

LEGAL INFOⁱ
NOVA SCOTIA

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2023-March 2024

LEGAL INFOⁱ NOVA SCOTIA

**People have questions.
LISNS has answers.**

CONSUMER

I bought a used vehicle
on Kijiji..
There was water damage...
It broke after 2 days...

CREDITOR/DEBTOR

I've been laid off...
I had a heart attack...
I'm on assistance...
I have a gambling problem...

FAMILY

I'm doing it DIY...
I thought it was 50/50...
What is joint custody...?
I need spousal support...

SUMMARY OFFENCE TICKETS

I was on pizza corner...
I wasn't speeding...
I was at this bar...
I want to fight the ticket...

TORTS

I signed this release...
The driver was uninsured...
I need more than \$7500
My insurance company...

LANDLORD/TENANT

I'm only behind a few days...
They won't fix the windows...
My roommate won't pay...
I co-signed for my son...

EMPLOYMENT

I was probationary...
They gave me 1 week's notice...
I have a severance package...
I didn't steal anything...

CRIMINAL

I need my license for work...
How do I get disclosure...?
I want to go through the ignition
interlock device program...

WILLS & ESTATES

I'm doing these probate forms...
She told me I'd get the house...
She won't give me the will...
My brother took the paintings...

FAMILY VIOLENCE

It only happened once...
Child protection just called...
I want to change
my undertaking...
I left with the kids...

- Are there rules for collection agencies?
- How do I file for bankruptcy?
- How do I sue in Small Claims Court?
- At what age can a child decide who to live with?
- I'm moving in with my boyfriend – will he own half my condo once he moves in?
- What is the cheapest way to get a divorce?
- Can I get extra time to pay the fine?
- The landlord won't repair the heating. Can I stop paying rent?
- I'm behind on my rent. Can the landlord kick us out in winter?
- I had a car accident last week—should I get a lawyer?
- My employer fired me for no reason – what can I do?
- Will I lose my license if I'm convicted of impaired driving?
- I want to drop the assault charge against my spouse—how can I do that?
- How can I get a peace bond?
- My son has power of attorney – but he won't give me any spending money – what can I do?
- My grandmother just died without a will—am I entitled to anything?
- Can I appoint more than one executor?



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OUR VISION

- The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia is access to justice in action.
- LISNS provides legal information, resources and referral options in traditional and innovative ways to help Nova Scotians to understand their legal rights and responsibilities.

OUR MISSION

LISNS empowers Nova Scotians to identify, prevent and solve legal issues.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND



LISNS recognizes Mi'kmaw'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People who have lived on, cared for, and protected this land for over 13,500 years. LISNS' has been fortunate to partner with Whitney Gould of We'koqma'q First Nation over the past years who has produced a variety of captivating art pieces to complement our projects. Known for her "They Found US" drawing, honouring the 215 child graves found at a former residential school in BC, Whitney has been able to channel her passion and work from her heart on projects with LISNS', covering domestic violence, harassment and inclusivity.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LISNS has been advancing access to justice for Nova Scotians this past year through its core services and project work collaborating with supporting stakeholders. Highlights include:

- delivering community outreach sessions in partnership with public libraries across the Province to capacity crowds on estate planning with a focus on Power of Attorney legislation and how to make a will using our free recently launched [Wills App](#);
- working with Senior Safety Officers across the Province to promote proactive estate planning using LISNS apps and supporting publications including our updated [It's In Your Hands, Planning Guide for Seniors and Families](#);
- working with the NS Association of Social Workers to advance understanding of the rule of law and democratic processes through the [We Have Power Guide](#) and workshops;
- serving the legal needs of sick children and their parents and palliative care patients through **Medical Legal Health Partnerships** with the IWK and Nova Scotia Health Authority;
- working with the Shelburne Warm Line, Art and Dance Therapists and Indigenous Artists to promote healing help as part of our [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project](#) utilizing innovative approaches;
- developing [Know Your Rights Handbooks](#) for visually impaired persons in collaboration with CNIB supported by Dal Legal Aid; and
- launching comprehensive [supporting tools for youth including a Youth Text Line](#) through our **Youth Legal Info Project** working with supporting project partners the IWK and NS Legal Aid.

LISNS makes a big impact through the dedication and professionalism of the organization's five staff members. LISNS staff are highly qualified legal professionals who work collaboratively with stakeholders to deliver access to justice to Nova Scotians. Thank you LISNS staff for your incredible work!



Heather de Berdt Romilly
Executive Director
Legal Information Society
of Nova Scotia



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

LISNS core services provide access to justice

We helped **6,290 Nova Scotians** directly through our core services. **1,189** of those contacting us were **self-represented**. Helping people help themselves with their legal problems is at the core of LISNS services. **Only 484 lawyer referrals** were required as a follow-up to those served. This is a testament to the quality of LISNS Legal Information Counsellors who are trained lawyers with the knowledge and expertise to guide people to the resources that are right for their legal problem.

