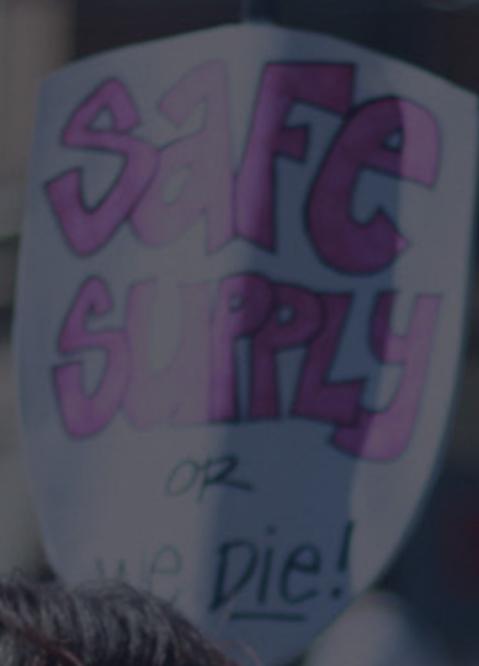


**PIVOT**  
LEGAL SOCIETY



2021

*Annual Report*

## About Pivot Legal Society

Pivot works in partnership with communities affected by poverty and social exclusion to identify priorities and develop solutions to complex human rights issues. Our work is focused in four policy areas: police accountability, drug policy, homelessness, and sex workers' rights.

In 2001, we opened our doors in response to a health and human rights crisis in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Since then, we have worked in partnership with marginalized people and grassroots organizations to challenge legislation, policies, and practices that undermine human rights, intensify poverty, and perpetuate stigma. We strategically focus our efforts on the most tangible human rights in order to improve the immediate situation of the people we work with, while creating lasting change that resonates across the country.

## Territorial Acknowledgement

Our office is located on the stolen lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful to Indigenous Peoples for their continuous relationship with their lands. We recognize that the legal tools that we use are colonial legal tools which have been weaponized against Indigenous peoples since colonization and continue to disadvantage Indigenous peoples and ignore the existence of Indigenous people's own laws. We are committed to learning to work in solidarity as accomplices in shifting the colonial default.

## Publication Date

June 2022

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**PIVOT**  
LEGAL SOCIETY

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# Contents

<b>Letter from Pivot's Leadership</b>	4
<b>Pivot Stats 2021</b>	5
<b>Our Campaigns</b>	6
Drug Policy Reform	8
Homeless People's Rights	12
FEATURE: #StopTheSweeps	15
Criminalization & Policing	17
FEATURE: Justice for Jared	22
Sex Workers' Rights	24
FEATURE: OPCC Group Complaint Process Advocacy	28
Community and Public Legal Education	31
Supporting Black and Indigenous-Led Movements and Communities	34
<b>Our People</b>	37
<b>Our Community</b>	38
<b>Financials</b>	42

# Letter from Pivot's Leadership

Greetings and taanishi to dear friends, members, and allies who stand with the communities we serve and work alongside. As the Executive Director and Board Chair of Pivot Legal Society, we are pleased to present Pivot's 2021 Annual Report. 2021 was another year of community response to a pandemic which has continued to exacerbate ongoing and overlapping public health emergencies. Our team worked alongside community and grassroots organizations to mobilize safe smoking supplies, food, personal protective equipment, and other much needed resources.

Early in the year, we made significant steps forward in advocacy, campaign work, and litigation. Pivot worked with 17 complainants to launch the first of its kind "group complaint" to the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner (OPCC). Discussed was a pattern of abusive behaviour by two Vancouver Police Department officers including harassment, intimidation, targeting Indigenous and Black people, and interference in harm reduction responses in the Downtown Eastside. Although 17 people filed official complaints, there were many more who shared their stories. You can read more about this case in the Campaigns section of this report.

The Pivot team continued its ongoing support of unhoused community members taking shelter in the Strathcona encampment and facing the constant threat of eviction. The unhoused residents fought back by issuing a low "D" grade to government actors involved in the eviction. The report card is based on principles in the *"National Protocols for Homeless Encampments in Canada"* developed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing (2014 - 2020) Leilani Farha, and Dr. Kaitlin Schwan. The report card survey was completed by over 90 unhoused residents of the Strathcona Park Tent City during April 2021, with overwhelmingly low results.

Pivot litigation gained some ground in highlighting what drives and fuels the fentanyl overdose crisis: deadly government inaction and regressive drug policies. Instead of much-needed law reforms, we see an over-reliance on harsh jail sentences to punish street level dealers, often drug users themselves. There was a glimmer of hope for change that appeared in the decision of R v Ellis. In November, the Provincial Court of BC delivered a ground-breaking decision re-examining the sentencing range for people who deal drugs containing fentanyl. Co-defended by our friend Sarah Runyon and Pivot Lawyer Caitlin Shane, Tanya Ellis' case is the first of its kind to categorically deny the utility and fairness of BC's harsh sentencing for street-level dealers of fentanyl.

As a legal society, we recognize that Pivot is entrenched and complicit in colonial structures which continue to disadvantage Indigenous peoples and ignore the existence and legitimacy of Indigenous law, legal systems, and systems of governance. These colonial structures similarly disadvantage racialized communities and people who experience poverty. Our Board and staff continue to take up organizational work related to decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion. As an organization that has historically predominantly been led by white settlers, we understand that our team has a long way to go to truly be accomplices to Indigenous peoples in shifting the colonial default, and we are committed to ongoing learning across our organization. Our immense gratitude to Pivot staff for their tremendous dedication, leadership, and resilience throughout an extraordinary time, and to all of you for continuing to stand with us.

In solidarity, maarsii,



**Stephen Mussell**  
Board Chair



**Drew Dennis**  
Executive Director

# Pivot Stats

2021

In 2021, Pivot staff collaborated closely with community members and groups on blogs, press releases, presentations and public advocacy. We continued to work within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, using a combination of online and in-person formats to connect and collaborate. We continued to engage with people with lived and living experience, lawyers, healthcare workers, students, government actors, and service providers through webinars, workshops, panels, and presentations. We use a combination of community support, direct government advocacy, public education campaigns, and litigation to challenge laws and policies that discriminate against and deny human rights to people who use drugs, sex workers, people who are unhoused, and criminalized communities.



234 

Short-Service  
Calls Received



36 

Keynotes, Panels &  
Webinar Presentations



91 

Legal & Policy Advice  
and Advocacy with  
Government Agencies



14 

Legal Interventions, Hu-  
man Rights &  
Policing Cases



94 

News Headlines  
& Mentions



Sun in the DTES | Photo: Priscillia Tait, June 2021

A photograph of a city street at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright lens flare and casting long shadows. The street is lined with multi-story buildings, and there are cars and a person on a bicycle visible in the distance. A black rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "Our Campaigns" in a white, italicized serif font.

# *Our Campaigns*



Drug User Liberation Front (DULF) action  
Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, April 2021

# Drug Policy Reform

In 2021, Pivot’s Drug Policy Reform work continued to navigate overlapping public health emergencies: the COVID-19 pandemic and the now five-year-long drug poisoning epidemic. Increasingly, government inaction drove a toxic drug supply and skyrocketing overdose rates amongst people who use drugs. Not surprisingly, 2021 marked the deadliest year for overdoses in so-called BC. Working alongside people who use drugs – the experts – we’ve advocated at all levels of government for decriminalization and access to a safer, regulated drug supply. This includes supporting people who use drugs who put their liberties at risk to initiate safer supplies in creative ways. We won’t stop fighting until decriminalization and legal regulation are achieved through a human rights based approach that centers the autonomy, dignity, health, and rights of people who use drugs, their families, and the communities that they are part of.

## Advocating for Decriminalization Done Right

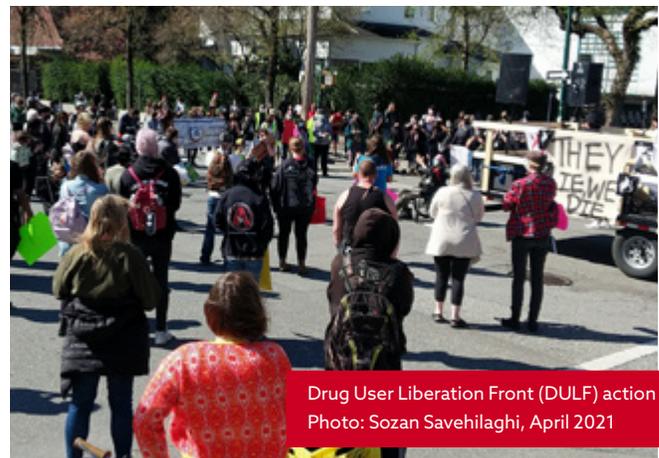
In 2021, we continued advocating for a federal drug law exemption, to achieve a model of decriminalization that reflects the needs and aspirations of people who use drugs. This followed on our core recommendation contained in our 2020 report *Act Now! Decriminalizing Drugs in Vancouver*, as well as our *joint letter* with the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition and the HIV Legal Network, which urged Health Canada to issue exemptions against simple possession offences immediately, in order to save lives.

