



The Law Society of Manitoba

INCORPORATED 1877 | INCORPORÉ EN 1877

Annual Report 2025





The Law Society of Manitoba

INCORPORATED 1877 | INCORPORÉ EN 1877

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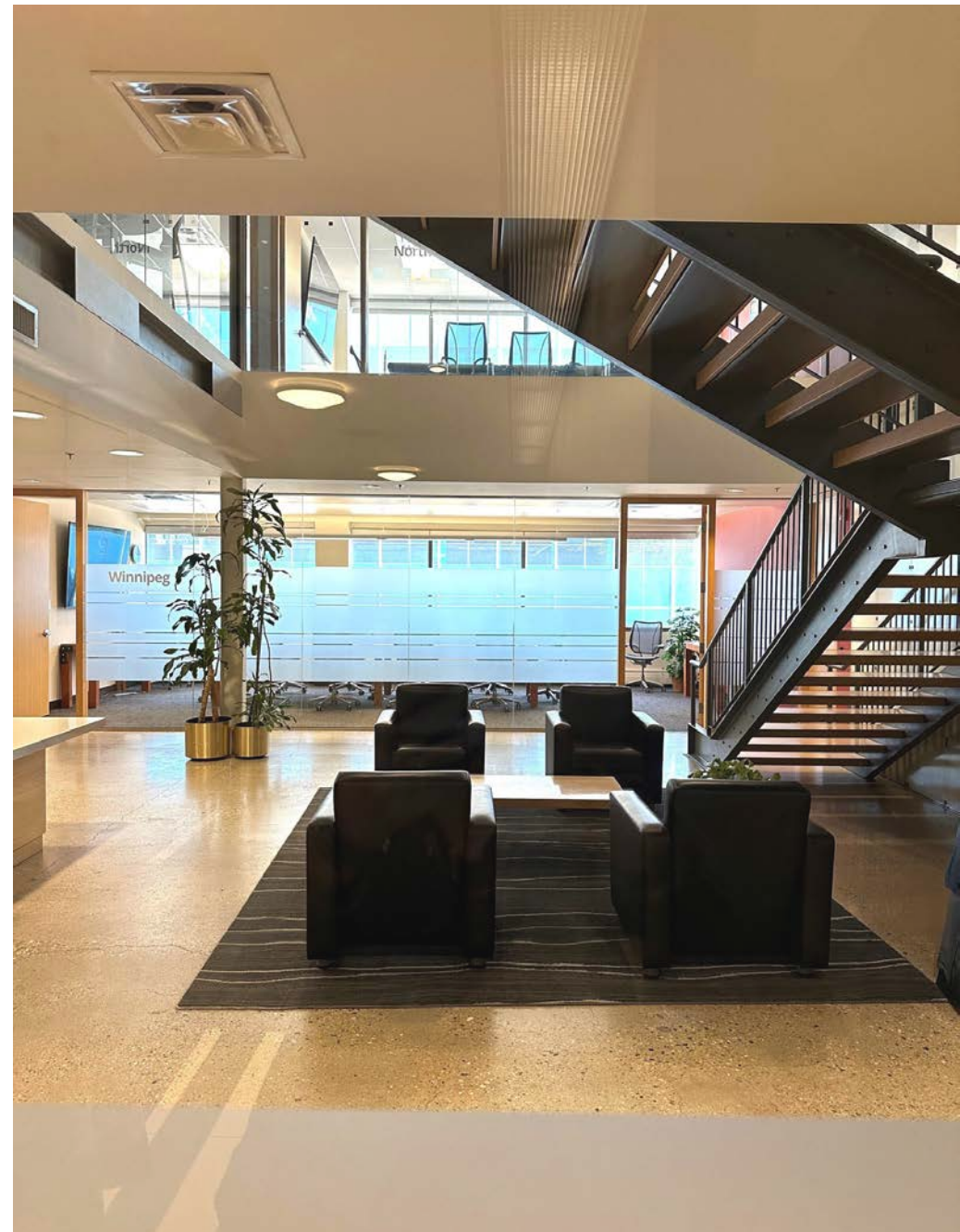
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Who We Are

Our Mission

A public well-served by a competent, honourable and independent legal profession.

Our Goals

- 1 Regulate proactively to protect the public interest by ensuring that legal services are delivered by competent and ethical lawyers.
- 2 Promote and improve equity, diversity and inclusion within the legal profession in the regulation of the legal profession and in the delivery of legal services.
- 3 Advance, promote and facilitate increased access to justice for all Manitobans.
- 4 Build public and stakeholder confidence in the Law Society as the regulator of the legal profession.



Our Values

- Accountability**
Open and transparent processes to the profession and to the public.
- Collaboration**
With other regulator law societies, the Federation, the profession, the courts, the law school and other stakeholders in the legal system.
- Competency**
Best practices, high standards, pursuit of excellence.
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**
In the governance of the profession and the delivery of legal services.
- Fairness**
Fair, respectful and consistent treatment of all people.
- Integrity**
Honest and ethical behaviour.

President's Message



Gerri Wiebe, KC
President

There are two very distinct themes that I hope to convey in my final communication as President of the Law Society of Manitoba.

The first, and decidedly more pleasant message, is one of gratitude. My journey as a benchler, executive member, and then President of the Law Society has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my legal career. I am truly honoured to have been elected by my peers three times and entrusted with the role of Law Society President this past year.

The role of the Law Society is sometimes misunderstood. Many lawyers (like me at the outset of my career), view the Law Society as an unfortunate necessity. The prevailing perception is that the Law Society is about rules and requirements, not support and advocacy. In reality, the Law Society is so much more than regulation. Rather, the Law Society's mandate is to serve to protect the public by promoting access to justice, wellness, competence, and reconciliation while defending and protecting the rule of law. Clearly this is no small task, and for me, while the work has been hard, it has also been incredibly worthwhile and satisfying. I am so grateful to all of the talented, dedicated and kind people that I have had the privilege of working with over the years. The landscape is changing around us, and I am grateful that the Law Society staff and executive are capable and prepared to lead the legal profession forward.

