2022 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 five policy areas: homes for all, drug policy reform, sex workers’ rights, anti-stigma & poverty and criminalization & policing.

In 2001, we opened our doors in response to a health and human rights crisis in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. 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 violations 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 səl̓ílwətaʔɬ (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 existences of Indigenous peoples’ own laws. We are committed to learning to work in solidarity as accomplices in shifting the colonial default.

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Greetings and taanishi to dear friends, members, and allies who stand with the communities we serve and work alongside. As the Managing Director, Legal Director, and Board Chair of Pivot Legal Society, we are pleased to present Pivot’s 2022 Annual Report. As we emerged from years of isolation from the pandemic and public health orders, we’ve grown to meet the ongoing need to connect either virtually or in person by adapting ways to maintain and expand our systemic advocacy, community collaboration, legal education, and mobilizing support for radical allies and grassroots organizations.

Early in the year, Pivot launched our Anti-Stigma campaign: an extension of our 2018 report, Project Inclusion. Officially announced at last year’s Annual General Meeting, Nina Taghaddosi, Pivot’s Anti-Stigma campaigner, aims to uncover and address stigmatizing laws that affect people living in poverty, by exposing government stigma and discrimination against people based on their social condition (in effect, their socio-economic status.)

In the deadliest year on record for overdose fatalities in BC, Caitlin Shane, Pivot’s Drug Policy Campaigner, worked with the collaborative aid and expertise of people who use drugs (PWUD) surviving the drug poisoning crisis to achieve groundbreaking precedents. In May of 2022, Health Canada gave BC an exemption from some drug laws, decriminalizing personal drug possession as part of a three-year pilot initiative eliminating criminal consequences for adults who have modest amounts of certain illegal narcotics for personal use. Additionally, it should offer legal protection to anyone seeking access to supervised consumption facilities and overdose prevention services. We continue to monitor the government’s implementation of this positive step forward.

BC’s homelessness and housing crisis continued unabated, especially galling given yet another increase to police budgets across the province. Anna Cooper, Pivot’s Housing Campaigner, regularly supported movement lawyers, advocates, tent city residents, and members of the community living or sheltering in public spaces. Working across our campaign areas, Pivot also provided numerous Know Your Rights and Legal Observer training sessions to tent city residents and their supporters, to better enable unhoused people and their advocates to engage in collective action and resistance to criminalization.

Our Policing and Criminalization Campaigners, Meenakshi Mannoe and Tonye Aganaba, were relentless in exposing the catastrophic reality of police killings in BC and across so-called Canada. In 2022, a total of 64 people were killed by police, causing an unquantifiable ripple effect of harm to their loved ones and communities. 2022 was marked by demands for justice and glimmers of hope. Honour Their Names, a two-week art exhibit dedicated to Indigenous people killed by police across so-called Canada, was an opportunity for community and family together, including Laura Holland (Wet’suwet’en, Laksilyu Clan), the mother of Jared Lowndes, and Laura Linklater (Métis), the other-mother of Jared Lowndes. It wasn’t until the end of the year, after intense public pressure, that the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) informed Laura Holland that charges were recommended for at least three RCMP officers.

In late 2022, alongside Kerry Porth, Sex Work Policy Consultant, Pivot welcomed Simone Akyianu, Sex Workers’ Rights Campaigner, to continue the fight to decriminalize adult sex work. Because of criminalization, sex workers find it difficult to control their own working conditions, leading to increasing levels of violence and discrimination. Pivot’s commitment to the decriminalization of adult sex work is shaped by its engagement with the sex worker community across so-called Canada.

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
Eva Ureta, Managing Director
Lyndsay Watson, Legal Director
Campaigns

International Overdose Awareness Day action - Photo Credit Asha Nygra | 2022-08-31
Drug Policy Reform

2022 was the deadliest year on record for overdose fatalities in British Columbia. Since the Province declared a public health emergency over seven years ago, we have lost countless friends, neighbours, and comrades to an increasingly toxic drug supply. Of course, it is poor, unhoused, and racialized people who disproportionately bear the brunt of drug prohibition, a system that drives the targeted criminalization of people who use drugs (PWUD) and results in dangerous precarity and toxicity in the drug market.

Despite this grim reality and what feels like an unending, uphill battle, there is hope in our collective action and resistance. The strength of our community and the drug user liberation movement energizes and inspires our work every day. We are firmer than ever in our principle that only through working together can we successfully chip away at the injustice of Canada’s War on Drugs.

