



Law Society  
of Ontario

Barreau  
de l'Ontario

**TAB 8**

**Report to Convocation**

**June 28, 2022**

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# calibrate

Change. For Good.

TAB 8.1

## Civil Society Organization Program Evaluation Final Report

June 20, 2022

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Prepared for:



**Law Society**  
of Ontario

**Barreau**  
de l'Ontario

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# Executive Summary

The Law Society of Ontario (LSO) has a legislated mandate to carry out its functions with regard to its duties to maintain and advance the cause of justice and to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario.<sup>1</sup>

Pursuant to this mandate, the Alternative Business Structures Working Group's [February 2019 report to Convocation](#) recommended a framework for the Civil Society Organization (CSO) initiative. Convocation approved the initiative and on April 1, 2019, the LSO launched the CSO program. The Working Group also recommended that an evaluation of the program be reported to Convocation in the spring of 2022.

This Report outlines the evaluation results and findings.

## The Civil Society Organization Program

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) program is a regulatory framework that permits lawyers and paralegals to provide no-cost legal services through registered CSOs to the clients of those organizations, as a means of enhancing access to justice by making lawyer and paralegal services more accessible.

The program is registration based. CSOs may register with the LSO and, having satisfied a basic set of criteria with respect to the definition of a civil society organization, a confirmation that the in-house counsel has no conflicts of interest and meets other requirements with respect to serving the public including having insurance, the CSO may offer legal services through their 'in-house counsel' to their clients.

As of May 2022, there are 20 CSOs registered with the LSO (from LSO website):

*AEL Advocacy*

*Canadian Centre for Torture Victims  
(Toronto) Inc.*

*Canadian Civil Liberties Association*

*Centre des services communautaires de  
Vanier / Vanier Community Service  
Centre*

*Centre for Equality Rights in  
Accommodation*

*Chinese Christian Mission of Canada*

*Community Justice Collective*

*Ecojustice Canada Society*

*Family Service Toronto*

*First Freedoms Foundation*

*Housing Help Corporation Aide Logement*

*Lakehead University, Newcomer Legal  
Clinic*

*Midaynta Community Services*

*National Canadian Lawyers Initiative*

*National Council of Canadian Muslims  
(NCCM)*

*Ontario Social Justice & Welfare Corp*

*Pathways Employment Help Centre*

*South Asian Autism Awareness Centre*

*TalentLift Canada*

*The Democracy Fund*

One CSO, Ontario Tenant Alliance, deregistered in January 2022.

<sup>1</sup> Law Society Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.8, s. 4.2

## The Evaluation

CALIBRATE was retained to provide an evaluation of the CSO program (from its start in 2019 to April 2022) that provides both a summative assessment of the progress of the program and a formative perspective on challenges, opportunities and potential for improvement and increased impact.

### Evaluation Methodology

CALIBRATE reviewed documents relating to the program, including reports from Convocation and the Professional Regulation Committee, and materials from evaluation participants.

CALIBRATE used a combination of online surveys and direct interviews<sup>2</sup> to gather information from stakeholders for the CSO initiative. Three separate surveys were distributed to 67 stakeholders, including current and deregistered CSOs, newly registered CSOs and other non-profit organizations.

Direct interviews were conducted with 26 individuals, including CSOs, LSO staff, and other stakeholders, which included other non-profit organizations not registered with the program. These non-participating CSOs were interviewed to provide insight into what these organizations would need if the LSO wanted to increase uptake and expand the CSO initiative.

### Answering the LSO's specific questions

The Working Group's report to Convocation asked that the evaluation include the following information. Answers marked with an asterisk are answers that only include information from those CSOs that participated in the evaluation. Other answers are compiled from the annual reports filed by all registered CSOs.

1. The number of CSOs that have registered with the LSO:
  - **21** since inception
2. The number of CSOs that deregistered:
  - **1** since inception
3. The number of lawyers or paralegals providing legal services pursuant to the regulatory framework:
  - **32** currently – most CSOs have 1-2 licensees on staff
  - Additional **16** licensees that are no longer employed by the CSOs
  - **14** CSOs currently have licensees on staff
4. The number of individuals assisted by lawyers and paralegals:
  - **\*1,776 individuals** have received legal services from the 10 organizations that responded and were able to provide this information
  - **\*Average of 74 clients per licensee** providing direct services to individuals
  - 6 CSOs are not yet providing any legal services
  - The figures only reflect the CSOs that provided direct service, tracked the information, and participated in the evaluation. Because the data is incomplete, we know the true number of individuals that have received legal services will be higher
5. Types of legal services delivered: **\*The most frequently cited include:**

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for a full list of evaluation participants

*General or Summary Advice**Referrals**Advocacy Assistance**Representation**Litigation**Legal Consultations**Legal Education Workshops**Assisting with social benefits**Intervening with Federal government and**Supreme Court of Canada*

Areas of law engaged in: \*The most frequently cited include:

*Administrative**Constitutional**Criminal**Environmental**Family**Housing**Human rights**Immigration and Refugee**Labour and Employment**Landlord/Tenant**National Security**Social benefits*

6. Complaints received by the LSO with respect to services provided by lawyers and paralegals pursuant to the regulatory framework:
- **None identified**

A full list of the survey questions and summarized results can be found in Appendix B, including recommendations from the respondents on how to improve the CSO initiative, and how it can evolve over time to have more impact for people and communities.

## Findings

### Finding 1: The CSO Initiative supports the LSO's Access to Justice mandate.

The program, while small, is directly responsive to the LSO's access to justice mandate. It allows for the provision of services to people who would not otherwise have access to legal support. The program has successfully resulted in access to justice improvements. At least 1,776 people who would otherwise not have received legal supports were served.

### Finding 2: The CSO initiative is efficiently administered and managed.

This initiative is administered with minimal resources from both the LSO and the CSO perspective. At the current level, the administrative requirements for LSO are easily managed, and LSO staff indicated that they would be capable of handling some additional organizations within their existing capacity.