Which leads me to the second, less pleasant theme of this report. The stark reality is that the changes that we are experiencing are not for the better. Simply put, the rule of law is under attack. We now operate in a world where nothing is certain. Customs and practices, along with civility and tolerance are being systematically eradicated, and the democratic safeguards that were once thought redundant are being strained to their breaking points. The independence of the judiciary and bar are not only no longer a foregone conclusion, but undermined on a regular basis.

While it may be easier to keep our heads down and focus on the work immediately before us, complacency is a luxury that we cannot afford. In the words of Margaret Atwood, "Nothing changes instantaneously. In a gradually heating bathtub, you'd be boiled to death before you knew it."

Democracy is in the proverbial bathtub. As protectors of the rule of law, it is the responsibility of the legal profession to be on the front lines of the fight to stop the heat. Preserving the rule of law will be a priority of the Law Society in the days to come, and your participation and support in this critical endeavor is appreciated.

CEO's Message



Leah Kosokowsky
Chief Executive Officer

This past year marks the final year of the Law Society's 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan. In the pages that follow, you will receive information on the activities undertaken by the Law Society to further the benchers' strategic goals to proactively improve the competence of the profession, to increase access to justice for Manitobans, to commit to ensuring the Law Society and the legal profession are equitable and diverse and to improve the public's confidence in our regulation of the delivery of legal services.

Worthy of note is the work undertaken to improve the health and well-being of lawyers, with a fully operational diversion stream that encourages lawyers to obtain assistance for mental health and substance abuse issues, rather than be disciplined for the associated conduct issues. Also supportive of such work is the peer support program, [Law\(yer\) Strong](#), which is supported financially by the Law Society and ongoing efforts to create a sustainable culture of well-being within legal workplaces. All of these efforts will support the competence of lawyers and this work will continue in the years to follow.

You also will find in this report, information about the Law Society's core regulatory functions such as complaints and discipline, continuing professional development, professional liability insurance and reimbursement, as well as admissions and membership.

The work product that is reflected in this report results from the voluntary efforts of our elected and appointed lawyer benchers, lay benchers, public

representatives and countless volunteer committee members. Many of our volunteers have committed to Law Society work for many years and the entire profession and the public we serve benefits from their generous contributions.

Similarly, the entire Law Society staff are top-notch employees who not only deliver on their responsibilities, they often volunteer their time to contribute to Law Society events such as Lawyers for Literacy, the Call to the Bar ceremony, the SOGIC, Building Connections and Internationally Trained Lawyers events. I am extremely fortunate to work with such a dedicated group of people.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Law Society executive – President Gerri Wiebe, KC, Vice-President Christian Monnin, Past President Wayne Onchulenko and Officer-at-Large Carmen Nedohin, all of whom have extremely busy schedules outside of their Law Society commitments, but each of whom always had time for the many requests made of them throughout the year.

2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan

As we conclude year three of our Strategic Plan, the Law Society continues to make significant progress in advancing its core priorities of promoting competence, fostering inclusion within the legal profession, advancing access to justice and enhancing public trust.



Ensuring the Competent and Ethical Delivery of Legal Services

In support of our strategic priority to promote competence in the profession, the Law Society developed new resources and enhanced access to existing ones through an improved on-demand platform featuring a curated library of high-quality content.

We hosted an Education Forum for over 80 solo practitioners and lawyers from small firms, with sessions focused on key technology topics and opportunities to share best practices—strengthening both knowledge and professional connection.

Health and wellness remained a priority area. In collaboration with the Manitoba Bar Association and Law(yer) Strong, we launched an eight-week Wellness Challenge last summer. This initiative generated meaningful dialogue and valuable insights from our [Wellness Champions](#) and across the broader legal community.



Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession

Since launching The Path in 2023, over 2,000 lawyers have completed this mandatory Indigenous education program, with nearly 95% reporting increased cultural awareness.

We also saw continued engagement in inclusion-focused events, including:

- *Building Connections*, now in its 7th year supporting Indigenous articling and law students
- *The SOGIC (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Community) Reception* celebrating Pride
- Newer initiatives in their second year, such as the *Sankofa Lecture* in honour of Black History Month and the *Internationally Trained Lawyers Networking Event*.

These and other events celebrating diversity in the profession are delivered in partnership with Robson Hall and the Manitoba Bar Association.

continued...

2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan

... continued



Advancing Increased Access to Justice for all Manitobans

The Law Society continued its pilot project, whereby individuals and organizations can offer limited legal services, which would otherwise constitute the unauthorized practice of law through its [regulatory sandbox](#).



Building Public Confidence in the Law Society

Over the past year, the Law Society hosted five Public Engagement Information Sessions with community members and social service providers. These sessions focused on client rights in working with a lawyer, the role of the Law Society, and how we support the public. A post-session survey completed by 55% of the 85 attendees showed strong results: 87% indicated they were likely to refer clients to the Law Society for assistance, and 85% expressed satisfaction with the session. Developing and delivering this [presentation](#) to key community partners marks a meaningful step in strengthening public understanding and confidence in the Law Society's role.

As we look ahead, the Law Society remains committed to building on this progress, continuing to uphold the highest standards of the profession while fostering a culture of trust, competence, and inclusion for the benefit of all Manitobans.

continued...

2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan

... continued



Networking Event for Internationally Trained Lawyers



Building Connections with Indigenous Lawyers, Law Students and Articling Students.



Lawyers took part in **Lawyers for Literacy 2024**



Law Society staff participated in the **2024 Wellness Challenge**

Financial Accountability

Finance

The 2024-2025 practice fee per lawyer was \$2,645, a modest decrease over the prior year. These funds are budgeted and allocated across the Law Society's General Operations Fund, Education and Competence Fund and Reimbursement Fund.

The Law Society employs external auditors to audit the financial statements annually. This year the benchers appointed BDO Canada LLP to complete our audit. [The 2025 financial statements can be found on our website.](#)

Insurance

The Professional Liability Claims Fund of the Law Society of Manitoba provides professional liability insurance coverage to all Manitoba lawyers except those who are exempt under the *Legal Profession Act*. Based upon an independent actuarial valuation in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the insurance assessment was levied at \$1,839 plus applicable taxes, including cyber liability coverage.