People call LISNS for help in all areas of law but this year we noted people needed help in particular with these top five categories which mirrored the issues being tracked through news outlets: Family law, Criminal, Landlord/Tenant (Residential), Employment, Property. LISNS has its finger on the pulse of current issues and is ready to help people with their legal problems.

For the second straight year, approximately **25%** of the people who contacted our Legal Info Line were **referred directly** by one of our **key justice system stakeholders**:

DIRECT REFERRALS TO LEGAL INFO LINE BY STAKEHOLDERS		
Referral Source	# of referrals	% of total referrals
Bar Society/Lawyer	307	8.9%
Legal Aid	212	6.2%
Government	174	5.1%
Courts	171	5.0%
211	85	2.5%
Non-profits, charities, service agency	73	2.1%
Other professional, commercial services	32	0.9%
Boards	11	0.3%

Our Legal Information Line provided valuable legal information to **3,437 Nova Scotians** this year. We know many people appreciate speaking to a live person where they are anonymous and have no time limit on their discussion.



6,290

Nova Scotians helped directly through LISNS' core services.



3,437

Nova Scotians used the Legal Information Line for valuable legal info this year



2,137

email completions equalling a **14%** increase in email inquiries

Email support

We continue to see a steady increase in demand for service via email. There was a **14% increase in email inquiries** this fiscal year resulting in **2,137 email completions**. The increase in email traffic has been a long-term trend that we have been monitoring since 2019 and we have nearly doubled the number of emails we respond to over that time span.

As the number of email inquiries have increased, we have become more efficient in our responses and they demand less staff time. We have done this successfully without making any major changes to staff allocation in part by building and maintaining **a database of over 2,200 template responses**, which staff can adapt as needed.

An increase in demand for service online is significant because we know from our data that users who contact us via email and live chat are more likely to be:

- outside the HRM
- unrepresented and dealing with a matter out-of-court
- seeking information, rather than a lawyer referral
- asking questions about wills and estates law

Our email service had a satisfaction **rating of 90% based on 122 reviews** (5.7% of users provided feedback) and we have received a great deal of unsolicited, positive feedback including comments like:

- *“This information is incredibly helpful, and I just want to say thank you so, so much for all of the time that you put into this. It’s very, very much appreciated on my end. It’s made the whole process seem not so scary and insurmountable.”*

75% of the users who choose to contact us by email do so because it is their preferred method of communication. However, there are some (approx. 20%) who prefer to communicate by phone and use the email service as a secondary option. As one user commented:

- *“Extremely satisfied. Day 1 I tried to phone then emailed. Day 2 I got through on phone and got an email answer. I am grateful for the 2 ‘channels’. That helped me to absorb the information better and calmed me considerably.”*

Live chat

We doubled the number of people that we responded to by live chat (96% increase) and helped 693 Nova Scotians with their legal problems.

Our Live Chat had an approval rating of 4.59/5 based on 66 reviews. One user described our chat as a “*top notch, friendly, informative service*” and another said, “*This is a great service. So glad to have the chat option*”.

LISNS website helps people with their legal problems

LISNS website had **over 250,874 page views**. We continue to develop content on topics that are top of mind for Nova Scotians. We meet people where they can best access the legal information. We refreshed content on Small Claims Court, intellectual property, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and consumer issues. We are proud to have worked in partnership with the NS Association of Social Workers to produce a guide on how to exercise your democratic rights – in recognition of the pivotal role democratic rights play to a healthy functioning justice system. We developed a video to complement the *Moving Beyond the Binary Guide* helping employers develop inclusive workspaces which has received rave reviews. We also worked with the NS Trucking Safety Association to develop videos to promote women in trucking and address sexual harassment in the workplace. Presentations have been made to organizations across Canada for our widely sought resources.

PODCASTS & VIDEOS

Legal Information Podcasts	Legal Information Videos
• 594 downloads on 45 podcasts. • The 7 podcasts associated with our Youth Legal Info Guide, <i>It's Your Right</i>, accounted for 34% of downloads.	• 6,258 views on 86 video files on both the LISNS website and our custom training portal. • The top 3 most viewed videos on the LISNS website were all estate planning related.

LISNS HELPS FAMILIES GAIN ACCESS TO JUSTICE

This year we developed materials to help families with their legal problems including:

- An updated *Guide for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence* which is in significant demand by stakeholder organizations which has received positive feedback filling an important gap area;
- Created and soft launched a free Child Guardian Appointment template and guide for parents to name legal guardians for their minor children; this is a critical need for many Nova Scotian parents; and
- Developed family law content for newcomers responding to increasing needs in Nova Scotia.