We are pleased that this recommendation has been taken up by the cities of Vancouver and Toronto and the Province of BC, all of whom have at this time submitted applications to decriminalize drug possession within their jurisdictions. Throughout these processes, we played a critical role partnering with drug user led groups to push things forward. This included sitting on the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions' Core Planning Table for Decriminalization, and working closely with drug user-led groups across BC to ensure our voices were heard. As always, *we remain committed to a model of decriminalization that provides the best protections for people who use drugs: this means challenging unreasonable conditions and restrictions, such as too-low threshold quantities and sanctioned drug confiscations.*

We continue to work closely with our allies at the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU). In March, we co-authored *a letter to the City* expressing the undermining effects of low threshold quantities under the "Vancouver Model" of decriminalization. In particular, we asserted that poor and racialized people will be further stigmatized, criminalized and harmed by these conditions, which fail to reflect the actual purchase and use patterns of people who use drugs. We subsequently published a press release as part of a national decriminalization coalition, citing

*serious flaws in the "Vancouver Model" proposed by the City.* We warned the City against adopting a flawed decriminalization model that lacked meaningful engagement with people who use drugs, and which was largely dictated by police. In addition, we asserted the danger this model might pose as a precedent for other jurisdictions.

In November, in coalition with our peers on the Decriminalization Core Planning Table, *we expressed concern and frustration that BC's most marginalized drug users are getting left behind* yet again in the Province's decriminalization application due to restrictions such as age limits, mandated police referrals, and inadequate cumulative threshold quantities. Of course, we are ultimately pleased to have achieved some movement forward, and we know this wouldn't be possible without the decades-long advocacy of people who use drugs. To this end, we celebrate all progress. But we dream bigger: *we want full decriminalization for all and we'll continue that fight for as long as it takes.*



Drug User Liberation Front (DULF) action  
Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, April 2021

## R v Ellis

On November 29, 2021, *we received an affirming decision from the BC Provincial Court.* This marked a landmark reevaluation and departure from BC's sentencing range for street-based trafficking offences involving fentanyl. Our client Tanya Ellis is a devoted mother of two daughters who has lived for

decades on the We Wai Kai First Nation Reserve. Having faced and overcome numerous challenges and structural barriers in her life, including the fatal overdose of her partner, Ms. Ellis engaged in street-based drug dealing to pay her bills and sustain her own drug use; she had no employees and no role in the manufacturing, compounding, or cutting of the substances she provided to a regular client base of 5-10 people.

Having been to residential treatment seven times and serving multiple jail sentences, Tanya testified about the difficulty of her life following those periods. She explained that incarceration led only to “the same problems, the same chaos, not knowing where to go from there and not wanting to deal with it.” In 2019, Ms. Ellis was the target of an undercover sting operation led by the RCMP and, in February 2021, she pleaded guilty to four counts of trafficking. The Crown recommended the highest end of BC’s harsh sentencing range for trafficking offences involving fentanyl: 36 months jail time. On Ms. Ellis’ behalf, we sought a suspended sentence with minimal or no conditions. Most importantly, we asked the Court to revisit the efficacy and utility of deterrence and denunciation and the use of carceral sentences for street-level trafficking offences. We argued that *not only do harsh sentences for subsistence-based dealers fail the objectives of deterrence and denunciation, but that evidence-based supports for drug users and dealers, such as voluntary maintenance therapies, should be prioritized.*

Pivot Drug Policy Campaigner Caitlin Shane and Sarah Runyon of Marion & Runyon successfully argued a departure from BC’s steep sentencing range of 18-36 months for street-based drug trafficking offences involving fentanyl. For the first time, the Court re-examined BC’s harsh sentencing range (established in 2017) for people who deal drugs containing fentanyl. Tanya Ellis’ case is the first of its kind to categorically deny the utility and fairness of BC’s harsh sentencing for street-level dealers of fentanyl.

On December 17, 2021, following our decision from the BCPC, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada filed its appeal, claiming that the sentencing judge erred in her decision; *we will be arguing Ms. Ellis’ case to the BC Court of Appeal.*

## **Challenging the City of Surrey’s Cancellation of a Business License to the BC-Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors**

From September 2020 to March 2021, the BC/Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors (DWS) ran a meeting space for members of its Surrey-Newton chapter, SNUDU (The Surrey-Newton Union of Drug Users). The space filled a critical gap in Surrey’s services for people who use drugs; it was a dedicated space - the only space – to meet indoors

and access live-saving harm reduction supplies, as well as use Wi-Fi and technology, and host and attend support groups and information sessions.

After SNUDU had been operating for seven months, the City of Surrey abruptly cancelled DWS' business license and ordered that the space be shuttered immediately, denying drug users' core protections under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In response, Pivot represented DWS in a May 2021 reconsideration hearing before Surrey City Council, where DWS challenged the City's decision to cancel the license. Unfortunately, City Council upheld the decision and DWS has been unable to provide services in Surrey-Newton ever since.

In September 2021, working closely with our friend Sarah Runyon at Marion & Runyon, *Pivot filed a petition on behalf of DWS with the BC Supreme Court to have Council's decision reviewed in a "judicial review" hearing.* By asking the Court to overturn the Surrey City Council's decision, we hope to build strength, solidarity, public understanding,

**“...it was a dedicated space – the only space – to meet indoors and access live-saving harm reduction supplies, as well as use Wi-Fi and technology, and host and attend support groups and information sessions.”**

and certainty that people who use drugs can and will speak truth to power.

Through the judicial review, we hope to also set a court precedent by affirming meeting spaces as an important health service for people who use drugs and by challenging the frequent municipal practice of shutting down core services for people who use drugs. Additionally, we are seeking an outcome that improves the resources for people who use drugs in Surrey, deterring the City from making additional discriminatory decisions. Finally, we plan to use media and public dialogue to bolster DWS' long-standing history of public advocacy and education about the importance of drug user meeting spaces and harm reduction.



Vigil for Chester | Photo Sozan Savehilaghi, January 12 2022



# Homeless People's Rights

In 2021, the second year into the COVID pandemic, unhoused and precariously housed communities continued to be disproportionately affected by government action (and inaction) to the crisis.

While some people continued to securely shelter at home, accessible, dignified, and safe housing became **less and less available** to those who needed it most. Neighbours experiencing homelessness continued to face ticketing, harassment, and other displacement tactics that endanger them for engaging in basic acts of survival.

Nobody should be criminalized or marginalized for not having a home. Alongside directly affected people, Pivot advocated against this glaring inequality between adequately housed people and those relying on public space or living in substandard and coercive housing.

## Tent City Advocacy

As systems of shelter, care and safety for those who live in them, tent cities continue to provide critical refuge to many unhoused and precariously housed neighbours.

The dangers of sheltering alone are many. *Tent cities allow inhabitants to be adaptive in the safety of community and serve as a crucial health intervention in the context of worsening overlapping crises - a viral pandemic, a drug poisoning epidemic, and a housing crisis.* Whether it's informal harm reduction intervention or providing adequate space for distancing, tent cities provide a safer housing option of last resort for many without the *paternalistic surveillance and intervention stemming from complex-housing.*

Throughout 2021, municipalities continued to stigmatize and criminalize people experiencing homelessness for survival acts like sleeping or setting up a tent in a park.

*Access to shelter is necessary to the health and safety of any person.*

Pivot Legal Society advocated, alongside our community peers, for the right to safely shelter in public space. Anna Cooper, Pivot's Housing Campaigner, frequently supported movement lawyers, advocates, and tent city residents by providing strategic legal advice and advocacy for CRAB Park and Strathcona Park tent cities. This work included public advocacy and government relations, with the aim of fighting displacement and park closures.

Pivot also provided a number of Know Your Rights and Legal Observer training sessions to residents and their supporters to better enable unhoused people and their advocates to engage in collective action and resistance to criminalization.



## Decampment Report Card Project

In a collaborative project with The Shift; Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinic at Osgoode Hall; grassroots housing activists; and tent city residents, Pivot published a *decampment report card* evaluating the government's effort to decamp unhoused people from Strathcona Park.

The report drew upon residents' lived experience and used principles developed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing in "*National protocols for homeless encampments in Canada.*" Pivot and our collaborators used this rights-based approach to build out a tool centered on unhoused people as rights holders deserving of protection from unethical, forced government eviction. The Strathcona Park Decampment Report Card survey was completed by over 90 unhoused residents of the Tent City during April 2021. Unsurprisingly, they issued low grades on every question about the government's respect for the rights of encampment residents.

"This report card is a clear statement from tent city residents that government actors need to slow down and do better. Despite the government narrative, the resident experience is clearly not of an ethical eviction, nor one that is trauma-informed and respects their rights and dignity. It is possible to provide people with adequate, rights-based housing without resorting to coercive, colonial tactics and further displacement – residents could tell the

government how, but they need to be prepared to actually listen.” – excerpt from *Report Card*

The Decampment Report Card serves as a measure to give clear, succinct feedback on the impact of governmental actions on tent city residents. It evaluates whether the rights of Indigenous peoples are being respected, if prohibitions on forced evictions of those sheltering outside exist, and whether residents are being relocated to long term, affordable, and accessible housing.

Following the eviction of those sheltering in CRAB park and the subsequent targeting of Camp H.O.P.E.S in Strathcona, this report aims to confront the laws and policies that criminalize the thousands of people who experience homelessness and precarious housing survival in BC.



City Worker throwing a tent in the back of a disposal truck during a Street Sweep during Homelessness Action Week | Photo: Meenakshi Manoe, October 2021

## SRO Advocacy

For years, community members and groups like Pivot have fought for the rights of residents of single room occupancy (SRO) hotels in the Downtown Eastside.

Despite the COVID pandemic, many SRO residents faced a lack of safe social distancing, the worsening of *already substandard living conditions*, and *harmful restrictions placed on them by their housing providers*. The tragic effects of using substances

alone and without community harm reduction supports were clear, with *overdose deaths in 2021 reaching record high levels*.