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Insurance Program paid net claims totalling \$1,776,293 in damages and \$228,433 in net defence costs. This compares to \$816,140 in net claims and \$540,456 in net defence costs paid during the previous fiscal year.

Reimbursement Fund

The Reimbursement Fund compensates clients for losses resulting from the misappropriation or conversion by lawyers of client funds or property. It is financed by an annual assessment on all practising lawyers within the province. In the 2024/2025 fiscal year, all practising lawyers paid the sum of \$350 into the Fund.

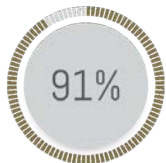
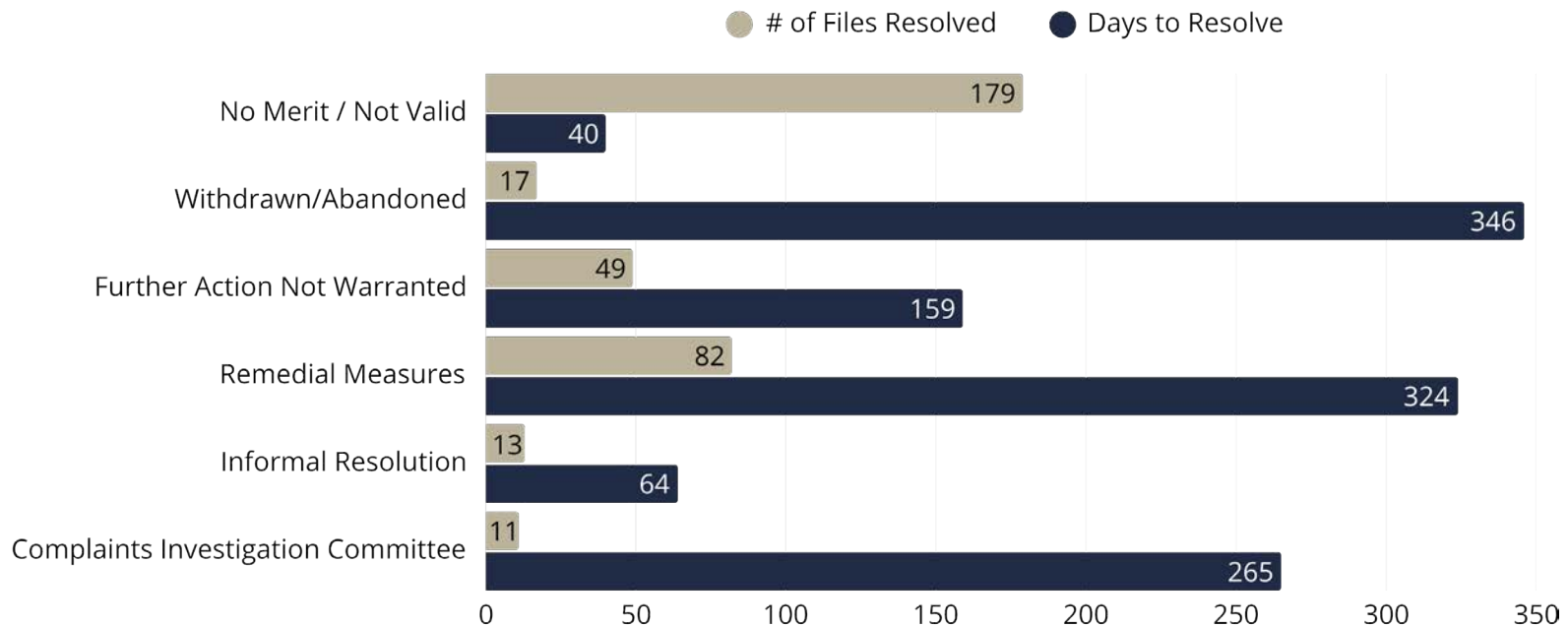
In the 2024-2025 fiscal year net claims totalling \$17,327 were paid out of the Reimbursement Fund.

Key Performance Indicators

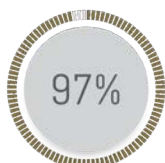
Professional Conduct and Discipline

The Law Society received **368** formal complaints. Additionally, **53** contacts were resolved through early intervention without formal complaints. These totals do not include the broader volume of general inquiries received from the public.

368 Complaint Files Opened  **384** Complaint Files Closed



Under 12 months



Under 18 months

25
Charges



10
Matters

Relating to
4 Lawyers



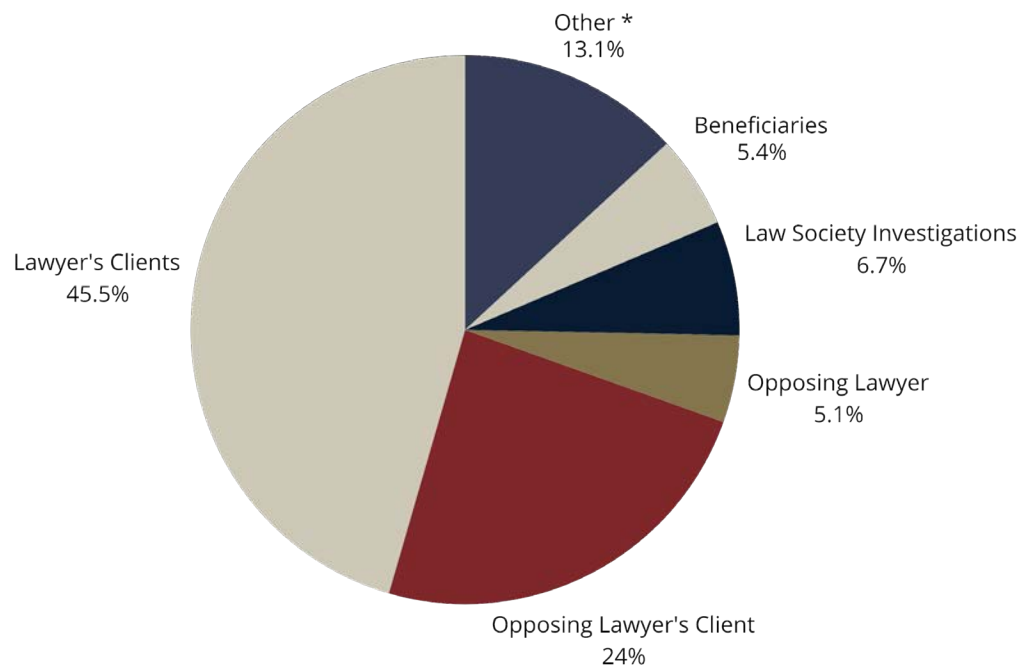
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Key Performance Indicators

