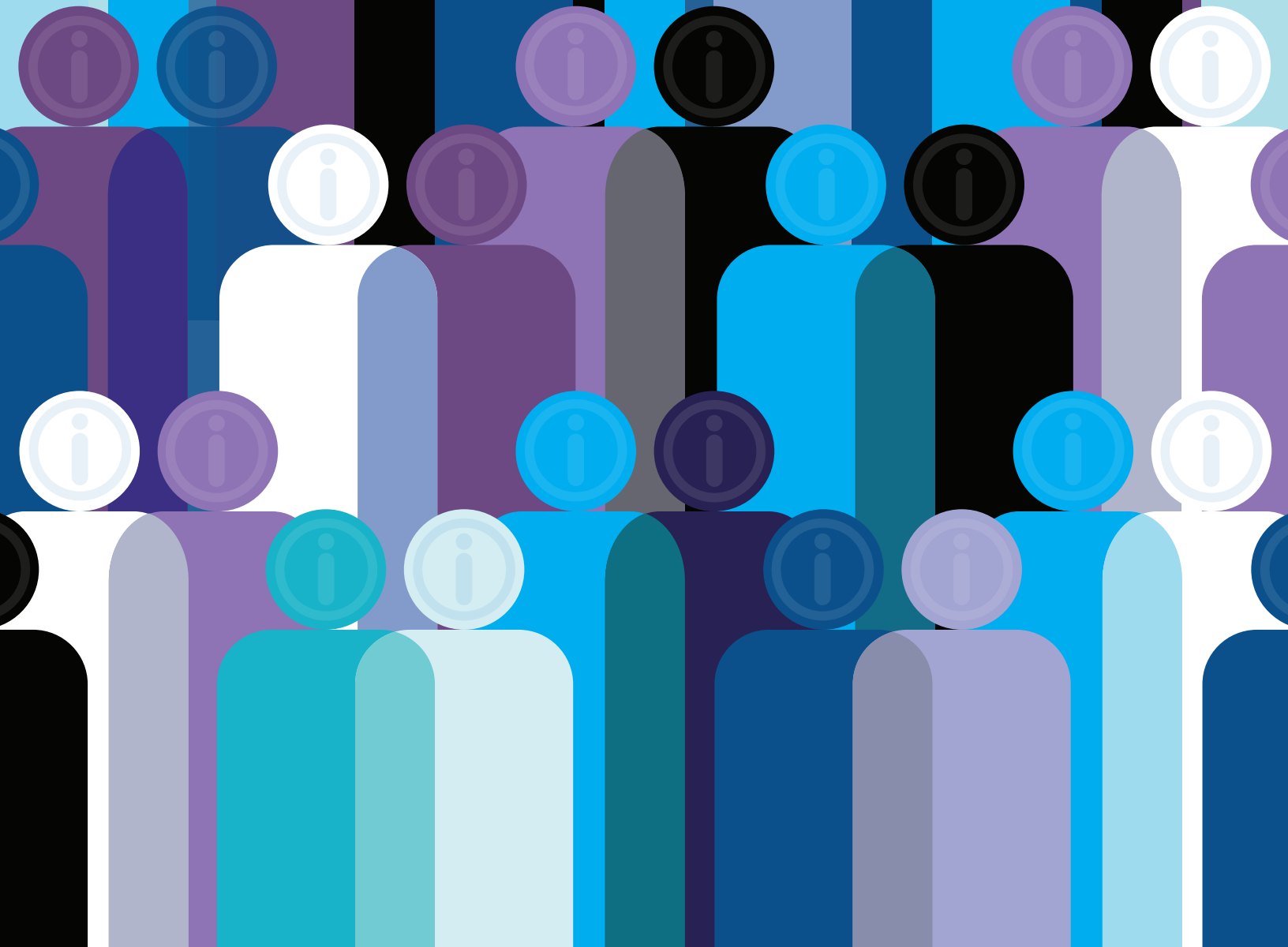


ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2024-MARCH 2025



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Our Mission

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

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.

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.

Message from the Executive Director

LISNS is proud to be helping Nova Scotians with their legal problems by providing tangible tools that increase access to justice. This is only possible due to the expertise of LISNS staff who know how to innovate and develop plain language pathways, apps and guides that help people help themselves.

