CANLII)

The Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII) is transforming how Nova Scotians access and understand the law by harnessing the power of artificial intelligence to make legal information clearer, more accessible, and free for all.

At the heart of this initiative is a two-part project designed to remove long-standing barriers to legal understanding. First, CanLII is using advanced large language models to generate plain-language summaries of Nova Scotia’s case law and legislation. These summaries are carefully structured to reflect legal reasoning for court decisions and legislative intent for statutes, helping users quickly grasp complex material. Fully integrated into the CanLII website and clearly identified as AI-generated, these summaries are available to anyone—whether a lawyer, student, or member of the public—at no cost.

The second phase expands this work by introducing bilingual access. French-language versions of Nova Scotia’s legal summaries are being developed, alongside similar enhancements for a portion of federal case law and legislation. This effort moves Canada closer to a truly inclusive legal information system, where primary legal sources are not only available but

understandable in both official languages.

This project addresses a critical challenge. While CanLII has long provided comprehensive access to legal materials, the sheer volume of content makes it impossible to manually produce summaries or translations at the scale required. At the same time, some commercial legal publishers have begun offering AI-enhanced tools—but only behind paywalls. This creates a divide where clarity and efficiency are available only to those who can afford it. CanLII’s approach ensures that improved access to legal understanding remains a public good, not a privilege.

The impact of this initiative is significant. Nova Scotia is now part of a growing national effort supported by law foundations across Canada. When complete, users will be able to search and access legal information from across the country in either official language—something never before possible at this scale. For Nova Scotians, from practicing lawyers to self-represented litigants, this means clearer pathways through the legal system, better-informed decisions, and more equitable access to justice.

By making the law easier to understand and freely available to all, CanLII is helping to build a more informed, inclusive, and just society.

**Brenda Alm, Manager Partnerships and Content**  
The Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII)

For more information go to [canlii.org](https://canlii.org)

## CNIB – Know Your Rights

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) continues to build on the success of its Know Your Rights initiative—first launched in Ontario in 2019—to advance equitable access to legal information across Canada. In Nova Scotia, this work responds to a clear and persistent need: individuals who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision often face significant barriers to understanding their legal rights and navigating systems designed without accessibility in mind.

Through the Know Your Rights – Nova Scotia project, CNIB delivered a combination of in-person and virtual legal information workshops alongside the development of a fully accessible, interactive website. Together, these resources were designed to provide practical, plain-language legal information and to strengthen participants’ confidence in self-advocacy.

Four in-person workshops were held in Halifax, Sydney, Arichat, and New Glasgow, followed by a virtual session. Co-facilitated by CNIB staff, the sessions created welcoming, small-group environments where participants could engage openly, ask questions, and build understanding. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: all respondents reported increased knowledge of their legal rights, a stronger understanding of how to distinguish legal information from legal advice, and improved awareness of available legal resources.

Participants emphasized the importance of accessible legal education, noting that having “a toolkit in one’s pocket” is essential to navigating and challenging discrimination.

Complementing the workshops, CNIB launched the Know Your Rights – Nova Scotia interactive website. Designed with accessibility at its core, the site includes French-language content, screen reader compatibility, and carefully structured navigation to ensure ease of use. Development involved extensive collaboration, user testing, and iterative improvements to ensure both functionality and inclusivity.

Early engagement metrics point to meaningful reach within a targeted audience, with the website recording over 1,600 page views and more than 1,300 active users. Additional virtual information sessions further supported users in navigating the platform and accessing relevant legal information.

Together, these initiatives represent a meaningful step toward reducing barriers to justice. By equipping Nova Scotians who are blind, Deafblind, or have low vision with accessible legal knowledge and tools, CNIB is helping to foster greater independence, confidence, and inclusion. With continued outreach and refinement, the project is well-positioned to deepen its impact in the years ahead.

**Daniel Moore, Director, Philanthropy, CNIB Foundation**

For more information, go to [cnib.ca](https://cnib.ca) / [inca.ca](https://inca.ca)

## Community Justice Society

For more than four decades, the Community Justice Society (CJS) has been a steady presence for vulnerable youth across the Halifax Regional Municipality, quietly working to guide young people toward safer, healthier futures. With support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, CJS has expanded that mission through an innovative new program: Creating Restorative Environments Within (CREW).

CREW was designed to meet a critical need—reaching youth before they enter the justice system. While many programs exist for those who have already committed offences, CREW steps in earlier, at the first signs of struggle or change in behaviour. By partnering directly with schools and community organizations, CJS identifies young people who could benefit from restorative support and offers them a different path—one grounded in understanding, connection, and accountability.

What makes CREW particularly effective is its accessibility. Rather than expecting youth to seek out services, CJS brings the program directly into schools and safe community partner spaces, removing barriers and meeting young people where they are. As executive director Barb Miller says, “We just want to make sure we reach youth who need us regardless of referral origin, and the broader community knows this

for the benefit of more youth.”

At the heart of CREW is the creation of safe, open spaces. Here, youth are encouraged to explore issues that matter deeply to them—identity, relationships, consent, boundaries, and the complexities of social media and digital life. These are conversations many young people struggle to have elsewhere, but within CREW, they are met with respect, empathy, and guidance.

The impact is tangible. In one group held at a Dartmouth school between November 2025 and February 2026, ten girls aged 15 to 16 came together weekly. They described the program as the highlight of their week—a rare space where they felt safe, supported, and truly heard. For many, it was the only place in their lives where they could speak openly and gain new perspectives on the challenges they faced. Their feedback was clear: the program should run all year.

Led by experienced professionals, CREW helps youth navigate difficult situations, build resilience, and make positive choices. Its preventative approach not only changes individual lives but strengthens communities by reducing the likelihood of future involvement in the justice system.

**Barbara Miller, Executive Director of CJS in the Halifax Region**

For more information, go to: [cjshfx.ca](http://cjshfx.ca)

## St. Luke's Renewal Centre – Concilio Prison Ministry

St. Luke's Renewal Centre, located within Springhill Institution (Correctional Service Canada), is a one-of-a-kind sanctuary where individuals are invited to rediscover hope, belonging, and a renewed sense of purpose. Through transformative and meaningful experiences, participants are empowered to grow spiritually and personally. The Centre inspires and supports each person's journey toward restoration and reintegration into faith communities and society.

Many inmates have experienced rejection and disconnection from their communities, which can perpetuate cycles of isolation and harm. St. Luke's Renewal Centre helps participants examine their identity, rebuild healthy relationships, and develop essential social and emotional skills in a safe, supportive environment. St. Luke's Renewal Centre empowers inmates from all backgrounds to grow, heal,

and prepare for successful reintegration.

St. Luke's Renewal Centre delivered a range of programs supporting personal growth and reintegration for incarcerated men, with 1,329 visits. Participants accessed quiet study spaces, trauma-informed programs like Houses of Healing, and twice-weekly Lifers' Days focused on reflection and connection.

Initiatives such as Fathering from the Inside Out and weekly peer support groups strengthened identity and reintegration skills. One-on-one pastoral counselling provided individualized support, while creative programs and hands-on activities like gardening fostered healing, self-expression, and practical skill-building. Together, these services offered a holistic, supportive environment for emotional development and preparation for life beyond incarceration.

Clarence De Schiffart, President, Concilio Prison Ministry

For more information, go to [concilioprisonministry.org](http://concilioprisonministry.org)

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*St. Luke's Renewal Centre is peaceful. There's less judgment down here. Everybody can be themselves. It's nice and quiet. You can let your guard down; it's that well respected. No one wants this place taken away. This is home.*

Concilio Prison Ministry participant

## Coverdale Justice Society

Coverdale continues to provide critical support and specialized services to women and gender-diverse individuals navigating the justice system in Nova Scotia. Its priorities centre on communities that are disproportionately criminalized, including Indigenous and African Nova Scotian women, trans and queer individuals, those affected by gender-based violence, and people living in poverty.

Coverdale's work is guided by three core goals: improving access to justice, creating alternatives to traditional justice processes, and enhancing public safety and well-being. With support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, the organization expanded its reach and deepened its impact over the past year.

Funding enabled the introduction of several new services designed to reduce barriers and provide meaningful, trauma-informed support. Court Support services were expanded to include family, criminal, and virtual formats, ensuring individuals could access assistance regardless of their circumstances. In correctional settings, workshops such as Parenting Inside Out, Healing Trauma, Helping Women Recover, and Beyond Violence offered participants opportunities for reflection, skill-building, and healing.

In the community, the "Safe Outside the System" program provided dedicated support for LGBTQ+ individuals seeking alternatives to traditional systems.

Investment in staffing also strengthened service delivery. The addition of a Community Outreach Worker and a Peer Support Worker increased capacity, allowing for more consistent engagement and relationship-building with participants. Outreach efforts were further enhanced through transportation supports, helping individuals attend court, probation appointments, programming, and transition successfully out of correctional facilities.

Over the reporting period, approximately 63 individuals were directly supported through these initiatives. The organization also delivered three rounds of the Beyond Violence program at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility and welcomed approximately 23 new clients into its caseload from that setting.

Together, these efforts contributed to improved access to justice, expanded service capacity, and more responsive, community-based alternatives—advancing Coverdale's commitment to equity, dignity, and safer communities across Nova Scotia.

**Madison Smith, Interim Executive Director**

**For more information, go to [coverdale.ca](https://coverdale.ca)**



Members of DBLSA at Conference

## Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association

The Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association (DBLSA) used funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia to support student participation in the Black Law Students' Association of Canada (BLSA Canada) National Conference, an initiative that significantly advanced access, equity, and professional development opportunities for Black law students at Dalhousie University.

Black law students continue to face barriers in accessing legal networks, mentorship, and career development opportunities that are often critical to entering and advancing within the legal profession. While national conferences provide an essential platform for exposure, learning, and connection, financial constraints frequently limit the ability of students to attend. This initiative was designed to directly address those barriers by ensuring that participation was not determined by financial capacity.

Funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia supported travel and registration costs for DBLSA members, enabling students who otherwise would not have been able to attend to fully participate in the

national conference experience. This included access to keynote events, workshops, career programming, and networking sessions with legal professionals from across Canada and the United States.

