

Annual Report

2019



Law Society
of Ontario

Barreau
de l'Ontario



Annual Report 2019

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Our mandate

The Law Society of Ontario (the Law Society) governs the legal professions in the public interest by ensuring that the people of Ontario are served by lawyers and paralegals who meet high standards of learning, competence and professional conduct.

In fulfilling its regulatory mandate, the Law Society observes principles that encompass a duty to protect the public interest, to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario, and to act in a timely, open and efficient manner.

Strategic priorities

In 2015, the Law Society developed a four-year strategic plan with five key priorities:

- 1** Lead as a professional regulator
- 2** Prioritize life-long competence for lawyers and paralegals
- 3** Enhance access to justice across Ontario
- 4** Engage stakeholders and the public with responsive communications
- 5** Increase organizational effectiveness

The Law Society has pursued these priorities by undertaking a number of key initiatives. You can read about our most recent accomplishments — what we have done and why it is important — in the strategic initiatives section of this report.

The work set out in the 2015-2019 strategic plan is now complete. With the election of a new board of directors (known also as Convocation) in April 2019, the Law Society has begun the process of forming a new strategic approach for the next four years. We look forward to reporting on the activities related to that plan in upcoming annual reports.



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At a glance

2,423 lawyers licensed
1,057 paralegals licensed

Membership:
55,360
lawyers
9,470
paralegals

37,900
lawyers
practising law
3,700
paralegals providing
legal services

4,379
complaints referred
to Professional
Regulation Division

48%
of complaints in Professional
Regulation were about
service issues

144
discipline
notices
issued





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Message from the Treasurer

At the time of writing

While I reflect on the Law Society's work throughout 2019, and my time as Treasurer, I would like to recognize that at the time of this writing we are continuing to respond to the far-reaching social and economic impacts of the pandemic, across the globe and society, and throughout the practice of law, the justice sector and the public we serve. As a profession, we have responded to this extraordinary event with collegiality, collaboration, innovation and some ingenuity.

Likewise, we are in the midst of important discussions about anti-Black racism, highlighting the need to reduce barriers created by racism and by unintentional and indirect discrimination. Also of importance is the Law Society's commitment to implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and working toward reconciliation with First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

This context is significant as we reflect on our work in 2019 and as we look ahead to the future. Together, we must remain focused on our goal to increase fair representation of racialized licensees and members of equity-seeking communities and as we integrate insights from the pandemic into the practice of law to improve access to justice for the people of Ontario. There is basis for optimism as we listen and reflect on learnings that may be applied in future.

Attaining common goals

Over the past year, the Law Society made significant and meaningful progress as we entered the final and culminating stage of implementation of the Law Society's 2015 to 2019 strategic priorities. Highlights this year include enhancing professional competence and working with our stakeholders and partners to address strategic issues and to advance access to justice for all people in Ontario.

Professional competence is integral to the professions and part of the Law Society's mandate to regulate in the public interest. Over 2019, the Law Society has focused efforts to help lawyers and paralegals with practice supports, educational activities, information and resources aimed at enhancing competence.

An important element of competence includes the provision of legal information and library services for licensees. In collaboration with stakeholders over the

course of the year, we set the direction for the evolution of library services through the Legal Information and Resource Network (LIRN). This new approach to governance brings enhanced librarianship expertise to the oversight of legal information and library related services for practitioners across the province.

Throughout 2019, we continued to rely on justice sector stakeholders for input and collaboration as we position the Law Society to lead the professions strategically into the coming years. This includes the important work of our task forces and working groups, focused on addressing strategic issues facing the professions such as technology, mental health, proportionate regulation and family law.

In 2019, the Law Society continued to work to help ensure accessible legal aid services are available to low-income Ontarians. With a long history in the provision of legal aid service to Ontarians, the Law Society, with input from stakeholders, advocated for improvements to the *Legal Aid Services Act*.

Much progress has been made in relation to the Family Legal Services Review over the last year. We are proceeding in a careful and thoughtful way as we continue to consider the parameters for change and to consult with subject matter experts, stakeholders and the public, regarding a potential family legal services provider licence.