We achieve incredible efficiencies through our development processes that are done entirely in-house and permit us continued flexibility to adjust as required to meet changing legal and user needs. This is critical working in the not for profit sector where core funding is at a premium and LISNS ensures every dollar counts for the benefit of Nova Scotians.

We are one of the few public legal education providers who continue to provide services directly to the public - helping people through their preferred choice of contact – from our highly used telephone helpline, to our email service and textline along with community presentations that are in high demand. It is this combination of in-person contact and legal know-how that permits us to be in tune with the needs of the day and to quickly adapt and develop tools and information to respond to those needs.

LISNS small staff is a testament to what is possible when knowledgeable and highly motivated individuals work together with a shared purpose to help the public in meaningful ways without creating undue strain on the public purse.

I thank each of the LISNS team who are on their own extraordinary and who as a team are absolutely outstanding. Nova Scotians are well served by their efforts. Nova Scotians receive access to justice because of LISNS staff efforts.

The LISNS Board of Directors provides excellent oversight and our work is only possible due to the belief that the Board has in the importance of innovation along with quality service delivery and the confidence it reposes in the LISNS team to deliver on our mandate. Thank you to Bill Berryman for his leadership as LISNS Board Chair and to our ever supportive Board members who give generously of their time and expertise.



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

Access to Justice Accomplishments

LISNS is proud to be making access to justice for Nova Scotians a reality. In fiscal 2024/25, LISNS launched important access to justice legal tools to address areas of greatest need.

INCREASING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES DEALING WITH A BREAK-UP



Separation Agreement Pathway (and Information Guide) – this online tool allows people to create a separation agreement which enables them to continue their lives while dealing with a stressful event. With over half of relationships in Nova Scotia breaking up, there is a significant need for this tool which lays the groundwork to filing for divorce if determined necessary.

A Separation Agreement can sometimes make the need for a divorce unnecessary reducing considerable strain. The majority of individuals dealing with family law issues are self-represented, and this tool will help many of these people through a difficult period of their lives. Special thanks to Justice Canada for funding support which made this resource possible.

HELPING VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE FIND THE HELP THEY NEED



We created the intimate partner violence pathway of resources, called **“Finding Your Way: Navigating legal issues after family violence”** (in partnership with Access to Justice & Law Reform Institute of NS, NS Association of Black Social Workers, Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland NS). The pathway helps you find resources and support for those who are experiencing, or supporting people who are experiencing, Family Violence. The pathway supports the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission and focuses on helping individuals find the resources that are most appropriate to help with their situation. Special thanks to the NS Status of Women Office whose funding support made this resource possible.

PROVIDING INDIVIDUALS DEALING WITH WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT HELP TO ACCESS RESOURCES



Guided Pathway to the Human Rights Complaint Process for Workplace Sexual Harassment (in partnership with NS Human Rights Commission). The Safe at Work Pathway is a step-by-step guide that clearly explains your legal choices, helping you confidently make informed decisions. Whether you're a survivor, support person, witness, employer, or accused, you'll find reliable information tailored to your situation. Special thanks to the NS Status of Women Office whose funding support made this resource possible.

HELPING EMPLOYERS CREATE MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES



Rainbow Rights – A Human Rights Legal Information Guide for 2SLGBTQIA+ Nova Scotians

This guide empowers members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Nova Scotia (Mi'kma'ki) to understand their human rights and what options and resources are available to them if they face discrimination.

The Guide has received rave reviews and the many workshops offered during the year were filled to capacity. We are excited to continue this important work building upon the success to date.

We thank the Nova Scotia Office of Equity and Anti-Racism for project funding that made this work possible.

HELPING UNIVERSITIES BE SAFER PLACES FOR WORK AND STUDY



Videos and publications on **workplace sexual harassment in higher education** were developed in partnership with Acadia University.

LISNS is proud to support the efforts of higher education to provide safe and inclusive spaces for work and study. We applaud Acadia University for its leadership and thank Justice Canada for project support making this work possible.

HELPING PEOPLE PROACTIVELY PLAN THEIR LIVES



Power of Attorney App (Information Guide and Forms Booklet) –

this online tool allows people to create a power of attorney to ensure someone has the ability to manage their affairs when a person is unable to. The POA Forms Booklet (Formulaire de procuration pour la Nouvelle-Écosse) provides power of attorney forms in both English and French.