There is room within the reporting process to improve the LSO's ability to assess the impact of this program going forward by asking the CSOs to report on program outcome measures, such as number or type of services provided or other measures that would assist in understanding the access to justice impact in a more nuanced fashion.

### Finding 3: Retain the current definition of eligible organizations

The evaluation assessed whether the definition of eligible organizations should be reconsidered. The CSO program is open to registered charities and non-profit corporations in Ontario, but some expressed concern that the definition was too broad and may capture entities that do not share the LSO's access to justice goals. This evaluation does not find support for this proposal to narrow the definition for eligibility.

### Finding 4: Resourcing models for CSOs limit participation in the program

CSOs are either limited or entirely unable to participate in this program because their funding models do not provide sufficient resourcing, including specifically the capacity to pay counsel for providing services.

Evaluation participants provided feedback on potential options for funding legal programming:

- *Charging fees for services*: While this would potentially provide a source of revenue for the CSOs, it is not an option that all the CSOs would be able to implement or in line with their mandate to support people in need
- *Reallocating existing funding*: Most charities and non-profits receive restricted program grants that they are not able to reallocate for other purposes
- *Seeking grant funding*: There are few funders of civil society that provide funding for legal services, and few opportunities to apply for grant funding for this type of program

The insurance premium discount equal to 75% of the base rate provided by LAWPRO is an incentive for many of the CSOs who use that money for programming.

### Finding 5: The program provided career opportunities for lawyers and paralegals

The CSO initiative has provided employment opportunities to lawyers and paralegals and has helped retain legal professionals. 93% of survey respondents agreed that lawyers and paralegals benefit from this program. The initiative is providing lawyers and paralegals the chance to work in their communities and to support causes they believe in.

## Conclusion

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There are no current threats to the sustainability of the CSO model at its present operational level. Based on the review of the efficiency and of the interest in the project, this model is functionally sustainable and provides access to justice to clients of the participating organizations. Expansion of the CSO initiative is an option that the LSO could pursue, based on its own resources and priorities, noting that funding structures prevent many CSOs from participating. Moderate expansion of the initiative will not require significant additional resources.

# CSO Program Context

The Law Society of Ontario (LSO) has a legislated mandate to carry out its functions with regard to its duties to maintain and advance the cause of justice and to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario.<sup>3</sup>

Pursuant to this mandate, the Alternative Business Structures Working Group's [February 2019 report to Convocation](#) recommended a framework for the Civil Society Organization (CSO) initiative. Convocation approved the initiative and on April 1, 2019, the LSO launched the CSO program. The Working Group also recommended that an evaluation of the program be reported to Convocation in the spring of 2022.

This Report outlines the evaluation results and findings.

## The Civil Society Organization Program

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) program is a regulatory framework that permits lawyers and paralegals to provide no-cost legal services through registered CSOs to the clients of those organizations, as a means of enhancing access to justice by making lawyer and paralegal services more accessible.

The program is registration based. CSOs may register with the LSO and, having satisfied a basic set of criteria with respect to the definition of a civil society organization, a confirmation that the in-house counsel has no conflicts of interest and meets other requirements with respect to serving the public including having insurance, the CSO may offer legal services through their 'in-house counsel' to their clients.

As of May 2022, there are 20 CSOs registered with the LSO (from LSO website):

<i>AEL Advocacy</i>	<i>First Freedoms Foundation</i>
<i>Canadian Centre for Torture Victims (Toronto) Inc.</i>	<i>Housing Help Corporation Aide Logement</i>
<i>Canadian Civil Liberties Association</i>	<i>Lakehead University, Newcomer Legal Clinic</i>
<i>Centre des services communautaires de Vanier / Vanier Community Service Centre</i>	<i>Midaynta Community Services</i>
<i>Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation</i>	<i>National Canadian Lawyers Initiative</i>
<i>Chinese Christian Mission of Canada</i>	<i>National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)</i>
<i>Community Justice Collective</i>	<i>Ontario Social Justice &amp; Welfare Corp</i>
<i>Ecojustice Canada Society</i>	<i>Pathways Employment Help Centre</i>
<i>Family Service Toronto</i>	<i>South Asian Autism Awareness Centre</i>
	<i>TalentLift Canada</i>
	<i>The Democracy Fund</i>

One CSO, Ontario Tenant Alliance, deregistered in January 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Law Society Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.8, s. 4.2

# The Evaluation

## Evaluation Mandate and Goals

CALIBRATE was retained to provide an evaluation of the CSO program (from its start in 2019 to April 2022) that provides both a summative assessment of the progress of the program and a formative perspective on challenges, opportunities and potential for improvement and increased impact going forward. The evaluation considered the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the program, including the following considerations set out in the Working Group's report to Convocation:

1. The number of CSOs which have registered with the LSO
2. The number of CSOs which have been deregistered
3. The number of lawyers or paralegals providing legal services pursuant to the regulatory framework
4. The number of individuals assisted by lawyers and paralegals
5. The types of legal services delivered
6. Complaints received by the LSO with respect to services provided by lawyers and paralegals pursuant to the regulatory framework
7. Feedback from lawyers, paralegals, CSOs and their clients about the operation of the regulatory framework
8. LSO resources dedicated to the regulation of lawyers and paralegals practicing through CSOs
9. An assessment of whether the LSO should reconsider its decision to limit CSOs to providing services for free
10. An assessment of whether the LSO should reconsider the definition of eligible organizations

## Evaluation Methodology

### Document review

CALIBRATE reviewed a number of documents relating to the program, including reports from Convocation and the Professional Regulation Committee, the mandate letter from the Access to Justice Committee, and the guide and other materials provided to non-profits interested in the CSO initiative. Documents were also received from evaluation participants, including program reports, annual organizational reports, and consultation letters regarding the CSO program framework.