It has been an honour and privilege to lead the Law Society as Treasurer over the last two years, supported by a dedicated group of benchers and an equally dedicated and professional operational staff led by our CEO Diana Miles. I am confident that with that support and the guidance of its many stakeholders and partners, the Law Society will continue to be a competent and effective public interest regulator.

Malcolm M. Mercer
Treasurer





Annual Report 2019

Message from the CEO

Envisioning the future of the Law Society

Heading into my third year as CEO, I continue to be honoured to be part of an organization that is public-focused and future-oriented, yet founded in a long, proud history. This perspective — looking to the future by building on the success of the past, ran through many of our activities in 2019.

The past year saw the successful completion of the Law Society's strategic priorities for 2015 to 2019. Under the direction of our board, we implemented a significant number of objectives in all of our core policy areas. Following the first simultaneous lawyer and paralegal bench elections in April 2019, our new board will be assessing and building on these accomplishments, setting priorities for the ongoing work of the organization.

Significant achievements in 2019, operationally, also involved examining our approaches and positioning the organization to operate more effectively with a focus on the future. We revised the approach to our budgeting process to more accurately forecast annual outcomes and expenditures, and to focus on approved projects and programs supported by formalized policy and business plans. This new approach to the setting of priorities and longer-term planning led to a decrease in annual fees for Ontario's lawyers and paralegals for 2020.

Building on work begun in 2018, the senior management executive team and I continued to emphasize and enhance cross-functional collaboration through increased internal communications and coordinated goal setting for all divisions. This has led to improved organizational results and more timely and effective engagement, both internally and externally with our stakeholders. Moving toward a more agile application of our human and infrastructure resources is a key objective for our operations as we move forward, and will assist us to be nimble and cost efficient.

Perhaps the accomplishment that best demonstrates our vision for the future is the establishment of our corporate values. With participation from across the organization, we identified a set of shared values to shape our work together and with others. This project was the culmination of a series of improvements that our operational teams have embraced to communicate more effectively, set clear performance plans and reinforce our commitment to the Law Society's mandate. We are a multi-faceted regulatory and business corporation with a positive reputation domestically and internationally as a result of our regulatory leadership, subject-matter expertise and skills. Our people are proud of our public interest regulatory focus because they know that what we do matters. We will strive to continue to serve that public through the lens of our newly adopted values, pictured on the adjacent page: Excellence, Responsiveness, Compassion, United in Purpose and Legacy.

I look forward to continuing to build on our many accomplishments in 2020. I thank my team for their dedication and great work, and Treasurer Mercer for his thoughtful and supportive leadership throughout the past year.



Diana Miles
Chief Executive Officer



Annual Report 2019

Law Society of Ontario corporate values

We act with integrity to be the regulatory gold standard.

Excellence

United in Purpose

We are one team that works together to achieve our shared goals.

Compassion

We are genuinely interested in the needs of one another, and the public.

Responsiveness

We adapt quickly to the evolving needs of the public and legal professions.

Legacy

We are proud of the work we do and the meaningful role we play in support of the public interest.



Strategic Initiatives

2019



Task Forces

Why it's important:

The Law Society's board of directors establishes task forces to research and review current or potential issues or needs and report back with findings and recommendations for the board to consider.

What we did:

- The **Technology Task Force**, established in 2018, continues to examine both current and emerging legal technologies to determine how they engage regulatory standards and professional conduct rules, as well as their prospects for assisting the public. The task force seeks to recommend regulatory approaches and tools for legal technologies that will aid in enhancing access to justice and protecting the public, and strives to better facilitate and encourage technological innovation within the professions.

The task force presented its first update report in November 2019. It will continue to report periodically to ensure that the public and the professions are engaged with the issues and ideas it is considering.

- The **Program Review Task Force** was established to determine if certain Law Society programs continue to be relevant and needed, and if their objectives or goals continue to be valid. In particular, the task force is assessing the efficiency with which programs are delivering their outcomes. The task force will report regularly on its progress.
- The **Proportionate Regulation Task Force** was established to examine the regulatory obligations, processes and procedures that affect members in their interactions with the Law Society. The task force may propose possible changes in order to ensure a balance between effective public protection and regulatory burden. The task force will make regular reports on its work.



Professional Competence

Why it's important:

Professional competence is an integral part of the Law Society's mandate to regulate in the public interest — and it is essential that we continually enhance opportunities and develop new ones to support our members in strengthening their skills and knowledge base in order to best serve Ontarians.