Every adult person should have a POA and this app makes this accessible to all Nova Scotians. Thanks to the NS Department of Justice for providing the funding to make the POA app possible.

LISNS made numerous presentations across the Province on estate planning this year. With the support of our project funding, LISNS will also undertake community outreach across the Province in the new fiscal to support the launch of the POA App with many presentations scheduled. LISNS is proud to now offer the complete suite of free online estate planning apps for Personal Directive, Will and Power of Attorney.

MAKING ESTATE PLANNING ACCESSIBLE



C'est Entre vos Mains: Information juridique pour les aînés et leurs familles is now available! This important publication aims to increase understanding of everyday legal issues and planning for the future in an accessible way for our francophone neighbours and friends. It is a companion to LISNS most successful publication, *It's In Your Hands Guide – a life planning guide for seniors and their families.*

We also offer French and English short videos for each chapter of the guides along with a webinar that can be used by community groups. We are proud to launch these resources in partnership with AJEFNE and FFANE. Our thanks to Justice Canada for providing funding to make this project possible.

HELPING TENANTS KNOW THEIR HOUSING RIGHTS



We are proud to offer a Tenants Rights video series developed in partnership with Dalhousie Legal Aid with community outreach sessions held around the Province.

Renting a home comes with rights and responsibilities, and it's important to know where you stand. We've teamed up with Dalhousie Legal Aid Services to create 16 easy-to-understand videos about rental laws in Nova Scotia. These videos cover common questions and issues that renters face, helping you understand your rights and what to do in different situations. Whether you live in a small town or a big city, these videos can help you feel more confident about renting.

Scripts of the 16 videos are available in seven languages including:

- English
- French
- Arabic
- Swahili
- Ukrainian
- Somali
- Punjabi

LISNS also offers comprehensive tenant rights legal information on its website. Our thanks to Justice Canada for project funding which made this work possible.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



LISNS has provided invaluable help to the many people who call our **Free Legal Helpline**, email questions and engage in livechat and the youth textline.

We have continued to serve individuals requiring help through our Medical Legal Health Partnerships making presentations to IWK healthcare staff who value the information we provide and assisting patients in palliative care (VG site, Halifax) with their estate planning documents.

We are very proud to celebrate staff member Dianna Burns, who has graduated with her Master of Laws thesis from Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. Dianna received the Governor General's Gold Medal Award in Humanities and Social Sciences 2025. This is a fantastic accomplishment – congratulations Dianna! Her thesis focused on power of attorney and involved LISNS – we are so proud to have had a small role to play.



Dianna is the architect of LISNS Enduring Power of Attorney App and is doing amazing community outreach across the Province in addition to supporting our core services and estate planning with patients in palliative care.

LISNS is proud to be recognized as a leader in public legal education across Canada through its innovation in providing free high quality digital legal tools for the public (*BC Law Foundation review of Public Legal Education 2024*).

LISNS has had an outstanding year with demand for LISNS services and content at an all time high.

It is the combination of **in-person contact** and **legal know-how** that permits us to be in tune with the needs of the day and to **quickly adapt and develop tools and information** to respond to those needs.

How LISNS is helping Nova Scotians

WEBSITE OVERVIEW

Page views: 350,533

Engaged Sessions: 95,222

Top 5 pages:

1. Free and low-cost legal help
2. I want to ask a legal question
3. Making a Will
4. Power of Attorney
5. Wills App

App Usage (views):

Wills: 8,925

Personal Directive: 5,755

Safe-at-Work/Safe Spaces: 4,434

Small Claims Court: 2,352

Wills App Completions: 990

Personal Directive App Completions: 159

RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC

Legal Info Line: 4,097

Emails: 2,420

Live chat: 473

Text: 27

Total Responses: 7,024

of self reps: 1,472

Referrals to lawyers: 503

Referrals to Legal Aid: 107

Top 5 areas of law:

1. Family law
2. Criminal
3. Landlord-Tenant (Residential)
4. Wills and Estates
5. Employment

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

This fiscal was one our busiest ever in terms of the number of products we developed and the size and scope of those products. We produced:

4 New Apps and Guided Pathways

- The highly anticipated Power of Attorney App
- The Separation Agreement Guided Pathway
- The Sexual Harassment Guided Pathway
- A Guided Pathway for Navigating Legal Issues After Family Violence and Abuse

4 New Plain Language Guides

- *Guide to Making Your Power of Attorney*
- *Rainbow Rights, a human rights guide for 2SLGBTQIA+ Nova Scotians*

- A new French estate planning guide, *C'est Entre Vos Mains*.
- *Safely On Your Way*, a legal information and resource guide for survivors of intimate partner violence and their service providers.