Through this experience, 24 DBLSA members gained direct exposure to national legal networks, enhanced their understanding of career opportunities, and developed practical tools for professional advancement. Students reported increased confidence in pursuing legal careers and a strengthened sense of belonging within the legal community. The initiative also deepened DBLSA's connection to the broader national network of Black law students and legal professionals.

Looking ahead, DBLSA remains committed to supporting student participation in national conferences and similar initiatives that foster professional growth, mentorship, and community building. This project underscores the importance of sustained investment in reducing barriers and ensuring equitable access within the legal profession.

Abdullah Hammawa – Vice-President Finance  
Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association

Instagram: DBLSA / Email: [communications@dblsa@gmail.com](mailto:communications@dblsa@gmail.com)



*Eviction Prevention Program Coordinator Hannah Main speaking with Global News journalist Mitchell Bailey about tenancy rights.*

## Dalhousie Legal Aid Service - Two Projects

### Eviction Prevention Program – Project 1

Across Nova Scotia, the rising pressure on housing has left many tenants living on the edge of eviction, often without the knowledge or support needed to protect their rights. At Dalhousie Legal Aid Service (DLAS), the Eviction Prevention Program is working to change that reality—meeting tenants where they are and helping them stay housed.

With support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, DLAS expanded this critical work in 2025 by welcoming Hannah Main as Eviction Prevention Coordinator. Bringing a PhD in sociology and deep experience in research and community engagement, Hannah has helped transform the program into a powerful combination of frontline support, public education, and system-level insight.

One of the program’s most significant achievements has been the publication of the first-ever survey of tenants in Nova Scotia. This landmark report sheds light on the real barriers tenants face in accessing justice and is already helping DLAS better target its services to those most in need. At the same time, the program has strengthened its presence in communities most at risk. Through legal information drop-in sessions

in neighbourhoods such as Halifax’s North End and Dartmouth’s North End, DLAS is reaching tenants before crises escalate.

The demand for this work is clear. In 2025 alone, 712 people connected with DLAS’s social justice team, and 95 per cent were dealing with tenancy-related issues. In response, the program delivered 12 tenancy rights workshops in partnership with organizations including the YMCA, Feed Nova Scotia, libraries, community health boards, Indigenous youth groups, and NSCC. It also extended its reach through media engagement, completing 12 interviews to raise awareness of tenant rights across the province.

Equally important has been the program’s focus on collaboration and capacity-building. By working alongside partners such as Nova Scotia Legal Aid, The North Grove, women’s centres, and student unions, DLAS is strengthening a network of support for tenants. Looking ahead, the launch of a free Tenant Advocate Training Program in Spring 2026 will further empower service providers to help individuals navigate residential tenancy challenges—ensuring that more Nova Scotians have the tools they need to remain safely housed

Megan Longley KC, Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service

For more information go to [dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html](https://dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html)



*Dalhousie Legal Aid Service meets tenants “where they are” and helps them stay housed*

### **Mental Health Carceral Advocacy – Project 2**

At Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, the Mental Health Carceral Advocacy initiative is confronting one of the most urgent and longstanding gaps in Canada’s justice system: the lack of adequate mental health and addictions care for incarcerated people. Through a strategic combination of legal research, policy advocacy, and test case litigation, the initiative is working to improve access to essential services for individuals in custody across Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada—with the ultimate goal of preventing avoidable deaths behind bars.

For decades, organizations have documented the deeply concerning conditions within provincial and federal correctional facilities, particularly the systemic failure to provide adequate mental health supports. DLAS’s initiative responds directly to these findings, advancing solutions that address both immediate needs and structural inequities.

The initiative serves incarcerated individuals, with particular impact for Indigenous and Black people who are disproportionately affected by systemic racism and colonialism within the justice system. Its benefits extend beyond prison walls—to families, communities,

and the broader public—by promoting stability, reducing recidivism, and enhancing community safety.

Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has been instrumental in advancing this work. In 2025, DLAS partnered with the East Coast Prison Justice Society and the Schulich School of Law to deliver legal rights presentations at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. These sessions addressed critical issues such as use of force, searches, disciplinary procedures, solitary confinement, and transfers—equipping inmates with knowledge of their rights and available complaint and appeal mechanisms.

Equally important were the one-on-one conversations that followed, creating space for individuals to share their experiences and receive tailored legal information.

In parallel, DLAS has advanced key projects including a comprehensive research report on solitary confinement, ongoing collaboration with community partners, and the development of a test case focused on access to mental health treatment. Looking ahead, DLAS is poised to pursue strategic litigation that will drive systemic change—ensuring that the rights, dignity, and well-being of incarcerated individuals are better protected across the region.

**Megan Longley KC, Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service**

**For more information go to [dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html](http://dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html)**

## East Coast Environmental Law

Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia continues to be the primary enabler of our work to provide freely accessible public-interest environmental law services to Nova Scotians. These services include public legal education resources in written, audio, and video formats that members of the public can access at no cost. They include the maintenance of our free Environmental Law Inquiry Service, through which we provide general legal information about environmental

laws and, in some cases, legal opinion and advice. And, equally importantly, these services include law reform advocacy conducted in the public interest, with a vision for laws and legal systems that protect ecological health and promote environmental and climate justice throughout this province. East Coast Environmental Law remains grateful to the LFNS for its continued support over the life of our organization.

Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director

For more information go to [eclaw.ca](http://eclaw.ca)

## East Coast Prison Justice Society – Visitor Committee Project

In a span of five years, the East Coast Prison Justice Society (ECPJS) through its Visitors Committee (VC) Project has brought forward many human rights-related interests of persons incarcerated in Nova Scotia jails.

ECPJS's mandate is to improve the system, and they have stepped in as volunteers to assert the legitimacy and effectiveness of civil society oversight. They have developed a number of initiatives toward that end.

Sheila Wildeman, KC, Co-chair East Coast Prison Justice Society, Assoc. Professor Schulich School of Law

For more information, go to [eastcoastprisonjustice.ca](http://eastcoastprisonjustice.ca)

## Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

Over the past year, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia has continued to strengthen its core programs while responding to emerging needs in the community. Through a combination of direct service delivery, supportive housing, culturally grounded programming, and system-level advocacy, the organization has remained focused on improving outcomes for justice-involved women and gender-diverse individuals.

At the heart of this work is a commitment to meeting people where they are. The Abundance program continues to play a vital role in supporting participants on their pathways to healing and empowerment. In May 2025, the program marked an important milestone with its third annual Thrift Fashion Show and Market, held at NSCAD University. This community-driven event celebrated creativity, resilience, and connection, while raising support for the Abundance Thrift Store. Beyond the celebration itself, the event reflected the program's core purpose: creating accessible, dignified opportunities for individuals to build confidence, develop skills, and work toward their personal goals.

Recognizing gaps in culturally relevant supports, the Society also launched RISE—Reclaiming Identity, Sisterhood, and Empowerment—in December 2025. This program provides a dedicated space for Black and African Nova Scotian women and gender-diverse individuals who have been impacted by criminalization, incarceration, violence, and poverty. Through a holistic approach, RISE supports participants in navigating trauma, strengthening self-advocacy, and reconnecting with identity and culture, while building meaningful peer relationships grounded in shared experience.

Safe and stable housing remains a cornerstone of the Society's work. Over the past year, all housing facilities have operated at full capacity, reflecting both the effectiveness of these programs and the significant demand for them. Since becoming a registered provider under the Independent Living Support Plus program, the organization has expanded its Disability Support Program services, growing from three to eight supported clients. This expansion has enabled individuals facing complex barriers to access safe, inclusive housing alongside 24/7 support, fostering independence and long-term stability. For one individual who had experienced over a decade of homelessness, this support has been life-changing—providing not only housing, but a foundation for healing, connection, and renewed possibility.

Alongside direct services, advocacy remains central to the Society's mission. In response to ongoing systemic inequities and rising concerns around gender-based violence, the organization has intensified its public engagement efforts. Over the year, educational events and community dialogues created space for reflection, awareness, and action, emphasizing prevention as well as support for survivors.

The Society has also continued to advance justice through legal advocacy. In partnership with sector organizations, it contributed to national-level litigation that strengthened access to justice for incarcerated individuals, reinforcing oversight and accountability within correctional systems.

Together, these core activities reflect a comprehensive, community-driven approach—one that integrates direct support, cultural responsiveness, housing stability, and systemic advocacy to create lasting change.

Emma Halpern, Executive Director

For more information, go to [efrymns.ca](http://efrymns.ca)



*Elizabeth Fry Society initiatives during the year, included: Red Flags and Creating Safe Spaces panel discussions (above); an EFMS event (top right); an educational event on gender-based violence intervention, prevention, and awareness-building (middle right); lawyers Emma Arnold and Jessica Rose (bottom right); and a celebration of The Abundance Thrift Store third anniversary (bottom left)*



*Some of the people and events photographed at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton building in Sydney.*

## Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton is deeply grateful for the ongoing support of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, whose investment continues to strengthen both our physical capacity and our commitment to reconciliation. Through their support in the purchase of our building, we now have a dedicated and welcoming space to host culturally meaningful gatherings and community-driven initiatives.

This funding has also allowed our Society to assist women across Cape Breton Island with a variety of services and programs, from advocacy and referral to prison visits and a drop-in centre. There's also a Satellite Apartment Program, a Court Accompaniment Program plus other needed supports to make a positive impact on the lives of many marginalized individuals.

Over the past year, the Society has also hosted powerful events centred on Indigenous voices and experiences. In January, a Reconciliation Mawio'mi brought together community members, partners, and Indigenous leaders to talk, learn from each other and strengthen relationships. Their conversations reinforced their commitment to reconciliation action. In March, a

Grandmothers (Kiju) Gathering welcomed more than 40 grandmothers from Indigenous communities across Nova Scotia. They shared knowledge, explored how to bring Indigenous women back to their home communities, and supported reintegration efforts rooted in culture, community, and care. The presence and leadership of the grandmothers reminded everyone of the importance of intergenerational wisdom in shaping just and compassionate systems.

The Law Foundation's support has also made it possible for the Society to work closely with an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. This guidance will help to ensure that the Society's programs and services follow culturally appropriate approaches to healing.

The building and the relationship with the Knowledge Keeper build upon the Foundation's ongoing investment in the Society's core programs of supporting women and gender-diverse people facing the justice system. The funding helps to advance reconciliation in tangible ways that Indigenous people have chosen. It will improve life for Indigenous women today and for the people whose lives they touch.

