



# Annual Report 2023-2024

**seniors first BC**

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### **Board of Directors**

Eric B. Clavier	<i>President</i>
Edward Macaulay	<i>Vice President</i>
Margaret Ostrowski, K.C.	<i>Board Liaison</i>
Christine Jones	<i>Secretary</i>
Chelsea Belyk	<i>Treasurer</i>
Andrea Rolls	<i>Member at Large</i>
Kenneth Armstrong, K.C.	<i>Member at Large</i>
Gloria Gutman	<i>Member at Large</i>
Vivek Joseph	<i>Member at Large</i>
Curt Van Ardenne	<i>Member at Large</i>
Abdul Sana	<i>Member at Large</i>
Thomas Yoo	<i>Member at Large</i>
Sam Zeitoun	<i>Member at Large</i>
Pearl Mckenzie	<i>Honourary Lifetime Director</i>
Penny Bain	<i>Honourary Lifetime Director</i>
Martha Jane Lewis	<i>Honourary Lifetime Director</i>

## Staff

### Seniors Abuse & Information Line and Victim Services

Tina Chang	<i>Manager of SAIL and Victim Services</i>
Hannah	<i>SAIL Team Lead</i>
Aneet	<i>SAIL Intake Worker</i>
Angela	<i>SAIL Intake Worker</i>
Clarissa	<i>SAIL Intake Worker</i>
Maggie	<i>SAIL Intake Worker</i>
Sarah	<i>SAIL Intake Worker</i>
Queen	<i>Victim Services Worker</i>

### Legal Programs

Gordon Marshall	<i>Senior Counsel - Elder Law Clinic</i>
Catharine Schlenker	<i>Advance Planning Clinic Program Manager &amp; Staff Lawyer</i>
Preetkamal Brar	<i>Staff Lawyer</i>
Ryan Hardy	<i>Staff Lawyer</i>
Nighat Afsar	<i>Legal Advocate</i>
Zach Zen	<i>Legal Advocate</i>
Natalija Maksimovic	<i>Paralegal</i>
Nataliya Ivannikova	<i>Legal Administrative Assistant</i>
Lily Golightly	<i>Legal Administrative Assistant</i>
Beverley Collinson	<i>Legal Advocate/Skidegate Advance Planning Clinic Assistance (Haida Gwaii)</i>
Hailey Chapman	<i>Legal Advocate/Skidegate &amp; Masset Clinic Assistant (Haida Gwaii)</i>
Keanna McLeod	<i>Sechelt Advance Planning Clinic Assistant</i>
Bailey Sure	<i>Williams Lake Advance Planning Clinic Assistant</i>
Wendy Forth	<i>Nanaimo Advance Planning Clinic Assistant</i>

### Public Education & Outreach Program

Justin Lee	<i>Public Education &amp; Outreach Program Manager</i>
Linda Yauk	<i>Learning Events &amp; Outreach Coordinator</i>

### Management and Administration

Marie-Noël Campbell	<i>Executive Director &amp; Lawyer (On Maternity Leave)</i>
Alison Brewin	<i>Interim Executive Director</i>
Norbert Ma	<i>Operations Manager</i>
Malavika Tewari	<i>Bookkeeper</i>

# BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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It is my pleasure to report that Seniors First BC has had yet another extremely successful year. This is due in no small measure to the exemplary work of our Executive Director, Marie-Noël Campbell, our Interim Executive Director, Alison Brewin (who is filling in while Ms. Campbell is on maternity leave), our organization's dedicated and committed staff, and our enthusiastic Board members.

As in prior years, the society continues to grow, improve, and show determination toward our common cause of helping seniors overcome many life challenges.

I am very proud of the work that our enthusiastic staff does in the service of our vision that older adults in BC have the right to live with dignity, free from abuse of any kind. We work towards this in four ways:

- 1. Public Education & Outreach** – Since its inception, Seniors First BC has worked hard to raise awareness about elder abuse and to educate the public about the rights of seniors. We currently fulfill this role through public education and workshops delivered by staff and volunteers through several publications and resources available online.
- 2. Seniors Abuse & Information Line** – Our Province-wide confidential Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to a trained intake worker about abuse or mistreatment and to receive information and support about issues that impact the health and well-being of older adults.

**3. Victims Services Program** – Our Victims Services Program helps victims of crime or abuse who are 50+ and provides emotional support to anyone who has witnessed the abuse of an older adult. Assistance is provided over the phone and callers may remain anonymous.

**4. Legal Programs** – Seniors First BC provides services to older adults who are not able to access legal help elsewhere due to low income or other barriers. Legal Services may be provided by one of our legal advocates, or one of the lawyers in our Elder Law Clinic or Advance Planning Clinics.

Seniors First BC's continued success and its ability to employ and retain its devoted staff is and remains the result of the ongoing backing from our incredible donors and stakeholders, who not only provide much-needed funding to support the great work of our organization but provide other supports and encouragement above and beyond that of traditional benefactors. For this we are extremely grateful, and we feel honoured that our contributors continue to show confidence in this organization and its vision. We work hard to nurture and strengthen our relationships with all funders so that we can continue to provide the services we do, while we simultaneously explore additional funding options so that Seniors First BC can further expand and cement its rightful place as the preeminent organization supporting seniors in this Province.

Lastly, our success would not be possible without our dedicated Board members, each of whom contributes their time and expertise to improving the organization. To the Board, I am extremely grateful for the invaluable work that each of you continue to put into the organization. My gratitude also extends to past Board members who stood down during this term for personal reasons.

My report for this year is bittersweet, as it is my final opportunity to address members as your Board President. After 6 sometimes challenging but always rewarding years on the Board of Directors, I must regrettably step down due to the term limits prescribed by the society's by-laws. While I leave Seniors First BC with a heavy heart, it is time for new ideas and fresh perspectives, and I pass the leadership baton reassured that the current and prospective new Directors will embrace the short, medium, and long-term goals of Seniors First BC and lead the society to thrive in the future like never before. I will always remain a friend to Seniors First BC and look forward to enjoying its successes from afar.

Also leaving Seniors First BC after 6 dedicated years on the Board is the former Vice President and current Board Liaison, Margaret Ostrowski, K.C. It goes without saying that Margaret's support, hard work, and indomitable spirit since we both joined the Board in September 2018 have been invaluable and allowed me to delegate many tasks to my trusted right-hand person. Margaret, thank you for always being available as my sounding board and as a conduit between Board members, the executive, and staff! Your absence from the Board will be an immeasurable loss.

With a remarkable Executive Director, an incredible staff, and a settled Board that will be bolstered by some wonderful new members from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, I know that Seniors First BC will continue to build on its past successes while it continues to expand and serve some our community's most vulnerable members.