What we did:

- The **Coach and Advisor Network (CAN)** matched 559 coaches and advisors with members who requested support, and held six new learning and community events in 2019. These included a panel discussion on coaching and workshops focused on resilience habits, cultural competence and goal setting.

An extension of CAN, called the **Management Coaching 2020** program, launched a call for recruitment in late 2019. This program provides coaching by seasoned law firm leaders to managers of firms with two to 20 legal professionals. The new program generated substantial interest, and is being piloted with 10 engagements in 2020.

- The **Legal Information and Resource Network (LIRN)** was approved by the Law Society, the Federation of Law Associations of Ontario and the Toronto Lawyers Association. With a new skills-based board of directors, LIRN is well positioned to effectively guide the provision of legal information and library services for Law Society members.
- The **Practice Management Helpline (PMH)** improved telephone access by introducing an option to connect directly from the member inquiry line and a triaged voicemail system. These changes reduce the wait times for calls made during busy periods, allow confidential voicemail messages to be left with PMH after hours and permit members to identify calls as urgent, if appropriate. This allows PMH staff to respond to calls in priority sequence and serve practitioners more effectively.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Professional Competence

In addition, a decision-making checklist was created to help members resolve their professional responsibility or practice management issues independently. Helpline FAQs and resources regarding virtual commissioning were also developed. These materials are available on Iso.ca.



Equity

Why it's important:

The Law Society seeks to ensure that both the law and the practice of law are reflective of all the peoples of Ontario, including Indigenous peoples, Francophones and equity-seeking communities. The Law Society also works to ensure that its workplace and the legal professions are free of harassment and discrimination.

What we did:

- Launched a free, three-hour online course focused on advancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the legal professions. The course was developed to help members fulfil their initial three-hour **EDI Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** requirement. This new course is offered in addition to other accredited EDI CPD activities and events.
- Approved a requirement for members to acknowledge, in accordance with professional conduct rules, their responsibilities to respect the **requirements of human rights laws** in Ontario and to honour the obligation not to discriminate. The requirement is now included in members' annual report filings.
- Increased clarity and transparency when the board approved enhancements and improvements to the **good character assessment process** and the materials that communicate that process to applicants, members and the public. For instance, transparency about the review process is improved by outlining the steps in the process and the possible outcomes at each stage.
- New Law Society Tribunal **Rules of Practice and Procedure** were approved and came into force on January 1, 2020. The rules provide more flexible case management powers and methods of hearing issues, enabling panels to better respond to the particular needs and dynamics of each case — including the needs of the parties, complainants, witnesses and the public.



Equity

This flexibility is especially valuable in matters that may involve mental health issues. For instance, under the new rules, a panel hearing a conduct application may — on consent, deal with matters that would otherwise be the subject of a capacity application.



Access to Justice

Why it's important:

It is critical that all Ontarians have fair and equal access to the justice system. Many individuals, especially those with modest means, have limited or no ability to access the help they need to address their legal issues. Facilitating access to justice in Ontario is part of the Law Society's statutory obligations and we continue to collaborate with our justice system partners to support initiatives and programs that enhance access for everyone.

What we did:

- The Access to Justice Committee launched a **review of the Law Society's approach to access to justice** and, in May, the committee concluded a call for comment on the initiatives described in its consultation paper. Submissions were provided by 215 individuals and 28 organizations, and the committee is reviewing the submissions.
- The Law Society continued to work to help ensure that strong and readily accessible **legal aid** services are available to low-income Ontarians across the province. As one of the initial architects of the modern legal aid system, the Law Society supports and participates in the Association for Sustainable Legal Aid (ASLA). The Law Society, with input from ASLA, actively advocated for improvements to the *Legal Aid Services Act*.
- **The Action Group on Access to Justice (TAG)** celebrated Ontario's fourth annual Access to Justice Week (October 28 to November 1) by hosting five events. Nearly 1,500 people participated in-person and via webcast. Topics included current justice-sector challenges, such as: Indigenous justice, investing in justice, self-represented litigants, data technology and design, and public legal education. In the plenary session, ideas were generated for a robust 2020 TAG program.
- The lawyers' **Rules of Professional Conduct were amended to extend the modified conflict of interest standard** to lawyers who are remunerated by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) and who provide short-term legal services, such as duty counsel or summary advice



Access to Justice

services. LAO provides legal services to some of the most vulnerable members of the public. This amendment is intended to allow for the more efficient delivery of short-term legal services and result in fewer potential clients being denied service. The modified conflict standard was also extended to lawyers who provide short-term legal services under the auspices of a clinical education course or program.