2 New Website Categories

- Family Violence & Abuse
- Rights & Citizenship

A completely refreshed housing category featuring 10 all-new articles.

PODCASTS & VIDEOS

Legal Information Podcasts

- 653 downloads on 47 podcasts.
- 3 new podcasts uploaded related to workplace sexual harassment.
- Most downloaded: Youth Legal Info - Accessing Health Care.

Legal Information Videos

- **4,448 views** on **97 video** files on both the LISNS website and our custom training portal.
- **37 new videos uploaded**, including a new introductory video for LISNS services and a 16-video series on tenants' rights produced in collaboration with Dal Legal Aid.
- **47 hours** of watch time on YouTube
- The most viewed video files on the LISNS website were estate planning related.

SITE MAINTENANCE

Directories Under Management: **41**

Assets Under Management: **1,882**

Articles Queued for Review: **22**

Articles Revised, Updated, or Tidied Up: **61**

Next Section for Review: **Criminal Law**

Average Word Count per Article: **1,791**

- Completed internal reviews of our Lawyers & Legal Help and Housing sections, two of the most highly trafficked sections of our site.
- Content under development related to consumer rights, common-law relationships, and lawsuits.

LONG-TERM PROJECTS

NSHA VG-Estate Planning Legal Health Program

- Free estate planning documents (Will, PoA, PD) for eligible patients who have a life-limiting illness
- 15 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
- 55 workplace harassment related inquiries
- 17 referrals for free legal advice.
- Developed a guided pathway for responding to sexual harassment in the workplace.

IWK Family Legal Health Program

- Free legal help for eligible IWK patients –families (where Legal Aid not available).
- 11 requests for assistance, plus ongoing consultations with social workers as needed at the IWK.

OUTREACH

Social Media Highlights

	Followers	Interactions	Reach	Views	Most Popular Post (Views)
Facebook	1421	1300	22,100	39,000	Reminder: You Need a Will (3,816)
Instagram	832	859	7,000	21,600	Do you know your Rainbow Rights? (2,066)
LinkedIn	27	188	4,148	6,620	CNIB Partnership (700+)

- Like other justice system stakeholders such as the NS Courts and HRM, we left X (Twitter) in 2025 and switched to BlueSky. Our BlueSky account was created on March 13, 2025. We will be happy to report on the analytics in the future.

Legal Info Presentations

- Provided **43 presentations** on a variety of legal topics including powers of attorney, employment law, and gender based violence.
- **Over 1,000 attendees in over 20 communities** across the province.

Dal Legal Aid Tenants' Rights Workshops

- Engaged Dal Legal Aid to conduct tenant's rights workshops in rural Nova Scotia in February and March of 2025.
- **29 workshops** across **16 communities** attended by **230** members of the public and service providers.

Other Stakeholder Outreach

- **4 conferences** attended by staff: the International Women's Day Summit, International Access to Justice Forum, Legal Services Corporation Innovations in Technology Conference, Exchange 2024 hosted by Impact Organizations Nova Scotia.
- **7 community consults** regarding legal needs
- Our first-ever notarization clinic at the Keshen Goodman Library in Clayton Park.