**Eric B. Clavier**

Board President

September 16, 2024

Vancouver, BC

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 was a fiscal year of both stabilization and expansion for Seniors First BC.

The Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) answered 7,426 enquiries from older adults and those who care for them, compared to 6,501 in the previous fiscal year, a 14% increase. Our statistics continue to show that family members are the most likely to both assist the older adult as well as to abuse them. Our SAIL workers navigated those sensitive tensions remarkably, with a focus on the senior's dignity and right to determine their needs and wishes.

Our Victim Services program noticed more callers in need of prompt or urgent support, in particular older adults living with their alleged abuser. In a few extreme cases, clients were deprived of housing or food by their relatives. Clients in these situations were also referred to our legal programs to dispute an eviction and prepare advance planning documents allowing them first to choose who could assist them with their financial, housing and health decisions, and prepare their wills.

As for our core legal programs, the Elder Law Clinic continued to provide general legal services to clients located in British Columbia, and engaged with deaf, deaf-blind, and non-verbal hospitalized seniors, while the Legal Advocacy Program team grew from one to three legal advocates. Each advocate can now provide more attentive support to older adults disputing evictions, living in stressful and sometimes dangerous housing situations, or requiring government benefits to live safely.



The Advance Planning Clinic program, which serves eligible seniors located outside of the Lower Mainland with their advance planning needs, considerably expanded its outreach. Lawyers travelled to Prince George, Prince Rupert, and several communities in the Central Coast, Interior, and Vancouver Island. Thanks to the Haida Gwaii Legal Project Society and the Bella Coola Legal Advocacy Program, Seniors First BC staff lawyers were invited to engage with local Elders and fill a gap in much needed estate planning services. Lawyers, including myself, returned from these trips reflecting on the history of these magnificent lands, clients residing there, and our duty to better meet their needs. Dedicated outreach to First Nations Elders was made possible with the strong support of the Law Foundation of BC, and a donation from Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (Vancity).

The Public Education and Outreach team continued to travel to community centers, libraries, multicultural organizations and faith-based institutions to share information and resources with a record number of participants. Our dynamic and relentless team travelled by bus, car and plane to meet seniors where they were and support them.

We are grateful to all those who make this important work possible, including our funders, in particular the Law Foundation of BC and the Province of BC, our institutional partners, staff, Board of Directors and other volunteers.

Finally, I wish to thank warmly both Eric Clavier, President of the Board, and Margaret Ostrowski, K.C., who have served on our Board of Directors for the six-year maximum allowed by our bylaws. Eric steadily steered the organization throughout these years, particularly during the period of turmoil brought about by the pandemic, while Margaret kept pushing us all to do more for our community and to provide advance planning services outside of the Lower Mainland.