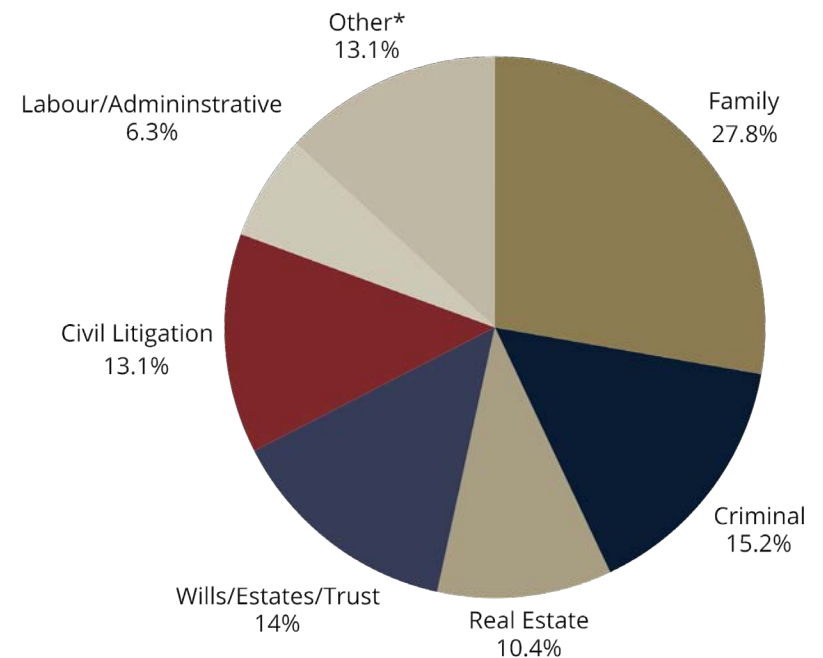
Professional Conduct and Discipline

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Source of Complaint



Area of Law for Complaints



* Other Includes: Miscellaneous (11.5%), Employees (1%), The Courts (0.3%) and Land Titles (0.3%)

* Other Includes : Miscellaneous (8%), Corporate/Commercial (1.8%), Private grievance (1.5%), Lawyer- Employee Dispute (0.6%), Immigration (0.6%) and Indigenous (0.6%)

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Key Performance Indicators

Professional Conduct and Discipline

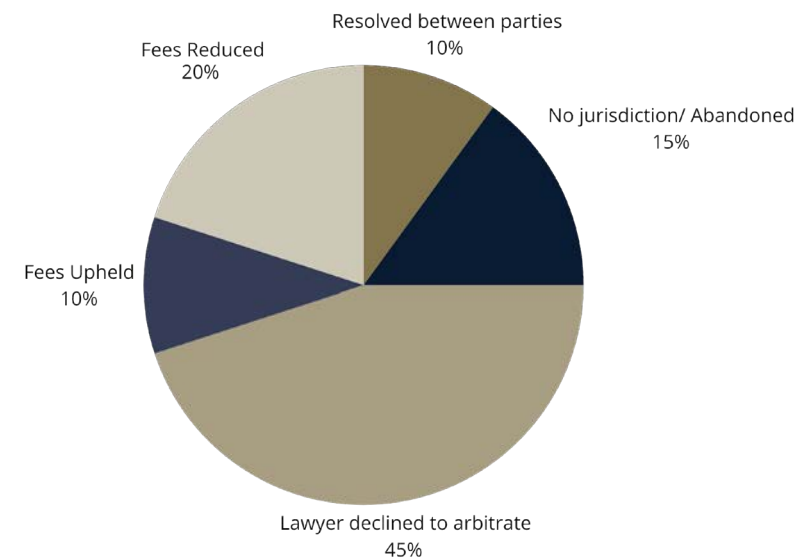
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Complaints Review Commissioner - Reviews Conducted



Fee Arbitrations

The Law Society received **25** complaints relating to excessive fees. As of March 31, 2025, **80%** of these matters concluded with the following outcomes:



continued...

Key Performance Indicators

Professional Conduct and Discipline

... continued

Discipline

CONTINUING MATTERS
(at start of year)