Pivot has a longstanding history of working alongside communities to develop novel drug laws and policy solutions. Throughout 2022, we continued working in deep collaboration with PWUD – the true experts – in advocating at all levels of government against criminalizing PWUD and for access to a safer, regulated drug supply.
A Historic Victory in the Fight for Decriminalization

In May 2022, BC became the first province to receive a federal exemption from Health Canada decriminalizing personal drug possession. This pilot project, approved for three years, removes criminal penalties for adults who possess small amounts of certain illicit substances for personal use in BC. Decriminalization has been demonstrated to reduce rates of arrest and incarceration for PWUD, in addition to limiting harmful interactions with police. Decriminalization also provides legal protection to people traveling to overdose prevention services and supervised consumption sites - an action that the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act prohibits, at counter-purposes to harm reduction goals.

Though BC’s policy is not without its shortcomings, it represents the strength and tenacity of our movement. Without the decades of labour and organizing by drug user-led groups and organizations like Pivot, a policy like this would never exist. Pivot’s 2020 report, Act Now! Decriminalizing Drugs in Vancouver, was developed in collaboration with drug users around BC and arguably led to BC’s successful exemption application through the report’s single recommendation to implement local decriminalization via federal exemption. As a member of the Province’s Core Planning Table for Decriminalization, Pivot assisted in the design and development of BC’s decriminalization policy, always with a view to upholding the dignity, health, and human rights of PWUD.

Despite this significant step towards an evidence- and rights-based framework to drug policy, barriers to effective decriminalization – not to mention a safer supply of substances – still abound. The threshold quantity of 2.5 grams does not meet the needs of many people who are criminalized for using drugs - namely people in rural and remote communities, people with disabilities, and people who purchase in bulk for safety and security reasons. An open letter from Pivot to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions underscores this shortcoming:

...I have watched with concern as government officials claim an interest in the expertise and representation of PWUD while at the same time adopting design features that are entirely at odds with the requests and concerns voiced by PWUD; in particular, threshold quantities that have been proposed without the consent of PWUD and without a sound evidentiary basis.

- Caitlin Shane | Pivot’s Drug Policy Lawyer

Pivot’s involvement in the development of BC’s policy was a tremendous learning opportunity. Considering these lessons, staff lawyer Caitlin Shane co-authored a peer-reviewed article in April 2022, published in the International Journal of Drug Policy and titled “The details of decriminalization: designing a non-criminal response to the possession of drugs for personal use”. The paper equips policymakers with core considerations for developing a model of decriminalization that serves the needs and protects the rights of PWUD.

We continue to advocate for a more inclusive decriminalization policy in BC, while empowering other communities to advocate for decriminalization in their own cities and provinces. We are also committed to ensuring that criminal sanctions are not merely replaced with administrative penalties (i.e., bylaw tickets), which still replicate the harms of criminalization.

The Duty to Provide Overdose Prevention Services

Overdose prevention services (OPS) are essential and lifesaving. Despite their unequivocal role in reducing overdoses and related deaths—and their legal necessity under a 2016 Ministerial Order—OPS and their providers are under constant threat in communities around BC. Though provincial law requires the health authorities to establish OPS “in any place there is need”, the Order is not currently being fulfilled, as noted in the 2022 report of the BC Legislature’s Select Standing Committee on Health. This inaction has forced many PWUD to take matters into their own hands to save the lives of community members.

In September of 2022, Pivot published a legal backgrounder and policy recommendations outlining the need for health authorities, local governments, and police to facilitate rather than obstruct OPS. The present lack of OPS throughout BC is already inexcusable. When local governments take additional steps to stand in the way of these services, they contravene a Ministerial Order; violate provincial jurisdiction over health; discriminate against people who use drugs; and put people’s lives at even greater risk amid overlapping health crises.