With gratitude and optimism for Seniors First BC's future,

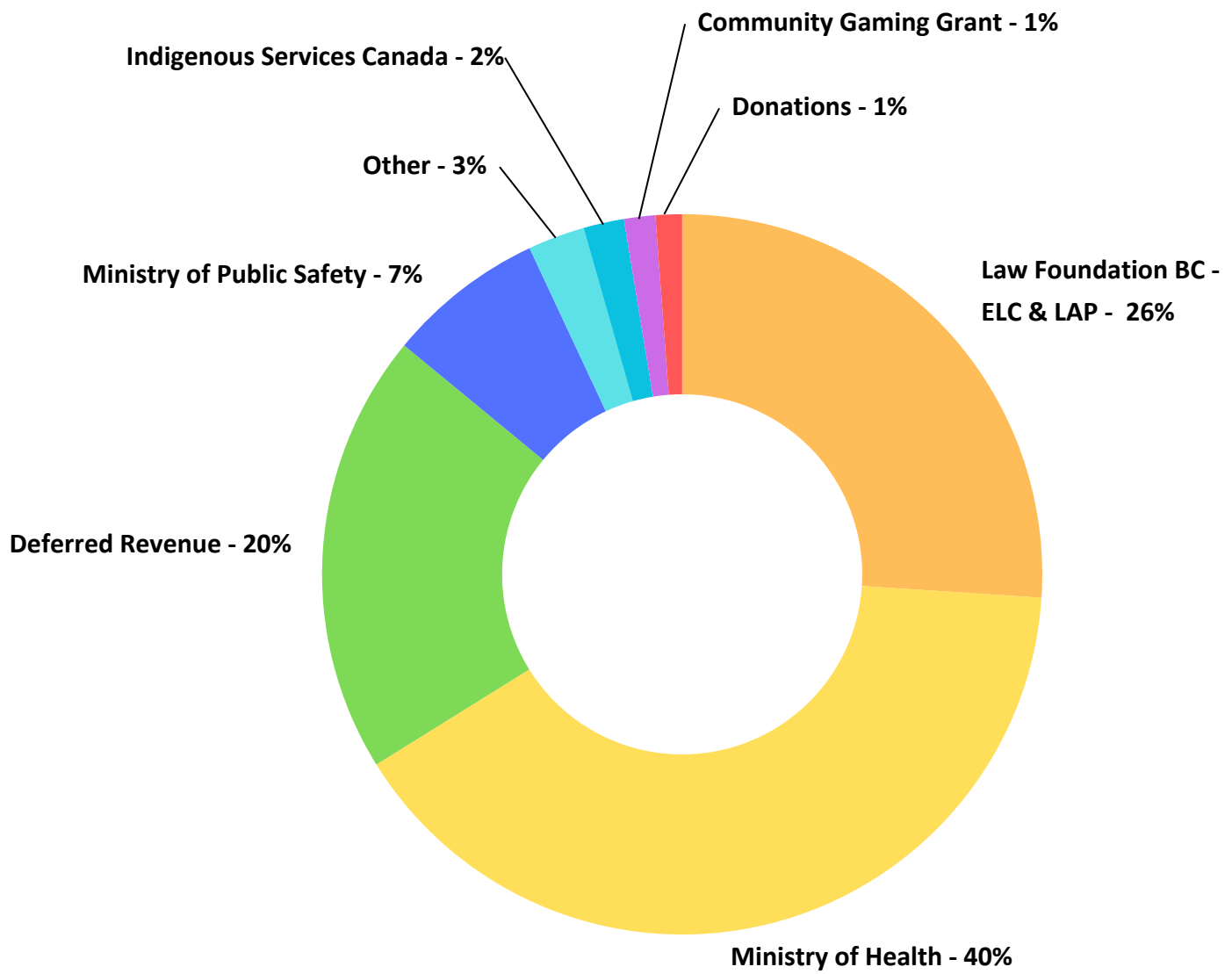
**Marie-Noël Campbell**

Executive Director & Lawyer

September 16, 2024

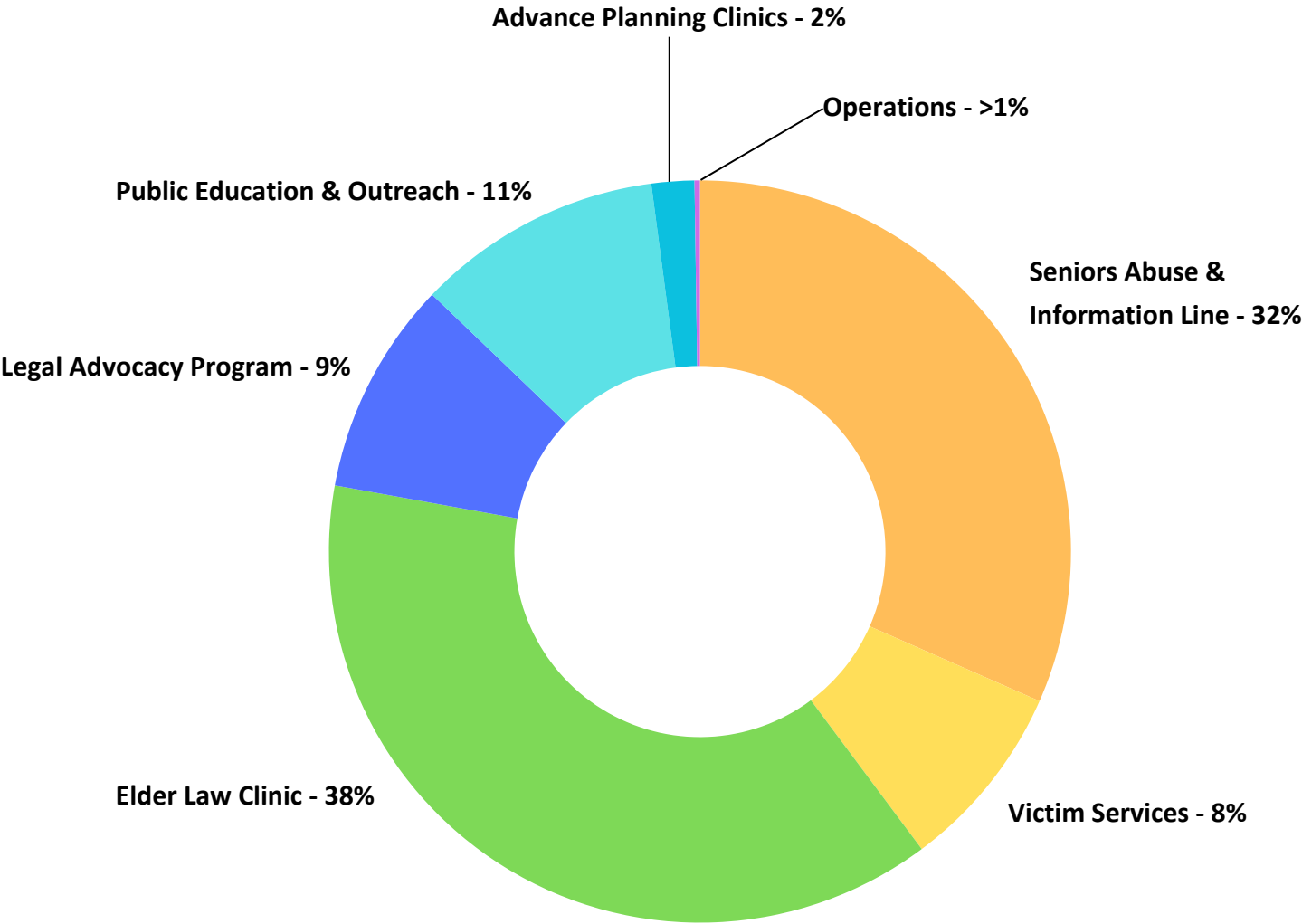
Vancouver, BC

## Organization Revenue



**Total: \$1,425,682**

# Organization Expenses



Total: \$1,394,716

# SAIL REPORT

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## Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)

It has been 4 years since the SAIL expanded from a small team of 4 part-time intake workers to a team of 7 part-time and full-time workers. This expansion, driven by an ongoing need for SAIL services, has led to continuous program improvements over the years, from the reorganization of SAIL's digital workspace to the increased reach of its services across the province.

This reporting fiscal year saw further growth in SAIL's call volume. SAIL responded to 7,426 inquiries—a 14 percent increase from the year before and a 31 percent increase from 4 years ago. In March 2024 alone, SAIL received the highest number of inquiries within a month (712) and within a day (47)—both record highs in the past 4 years. This continued growth for SAIL speaks to the (continued) demand for our services. We anticipate the demand will only increase, especially as demographic shifts begin to be felt. This projection is further supported by the rise in abuse-related inquiries to SAIL. SAIL responded to 2,765 abuse-related inquiries this past year—a 7 percent increase from the year before and a 55 percent increase over the past 4 years.

Recognizing that older adults who are being mistreated often have more than one reason for contacting SAIL, our intake workers are trained to identify inquirers' immediate, and potential long-term needs, and provide general information and referral to community, government, and social services. Before commencing their responsibilities on SAIL, our intake workers undergo extensive and thorough training across a range of essential topics to ensure they are fully prepared and equipped to meet the dynamic needs of older adults across British Columbia.

Most forms of harm and abuse involve disregarding the older adult’s decision-making, diminishing control over their own (financial/legal/daily) affairs, and disrupting their ability to connect with services. Statistics indicate that 59 percent of incoming inquiries to SAIL are made by individuals other than the affected older adult, including family members and other concerned parties seeking assistance, guidance, and information on their behalf. We know that older adults’ vulnerability to abuse increases further when they are isolated, dependent on the alleged abuser(s), or face other barriers such as diminished cognitive ability, language or communication challenges, and disability or health issues. As such, SAIL encourages older adults to make informed decisions by supporting them in understanding the options that are available to them. Through the referrals provided on SAIL, our intake workers help older adults establish and strengthen a community of supports. Below is an example of one such call where SAIL supported an older adult’s autonomy, while considering the family dynamic:

An older adult was being pressured by his adult son for money, manipulated and gaslit, and told that ‘he is mentally unstable and needs help.’ The older adult shared that his son has mental health and substance misuse issues and the relationship has always been difficult, but things are escalating and impacting the caller’s health and well-being. The older adult received numerous phone calls (more than 20) and text messages from his son each day and had been threatened with being blocked from contacting his granddaughter (the alleged abuser’s daughter). The older adult did not wish to lose connection with his granddaughter but felt frustrated and upset with his relationship with his son.