18

11 Lawyers

COMPLAINT
REFERRALS

9

4 Lawyers

HEARINGS HELD

9

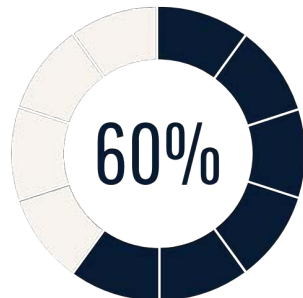
22 Days

COMPLETED
MATTERS

18

10 Lawyers

PRIOR REGULATORY INVOLVEMENT



9 of 15

Lawyers have
previous
Disciplinary
dispositions



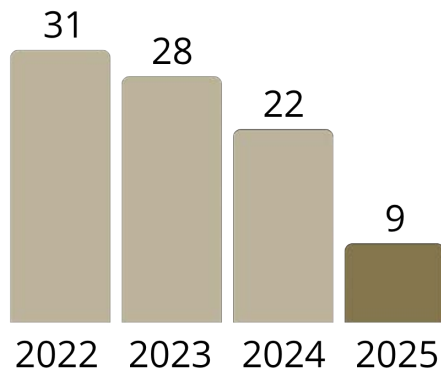
Key Performance Indicators

Professional Conduct and Discipline

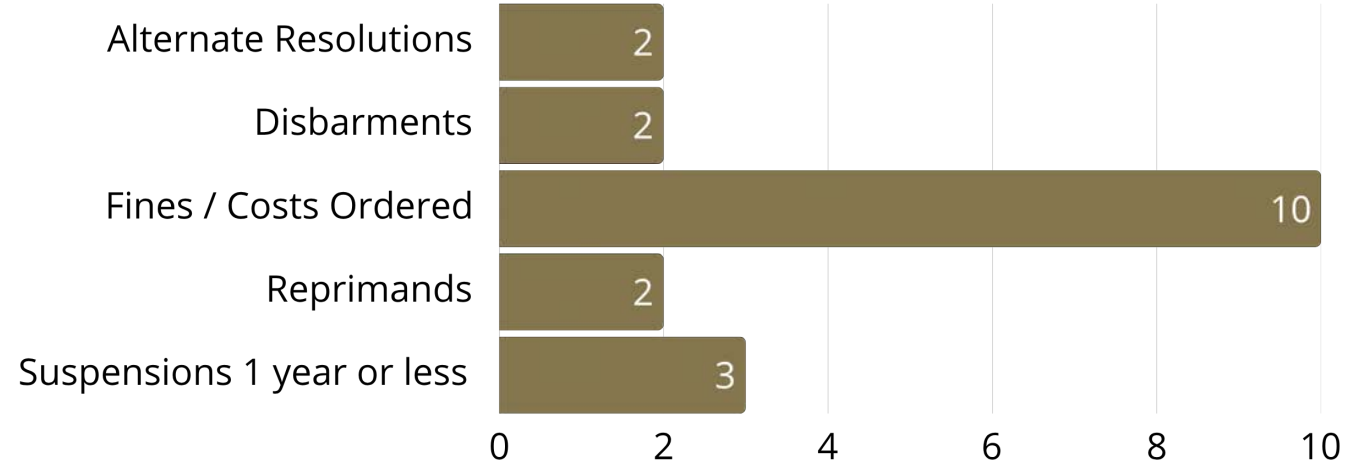
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Discipline

COMPLAINT REFERRALS



Discipline Outcomes



Complaint referrals have declined due to several measures, including earlier resolution within the Complaints process and the introduction of the Health Recovery Program, which offers a constructive alternative to discipline for health-related concerns.

Discipline Outcomes: In some matters, there was more than one consequence ordered.

Key Performance Indicators

Practice, Ethics and Equity Advisor

The Law Society's Practice, Ethics and Equity Advisor offers guidance to lawyers on a wide range of practice and ethics inquiries. Since assuming this role in May 2024, the Advisor has received an average of **40** contacts per month. Inquiries have ranged from brief consultations (20–30 minutes) to complex matters requiring significant time and follow-up, often involving multiple issues.

Inquiries were received from lawyers across all career stages, in private practice, government, and in-house roles, with inquiries spanning a broad range of concerns. Uptake has grown steadily throughout the year, reflecting increased awareness and trust in the service. Key themes and highlights from these interactions are outlined below.



Key Performance Indicators

Education and Competence

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In 2024-2025, **83** hours of new CPD content was offered through live and on demand programing, including **35.75 hours** hours of Ethics, Professionalism and Practice and Risk Management (EPPM) content. To support the competent and ethical delivery of legal services the content focused on the following areas:

Priority and Emerging issues in 2024-2025:



continued...

Key Performance Indicators

Education and Competence

... continued

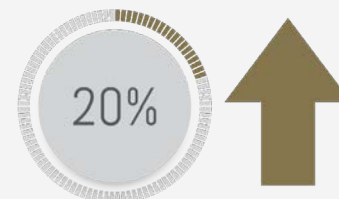
Top 5 Most Attended Live Programs



All of the top five programs had more than 200 registrants.

- 1** Hot Topics in Real Estate
- 2** Prompt Payment and The Builders' Liens Act
- 3** POAs, HCDs and Committeeships (Joint Wills and Estates Program)
- 4** Access to Justice:
Educating and Advocating in Manitoba Prisons
- 5** Homecoming 2024: Engaging in Economic Reconciliation

On Demand Platform



Increase in course access

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Key Performance Indicators

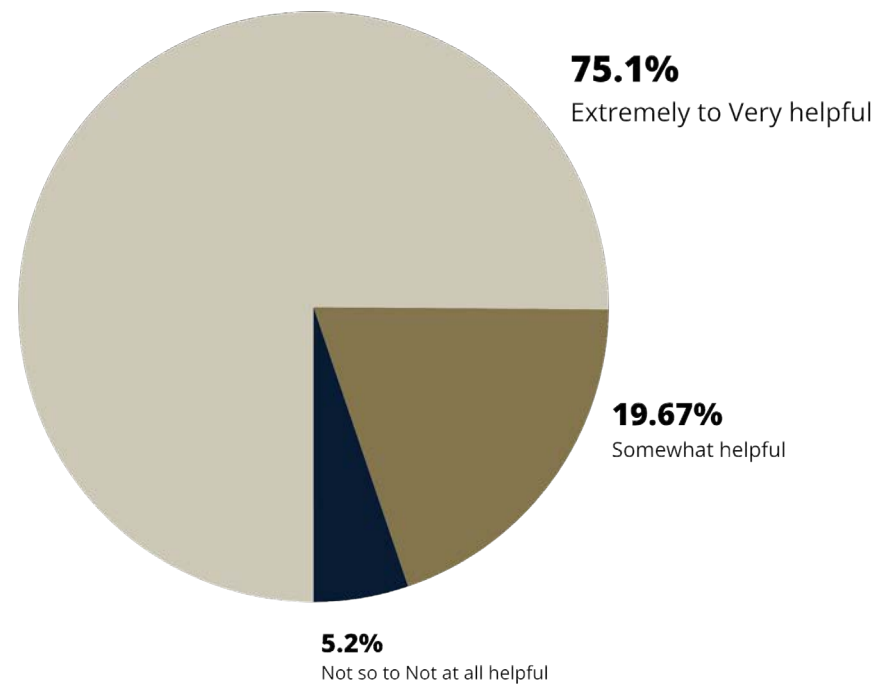
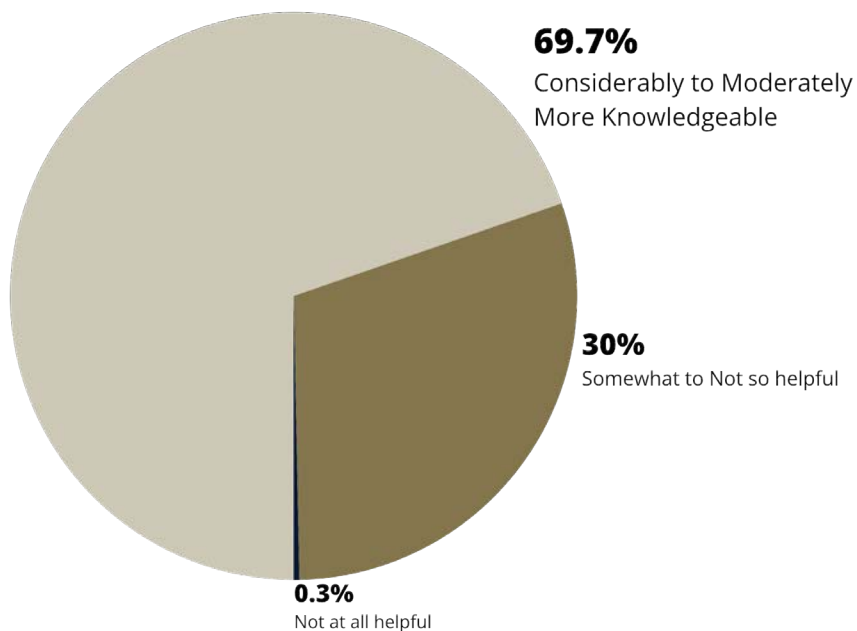
Education and Competence