**Darlene MacEachern / Julie Kendall, Co-Executive Directors**

For more information, go to [efrycb.com](http://efrycb.com)

## EPIC – Educational Programs Innovations Charity

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia remains EPIC’s largest, longest-standing, and most reliable source of support—an investment that continues to drive meaningful change in the lives of high-risk youth. With this sustained funding, EPIC has strengthened and expanded its core Youth Peer Program, now in its 28th year in Sydney, while extending its reach to underserved communities across Cape Breton.

At the centre of EPIC’s work is the Youth Peer model: a relationship-based, after-school program that pairs marginalized youth one-to-one with trained secondary and post-secondary tutor-mentors. Operating five days a week in Sydney and now complemented by weekly Outreach programs in Sydney Mines, Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside, EPIC supports more than 100 youth each week. Referrals from 19 schools ensure that those who would benefit most—youth experiencing low school attachment, diminished self-esteem, and heightened risk of social conflict—are connected to consistent, caring mentors who help them feel accepted, valued, and capable of success.

The program’s impact is reflected in the populations it serves. Ninety-one percent of participants are identified as being at high social and academic risk, while 72 percent live in poverty. Both youth participants and volunteer mentors reflect a level of cultural diversity that is twice that of the surrounding service area. Through daily transportation, EPIC ensures equitable access, even for youth traveling 30 to 40 kilometres to attend programming. These intentional efforts remove

barriers and create a safe, inclusive space where young people can build confidence, strengthen academic skills, and develop positive social connections.

Outcomes remain consistently strong. Year-end evaluations using EPIC’s youth risk assessment tools demonstrate an average 11 percent improvement in internalized protective indicators—key factors that help youth navigate challenges and counteract risk. These gains underscore the effectiveness of sustained mentorship and supportive relationships in fostering resilience and long-term well-being.

Building on this success, EPIC has expanded its impact beyond Sydney by supporting the development of four new peer tutoring sites over the past two years. Two sites in the Halifax region, delivered in partnership with local Boys & Girls Clubs, and two in Cape Breton, delivered through SchoolsPlus, are now replicating the Youth Peer model. EPIC provides operational guidance and mentorship to ensure these sites maintain the same focus on relationship-building and individualized support.

This work has earned national recognition, with EPIC consistently named by Charity Intelligence as one of Canada’s top impact charities. At its core, the Youth Peer Program continues to offer more than academic assistance—it provides a safe haven where youth can thrive, and where volunteers, families, and communities come together to support brighter futures.

**Barry Waldman, volunteer Executive Director**

**For more information, go to [epiccharity.com](http://epiccharity.com)**



*The Gluskabewimk Project (“Glooscap Project”) is an Indigenous law revitalization project involving land-based learning sessions of Mi’kmaw participants, such as the one pictured above near Five Islands.*

## Glooscap Project

The Gluskabewimk Project (“Glooscap Project”) is a powerful effort to revitalize Lnuwey tplutaqan (Mi’kmaq law) in a way that is grounded within the needs, goals and aspirations of our Nation. Through seasonal gatherings, a dedicated Core Group of Mi’kmaq participants come together to engage deeply with Lnuwey tplutaqan, drawing out its principles using Indigenous law methodologies such as Story-Briefing, Deliberative, and Linguistic approaches. These sessions centre engagement with the wisdom embedded in Glooscap stories as living legal guidance for governance and decision-making.

The Glooscap Project responds to the pressing need for Indigenous communities to engage with Indigenous legal orders so as to support the practice of self-governance and self-determination. Specifically, it aims to support Mi’kmaw communities who are seeking to engage with Lnuwey tplutaqan in everyday governance, conflict resolution, and relational decision-making.

Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has been instrumental. As foundational funding, it enabled the hiring of a project lead and research assistants, supported the co-development of guiding

principles with Mi’kmaw organizations, and ensured participants could meaningfully engage through honoraria and travel support. Without this investment, the opportunity for this depth of community-led legal engagement would not have been possible.

Over the past year, the Project has made significant strides. Five core sessions and three supplementary workshops have been delivered, engaging both Core Group members and more than 80 additional participants. The research output has been substantial: 20 story analyses completed, 110 Glooscap stories indexed, and over 50 supporting research documents compiled. Four research assistants have received specialized training, and work is underway on accessible, plain-language resources to broaden community access to these teachings.

Looking ahead, the Project continues to grow. Two land-based learning sessions are planned for Spring and Summer 2026 in Kejimikujik and Unama’ki, with additional gatherings to follow. New educational materials are also in development, with anticipated release in Summer 2026, so that the knowledge generated continues to inform and empower Mi’kmaw communities for generations to come.

**Naiomi W. Metallic, KC, NWL, Chancellor’s Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy; Associate Professor,  
Schulich School of Law; Academic Lead, Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom, Dalhousie University**

**Kristan Belanger, Instruction and Public Service Librarian, Schulich School of Law  
Research Lead, Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom, Dalhousie University**

**Malian Levi, Project Coordinator, Gluskabewimk Project; Principal of Levi Law,  
Elsipogtog First Nation, New Brunswick**

For more information, go to [abaji.ca](http://abaji.ca)

## Halifax Refugee Clinic

The Halifax Refugee Clinic (HRC) celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025. We are proud to have been able to continue our mandate to provide no-cost legal and settlement services to refugee claimants and other at-risk non-status migrants in Nova Scotia.

The Clinic supports eligible low-income individuals through all stages of the in-Canada refugee determination process while also addressing the complex settlement barriers they face in the community.

The Halifax Refugee Clinic was founded 26 years ago, by local immigration and refugee lawyer Lee Cohen, K.C. to fill a critical gap in legal representation for refugee claimants in Nova Scotia. At the time, refugee claimants who could not afford private counsel were forced to go through the challenging in-Canada refugee determination process unrepresented, with potentially dire and irreparable consequences. We started small with a group of pro-bono lawyers and although we have grown since then, we have stayed true to our grassroots approach and still work every day to fill critical systemic gaps.

We are now the only immigration and refugee legal aid service provider for Nova Scotia and have a team of specialized in-house lawyers and legal support staff, as well as dedicated and expert settlement staff.

Refugee claimants, due to their immigration status, face constant barriers and limited access and eligibility to essential programs, services and benefits. Without intervention and support of our organization, many would not only have to navigate complex legal processes alone, but also face additional challenges accessing such basic needs as food security, healthcare, income, housing, education and employment.



*This is artwork done by a talented HRC client, A.P., depicting a warm welcome to our HRC office promises in the North End.*

**Julie Chamagne, Executive Director**

For more information, go to [halifaxrefugeeclinic.org](http://halifaxrefugeeclinic.org)



*The IBM initiative continues to advance access, inclusion, and success for Black and Indigenous students within legal education and the legal profession. Pictured are: Paul Egbeyemi, Ramona Morris, Kasha Young (left to right)*

## Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative

Over the past year, the Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative at the Schulich School of Law continued its long-standing mandate to advance access, inclusion, and success for Black and Indigenous students within legal education and the legal profession.

The Initiative provided comprehensive, culturally responsive supports including no cost academic tutoring, peer and professional mentorship, access to a Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian Elder in Residence, career development and networking opportunities, and the ongoing stewardship of a dedicated IB&M

student space in the law school. In addition, the Initiative strengthened community connections and advocacy efforts that center lived experience and challenge systemic barriers within legal institutions.

We are deeply grateful to the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia for its continued and generous support, which has been instrumental in sustaining and strengthening this important work. The Law Foundation's commitment enables IB&M students to thrive academically, professionally, and personally, while supporting the broader pursuit of equity and justice within the legal profession.

**Kelsey Jones, BA, JD, Director, IB&M Initiative, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University**

For more information, go to [dal.ca/faculty/law.html](https://dal.ca/faculty/law.html)



*KSS educates seniors on a variety of justice-related issues. Above, Sgt Trevor MacNeil, Kentville Police Service, Trishe Colman and Trisha Urquhart deliver a presentation on how to avoid frauds and scams*

## **Kings County Seniors' Safety Society / Kings Seniors' Safety**

For nearly two decades, Kings Seniors' Safety (KSS) has remained committed to its mission of improving the safety and wellbeing of seniors across Kings County. With the steadfast support of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, KSS has evolved to meet the growing and increasingly complex needs of an aging population. As the number of seniors in Nova Scotia continues to rise, so too does the demand for responsive, accessible, and preventative services.

In 2024, KSS expanded its capacity by increasing staffing by 50 percent, enabling significant program growth and enhanced community reach. This investment, supported by sustainable funding, has strengthened the organization's ability to deliver both intensive one-on-one support and a broad range of preventative programming led by dedicated staff.

While direct service remains a cornerstone of KSS's work, prevention is at the heart of its impact. Through presentations, academies, and community events, seniors are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate challenges and reduce risks. Topics range from fraud and scam awareness to financial literacy, tenancy issues, personal safety, cyber security, and understanding wills and estates. These programs

are enriched through collaboration with a strong network of community partners and subject-matter experts, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.

Recognizing that social isolation is a growing public health concern, KSS programming also fosters connection and engagement. Educational sessions double as social opportunities, helping seniors build relationships while gaining critical information that supports independence and wellbeing.

Among KSS's most successful programs are its driver safety initiatives, which address a vital aspect of independence in rural communities. The full-day Driver Refresher Program and the half-day Driver Decisions Panel provide practical guidance on safe driving, the impacts of aging, and the difficult transition away from driving when necessary. Delivered in partnership with experts from law enforcement, health services, and driver education, these sessions are consistently oversubscribed.

By combining prevention, education, and community connection, Kings Seniors' Safety continues to empower seniors to live safely, confidently, and with dignity in their communities

**Johanna Kwakernaak, Board Treasurer, KCSSS**

For more information, go to [kingsseniorssafety.org](http://kingsseniorssafety.org)

## Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS)

LISNS, a grantee for the past 44 years, provides Nova Scotians with free high quality legal information and tools to help address everyday legal problems.

LISNS is a recognized leader across Canada in using innovation to provide the public with free self-help legal tools that are plain language, sustainably developed in-house and significantly reduce the cost barrier of justice services. LISNS has helped Nova Scotians save more than \$2.2 million since 2019 by offering accessible, user-friendly tools that produce legally valid documents. This continued success is reflected in the \$1.2 million savings achieved April 2025 to February 2026 since the launch of the highly anticipated Enduring Power of Attorney App and Separation Agreement Maker App along with free notary clinics. More than half of adult Nova Scotians do not have estate documents in place. These tools expand the range of legal needs that can be addressed affordably and efficiently, ensuring that more people have access to critical legal protections and planning resources at key moments in their lives.

