

# Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services

## ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016



# From the Chair

**Gary Newhouse, Barrister & Solicitor**

Our Annual General Meeting last year featured singer-songwriter and Jazz FM host Laura Fernandez and was followed by a Community Forum on the Present State of Democracy and Justice in Canada hosted and moderated by University Settlement. Three of the local candidates in the Federal Election responded to presentations and questions from representatives of Samara Canada, Fair Vote Canada, the Metro Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and Kensington-Bellwoods. It was a lively and enlightening discussion in which many community members participated. Since our last AGM we have remained very engaged with our community members and agency partners. In November we supported a memorial for labour organizer Joe Hill raising funds for the Workers Action Centre and in December we held a well-attended Open House and then a forum on Income Security.

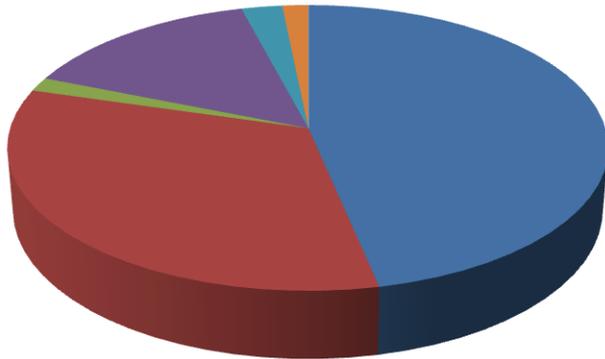
As a result of the forum on Income Security, community members called for a further event to focus on Universal Basic Income which was held in June. In the meantime, Kensington-Bellwoods has supported the efforts of the Tenant Advocacy Group of legal clinics, the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations and ACORN in their efforts to secure landlord licensing in Toronto, better enforcement of property standards and to oppose the provincial governments proposed changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that would make it easier for landlords to evict tenants. We have also been working with Parkdale Community Legal Services to organize tenants to fight easier evictions. With the help of volunteers, we have also been promoting the \$15 and Fairness campaign in our community.

Our staff lawyers and community legal worker continue to provide excellent advice and successful representation to our clients in the areas of immigration and refugee law, tenant rights, workers' rights and income security programs. In addition to their heavy caseload, they have also been providing legal education and information to the broader community through events such as Law at the Library and conducting legal education and training sessions with frontline workers of our community partners, including University Settlement, St. Stephen's Community House, Scadding Court, West Neighbourhood House and the Cross Cultural Community Services Association.

In September we met with a group of academics and non-profit managers involved with the Non-Profit Organization Management Program at Fu Jen Catholic University, College of Social Sciences, in Taipei, Taiwan. We introduced the group to the Executive Directors of eight other non-profit organizations, most of whom are our community partners. There was a very successful and productive exchange of knowledge concerning both services to the community and organizational management.

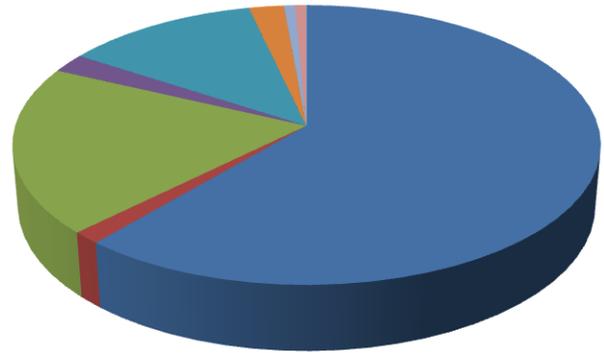
This year's Annual General Meeting will be followed by a community forum on income and housing. While the community and workers organizations have been fighting for \$15 and Fairness and the anti-poverty movement has been fighting for increased social assistance rates, the government has responded by floating the idea of a basic income. Regardless of whatever scheme the government eventually embraces, without meaningful rent control and tenant protection, most working people and the poor will continue to pay a significant and ever-increasing portion of their income to landlords. In this community forum, we are looking for ways that local communities can hold the provincial and federal governments accountable for the lack of decent jobs, adequate income supports, and affordable rental housing.