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Enhancing Competence: *Quality and Impact*

99% of surveyed program participants reported their knowledge increased as a result of attending a live CPD program.

Nearly **95%** of the participants who have completed [The Path](#) as of April 1, 2025 reported an increase in their Indigenous Cultural Awareness.



continued...

Key Performance Indicators

Education and Competence

... continued

Accessible Resource Options

Resources are offered in a wide range of formats to ensure accessibility for all Manitoba lawyers.



Collaboration

The quality of education resources is greatly enhanced as a result of the critical partnerships with



Key Performance Indicators

Bar Admission

CPLED PREP Program Enrollment

124 **Manitoba Students**



94%
Participated with an articling position



10%
Self Identify as
Indigenous



10%
Served articles outside Winnipeg

Program Results - *Success Rate*

On average **98%** of Manitoba students successfully completed either the Regular or Accelerated PREP program this year.

2022



2023



2024



2025



continued...

Key Performance Indicators

Bar Admission

... continued

2024 Mass Call to the Bar

June 20, 2024
RBC Winnipeg Convention Centre



A. Montague Israels, KC Prize



Recipient **Emmanuella Obeya**
with Justice David Kroft



**View highlights
from the 2024
Ceremony**



May 27, 2024 - Brandon



December 9, 2024 - Winnipeg



June 4, 2024 - Dauphin

Key Performance Indicators

Trust Safety Program and Audit

Trust Safety and Audit

The following programs monitor a firm’s compliance with the Law Society rules established to safeguard client property.

Every trust account must be operated under the supervision of an approved and qualified trust account supervisor. A trust account supervisor whose status is revoked, denied, or approved with conditions has a right to appeal to the Trust Safety Appeal Committee. [Trust Safety Decisions](#) are posted on our website. In 2024-2025, one appeal was filed and it was dismissed.

	PROGRAM	OUTCOME
27	Trust Safety Trust Account Supervisor Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 96% Approved• 4% Denied
3	Trust Safety Trust Account Supervisor Reassessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 67% Approved• 33% Revoked
49	Check Up <i>A brief more frequent review of select aspects of recordkeeping</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% in Compliance
54	Spot Audit <i>An in-depth examination of compliance and accounting records</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 94% in Compliance• 6% Many or Serious Deficiencies

DEMOGRAPHICS

Lawyers and Students

The Profession at a Glance

124

LAW STUDENTS

127

ARTICLING STUDENTS

2,369

PRACTISING LAWYERS

Articling Students - Good Character Assessment Outcomes

Cumulative Totals: 2021-2024

510

Applications for Admission

44

8.6% Disclosures of Past Conduct

14

2.7% Investigations

1

0.2% Application Denied

New Lawyers

Articling students

115

Completed Manitoba's Bar
Admission program



Canadian Lawyers

25

Transferred under the National
Mobility Agreement



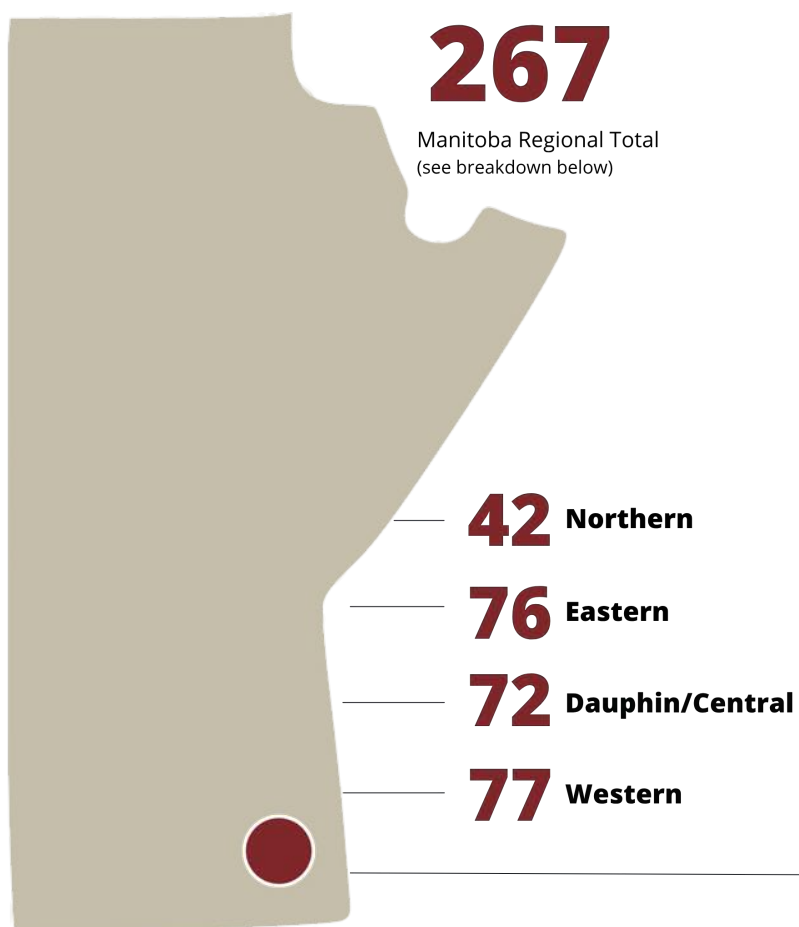
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DEMOGRAPHICS

Lawyers and Students

... continued

Where Lawyers are Practising



continued...