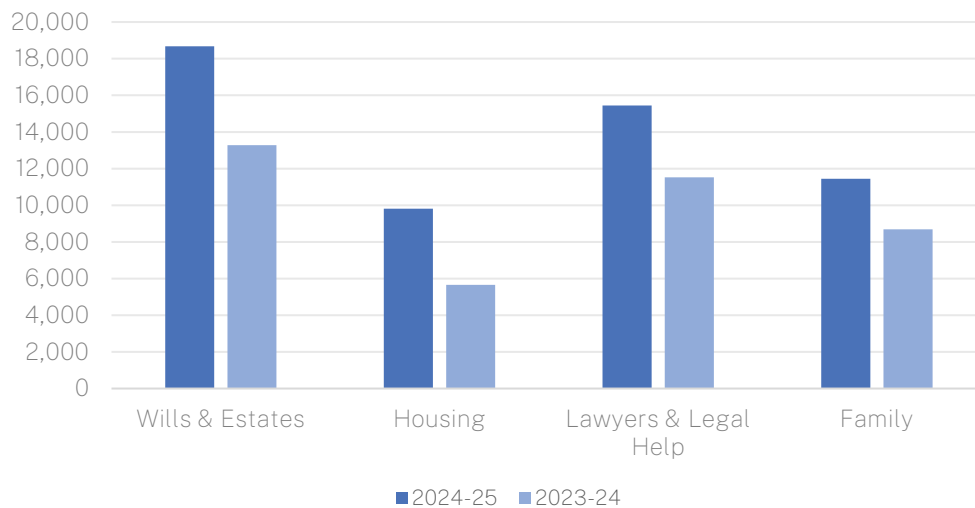
WEBSITE DATA

This fiscal year we saw a major jump in website traffic. **Engaged sessions increased by 23%:**

	2024-25	2023-24	Change
Events (e.g. clicks, scrolls, downloads)	999,413	711,502	40.47%
Views	350,533	250,874	39.72%
Engaged Sessions	95,222	77,174	23.39%

Nearly 30% of the increase in engaged sessions is due to **an increase in traffic to the wills and estates section** of our website. In some weeks, traffic to the wills and estates section accounts for nearly 25% of the visits to our site overall.

Site sections with largest increases in engaged sessions



THE WILLS APP

We attribute the increase in traffic to our wills and estates section to the **success of our Wills App**. This was the first full fiscal year with our Wills App active. In addition to the **30% boost in engaged sessions** to our wills and estates section, this fiscal year we also saw:

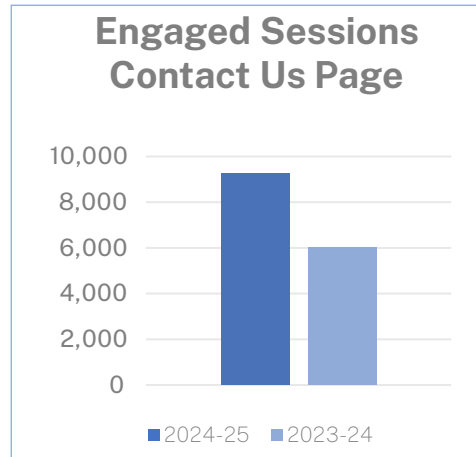
- **13,723 views** of the app and associated guides from as many as 4,500 users
- **990 wills completed** on the app.
- **14% increase in engaged sessions** on our personal directives app.

The success of the app has prompted us to begin offering **notarization clinics**, the first of which we offered at the Keshen Goodman Library in February 2025.

INCREASE IN INQUIRIES VIA WEBSITE

LISNS responds to questions from the public by phone, email, live chat and text.

The increase in traffic to our site also meant that more people contacted us via our website. There was a **54% increase in traffic to our contact us page:**



Demand for service via email rose again, continuing a steady long-term trend. **Email traffic has doubled over the past 5 years.**

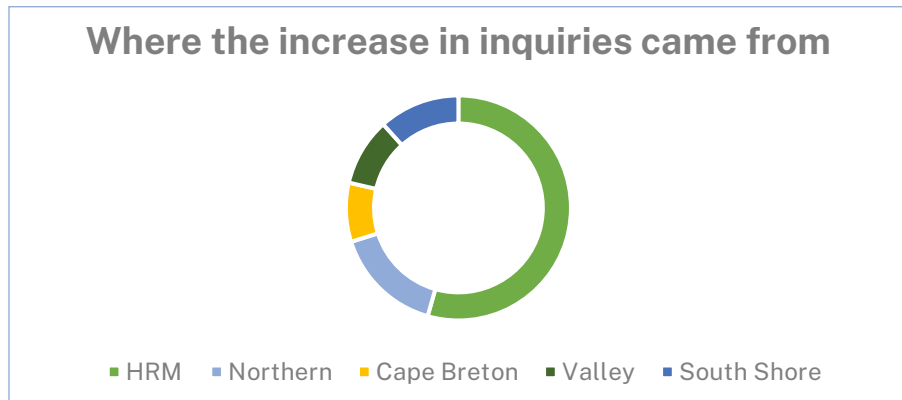


For the first time ever there were sustained periods of time, particularly in the spring of 2024, where we responded to the same number of inquiries via email and live chat as we did via telephone on our Legal Info Line.