- The Law Society continued its work on the development of a proposed, new **family legal services provider licence** to improve access to justice for Ontario's families. The proposed licensing framework would permit appropriately licensed paralegals and others to assist the public with certain family legal services.



Financial Statements

2019



Financial Statements

Summary of financial performance

The Law Society is in a financially sound position, with notable improvement in the fund balance of the Compensation Fund, and is well placed for the future.

The Law Society's lawyer and paralegal General Funds, which account for program delivery and administrative activities, are reporting for 2019 combined operating expenses in excess of revenues of \$836,000 (2018 - \$118,000 expenses in excess of revenues). To mitigate annual fee increases, the 2019 budget incorporated funding through the use of \$5.1 million of the lawyer General Fund balance along with \$1.2 million in funding from surplus investment income in the Errors & Omissions Insurance Fund. Similarly, the 2019 budget planned for utilization of \$2.4 million of the paralegal General Fund balance to fund operations associated with the paralegal General Fund. Planning for an in year excess of expenses over revenues to use available fund balances to fund operations is a not-for-profit budgeting best practice. As a result of the better than anticipated financial performance in 2019, the Law Society did not use the lawyer General Fund balance and used less of the paralegal General Fund balance than planned in the 2019 budget to fund operations.

The Law Society's restricted funds are reporting combined excess of revenues over expenses of \$8.4 million in 2019 (2018 - \$7.5 million excess of revenues over expenses) with the lawyer Compensation Fund experiencing revenues in excess of expenses of \$10.1 million (2018 - \$8.5 million revenues in excess of expenses). In response to unusually high claims against the lawyer Compensation Fund prior to 2017, the Law Society implemented a three-year plan from 2018 to 2020 to refinance the fund and restore its financial stability. As part of this plan, the lawyer Compensation Fund component of the annual fee was increased for this three-year period to raise an additional \$5 million in each year. At the end of 2019, this plan, coupled with grant claims returning to a more normal level, has allowed the fund balance to increase to \$21.8 million.

For more information, view the full [2019 Financial Statements](#).



Board Membership

2019





2019 Board Membership

Treasurer

Malcolm M. Mercer

Elected benchers

Robert Adourian
Dr. Ryan Alford, LL.D.
Jack Braithwaite
D. Jared Brown
Robert J. Burd
Gerard Paul Charette
Joseph Chiumminto
Paul M. Cooper
Dianne G. Corbiere
Cathy Corsetti
Jean-Jacques Desgranges
Teresa Donnelly

Etienne Esquega
John Fagan
Julian Falconer
Sam Goldstein
Gary Graham
Joseph Groia
Philip Horgan
Jacqueline A. Horvat
Murray Klippenstein
Shelina Lalji
Cheryl Lean
Atrisha Lewis

Marian Lippa
Michelle Lomazzo
Cecil Lyon
C. Scott Marshall
Isfahan Merali
Gina Papageorgiou
Trevor Robert Parry
Jorge Pineda
Lubomir Poliacik
Geoff Pollock
Brian Prill
Jonathan M. Rosenthal

Chi-Kun Shi
Julia Shin Doi
Megan Shortreed
Andrew Spurgeon
Sidney H. Troister, LSM
Tanya Walker, C.S.
Alexander David Wilkes
Claire Wilkinson
Nicholas dePencier Wright, C.S

Appointed benchers

Robert Bateman
Seymour Epstein, P.Eng.

Dr. Benson Lau, O. Ont.
Nancy Lockhart, O. Ont.

Geneviève Painchaud
Clare Sellers

Gerald Sheff
Doug Wellman

Ex officio benchers

The Hon. Doug Downey, MPP
Bob Aaron
The Hon. Robert P. Armstrong, Q.C.
Larry Banack
Christopher Bentley
Michael J. Bryant
Paul Copeland, C.M., LSM
Abraham Feinstein, Q.C., LSM
The Hon. Lee K. Ferrier, Q.C.
Patrick Garret Furlong, Q.C., LSM
Gary Lloyd Gottlieb, Q.C.
The Hon. John D. Ground, Q.C.

