

# Community Legal Education Association

## *Winter Newsletter*

### President's Message

**Sarah Thurmeier**

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**Unknown Rights  
are  
Not Rights  
At All!**



Dear Friends,

Since 1984, CLEA has successfully delivered an array of programs and resources to help individuals better understand our legal system and how to resolve their legal issues. In spite of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic CLEA's staff, together with the Board, have continued to serve Manitobans and ensure that our mandate is met.

CLEA has seen a significant increase in calls and e-mails to the Law Phone-in and Lawyer Referral program in the first 11 months of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020. Calls related to employment, labour law, human rights issues, family law matters involving domestic violence and criminal charges, and wills and power of attorney inquiries have been on the rise during the pandemic.

Our videos and website continue to provide resources to the community on a wide range of topics.

Our Speakers Bureau program and Community Legal Intermediary training courses have continued throughout the pandemic, albeit virtually, and presentations through the Law in the Library program resumed recently.

CLEA's Workplace Sexual Harassment project is going strong. CLEA is also involved in a number of new and upcoming projects, including our Senior Abuse Project, Family Law Information and Presentations for Rural and Northern Manitoba project, and two video projects in partnership with Pro Bono Students Canada.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our gratitude for the dedicated and knowledgeable staff at CLEA, who alongside our Executive Director, Mary Troszko, work hard to do what is necessary to support a more equitable and accessible justice system that is responsive to the needs of Manitoba's diverse communities.

To the members of the law community who volunteer their services and our various funding partners who continue to support CLEA's endeavours, our deepest gratitude.

I wish you all the very best this holiday season and in 2022.

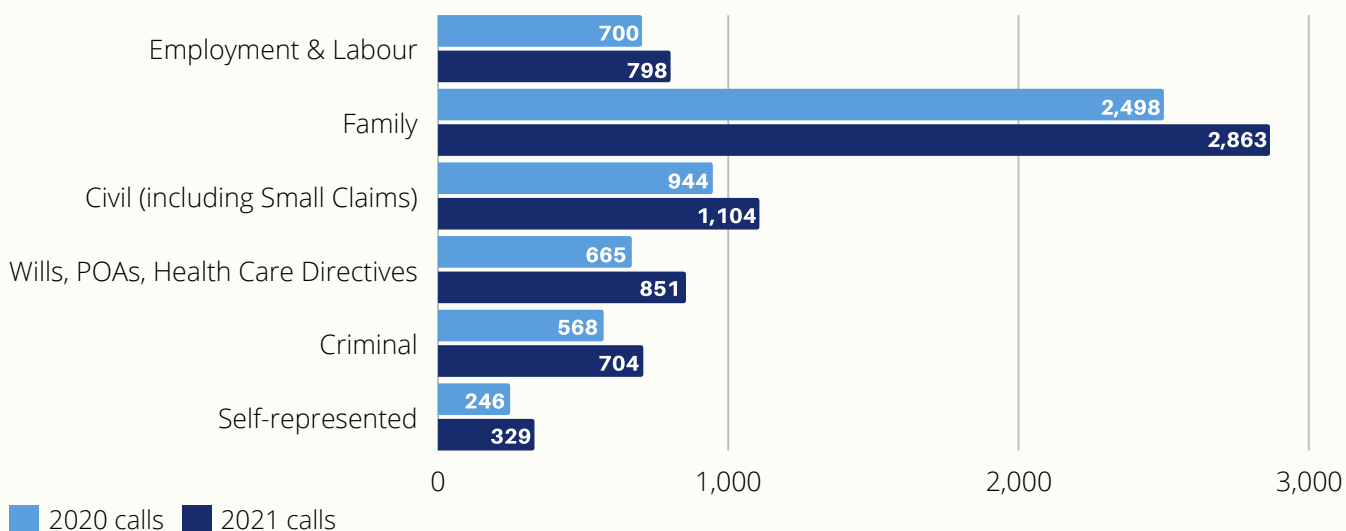
Sincerely, Sarah Thurmeier

## Law Phone-In Update (Jan. 1, 2021 - Nov. 30, 2021)

Calls and e-mails to the Law Phone-in and Lawyer Referral Program have significantly increased in 2021. We have received 9,182 inquiries up until the end of November of this year. This is an increase of more than 1,800 calls from the same time period last year. In 2020, we had responded to 7,360 calls and e-mail inquiries by the end of November.