DEMOGRAPHICS

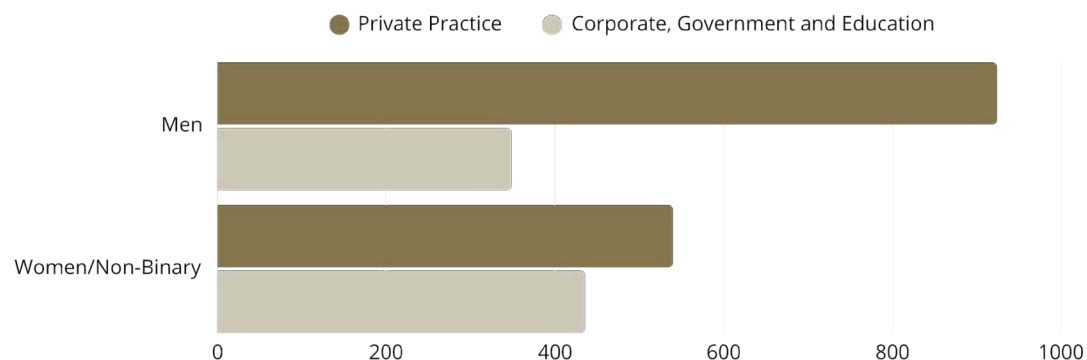
Lawyers and Students

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Where Lawyers are Practising

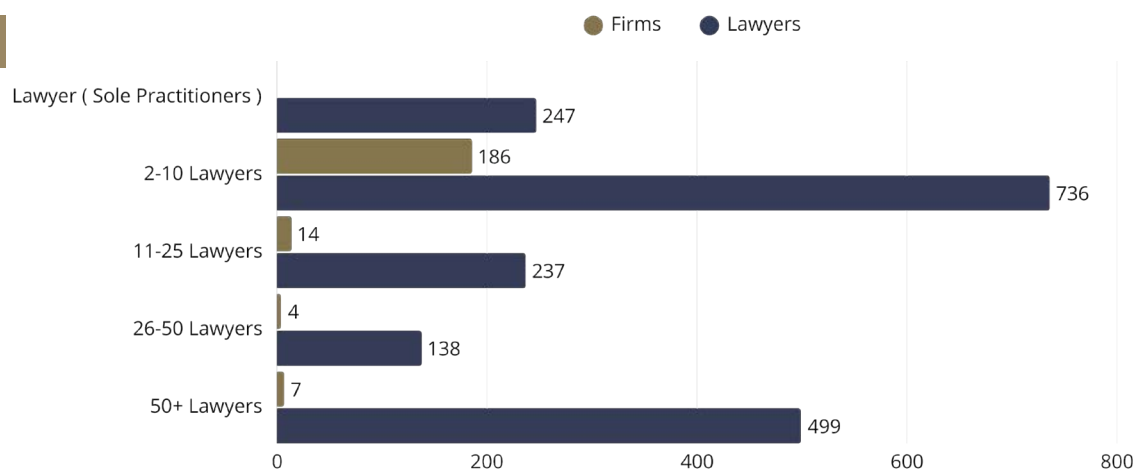


Nature of Practice



Private Practice - Breakdown by Firm

1,464 lawyers engage in private practice, with **458** law firms and sole practitioners operating in Manitoba.



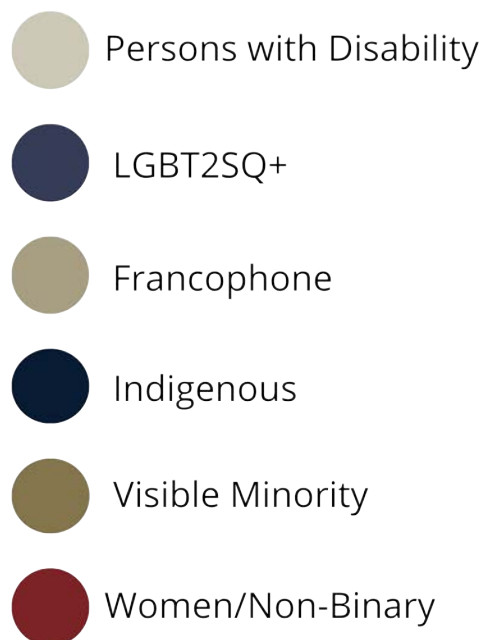
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DEMOGRAPHICS

Lawyers and Students

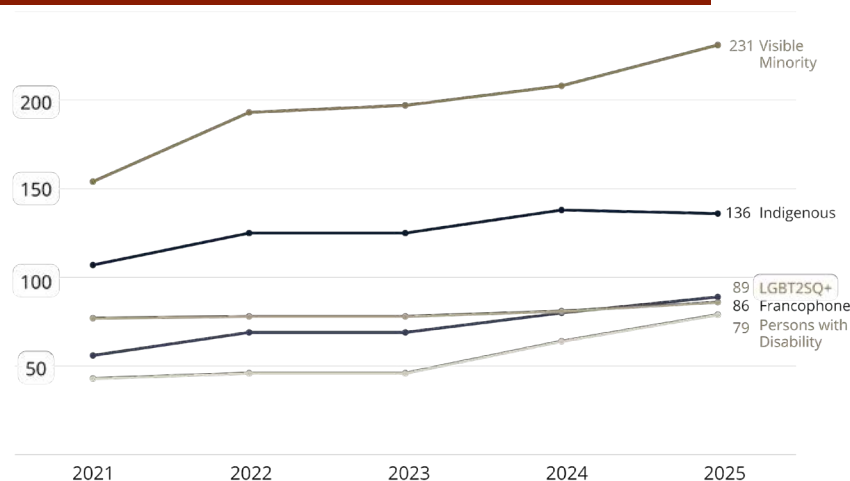
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Diversity in the Profession