### Data Collection

CALIBRATE used a combination of online surveys and direct interviews<sup>4</sup> to gather information from stakeholders for the CSO initiative. Three separate surveys were distributed to 67 stakeholders, with the goal of receiving 1-2 responses per organization. The surveys were sent to:

- 17 current CSOs and 1 deregistered CSO (program staff and lawyers/paralegals)
- 3 newly registered CSOs (program staff)
- 7 other non-profit organizations

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**62% response rate from Civil Society Organizations to the Evaluation Surveys**

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A for a full list of evaluation participants

CALIBRATE received a strong 62% response rate to the survey from the registered CSOs, with 16 survey responses from 13 different organizations. Of these, 10 of the 16 respondents were licensees and 6 were program staff. CALIBRATE also received two survey responses from other non-profit organizations that have not registered as a CSO.

Direct interviews were conducted with 26 individuals, including:

- 7 CSOs (program staff and lawyers/paralegals)
- 8 stakeholders, including other non-profit organizations not registered with the program
  - 4 groups of LSO staff

Interviews with other stakeholders included participants from four non-profits that are not registered under the CSO initiative, including one that is an umbrella organization representing nearly 240 social service agencies across the province. One of these stakeholders is exploring CSO registration, and the other three were unfamiliar with the initiative before our conversations. Non-participating CSOs were interviewed to provide insight into what these organizations would need if the LSO wanted to increase uptake and expand the CSO initiative.

## Answering the LSO's specific questions

The Working Group's report to Convocation recommended that the evaluation include the following information. Answers marked with an asterisk are answers that only include information from those CSOs that participated in the evaluation. Other answers are compiled from the annual reports filed by all registered CSOs.

1. The number of CSOs that have registered with the LSO:
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  - **\*Average of 74 clients per licensee** providing direct services to individuals
  - 6 CSOs are not yet providing any legal services
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5. Types of legal services delivered: **\*The most frequently cited include:**

| *General or Summary Advice*

| *Referrals*  
| *Advocacy Assistance*

*Representation*  
*Litigation*  
*Legal Consultations*  
*Legal Education Workshops*

*Assisting with social benefits*  
*Intervening with Federal government and Supreme Court of Canada*

Areas of law engaged in: \*The most frequently cited include:

*Administrative*  
*Constitutional*  
*Criminal*  
*Environmental*  
*Family*  
*Housing*

*Human rights*  
*Immigration and Refugee*  
*Labour and Employment*  
*Landlord/Tenant*  
*National Security*  
*Social benefits*

6. Complaints received by the LSO with respect to services provided by lawyers and paralegals pursuant to the regulatory framework:
  - **None identified**
7. Feedback from lawyers, paralegals, CSOs and their clients about the operation of the regulatory framework:
  - **See Finding 2**
8. LSO resources dedicated to the regulation of lawyers and paralegals practicing through CSOs:
  - **See Finding 2**
9. An assessment of whether the LSO should reconsider its decision to limit CSOs to providing services for free:
  - **See Finding 4**
10. An assessment of whether the LSO should reconsider the definition of eligible organizations:
  - **See Finding 3**

A full list of the survey questions and summarized results can be found in Appendix B, including recommendations from the respondents on how to improve the CSO initiative, and how it can evolve over time to have more impact for people and communities.

**Most of the people we work with are tenants and unhoused people. The most important stories are the ones about how no one can get access to a lawyer – they don't qualify for legal aid, and for tenants living paycheque to paycheque, they have no money left for a lawyer, don't have access to legal supports, and the legal clinics are full and overworked. We are hearing from a lot of people that our work is so needed and appreciated.**

# Findings

## Finding 1: The CSO Initiative supports the LSO's Access to Justice mandate

The LSO has a mandate to maintain and advance the cause of justice and to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario. The goal of the CSO initiative is to provide new inclusive entry points for those requiring lawyer and paralegal services who otherwise might not have access to them, thereby increasing their access to justice.

One of our clients was a newcomer to Canada, here with their child. They were on a work permit, with insecure status, and then took on responsibility for the children of their late spouse. By having an immigration lawyer on team, the CSO could assess the matter, help collect documents, and connect them with supports. The lawyer got involved with the Children's Aid Society to ensure that the client could get custody of the kids and even helped enroll the kids into school.

The program, while small, is directly responsive to the LSO's access to justice mandate. It allows for the provision of services to people who would not otherwise have access to legal support. The program has successfully resulted in access to justice improvements. People who would otherwise not have received legal supports were served.

**88% of respondents agreed that the CSO initiative allows their organization to provide legal services that clients would not be able to afford.**

This is a typical case. The individual would not have been able to afford a lawyer on their own, was unaware of the services available to them, and was not even aware that this was a legal issue.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the CSO initiative allows their organization to provide legal services that clients would otherwise not be able to access, and that it allows them to serve more clients. Because of the CSO initiative, more than 1,700 individuals have received help with their legal issues and have received competent advice and support.

## Finding 2: The CSO initiative is efficiently administered and managed

This initiative is administered with minimal resources from both the LSO and the CSO perspective. The LSO designed the CSO initiative to have low administrative demands on both the LSO staff and the CSO participants.

The human resources connected with the program are minimal. The LSO assigned one Assistant Manager to provide programmatic management and one Manager to provide supervisory oversight, in addition to their other duties. At the current level, the administrative requirements for the LSO are easily managed, and LSO staff indicated that they would be capable of handling some additional organizations within their existing capacity.

As part of this evaluation, CALIBRATE reviewed the formal interaction processes between the LSO and CSOs. This engagement starts with a short registration form for new organizations that asks for basic organizational details and a description of the legal services the CSO proposes to provide. Evaluation participants reported that LSO staff provided useful direct support to address their questions, and that the approval process concluded quickly, usually within a couple of weeks.

**Through outreach to newcomer-serving organizations, we can explain the legal matters related to immigration status and describe the services we can help clients get access to. We have heard that some staff, who are trying to be helpful to clients, are providing legal advice. Usually this advice is wrong, and it is putting those organizations and clients at risk. As a CSO, we can raise awareness about immigration being a legal issue and can identify when legal help is needed.**

CSOs also submit a short report to the LSO on an annual basis. This report includes a list of the licensees employed by the CSO for that year, confirmation that services will continue the next year, and an opportunity to update details that may have changed. CSOs noted that the annual reporting process was straightforward and not difficult to complete, and that the LSO managed the administrative and reporting requirements well.

