

**COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC**

NAVIGATING NEW SEAS

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



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(MAY 2022)

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BACKGROUND

CLBC is a not-for-profit registered charity under the BC Societies Act and is funded primarily through major contributions from the Law Foundation of British Columbia and the Law Society of British Columbia, with additional project funding from the Notary Foundation of British Columbia. The Ministry of Attorney General provides physical space for law libraries in 30 courthouses throughout the Province.

CLBC Values

Accountability
Excellence
Service
Equity & Inclusion
Adaptability
Kindness

CLBC Vision

Everyone in BC has ready access to the legal information & resources they need.

CLBC's mission is to provide the legal community and public with legal resources, Librarian expertise & informed referrals, to help people research and manage their own or client legal issues. We strive to meet this by providing the following core services:

- 1. Providing information services:** connecting clients to legal information and services.
- 2. Curating print and digital materials:** developing and maintaining legal information collections that meet our clients' needs.
- 3. Delivering training and outreach programs:** building the capacity of our clients to use legal information and services.

CLBC's strategic plan guides the overall direction of the library by outlining objectives and activities intended to achieve **four goals**:

- 1.** Expertly curate and protect the quality of our legal information & resources.
- 2.** Invest in the acquisition & sharing of staff expertise.
- 3.** Reduce barriers to accessing high quality legal information & resources.
- 4.** Empower people to effectively research and manage their own or client legal issues.

Foundation

We continuously improve our business processes & governance to support this work.

EMBARK

/im'ba:rk/ **1** begin (a course of action, especially one that is important or demanding.) **2** to commence or engage (in) a new project, venture, etc.



NAVIGATING NEW SEAS

Assessing the new status quo was a key theme for 2022. This meant continually surveying our data, including user experience (UX) research and usage statistics, to confirm that some trends we had seen during pandemic restrictions had become lasting factors that will impact resource planning and future budgets. We paused on starting any major new initiatives, and took the time to assess what we've learned so far and what it tells us about the future of our services.

Highlights of what we learned:

- Lawyers are more likely now to access our librarian services online or by phone than they were pre-pandemic. More lawyers have come to rely on the expertise and guidance of our staff, which is a positive trend but is also a future challenge in terms of limits on our human resources.
- There is a large "Pandemic Cohort" of lawyers newly called in BC since 2020, who may not yet have stepped into a courthouse library. Training and empowering people to competently manage their clients' legal matters requires that we raise awareness of our library resources and embed skill-building opportunities into our programming and services.
- Members of the public and legal intermediaries (e.g. advocates and public librarians) provided feedback and UX input to guide the re-design of our Clicklaw website to improve its functionality. The concept of an "Online Library of Public Legal Resources" remains valued, but the site design and functionality is 14 years old and overdue for a user-focused overhaul. Initial steps were taken to map out what resources will be required in 2023 and 2024 to improve this service.
- With the introduction of mandatory Indigenous cultural education for lawyers, the Law Society made clear that lawyer competence includes Indigenous inter-cultural competence. As one of the key providers of resources that support lawyer competence, CLBC made collection decisions in 2022 that resulted in multiple copies of key publications being made freely available to BC lawyers and notaries, regardless of where in the province they live or work. This includes First Nations 101, 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, Indigenous Relations and many other important educational titles.
- Increased demand for Truth and Reconciliation-related resources in

public libraries led us to prioritize those materials in our LawMatters collection recommendations, leading to a significant uptick in Truth and Reconciliation resources purchased with Law Matters grants as well as some innovative programming through public libraries around the province:

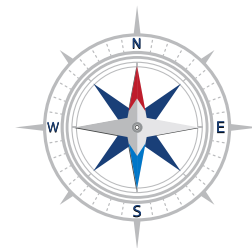
- Local public libraries partnered with local Indigenous agencies to set up satellite collections in the Tse'k'wa Heritage Society and Kermode Friendship Society
- Five libraries purchased multiple copies of recommended titles and hosted book clubs (Creston, Grand Forks, Kimberley, Fernie and Nelson).
- Eleven libraries used funds to purchase multiple copies of books to be shared at events held on the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day in Invermere, Nelson, West Vancouver, New Westminster, Fort Nelson, Pemberton, Squamish, Valemount, Whistler, North Vancouver and Smithers.
- Recommendation lists curated by our staff were very much appreciated by public libraries: "We're happy to see the early stats show that almost every item purchased has already

circulated in our community! This is already a big improvement from past dusty reference shelves." ~ Fraser Valley Regional Library