With a small team of six staff, LISNS has a focused commitment to personalized legal help, public legal education, and community outreach supported by LISNS digital legal tools. Nova Scotians are better able to understand the law and access needed legal support through our widely used and highly regarded toll-free

anonymous legal information helpline, email, livechat, textline and comprehensive website. LISNS fills a significant gap in care that is uncommon in Canada through its two Medical Legal Partnerships, one with the VG hospital to serve estate needs for patients in palliative care and, the second to help parents of sick children access free legal help through an MOU with the IWK Children's Hospital and supporting law firms.

Community engagement remains central to LISNS's approach. Over the past year, the organization delivered 40 outreach sessions across the province, reaching a total of 1,362 participants, many in rural locations and underserved communities where access to legal services is limited. By partnering with public libraries and local organizations, and hosting sessions in accessible community spaces, LISNS provides information and support to those who need it most.

LISNS is also a leader in the areas of family violence, LGBTQ+ resources to support diverse workspaces, and workplace and sexual harassment and has developed a range of navigation tools that assist people with finding answers to their legal issues. LISNS empowers individuals to manage their legal issues with greater confidence, navigate complex legal systems and provides meaningful access to justice for all Nova Scotians.

Heather de Berdt Romilly, Executive Director

For more information, go to [legalinfo.org](https://legalinfo.org)

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*I love the new materials on Wills, POAs, ePOAs, and the seniors guide. I just saw them in our resource room. They will be so useful for my home visit patients.*

VG Palliative Care Social Worker, February 2026

## Level Justice – IYOP, BYJP and EJP Programs

Level Justice is advancing access to justice in Nova Scotia by delivering culturally grounded public legal education to youth aged 9 to 18 through its Indigenous Youth Outreach Program, Black Youth Justice Program, and the recently launched Environmental Justice Program. Focused in Mi'kmaq communities and Halifax, these initiatives respond to the persistent reality that Indigenous and Black youth face systemic barriers within the justice system and are disproportionately represented in custody, while access to preventative, culturally relevant legal education remains limited.

Through early-entry, community- and school-based programming, Level Justice builds legal knowledge, fosters trust, and creates meaningful connections between youth and legal professionals. Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has been pivotal, enabling the expansion of Indigenous and Black youth programming and the full implementation of the Environmental Justice Program in Halifax. This investment has strengthened partnerships with organizations including the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, Wagmatcook Justice Council, Legal Aid Nova Scotia, the Boys and Girls Club of Halifax, and Ulnooweg Development Group, while also supporting the recruitment and training of Indigenous and Black law students and lawyers as facilitators and mentors.

Programming integrates experiential learning—such

as mock trials, restorative justice practices, and field experiences—alongside curriculum tailored through community feedback. Recent initiatives include virtual delivery in Indian Brook, expansion to Wagmatcookewey School, and the introduction of environmental justice programming at Highland Park Junior High, including an Africville Museum visit and a locally developed mock negotiation scenario.

The impact is measurable and meaningful. Among Indigenous Youth Outreach Program participants, understanding of the Canadian legal system and individual rights increased by 63 percent, while understanding of Indigenous justice approaches rose by 48 percent. Seventy percent of youth reported greater comfort engaging with legal professionals, and 42 percent expressed increased interest in legal careers. The programs have reached dozens of youth annually, with continued growth expected as new sites and cohorts are added.

Without this support, many of these youth would lack access to legal knowledge, mentorship, and pathways into justice-related careers. Building on strong outcomes, Level Justice is poised to deepen its reach, expand programming in Halifax, and continue empowering the next generation with the knowledge and confidence to navigate—and ultimately transform—the justice system.

Shelan Markus, Executive Director

For more information, go to [leveljustice.org](http://leveljustice.org)

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*Before this program (IYOP), I didn't think what we were talking about mattered for people like me. Now I feel like I could be part of changing the (legal) system.*

Participant in IYOP Level Justice Program

## Leave Out Violence (LOVE)

LOVE Nova Scotia's Succeed & Proceed program, funded through the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, continues to play a vital role in equipping vulnerable and at-risk youth—including those who have had involvement with the justice system—with the skills and supports needed to build stable, positive futures. Through a combination of mentorship, practical training, and wraparound supports, the program helps young people navigate pathways toward employment and further education while strengthening their confidence and decision-making.

Participants receive hands-on guidance in resume development, cover letter writing, and interview preparation, alongside broader life skills training that includes healthy conflict resolution. The program's structure emphasizes consistency and trust-building, offering weekly Saturday group sessions complemented by individualized one-on-one mentoring. Each participant leaves the program with a professional resume, cover letter, and reference letters, ensuring they are prepared to pursue job or educational opportunities.

Funding has enabled the integration of critical supports that address the complex realities many youth face. A dedicated social worker is available during program

hours, while 24/7 on-call crisis support ensures that participants have access to help whenever it is needed. Additional supports, including food assistance and substance use and harm reduction services, help remove barriers that might otherwise prevent youth from fully engaging in the program and achieving their goals.

The program has experienced strong uptake and meaningful outcomes. With 110 youth enrolled and 25 to 30 attending weekly sessions, Succeed & Proceed continues to expand its reach. The addition of a Referral Officer has further strengthened the program's ability to connect youth with appropriate services and opportunities. Participant feedback remains overwhelmingly positive, with 95 percent of respondents expressing satisfaction. Notably, more than 75 percent of participants have successfully transitioned into employment or continued their education.

Through its holistic approach, Succeed & Proceed is making a measurable difference in the lives of Nova Scotia's youth, providing not only practical tools but also the stability and support needed to move forward with confidence.

**Dennis Adams, Executive Director**

For more information, go to [lovenovascotia.org](https://lovenovascotia.org)



*Mainline – Greg and Thomas Court Support*

## **Mainland Needle Exchange**

Mainland Needle Exchange’s Community Based Legal Support & Education Project (CBLSEP) improves access to justice for individuals with addiction challenges who are involved in, or at risk of entering, the criminal justice system. Serving both men and women, the project recognizes the complex relationship between substance use and criminalization, and responds with practical, community-based supports.

CBLSEP focuses on helping participants better understand their legal rights and responsibilities so they can make informed decisions about their situations. Through this work, the project aims to support individuals in achieving greater stability in their lives while reducing recidivism among people who use drugs.

A core component of the project, which is delivered by the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre, is individualized legal support. Staff provide one-on-one assistance to participants navigating court processes and, when

needed, offer support within correctional institutions. This direct service helps demystify legal procedures and ensures individuals are not facing these systems alone.

In addition, CBLSEP delivers legal education programming tailored both to individuals with lived experience of substance use and to the service providers who support them. These sessions build understanding of the legal system, while also increasing awareness among professionals about the unique needs and realities of this population.

The project is strengthened by a collaborative network of community partners, including social workers, healthcare providers, legal professionals, police, and correctional services. This coordinated approach ensures participants receive holistic, consistent support as they work toward positive outcomes in their communities.

- **Jo Parker, Program Coordinator, Mainline Distribution @ Disposal Program**

For more information, go to [mainlineneedleexchange.ca](http://mainlineneedleexchange.ca)



*This Project funds research into new governance models and legal principles grounded in the Mi'kmaw tradition*

## Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

For the Mi'kmaw, land is not a resource to be managed. It is a relative.

With support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Kjiptuk/ Halifax is exploring what this understanding can offer to how we govern land in Nova Scotia. The project brings together Mi'kmaw Elders and Grandmothers, legal scholars at Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law, governance strategists at Dark Matter Labs, and legal practitioners at Miller Titerle + Company to research and design a governance model grounded in Mi'kmaw legal traditions and supported by tools available within Canadian law.

A central feature of the emerging model is a Grandmothers' Circle that would hold real governance authority, grounding decision-making in the matriarchal traditions that have long guided Mi'kmaw communities.

The project is currently in its research and planning phase. The team is conducting interviews with knowledge holders, examining legal precedents from other jurisdictions, and studying how Mi'kmaw concepts like netukulimk — the practice of taking only

what is needed to sustain life and community — might inform governance design.

This is careful, incremental work. Translating relational, place-based governance into legal structures that Canadian courts would recognize requires creativity, rigour, and humility. The team draws on emerging scholarship and precedents from across Canada and internationally, while remaining attentive to the unique legal and cultural landscape of Nova Scotia.

What makes this project distinctive is not a claim to have the answers, but a commitment to asking the right questions in the right way — led by community, informed by both Mi'kmaw and Western legal scholarship, and grounded in the understanding that how we relate to land shapes everything else: housing, ecology, economy, justice, and our relationships with one another.

This pilot will produce something valuable: living evidence that land governance can be shaped by care and stewardship, and that legal systems can support relationships with land that honour both the communities who have always belonged to it and the broader public good.

**Pam Glode-Desrochers, Executive Director**

**For more information, go to [mymnfc.com](http://mymnfc.com)**

## Access to Justice for Migrant Workers in Nova Scotia Pilot Project

The “Access to Justice for Migrant Workers in Nova Scotia” pilot project was launched to address the significant barriers migrant workers face in accessing legal information and support. While migrant workers are essential to Nova Scotia’s food security, economy, and communities, many remain in vulnerable positions due to their temporary immigration status and the power imbalance inherent in employer-tied work arrangements. Closed work permits can leave workers dependent on a single employer who may also control their housing, transportation, healthcare access, and, in some cases, their pathway to remain in Canada. Language and cultural barriers, geographic isolation, discrimination, and limited access to legal services further compound these challenges.

With support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, the project strengthened both direct services and organizational capacity to better respond to these needs. Outreach efforts were expanded, enabling the delivery of critical rights information directly to migrant workers across the province. New programming included legal information sessions focused on immigration law, helping workers better understand their rights and available protections.

The project also enhanced internal capacity by engaging a growing network of lawyers, law students, and community volunteers. Funding supported the addition of key staff roles, including a Helpline and

Community Engagement Coordinator and a Case Worker, ensuring more consistent and responsive support. New and strengthened partnerships with legal organizations across Nova Scotia further broadened the project’s reach and impact.