**Area of Law %  
OPEN CASES**



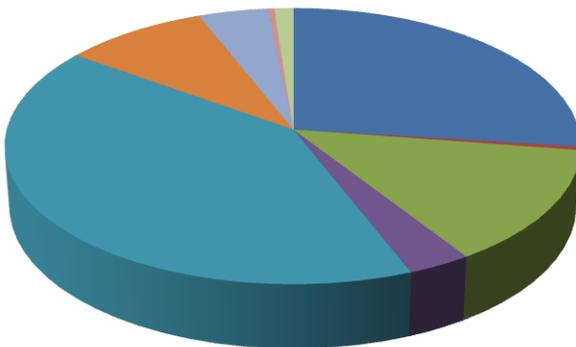
- Housing
- Disability Support ODSP
- Other Income Maintenance
- Immigration / Citizenship
- Employment
- Other

**Area of Law %  
CLOSED CASES**



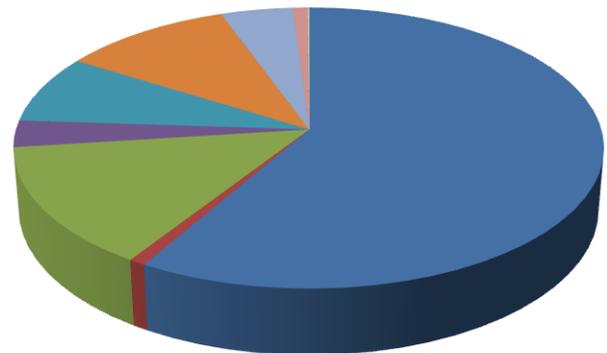
- Housing
- Ontario Works
- Disability Supports ODSP
- Other Income Maintenance
- Immigration / Citizenship
- Employment
- Human Rights
- Other

**Area of Law %  
BRIEF SERVICES**



- Housing
- Ontario Works
- Disability Support ODSP
- Other Income Maintenance
- General Administrative / Notary
- Immigration / Citizenship
- Employment
- Human Rights
- Other

**Area of Law %  
ADVICE**



- Housing
- Ontario Works
- Disability Support ODSP
- Other Income Maintenance
- General Administrative / Notary
- Immigration / Citizenship
- Employment
- Human Rights
- Other



## **Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services**

### **Our Principles**

Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services is committed to providing legal assistance to low income persons in the area bounded by Ossington Avenue/Strachan Avenue, Yonge Street, Bloor Street and Lake Ontario. This includes providing summary advice, representation and assistance, as well as referral on non-legal matters of concern to clients; community outreach; community organizing; community education; and organizing law reform activities aimed at improving the legal and economic status of low income persons in Ontario.

Our goal is to work towards the elimination of poverty in our society, and to ensure equality before the law. To that end we are committed to working with other individuals and groups who share that goal, and to community organizing to bring about changes in the law that improve the legal and economic status of low income people in Ontario.

Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services is committed to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, national origin, political or religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationship and/or disability.

### **Our Areas of Law**

**Immigration and Refugee, Income Security, Tenants' Rights, Workers' Rights,  
Domestic Violence and Criminal Injuries Compensation**

### **Our Regular Hours**

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 5:00

Thursday 9:00 to 1:00 CLOSED for Staff Meeting

Friday 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:00

We close daily from 12:00 to 1:00 for lunch except on Thursdays.

### **Mandarin Mini Clinic**

Mandarin speaking people may drop in on Tuesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to speak with Fei, our Mandarin interpreter. KBCLS is located at 489 College Street, Suite 205, one block west of Bathurst Street, in Toronto. Interpretation in other languages is also available over the telephone or in person by appointment. Please call 416-924-4244 for an appointment.

**For more information, visit our website at [www.kbcls.org](http://www.kbcls.org)**