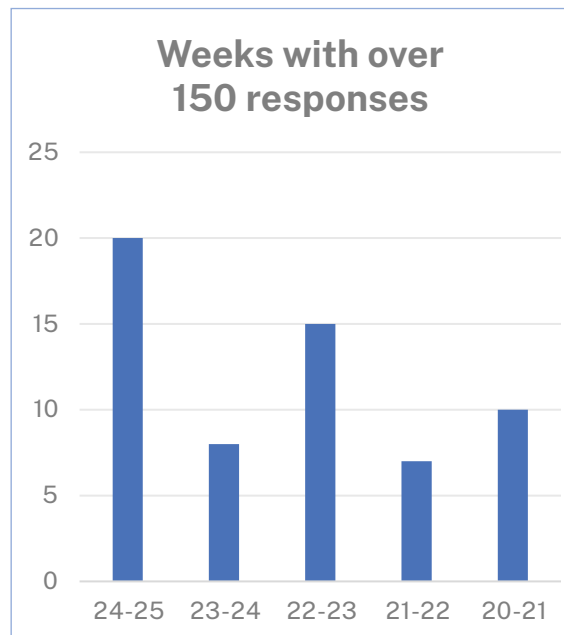
RESPONDING TO MORE NOVA SCOTIANS

We responded to **7,024 inquiries** on our Legal Info Line, email, live chat and text services this fiscal year. That's an 11% increase over the previous year. That means we responded to **734 additional people**.

We are proud that this increase was **proportional across all regions of the province**:



There were sustained periods of extremely high demand illustrated by the **record number of weeks with over 150 responses**:

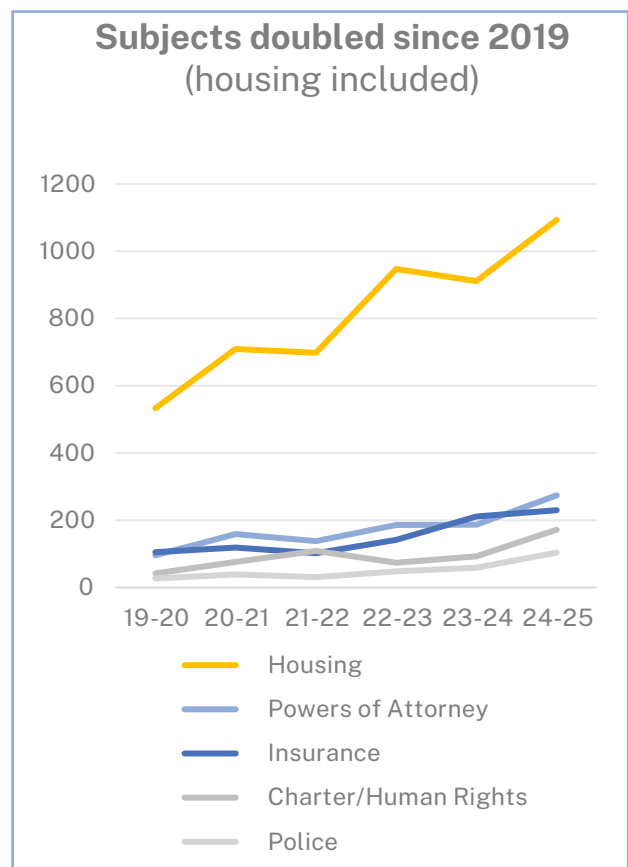
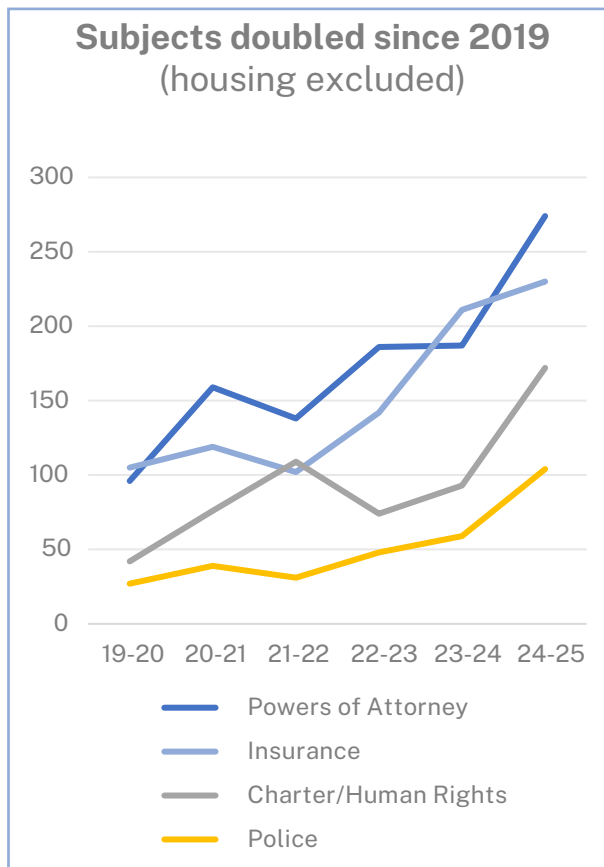