Over the course of the pilot, the organization delivered six outreach sessions, two legal information sessions for migrant workers, and educational presentations for the legal community. Volunteer engagement was a key component, with eight orientation sessions, two trainings, and an appreciation event supporting a dedicated group of 47 volunteers and 71 legal professionals and students.

A central feature of the project was the operation of an English-Spanish helpline serving migrant workers province-wide, alongside individualized casework support. Through these services, workers received assistance in accessing workplace rights and benefits and navigating applications such as Vulnerable Worker Open Work Permits.

In total, 624 migrant workers were reached or supported through the project. Notably, 91% of participants in outreach activities reported feeling supported and confident in their ability to seek help if needed—an important indicator of increased trust and access to justice.

**Stacey Gomez, Executive Director**

**Centre for Migrant Worker Rights NS**

For more information, go to [migrantjusticens.ca/](http://migrantjusticens.ca/)



*Nova Scotia Legal Aid staff engage with the community: Karen Susara and Morgan Manzer at the Halifax Pride Parade and Boma the Artist paints a portrait of Burnley "Rocky" Jones while NSLA's Amrita Singh and guest look on.*

## Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA) received funding from the Law Foundation to continue putting our multi-year DEI Strategic Plan into action through increased capacity. We are working to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace and to reduce barriers to accessing our services – all with the aim of better supporting the communities we serve. The funding also supports staff by building DEI skills and providing practical tools and guidance for teams across the organization. We will do this by strengthening relationships and expanding services across the province to improve access to justice for rural communities, Indigenous Peoples, African Nova Scotians, immigrants, and other equity-deserving groups.

NSLA's Equity and Racial Diversity Committee (ERDC) and Indigenous Justice Committee (IJC) identified key issues and opportunities for change. These included improving hiring, retention, and leadership opportunities for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian lawyers and professional staff. They also included collecting consistent, reliable demographic-based data, and having enough resources to deliver culturally responsive services. In response, NSLA completed a DEI audit and created a DEI Strategic Plan. We needed

dedicated staff time and funding to fully put the plan into action, which the Law Foundation funding allowed.

NSLA helps thousands of Nova Scotians each year with criminal, family, and social justice legal problems. Funding supports the staff who deliver these services and the operational systems that make the work possible.

For instance, the Language Line provided interpretation services in over 40 different languages. A total of 13,795 minutes were spent using language interpretation services during this reporting period while overall it took on average 24 seconds to connect with an interpreter.

“With a significant increase in Immigration, we are now serving more and more clients who may or may not speak English,” Tammy Wohler, a managing lawyer in our Social Justice Office, said. “The introduction of on-demand language interpretation services over the phone has been a real gamechanger. This is a significant step forward in our ability to serve all residents of our province, irrespective of the language they speak.”

**Charlene Moore KC, CEO**

For more information, go to [nslegalaid.ca](https://nslegalaid.ca)

## Nova Scotia Barristers' Society – Four Projects

### NSBS – PREP Scholarship Funding

The NSBS is committed to increasing opportunities for law graduates from communities historically underrepresented in the legal profession. To support this, funding has been made available to cover the full cost of the Practice Readiness Education Program (PREP)—the mandatory bar admission program in Nova Scotia—for 10 students.

With support from the Law Foundation, this funding assists articled clerks from equity-deserving groups whose tuition is not covered by their employer or who are unpaid during their articles. Over the past year, it has provided full scholarships to clerks from a range of equity-deserving communities, while also enabling small-town firms, as well as non-profit legal advocacy organizations, to take on articled clerks they would otherwise be unable to financially support.

The cost of legal education and bar admission can be a significant barrier. By reducing this burden, the program improves representation within the profession and enhances access to justice. It also increases the number of available articling positions in a competitive environment where securing a position is required for admission to the bar.

In the 2024/25 grant funding year, a permanent endowment fund was created, with the income from the endowment being used to provide financial assistance to individuals undertaking the PREP, who are from equity-deserving communities or experiencing financial hardship.

This initiative advances the NSBS's commitment to a more accessible, inclusive legal profession that reflects the diversity of the Nova Scotian population it serves.

### African Nova Scotian Cultural Competency Training (ANS CCT)

The African Nova Scotian Cultural Competency Training (ANS CCT) course will provide NSBS lawyers with free and engaging multimedia e-learning modules on a range of legal topics impacting African Nova Scotians

as a distinct people, including land and property, family and child welfare, and justice matters.

African Nova Scotians are a distinct people who descend from free and enslaved Black Planters, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people who inhabited the original 52 land-based Black communities in the part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia. African Nova Scotian distinctiveness has been recognized by Nova Scotia courts, the United Nations, and in the NSBS Regaining Trust: Ruck Report. The ANS CCT is an important step along the path to regaining the trust described in the Ruck Report and supports lawyers in fulfilling the Society's mandate to better serve the public interest.

In 2020, the Law Foundation indicated its “deep commitment” to addressing issues of systemic racism, including anti-Black racism. In 2021, the NSBS publicly acknowledged systemic racism within society and its organization and recognized the need for action and education to address it. The NSBS committed to improving cultural competence in the legal profession, specific to the African Nova Scotian experience.

The Law Foundation grant enabled the creation of the groundbreaking African Nova Scotian Cultural Competency Training (ANS CCT) course and makes it accessible to NSBS members.

The course will:

- Address systemic racism, discrimination, and unconscious bias in the legal profession, and their impacts on African Nova Scotians, through education;
- Further the NSBS regulatory objectives to promote diversity, inclusion, substantive equality, and freedom from discrimination in the delivery of legal services and the justice system;
- Increase awareness of African Nova Scotian related legal issues, cases, and legislation;
- Promote best practices for working with African Nova Scotian clients, colleagues, and communities; and
- Strengthen the NSBS mandate to protect the public, which includes African Nova Scotians.

The ANS CCT Project represents the first initiative of its kind in Nova Scotia, tailored specifically to African Nova Scotian legal experiences. It delivers a structured and engaging learning experience that enables lawyers to develop cultural awareness, challenge systemic inequities, and fulfill their professional obligations to serve African Nova Scotian people and communities equitably.

### **NSBS Library Revitalization Project**

The Society wanted to revitalize the Barristers' Library and began by reviewing operations and proposing new ways to offer accessible and affordable information services to members, particularly rural, small, and solo practitioners.

The Society is aware of the changes that have impacted the NSBS Library's ability to provide relevant legal information services to lawyers over the past several years. Rural, small, and solo members were greatly disadvantaged, creating an access-to-justice issue. A better approach was needed to serve diverse membership from Yarmouth to Sydney.

With Foundation funding, the Society hired a law library consultant. He provided a library review, a national scan, and recommendations on improvements. He proposed a strategic partnership with the Schulich School of Law and the Lnuwey Dêbludaqan Wiguom (Mìgmaq Law Lodge) to create the Nova Scotia Law Library. The consultant will lead these negotiations.

Foundation funding has allowed the Society to continue offering information services today by supporting open-access initiatives like CanLII and offering subscription resources through the NSBS members' portal. In anticipation of next steps, the Society is building out its infrastructure. A platform to support e-books and databases, better ways to deliver print-only content, and new tools to communicate are all needed. Law Foundation funding has provided the capacity to do this.

For the NSBS, this was a year of learning and reflecting on members' information needs, and the barriers to meeting those: talking with lawyers, librarians, vendors, academics, and community members. The Society has

spent time exploring "what ifs" and vision casting and are now starting the hard work of implementing that vision for members and their communities.

So far, the project has achieved the following outcomes:

- Hired an external consultant;
- Completed a library review, engaging with local and national law, A2J community organizations, and members;
- Received recommendations and presented a plan to Council;
- Began investigating the specifics of the proposal by reaching out to potential library partners who will help create a sustainable law library for all Nova Scotians; and
- Began building capacity to deliver high quality e-books, e-journals, and research tools to members from Yarmouth to Sydney.

### **Implementation of Regaining Trust: The Ruck Report**

The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society is leading a multi-year effort to confront systemic discrimination within the justice system and legal profession. Anchored in the twenty-one recommendations of the Regaining Trust: The Ruck Report, this initiative is advancing meaningful, system-wide reforms to strengthen equity, diversity, inclusion, and access to justice across Nova Scotia.

For many Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, racialized, and other marginalized communities, barriers to justice persist. Inequitable treatment, underrepresentation, limited cultural competence, and gaps in accountability have contributed to diminished trust in legal institutions. This project responds directly to those challenges, aiming not only to address inequities but to rebuild confidence in the legal system through transparency and sustained action.

Support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for change. Funding enabled the engagement of specialized equity expertise, including an Independent Implementation Lead, and supported comprehensive reviews of governance policies and anti-discrimination frameworks. It also strengthened reporting and

investigation systems through the development of trauma-informed complaints processes and more accessible reporting pathways. In parallel, expanded education and outreach initiatives have ensured that Council members, staff, and lawyers across the province are better equipped with cultural competence and awareness.

A cornerstone achievement has been the creation of the Regaining Trust implementation platform, a transparent accountability tool that tracks progress on all twenty-one recommendations. For the first time, both the public and the profession can clearly see how commitments are being translated into action. This platform will also underpin an annual independent progress report, reinforcing accountability and maintaining momentum.

The impact is already evident. Cultural competence training is now required for all practising lawyers, governance structures have been strengthened, and participation by equity-deserving communities in regulatory processes is increasing. Most importantly, early feedback points to growing trust and engagement among communities historically underserved by the justice system.

As the initiative moves into its next phase, the focus will remain on embedding equity into governance, regulation, and professional standards—driving lasting cultural transformation and fostering a more inclusive, accountable, and trusted legal profession in Nova Scotia.

**Jonathan Saumier, Marla Brown, Vanessa Fells, and Jacqueline Mullenger, NSBS**

For more information, go to [nsbs.org](https://nsbs.org)



*Wills Clinic Student Coordinators, left to right: Shawn Courtney, Jessica Duffney, & William Clarke*

## **Pro Bono Dalhousie - Schulich School of Law**

Many individuals and community organizations across Nova Scotia face persistent barriers to accessing legal information, often due to financial constraints and limited available resources. Pro Bono Dalhousie plays a critical role in addressing this gap by connecting law students with individuals and organizations who need legal assistance but cannot easily obtain it. In doing so, the program strengthens community initiatives, expands access to justice, and fosters a deep commitment to public service among the next generation of legal professionals.