Pivot continues to work alongside peer-run sites and services who face the threat of closure. During 2022, we provided numerous legal education workshops to site operators, authored letters to various city councils, and engaged with many cities, medical health officers, and health authorities about the need for OPS.
We were accompanied by BCAPOM Board members Howard Calpas, Jeff Louden, Ryan Maddeux, Garth Mullins, Brian O’Donnell, and Laura Shaver, who revealed the impossible conditions of living through years of government inaction under the drug poisoning crisis and dealing with a daily oppressive prescription system. Echoing BCAPOM’s testimony, we argued that rigid restrictions on opioid maintenance therapy are untenable for many PWUD, and result in forced reliance on the illicit market:

“...Patients’ receiving opioid maintenance prescriptions must attend a pharmacy multiple times a day; undergo urine screening tests; be witnessed while consuming their prescription; and be prohibited, for the most part, from carrying their prescriptions off-site. The conditions associated with opioid maintenance prescriptions are in and of themselves a full-time job that makes working, attending school, child-rearing, and socializing incredibly challenging if not impossible.”

- Caitlin Shane | Pivot’s Drug Policy Lawyer

Pivot’s legal recommendations urged the Province to intervene in cases where law enforcement, municipalities, and professional colleges undermine harm reduction and safe supply efforts. The final report of the Standing Committee cited Pivot’s testimony and agreed that the 2016 Ministerial Order requiring OPS is currently being violated, and that “there is a need for [municipal governments] to show leadership by ensuring life-saving harm reduction services are available in their communities.”

"The reality for the person on the ground, selling drugs, living in poverty, it’s a subsistence activity that... generates... barely enough money, if enough money, or drugs, to sustain one’s own use.”

- Dr. Ryan McNeil’s evidence

The appeal decision from the Court was a partial win for Ms. Ellis. Pivot was pleased that the Court upheld the lower court’s ruling that our client not be incarcerated. Despite this, the ruling was a missed opportunity for much-needed law reform; the ruling did not acknowledge the inefficacy of incarceration for all marginalized street-based trafficking offenders. We are deeply indebted to our friend Dr. Ryan McNeil of the BC Centre on Substance Use and the Yale School of Medicine, whose expert testimony allowed the Court to see first-hand the counter-productive relationship between our current criminal justice system and people who use drugs.

Pivot is thrilled that Ms. Ellis can thrive without facing the devastating and destabilizing impact of incarceration. However, Pivot’s fight continues for a human-rights and health approach to street-based drug trafficking and peer-led safer supply programming.
Homes For All

When safe, affordable, and accessible housing becomes increasingly impossible to access, where do people turn?

2022 marked another difficult year for those without adequate shelter. People who rely on public space continued to face violence from people with adequate housing, harassment from law enforcement, and other displacement tactics that endanger them for basic acts of survival.

Tent cities in the DTES and across so-called Canada have been consistently displaced, with new communities quickly cropping up in their wake. The violent reality is that safe and affordable long-term shelter doesn’t exist for a vast majority of people living in poverty. Market-rate rent is impossible to afford and completely inaccessible. A lack of investment from government in housing and a focus instead on housing as a commodity means that the small amount of affordable housing that exists is increasingly sparse, especially for people on income assistance or who are low-income. The low-income housing that is available, such as SROs, are often devastatingly unsafe and inaccessible, with tenants routinely facing violence, fires, isolation and other deadly outcomes. Many nonprofit housing providers treat residents like “program participants”, not tenants, and actively fight recognition of basic tenancy protections.

We cannot end homelessness in Canada through policing, displacement, or rights-infringing housing. As one of Pivot’s most long-standing campaigns, our housing campaign continued our work wielding the law as a tool to advance rights-based housing policies, such as challenging anti-sheltering laws and rights-infringing conditions in subsidized housing.
Supporting Hastings Tent City

Throughout 2022, Pivot’s advocacy for the rights of the precariously housed and the unhoused continued, through our Street Sweeps advocacy, public legal education, and deep collaboration with grassroots organizers and legal practitioners.

After years of the constant displacement of unhoused communities, sheltering gradually increased along Hastings Street in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside throughout 2022. Alongside unhoused and precariously housed communities and organizations, Pivot supported the neighbourhood’s fight against the criminalization and marginalization of poverty, building off the momentum of effective organizing throughout 2021 with the #StopTheSweeps coalition.

SEE PAGE 18 - Hastings Tent City: #StopTheSweeps

This most recent & visible tent city in the DTES drew a lot of media coverage when, in July 2022, the Fire Chief issued an order calling for the eviction of everyone in the tent city, and the City pushed forward with enforcement in August. People were told they were being evicted for their own safety, but most residents were not being offered housing, or told how they would be more fire safe in whatever area they sheltered next.