LONG-TERM TRENDS

There is **always demand for information about family law, wills and estates, criminal law.**

However, there are many other subjects that have seen dramatic increases in recent years. The overwhelming trend is **an increase in demand for information about housing.** We responded to this demand by uploading 10 new articles to the housing section.

The charts below illustrate how the increase in housing inquiries makes the other subject matter trends seem modest by comparison.



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. We saw a **70% increase in traffic** to the housing content on our site.

HOUSING CONTENT			
Metric	2024-25	2023-24	% change
Events (clicks, downloads, etc.)	68,818	40,609	69.56%
Page Views	21,228	12,548	69.17%
Active Users	13,953	8,179	70.60%
Engaged Sessions	9,810	5,658	73.38%

There was a **20% increase in inquiries** related to housing this fiscal year. Most of those inquiries are landlord-tenant related, but many family law, estate law, and consumer law inquiries also have a housing component to them.

12% of housing-related inquiries were either **high-conflict situations** (e.g., a landlord evicting a tenant) or complicated in another way (e.g., a technically complicated legal problem involving unadministered estate property).

INCREASE IN SELF REPS

Compared with last year, we had an **additional 283 self-reps** contact us with questions:

	2024-25	2023-24	% change
Self-reps	1472	1189	23.80%

At least 25% of the self-reps that contact us are referred to us directly from justice system stakeholders (for example, legal aid services, court staff, lawyer's offices, etc.). These key referral sources primarily referred self-reps with issues related to:

Criminal and Quasi-Criminal Law	25%
Family Law	23%
Court Procedure	20%
Wills and Estates	15%

Self-reps usually ask lots of questions and their questions tend to be more technically complicated, so they demand more staff time:

Self-Representing?	Response over 20 minutes
Yes	15%
No	10%

STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT OF A LIVE CHAT EXCHANGE

Live chat is one of the ways that people can submit questions to our staff.

This fiscal year we responded to approximately **10 inquiries by live chat every week**.

A little more than half of the users (53.5%) who contact us via live chat enter the site with an apparent intention of submitting a question to our staff. For example, these users might navigate directly to our Contact Us section.

The remainder (46.5%) navigate to our site apparently looking for content and then contact us when they notice the live chat option. For example, these users might be looking at content in our Wills and Estates section and then see our chat window.

A typical live chat exchange:

Messages sent by user	6
Messages sent by LISNS	4
Average chat duration (minutes)	12.5
Average word count per message	26.8

Compared with our email and phone services, users who contact us by live chat are more likely to:

- Have questions about lawyers and employment law
- Be located somewhere outside the province

10% of live chat inquiries came from users outside of Nova Scotia (compared with 5% by phone and email). These users often contact us on behalf of a family member who resides in the province, but who needs help navigating services.