Howard G. Hampton
Charles A. Harnick, Q.C., LSM
George D. Hunter
Vern Krishna, C.M., Q.C., FRSC, LSM
Ronald D. Manes
The Hon. R. Roy McMurtry, O.C., O.Ont., Q.C., LSM
W. A. Derry Millar, LSM
Daniel J. Murphy, Q.C.
Ross W. Murray, Q.C.
Alan W. Pope, Q.C.
Julian Porter, Q.C., LL.D.

Judith M. Potter
The Hon. Allan Rock, P.C., Q.C.
Clayton Ruby, C.M., LL.D.
Arthur R. A. Scace, C.M., Q.C.
The Hon. James M. Spence, Q.C., LL.D.
Norman W. Sterling, Q.C.
Harvey T. Strosberg, Q.C., LSM
Gerald A. Swaye, Q.C.
J. James Wardlaw, Q.C., LSM
Bradley H. Wright
David S. Young



2019 Board Membership

Emeritus treasurers

Thomas G. Conway, LL.D.

Janet E. Minor, LL.D.

Laurie H. Pawlitzka, LL.D.

Honorary bencher

His Royal Highness Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales

Committee chairs

Cathy Corsetti, Access to Justice

Teresa Donnelly, Audit and Finance

Joseph Groia, Compensation Fund

Dianne G. Corbiere, Equity and Indigenous Affairs

Malcolm M. Mercer, Government and Public Affairs;
Litigation; Priority Planning

Robert J. Burd, Paralegal Standing

Sidney H. Troister, Professional Development and
Competence

Jacqueline A. Horvat, Professional Regulation

Isfahan Merali, Tribunal

Membership changes

April 11 – Former Treasurer emeritus Paul B. Schabas was appointed as a Judge of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario.

April 11 – Elected bencher Janet Leiper was appointed as a Judge of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario.

April 25 – Lee Akazaki was elected a bencher to fill the resulting vacancy.

April 30 – Paralegal and lawyer bencher elections took place.

April 30 – Treasurer Malcolm M. Mercer was re-elected as a bencher and resumed his duties as Treasurer as an ex officio bencher.

April 30 – Tanya Walker was elected a bencher in the Toronto region to fill the resulting vacancy upon Mr. Mercer's resumption as Treasurer as an ex officio bencher.

June 20 – The Honourable Doug Downey was appointed Attorney General of Ontario and became an ex officio bencher, replacing the Honourable Caroline Mulroney.

June 27 – Malcolm M. Mercer was re-elected as Treasurer.

June 27 – The following individuals joined Convocation as new public-appointed benchers or reappointed public-appointed benchers:

Robert Bateman

Seymour Epstein, P.Eng (reappointed)

Dr. Benson Lau, O. Ont.

Nancy Lockhart, O. Ont.

Geneviève Painchaud

Clare Sellers

Gerald Sheff (reappointed)

Doug Wellman

Sept. 11 – Orlando Da Silva resigned as a bencher.

Oct. 24 – Jonathan Rosenthal was elected a bencher to fill the resulting vacancy.



Statistics

2019



Membership

In 2019, the Law Society regulated more than 55,360 lawyers and more than 9,470 paralegals.

Of those, approximately 37,900 lawyers were practising law and 3,700 paralegals were providing legal services, as of December 31, 2019.

Lawyers by age and gender

Age range	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
Under 30	3,973	1,672	3.02%	2,301	4.16%
30 – 39	14,869	6,967	12.58%	7,902	14.27%
40 – 49	12,144	5,895	10.65%	6,249	11.29%
50 – 65	14,917	8,904	16.08%	6,013	10.86%
Over age 65	9,457	7,840	14.16%	1,617	2.92%
Total	55,360	31,278	56.50%	24,082	43.50%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Percentage is based on total.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Statistics do not include honorary members, lawyers appointed to judicial office, and lawyers whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.