In the above call, our intake worker actively listened and provided emotional support, validating the older adult’s feelings of frustration, and discussed ways to approach and respond—or not respond—to his son. Our intake worker also explored the possibility of seeking mental health-specific supports for his son. Information about legal programs and victim services offered through Seniors First BC was provided, but the older adult declined to access further services at this time. On a positive note, however, the older adult found that the conversation on SAIL provided him reassurance and self-confidence.

In addition to providing direct services to vulnerable older adults and addressing the intersecting challenges that they experience, SAIL engages in research, consultations, and initiatives at the community, provincial, and federal levels on issues that affect seniors, particularly relating to ageism and aging in place. Recently, we supported and presented at a pilot summer program on aging and ageism at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Lastly, the stability of SAIL is a testament to the diversity and resilience of our intake workers on the frontlines, providing exceptional quality service to vulnerable older adults, many of whom are traumatized and marginalized. Above all, the stability of SAIL over the past 4 years would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our funder, the Province of BC.

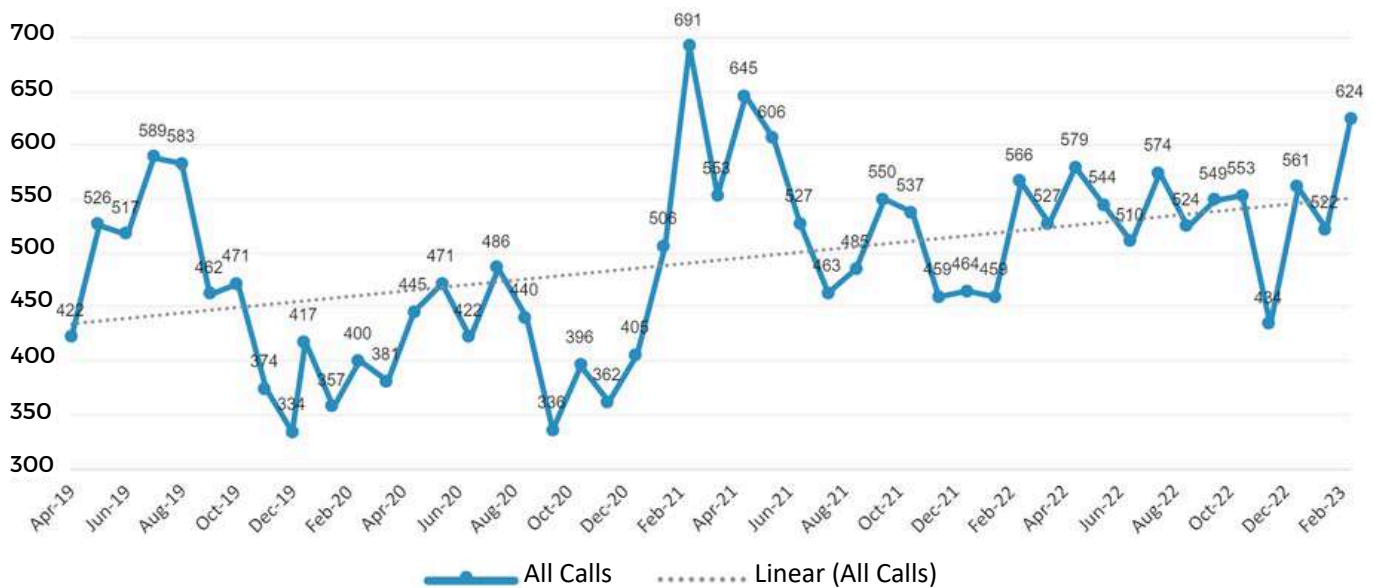
**Tina Chang**

Manager, SAIL and Victim Services Programs

## Total Number of Calls: 7,426 (April 2023 - March 2024)

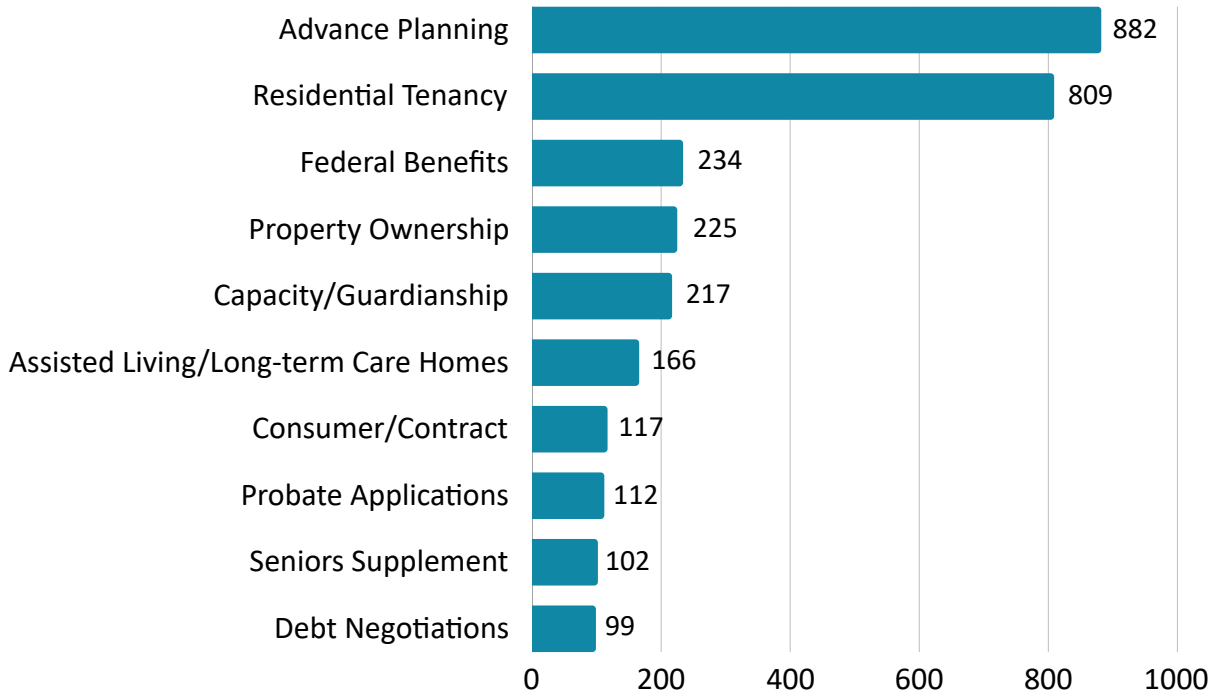
Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2019-20	422	526	517	589	583	462	471	374	334	417	357	400	<b>5452</b>
2020-21	381	445	471	422	486	440	336	396	362	405	506	691	<b>5341</b>
2021-22	553	645	606	527	463	485	550	537	459	464	459	566	<b>6314</b>
2022-23	527	579	544	510	574	524	549	<b>553</b>	434	561	522	624	<b>6501</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>7426</b>