Our Streets, a newly-formed block stewardship initiative in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood of so-called Vancouver, published a blog with Pivot outlining the numerous ways law enforcement has interfered with residents and the program’s fire safety attempts. Hastings Tent City residents were not being supported to increase fire safety, but fire safety was being used against them to justify eviction.

The City’s enforcement efforts and latest Fire Order emphasize the discrimination that people who rely on public space face as they seek shelter in the community. Pivot Legal Society supported the law firm Arvay Finlay and the residents of Hastings Street Tent City to file a Judicial Review of the Fire Order in court.

The case seeks to prevent more death and displacement by requesting that the court strike down parts of the Order for being unreasonable and for being issued without procedural fairness for people sheltering along Hastings.

The petitioners emphasize that the Fire Chief did not address any of the consequences that the order would have on tent city inhabitants, which is particularly troubling considering the right to shelter in public space is well-established.

Pivot’s work, moving forward, will continue to focus on sharing information, resources, and strategies with people fighting anti-encampment laws and lawsuits; and co-creating advocacy materials and strategies fighting against rights-infringing housing practices.
Addressing Targeted Violence Against Unhoused Communities

A devastating act of fatal violence took place against unhoused people in July 2022 in Langley City and the Township of Langley. A suspect targeted and killed two unhoused people with two others left seriously injured in a stigma-fueled attack on the poor.

This deadly display of anti-poor violence is not surprising, given the persistent stigma and hatred unhoused communities are often subject to from media, law enforcement, government, and finally, from their housed neighbours. Despite sparse details about this violent event, Pivot knows about these harms directly from unhoused community members and people who rely on public space for work and shelter, who continue to face disproportionate levels of violence, criminalization and dehumanization.

Poverty is not inevitable. The most marginalized members of society are with unhoused individuals who are victimized through direct and political violence. We denounce the conditions that manufacture poverty and homelessness – including white supremacy, settler colonialism, anti-drug user and anti-homeless stigma.

- Nina Taghaddosi | Pivot’s Anti-Stigma Campaigner

Winters Hotel Fire Support

On April 11, 2022, a catastrophic and preventable fire burned down the entire Winters Hotel SRO in Gastown, displacing over 80 people, and killing two people. In the wake of this tragic disaster, Pivot worked alongside survivors of the Winters Hotel and Our Homes Can’t Wait to help residents file a Class Action Lawsuit represented by the law firm Camp Fiorante Matthews Mogerman. The lawsuit, led by one of the survivors of the fire, was filed on the grim one-year anniversary of the fire. The lawsuit is brought against the organizations seen as collectively responsible for the devastating fire, including the embattled property manager (Atira Property Management), the fire department, and the landowner. Residents have told Pivot they want this case to lead to accountability and change, so that other tenants do not suffer the same horrifying consequences.

In July 2022, BC’s Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General directed a coroner’s inquest investigating the deaths of two people who died in the fire. While the inquest has not been set down for a hearing at this time, Pivot has provided inquest support, helping connect families with counsel and information about the process.

Pushback by Pivot, OHCW, and other advocacy groups appears to have successfully deterred the government – at least for the time being. The Residential Tenancy Branch recently released an updated Policy Guideline reiterating that Supportive Housing is protected under tenancy laws.

Pivot will continue to work with community partners to build out work aimed at identifying and improving harmful conditions in low-income housing, especially so-called “Supportive Housing.” This work, in collaboration with partners at Our Homes Can’t Wait (OHCW), continued with Pivot’s participation in the Province’s Supportive Housing consultations in 2022. The consultations appeared to be aimed at justifying the removal of supportive housing from the basic tenancy protections contained in the Residential Tenancy Act. Pushback by Pivot, OHCW, and other advocacy groups appears to have successfully deterred the government – at least for the time being. The Residential Tenancy Branch recently released an updated Policy Guideline reiterating that Supportive Housing is protected under tenancy laws.

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New Work: Supportive Housing Advocacy

Historically, much of Pivot’s 22 years of work in housing advocacy has focused on defending the rights of people who shelter in public space. Part of this work was understanding not only the experiences of those who live in public space, but the conditions of those living in substandard and coercive housing.

Years of working with people living in tent cities has taught us that even when people have access to housing, that housing is often isolating, low-quality, rights violating, and operated in ways that endanger people.