Paralegals by age and gender

Age range	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
Under 30	2,403	513	5.42%	1,890	19.96%
30 – 39	2,679	696	7.35%	1,983	20.94%
40 – 49	1,689	611	6.45%	1,078	11.38%
50 – 65	2,157	1,065	11.25%	1,092	11.53%
Over age 65	542	415	4.38%	127	1.34%
Total	9,470	3,300	34.85%	6,170	65.15%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Percentage is based on total.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Statistics do not include honorary members, paralegals appointed to judicial office, and paralegals whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.



Lawyers by type of employment and gender

Type of employment	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
Sole practitioner	9,341	6,280	14.47%	3,061	7.05%
Partner	7,100	5,254	12.11%	1,846	4.25%
Employee	1,434	752	1.73%	682	1.57%
Associate	8,682	4,463	10.28%	4,219	9.72%
Education	589	236	0.54%	353	0.81%
Government	6,081	2,519	5.80%	3,562	8.21%
In-house	5,824	2,834	6.53%	2,990	6.89%
Legal clinic	588	170	0.39%	418	0.96%
Other	3,757	1,874	4.32%	1,883	4.34%
Total	43,396	24,382	56.18%	19,014	43.82%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Percentage is based on total.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Statistics do not include honorary members, lawyers not working or retired, lawyers appointed to judicial office, and lawyers whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.



Paralegals by type of employment and gender

Type of employment	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
Sole practitioner	1,706	1,019	13.90%	687	9.37%
Partner	175	111	1.51%	64	0.87%
Employee	853	262	3.57%	591	8.06%
Associate	235	98	1.34%	137	1.87%
Education	85	17	0.23%	68	0.93%
Government	737	191	2.61%	546	7.45%
In-house	428	176	2.40%	252	3.44%
Legal clinic	110	11	0.15%	99	1.35%
Other	3,003	696	9.49%	2,307	31.46%
Total	7,332	2,581	35.20%	4,751	64.80%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Percentage is based on total.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Statistics do not include honorary members, paralegals who are not working or retired, paralegals appointed to judicial office, and paralegals whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.



Geographical distribution of lawyers by gender

Geographic area	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
City of Toronto	27,076	15,051	27.19%	12,025	21.72%
Ontario (excl. City of Toronto)	23,453	13,686	24.72%	9,767	17.64%
Canada (excl. Ontario)	2,865	1,533	2.77%	1,332	2.41%
Outside Canada	1,966	1,008	1.82%	958	1.73%
Total	55,360	31,278	56.50%	24,082	43.50%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Percentage is based on total.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Statistics do not include honorary members, lawyers appointed to judicial office, and lawyers whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.



Geographical distribution of paralegals by gender

Geographic area	Total	Male	% M	Female	% F
City of Toronto	3,470	1,176	12.42%	2,294	24.22%
Ontario (excl. City of Toronto)	5,841	2,068	21.84%	3,773	39.84%
Canada (excl. Ontario)	122	39	0.41%	83	0.88%
Outside Canada	37	17	0.18%	20	0.21%
Total	9,470	3,300	34.85%	6,170	65.15%

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.*
- Percentage is based on total.*
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*
- Statistics do not include honorary members, paralegals appointed to judicial office, and paralegals whose licences were suspended as of December 31, 2019.*



Membership

Number of law firms by size

Firm size	# of firms	%
1 lawyer	8,204	73.45
2 – 10 lawyers/paralegals	2,678	23.97
11 – 25 lawyers/paralegals	193	1.73
26 – 50 lawyers/paralegals	61	0.55
51+ lawyers/paralegals	34	0.30
Total	11,170	100.00

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Statistics based on law firms reported as primary business.
- Firm size based on number of lawyers and paralegals in private practice at firm.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Number of paralegal firms by size

Firm size	# of firms	%
1 paralegal	1,601	87.44
2 – 10 paralegals/lawyers	226	12.34
11 – 25 paralegals/lawyers	3	0.16
26 – 50 paralegals/lawyers	1	0.05
51+ paralegals/lawyers	0	0.00
Total	1,831	100.00

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Statistics based on paralegal firms reported as primary business.
- Firm size based on number of lawyers and paralegals in private practice at firm.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