- Training and Outreach staff working with community partners delivered 40 programs to more than 4,000 participants who reported an average 30% increase in confidence levels following our training. Our archived webinars were viewed 8,119 times. Demand for virtual and in-library tours and research skills training was also high: we hosted 70 tours and orientation sessions.
- Online communities of practice hosted on our Lawbster platform continued to grow and thrive, particularly within communities of family law practitioners, and a very active community of law librarians in BC's larger law firms.
- In partnership with Court Services, we piloted two virtual hearing rooms (Kamloops and Vancouver) and saw little take-up on their use, in large measure because the courts returned to in-person hearings as the default format, but also because of limitations in the court services technology provided. Future pilots with less limited technology will be needed to provide a more practical test of demand for private, tech-enabled spaces in our libraries.

- Our technological requirements continue to dominate discussions about service delivery, as we prepare for the aging-out of some key elements of our IT infrastructure. We continued to analyze usage, demand and technology developments in order to inform our future architecture and resource allocations.

Overall, 2022 was a success story in terms of providing the staff, technology and virtual & physical resources to support British Columbians who needed to access legal information to manage their own or their clients' legal issues. It was also a year of investing in research and analysis to support our ability to plan out the resources and infrastructure needed to respond to changed demand. We expect to use that information to continue to navigate through the changed environment and maximize the impact of our funders' investments in us to support access to justice and the legal profession's competence.



2022 SERVICE STATS



Training

The number of total training sessions post-Covid continued to settle in 2022, but the number of individual participants still remains above 2019 levels.



Remote services

Web access and some of the other remote services dropped in 2022, possibly due to the continued return to onsite services.



Book-in-a-Box

2022 saw a slight decline in Book-in-a-Box orders, yet they still remain 35% above pre-pandemic levels. This appears likely to stay high.



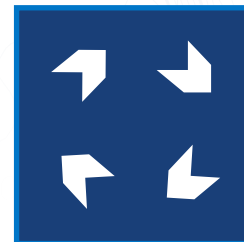
Database subscriptions

PAC accessed database subscriptions were up again in 2022 with more users back onsite, and remote subscription accounts also grew by 9% over 2021.



Front-line reference information requests

Complex requests - where our librarians provide high value to our clients - reached a 5 year high in 2022. The number of overall information requests is still below pre-pandemic levels.



Print circulation, Public Access Computers, WIFI

Print circulation again saw growth in 2022 of over 20% compared to the previous period, and onsite PAC sessions grew 32%.

ADVANCE

/əd'væns / **1** move forward in a purposeful way. **2** make or cause to make progress. **3** a development or improvement.



Information services

Our library staff continued to deliver legal information services to our clients virtually through our phone and email services, and in-person through our onsite services.

The LawMatters program distributed \$144,250 in grants to public libraries across BC to support legal information collections in communities across BC. We expanded our selection criteria and curated a list of suggested titles to include resources promoting a greater understanding of the

Canadian justice system, with a focus on truth and reconciliation, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

In person

In April 2022, as the courts discontinued public screening, we opened our doors and returned to drop-in service during public hours. In-person traffic continued to grow as our physical spaces were once again easy to access.

Online

CLBC provides a variety of information services and repositories online, hosted across several web properties. Demand for these services has fluctuated, with some areas seeing increases and others decline.