*Local governments did little to alleviate the abhorrent living conditions of low-income residents of SROs and shelters in 2021.* The city continued active gentrification efforts in the Downtown Eastside through zoning changes, ‘social mix’ developments, and tax break incentives for developers and landlords, effectively pushing more and more people out of housing and on to the street.

Pivot and other community actors *advocated* to the City of Vancouver, pushing for vacancy control regulations to prevent homelessness and ensuring that this last-resort housing stock remains accessible for those who depend on it. Evictions and unreasonable rent increases, especially in the context of COVID-19, a drug poisoning crisis, and a housing emergency, leave those living in poverty dangerously vulnerable.

In November 2021, Pivot featured a *blog* with community organizer and author Nicole Luongo discussing the harms of the emerging alternative to SROs: the complex-care housing model. The carceral implications of people being denied bodily autonomy and tenant rights in supportive housing are deeply concerning and must be addressed.

Throughout the year, Pivot has continued to engage in public education, human rights claims, and various communications projects to advance the rights and dignity of unhoused people. Pivot continued to provide advice to researchers conducting social science and legal research into the root causes and impacts of homelessness.

*The crisis of criminalizing homelessness and discriminatory laws cannot be ended through more surveillance and policing.* Moving forward past 2021, Pivot remains committed to fighting alongside unhoused and precariously housed communities in protecting their right to survival and dignity.



Daily Street Sweeps in the DTES during Homelessness Action Week | Photo: Meenakshi Manno, October 2021

## FEATURE:

# #StopTheSweeps

Opposing street sweeps has long been a part of Pivot's advocacy. In the fall of 2021, Pivot began to focus on the practice of Street Sweeps in the Downtown Eastside. Street Sweeps are based on a partnership between City workers and Vancouver Police Department officers, focused on 'cleaning up' public space where people shelter in the DTES. Apparently intended to keep sidewalks clear of debris, Street Sweeps require that CUPE 1004 city workers and the Vancouver Police Department target people who rely on public space by seizing and destroying their shelter and personal belongings, creating increased precarity and mistrust of law enforcement and municipal agents. This costly, daily routine of harassment punishes those who rely on public space in a perpetual cycle of displacement and criminalization.

*“Poverty is not a crime. Being homeless is not a crime. Wanting to live with the safety of others like those at CRAB Park, is not a crime. It is about time that the Vancouver Police Department stop criminalizing the most vulnerable people in our community.” - BeeLee Lee, Vice President of the Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War*

This dehumanizing practice of theft and destruction disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples, who are over-represented in the unhoused population due to so-called-Canada’s legacy of colonial violence.

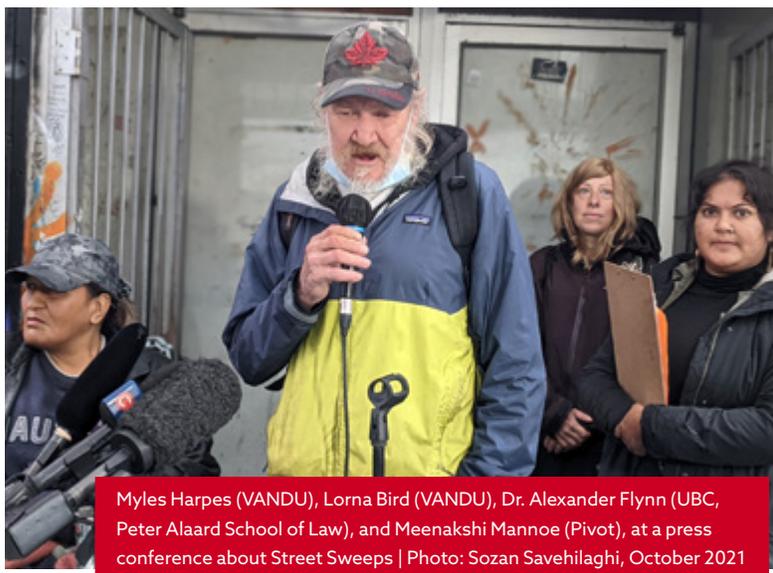
In September, Pivot supported a town hall on the matter, held at the Japanese Hall. One month later, during Homeless Action Week in 2021, Pivot, VANDU, and the Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War issued a *Joint Statement*, sounding the alarm on the destructive and cruel practice of Street Sweeps. This statement was followed by a week of peer-led research in the Downtown Eastside, gathering information on Street Sweeps and their impact on community members. In just 5 days, *the counter-sweep team spoke with nearly 100 people* living within a 2-block radius of Main and Hastings, and documented the impact of this city-police partnership. At the end of Homelessness Action Week, Pivot organized a *press conference* alongside

community groups, residents and advocates calling for an end to Street Sweeps.

Despite the City of Vancouver’s supposed commitment to *“decriminalizing poverty,”* ongoing Street Sweeps reproduce and punish homelessness and poverty by forcing people to start again with nothing - on a daily basis.

*“Poor people are often precariously housed, moving between public and private spaces, such as insecure rental housing, rooming houses, shelters, or public space. Poor people’s belongings - including much-needed medications, clothing, photos and tents - are subject to the will of many others, including police officers, landlords, or shelter providers, who each have their own rules. The result is that possessions may be confiscated or destroyed, with officials seeing them as ‘garbage’ or ‘waste’, leading to further difficulty for survival and a denial of human rights.” - Dr. Alexandra Flynn, Assistant Professor at UBC’s Allard School of Law*

Pivot continues to work with communities defending the rights of people who rely on public space and as a part of the #StopTheSweeps coalition. We are now engaging with the City to identify alternatives to this practice and opportunities for peer-led work, including an expansion of micro-cleaning grants.





Vigil for Chester  
Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, January 12, 2021

# Criminalization & Policing

Throughout 2021, Pivot’s work continued to call attention to the pervasive harms of policing. We have yet to see lasting systemic change in response to the uprisings of 2020 and the growth of grassroots mutual aid work, while governments remain reticent about the catastrophes of police, prisons, and pollution.

Our criminalization & policing campaign finds inspiration in direct action and the resistance of people with lived and living experience of police violence. Pivot, in collaboration with various peer-led organizations and community-led groups, challenged and highlighted the pervasive harms of policing at all levels. In the wake of abolitionist organizing in 2020, throughout last year our work has examined the nefarious ways police are embedded into different facets of society,

sometimes in ways that are invisible or hidden.

Pivot’s cutting-edge work on policing is made possible by our commitment to deepening community relationships, involving stakeholders in our advocacy, and the tenacity of speaking truth to power. Our work is most effective when it is done in partnership with folks who have lived and living experiences of criminalization. We also know that lived experiences - specifically of poor, racialized, and illegalized realities - must be done in ways that build capacity, highlight wisdom, and always honour the expertise people bring to the table.

Our resolve to show up for those affected by state violence has only gotten stronger and we will continue fostering those relationships into 2022.

## Public Policy & Advocacy

Throughout 2021, Pivot contributed to public dialogue and discussion regarding policing and criminalization through public speaking engagements, Know Your Rights workshops, editorials, media commentary, and popular education. Our advocacy included supporting work to remove police from schools, bringing attention to instances of police murder and violence, highlighting anti-poor policing, contributing to the provincial Police Act review, analyzing police budgets, supporting survivors of police violence, and demanding accountability from police forces throughout BC.

## Decriminalizing Poverty

Pivot's defund advocacy focuses on the local police department, the Vancouver Police Department. Since the Vancouver Police Department is a large municipal police force, we have been able to use civic engagement as a tool to push back on police funding. In recent years we have publicly supported motions relating to defunding the police budget, and the unanimously-supported 2020 Motion "Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives."

Throughout 2021, Pivot kept the pressure on the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Police Department to meet the mandate set out in the Decriminalizing Poverty motion. Following months of lackluster response and inappropriate engagement, Pivot joined a *coalition* of 20 organizations re-affirming our expectations that the City of Vancouver divest from policing and invest in community-based services, specifically non-police interventions that support people who are impacted by homelessness, the contaminated drug supply, mental health distress, and those working in informal/grey economies, such as sex work. This coalition work turned the tide on the City process, and Pivot supported advocacy for a peer-based approach, rather than disconnected recommendations.

**"Policing is an inappropriate response to the social and economic injustices perpetrated by settler colonialism, white supremacy, and poverty."**

## Defunding the Police

In February 2021, Meenakshi Manoe co-authored an *op-ed* with Harsha Walia in response to the national declaration "*Choosing Real Safety: A Historic Declaration to Divest from Policing and Prisons and Build Safer Communities for All.*" Pivot also endorsed this national declaration, which commits us to "building a society that chooses to meet people's needs instead of locking them away, with a three-prong strategy: Defund/Dismantle/Build."

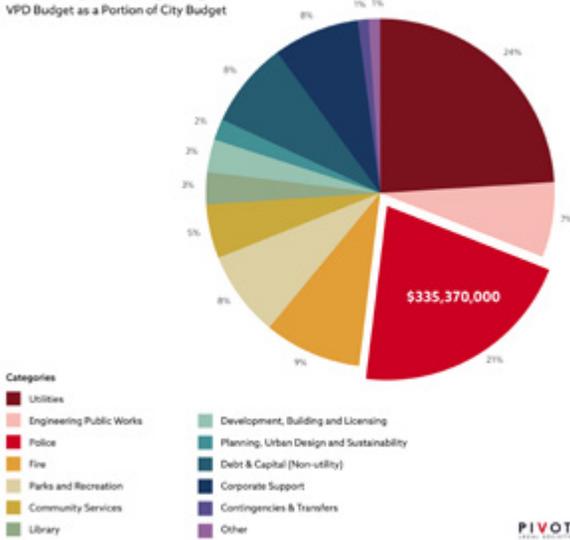
## Police Budgets ≠ Public Safety

In the communities we work alongside we have heard countless stories where families, friends and community members mourn for their loved ones' whose lives were taken by police violence. Despite inflicting trauma, injury, and death onto entire swaths of the city, police forces continue to enjoy major portions of city budgets.