Membership

Number of lawyers and paralegals working in law firms by size

Firm size	# of lawyers and paralegals	%
1 lawyer	8,204	30.47
2 – 10 lawyers/paralegals	8,157	30.29
11 – 25 lawyers/paralegals	2,736	10.16
26 – 50 lawyers/paralegals	2,037	7.56
51+ lawyers/paralegals	5,794	21.52
Total	26,928	100.00

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Statistics based on law firms reported as primary business.
- Firm size based on number of lawyers and paralegals in private practice at firm.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Number of lawyers and paralegals working in paralegal firms by size

Firm size	# of lawyers and paralegals	%
1 paralegal	1,601	71.38
2 – 10 paralegals/lawyers	567	25.28
11 – 25 paralegals/lawyers	31	1.38
26 – 50 paralegals/lawyers	44	1.96
51+ paralegals/lawyers	0	0.00
Total	2,243	100.00

Notes:

- Data as of December 31, 2019.
- Statistics based on paralegal firms reported as primary business.
- Firm size based on number of lawyers and paralegals in private practice at firm.
- Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



Number of lawyers and paralegals licensed by gender

Lawyers

Female	1,319	54.4%
Male	1,104	45.6%
Total	2,423	100.00%

Paralegals

Female	785	74.3%
Male	272	25.7%
Total	1,057	100.00%

Lawyer and paralegal enrolment in licensing process by gender

Lawyers

Female	1,449	54.02%
Male	1,232	45.94%
N/A*	1	0.04%
Total	2,682	100.00%

Paralegals

Female	1,067	73.69%
Male	381	26.31%
N/A*	0	0.00%
Total	1,448	100.00%

* Does not self-identify as either male or female.



Lawyer and paralegal enrolment in licensing process, by equity-seeking groups*

Lawyers

Racialized community	745	27.78%
Francophone	124	4.62%
Indigenous	39	1.42%

Paralegals

Racialized community	288	19.89%
Francophone	35	2.42%
Indigenous	24	1.66%

* Data obtained from applications for the licensing process in which applicants voluntarily self-identified.



Regulation

Complaints

The number of new complaints received in the Professional Regulation Division (Professional Regulation) increased in 2019. The total number of new complaints received in 2019 (4,379) was 4.3% higher than the total number received in 2018 (4,200).

Complaints received	
5,838	Complaints received by Law Society
126	Complaints re-opened
5,964	Total complaints
4,379	Complaints referred to Professional Regulation

Subjects of the complaints	
Lawyers	77%
Paralegals	12%
Non-licensee and lawyer and paralegal applicants	11%

Complainants	
Members of the public	71%
Lawyer or paralegal	12%
Internally raised (i.e., the complainant is the Law Society)	17%



Types of allegations raised in complaints received

Issue type	% of complaints received in Professional Regulation
Service issues (examples: fail to account, fail to communicate, fail to serve client)	48%
Integrity issues (examples: civility, counselling/behaving dishonourably)	40%
Governance issues (examples: fail to cooperate with Law Society, unauthorized practice)	21%
Financial issues (examples: mishandling trust accounts, misappropriation, real estate/mortgage schemes)	14%
Special applications (examples: capacity, good character)	9%
Conflicts (examples: lawyer or paralegal in position of conflict, business/financial relations with client)	7%

Figures total more than 100% due to some complaints raising more than one issue.

Area of law identified in the complaints received

Area of law	2019	2018	2017
Civil litigation	25%	27%	28%
Family	18%	16%	14%
Real estate	20%	16%	22%
Criminal	12%	12%	10%
Administrative/immigration	15%	15%	10%
Estates	5%	6%	6%



Investigations

In 2019, the Professional Regulation Division continued to pursue its goal of more robust triaging and increased resolution of complaints earlier in the process, without the necessity of full investigations instructed under section 49.3(2) of the *Law Society Act*. These efforts allow investigation staff to focus on and address those matters which represent higher risk to the public and the professions.

Of the complaints that were instructed for investigation:

- 87% of the instructions were for a conduct investigation.
- 3% of instructions were for a capacity investigation.
- 5% of instructions were for an investigation into unauthorized practice.
- 5% of instructions were for a good character investigation.

There was no appreciable difference in the reason for the completion of investigations in the past three years.