**Providing examples of how a lawyer has successfully been integrated into a non-traditional setting, or how service provision has been structured in existing CSOs, would be useful.**

There is room within the reporting process to improve the LSO's ability to assess the impact of this program going forward by asking the CSOs to report on program outcome measures, such as number or type of services provided or other measures that would assist in understanding the access to justice impact in a more nuanced fashion.

Several stakeholders, including the non-profit organizations that are not part of the CSO program, noted that the written materials about the CSO initiative are not clear and useful. The LSO could provide clearer information to non-CSO agencies, provide other types of tools, and consult with non-profits from outside the legal sector about effective ways to present this program.

### Finding 3: Retain the current definition of eligible organizations

The Working Group's report to Convocation indicated that the evaluation should examine whether to reconsider the definition of eligible organizations for the CSO initiative. The CSO program is open to registered charities under the *Income Tax Act (Canada)*, non-profit corporations (NFPs) incorporated under the laws of Ontario, and NFPs permitted under the laws of Ontario to operate in Ontario. Responses to the Working Group's call for comment on a draft of the regulatory framework expressed concerns that the definition was too broad and may capture entities that do not share the LSO's access to justice goals.

This evaluation does not find support for changing the definition. CSOs were split on the issue of whether the initiative would be improved by limiting CSOs to social service agencies; responses were almost evenly split between those who agreed and those who disagreed with the idea. Other stakeholders canvassed in the evaluation also did not raise any issues with the definition of eligible organizations in the program. When asked about this proposal directly, they saw no need for redefinition.

## Finding 4: Resourcing models for CSOs limit participation in the program

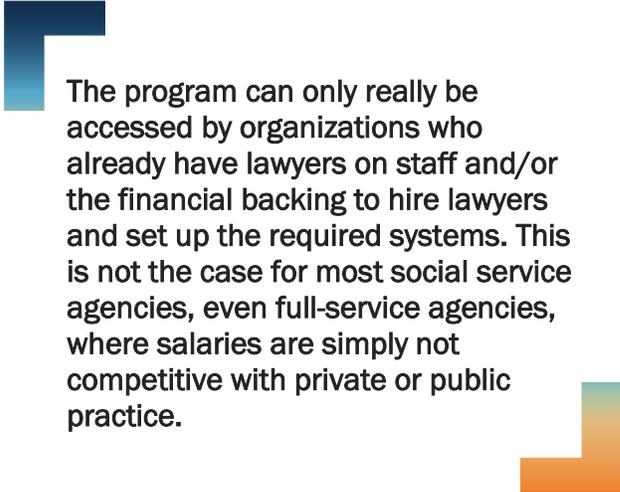
Although the CSO initiative is a relatively low-effort program from the perspective of the LSO and does not require extensive engagement by the CSOs to stay in the program, providing the services that are enabled by the program has cost implications for the participating CSOs.

The LSO allows charities and non-profits to provide free legal services to their clients through lawyers and paralegals that are employed by the CSOs. Most evaluation respondents, whether they were participating CSOs, other non-profit organizations, or other stakeholders, discussed the challenge of funding for these positions. There are 6 registered CSOs who are not delivering legal services because they have no lawyers on staff. While the program allows CSOs to provide more services to their clients, resourcing realities have limited the impact of the program, including specifically the capacity to pay counsel for providing services.

Evaluation participants provided feedback on potential options for funding legal programming:

- charging fees for services,
- reallocating existing funding, and
- seeking grant funding.

In the absence of any other funding sources, the potential to charge fees is one option for increasing participation. However, there was not consensus among the CSOs that this is the best solution. While 56% of respondents agreed the CSO initiative would be improved by allowing organizations to charge fees for legal services, some respondents noted that because their clients are living with very low incomes, charging for legal services would not be a possibility for them nor would it meet their mandate. While this would potentially provide a source of revenue for the CSOs, it is not an option that all the CSOs would be able to implement.



**The program can only really be accessed by organizations who already have lawyers on staff and/or the financial backing to hire lawyers and set up the required systems. This is not the case for most social service agencies, even full-service agencies, where salaries are simply not competitive with private or public practice.**

Another option for resourcing the licensee salaries is for CSOs to reallocate funds from within their existing budgets. Respondents talked about the assumption that exists that organizations can use funding from other sources to cover these costs. However, for most charities and non-profits, almost all their annual budget is comprised of restricted program grants, and most funders do not allow reallocation of grants to cover legal services. Even if the funders were open to this possibility, those funds are currently providing other needed programming that would have to be cut for the CSO to hire a lawyer or paralegal. At the same time, the charities and non-profits that serve the most vulnerable populations are frequently small organizations with the least flexibility in their annual budgets and low levels of fundraising. The non-participating organizations recognized the value of the CSO initiative but identified that the lack of funding for staff salaries and other program costs would be a barrier to participation in the program.

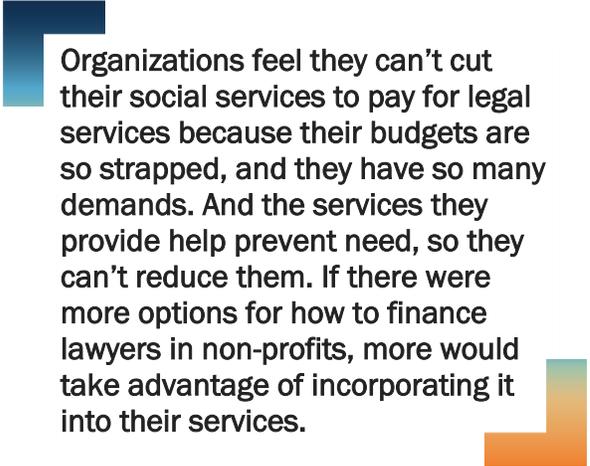
Pursuing funding through grant applications was another issue raised by many of the evaluation participants. Most charitable organizations and non-profits expand their program offerings by applying for grants from different funders, including those who are willing to pilot programs for the first time. However, the non-profit funding model does not typically allow for the funding of legal services – there are few funders that support these activities, and few opportunities to apply for grant funding for this type of program.