From our work with folks in the Downtown Eastside, we're keenly aware of police budgets and their impact on marginalized communities. Policing is an inappropriate response to the social and economic injustices perpetrated by settler colonialism, white supremacy, and poverty. From our work in community, we know that the police budget correlates with police violence - direct physical violence, and the violence of stigma. Defunding the police is about collectively prioritizing safety, care, and dignity over fear, violence, and criminalization.

## 2021 Operating Expenditures

VPD Budget as a Portion of City Budget



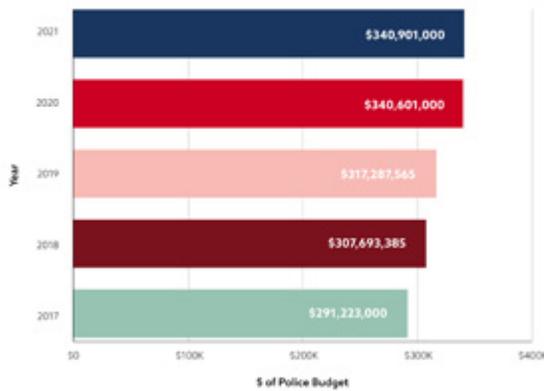
Policy analyst Chuka Ejeckam wrote an *informative blog* in November 2021, accompanied by infographics produced by graphic designer Amy Wu. In this blog, Chuka illustrated troubling dynamics that inform police budgets, property taxes, and the inappropriate deployment of police for non-criminal matters.

Meenakshi Mannoe, Pivot's Criminalization & Policing Campaigner states "We live in a city where the police force denies the existence of systemic racism, creates programs that target unhoused communities, and members obstruct the delivery of peer led services at Overdose Prevention Sites. This is unacceptable and the only way to end this culture of criminalization is through defunding."

**“The call to defund the police is not about abstraction – it’s a recognition that there are alternatives we should be able to call upon.”**

## VPD Budget Increase over Five Years

VPD Budget as a Portion of City Budget

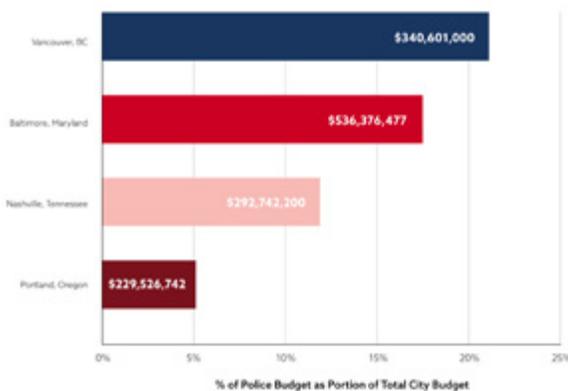


Funding for the VPD ranges between 21% and 23% of the total city budget for all years from 2017 to 2021

Leading up to the 2021 Police Budget, residents spoke out against the Vancouver Police Department budget, and instead asked for the city to invest in community-led safety initiatives. In the summer of 2021, Pivot supported the work of Defund 604 Network, including their participatory budgeting project - *The People's Budget*. This budget surveyed over 700 residents of Vancouver, who again highlighted the need to redirect funding to civilian responses. Community members have enthusiastically spoken about the importance of peer programming, housing, safe supply, and community-led crisis response. These should be priorities for all levels of government. Throughout 2021 we highlighted the importance of defunding the police, decriminalizing poverty, and removing police from wellness checks.

## 2020 VPD Budget as Compared to Other Cities

Police Budgets as a Portion of Total City Budgets





## Police Act Reform: The Great Misdirection

After a snap provincial election in 2020, the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act reconvened in December. Although Pivot and our allies were keenly aware of the ineffectual process set out by the province, we used our invitation to present to the Committee recommendations informed by our campaign work.

We identified *five central priorities* for systemic change:

- ensuring access to police accountability;
- investing in access to justice;
- addressing the broad harms of criminalization;
- eradicating prohibitionist policing;
- and enabling communities to defund the police.

We know that many of our loved ones don't have

time for reform - they need urgent changes to policing, now. After spending recent years (re) building relationships and supporting directly-affected communities, we are holding ourselves accountable to avoid the traps of reform and the notion that institutions founded on settler colonialism and white supremacy can be meaningfully changed from the inside.

## Supporting Survivors of Police Violence

The call to defund police, and indeed all of our criminalization & policing campaign work, comes at tremendous social, spiritual, economic, personal, and physical costs. Individuals, families, communities, Indigenous Nations and other folks are profoundly impacted by the prison-industrial-complex. We thank the families that allow us to advocate alongside them.

## Justice for Chester

By the time the first week of 2021 wrapped up, there had already been 2 police shootings in the Downtown Eastside, one of them fatal. *Chester* was a community member who was brutally gunned down in public, despite the fact that he was in obvious distress. Following his death, DTES members mobilized to find answers to his murder. VANDU acted as a community liaison and enabled an investigation that allowed us to communicate with Chester's neighbours, family members and coworkers. His death was a tragic reminder of how people who experience mental distress are treated - with unanswered calls, unrealistic services, and untimely ends.

## CMHA Visions

In 2021, Criminalization & Policing Campaigner Meenakshi Mannoe contributed to the *Systemic Racism* edition of Visions: BC's Mental Health and Substance Use Journal. This edition of Visions also featured an article by *Yin Yin Hla Din*, sister of Kyaw Din. Kyaw Din was killed by Maple Ridge RCMP on August 11, 2019. Kyaw Din was a 54 old man, known to be living with schizophrenia. He was also a beloved brother, a migrant from Myanmar who came to Canada in 1990 with his family. In a heartbreaking turn of events on August 11, 2019, Kyaw's sister called the police to attend their home, to take him to the hospital, something that had occurred in the past with no issue. As Yin Yin wrote in her article,

“Police officers are supposed to be trained in responding to people with mental health issues, without causing harm. However, the police officers did not de-escalate the situation. The police did not bring a mental health practitioner with them nor an interpreter. If the police officers had listened to my request not to enter Kyaw's bedroom, Kyaw would be alive and well today.”

— *The Police Senselessly Shot and Killed our Beloved Brother, Kyaw Naing Din, in His Own Bedroom*

We are humbled to share Kyaw's story and highlight the tireless work of his family, who are still seeking justice for their brother's killing. You can find their ongoing petition on [change.org](https://change.org).

The toll of police violence includes the cumulative impacts of fatal incidents, instances of brutality, discriminatory surveillance, and woeful remedies to systemic issues. Pivot continue to work alongside our comrades, and aim to do so with the utmost care and generosity, as we know that the toll of police violence includes the cumulative impacts of fatal incidents, instances of brutality, discriminatory surveillance, and woeful remedies to systemic issues. Thank you for your support in fighting the unjust systems that enable these inequalities!



Police presence at DULF action  
Photo: Sozan Savehlaghi, April 14 2021

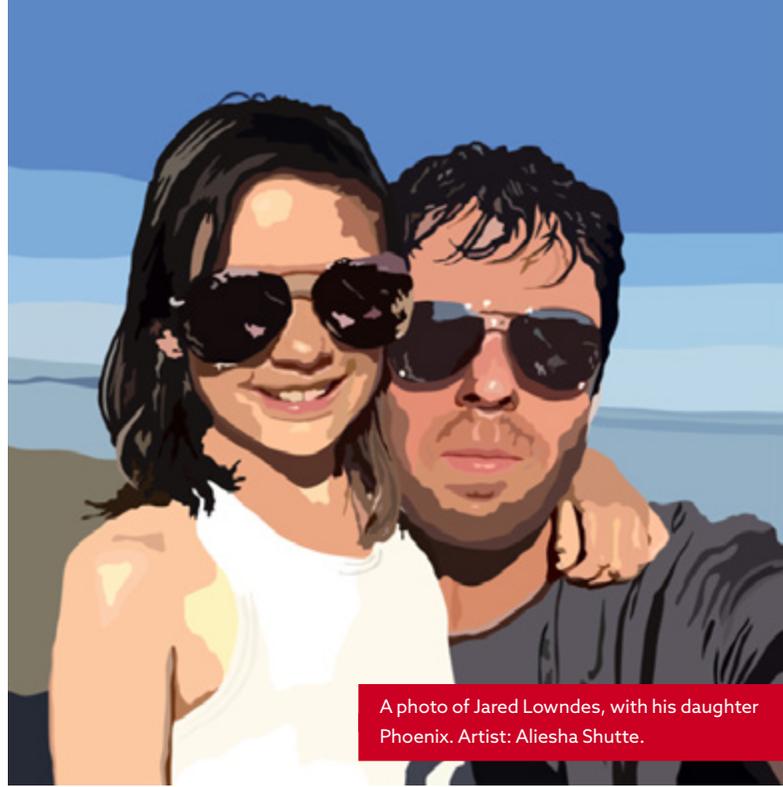
**FEATURE:**

# Justice for Jared

In 2020, global uprisings against police brutality and killings brought sustained attention to Pivot's work on police accountability. Police accountability has been at the core of our work since we began our work, more than 20 years ago.