With sustained support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, Pro Bono Dalhousie has been able to grow and evolve its programming, supporting coordination, training, and the placement of student volunteers with a wide range of community partners. This funding enables the delivery of free legal research and assistance on issues such as privacy, wills drafting, and general legal information, while also supporting the development of specialized clinics and student-led initiatives. These include the Know Your Rights project, the Dalhousie Wills Clinic, the McCarthy Tétrault Non-Profit Privacy Compliance Clinic, and collaborations with organizations such as Rainbow Railroad.

The impact of this work is reflected both in its reach and in the depth of engagement. This year, Pro Bono Dalhousie expanded its project offerings from 40 to 47, enabling 242 law students to contribute approximately 25,000 hours of

volunteer service. Students supported organizations such as the East Coast Prison Justice Society by monitoring conditions in provincial jails and developing accessible public legal education materials, assisted ABLE2 in delivering legal referral services and plain-language resources for people with disabilities, and contributed to environmental advocacy through research and public-interest initiatives with East Coast Environmental Law.

The McCarthy Tétrault Non-Profit Privacy Compliance Clinic, now in its second year, exemplifies the program's innovation and national reach. Law students work alongside legal professionals to help non-profits navigate privacy laws, develop policies, and respond to data protection challenges, gaining hands-on experience while supporting organizations across Canada.

Funding also supports student leadership, including two student Directors who oversee placements, outreach, and program delivery. Together with a broader student team, they ensure the continued growth and effectiveness of Pro Bono Dalhousie's work.

By bridging the gap between legal need and available support, Pro Bono Dalhousie continues to expand access to justice while equipping law students with the skills, experience, and values needed to serve their communities.

**Delaney Helmke, Bushra Khadra & Elizabeth McGraw, Program Directors**

For more information, go to [www.dal.ca/faculty/law/current-students/probono.html](http://www.dal.ca/faculty/law/current-students/probono.html)



Round table conversation at the Building Bridges Forum hosted by RRANS

## Rainbow Refugee Association – Communities of Care Project

Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia's Communities of Care Project is strengthening access to immigration and refugee applications information and support for LGBTQI+ refugees, 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers, and their families across the province and abroad. Grounded in education, application support, and community capacity-building, the initiative addresses persistent barriers that make it difficult for individuals to navigate complex immigration and refugee sponsorship systems, including Private Sponsorship of Refugees, the One-Year Window, and family reunification pathways.

For many, these processes are not only complicated but inaccessible without targeted guidance. At the same time, community organizations often lack the capacity to provide detailed, up-to-date support. With funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, Rainbow Refugee significantly expanded its ability to respond to these challenges. The creation of a Sponsorship and Resources Coordinator role was central to this growth, enabling the organization to deliver one-on-one application support, develop multilingual educational materials, and provide training to both newcomers and community members. As a result, sponsorship application activity increased substantially compared to the previous year.

The project also fostered meaningful partnerships that enhanced its reach and impact. Collaboration with Rainbow Railroad supported referral-based Government-

Assisted Refugee applications, while joint efforts with community organizations enabled the delivery of clinics focused on legal name and gender marker changes. These clinics provided critical, hands-on assistance to approximately 80 individuals, including LGBTQI+ refugees and newcomers, helping them navigate legal processes and access financial support for application fees.

In addition to direct services, the project prioritized accessible, inclusive information. New multilingual resources were developed to explain immigration pathways and legal name and gender marker change processes, with materials translated into multiple languages and made available both online and in print. Public information sessions and training opportunities further extended the project's impact, equipping volunteers and community members with the knowledge needed to support refugee sponsorship efforts.

Overall, the Communities of Care Project has improved access to legal information, strengthened pathways to reunification and resettlement, and built a more informed and responsive community network. By reducing barriers and increasing capacity, Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia is helping ensure that LGBTQI+ refugees and 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers in Nova Scotia are better supported in navigating complex systems and their resettlement journey so they can thrive.

Rhiannon Makohoniuk, Orlando Tovar, Co-Executive Directors

For more information, go to [rainbowrefugees.com](http://rainbowrefugees.com)

## reachability Association- BOSS24 Program

BOSS24 (Building on Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness) is a program that delivers much needed emotional regulation and anger management supports to our most marginalized citizens.

Using structured workshops focused on emotional awareness, decision-making, and communication skills, as well as one-on-one sessions; it is designed for participants who are involved in justice-related processes and need practical tools to better manage reactions and interactions.

The program serves individuals in the community who benefit from building these skills in a clear and applied way. Our referrals come from: Legal Aid, Probation Services, Mental Health Court, Agencies, and more.

### Need or Challenge Addressed

According to legal aid, 75 per cent of their clients in Halifax Regional Municipality are on the ADHD-Spectrum/ neurodiverse which is why this initiative focuses on folks in conflict with the law and on the Spectrum. Many participants struggle with managing emotional reactions, especially in situations involving conflict, authority, or stress. This often affects communication, decision-making, and outcomes in legal and/or structured environments.

There is a real need for this population to break these skills down in a simple, structured, and practical way. This program was designed to make those skills accessible and usable in real situations – and the

results are promising.

Among a number of developments, the funding made the following possible::

- Supported creation of slides, booklets, and exercises
- Workshop development and delivery
- Supported one-on-one discussions
- Flexible scheduling of workshops during morning and evening
- Ongoing outreach to justice community
- Access to employment and pre-employment programming

An advisory committee comprised of individuals from legal aid, Crown attorneys, equity-seeking groups and others continue to oversee progress and advise on next steps.

Over the last year, the program has seen strong growth, with almost double the number of participants. Of those, 86 per cent completed the programming focused on emotional regulation and communication.

Feedback from participants showed that the content was practical, easy to follow, and directly applicable to real-life situations.

As the program is unique in Canada, we hope to share it with community agencies across Canada for potential implementation.

Tova Sherman, CEO, reachability Association

For more information, go to [reachability.org/boss24](https://reachability.org/boss24)

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***Without this funding, the program would not exist. Period. This program is unique in Canada, and we hope to share it with community agencies across Canada for potential implementation.”***

- reachability BOSS24 program

## Stepping Stone – Tipping the Scales

The Tipping the Scales project, an initiative of Stepping Stone, provides critical legal and advocacy support to individuals involved in the criminal justice system who are currently or formerly engaged in the sex trade, as well as youth at risk of entering it. At the heart of the project is a dedicated advocacy support worker who delivers individualized, trauma-informed assistance tailored to each participant’s circumstances.

Through one-on-one support, the program helps individuals navigate complex legal processes, including court appearances and interactions with correctional institutions. Services include court accompaniment, prison visits, goal setting, exit planning, and support with reintegration. The advocacy support worker also connects participants to essential community resources, offering referrals and guidance related to housing, counselling, healthcare, and addiction supports.

Acting as a bridge between participants and the justice system, the advocacy support worker liaises with Crown attorneys, probation officers, and other legal professionals to ensure that participants are better understood and supported. This role is complemented by strong partnerships with community agencies,

enabling a coordinated and responsive network of care.

A key component of the project is its collaboration with Pro Bono Students at the Schulich School of Law and Dalhousie Legal Aid. Together, they provide legal education workshops and one-on-one legal assistance, empowering participants with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities while increasing access to legal support.

The project also works closely with Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) to promote the health and safety of individuals working on the street. This collaboration ensures that participants can access harm reduction services and medical care alongside legal and social supports.

By addressing the intersecting challenges faced by participants—including stigma, criminalization, and barriers to stable housing and health services—Tipping the Scales helps individuals move toward greater stability and autonomy. The project’s holistic and relationship-based approach continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those it serves.

Alex MacDonnell, Executive Director

Linda Grandy, Court Support & Corrections Workers

For more information, go to [steppingstonens.ca/tipping-the-scales](http://steppingstonens.ca/tipping-the-scales)

## Ummah Society

This project represents an important first step toward improving access to justice for Muslim and ethnocultural communities across Nova Scotia. Designed as a research and planning initiative, the project focuses on conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and environmental scan to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities for more inclusive and culturally responsive legal services. The ultimate goal is to produce evidence-based recommendations that will inform future legal education initiatives and service delivery models.

An internal project team was established to guide this work, alongside the development of a detailed research framework that includes community consultations, stakeholder interviews, and a broad environmental scan. Early research identified key legal areas requiring focused attention, including wills and estates within Canadian legal frameworks, the intersection of Islamic and Canadian family law—particularly divorce and annulment (faskh)—and financial and regulatory considerations related to Islamic finance. A significant advancement has been the initiation of a national research collaboration with scholars, legal experts, and the Canadian Council of Imams to explore pathways for recognizing Islamic divorce and annulment processes within the Canadian legal context.

Community engagement has been central to this phase. Multiple needs assessment sessions and

workshops were delivered in Halifax, bringing together imams, community leaders, and organizational directors. These sessions strengthened participants' understanding of complex legal intersections and built capacity among frontline leaders. Complementary engagement with family lawyers highlighted a critical gap in culturally informed legal services, particularly in family law and estate planning.

The project has also fostered key partnerships, notably between Legal Aid Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Muslim Resource Centre, to support Muslim clients in navigating legal systems and accessing culturally appropriate guidance. Early collaboration has led to the development of an initial legal navigation support pathway within community-based services.

Preliminary findings point to persistent barriers, including limited culturally relevant legal information, language challenges, and a lack of culturally competent legal professionals. There is a strong preference within the community for preventative legal education and integrated service models that combine education, navigation, and targeted legal support.

Building on these insights, the next phase will focus on developing practical frameworks, expanding partnerships, and advancing recommendations grounded in comprehensive data analysis.

**Abdallah Yousri, CEO**

For more information, go to [ummahsociety.ca](http://ummahsociety.ca)

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# Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund

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Since the creation of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship program in the early 1980s, almost \$6 million has been given to 474 recipients studying law at Dalhousie University.