Number of Calls by Month (with Linear Trendline)



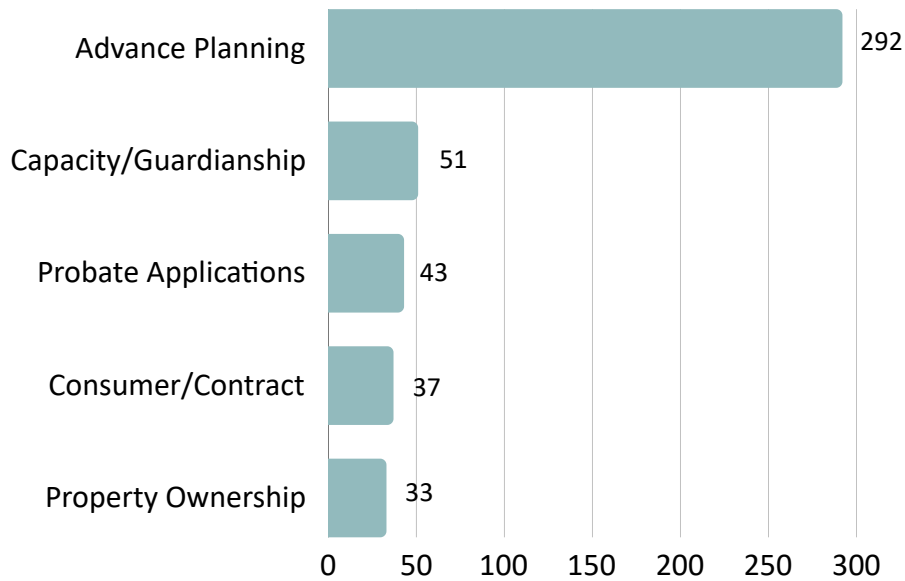
## Legal Issue Calls: 3,071

### Top 10 Legal issues



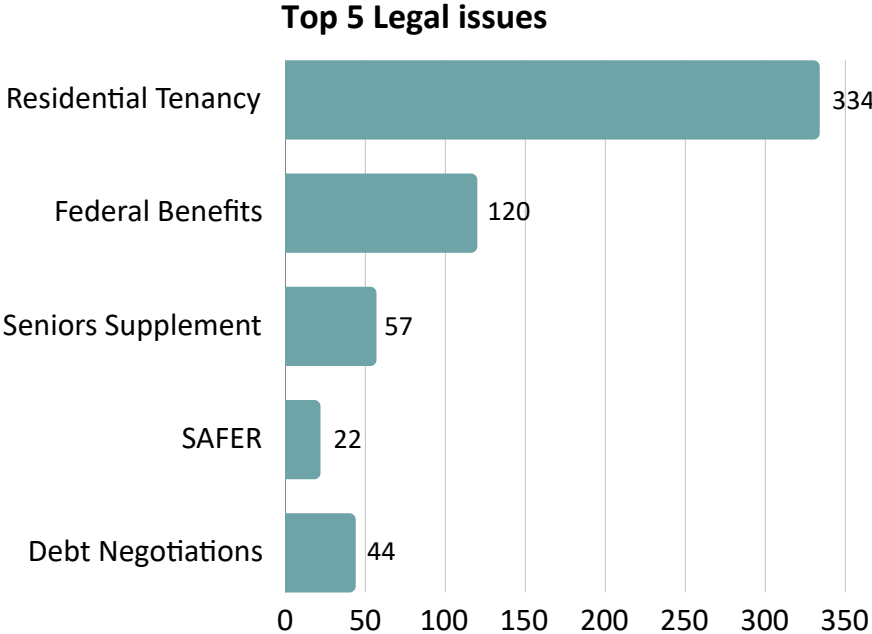
## Referrals to Elder Law Clinic: 638 Calls