The lands we work on have been stewarded by the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), sə'ílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples, and over fifty Coast Salish Tribes who hold a continuous relationship to these land and waters. The territories known as Vancouver and BC have been forcefully settled, a process aided by police - including RCMP E Division, and various municipal police forces. We cannot talk about this violence without talking about the Black and Indigenous communities that are targeted by police forces.

As Pivot works towards decolonizing our work and deepening our commitment to racial justice, we are building relationships with Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities impacted by police violence. Since summer 2021, Pivot has been supporting the work of #JusticeForJared.



A photo of Jared Lowndes, with his daughter Phoenix. Artist: Aliesha Shutte.



Laura Holland stands alongside Musqueam Elder Ti' te-in Shane Pointe at #FeedThePeople, Oppenheimer Park. Photo: Kriss Li, October 22, 2021.



Wet'suwet'en Family Members gather at a Justice for Jared action in Vancouver. Photo: Meenakshi Mannoe, July 20, 2021.

## About Justice for Jared

Jared Lowndes, known as Jay, was a proud Wet'suwet'en man of the Laksilyu Clan, who also held strong connections to the Xwémalhkwa (Homalco) Nation. Jared grew up in East Van and was well known locally. He was brutally killed by Campbell River RCMP on Thursday, July 8, 2021.

Jared was an Indigenous man whose life and death was defined by intergenerational effects of colonialism - including land theft and dispossession, child welfare, policing and criminalization.

Since his death, Jared's mother Laura Holland has called for actions to bring attention to his death, and the deaths of other Indigenous people at the hands of police. Pivot staff have supported Laura's work through supporting events, media engagement, and advocacy with the Independent Investigations Office of BC as the investigation into Jared's death is ongoing.

Alongside support for Laura, we continue to focus on the systemic and structural issues that drive the high rates of police killings of Indigenous people. Pivot calls for the defunding of police in order to redirect funds into community-based crisis response, culturally safe interventions, and legal advocacy programs that will support families and survivors of violence.

*To follow the work of Justice for Jared, keep an eye on [JusticeForJared.org](https://JusticeForJared.org) & follow the hashtag [#JusticeForJared](https://twitter.com/JusticeForJared).*

### 2021 Highlights of Justice for Jared

- July 15: 'An arrest warrant should not be a death sentence' - [Article](#) in IndigiNews by Odette Auger
- September 8: Family and Legal Advocates Demand Justice in the RCMP Murder of Jared Lowndes - [Joint Letter](#) from BC Civil Liberties Association, Union of BC Indian Chiefs & Pivot Legal Society

- October 15: Groups call for Indigenous involvement in investigation of police shooting of Campbell River man - [Article](#) in Vancouver Island Free Daily by Marc Kitteringham
- October 22: Support for the National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation - [Article](#) on the media co-op by Jeff Shantz
- December 14: Island-based website showcases victims of police violence as people not statistics - [Article](#) in Black Press Media by Marc Kitteringham

### Quick Stats

- Jared Lowndes (Wet'suwet'en), Julian Jones (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), and an unnamed woman (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation) were all shot by RCMP on Vancouver Island in 2021; Jared and Julian were both killed by police
- Chantel Moore, also a member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, was killed by Edmunston NB Police on June 4, 2020
- In 2021, there were 54 police-involved deaths in BC, as reported by the Independent Investigations Office of BC ("IIO")
- The BC Coroners Service completed a review of 127 police-involved deaths during or within 24 hours following contact with police, from January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2017
  - 21 of these deaths were attributed to police use of force; 29% of those people were Indigenous



Orange "Justice for Jared" banner. Text: "JusticeForJared.Org. Killed by RCMP. Nov. 23 1983-Jul 8 2021." Photo: Meenakshi Manoe. September 8, 2021.



Low angle photo of red umbrella | Photo by Loïc Fürhoff on Unsplash, published January 1st, 2018

# Sex Workers' Rights

Sex workers in Canada have been ongoing targets of violence and discrimination by government policy, the police, and the community at large. Instead of being treated like any other worker, our stigmatizing laws continually target sex workers, jeopardizing their safety, wellbeing, and security. Street-based sex workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and across the country contend with a lack of protection, making for dangerous working conditions and a heightened risk of criminalization.

Sex work is labour, and in 2021, Pivot continues to stand alongside all sex workers in the fight for health, safety and human rights.

## Continued Work

2021 was yet another difficult, unprecedented year for sex workers in so-called-Canada, and elsewhere in the world. In the context of a global pandemic stretching into its second year, sex workers still were denied the same basic supports that other citizens received to cope with the financial difficulties of COVID-19. Despite this, sex workers and sex worker-led organizations *continued to organize and support each other through mutual aid and care.*

Pivot's Sex Work Policy Consultant, Kerry Porth, continued to engage in research and advocacy with local sex workers' rights group to support workers during the overlapping crises of COVID-19, poisoned drugs, and housing unavailability.

## Decriminalization of Adult Sex Work

In 2021, Pivot continued the fight for adult sex work to be decriminalized. Sex workers experience decreased control over the conditions of their work and they are subject to increased violence and discrimination. Pivot's commitment to the decriminalization of adult sex work is informed by our work with sex workers across Canada.

Decriminalization is a necessary step to ensure the safety and rights of sex workers. All sex workers deserve to have their choices respected and be able to work safely, without fear of violence, discrimination and social stigma.

## PCEPA Updates

In 2021, Canada's current stigmatizing sex work legislation, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA), marked its 7th anniversary of implementation.

Throughout the year, so-called-Canada continued to witness the *tragic, violent,* and preventable results of stigma and the criminalization of sex workers. Many sex workers, due to these factors, find themselves *unable to access help in emergencies.* Most often, sex workers rely on their peers, friends, and family for support in critical and life-threatening situations. The ongoing harms of colonization and criminalization mean that Indigenous, Black, racialized, and undocumented migrant sex workers are most at risk when working.

The harms of PCEPA and criminalization in general on sex workers are unacceptable, and Pivot argues that these laws must be amended on a constitutional basis to protect the rights and safety of sex workers. While this is a national conversation because PCEPA is a federal law, we recognize the necessity for relationships and conversations to be centred on local sex workers' needs.

A formal review of Canada's sex work laws by the Government of Canada was originally slated to have started in December 2019. In spite of demands from sex workers and allied organizations across Canada, this critical review had still not started as of December 2021.

## Unequal Access to Public Space

In *January 2021*, seven organizations, including Pivot, spoke out against the Trespass Prevention Program. Describing the Trespass Prevention Program ("TPP"), Pivot noted that the Vancouver Police Department specifically targets people experiencing stigmatization and lack human rights protection on the basis of their "social condition," including street-based sex workers. In *June 2021*, the original coalition of Indigenous, women, Downtown Eastside, and legal organizations, filed a Service & Policy Complaint.

### The Trespass Prevention Program raised 5 areas of concern:

- social condition & criminalizing poverty,
- democratic deficit,
- conflict of interest with police enforcing the Trespass Act,
- lack of procedure/regulation undermines rule of law,
- and potential for mass privacy violations and increased “street checks.”

We know that people who rely on public space are increasingly deprived of any space to safely gather with dignity. The TPP targets and criminalizes people who shelter on sidewalks, in parks, in doorways, beneath awnings, or seeking momentary relief on a stoop. This disproportionately affects sex workers, who are already criminalized, and drives them further underground isolating them from protective networks of safety and worsening already dangerous working conditions.

In *October*, we learned that the Vancouver Police Department planned to expand the program, and released a blog highlighting the unaddressed concerns.

When the Vancouver Police Department creates band-aid solutions such as neighbourhood response teams and trespass prevention programs, they are wasting vital public dollars that could be better invested in root cause solutions.

In 2022, we will continue to raise concerns about the TPP and its expansion. Initiatives like this only further anti-homeless, anti-drug user, and anti-sex worker stigma. The resources invested in the TPP would

“Programs such as the Trespass Prevention Program further criminalize and stigmatize poverty, plain and simple. Furthermore, this program gives more power to the police to harass and criminalize street-based sex workers at any time, even if there is no actual public safety issue. A sex worker may take temporary shelter under closed storefronts or building entryways to stay safe, avoid predators, or get out of the rain, yet this program would allow the police to target, street check and ticket her for doing so. This is appalling.”

— *Mebrat Beyene, Executive Director of WISH Drop-In Centre*

be better spent on creating inclusive and welcoming infrastructure for all community members.

City and police-led initiatives like Street Sweeps and the Trespass Prevention Programs erode social inclusion and belonging for people living in poverty. Pivot continues to call for an end to the enforcement of bylaws against people who rely on public space, and instead encourage government to defund criminalization and invest in the infrastructure that is so desperately needed - not just in the Downtown Eastside, but in communities throughout BC.

## Unequal Access to Digital Space

In September 2021, we wrote submissions on the federal government’s proposed approach to “harmful content” online. In solidarity with sex worker led groups across so-called Canada, we explained how website monitoring, filtering, content removal, and police reporting would further harm, stigmatize and surveil sex workers.

A black banner with purple writing "sex work is work" behind a chainlink fence.  
Photo: Meenakshi Manno. June 1st, 2022



Due to COVID 19, as well as police interference and harassment, many sex workers use digital spaces for work. Government-imposed regulation will only interfere with and harm sex workers, especially those with marginalized identities.

## New Directions

Another major focus for Pivot in 2021 was on interviewing people from sex worker-led organizations across Canada as well as sex workers to learn what skills and attributes directly-affected communities are looking for in the advocacy we do at Pivot.