Through the **LISNS IWK Family Legal Health Program** we provide **free legal help for eligible IWK patients-families** (where Legal Aid not available); LISNS provides an on-site resource bi-weekly to support families and healthcare providers. We served 16 patients-families in-person at the IWK in the following areas of law: immigration; adult capacity and decision-making; family; government programs; and criminal law. Education and legal information for healthcare providers is an important component of the program and we made a presentation to the IWK community mental health clinicians during their professional development day. Many thanks to McInnes Cooper and Pink Larkin who generously provide the program legal advice support on a *pro bono* basis.

Innovative help for families to meet their family law needs (coming soon!)

LISNS is using the best of technology and professional expertise to help families with their family law needs. The **Separation Agreement App** and **Do It Yourself Divorce App** will provide much needed quality legal help to the many Nova Scotians who cannot afford a lawyer.

The **Separation Agreement app** is being developed with funding support from Justice Canada and will be ready to launch in 2024-25.

The **Do It Yourself Divorce App** developed for the Government of Nova Scotia will be available on the LISNS website once approved and it will help families complete court forms and access legal information for a broad array of family issues.



LISNS – HELPING NOVA SCOTIANS WITH ESTATE PLANNING

Launch of Wills App

LISNS is proud to have launched the [Wills App](#) which creates a finished will. This is a significant achievement and an important resource that puts estate planning within reach of many Nova Scotians. It provides an easy-to-follow guide to making a will. Many thanks to respected estate planning professional Jessica Lyle and retired LISNS Manager Wendy Turner who made the [Wills App](#) possible.

Since the launch of the wills app in mid-September 2023 we have seen:

- **7,315 views** of the app and associated guides from as many as 2,500 users
- **551 wills completed** on the app
- **45% increase in monthly traffic** to the wills and estates section of our website, which was comprehensively updated prior to launch
- **17% increase in completions per month** on our [Personal Directive App](#)
- **3x reduction** in requests for lawyer referrals related to wills and estate planning
- **35% decrease** in inquiries related to wills and estate planning on our legal info line, email, and chat services (suggesting the new content on our site is answering many of the questions we were commonly asked).

Community Outreach – Estate Planning Presentations delivered across Nova Scotia

Building on the success of our province-wide presentations in 2022, we delivered another round of presentations mainly in the Spring and Fall of 2023. Community outreach sessions across the Province were delivered in partnership with Nova Scotia Public Libraries and various local non-profits in order to provide information and answer questions on Powers of Attorneys, Personal Directives, Guardianship and Wills. The sessions have received overwhelmingly positive feedback with requests for future sessions across the province. Special thanks to the Department of Seniors, [Positive Aging Directory](#) for including an entire one-page article on LISNS estate planning which has reached many Nova Scotians through the hard copy distribution to pharmacies across the Province.

Statistical highlights include:

- **20 presentations** across **12 different communities**
- Over **650 attendees**
- Distributed hundreds of pamphlets, info sheets, and guides
- Nearly **7,000 people reached** via social media with over **300 shares and likes**
- **Doubled the traffic** to the wills and estates pages of our website compared with the previous year
- Our wills and estates content was accessed by as many as **16,000 people**
- Users who viewed our wills and estates content engaged with content and spent an average of **25% longer** on the site

Most importantly, people were extremely satisfied with the presentations. The expressions of gratitude that we received were inspiring:

- *"I want to say how pleased I was to be able to join such a very important session that benefited everyone present. Very informative and relaxing atmosphere." – May 12, 2023*
- *"Thank you...for today's session at Kentville Library. It cleared up some misconceptions I had and provided a lot of new information we need." – May 13, 2023*
- *"Thanks again for taking your presentation into our rural communities!" – May 31, 2023*
- *"Thank you so much for coming on Friday, I really appreciate you taking the time to come out and sharing that important information with us. One of the participants said it was the best information she's received on the topic, so that's a testament to how useful your session is!" – June 1, 2023*

Through **LISNS Estate Planning Legal Health Program** we provided 17 persons in palliative care with *pro bono* community lawyer services to complete their Wills, POAs and PDs with the NS Health Authority. Nova Scotia Health Authority Social Workers with the palliative program in Halifax were provided with estate planning information on LISNS resources to provide patients, with LISNS acting as a legal resource for follow up questions. LISNS expresses our heartfelt thanks to the lawyers in private practice who so generously support this important program through their *pro bono* services.

LEGAL INFO
NOVA SCOTIA

INFORMATION SESSION

Planning Ahead:

Learn the basics about Powers of Attorney,
Personal Directives and Wills



We all need to plan for the unexpected in case we become unable to make decisions about our children, finances, property and personal care.

Plan ahead for what you want done with your estate when you die.



Friday, May 26th, 2023 2:00 PM
Well-Being Hub
167 Meagher's Grant Road

Call to register email oldschoolhubs@gmail.com

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia provides legal information, not legal advice.