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## 88% of respondents agreed the CSO initiative would be improved by having additional dedicated funding to employ lawyers/paralegals

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The professional fees paid by lawyers and paralegals were identified as a burden by several respondents. The insurance premium discount provided by LAWPRO is an incentive for many of the CSOs, because often those fees are included as a program cost that is paid by the organization. CSOs that employ lawyers who provide professional services to the public pursuant only to their employment on a no-fee basis can apply to be part of LAWPRO's "Designated Agency" program. If approved, lawyers providing services through the CSO qualify for a premium discount equal to 75% of the base rate. While not all the licensees were able to take advantage of the reduction to their insurance fees, those that were noted that their organizations were able to direct those dollars back into service delivery. 30% of respondents said that if their other fees were reduced, this would also benefit service delivery.

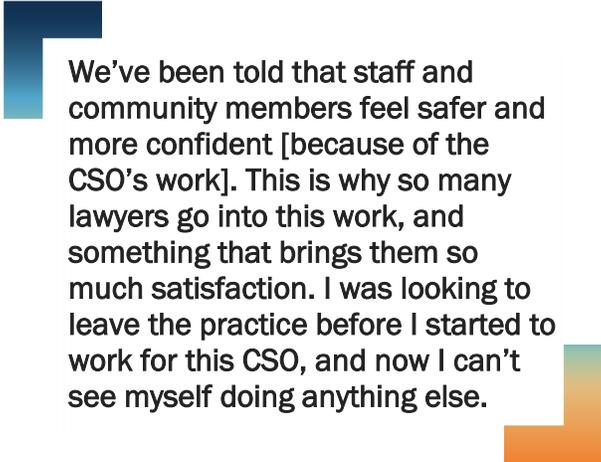


Organizations feel they can't cut their social services to pay for legal services because their budgets are so strapped, and they have so many demands. And the services they provide help prevent need, so they can't reduce them. If there were more options for how to finance lawyers in non-profits, more would take advantage of incorporating it into their services.

For multiservice non-profits, there are other resourcing implications involved with the CSO initiative. As one of the interview participants noted, most organizations would want this lawyer/paralegal to be part of a larger team, to get a sense of community and issues, and the trends and legal issues that will affect their clients. The licensee would also need to work with another staff member who would provide coordination and logistics support, which would allow the licensee to spend their time on the cases themselves. Building this team and providing appropriate supervision within the organization puts additional resource demands on the CSOs.

## Finding 5: The program provided career opportunities for lawyers and paralegals

In addition to providing individuals with access to justice, the CSO initiative had another positive benefit: it has provided employment opportunities to lawyers and paralegals and has helped retain legal professionals. Some of the organizations filled new positions with licensees because of the CSO initiative, and other CSOs expanded the work of their existing in-house counsel to include direct service to clients. From most respondents there was clear recognition that this program offers another practice option for licensees.



We've been told that staff and community members feel safer and more confident [because of the CSO's work]. This is why so many lawyers go into this work, and something that brings them so much satisfaction. I was looking to leave the practice before I started to work for this CSO, and now I can't see myself doing anything else.

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## 93% of survey respondents agreed that lawyers and paralegals benefit from this program

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The CSO initiative is providing lawyers and paralegals the chance to work in their communities and to support causes they believe in. 75% of respondents agreed that the CSO initiative offers opportunities for lawyers and paralegals to serve the community in new ways. One respondent noted that the CSO initiative

opens more pathways to licensees to provide affordable client service, and to offer services in niche practice areas.

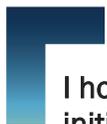
## Conclusion

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This evaluation has considered the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the CSO initiative. When considering the program's access to justice impacts, achievements, and challenges, it is CALIBRATE's assessment that the CSO initiative is meeting the goals of the program according to the framework that was established.

There are no current threats to the sustainability of the CSO model at its present operational level. Based on the review of the efficiency and of the interest in the project, this model is functionally sustainable. Expansion of the CSO initiative is an option that the LSO could pursue, based on its own resources and priorities, noting that funding structures prevent many CSOs from participating. Moderate expansion of the initiative would not require significant additional resources.

The CSO initiative offers current and future lawyers and paralegals the ability to provide access to justice to clients of the participating organizations. Individuals and communities are accessing needed legal services through this initiative that they otherwise would not be receiving.



**I hope that the LSO continues this initiative. It is important and a symbolic step forward, even if the achievements have been modest. [It should be] part of the menu of initiatives available to improve access to justice in Ontario.**



# Appendix A:

## Survey and Interview Participants

### Civil Society Organizations registered with the LSO

- AEL Advocacy
- Canadian Centre for Torture Victims (Toronto) Inc.
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association
- Centre des services communautaires de Vanier / Vanier Community Service Centre
- Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
- Chinese Christian Mission of Canada
- Community Justice Collective
- Ecojustice Canada Society
- Family Service Toronto
- Lakehead University, Newcomer Legal Clinic
- National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)
- Ontario Social Justice & Welfare Corp
- Pathways Employment Help Centre
- TalentLift Canada

### Other Stakeholders and Non-Profit Organizations

- Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA)
- Bramalea Christian Fellowship
- Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)
- LAWPRO
- Former Treasurer, Law Society of Ontario
- Ontario Bar Association (OBA)
- Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
- Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN)
- The Neighbourhood Group (TNG)

# Appendix B:

## Survey Responses

1. Name of Organization:

Responses listed in Appendix A

2. Your role at the CSO:

Lawyer	8
Lawyer/Administrator	3
Paralegal	2
Program Staff	2
Supervisor	1

3. Does your organization have the same number of lawyers/paralegals providing services as you did as of December 31, 2021?