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Hastings Tent City

#StopTheSweeps

StopTheSweeps Demonstration
- Photo Credit Taz Khandwani | 2022-06-15

Feature
During the summer of 2022, a community of at least 200 people sought refuge in public space along Hastings St. in the DTES, after years of relentless displacement, orchestrated by the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Police Department, and amid an escalation in fires inside SROs. Facing an absence of safe alternatives, unhoused and underhoused communities sheltered along Hastings and its cross-streets, staying close to existing networks and necessary health services.

In May 2022, Pivot released #StopTheSweeps: Ending Cyclical Displacement and Criminalized Poverty in Vancouver - a detailed investigation into the violent practice of street sweeps, a displacement tactic from the City of Vancouver which compromises the dignity, safety, and well-being of people sheltering in public space. This work was in direct response to the persistent criminalization of poverty and lack of meaningful action from all levels of government in addressing structural gaps in housing for those who desperately need it. #StopTheSweeps built on the research conducted in the DTES during Homelessness Action Week 2021, when a community-led Street Sweep counter-patrol was formed to document the sweeps carried out by City Engineering Workers and Vancouver Police Department officers in the Downtown Eastside. The report, authored by Pivot Campaigner Meenakshi Mannoe, was written in collaboration with 4 community organizations: the Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War, Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society (WAHRS), Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), and Defund 604 Network.

We found that Street Sweeps can infringe on constitutional and human rights law by endangering people’s lives and security of the person, in violation of section 7 of the Charter; and by discriminating against protected groups, including Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, drug users, and people with disabilities.

The colonial legacy of this anti-poverty practice cannot be underestimated:

Street Sweeps can be understood through the lens of disability justice, as people who rely on public space are disproportionately disabled and affected by poverty and the harms of law enforcement practices.

Sponsored by SPARC BC, Pivot authored a blog interviewing Gabrielle Peters for Access Awareness Day. Gabrielle, a disabled writer and policy analyst, explored the historical legacy and negative impacts of criminalization of poverty on racialized, street-involved, and disabled communities:

Modern Western ableism is a tool of white supremacy, colonialism and capitalism to exert power and control resources. Ableism is historically rooted, interwoven, supporting and intersecting with other oppressions and embedded and endemic throughout every aspect of Canadian society.

~ Gabrielle Peters, Street Sweeps & Disability Justice

Pivot’s continued advocacy with the #StopTheSweeps coalition included fighting against municipal inaction. In June, Vancouver City Council referred Member’s Motion “Street Care, Not Street Sweeps: Ending Daily Displacement in Vancouver” to a staff report, to be prepared on an unspecified timeline, before public input can be heard. The implications of this thoughtless action amounted to an unconscionable failure to allow the community an opportunity to speak in favour of the motion: over 30 community members had been signed up to speak and several had arranged testimonies to describe their lived experiences of the violence of Street Sweeps.

2020 data from the City of Vancouver found that 39% of people who identified as homeless were Indigenous. The City further found that Black people and other People of Colour are more likely to experience homelessness. The City of Vancouver continues to expose its commitment to Reconciliation and aspiration to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (“UNDRIP”) and must recognize Street Sweeps as a tool of colonial violence.

The displacement of Indigenous people from unceded land, and the disposal of their personal property - including items of cultural and ceremonial significance - is unconscionable.

~ REPORT: #StopTheSweeps: Ending Cyclical Displacement and Criminalized Poverty in Vancouver

The widely documented harms of this practice on low-income and street-involved communities in Vancouver are clear, forcing ceaseless organizing efforts from directly affected individuals and grassroots responses, including mutual aid drives.
In response, Pivot launched an email action calling on several City of Vancouver officials to Stop The Decampment – Support Our Streets. Over 1,169 residents supported this action.

These forced decampments continued throughout 2022, despite dangerously cold weather and without any winter housing plan set into place. Small amounts of shelter remained open overnight but with very limited hours, forcing those who rely on them to endure freezing temperatures for most hours of the day. In response, Pivot, alongside 16 other organizations, issued an open letter to all levels of government, demanding increased housing protections, investment in shelter-rate housing, and an end to the City’s attempts to criminalize survival using street sweeps and other displacement tactics.