### Top 5 Legal issues

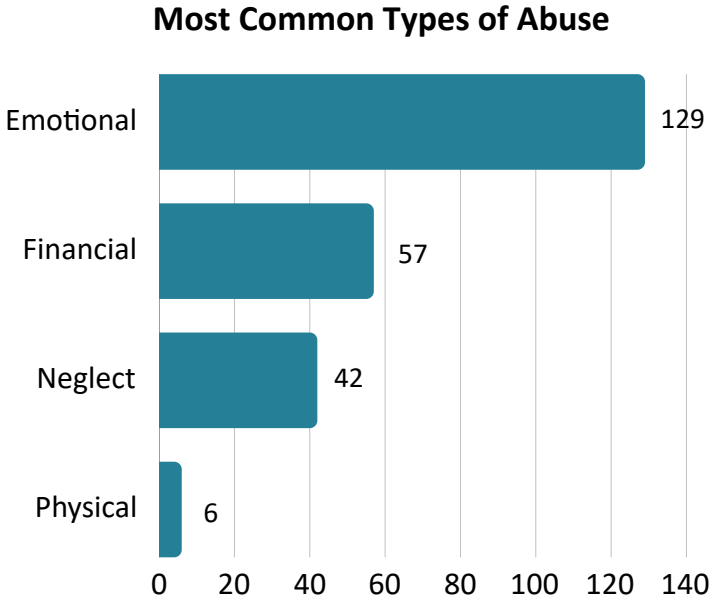




# Referrals to Legal Advocacy Program: 548 calls



# Referrals to Victim Services Program: 154 calls

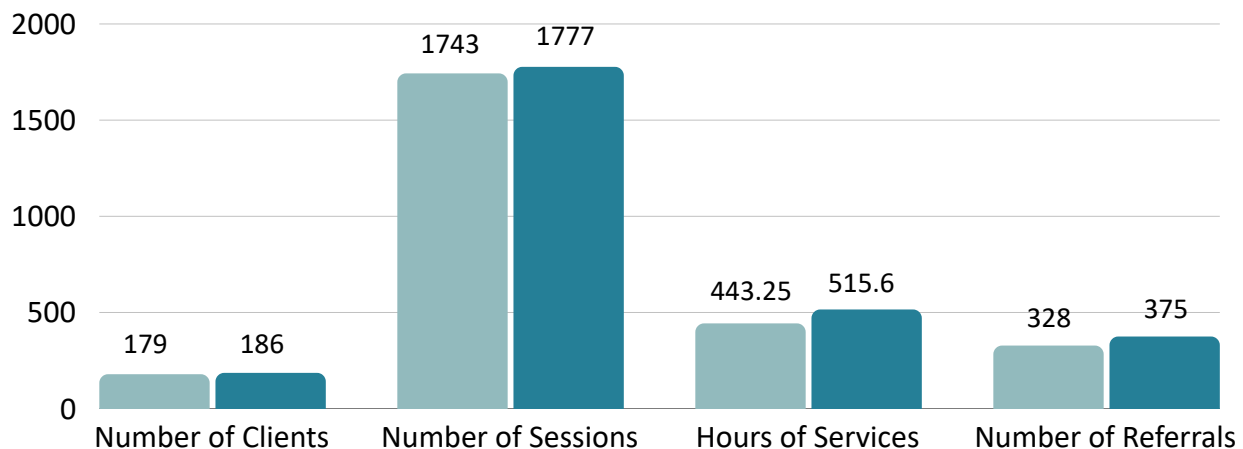


# VICTIM SERVICES REPORT

# 5

It has been another busy year for our Victim Services program, as we responded to 154 new referrals from SAIL. While the number of new referrals decreased by 3 percent compared to the previous fiscal year, our Victim Services program had supported more clients (a 4 percent increase). This discrepancy is due to several factors; in particular, repeat clients reaching out to our Victim Services program directly. While some clients are not eligible for program services, our Victim Services program still provided some support, such as helping them find the appropriate resource or connecting them with service providers that they may have difficulty accessing.

	FY2022-2023	FY2023-2024	% Dec./Inc.
<b>Number of Clients</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Number of Sessions</b>	<b>1743</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Hours of Services</b>	<b>443.25</b>	<b>515.6</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Number of Referrals</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>14%</b>



Notably, the increase in time spent supporting older adults is largely due to the increased severity of the abuse they experience. Our Victim Services program received significantly more referrals about physical abuse compared to the year before (a 320 percent increase). The rise of referrals with a higher level of severity requires a longer period of time - ensuring client safety, consulting and collaborating with community partners for a coordinated response, and often providing timely and effective referrals to supportive resources.

While the physical abuse experienced by our clients accounts for the increased time spent supporting them, other forms of harm and abuse have as much, if not greater, impact on our clients. In particular, sexual abuse and ongoing harassment from the alleged abuser(s). This is exemplified by one of our client's experiences. The client shared that they do not fear physical harm, but that the emotional abuse is "horrific." The client felt trapped as they were unable to find alternative housing. However, our assistance to the client ended on a positive note with the older adult finding employment to help pay her bills and securing a housing loan from a community agency to move into alternative housing. Our victim services worker assisted the client for over a year which led the older adult to express surprise that our program had been assisting her for that long. The older adult voiced appreciation for the ongoing support and knowing that someone was walking alongside her on this difficult path.

Utilizing a holistic approach in supporting older adults, our victim services workers positively impact their social determinants of health, and promote older adults' ability to cope and overcome challenges while recognizing the uniqueness of each individual. This is a time-consuming process that requires building rapport and trust with each older adult and collaborating with them (and community partners) to find solutions when there are limited practical resources. In some situations, this means working with community partners to keep the situation under control and avoid further escalation. To ensure maximum efficiency throughout this process, our team has developed an assisted referral form for victim services workers across the province to refer prospective clients directly to our program. Considering the demographic served, the form aims to increase the accessibility of our program to clients and to victim services workers who seek to collaborate with us.

In addition to providing direct services to address the impact of victimization and abuse towards vulnerable older adults, our victim services workers drive systemic change through our engagement in community consultations, province-wide conferences, and research projects. Our victim services program participated in the Supporting Vulnerable Victims and Witness project through the BC Law Institute and Canadian Centre for Elder Law (“CCEL”). Presently, our program involves itself in extensive ongoing community consultation in the establishment of Surrey Police Services on topics of community safety, victimization, and the needs of vulnerable populations.

Finally, the success of the program is largely attributed to Queen Adonri, our dedicated victim services worker, who managed the majority of the cases while I attended to strategic responsibilities. We also deeply appreciate the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG), the Province of BC, for funding our victim services program.

**Tina Chang**

Manager, SAIL and Victim Services Programs



# LEGAL ADVOCACY REPORT

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Our dedicated legal advocates have worked tirelessly to assist 548 seniors with a variety of legal and administrative issues over the last twelve months.

## Case Examples

1. Nihat Afsar (Ms. "Afsar") assisted a client in the small claims court for a payment hearing to enforce an order of the Residential Tenancy Branch (the "RTB"). Ms. Afsar was successful in the payment hearing, and the client received \$5000 from the debtor.
2. Ms. Afsar assisted a client in the RTB with a notice of eviction, where the Landlord sought eviction for the client for not complying with the park rules. The client was threatened to leave the park by losing her new mobile home, worth \$20,000, which the client purchased one or two months before the eviction notice. Ms. Afsar successfully negotiated with the Landlord to cancel the eviction notice and get the client an extension to complete the required repairs per the park rules.
3. Ms. Afsar assisted a client in the RTB, where the Landlord sought a monetary claim of \$10,000 against the client as rent arrears. Ms. Afsar argued the case in the RTB to prove that the client only owes \$3500 and not \$10,000.

4. Ms. Afsar assisted a client where the client and their deceased spouse had a \$40,000 debt to a financial institution. The debt was insured under life insurance, however, the insurance company was inconsistent in approving the life insurance claim for the client after the death of the client's spouse. Ms. Afsar communicated with the financial institution, the insurance company, and Coroners Service BC regarding the life insurance claim. Ms. Afsar successfully received a life insurance claim in favour of the client.
  
5. Zach Zen (Mr. Zen) assisted a client where the Landlord increased the cable fee for the client. Mr. Zen communicated with the Landlord about the illegal increase in the cable fee, but the Landlord disagreed. Mr. Zen assisted a client in paying for a dispute resolution hearing in the RTB, where the adjudicator ruled in favour of the client and ordered that the cable fee not be increased as it is a component of the client's monthly rent.

**Nighat Afsar**

Senior Legal Advocate





# ELDER LAW CLINIC REPORT

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All three legal branches of Seniors First BC (have flourished this year and are working to their capacities. British Columbia seniors and the people and organizations who speak for seniors are becoming more aware of our Society and the broad range of services offered. The demand for the services offered by the Elder Law Clinic continues to grow and the members of our group strive to keep pace.

Our challenge to do so has not been without interruption the past year, some happy interruptions, others not so. Our front-line contact person and administrative assistant, Nataliya Ivannikova, has been on health leave since late April 2024; we look forward to her recovery and, when she is able, rejoining us. In April, Marie-Noel Campbell began her parental leave and will return early in the new year. Lawyer Sara Pon, working in both the Elder Law Clinic and the Advance Planning Clinic accepted a research position with Vancouver Coastal Health and lawyer Zack Uganec, who too worked in both these programs, accepted the position of Director of Student Affairs with the Allard School of Law at UBC. While these key members of our groups have moved along, Seniors First BC has been fortunate to regain the services of both Sara and Zack as contractors to assist in specific areas. Sara is completing a research project funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia titled “Untangling Capacity and Communication Study” and Zack will provide assistance principally in the area of advance planning (Wills, Powers of Attorney, Representation Agreements). While sad at their departure as full-time colleagues, we are very happy for them and wish them continued success in their new undertakings.