LISNS STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

- Connected with all 55 MLAs and their constituency assistants to discuss LISNS projects, content and legal info lines, as well as their concerns, gaps in legal information, and their 'wish lists' of services, support and content.
- Held an in-person round table with 7 constituency assistants to discuss their experiences serving the public, and the needs and gaps re: legal services in the community.
- Conducted an engagement survey with stakeholders to assess how they engage with LISNS -we have received 44 responses to date and data collection is ongoing.
- Partnered with NS College of Social Workers for March 24, 2024 Advocacy Day promoting the [We Have Power Guide](#) building on its successful launch in 2023. The Guide is filling an important gap noted in 2024 national research which found that Canadian teachers feel unequipped for civics education. The research found that students don't seem to make the connection between the issues that they care about and democratic processes, government processes and even community processes. The *We Have Power Guide* helps students and the public make those connections and is currently being promoted in professional development workshops with teachers in Halifax and nationally.

Social media reach

LISNS work is advanced through promotion through social media including the following:

Channel	Accounts reached
Facebook	20,859 followers
Twitter	14,000 followers
LinkedIn	5,652 followers
Instagram	2,984 followers
YouTube	1,180 views (63.8 watch time hours)



LISNS PROJECTS ADVANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Youth Legal Information Project

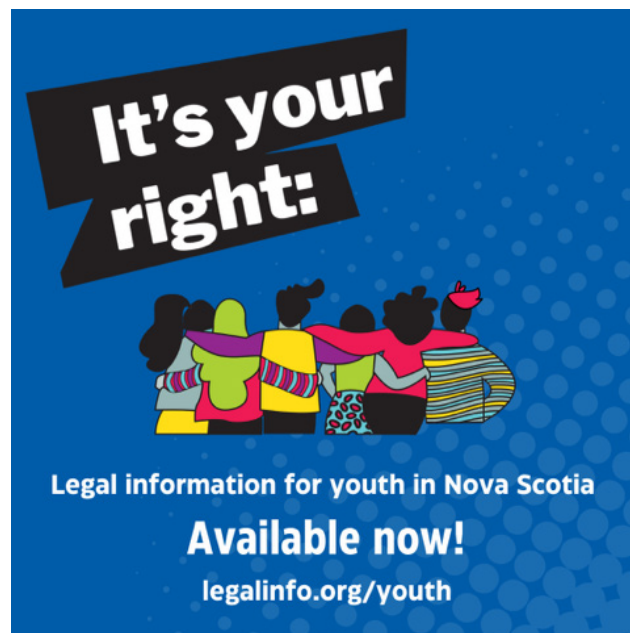
LISNS successfully completed the Youth Legal Information Project with funding generously provided by the Law Foundation of Ontario and with supporting two year partners, the IWK and NS Legal Aid. This project supported LISNS to develop easy-to-understand legal information for youth by investigating existing gaps in resources and service delivery. Through dialogue with youth across the province, we gathered feedback to help identify these gaps and inform our content development.

We developed digital materials, including a Youth Legal Information Guide, making resources accessible to both youth and front-line staff who work with youth. These materials include short videos and youth-led podcasts on important legal issues faced by young people.

We launched the [Youth Legal Information Texting Line](#), providing a confidential and easy-to-access platform for youth to receive legal information in a familiar medium they often use. This initiative has facilitated more direct engagement and support for youth navigating legal challenges.

Highlights of the Youth Legal Information Project:

- Produced **7 podcast episodes**, **3 videos** and a new guide with **10 chapters** of youth focused content.
- The production process included engaging **2 youth consultants** and **4 voice actors** from diverse communities.
- We produced a media kit, social media infographics, and teaching tools to compliment the 10 chapters in the guide.



Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project

The Sexual Harassment in the Workplace project reached the end of the project's five-year term in March 2024. The initiative developed plain language resources for survivors of workplace sexual harassment and employers. These resources include the Employers Best Practices Toolkit and OH&S-inspired training materials. We worked **in collaboration with AJEFNE** to make the SHWP Bystander Training Videos available in French.

We also created training materials for lawyers and front-line staff on culturally inclusive, trauma-informed engagement with the public. Over **23 Safe at Work presentations** were delivered to **over 200 hundred people**, addressing priority groups including inclusive programming, unhoused persons, and women veterans.

LISNS was recognized by Action Now Atlantic as an invaluable service for people who experience sexual harassment in the workplace. LISNS was featured in their resources and services on their social media campaign April 28th. Action Now Atlantic is a campaign to end sexual and gender-based violence in universities in Atlantic Canada. They organized Consent Awareness Week throughout the region, as well as a well-organized and active regional Youth Advocacy Network. Their reach is predominantly service providers, students, and advocates throughout the Atlantic region. This feature promotes awareness of LISNS SHWP resources.



This project also provided us with the opportunity to partner and work with large employers within Nova Scotia, including Halifax Water, and the Trucking sector and supporting associations like the Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association and Trucking Human Resources Sector Council - Atlantic.