We know there is no singular solution to the complex issue of housing and poverty. However, we are committed to searching for solutions that do not endanger the safety and dignity of people who rely on public space for survival. Criminalization and perpetual cycles of displacement caused by street sweeps remain an ongoing concern, especially in the face of a drug-poisoning public health emergency and shrinking access to welfare-rate housing. Pivot remains steadfast in advocating alongside unhoused people to fight the root causes of poverty, criminalization, and the denial of essential human rights.

“\nThe City’s telling us to go – but where? They’re forcing us to leave – but where do we go? The way the City has been carrying out this forced eviction is dehumanizing. It takes away our hope. We’re being made to feel less than human, outsiders in our own community.\n
– Scotty, former resident of Hastings Tent City and #StopTheSweeps Organizer, #StopTheSweeps August 16, 2022, Media Advisory\n
Criminalization & Policing

In 2022, 68 people died in police custody, based on cases reported by the Independent Investigations Office;

And a 2022 review of police shootings in Canada determined that:

- 19 people were killed by police; and
- There were 23 police shootings with VPD involved in 6 of them.

Pivot directly confronts these deadly incidents, in recognition that we must build alternatives to violent interventions – and that will involve defunding the police. The continued criminalization and policing of people facing multiple, intersecting oppressions takes a toll psychologically, physically, and with devastating, rippling impacts across communities.

Pivot’s Criminalizing & Policing Campaign continued to focus on the criminalization of poverty, addressing police misconduct, and supporting families who have self-organized to demand justice.
Justice For Jared

Pivot continues to support the Wet’suwet’en (Laksilyu Clan) family of Jared Lowndes, killed by the Campbell River RCMP on July 8, 2021.

In March, we marked the International Day Against Police Brutality with the launch of Honour Their Names, an art exhibit and organizing space dedicated to Indigenous people shot and killed by police across Canada. This exhibit featured ribbon boards, made by Laura Holland (Wet’suwet’en, Laksilyu Clan), the mother of Jared Lowndes, and Laura Linklater (Métis), the other-mother of Jared Lowndes, and seamstress extraordinaire. Programming at Honour Their Names included an opening feast, workshops, and speakers. Martha Martin (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), mother of Chantel Moore and Mike Martin, also joined the week of events, to highlight her fight for justice following the death of her daughter Chantel at the hands of Edmundston NB police, and the death of her son, Mike, at Surrey Pretrial just 6 months later.

July 8, 2022, marked the first anniversary of Jared’s death. Pivot travelled with community members and supporters to Campbell River to mark this important date, beginning with the opening of some of Jared’s belongings, returned to his mother by court order earlier in the year. As family, friends and supporters gathered to take the highway and begin marching, they were met with an incredible gift – an eagle watching from above dropped a feather at the site where Jared Lowndes took his last breaths. The day of action ended in Homalco, where folks gathered for a feast prepared by community members who knew Jared through the kinship ties of his daughters.

In October, Pivot supported the second International Day of Protest Against Police Brutality at Oppenheimer Park. The event was opened by xwmuthkwey’um Musqueam Elder Shane Pointe (Ti’ te-in) and also featured families impacted by police killings, including Laura Manson (Tla-o-qui-aht) whose brother Julian Jones was killed by Tofino RCMP in 2021, Nyalinglat Latjor, whose father Latjor Tuel was killed by Calgary Police in 2022, the family of Chris Amyotte, who was killed by the VPD in 2022, and Julie Matson, whose father was killed by the VPD in 2002.

Finally, in December, there was a glimmer of hope. At a meeting with Jared’s family, friends, and accompanied by Grand Chief Stewart Phillip from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, as well as the BC Civil Liberties Association and Pivot, the Independent Investigations Office of BC told Laura Holland and her family that they would be preparing a report for Crown Counsel, advising that they determined the actions of at least 3 RCMP officers involved in Jared’s death met the standard for recommending criminal charges.
Criminalization of Poverty
2022 also saw another year of police budget increases – including local police forces such as the VPD, as well as investments from the provincial government into the RCMP Community-Industry Response Group (C-IRG). Regardless of political stripe or position on the spectrum, governments continue to invest in the apparatus of a police state.