New to both the Elder Law Clinic and Advance Planning Clinic but not a newcomer to Seniors First BC is Preetkamal Brar. Preet has been a legal advocate working within our Legal Advocacy Program and is a lawyer called to the British Columbia Bar in 2019. Preet’s experience with advance planning in private practice has enabled her to take on a full caseload of our clients looking for this type of service.

At the time of writing we have met with two candidates expressing interest in working with the Elder Law Clinic and the Advance Planning Clinic. By the Annual General Meeting in September we expect they will be introduced to Society members.

While advance planning services remain the most sought after service, the Elder Law Clinic has seen an increase in persons asking for assistance with estate administration. Given the nature of assets under administration in these estates, many are addressed by giving assistance to the estate representative in completing the required applications, schedules, and affidavits and offering directions as to filing and giving notice to family and beneficiaries. Other estates, where the client is less able to manage the process or the circumstance involves some complications, while in the minority, are handled on a full representation basis. Less frequent are clients involved in one aspect or another of a wills variation claim, either seeking to support the directions of the will maker or challenging the distribution of the estate contemplated by the will.

An issue the Elder Law Clinic may face in coming months is whether Seniors First BC should take a role, as an intervenor, in two court challenges now underway: the first is in the Supreme Court of British Columbia by Dying With Dignity Canada ( to “...ensure that the rights of vulnerable patients to access medical assistance in dying (MAID) are protected within all British Columbia care facilities.”). The other is in the Superior Court of Ontario, also by Dying With Dignity Canada, suggesting that it is discriminatory for the federal government to bar persons with mental disorders from eligibility for assisted death when it is available to people suffering physical disorders. The Elder Law Clinic is seeking direction from the Board of Directors of Seniors First BC as to what positions, if any, the Society will take.

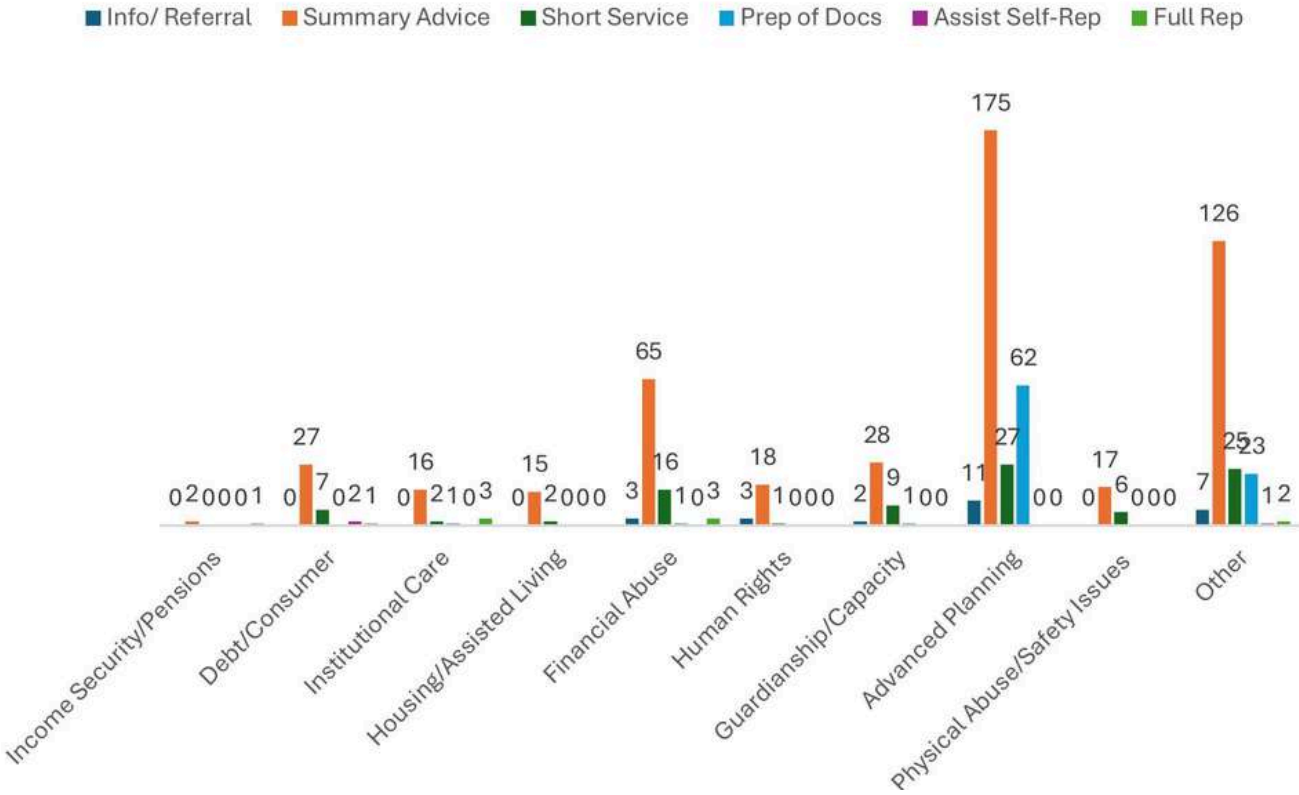


Presently the Elder Law Clinic gives priority appointments to persons seeking to revise or make their last will, who have qualified to receive medical assistance in their deaths. The grace and gratitude of all such clients we have met cannot adequately be described. The current challenges to the present limitations to access are of importance to all seniors residing in Canada.

We are grateful to Alison Brewin for her support and leadership as our interim Executive Director during Marie-Noël’s leave. Among Alison’s attributes, we are particularly thankful for her patience with all of us during the periods of unsettledness brought on by these unexpected staff departures. Always a steady hand on the tiller keeping us moving in the right direction.

**J. Gordon Marshall**  
 Senior Legal Counsel, Elder Law Clinic

Elder Law Clinic 2023/24



# ADVANCE PLANNING CLINIC REPORT

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With the Nanaimo and Prince George clinics having been previously established in the fall of 2022, two new clinics were added through partnership with the Haida Gwaii Legal Project Society in Skidegate and Masset, and in April began providing advance planning services to Haida Gwaii residents, on and off-reserve. Two Legal Advocates, Hailey Chapman and Eve Hansen, from Haida Gwaii Legal Project Society were hired on to assist with facilitating the remote Haida Gwaii clinics and connecting eligible clients in their respective communities to the Program.

At the end of April, after a period of acting management by the Marie-Noel Campbell, candidates were interviewed and Catharine Schlenker joined the team as the new Program Manager.