In this final year of funding, we also partnered with Emmy-Award winning Tim Hogan and award winning Mirror Image Media (a completely queer-owned film company here in Kijipuktuk) to develop:

1. a high-quality companion video to our *Beyond the Binary* Guide - recognized as valuable resources to add into inclusivity training and is currently being utilized by small and medium sized businesses across the country in DEI training. This beautiful piece of art offers organizations and groups 3 tips on including gender diverse folks at work. ([watch it here](#)); and,
2. a video developed in partnership with the NS Trucking Safety Association promoting women in trucking and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. This [video](#) is being used in employee training by trucking sector employers.

The Independent Free Legal Advice program for individuals who experienced workplace sexual misconduct was a keystone element of this project. We engaged with clients in a manner which emphasized a trauma-informed, survivor-led approach. Throughout the project, we had **88 contact points** and **completed 72 referrals**, demonstrating our impact in supporting individuals affected by workplace sexual harassment.



FINANCIAL UPDATE 2023-2024

LISNS achieved a balanced budget for 2023/24. Surplus funds include a one-time grant of \$50,000 received in 2023-24 to be used in 2024-25 to fund the Legal Information Line and unrestricted funds from donations and a project that have been strategically designated to LISNS Contingency Fund. LISNS Finance Committee deemed the existing contingency fund of \$10,000 to be inadequate to support LISNS in case of emergency. LISNS will continue to focus on building the contingency fund as a risk management tool.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY – REVENUES & EXPENSES

Fiscal year April 1 2023 to March 2024

GRANTS

<i>Law Foundation of Nova Scotia</i>	\$	172,000
<i>Department of Justice Canada</i>		163,300
<i>Department of Justice Nova Scotia</i>		100,000

DONATIONS

21,442

PROJECTS

592,088

TOTAL

\$ 1,048,830

EXPENSES

AMORTIZATION

91

ADMINISTRATION

348,284

FUNDRAISING

—

PROGRAMS

11,652

PROJECTS

627,836

TOTAL

\$ 987,863

INCOME (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR

\$ 60,967



FINANCIAL SUMMARY – ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Fiscal year April 1 2023 to March 2024

ASSETS

CURRENT

<i>Cash</i>	\$	314,260
<i>Accounts Receivable</i>	\$	7,500
<i>Prepaid</i>	\$	27,584
<i>HST Receivable</i>	\$	19,405
	\$	368,749
CAPITAL ASSETS	\$	813
TOTAL	\$	369,562

LIABILITIES

CURRENT

<i>Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities</i>	\$	99,911
<i>Deferred Revenue</i>		183,330
TOTAL	\$	283,241

NET ASSETS

<i>Investment in Capital Assets</i>	\$	813
<i>Unrestricted</i>	\$	50,000
<i>Contingency</i>	\$	35,508
	\$	86,321
TOTAL	\$	369,562

A copy of our financial statements is available upon request



THANK YOU TO OUR CORE FUNDERS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT

- LAW FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA – Thank you for continuing to support our legal information work and providing consistent and strong endorsement of our quality service delivery and the important role of LISNS in providing Nova Scotians with access to justice.
- NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Thank you to the Department for continuing to support LISNS work in helping Nova Scotians with their legal problems.
- DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA – Thank you to the Department for recognizing and supporting our work in providing Nova Scotians with quality legal information.



Department of Justice Canada



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER LAWYERS AND MEDIATORS WHO SUPPORT:

- The Lawyer Referral Service
- The Mediator Referral Service
- Legal Information presentations
- Legal Content research, writing and review



THANK YOU TO THE STUDENTS

- Thank you to the students who have contributed their time to work on LISNS content and projects. We are so appreciative of our students' support and involvement and commitment to providing the public with access to justice.





THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LISNS Executive:

PRESIDENT



John Hope,
Dalhousie University

TREASURER

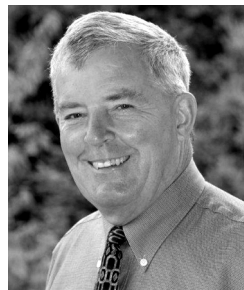


Mitchell Caiger,
Emera

LISNS Board Members:



Emma Arnold
Staff Lawyer, PATH
Legal / Elizabeth Fry
Society of Mainland
Nova Scotia



Bill Berryman,
Past President, Retired
Teachers Organization
NSTU and Canadian
Association of Retired
Teachers



Lauren Grant,
Land Titles Initiative,
Government of Nova
Scotia



Christine Hanson,
Mass Casualty
Commission



Justice Dan Ingersoll
Supreme Court of
Nova Scotia



Barbara Kerr,
Nova Scotia Department
of Justice



Robert Mroz,
McInnes Cooper



Tammy Wohler,
NS Legal Aid

WEBSITE / ONLINE APPS / SOCIAL MEDIA

Page views: 250,874

Sessions: 77,174

Top 5 pages:

1. Free and Low-Cost Legal Help
2. Making a Will
3. Power of Attorney
4. Wills and Estates Law
5. Rent Cap and Renovictions Information

App Usage:

Personal Directives: 5,339

Wills: 4,936

Small Claims: 2,571

Safe at Work/Safe Spaces: 921

Wills App Completions: 551

Personal Directive App Completions: 172

Social Media Followers:

X (Twitter): 1,456

Facebook: 1,200

Instagram: 674

LEGAL INFORMATION LINE, LAWYER & MEDIATOR REFERRAL SERVICE

Legal Info Line: 3,437

Emails: 2,137

Live chat: 693

Text: 23

Total Responses: 6,290

of self reps: 1,189

Referrals to:

Lawyers: 484

Legal Aid: 141

Top 5 areas of law:

1. Family law
2. Criminal
3. Landlord/Tenant (Residential)
4. Employment
5. Property

PODCASTS & VIDEOS

Legal Information Podcasts

- **594 downloads** on **45 podcasts**.
- The 7 podcasts associated with our Youth Legal Info Guide (*It's Your Right*) accounted for 34% of the downloads.

Legal Information Videos

- **6,258 views** on **86 videos** on both the LISNS website and our custom training portal.
- The top 3 most viewed video files on the LISNS website were all estate planning related.

SITE MAINTENANCE

- Completed a plain language review of all 18 articles in our Family Law section.
- An updated guide for survivors of intimate partner violence.
- Refreshed content on Small Claims Court, intellectual property, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and consumer issues.

Assets Under Management: 1,635

Articles Under Active Review: 9

Articles Revised, Updated, or Tidied Up: 198

Articles Inventoried for Future Review: 532

Average Word Count per Article: 1,793

POWER OF ATTORNEY & ESTATE PLANNING OUTREACH

Building off the success of our province-wide presentations in 2022 we delivered another round of presentations mainly in the Spring and Fall of 2023. Statistical highlights include:

- **20 presentations** across **12 different communities**
- **Over 650 attendees**
- Distributed hundreds of pamphlets, info sheets, and guides.
- Nearly **7,000 people reached** via social media with **over 300 shares and likes**.
- **Doubled traffic** to the wills and estates pages of our website compared with the previous year.
- Our wills and estates content was accessed by as many as **16,000 people**.
- The users who viewed our wills and estates content engaged with the content and spent an average of 25% longer on the site.

Most importantly, people were extremely satisfied with the presentations. The expressions of gratitude that we received were inspiring:

- *"I have been delaying doing any of this planning because I've been so overwhelmed but now I feel confident to get it done."* – May 12, 2023
- *"I really enjoyed the presentation—it was very eye-opening and full of useful information."* – June 2, 2023
- *"I would like to Thank You once again for your very informative and excellent Planning Ahead talk this afternoon at the Dr.Kingston Health Centre in L'Ardoise."* – June 2, 2023
- *"Thank you for the presentation today. There's so much to learn and this was a great couple hours."* – August 9, 2023

PROJECTS

Youth Legal Information Project

- Completed production on **4 podcast episodes**, **3 videos** and a new guide with **10 chapters** of youth focused content.
- The production process included engaging **2 youth consultants** and **4 voice actors** from diverse communities.
- We produced a media kit, social media infographics, and teaching tools to compliment the 10 chapters in the guide.

NSHA VG-Estate Planning Legal Health Program

- Free estate planning documents (Will, PoA, PD) for eligible patients who have a life-limiting illness
- **17 patient-clients served**
- A roster of **12 lawyers** who have volunteered to provide pro bono services.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project

- Free legal advice for victims of workplace sexual harassment and free training materials to promote harassment-free workplaces
- **24 referrals** for free legal advice.
- **62 harassment related inquiries**.

IWK Family Legal Health Program

- Free legal help for eligible IWK patients –families (where Legal Aid not available). It currently takes place every Friday from 9AM to 11AM
- **16 patients-families** served in-person at the IWK in the following areas of law Immigration (4); Adult Capacity and Decision-making (4); Family (3), Government programs (3), and Criminal law (2).
- Presented to the IWK Community Mental Health Clinicians during their professional development day

OUTREACH

Legal Info Presentations

- Provided **27 presentations** on a variety of legal topics including wills and estates, employment law, and gender based violence.
- Distributed **over 1500 print materials** to more than **1,000 attendees**.

Stakeholder Outreach

- Connected with all 55 MLAs and their constituency assistants to discuss LISNS projects, content and legal info lines, as well as their concerns, gaps in legal information, and their 'wish lists' of services, support and content.
- Held an in-person round table with 7 constituency assistants to discuss their experiences serving the public, and the needs and gaps re: legal services in the community.
- Conducted an engagement survey with stakeholders to assess how they engage with LISNS -we have received 44 responses to date and data collection is ongoing.
- Attended 55+ Wellness Day hosted by Yarmouth Senior Safety and NSCC, engaging in conversations with seniors and caregivers about LISNS Services and Estate Planning apps. Distributed 20 Personal Directive Reflection Guides and Workbooks.