The concerted efforts of police lobbyists to discredit the social safety net closely followed municipal elections across BC. This included Vancouver Police Union and VPD employees supporting screenings of “Vancouver is Dying” (an anti-poor propaganda video), as well as a November report from the VPD entitled “Vancouver’s Social Safety Net: Rebuilding the Broken.” Pivot responded to the VPD’s audit of the entire social service sector – which no one asked for – noting that:

[While no health, social or community service organization is beyond reproach, we must acknowledge that every non-profit and charitable organization – particularly those operating in the Downtown Eastside – is contending with multiple public health emergencies, zero-vacancy rates for shelter – and pension-rate housing, soaring costs of living, and the continued legacies of settler-colonialism and displacement.

~ VPD Manufactured Disinformation blog (November 10, 2022)

The overt politicization of police forces – including the Vancouver Police Union’s decision to endorse a mayoral candidate – should be a reality check about the role of police in our communities. From our years of continuous advocacy regarding defunding police and investing in community-led solutions (including crisis response), it’s obvious that stoking the public’s fear about safety (including stranger assaults and “prolific offenders”) generates bigger budgets – regardless of whether or not these dollars translate into meaningful change.

These efforts have had a profound impact on communities impacted by policing and criminalization. The summer of 2022 was marked by a “Campaign of Terror” in the DTES. On top of organized abandonment by the state, and forced decampment, there was an uptick in police violence, including at least one police shooting and the killing of Chris Amyotte, Leaping Frog Man of the Ditibineya-zii-bing (Rolling River) First Nation. The destabilization of an entire community – put on edge after edge – was used for cynical electioneering, and Pivot supported grassroots efforts to demand “police out of politics.”

OPCC Group Complaint
Since 2018, Pivot staff lawyer Anna Cooper, later joined by external counsel Donna Turko KC, have been supporting a group of 17 complainants as they navigate the byzantine police complaint system. As of 2022, these complaints, stemming from the conduct of 2 VPD officers deployed to the Beat Enforcement Area (“BET”, which includes the DTES foot patrol) have been making their way through the process overseen by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner for 3 years. In 2022, Pivot supported the complainants through attending police interviews; making legal submissions; demanding transparency; and advocating for changes to the police complaint system.

Adressing Intersectional Issues
The advocacy inherent in challenging responses to criminalization and policing interface with so many systemic issues. These complexities are reflected across Pivot’s campaign areas, as well as through coalition work alongside organizations across the city, province, and county.

In 2022, Pivot supported advocacy to oppose the expansion of CCTV throughout the city, in recognition that the use and expansion of CCTV and other forms of surveillance are embedded in racist, and anti-poverty rationales:

“Treating technology as a quick fix to Vancouver’s deeply entrenched problems of social inequity is irresponsible and has the potential to introduce harmful consequences.

~ Joint Letter in opposition to Vancouver City Council motion for CCTV cameras (April 26, 2022)

In coalition with Haida Elder Ruby Marks, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, BCCLA and Pivot also issued calls to action following the RCMP killing of Jimmie Johannesson (Haida) during a wellness check in March 2022. We also met the family and community of Dani Cooper, and began working alongside them, after Dani was killed by the North Vancouver RCMP in November 2022.

Addressing police violence and murder is the foundation of this campaign. Communities that are structurally marginalized – due to racism, colonialism, transmisogyny, social condition, housing precarity, and criminalization of survival – have been forced into survival mode, and we are doing our damndest to preserve life while the state response is always “more police.” In 2021 we made submissions to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act rooted in our decades of expertise and institutional knowledge. When the final report was released, in April 2022, we were disappointed to learn that defunding police and investing in community-led crisis response failed to register with committee members. We organized a response alongside local academics, activists, and legal advocates to address the disappointing recommendations that focused on reforming deeply broken – and dangerous – systems.

Where Are We Going?
Reflecting on 2022, the year both felt cruel – as the inhumane responses to people experiencing homelessness piled up – and the cruelty was borne out in stunning statistics on police use of force in BC. It’s clear that structural stigma enables violent public policy and policing responses: justifying harmful actions by treating Black, Indigenous and racialized communities as sub-human, justifying police-enforced displacement to disappear “undesirable” elements from streets, parks and sidewalks, and bolstering police budgets through manufactured public safety crises that do not address the root causes of social problems.

The rising rates of police use-of-force have also determined Pivot’s response – much of our time and resources are going towards rapid responses, including advocacy and material support for families in the aftermath of police killings.