Yes	11
No	4
N/A	1

4. Types of legal services delivered/anticipated through your CSO (Check all that apply):

General or Summary Advice	14
Referrals	10
Advocacy Assistance	13
Representation	11
Litigation	7
Legal Consultations	11
Legal Education Workshops	11
Assisting with social benefits	5
Other: Intervening with the federal and Supreme Court of Canada	1

5. Areas of law addressed/anticipated through your CSO (Check all that apply):

Administrative	9
Constitutional	5
Criminal	5
Environmental	3
Family	4
Housing	9

Human rights	8
Immigration and Refugee	8
Labour and Employment	7
Other: Animal, National Security, Social Benefits, Landlord Tenant Board, Social Services Tribunal	5

6. Do you have a report that summarizes your legal services as a CSO? (Y/N)

Yes	7
No	8
N/A	1

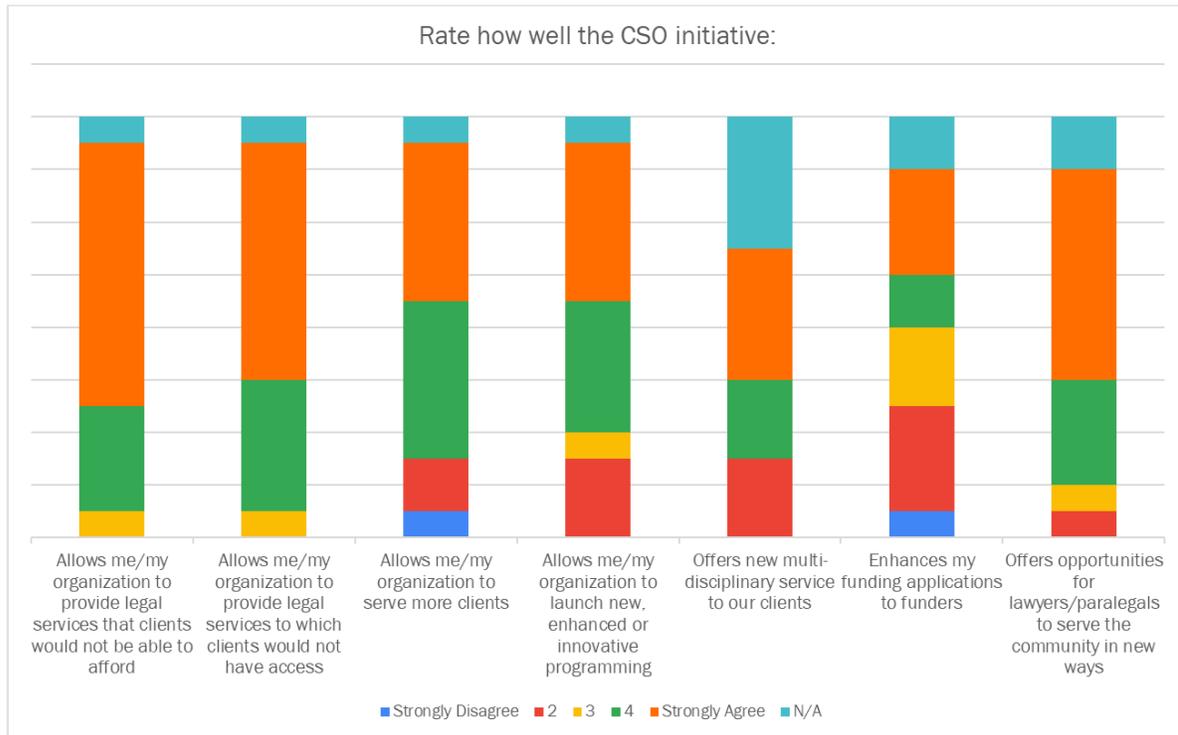
7. Number of clients that have received legal services from your organization as a CSO:



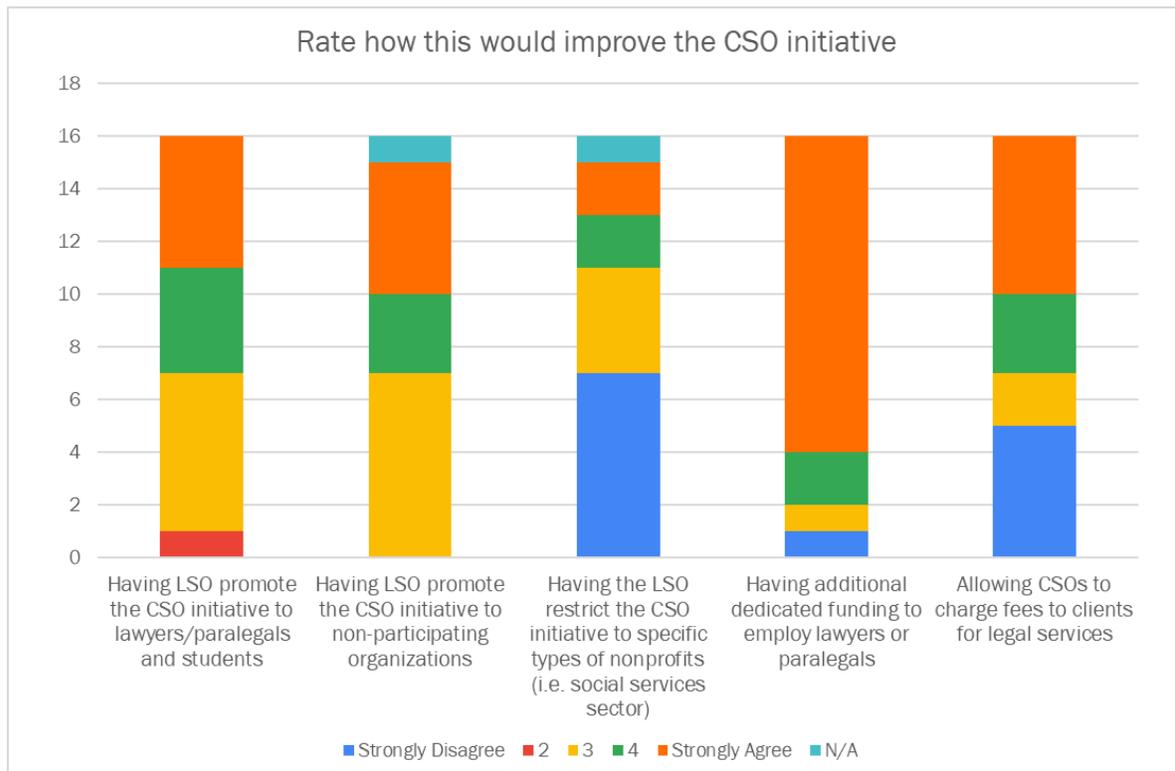
8. What types of information do you collect about the CSO clients receiving legal advice and your legal services? (Check all that apply):