We received live chat inquiries from users in: Australia, Egypt, Iraq, Peru, Poland, UK, and USA.

There was a **20% increase** in inquiries related to **housing** this 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 we track qualitative data about the calls we receive. We noticed that over 600 callers spontaneously expressed appreciation and gratitude for the service, that's approximately 15% of callers. Over 300 callers indicated that we were the first service to provide substantive legal help in their situation.

Of the callers that gave us unsolicited positive feedback:

- 30% were self-reps
- 60% were referred to us by a justice system stakeholder (for example, legal aid, court staff, a lawyer's office)
- 30% had long calls with us (over 20 mins in length)

Our email service had a satisfaction rating of 89% based on 56 reviews (2% of users provided feedback)

Our Live Chat had an approval rating of 5/5 based on 17 reviews (3% of users provided feedback).

We have received a great deal of unsolicited, positive feedback including comments like:

"Thank you so much for all of your help. I can't tell you what a convenience it is to have access to this service. (It) certainly goes a long way in alleviating someone's anxiety over legal issues." – Jan 21, 2025

"Thank you very much for the very helpful explanation. It took some time and thought to put that together. I thought it might take a long time or even that I'd get no response at all...I just needed to know where I stood...I appreciate your help" – June 6, 2024

"Thank you very much for responding to my questions in such a timely manner despite the demand for your services... Your help has been invaluable to us in navigating our situation and is greatly appreciated." – Apr 2, 2024

Over 300 callers indicated that we were the first service to provide **substantive legal help** in their situation.

Financial Update 2024-2025

LISNS has achieved excellent fiscal management and is pleased to deliver a balanced budget. Our thanks to our financial team, SimpliCanada, for their excellent assistance..

FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVENUES AND EXPENSES Fiscal Year April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

REVENUE

GRANTS

<i>Law Foundation of Nova Scotia</i>	\$	242,000
<i>Department of Justice Canada</i>		163,300
<i>Department of Justice Nova Scotia</i>		81,380

DONATIONS 15,766

PROJECTS 752,035

TOTAL \$ 1,254,481

EXPENSES

AMORTIZATION 268

ADMINISTRATION 443,961

PROGRAMS 17,651

PROJECTS 790,707

TOTAL \$ 1,252,857

INCOME (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR \$ 1,894

A copy of our financial statements is available upon request

Financial Update 2024-2025

FINANCIAL SUMMARY ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Fiscal Year April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

ASSETS

CURRENT

<i>Cash</i>	\$	262,089
<i>Accounts Receivable</i>	\$	50,972
<i>Prepaid</i>	\$	17,340
<i>HST Receivable</i>	\$	52,966
	\$	<u>383,367</u>

CAPITAL ASSETS

\$	1,664
\$	<u>385,031</u>

LIABILITIES

CURRENT

<i>Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities</i>	\$	126,049
<i>Deferred Revenue</i>		170,767
	\$	<u>296,816</u>

NET ASSETS

<i>Investment in Capital Assets</i>	\$	1,664
<i>Unrestricted</i>	\$	51,043
<i>Contingency</i>	\$	35,508
	\$	<u>88,215</u>

TOTAL

\$	<u>385,031</u>
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A copy of our financial statements is available upon request

Our Thanks

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

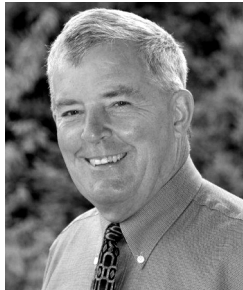
- Thank you to the students who have contributed their time to work on LISNS content and projects. We are so appreciative of our students' support and involvement and commitment to providing the public with access to justice.



Our Board of Directors

LISNS Executive:

CHAIR & PRESIDENT



Bill Berryman,
President of the Canadian
Association of Retired Teachers

VICE PRESIDENT



Robert Mroz,
McInnes Cooper

LISNS Board Members:



Ted Aubut,
Cabinet Advisor to the NS
Executive Council Office



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



Lauren Grant,
Land Titles Initiative,
Government of Nova Scotia



John Hope,
Dalhousie University



Tammy Wohler,
NS Legal Aid



LEGAL INFOⁱ NOVA SCOTIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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