Congratulations to the 2025-2026 scholarship recipients (JD and Graduate students) at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University:

M Arwa Ahmed	Owen Huisman	Janice Moon
Sarah Cameron	Luke Hurley	Alissa Murray
Davin Caratao	Jocelyn Le Blanc	Yirabari Israel Nulog
Sydney Chin	Pascale Legault	Laken Tucker
Alanah Ellsworth	Nolan Lesperance	Graci Young
Similoluwa Peace Emmanuel	Nicholas Kennedy	Adonis Zarkatzias
Adrienne Graham	Madhav Mallya	
Arthur Alexander Harris	Jocelyn McLellan	

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“

*I am proud to be supported by an organization whose work has a meaningful impact on the Nova Scotia legal community. Thank you again for the opportunity and support you have given me. I hope to pay it forward one day*

Sarah Cameron, 2026 Scholarship Recipient

# From the Dean of Law

The Schulich School of Law has a deep and broad pool of scholarships for our JD students, but the most significant and prestigious are the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarships.

The value of these scholarships begins at the admissions and enrolment stage. As one of the most generous scholarships across all Canadian law schools, they have helped us attract and bring through the doors of the Weldon Building the very best law school applicants from across the nation.

The Law Foundation Scholarships further guarantee the newly admitted recipients full tuition coverage for their entire time in law school, provided they remain in good standing. These core entry and renewable scholarships help make law school affordable for many students, but they also free up valuable time and energy so students can focus on their studies, clinical programs, experiential opportunities and research projects, rather than searching for part-time work. It's not an exaggeration to say these scholarships are a key reason for the ongoing very high quality of the law students at the Schulich School of Law.

Maintaining a highly regarded law school and academic program requires top-notch graduate programs alongside the core JD program. As with the Law Foundation JD scholarships, the two annual scholarships that are designated for LL.M. students help us build and maintain our graduate LL.M. program. Recent changes and cutbacks in university funding for master's students and programs make these scholarships more important than ever. Many of our graduate scholarship recipients go on to Ph.D. level work, some here at the Schulich School of Law, or return to legal practice with a newly acquired focus and expertise. The Law Foundation Scholarships help these students become the next generation of highly specialized legal professionals.

Just this past year the fund that has supported the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia JD and Graduate level scholarships grew to a point where more funds needed to be spent. The Trustees of the Scholarship Fund decided that rather than increase the existing scholarship amounts, the new funds should be dedicated to need-based awards. This year, and we hope moving forward, the Scholarship Fund was able to support eight more students, each receiving a significant need-based scholarship.

Combined the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarships fundamentally impact the Law School for the better. They ensure we bring in some of the very best law school applicants from across Canada, support our graduate programs, and serve a range of law students in need of financial support.

On behalf of the entire Schulich Law School faculty and in my personal capacity as Dean, thank you to the Nova Scotia Law Foundation for its many years of support, and congratulations on 50 years of successfully sustaining access to justice in Nova Scotia.



**Sarah Harding**

Dean of Law,  
Weldon Professor of Law  
Schulich School of Law,  
Dalhousie University

# Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund History

Special thanks to the trustees and secretaries who have helped guide the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund (formerly known as Dalhousie Law School Trust Fund) since its inception in 1981. The Scholarship Fund is a registered charity (#118881689RR0001) with the Canada Revenue Agency; it is a separate entity governed by three Trustees appointed by the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

## First trustees were:

R.J. Downie KC (1982-1987)

Dean W.H. Charles KC (1982-1985)

K. LeRoy Taylor KC (1982-1992)

## Secretary was:

Mary Helleiner (1982-1996)

## Subsequent trustees have been:

A. William Cox KC (1987-1996)

Dean Innis Christie KC (1985-1991)

Dean Philip Girard (1992-1993)

Dean Joseph Ghiz KC (1993-1995)

Dean Dawn Russell KC (1995- 2005)

Dean Philip Saunders KC (2005 – 2010)

Dean Kimberley Brooks (2010 - 2015)

Dean R. Camille Cameron KC (2016 – 2023)

Harry Wrathall KC (1992 - 1998)

Goldie Trager (1997- 2001)

John McFarlane KC (1998 - 2003)

Peter Green KC (2004 – 2005)

Jonathan Davies KC (2005 – 2008)

Robert G. MacKeigan KC (2008 - 2024)

Christine A. McCulloch (2001 - 2010)

Estelle Theriault KC (2011- 2021)

Dwight Rudderham KC (2021-present)

Dean Sarah Harding (2023 - present)

Catherine S. Walker KC (2024 - present)

## Subsequent Secretaries have been:

Jane Holmes (1996 – 2000)

Kerry Oliver (2002 – 2011) (2013-2015) (2016-2017)

Karen Hollett (Interim 2011-2012)

Maria Franks (Interim 2015-2016)

Mary D. Hamblin (2017 - present)

“

*Receiving this scholarship puts me in the best position possible to enjoy my years in law school and donate my time to the community. Your earnest investment in my future will not be forgotten. Thank you again for your generous and thoughtful gift.*

– Alanah Ellsworth, 2026 Scholarship Recipient

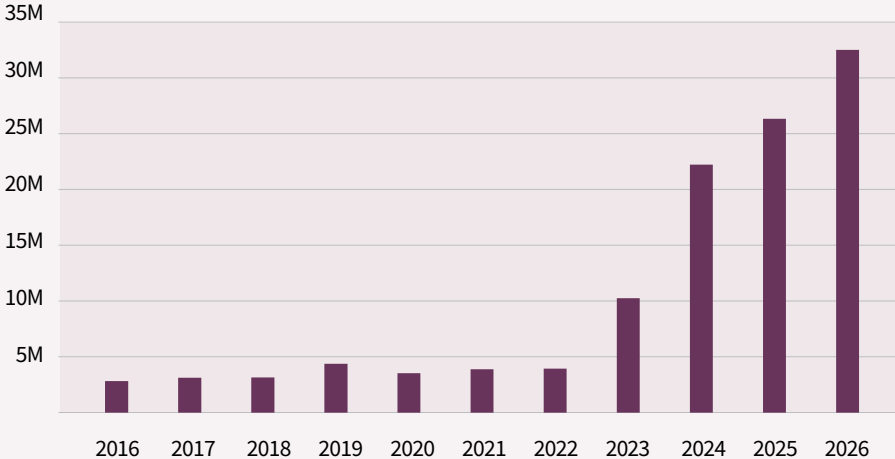
“

*The generous funding you have provided has not only given me financial benefits; it has also allowed me to have a more comprehensive and insightful law school experience. Ultimately, this funding has done a great deal to advance my pursuit of being a balanced, responsible, and passionate advocate for those experiencing the often-devastating effects of criminal prosecution.*

– Luke Hurley, 2026 Scholarship Recipient

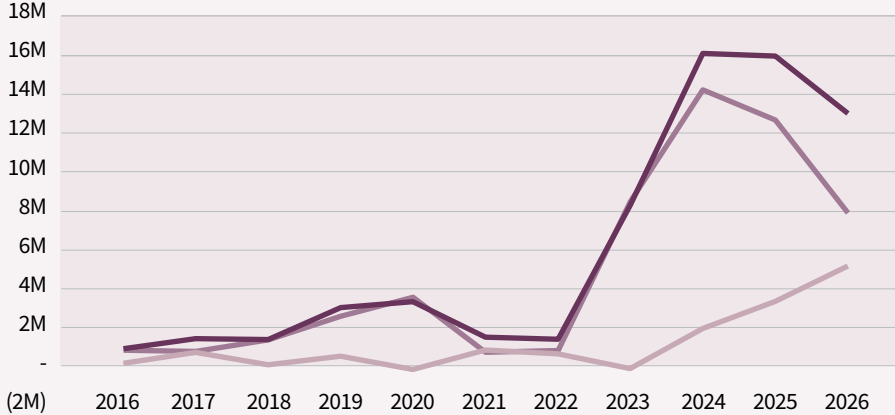
# Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Financial Analytics

## Net assets

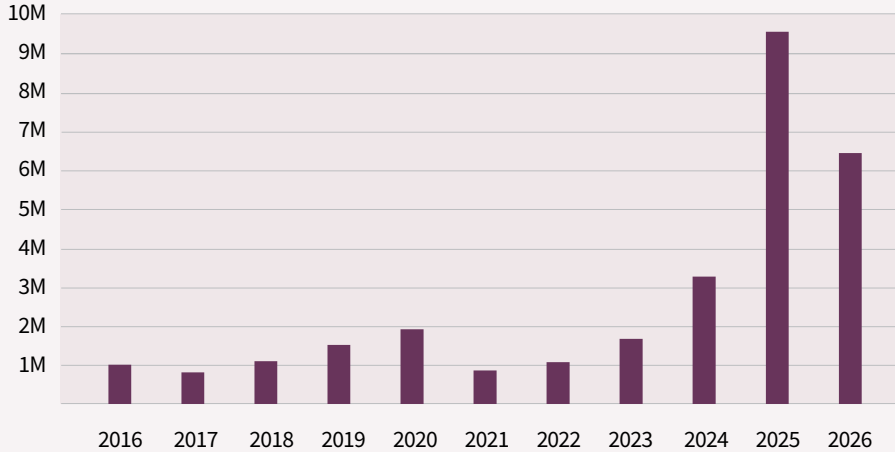


## Revenues

Interest on Trust accounts  
Investment income  
Total revenue



## Grants



Financial overview - 11-year snapshot includes revenue from investments.

# Financial Statements

## Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

### March 31, 2026

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Statement of changes in fund balances	62
Statement of cash flows	62
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# Independent auditor's report



## To the Members of the Board of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

### Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Law Foundation of Nova Scotia (the “Foundation”), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2026, the statements of operations, changes in fund balances, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Law Foundation of Nova Scotia as at March 31, 2026, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for notfor- profit organizations.

### Basis for Qualified Opinion

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia derives substantially all of its revenue from interest credited by financial institutions of Nova Scotia Barristers’ Society members’ mixed trust funds which is not susceptible to complete audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of revenue from this source was limited to accounting for the amounts received from financial institutions and recorded in the records of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia. Therefore, we were unable to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary for revenue, excess of revenue over expenses, and cash flow from operations for the years ended March 31, 2026 and 2025, assets as at March 31, 2026 and 2025 and net assets as at April 1, 2025 and 2024 and March 31, 2026 and 2025. Our audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2025 was modified accordingly because of the possible effects of this limitation in scope.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Foundation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Foundation’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Foundation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Foundation's financial reporting process.