Client demographic data	9
Type of legal service needed	10
Area of law provided	11
Number of interactions	5
Number of hours of service	2
Feedback/evaluation of the service	5
None	3
Other: Mental health assessment, Vaccination status, Success	3

9. Rate how well the CSO initiative currently does each of the following, in your view (1-5 scale, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):



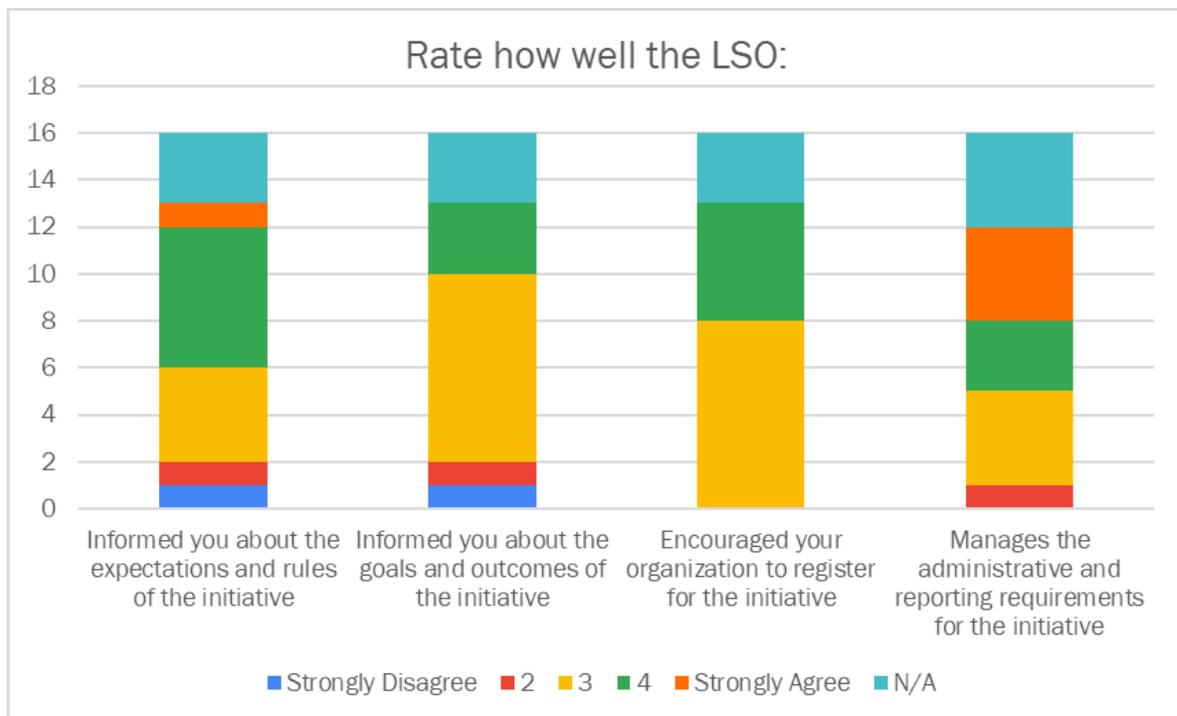
10. Rate how each of the following would improve the CSO initiative, in your view (1-5 scale, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):



11. What improvements or recommendations do you want to see for the CSO initiative? (responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)

- Funding support resources for organizations so we have sufficient funding to operate
- Being able to charge a small administrative fee to those clients who could afford it, but who would otherwise not be able to afford legal services, would allow us to serve more people by increasing access for the low/middle income clients
- Giving CSOs the flexibility to charge some fees for services - on an appropriate sliding scale - would greatly expand the variety of services that could be provided
- Effective intake mechanism and good interpretation services
- More French language initiatives
- Allowing CSOs to become empanelled to represent clients on legal aid certificates
- A better way to reflect these lawyers' unique situation as neither in-house nor firm lawyers in regulatory mediums (i.e., annual report, insurance, etc.)
- Any measures to increase flexibility would be welcome
- Forgo the CPD requirements for those with CSO Status
- Make it more straightforward to have partnerships recognized as CSOs

12. Rate how well the LSO (1-5 scale, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):



13. How should the CSO initiative evolve over time? Do you have any suggestions about how it can: a) Have more impact? b) Engage more people and communities? c) Expand financial or in-kind resources? d) Expand or improve partnerships? (responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)

- Provide funding to CSOs to hire lawyers and paralegals to address access to justice gaps
- The by-laws should allow the option to charge low fees to individuals or organizations who are of a modest income (as opposed to low-income)
- Provide financial support for the CSOs' work by encouraging larger firms to contribute to a CSO fund