In June, a new clinic was established in partnership with the Nelson Cares Society in Nelson, with Axel McGown being hired as the clinic assistant. Despite extensive efforts to promote the clinic, the clinic was wrapped up due to low demand in January.

In June, Sara Pon joined the APC team as a part-time staff lawyer to assist with developing expertise on Indigenous law along with us. Zackary Uganec, also assisted APC clients through the Advance Planning Clinics as well, both before and after his call to the bar.

Another clinic opened in September at the Chilliwack and District Seniors' Resources Society in Chilliwack followed in October by the opening of a clinic in Sechelt at the Sunshine Coast Resource Centre with Keanna McLeod joining the APC team as the clinic assistant for that location.

In October, Bev Collinson stepped in in Skidegate as clinic assistant to cover Hailey’s maternity leave.

Marie-Noël received confirmation in December of funding from Indigenous Services Canada for a new project in partnership with the Social Health and Economic Development Society in Bella Coola to have APC staff lawyers serve older adults in Bella Coola, Anahim Lake, Bella Bella, Klemtu, and Williams Lake.

At the end of December, Eve Hansen left the team to take on a new opportunity in her community and in January, Hailey agreed to return early to assist with the Masset clinic.

Bailey Sure was hired in February to act as clinic assistant for the Williams Lake clinic at the Cariboo Friendship Centre which opened in March.

Lauren Rands joined the APC team in March as well on a part-time basis to provide legal administrative support.

Throughout the fiscal year, staff lawyers also attended a number of ad hoc clinics including in Boston Bar, Victoria, and for clients on-reserve from the Nooaitch Indian Band, the Ulkatcho First Nation, the Heiltsuk Nation, the Nuxalk Nation, the Tsartlip First Nation and the Kitsoo Xai’xais Nation.

In summary, the Advance Planning Clinic Program saw 307 new matters between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, including 87 general information or referral matters, 91 summary advice matters, and 129 limited retainer matters resulting in the preparation of 329 advance planning documents for clients. 18% of these clients identified as Indigenous, the majority of whom were served through ad hoc clinics.

**Catharine Schlenker**  
Advance Planning Clinic Program Manager & Staff Lawyer

# PUBLIC EDUCATION & OUTREACH REPORT

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The Public Education and Outreach Program had another busy year filled with learning and community events and projects.

## Learning Events

We delivered 123 presentations to more than 2600 total attendees both virtually and in-person with the help of SFBC's legal staff, SAIL and Victim Services staff, and volunteers. The topics included:

- Elder Abuse – What is it? How do we deal with it?
- Frauds and Scams
- Staying Connected: Preventing Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Government Benefits
- Residential Tenancy for BC Older Adults
- Advance Planning: Joint Ownership, Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Representation Agreements
- Wills and Estates – On and Off Reserve
- Financial Abuse: Protect What's Yours!
- Introduction to SFBC

The presentations were delivered in partnership with service providers, academic institutions, friendship centres, seniors' networks, libraries, and community centres across BC, including:

- Archway Community Services
- BC Association of Community Response Networks
- Bella Coola Legal Advocacy Program
- Chilliwack & District Seniors Resource Society
- Chimo Services

- College of New Caledonia
- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Fraser Valley Regional Library
- Granisle Better at Home
- Heiltsuk Health Centre
- Langara College
- Nelson Public Library
- Nikkei Place
- Prince George Public Library
- Prince George Council of Seniors
- Rise Women’s Legal Centre
- Royal Canadian Mountain Police E-Division
- Simon Fraser University Gerontology John K. Friesen Conference
- Terrace & District Community Services
- Vancouver Coastal Health Deaf Well-Being Program
- Vancouver Public Library
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

## Community Outreach

We were involved in several seniors’ networks, including the South Vancouver Seniors’ Network, Burnaby Seniors’ Resources Society, Chinese Community Response Network, and City of Surrey’s Age Friendly for Seniors Network. Additionally, we participated in 28 seniors’ events with more than 4400 total participants, including:

- Activate! Positive Aging Fair – City of Richmond and Minoru Centre for Active Living
- Boom X 55+ Symposium: Embracing Aging & Change – White Rock Community Centre
- CCM Community Initiatives Ministry Safety and Secure Living Fair
- Chinese Community Response Network held a Lunar New Year Celebration Event
- City of Vancouver Renter Connect Events
- City of Surrey Health & Wellness Forum
- ConnecTra Abilities Expo
- Health & Wellness Fair - Wilson's Seniors Advisory Association and City of Port Coquitlam
- Healthy Aging Symposium – TriCities Seniors Action

- Jewish Family Services & Jewish Community Centre World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event
- Marpole Community Day
- Nelson Seniors Fair
- NEVAAN Seniors Resource Fair (North East Vancouver Active Aging Network)
- Seniors Resource Fair - Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
- Simon Fraser University Gerontology 30th John K. Friesen Conference
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. BC Health Fair

We thank each partnering and hosting organization for their invitations to their events, and we value the opportunities to connect with and hear from older adults in attendance.

## Projects

Seniors First BC's legal programs published *Navigating Home Care and Senior Housing – An Advocacy Guide* on Clicklaw Wikibooks, which comes as an addition and update to the 2014 *Legal Issues in Residential Care: An Advocate's Manual*.

This guide explains the types of personal care and health care that are available to older adults in British Columbia. It outlines some key laws that govern home and residential care services, including what people have a right to expect and what service providers must do and provide. While some of the laws discussed here apply to services for a variety of people with chronic conditions (such as mental health conditions, addictions, brain injury, or developmental disabilities), the focus of this guide is on older adults and how the laws and policies apply to them.



### **Navigating Home Care and Senior Housing** *An Advocacy Guide*

seniors  
first  
BC

Seniors Abuse & Information Line:  
1-866-437-3840  
www.seniorsfirstbc.ca  
info@seniorsfirstbc.ca

This resource is primarily for older adults seeking or receiving personal and health care services either at home or in residential care. It may also be of use for family members, designated decision-makers, and advocates who are supporting and assisting older adults.

## Volunteers

We wish to thank our wonderful volunteers, whose support and dedication have been an integral part for our accomplishments this year:

- Charlie Mance
- Eva Veres
- Hannah Pham
- Mandeep Kalan
- Marina Verones
- Megan Shen
- Melanie Tong
- Rona Dai
- Shih-wei Wang

This program is funded by the Province of British Columbia.

### **Justin Lee**

Public Education & Outreach Program Manager

# OUR FUNDERS

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We wish to thank the Province of British Columbia, the Law Foundation, Vancouver City Savings Credit Union, and the City of Vancouver, for their unwavering support of our organization, as well as our generous private donors.