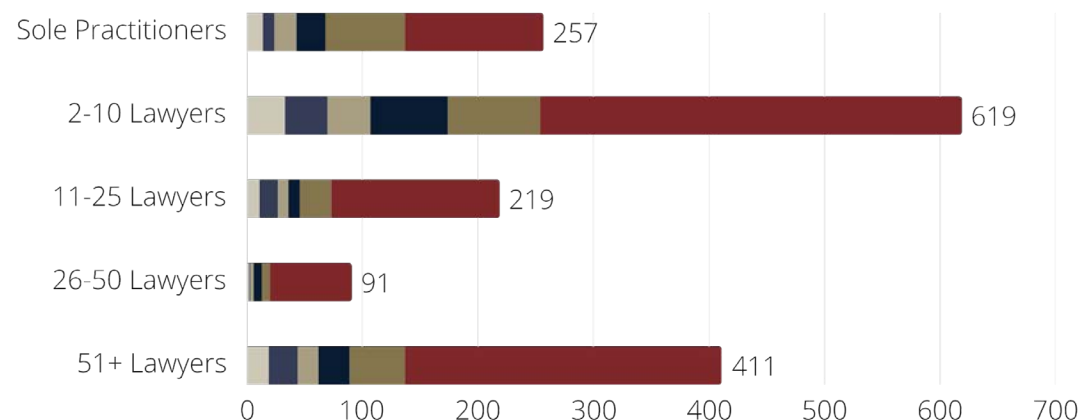


The Law Society is working to improve its data collection processes, including updating its descriptors to better reflect current terminology.

Demographics Over the Last 5 Years



Breakdown at Firm Level



PEOPLE

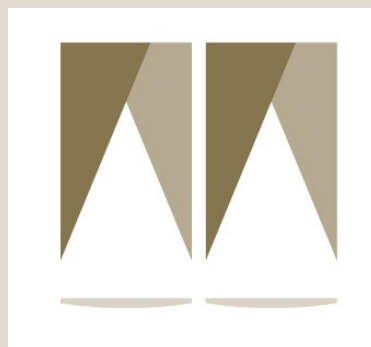
The Officers of The Law Society of Manitoba 2024/2025



Geraldine F. Wiebe, KC



Wayne M. Onchulenko



Officers

(effective May 16, 2024)

President:
Geraldine F. Wiebe, KC

Vice-President:
Vacant
Christian Monnin ¹

Past President:
Wayne M. Onchulenko

Officer-at-Large:
Carmen Nedohin

¹ Ceased to be Vice-President and bencher in March 2025



Christian Monnin



Carmen Nedohin

continued...

PEOPLE

... continued

Elected Benchers (elected for a two year term on May 1, 2024)

Winnipeg Electoral District

Kathrine D. Basarab
Kyle L. Dear
Sharyne M. Hamm
Kenneth G. Mandzuik, KC
Christian L. Monnin¹
Leah C.A. Unruh
Joshua A. Weinstein
Geraldine F. Wiebe, KC

Dauphin-Cental Electoral District

Kassy R. Baker

Eastern Electoral District

Mathieu R. Lafrenière

Northern Electoral District

Simon N. Jack

Western Electoral District

Trent B. Sholdice

Appointed Benchers

(appointed for a two year term effective June 2024)

Serena M. Ehrmantraut
Timothy A. Kurbis
Penny L. Piper
Kelli L. Potter²

Lay Benchers

(appointed for a two year term effective June 2024)

Gordon Daman
Patrick Fortier
Teresa Jaenen
Tehani Jainarine
Carmen Nedohin
Deanna Wilson



Faculty Benchers

Dr. Richard Jochelson (Dean)

Student Benchers

Kalanit Faingold³
Mason Geddes⁴

¹ Ceased to be Vice-President and bencher in March 2025

² Ceased to be a bencher in October 2024

³ Became student bencher in September 2024

⁴ Ceased to be student bencher in September 2024

continued...

PEOPLE

... continued

Elected Benchers (elected for a two year term on May 1, 2024)



continued...

PEOPLE

... continued

Committees

NOTE: The President and Vice-President are ex-officio members of all committees, except the Admissions and Education Appeals and Trust Safety Appeals Sub-Committee and the Discipline Committee.

Standing Committees

Admissions and Education Committee

Admissions and Education Appeals and Trust Safety Appeals Sub-Committee

Complaints Investigation Committee

Discipline Committee

Equity Committee

Practice and Ethics Committee

Professional Liability Claims Fund Committee

Reimbursement Fund Claims Committee

Special Committees and Working Groups

Access to Justice Committee

Indigenous Advisory Committee

Investment Committee

Nominating Committee

Richard J. Scott Award Selection Committee



continued...

PEOPLE

... continued

Staff



Staff Leadership Team

Chief Executive Officer
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Chief Financial Officer
General Counsel, Director | Policy and Ethics
Director | Admissions and Membership
Director | Audit
Director | Competence
Director | Complaints Resolution
Director | Continuing Professional Development
Director | Information Systems Development
Director | Operations and Information Technology
Director | Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Director | Professional Liability Claims Fund
General Counsel
French Language Services Counsel
Practice, Ethics and Equity Advisor
Communications Officer
Office Manager

Leah C. Kosokowsky
Rennie L. Stonyk
Sandra A. Alleyne
Darcia A.C. Senft¹
Richard C. M. Porcher
Kathy L. Levacque
Joan M. Holmstrom
Christopher C. Donaldson
Eileen S. Derksen
Simon Young
Sean Rivera
Alissa R. Schacter
Tana P. Christianson
Rockmil H. Kravetsky
Betta B. Wishart
Noelia Bernardo
Deirdre O'Reilly
Elaine Kinchen

¹ Retired May 2024



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