Not surprisingly, we are also receiving more referrals than ever before. Not all callers indicate where they were referred from, but 400 more callers than last year, for a total of 1,772 individuals, have informed us of their source of referral. Most referral sources have doubled the number of individuals that they have sent to our program, including the Law Society of Manitoba (161 versus 84), Lawyers (149/72), Family Resolution Service (34/10) and the Courts (73/30). Legal Aid Manitoba has referred 568 individuals and Legal Help Centre has referred 111.

There were significant increases in the number of family law related calls, wills, estates, and powers of attorney inquiries, and self-represented individuals using our program:



The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in additional calls to the Law Phone-in and Lawyer Referral Program on employment, labour law, and human rights issues. Callers were requesting information and referrals to lawyers about layoffs, termination, and accommodation requests. We have also recently dealt with a number of calls and e-mails about vaccine policies in work places, and post-secondary institutions, Quarantine Act and public health tickets, travel inquiries, and disputes between parents about having their children vaccinated.

**Thank You to our Funders:**  
**Core Funders:**  
*Department of Justice Canada  
Manitoba Law Foundation  
Law Society of Manitoba*  
**Project Funder:**  
*Department of Justice Canada*

## Seniors Abuse Project

The Seniors Abuse project, funded by Justice Canada, commenced in 2021. We drafted a series of publications (including a brochure, bookmark, and poster) to provide updated information to the community about elder abuse, as well as recourse and resources. We received feedback and input from agencies in Manitoba that provide services to seniors to ensure that the information was accurate and up to date. Fall 2021 saw the beginning of our webinars on seniors' rights and elder abuse, with a number of virtual presentations being delivered in Winnipeg as well as rural Manitoba.



## Family Law Presentations

The Family Law project has commenced and will continue into 2022, with a series of virtual presentations to be delivered in rural and northern Manitoba communities. These presentations focus on the recent changes to federal and provincial family law legislation, including amendments to the *Divorce Act*.

## Publications Update

### New Case Summaries

We have added five new case summaries to our lesson plans page. One of these is a recent criminal law case, three are Indigenous law cases, and one is a recent employment law case. Indigenous law and employment law are new categories to our lesson plans page, and we plan to keep adding cases to these (and other) new areas of the law.

### New Videos

Our video library continues to grow. We have updated our video, *How Long Does a Criminal Record Last?* We have also added four recordings from Zoom webinar sessions on the topics of Consumer Law, Criminal Law, Family Law, and Youth Justice Law. Thanks to presenters: Silvana Buccini, Michael Lazar, Len Fishman, and Candace Olson for these. We have also created a video explaining how to navigate our website.

### FAQs

On our website, we currently have 578 general questions. These fall into 12 categories. We also have an additional 81 about COVID-19.

### CNIB

We have continued to work with CNIB on their disability rights project. We have now provided answers to 99 legal questions across 9 topics in this area.

# Workplace Sexual Harassment Project Updates

## Hotline

The Workplace Sexual Harassment hotline, was launched on January 21, 2020. This service allows callers to get in touch directly with a staff lawyer who can provide legal information, connect clients to different resources, agencies, or refer callers to one of CLEA's panel lawyers. To date, the hotline has assisted over 175 clients and responded to almost 350 calls. The hotline has been experiencing an increased number of calls. Though a majority of the callers continue to inquire about workplace sexual harassment, the hotline is also seeing a significant increase in callers who are dealing with sexual assault, sexual violence, and domestic violence.

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## Workshops

After months of planning, we launched the workshop phase of the Workplace Sexual Harassment Project in January 2021. Over the course of the past year, we have organized and facilitated 33 workshops across Manitoba, with several more planned for 2022. We have partnered with community organizations throughout the province to expand access to our programming. We have reached over 315 participants in 20 communities, including youth, newcomers to Canada, and people living in rural and Northern Manitoba. Due to the pandemic, all of our workshops so far have been delivered using Zoom's online platform.

We have been pleased to notice that the workshops have been so popular that many of these organizations have scheduled second or third workshops for subsequent groups. Several organizations have attended our Law Conference and CLI programming, or have reached out to plan workshops on other legal topics, such as family law or criminal law.

In addition to the workshops themselves, we have distributed several hundred copies of our program brochure and bookmark to individuals and organizations across Manitoba. These materials are also available for free on our website.