Reasons complaints were completed in 2019, following an investigation

Reason	%
Closed with diversion*	2%
Closed with staff caution or best practice advice	24%
Closed as resolved	1%
Closed as no/insufficient evidence to warrant further regulatory action	25%
Other staff closings**	24%
Transferred for prosecution	25%

* *Regulatory meeting, invitation to attend, letter of advice, practice/spot audit recommendation, undertaking.*

** *Includes discontinued complaints and complaints outside the jurisdiction of the Law Society.*



Complaints Resolution Commissioner

When the Law Society closes a case after an investigation, the complainant may request a review of that decision by the complaints resolution commissioner (the “commissioner”).

- Of the 134 decisions rendered following a review by the commissioner in 2019, only nine files (7%) were referred back to the Professional Regulation Division for further investigation. Of those nine files, the commissioner was not satisfied that the decision to close was reasonable in eight files. (The other file was referred back as the complainant provided fresh evidence which the commissioner felt warranted further investigation.)
- The executive director of Professional Regulation adopted the commissioner’s recommendation in all of the files referred back.

Discipline

In 2019, 266 complaints/cases involving 164 lawyers/paralegals/applicants were transferred into Litigation Services - Discipline (“Discipline”) for prosecution. The number of lawyer/paralegal/applicant matters transferred into Discipline in 2019 was approximately the same as in previous years.

At the end of 2019, Discipline had:

- 132 matters before the Hearing Division.
- 28 matters before the Law Society Tribunal - Appeal Division or the Courts.

Notices issued by the Discipline department

Notices issued	2019	2018	2017
Notices of application (conduct and capacity)	114	103	116
Notices of referral for hearing (licensing [good character], reinstatement, terms dispute, restitution)	16	13	23
Notices of motion for interlocutory suspension/restriction	14	16	21
Total	144	132	160



Types of allegations raised in the notices issued in 2019

Issue type	% of notices issued in 2019
Service issues (examples: fail to account, fail to communicate, fail to serve client)	43%
Integrity issues (examples: civility, counselling/behaving dishonourably)	48%
Governance issues (examples: fail to cooperate with Law Society, unauthorized practice)	37%
Financial issues (examples: mishandling trust accounts, misappropriation, real estate/mortgage schemes)	32%
Special applications (examples: capacity, good character)	16%
Conflicts (examples: lawyer or paralegal in position of conflict, business/financial relations with client)	6%

Figures total more than 100% due to some complaints/cases raising more than one issue.



Final orders rendered by the Hearing Division by year

117 matters were completed before the Law Society Tribunal - Hearing Division in 2019.*

Matters disposed of by the Hearing Division		Lawyers			Paralegals		
		2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017
Conduct	Total	53	74	89	21	32	33
	Reprimand	7	15	22	3	7	3
	Suspension	23	35	42	14	20	23
	Permission to surrender	6	8	4	1	0	2
	Revocation	15	13	10	3	3	4
	Fine	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Dismissed/Stayed	0	2	6	0	0	0
	Withdrawn/Abandoned	2	1	4	0	2	1
Interlocutory suspension/Restriction		11	12	20	9	3	6
Capacity		6	1	3	1	0	2
Non-compliance		1	0	0	0	0	0

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Final orders rendered by the Hearing Division by year

Matters disposed of by the Hearing Division	Lawyers			Paralegals		
	2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017
Reinstatement/Terms Dispute	4	4	2	0	0	1
Licensing (including readmission)	5	5	3	6	8	5
Totals	80	96	117	37	43	47
2019	117					
2018	139					
2017	164					

* "Completed matter in the Hearing Division" for Professional Regulation is defined as one in which the Law Society Tribunal - Hearing Division has rendered a final order and the Tribunal is considered functus or when the matter has been withdrawn, abandoned or deemed abandoned.

Appeals and applications for judicial reviews in 2019

	Law Society Tribunal – Appeal Division	Divisional Court	Court of Appeal for Ontario	Supreme Court of Canada
Matters commenced	15 appeals	4 appeals 2 judicial reviews	1 application for leave to appeal 1 appeal	None
Matters completed	12 appeals	5 appeals 3 judicial reviews	2 applications for leave to appeal	None
Matters active as at December 31, 2019	21 appeals	6 appeals	1 appeal	None

See also:

Law Society Tribunal Annual Report

LAWPRO Annual Report

LibraryCo Inc. Annual Report



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