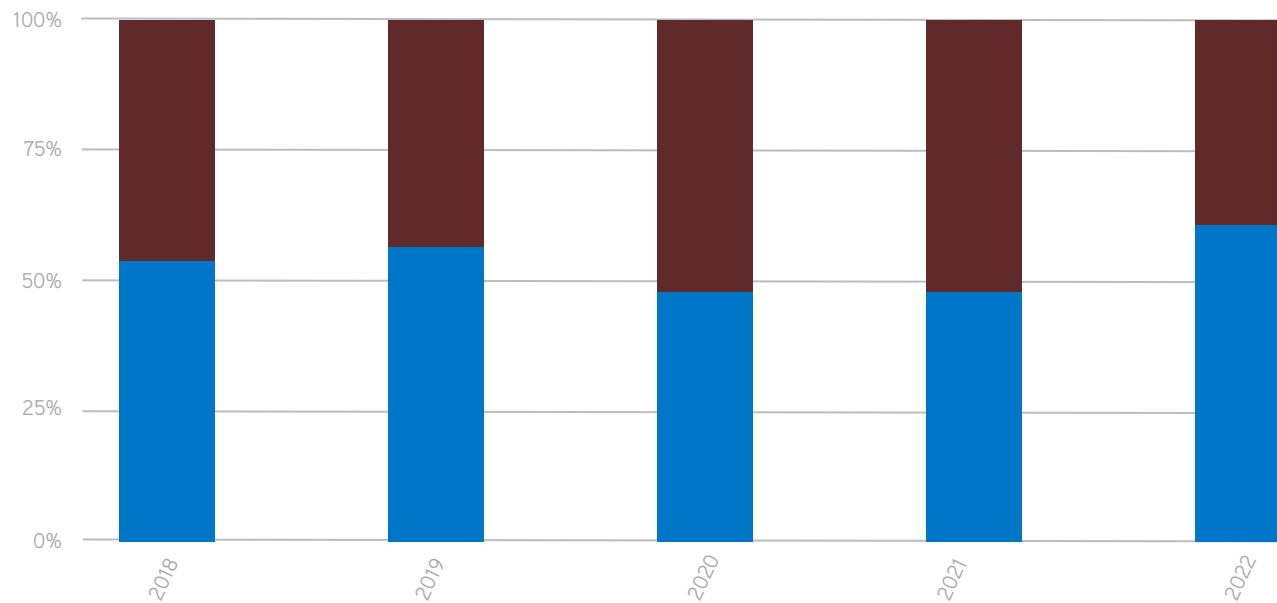


Figure 1:
The decline in public patrons seen over the pandemic shutdown rebalanced itself in 2022.