Our revised focus and pace of our litigation work during COVID-19 provided an opportunity to collaborate with community members and thoughtfully continue our sex work campaign. These consultations with sex worker-led organizations ensures we are being accountable to the communities we work

alongside. We are greatly indebted and thankful to sex workers and sex worker-led organizations, globally and locally, for their invaluable work and advocacy. We stand in solidarity with you in the struggle to uphold the rights of sex workers everywhere.

**“Decriminalization is a necessary step to ensure the safety and rights of sex workers.”**

Alongside directly-affected communities, we commit to pushing forward against oppressive legislation and practices, like the TPP and PCEPA, to ensure that sex workers are afforded safe and fair working conditions.

Pivot holds steadfast to our belief that full decriminalization of consensual adult sex work is the path to safer working conditions for sex workers, and affords them the agency to access support without fear of criminalization or violence.



**FEATURE:**

# OPCC Group Complaint Process Advocacy

Throughout 2018, **Pivot was repeatedly alerted to a pattern of two specific officers harassing and abusing people living in the DTES.** We received these calls from multiple residents, as well as from service providers. In September 2018, Pivot and the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) held a **community safety rally** and invited people to share their stories of interacting with the two identified officers.

Throughout this information gathering process many people expressed that they would feel safer filing complaints as a part of a group rather than as individuals. Pivot decided that pursuing a group complaint would be strategic and serve our clients, although prior to this complaint the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner (OPCC) had no group process in place.

The group of 17 complainants, represented by Pivot, *launched the first of its kind “group complaint”* to the OPCC back in March 2019. With support from the community and pro-bono counsel, Pivot has been able to utilize a group complaint as an unprecedented advocacy tool in our fight for police accountability.

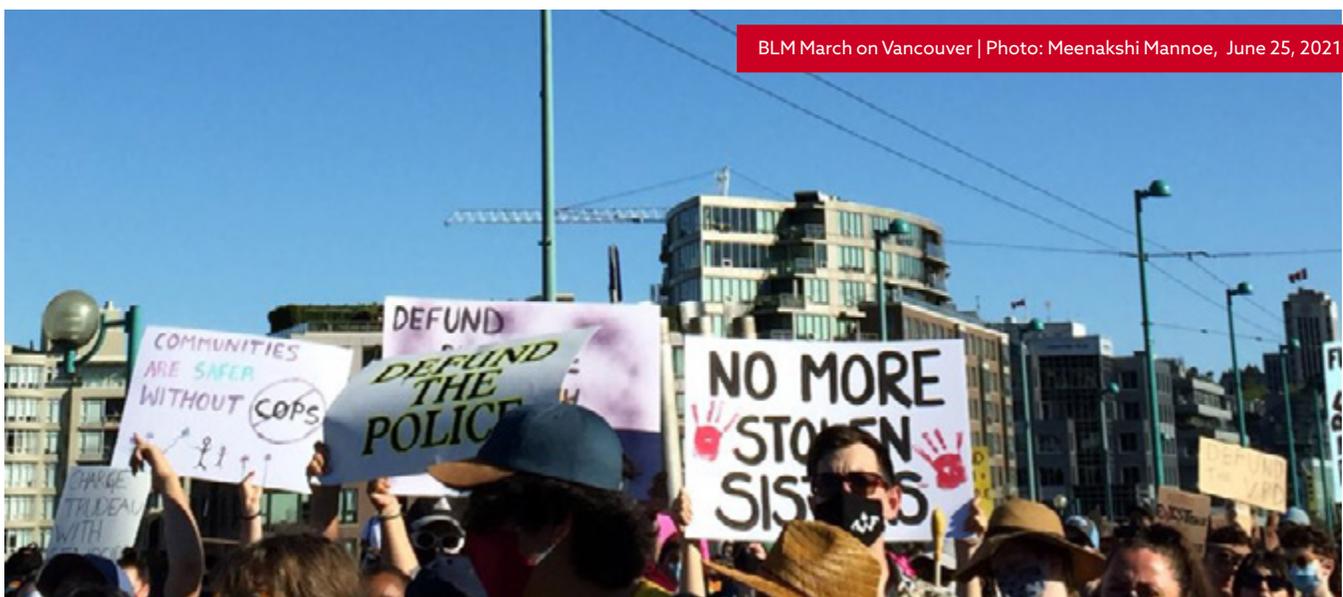
In December 2019, the OPCC ordered a mediation between the complainants and the officers. The mediation was extended numerous times as a result of COVID-19 and other issues, finally taking place in late 2020. In a show of good faith, the complainants largely abstained from speaking publicly concerning the group complaint during the mediation process, which concluded unsuccessfully in January 2021.

Pursuant to the Police Act, the mediation is confidential and nothing that was said can be shared.

Many of the complainants participated in person and spoke bravely to the officers concerning the impact of their conduct. *The officers, who were represented by legal counsel, refused to speak directly to any of the complainants during the mediation, only speaking through counsel. In the end, the complainants did not feel the two officers negotiated in good faith or were prepared to agree to a meaningful resolution.* As a result, the mediation failed, and the complaints were returned to the investigative process.

With the return to an investigative process in 2021, the complainants *re-launched* a public campaign to *ensure that their voices are heard* and that their safety isn't further jeopardized by retaliatory behaviour from the Vancouver Police Department.

The OPCC group complaint marks an innovative response to the failures of existing accountability mechanisms to provide a safe, meaningful avenue of redress for marginalized peoples facing routine police abuse. The experience of our clients so far has been that the police complaint process is inherently biased in favour of police, and that even this innovative group approach cannot make it sufficiently accountable to impacted community members. Still, many clients push forward with us as we work to expose the flaws in the existing system



BLM March on Vancouver | Photo: Meenakshi Mannoe, June 25, 2021

in order to create resources for those who will follow after.

Although 17 people filed official complaints in this case, we know there are many more people who decline to file, indicating fears of retaliation and further targeting from the same officers who will continue to police them through patrols like the Beat Enforcement Team while their complaints make their way through the system.

Neither the Vancouver Police Department nor the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner currently have policies of removing officers from “beat patrol” pending the outcome of complaints. While Pivot succeeded in having these specific officers temporarily relocated out of the Downtown Eastside, for most complainants, this means that the officer who threatened you yesterday still exercises discretion when they see you today, and chooses whether or not they want to carry out a street stop on you tomorrow. This can be excruciating while the *slow process of the OPCC ticks forward.*

These complainants are still waiting for any accountability and justice. Throughout 2021 Pivot supported clients who chose to participate in investigative interviews, and advocated for the rights of complainants throughout the investigative process. The OPCC rejected our request to keep these complaints together through the investigatory and disciplinary process. As a result we are representing clients individually while continuing to hold space for group support and direction.

This group complaint process would not be possible without the people who came forward in this case and stand up everyday in pursuit of a safe and just world for us all. Thanks to the many volunteers and organizations who have assisted Pivot throughout this process. Special thanks to our co-counsel Donna M Turko, Q.C., previous co-counsel Naomi Moses, and Tara Taylor, who serves as a Community Partner and supports the group complainants with client and legal support. Special thanks also to Sarah Runyon, of Marion & Runyon Lawyers.

**The impacts of**  
**POLICE VIOLENCE IN THE DTES**

“I want to live in a safe community just like everybody else.”

“When I become vulnerable and I feel at risk I can't turn to the police for anything.”

“When you're sitting down and hearing similar situations from all types of people and you realize all of those situations are so unfair, you feel like it's systemic.”

“Now I think twice before calling the police if anything happens.”

“They asked me if I was in a gang and whether I had tattoos but gave no reason for asking me those questions.”



## Community & Public Legal Education

Pivot continued conducting outreach, producing and distributing public legal education materials, and working alongside peer workers and facilitators throughout 2021.

Pivot staff presented at national and provincial conferences and workshops with stakeholders in healthcare, education, and law, as well as ongoing outreach and advocacy to government agencies and lawmakers.

## Public Legal Education (2021 at a glance)

Despite the difficulties of working through a pandemic, Pivot staff presented keynotes, on panels, and in workshops, regularly illustrating our campaign work in collaboration with directly affected communities.

Our 2018 report Project Inclusion continues to frame our work by describing the ways stigma, criminalization, and exclusion intersect in our campaign work in drug policy, housing, sex work, and policing and criminalization.

We frequently present to audiences that are decision-makers, practitioners and students in health care, and law, as well as frontline workers and advocates.

## 2021 Overview

COVID-19's continued impact in 2021 on poor and stigmatized communities cannot be understated. Insufficient and *inappropriate laws and policies* in policing, health care, and the court system directly undermined the health and safety of people who do sex work, use drugs, are criminalized, and who are unhoused.

As we saw in 2020- the first year of COVID-19's impact - resources continued to be *underallocated* to those who needed it most. *Many poor communities were severely disconnected from many essential services, due to a lack of technology and geographic access, while dealing with other overlapping health and climate crises.*

Throughout 2021, Project Inclusion continued to inform Pivot's advocacy in fighting cycles of stigma and criminalization. We continued disseminating the analysis and recommendations from our *2018 report*, despite the difficulties imposed on us and the communities we work alongside. We continued conducting outreach, producing and distributing public legal education materials, and working alongside peer workers and facilitators in person and online.

Pivot has made use of online and virtual tools to ensure the safety of staff and clients throughout the pandemic by connecting with members of our communities virtually, as well as hosting meetings and community events in a virtual space. Following public health advice and guidelines, the Pivot office has transitioned to a hybrid work environment, where staff have the option to work in-office and work from home. Similarly, while some aspects of our work remain online, we have resumed much of our in-person work with communities and stakeholders.