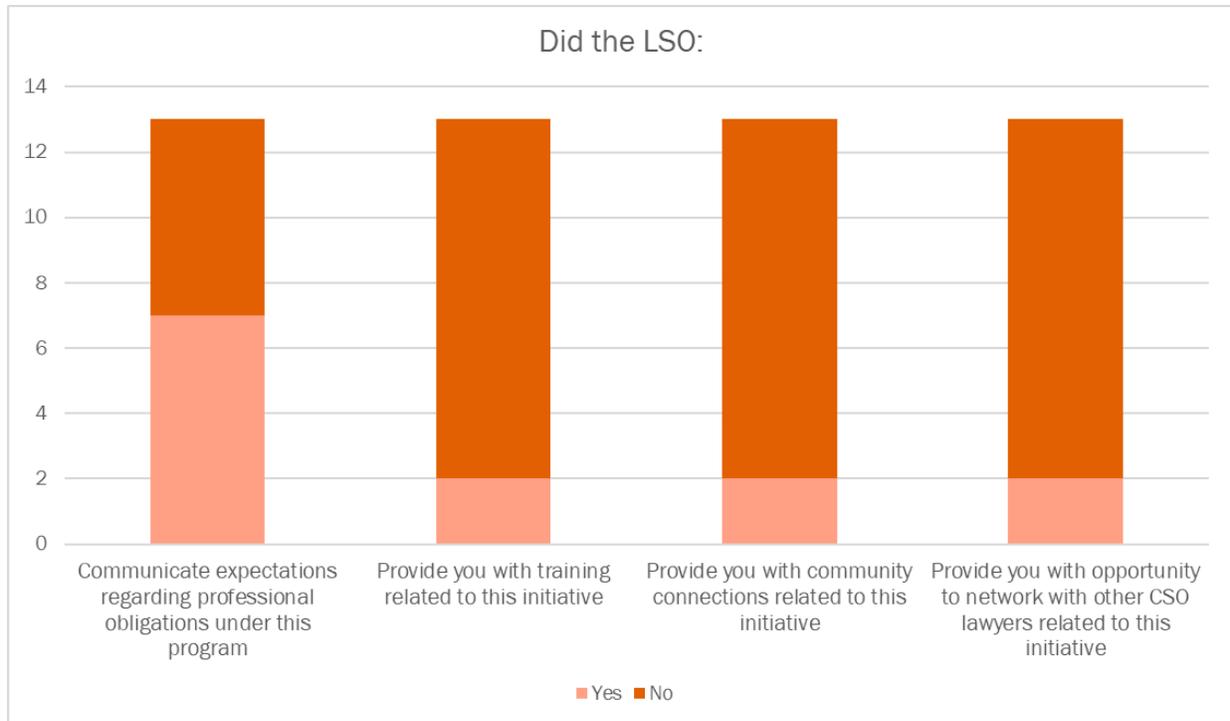
- Reduce LSO fees for lawyers practising at these organizations
- Expand in-kind resources
- CSO bank for these organizations to connect with and share precedents and subscriptions with each other
- Continued/greater outreach to a range of non-legal social service organizations and providing examples of how a lawyer has been integrated into a non-traditional setting, or how service provision has been structured in existing CSOs
- More francophone initiatives
- Educate judges about the initiative, including the important role that CSOs play in enhancing access to justice
- Connecting the registration status on the lawyer's LSO portal to track status of reporting and other requirements

14. Briefly describe how this initiative helps you serve your community. This could include the impact of the CSO initiative on an individual client, a group of people, your organization, or your broader community. *(responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)*

- Our organization aims to serve low- and modest-income individuals gain access to legal services
- Most of our clients, specifically refugee claimants, need lawyers and they have no financial means to retain one. Legal Aid Ontario has limited resources to provide them support
- Although we had lawyers prior to the CSO designation, the reduction in fees has allowed us to retain our lawyers and redirect the money that we traditionally paid to LSO towards other priorities
- As far as I know, it reduces my Law Pro fees, which frees up money for us to focus on fulfilling our mandate
- Our clients would not otherwise be able to access counsel/the courts to pursue important strategic litigation to advance environmental law in Ontario
- Being able to take on legal files has made a big impact on the community. From landmark defamation cases, intervention in sentencing in hate-based murders, to the daily calls we receive – there is such a need in this community for this type of service.
- We serve clients who would otherwise not be able to access legal help for immigration or refugee issues, we educate newcomers about their legal rights, and we educate other service providers about immigration and refugee legal issues that might be relevant to their work.
- I appreciate the ability to assist my clients to obtain financial benefits which they have been found ineligible to receive. It is imperative we continue to provide our free, services to our community

Questions 15-17 are only for the lawyers/paralegals of the CSO

15. Does/did the LSO:



16. Were you hired at the CSO specifically as a result of this initiative? Y/N

Yes	1
No	12

Please explain (responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)

- I was an existing staff lawyer prior to the CSO designation
- I was hired as a Paralegal, and later learned we carry CSO status
- I think this is the case although this was never made expressly clear to me
- When we created this project, we realized that it would have to be a CSO, so we applied under the program
- I am not an employee of the CSO, I am a volunteer

17. Do you feel that lawyers/paralegals benefit from this program? Y/N

Yes	11
No	1
N/A	1

Please explain (responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)

- It allows lawyers to offer services in niche practice areas to those otherwise unable to obtain representation
- It opens up more pathways to providing affordable client service
- It reduces my fees
- It is a unique opportunity for lawyers to do this type of meaningful work and is rewarding for lawyers who would otherwise leave the profession for fear that they are not fulfilled in their roles
- Greatly supports ability of lawyers to provide access to justice/legal services

- Registering for the CSO took time, and practising under its limits restricts what we can do and how we are able to fund the clinic
- We receive referrals from other legal representatives who would otherwise not know where to send their clients

18. Any other comments *(responses summarized and edited for privacy and length)*

- Further financial support is required for grassroots organizations to operate with a CSO model
- Funding is our largest issue. I am paid well below the average for my profession. While I enjoy my position and my ability to contribute back to the community, the pay rate is somewhat concerning. Grants and bursaries are somewhat limited if they exist at all
- Prior to joining my CSO I was actively looking for JD-preferred and law adjacent jobs because I did not feel fulfilled in private practice. I now can't imagine doing anything else
- Are there options other than a registration based CSO program? Could the Bylaws be amended to allow licensees to practise at non-profits under certain rules that they would be professionally responsible for adhering to?