Lawyers Public

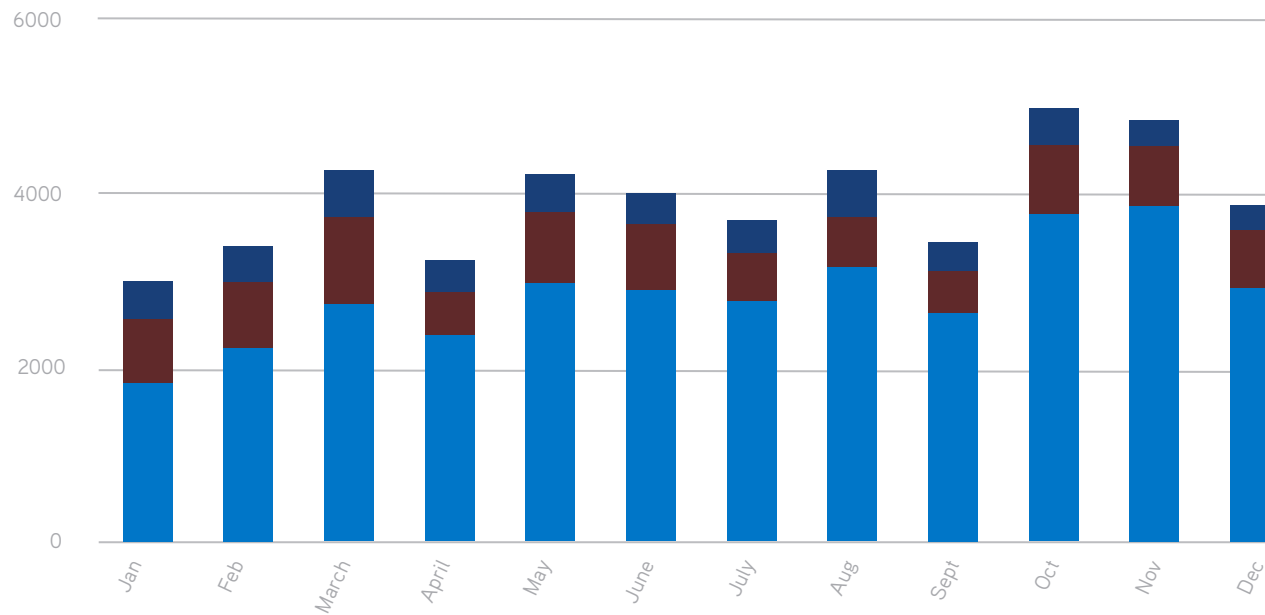


Figure 2: Front desk service demand continued to grow throughout 2022 reflecting a return to normal post-pandemic traffic.

In addition to the main website, CLBC curates and manages:

Clicklaw Wikibooks

Clicklaw Wikibooks, CLBC’s highest traffic online site, is a web-based publishing platform that provides access to public legal education to BC residents. Investigation into a drop in traffic to the site revealed the need for some minor technical updates, and highlighted the importance of regularly renewing and adding fresh content in order to remain high on Google’s search engine results pages. Two staff members have prioritized time on this important activity.

Lawbster.net

(online group discussion and collaboration platform)
 In 2022, Lawbster’s largest online Community of Practice, the Family Law Organizer (“FLO”) community, grew another 15% to a total of 560 members. FLO Working Groups included collaborative family lawyers, paralegals who work in family law, parenting coordinators, and practitioners (lawyers and paralegals) who have practice-oriented and procedural questions. FLO also welcomed a new working group under the name of “ELF”, which is short for Emerging Family Lawyers Forum, which grew to a 55 member working group by the end of 2022.

Lawbster also hosts the Vancouver Association of Law Libraries (“VALL”) forum

that supports local law librarians, primarily in private law firms. The VALL forum group on Lawbster grew to 81 members, growth of 16% over the previous year.

Clicklaw.bc.ca

The Clicklaw re-envisioning team focused on the design phase of their project, defining a new model for Clicklaw to better integrate with CLBC’s reference services for the public. Working with a UX design consulting firm on audience workshops, two rounds of user testing and four design iterations resulted in a design package containing desktop & mobile prototypes and a content strategy workshop for staff. Technology scoping and budgeting options were developed to facilitate implementation in 2023.

NAVIGATE

/ˈnæv.ə.ɡeɪt/ **1** to understand or deal with something complicated. **2** to determine a path or course. **3** direct carefully and safely.



Curating print and digital materials

Print collections continued to see supply chain issues and hyper-inflation as a challenge to efficient curation. The curation team strategized and coordinated print purchasing decisions across the organization to gain the most for client's access to quality print resources within the organization's limited financial resources..

2022 saw many new resources distributed to full time locations, completion of the

initial Abbotsford Courthouse Library print collection, and development of the collection development team, processes and procedures that will maintain high levels of service for our clients.

Book-in-a-Box orders declined slightly over last year, but remain 35% above pre-pandemic levels, illustrating the need in remote communities and with lawyers and notaries unable to come into the branches.

Subscription database usage continued a shift back from the temporarily expanded remote services, to in-branch PACs, as drop-in locations resumed normal operations. Renegotiated contracts with several digital publishers enabled continued access to important digital resources for our staff and clients.