Changing the Face of Poverty Workshop  
Photo: Meenakshi Manoe, January 27, 2021

We've had ongoing successes in continued advocacy of Project Inclusion's recommendations. That advocacy includes presentations at provincial conferences; workshops with stakeholders in healthcare, education, and law; and ongoing outreach to government and lawmakers, while also considering new approaches to meet the needs of the community.

For example, in 2021 Pivot, working collaboratively with BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and Homeless Services Association of BC, also pushed against the unequal impact that poor and unhoused folks will bear in *TransLink's Transport 2050 Strategy*.

2021 marked an opportunity to develop new and equitable approaches that acknowledges how *disability movements* influence the work we do. We aimed to fairly stipend, amplify, and center the needs of those with lived and/or living experience. By working with Disability Culture Educator Q Lawrence (they/them/it), we deepened our understanding of disability solidarity, access, and inclusion in tandem with the stigma and discrimination that people who use drugs, sex workers, unhoused communities, and criminalized populations experience.

Pivot is still in the starting stages of investigating our work and addressing inaccessibility in digital and online communications, but in 2021, we strived for greater accessibility and access, and part of our work in doing this was distributing funds and technology to partner community organizations. On August 31st, 2021, Pivot created a *fundraiser* for the Vancouver Area of Drug Users (VANDU), for International Overdose Awareness Day and raised over \$15,595.

Pivot aims to foster a culture of disability and racial justice throughout all of our external and internal work.

Alcohol seizure rights cards and Drinkers Parklet launch | Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, August 1, 2021



### EIDGE cards

On June 29th, 2021, Pivot, Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education (*#EIDGE*), and Drinkers Lounge celebrated the grand opening of a Drinker's Parklet in the Downtown Eastside and the release of new know-your-rights material.

*The opening of the parklet marked a significant victory in the fight for harm reduction for illicit drinkers in Vancouver.* It is a space where people can manage their own consumption of alcohol safely and without fear of discrimination.

Pivot released *rights cards on alcohol seizures*, created in collaboration with EIDGE and Drinker's Lounge participants, with the aim of preventing the seizure of alcohol by police.



# Supporting Black and Indigenous-Led Movements & Communities

2020 marked the racial reckoning that wasn't – though folks across communities were acutely alerted to the violent nature of policing and structural racism and oppression, widespread support of Black and Indigenous communities and movements were sensationalized amongst the masses. Throughout 2021 we witnessed the ways that Black and Indigenous communities fiercely continued the work – whilst simultaneously grieving loss after loss – despite dwindling support amongst “allies”, signifying how “allyship”, for many, was a hollow means of gaining social capital for individuals not otherwise invested in the cause.



Action: Cops out of Schools | Photo: Magin Payet Scudellari, April 2021

Informed by Black and Indigenous-led calls to action, Pivot's lifelong commitment to the fight, as accomplices, did not fade. We maintained pressure on elected officials and decision-makers by spotlighting the compounding effects of structural oppression and criminalization that Black and Indigenous folks experience, how anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism is woven into law, policy, and policing, and *how reformist approaches fail to address the insidious nature of racism in policing.*

Throughout the year, police continued their relentless attacks on Black and Indigenous communities, causing harm, injury, and death. In solidarity and in

support of victims, families, and communities, we sought accountability and justice and *relentlessly called to defund police and invest in communities.*

Attacks on Indigenous sovereignty did not waver throughout 2021 as the RCMP continued to invade the unceded and unsundered Wet'suwet'en Yintah (territories). In solidarity with Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan Land Defenders, we amplified their calls to stop the invasion and occupation of Wet'suwet'en land and circulated calls for donations to cover the legal costs of Land Defenders who had been arrested by the police.

*“The staff at Pivot are in a continual process of learning and unlearning as we build out our decolonial understanding, and strive to bring our work better into alignment with our commitments to Indigenous peoples on these unceded and stolen lands.”*

*— Anna Cooper*



Pivot staff meeting online during the COVID-19 Pandemic | Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, Feb 2021

# Our People

## 2021 Staff

- Anna Cooper
- Asha Nygra
- Caitlin Shane
- Chris Rahim
- Drew Dennis
- Emily Capel-Shyu
- Kerry Porth
- Kristin Cheung | 江雪莉
- Lyndsay Watson

- Meenakshi Mannoe
- Sozan Savehilaghi
- Steph Wiafe
- TJ Felix

- Mebrat Beyene
- Naomi Moses, Vice Chair
- Nikida Steel
- Stephen Mussell, Chair

## Board

- Aaron Samuel, Secretary
- Amanda Burrows
- Julie Guenkel, Treasurer
- Kit Rothschild

## Board members who served up until June 2021 AGM

- Nicolas Crier



Pivot Lawyer Caitlin Shane posing at the staff party  
Photo: Magin Payet Scudellari, Nov 24 2021



Friends of Pivot visit  
Photo: Sozan Savehilaghi, Dec 2 2021

# Our Community

The struggle against criminalization, poverty, and exclusion is a deeply collaborative effort. We are profoundly grateful to those who make our advocacy possible; Pivot couldn't exist without peer experts, community groups, funders, and supporters.

Peer experts and community organizers are critical to our campaign work at Pivot. The incredible knowledge and expertise that directly-affected comrades share with us is invaluable. Our community inspires our drive to continue the fight on a daily basis. We at Pivot are humbled and honoured to work alongside all of you.

To our donors and grantors: thank you for your trust in supporting Pivot year after year. It is through your generosity that our doors are open. Pivot wouldn't be able to push back against harmful laws and policies, and to build stronger, healthier communities without you.

Thank you to all our supporters for your trust and solidarity.

## Contractors

Amy Wu  
Chuka Ejeckam  
David Marshall Richards  
Meredith Burney  
Nicole Luongo  
Nina Taghaddosi  
Tara Taylor

Laura Holland  
Mackenzie Joe  
BeeLee Lee  
Samona Marsh  
Garth Mullins  
Lama Mugabo  
Flora Munroe  
Samantha Raymond  
sɣɛmɛnɑ:t St'agid Jaad - Audrey Siegl  
Markiel Simpson  
Manny Strain  
Ryan Sudds  
Vince Tao  
Fiona York  
Chloe Noir

## Peer Collaborators & Community Leaders

Tonye Aganaba  
Lorna Bird  
Chrissy Brett  
Zoe Craig-Sparrow  
Joshua Goldberg  
Elder Larry Grant  
Delilah Gregg  
Earl Greyes  
Dave Hamm  
Myles Harpes

## External & Pro-Bono Counsel

Jennie Cunningham  
Marguerite Ethier  
Naomi Moses  
Sarah Runyon  
Donna Turko QC

## Equity Consultants

Natasha Aruliah  
Q Lawrence  
Ta7taliya Nahanee  
Rabbit Richards  
Natasha Tony  
Karen Goodfellow

## Collaborating Organizations

A Better Life Foundation  
A. King Law  
AIDS Vancouver  
Anti-Oppression Educators Collective  
Atira Women's Resource Society  
Battered Women's Support Services  
BC Association of People on Opiate Maintenance  
BC Civil Liberties Association  
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition  
BC/Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors  
Binners' Project - MakeWay Charitable Society  
The Black Lab Artists Society  
Black Lives Matter - Vancouver  
Canadian Drug Policy Coalition  
CMHA - BC Branch  
Catherine White Holman Wellness  
Centre and All Genders Legal Clinic  
Centre for Gender & Sexual Health & Equity  
Community Legal Assistance Society  
Cops out of Schools  
Chilliwack Free Fridge  
Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War  
Community Legal Assistance Society  
Criminal Defence Advocacy Society  
Defund 604 Network  
Dignity Denied  
Disability Alliance BC  
Downtown Eastside SRO-Collaborative  
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre  
Drug User Liberation Front  
DTES Neighbourhood House  
Egale Canada  
Exchange Inner City  
First United Church Community Ministry Society  
Friends of Carnegie Community Action Project  
Fuerza Migrante  
Gallery Gachet

Health Sciences Association  
HIV Legal Network  
Hives for Humanity  
Hogan's Alley Society  
Homelessness Services Association of BC  
Justice for Girls  
Justice for Jared  
Law Union of BC  
Megaphone Magazine  
The Metro Vancouver Consortium  
Overdose Prevention Society  
PACE Society  
PAN  
RAMA Isla  
RAMA Okanagan  
Reel Causes  
Restoring Collective  
Sanctuary Health  
SFPIRG  
SFU Community Summit  
SWAN Vancouver  
The Shift  
Support Network for Indigenous Women  
& Women of Colour  
TORO - Tenant Overdose Response Organizers Project  
Together Against Poverty Society  
UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning  
UBCIC - Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
UBC School of Social Work  
UVic Law students for Harm Reduction  
and Decriminalization (H.A.R.D)  
VANDU - Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users  
Vancouver Committee for Domestic  
Workers and Caregivers Rights  
Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association  
Vancouver Women's Health Collective  
Voor Urban Labs  
Watari Counselling and Support Service  
WAHRS - Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society  
WePress  
WISH Drop-In society

## Academic Consultants and Collaborators

Donna Baines  
Nick Blomley  
Alex Flynn

# Our Members

Pivot Legal Society members are people who are interested in Pivot's work and invested in the well-being of the organization. Members are eligible to vote at Pivot's Annual General Meetings. All Pivot Legal Society members agree to uphold Pivot's **Constitution and Bylaws**.