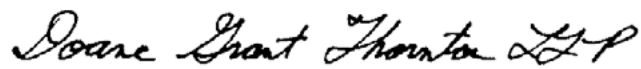
### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Foundation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Chartered Professional Accountants

Halifax, Canada  
May 29, 2025


## Statement of financial position

March 31	2026	2025
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash	\$ 549,496	\$ 777,312
Prepays	1,278	1,284
	550,774	778,596
Due from Law Foundation Scholarship Fund	10,160	1,199
Investments (Note 3)	38,987,283	31,446,901
Equipment (Note 4)	248	310
	\$ 39,548,465	\$ 32,227,006
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Payables and accruals (Note 5)	\$ 4,797	\$ 27,956
Designated grants payable (Note 6)	6,705,137	5,606,346
	6,709,934	5,634,302
<b>Fund balances</b>		
Unrestricted reserve fund	24,838,531	18,592,704
Grant stabilization reserve fund	6,000,000	6,000,000
Scholarship stabilization reserve fund	2,000,000	2,000,000
	32,838,531	26,592,704
	\$ 39,548,465	\$ 32,227,006

Commitment (Note 7)

On behalf of the Board

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Director

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Director

See accompanying notes to the financial statements.

## Statement of operations

Year ended March 3i	General Fund	Reserve Fund	2026	2025
<b>Revenue</b>				
Interest on trust accounts	\$ 7,874,787	-	\$ 7,874,787	\$ 12,686,978
Interest on operating account	8,027	-	8,027	15,287
Interest on investments		584,813	584,813	689,488
Dividend income	-	495,460	495,460	362,271
Change in market value	-	4,064,562	4,064,562	2,232,078
	7,882,814	5,144,835	13,027,649	15,986,102
<b>Grants disbursed</b>				
	6,382,137	-	6,382,137	9,460,585
	1,500,677	5,144,835	6,525,517	6,525,517
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Accounting and audit	41,089	-	41,089	49,225
Amortization	62	-	62	78
Bank charges	968	-	968	986
Consulting	15,849	-	15,849	23,469
Contribution to Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund	-	-	-	2,000,000
Director's insurance	3,162	-	3,162	2,839
Investment fees	-	165,797	165,797	149,906
Miscellaneous	6,593	-	6,593	4,190
Office	8,614	-	8,614	9,364
Rent and common area	23,526	-	23,526	22,279
Salaries and benefits	119,173	-	119,173	11,518
Telephone	1,928	-	1,928	968
Travel and meetings	12,924	-	12,924	8,654
	233,888	165,797	399,685	2,383,476
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 1,266,789	\$ 4,979,038	\$ 6,245,827	\$ 4,142,041

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

## Statement of changes in fund balances

Year ended March 31	General Fund	Unrestricted Reserve Fund	Grant Stabilization Reserve Fund	Scholarship Stabilization Reserve Fund	2026 Total	2025 Total
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ -	\$ 18,592,704	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	26,592,704	\$ 22,450,663
Excess of revenue over expenditure	1,266,789	4,979,038	-	-	6,245,827	4,142,041
Interfund transfer (Note 8)	(1,266,789)	(1,266,789)	-	-	-	-
Net assets, end of year	\$ -	\$ 24,838,531	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$32,838,531	\$ 26,592,704

## Statement of cash flows

March 31	2026	2025
<b>Operating</b>		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 6,245,827	\$ 4,142,041
Items in earnings not involving cash		
Amortization	62	78
Change in market value of investments	(4,064,562)	(2,232,078)
	2,181,327	1,910,041
Change in non-cash working capital balances		
Due from Law Foundation Scholarship Fund	(8,961)	(1,078)
Prepays	6	(24)
Payables and accruals	(23,159)	6,706
Designated grants payable	1,098,791	2,259,293
	3,248,004	4,174,938
<b>Investing</b>		
Current		
Purchase of investments, net of disposals	(3,475,820)	(3,583,003)
Net (decrease) increase in cash	(227,816)	591,935
Cash		
Beginning of year	777,312	185,377
End of year	\$ 549,496	\$ 777,312

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

# Notes to the financial statements

## 1. Nature of operations

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia (the “Foundation”) was established in 1976 by a Nova Scotia statute as a not-for-profit organization and is exempt from income tax. Its

purpose is to grant funds to groups for projects connected with the law.

## 2. Summary of significant accounting policies

### Basis of presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (“ASNPO”). The significant policies used in the preparation of these statements are detailed as follows:

### Fund accounting

The Foundation uses fund accounting and, accordingly, resources are classified for accounting purposes into funds based on specific activities or objectives. These funds consist of:

The General Fund accounts for the Foundation’s day-to-day activities which include the interest income on the lawyers’ trust accounts, the interest income on the investments, less grants approved and paid, and the administrative expenses for running the Foundation.

The Unrestricted Reserve Fund is an internally restricted fund to support future operations of the organization. Net investment income earned on these assets is recorded in the reserve fund. As well, any surplus from the General Fund is transferred to the Unrestricted Reserve Fund at each year end.

The Grant Stabilization Fund is an internally restricted fund which has been created to provide additional support for grant payments in years when income on the lawyers’ trust accounts is insufficient to support planned grant support.

The Scholarship Stabilization Fund is an internally restricted fund, established to provide additional support to the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund if the need arises.

### Cash

Cash includes cash balances on hand and held in investment accounts.

### Equipment

The cost of equipment is amortized over its useful life using the following annual rates and methods:

	Rate	Method
Computer Hardware	3 years	Straight line
Furniture and fixtures	20%	Declining balance
Office equipment	20%	Declining balance

When equipment no longer has any long term service potential to the Foundation, the excess of its net carrying amount over any residual value is recognized as an expense in the statement of operations. Any write-downs recognized are not reversed.

### Investments

The investments of the Foundation consist of money market funds, fixed income securities, and equities. They are measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognized in the statement of operations and changes in reserve fund in the period in which they arise.

### Financial instruments

#### Initial measurement

The Foundation’s financial instruments are measured at fair value when issued or acquired. For financial instruments subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost, fair value is adjusted by the amount of the related financing fees and transaction costs. Transaction costs and financing fees relating to financial instruments that are measured subsequently at fair value are recognized in operations in the year in which they are incurred.

#### Subsequent measurement

At each reporting date, the Foundation measures its financial assets and liabilities at cost or amortized cost (less impairment in the case of financial assets), except for equities quoted in an active market, which must be measured at fair value. The Foundation has also irrevocably

lected to measure its investments in fixed income securities at fair value. All changes in fair value of the Foundation's investments in equities quoted in an active market and in fixed income securities are recorded in the statement of operations. The financial instruments measured at amortized cost are accrued interest receivable and payables and accruals.

The Foundation is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis provides a measure of the Foundation's risk exposure as at the date of the financial statements.

i) Credit risk

The Foundation is exposed to credit risk in the event of non-performance by counterparties to financial instruments. The Foundation is not exposed to any significant credit risk.

ii) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Foundation will not be able to pay financial liabilities as they come due. The majority of assets held by the Foundation are invested in securities that are traded in an active market and can be readily disposed of as liquidity needs arise

iii) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. For purposes of this disclosure, the Foundation segregates market risk into three categories: interest rate risk, currency risk and other price risk.

*Interest rate risk*

The Foundation holds money market funds and fixed income investments of \$10,065,390 and \$5,155,943, respectively at year end (2025 - \$5,896,164 and \$10,140,549). A 1% absolute change in interest rates would increase or decrease interest income by \$152,213 (2025 - \$160,367).

*Currency risk*

The Foundation's functional currency is the Canadian dollar. Foreign currency risk arises from the Foundations investments that are denominated in a foreign currency. Fluctuations in the relative value of foreign currencies against the Canadian dollar can result in positive or negative effect on the fair value of

the investments. The Foundation holds \$13,467,968 (2025 - \$11,266,973) in cash and investments denominated in United States Dollars. A 5% absolute change in the foreign exchange rate would result in a gain or loss of \$673,398 (2025 - \$563,349).

*Other price risk*

Other price risk is the risk that the value of financial instruments will fluctuate as a result of changes in market prices, other than those occurring from interest rate risk or currency risk. Securities held for trading are carried at fair value and, as such, impact earnings as changes occur. Investments held by the Foundation are managed by professional investment managers and are monitored by management.

**Revenue recognition**

The Foundation uses the deferral method of accounting for the net investment income.

Interest on trust accounts is recorded in the General Fund on an accrual basis.

Interest income and dividend income are recorded on an accrual basis, in the General or Reserve Fund.

Realized gains or losses on sale of investments are the difference between the proceeds received and the cost of investments sold.

Unrealized gains or losses on investments represent the difference between the carrying value at the year end and the carrying value at the previous year end or purchase value during the year, less the reversal of previously recognized unrealized gains and losses in respect of disposals during the year.

**Use of estimates**

The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with ASNPO requires the Foundation's management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and reported amounts of revenue and expenditures during the year. Certain of these estimates require subjective judgments by management that may be uncertain. These items could include fair value of investments and useful lives of capital assets. Actual results could differ from those reported.

<b>3. Investments</b>	2026 Market Value	2025 Market Value
Equities and mutual funds	\$ 23,765,950	\$ 15,410,188
Fixed income	10,065,390	10,140,549
Money market fund	5,155,943	5,896,164
	<b>\$ 38,987,283</b>	<b>\$ 31,466,901</b>

<b>4. Equipment</b>	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	2026 Net Book Value	2025 Net Book Value
Computer equipment	\$ 874	\$ 874	\$ -	\$ -
Furniture and fixtures	8,769	8,769	48	60
Office equipment	30,718	30,518	200	250
	<b>\$ 40,361</b>	<b>\$ 40,113</b>	<b>\$ 248</b>	<b>\$ 310</b>

#### **5. Payables and accruals**

Included in payables and accruals are government remittances payable of \$Nil (2025 - \$Nil).

#### **6. Designated grants payable 2026 2025**

	2026	2025
Grants payable	\$ 6,705,13	\$ 5,606,346

Grants that have been approved but remain unpaid at year end are reported as current.

#### **7. Commitment**

The Foundation rents its premises under a long term lease which expires June 30, 2029. Estimated annual costs are \$25,000, including annual base rental and common area costs.

#### **8. Interfund transfers**

Consistent with previous years, surplus from the General Fund has been transferred to the Unrestricted reserve fund for future operations.

#### **9. Comparative figures**

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year presentation



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