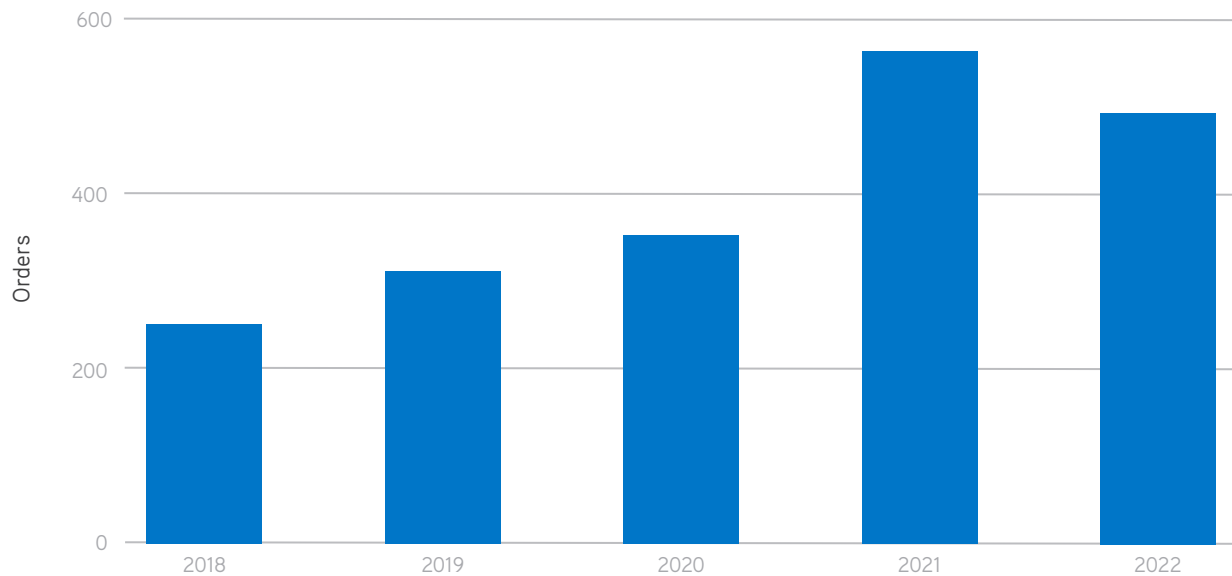


Figure 3:
Book-in-a-Box
orders, 2018 - 2022

Delivering training and outreach programs

CLBC provides training on the use of legal information tools and practice management skills, and works in partnership with subject matter experts to deliver training on substantive and procedural law. Training is aimed at the legal community, including lawyers, judges, law students, paralegals, as well as front-line intermediaries including legal advocates, community workers and public librarians.

2022, saw the launch of two new webinar series: The Criminal Law Scholar Series (CLSS) and Addressing Racism and White Supremacy in Child Welfare in BC. These co-hosted semi-

nar series received exceptional turnouts, with 583 and 270 attendees respectively.

27 webinar recordings were curated for the CLBC website in 2022, with presenters covering a variety of topics including gender inclusive legal writing, court etiquette, negotiating settlements, and tips for working with self-represented litigants. These videos amassed over 8,000 views in 2022.

Another highlight of 2022 was the 70 tours and orientation sessions delivered to law students taking advanced legal research

classes, clerks working at all three levels of court, and newly hired articling students in private law firms and community-based legal service organizations. Interest in these types of library hosted events demonstrates the interest in, and importance of, public legal libraries as a vital information hub for the next generation of legal professionals.

Of the 4,071 participants who attended training and outreach sessions in 2022, pre- and post-session confidence level surveys recorded an increase of 30% in participants' confidence levels.

EXECUTE

/ˈɛk.sə.kjuːt/ **1** to carry out or put into effect. **2** to do a piece of work, perform a duty, put a plan into action.



2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Highlights for the year ended
December 31, 2022

Complete Financial
Statements and Independent
Auditors' Report available
upon request.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Law Society of British Columbia	2,759,000
Law Foundation of British Columbia	2,835,207
Fees, interest and other income	84,405
Total	5,678,612

USES OF FUNDING

Information resources (including capital)	1,460,487
Human Resources	3,288,915
Operating expenditures	1,460,435
Total	6,209,837



COURTHOUSE LIBRARIES | BC

CLBC has branches across the lands now known as British Columbia. These lands are the ancestral home of a diverse population of Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge and respect the continued connection between the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous peoples within our local communities. We are thankful to live and work on these lands. This report was authored on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the x^mməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwiltulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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