Interested in becoming a member? Please apply online at [pivotlegal.org/membership\\_signup](http://pivotlegal.org/membership_signup)

## The following individuals served as members of Pivot at some point in 2021:

Monica Dare	Theresa Riley
Veronique Mireault	Sally Jane Aagaard
Frank Harris	Mina Sahi
Sandy Bauer	Shayna Holmes
Naomi Moses	Dean McMillan
David Bouvier	Shea Riley
Leo Yu	Tanya Hiltz
Scott McAlpine	Mairy Beam
Peter Mortifee	Christina Batstone
Amanda Burrows	Alexandra Kanezaki
David Fai	Jeremy Kalicum
Arnold Schenderling	Nikida Steel
Laura Moore	Kit Rothschild
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Kaymi Yoon-Maxwell	Emily Blyth
Stephen Mussell	Hal Slaunwhite
Denea Bascombe	Harpreet Bahia
Angela Noel	Ted Hajdu
Aaron Samuel	Steve Sorrenti
Douglas Bjorkman	Melora Koepke
Julie Guenkel	Jennie Hoi
Kevin Lowe	Katie Upham
Sam Wong	Alex Ward

## Sustaining Funders

### Sustaining Donors

Open Society Foundation  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
Vancouver Foundation  
Susan Adams  
Illahie Foundation  
The Milne Family  
James Pond  
McGrane Pearson Fund  
through Ken Gracie + Philip Waddell  
Vancouver Foundation  
North Family Foundation  
Somerset Foundation

*Sustaining Donors have committed to donations over a period of at least three years. This is the most effective and efficient way to support our work.*

## Annual and Project Funders

BC Community Gaming  
Law Foundation of BC  
Overdose Emergency Response Centre  
We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.

## How to Donate

You can contribute to Pivot's work by becoming a monthly donor, making a one-time gift, and making a 3-year commitment with your sustaining gift.

For more information about giving to Pivot Legal Society, contact our Development Department.

Email: [donate@pivotlegal.org](mailto:donate@pivotlegal.org)

Phone: 604.255.9700 x 171

Visit our [website](#)

## Monthly Donors in 2021

Margaret Asch  
Anthea Darychuk  
Elizabeth Mathers  
Forrest Silver  
Michelle Yung  
Kevin Hollett  
Lisa Slater  
Pauline Kendall  
Seth Klein  
Krisztina Kun  
Naomi Moses  
Sarah Sharp  
Clayton MacKay  
Richard Marcuse  
Henry Tsang  
Amanda Burrows  
Jeremy Brown  
John Webber  
James FitzGerald  
Zena Sharman  
Tess Conrad  
Shawn Norman  
Patricia Murray  
Annabree Fairweather  
Sara Farquharson  
Sean Konrad  
Neil Connatty  
Theresa Riley  
Scott Mahr  
Gary Ip  
Brianna Mau  
Kaylee Misener  
Sarah Leavitt  
Julia Scharnberg  
Sheena Starky  
Svetlana Kozlova  
Emma Winkelmann  
Carey Doberstein  
Mike Doaga-Diaconescu  
Richelle Muscroft  
Jonathan McRae  
Tahiana Silva  
Fu Guo  
Jeanie Parkinson

## Individual Annual Donors in 2021

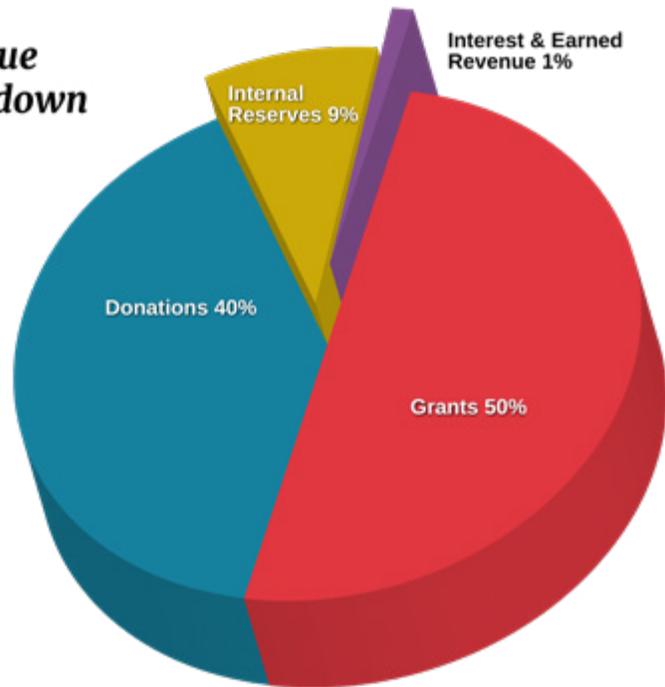
Margaret Asch  
Damon Chen  
Kathleen Glynn-Morris  
Elizabeth Mathers  
Michelle Yung  
Dan Shoom  
D Harvey West  
Sandy Bauer  
Michael and Dianne Goldberg  
Jon Bokic  
Jim Slade  
Barbara Pulling  
Benjiman Portz  
Mary Thibodeau  
Naomi Moses  
Adrienne Boon  
Janet Giltrow  
Anita Romaniuk  
Eugene McGuckin  
Sharon Mackay  
Henry Tsang  
Jason Strader  
Claire Laville  
Mark Strong  
Brenda Grunau  
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Michael Penney  
Linda Robertson  
Patricia Murray  
Christopher Verral  
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Oosha Ramsoondar  
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Francisco Javier Barajas  
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Aaron Frost  
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Serena Jackson  
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Nathan Davidowicz  
Richelle Muscroft  
Jake Giammarino  
Bobby Warrener  
Isaiah Dobbs  
Becky Potvin  
Jaye Rutledge  
Fu Guo  
Travis Morton  
James Mager  
Beverly Spring  
Dana Larsen  
Katherine Sirluck  
Leslie Mcbain  
Marlene Rodgers  
Chris Judge

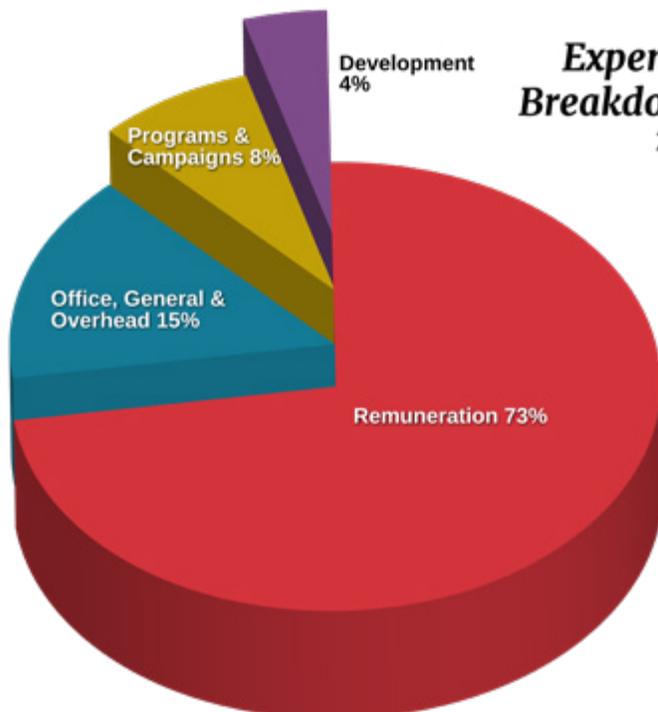
**If you made a donation to Pivot in 2021 and do not see your name here, please forgive us! We only list the names of individuals and organizations who have given express consent of public recognition. If you'd like to be acknowledged in our future annual reports, contact us by emailing [donate@pivotlegal.org](mailto:donate@pivotlegal.org)**

# Pivot Numbers & Financials

**Revenue  
Breakdown**  
2021



**Expenses  
Breakdown**  
2020



## Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	734,116	1,088,654
Term Deposits	200,000	-
Accounts receivable	-	184
Prepaid expenses and deposits	20,710	21,893
	954,826	1,110,731
<b>Property and equipment</b>	8,022	5,899
	962,848	1,116,630
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accruals	27,088	32,924
Deferred contributions	499,755	548,338
	526,843	581,262
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
General fund	127,983	229,469
Invested in property and equipment	8,022	5,899
Internally restricted contingency fund	300,000	300,000
	436,005	535,368
	<b>\$ 962,848</b>	<b>\$ 1,116,630</b>

## Statement of Operation December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Revenue</b>		
Charitable foundation contributions	201,770	169,569
Community group, union contributions	28,484	29,170
Corporate contributions	750	3,137
Individual donations (note 8)	195,261	217,216
Interest income	-	9,175
Law Foundation grants	190,000	204,113
Misc earned revenue	8,926	3,572
Open Society Foundation grant	65,650	91,549
Provincial grants	234,353	277,465
Public Foundations grants	54,120	75,105
	979,314	1,080,071
<b>Expenditures</b>		
<b>General</b>		
Facilities	96,173	98,366
Operation expenses	28,797	15,111
Professional fees	33,285	48,012
	158,255	161,498
<b>Organization &amp; resource development</b>		
Fund development	9,489	14,164
Organizational development	32,551	38,002
	42,040	52,166
<b>Programs</b>		
Campaigns expenses	50,130	103,912
Communication and outreach	11,909	10,097
Legal education	16,096	3,672
Litigation expenses	3,719	2,629
	81,854	120,310
Wages & benefits	792,981	810,336
Amortization	3,547	6,340
	<b>1,078,677</b>	<b>1,150,641</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenditures for year</b>	<b>(99,363)</b>	<b>(70,570)</b>