Print Materials Distributed

- **100 Estate Planning bookmarks** sent to Cape Breton Geriatric Clinic
- Distributed **over 250 copies** of our updated estate planning guide, *It's In Your Hands*. Copies were sent to each library, replacing the old copies, which were still regularly checked out of the library. Copies were also sent to each of the MLAs.
- **100 bookmarks** to the Courts for their distribution

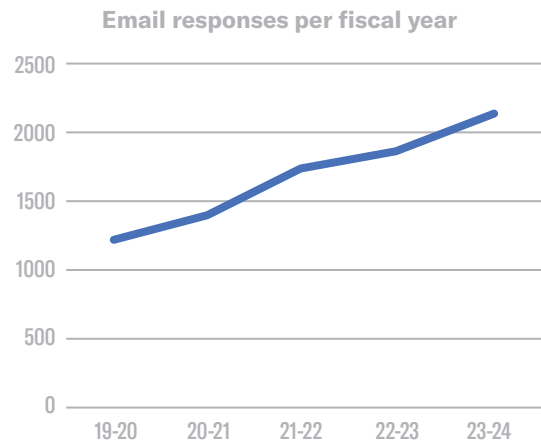
Social Media Reach

- **Facebook** - 20,859
- **Twitter** - 14,000
- **LinkedIn** - 5,652
- **Instagram** - 2,984
- **Youtube** (views) - 1,180 (63.8 watch time hours)



TRENDS IN RESPONSE DATA

There was a noticeable increase in demand for services online. We doubled the number of people that we responded to by live chat (**96% increase**). We continue to see a steady increase in demand for service via email. There was a **14% increase in email inquiries** this fiscal year. The increase in email traffic has been a long-term trend that we have been monitoring since 2019, we have nearly doubled the number of emails we respond to over that time span:

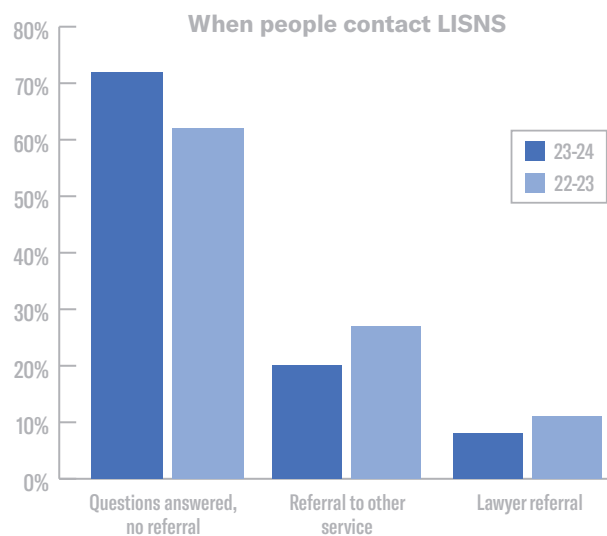


As the number of email inquiries have increased, we have become more efficient in our responses and they demand less staff time. We have done this successfully without making any major changes to staff allocation in part by building and maintaining **a database of over 2,200 template responses**, which staff can adapt as needed.

An increase in demand for service online is significant because we know from our data that users who contact us via email and live chat are more likely to be:

- outside the HRM
- unrepresented and dealing with a matter out-of-court
- seeking information, rather than a lawyer referral
- asking questions about wills and estates law

Our staff are more sophisticated and knowledgeable than ever before. The result is that we are now more likely than ever to answer people's questions directly, without resorting to referrals to other services:



For the second straight year, approximately 25% of the people who contacted our Legal Info Line were referred directly by one of our key justice system stakeholders:

DIRECT REFERRALS TO LEGAL INFO LINE BY STAKEHOLDERS

Referral Source	# of referrals	% of total referrals
Bar Society/Lawyer	307	8.9%
Legal Aid	212	6.2%
Government	174	5.1%
Courts	171	5.0%
211	85	2.5%
Non-profits, charities, service agency	73	2.1%
Other professional, commercial services	32	0.9%
Boards	11	0.3%

HOUSING CRISIS

Along with organizations like Nova Scotia Legal Aid and Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, LISNS is a first point of contact for many people dealing with legal issues related to their housing. As reported earlier, there was a dramatic increase in traffic to the housing section of our website:

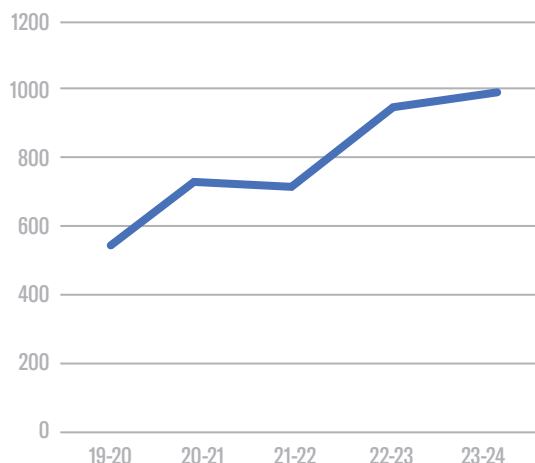
Housing Section - Page Views		
23-24	22-23	% change
12,548	4,682	168.01%

One of the hot button issues has been the rent cap – how it applies, when it applies, when it doesn't apply, and so on. We first published information about the rent cap in March 2022, but traffic to that page on our site spiked this year and that accounts for much of the increase in traffic to our housing section:

Rent Cap Information - Page Views		
23-24	22-23	% change
5,490	414	1226.09%

Overall, housing-related responses accounted for 15% of our total responses to the public. There have been some weeks where as many as 25% of the inquiries we receive are housing related. The increase in demand for information about housing issues has been an ongoing trend over the past five years:

Housing related responses per fiscal year



Many of the people who contact us are in high stakes situations where they are at risk of losing their housing. Starting this fiscal year, we asked staff to provide a qualitative assessment of whether a given inquiry involves a high-conflict situation. So far **more than 1/4 of the cases staff identified as high-conflict were housing related**.

We will be prioritizing updates to our housing-related content in the coming fiscal year.

FEEDBACK FROM THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

We continue to receive positive feedback regarding our Legal Info Line, Email, and Live Chat services.

We do not formally survey users on our Legal Info Line, but this fiscal year we began tracking more qualitative data about the calls we receive. We noticed that 1 out of every 15 callers takes the time to offer a spontaneous expression of appreciation and gratitude for the service.

Our Live Chat had an approval rating of **4.59/5** based on 66 reviews. One user described our chat as a “*top notch, friendly, informative service*” and another said, “*This is a great service. So glad to have the chat option*”.

Our email service had a **satisfaction rating of 90%** based on 122 reviews (5.7% of users provided feedback) and we have received a great deal of unsolicited, positive feedback including comments like:

- “*This information is incredibly helpful, and I just want to say thank you so, so much for all of the time that you put into this. It’s very, very much appreciated on my end. It’s made the whole process seem not so scary and insurmountable.*”

75% of the users who choose to contact us by email do so because it is their preferred method of communication. However, there are some (approx. 20%) who prefer to communicate by phone and use the email service as a secondary option. As one user commented:

- “*Extremely satisfied. Day 1 I tried to phone then emailed. Day 2 I got through on phone and got an email answer. I am grateful for the 2 ‘channels’. That helped me to absorb the information better and calmed me considerably.*”

↑
168.01%

increased views to housing
section of website
(12,548 visits)



250+

copies of updated estate
planning guide, *It’s In Your
Hands*, distributed.



20,850+
reach via LISNS
Facebook page

LEGAL INFOⁱ NOVA SCOTIA

Estate Planning 101: Wills, Powers of Attorney & Personal Directives

1

Wills & Dying without one

A Will is a legal document that lets you say what you want done with your estate (house, land, personal items) after you die. You will name someone to carry out your last wishes. This person is called your executor. If you die without a will, you're considered to have died intestate. Your property is distributed to people considered your nearest relatives and the rules are not flexible. If you die without a will, there's no protection for common law partners, stepchildren or grandchildren.

Check out LISNS' free Wills preparation app to make your own basic will:
www.legalinfo.org/will

2

Powers of Attorney (POA)

A power of attorney is a legal document that lets you give someone you trust the authority to act in financial and property matters on your behalf. You are called the donor and the person you give authority is called the attorney (even when they aren't a lawyer). Making an enduring POA doesn't limit you from acting on your own behalf. You still have control of your financial affairs and are free to deal with your property, money and investments as long as you have capacity.

Nova Scotia law for POAs changed on July 5, 2022. A POA made before July 5, 2022 is still effective but the changes include specific duties for attorneys and clear powers for the donor and support persons.

Learn more by visiting www.legalinfo.org

3

Personal Directive (PD)

A personal directive lets you choose someone to make health and other personal care decisions for you if you can't make them yourself. You can set out your instructions, wishes, and values about health and other personal care. You can name a delegate to speak for you if you can't. It's important to prepare a personal directive when you're well.

Check out LISNS' free Personal Directive App to make your own PD:
www.legalinfo.org/personaldirective

Call us at 1-800-665-9779 or 902-455-3135
Email us at questions@legalinfo.org
'Chat with us!' for live chat at www.legalinfo.org





LEGAL INFOⁱ NOVA SCOTIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

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