Our policing & criminalization campaign is invested in working alongside directly-affected communities, grassroots organizers, and joining both national and international efforts to defund, dismantle and abolish the violence of policing and prisons. Over the last year, Pivot has taken part in advocacy at the local, provincial and national level to continue challenging violent policing. In this work, we have prioritized building relationships with families, who can best speak to the aftermath of police killing a loved one.

This important work needs sustainable resources, and we continue to lobby for dedicated supports – including legal fees, truly independent community support, and government action that would support families and address preventative measures. We continue to build towards a network of legal advocacy and grassroots supports that can robustly respond to police complaints, police violence & police killings, through material supports, demanding change, and highlighting alternative models that will save lives.
Anti-Stigma and Poverty

It’s no surprise that being stigmatized by the government because of poverty blocks people’s access to quality housing, medicine, food security, employment opportunities, health outcomes, self-esteem, and life expectancy.

For those in poverty, surviving violent vitriol and scapegoating from the media, the public, and government officials of all levels is nothing new. This alienation is only amplified for people who use drugs, people who are unhoused, and people who work in grey economies, such as the sex work industry.

For the past 22 years, Pivot has held true to a few key beliefs: stigma against poor people hurts the most marginalized members of our society, and this is deeply embedded in our legal system. We recognize that a link exists between stigma, and discrimination against a person based on their social condition (in other words, their socio-economic status.)

Our new Anti-Stigma campaign aims to uncover and address stigmatizing laws and policies that affect people living in poverty’s access to safety and health by using systemic advocacy and public legal education.
The Legacy of our Anti-Stigma Campaign: Project Inclusion

A few months into 2022, Pivot officially launched our Anti-Stigma campaign, a new and discrete area of our work that addresses the existence of stigmatizing laws and policies across all of Pivot’s campaign areas.

This cross-campaign work aims to cut to the core of marginalization by building the case for expanding human rights law in BC to include a person’s “social condition” as a protected characteristic in our Human Rights Code, with the ultimate intended outcome being an increase in legal protection for people living in poverty.

There is a profound need for protections against poverty discrimination, especially as the BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner found that currently 1 in 10 people in BC are living in poverty.

Our Anti-Stigma campaign was born directly from our 2018 report, Project Inclusion, a province-wide review of how laws and policies harm and criminalize poor people, affecting their daily safety and well-being. People who are unhoused or who use drugs are thus trapped in cycles of marginalization, isolation and criminalization, instead of being treated with care and support.

For Project Inclusion, Pivot travelled to multiple municipalities across BC to hear directly from those impacted by stigmatizing laws and policies. The subsequent insights from our qualitative research shed light on the ways local bylaws and practices push people to the margins and set them up to fail by creating barriers to services and opportunities that are readily available to other members of society.

Stigma against already marginalized communities facing multiple health and safety risks keeps people in poverty, leading to a cycle of discrimination that ultimately materializes into legal barriers and often, criminalization. The systems and institutions that currently control so-called-Canada are historically rooted in colonialism, capitalism, paternalism, and white supremacy. These embedded structures deeply contribute to the insidious cycle of poverty we see presently, with stigma and criminalization at the very core.

All of Pivot’s advocacy is done in collaboration with communities directly affected by social exclusion and poverty, and much of 2022 was spent establishing trust and reciprocity in relationships with the individuals and organizations we work alongside to effectively guide our work on the ground, our research, and our public legal education. This year, we also supported the work of other organizations committed to advancing poverty reduction and the decriminalization of poverty, including contributing research to West Coast LEAF’s Gender Equity Report Card 2022, and submitting letters to government officials in support of LEAF’s campaign to end the family policing system in BC.

In 2022, we engaged with other organizations invested in this work by presenting our Anti-Stigma work to the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition’s Community Action Network, the Collective Impact Network, and a supportive housing building in a question-and-answer presentation involving law enforcement’s interactions with people who rely on public space and use drugs.

The Case for Social Condition Protections in the Law

A person’s social condition, or socio-economic status, refers to their inclusion in a socially identifiable group that suffers social or economic disadvantages based on living in poverty, their source of income, their occupation, their housing status, and their education level.

Unlike other provinces and territories in Canada, namely Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, and Quebec, British Columbia does not currently protect people against discrimination based on their social condition under the provincial Human Rights Code. Other protections in the BC Human Rights Code include protections from discrimination based on race, for example. The protection of a person’s social condition in the Human Rights Code would provide an avenue for filing human rights complaints for people who don’t currently have one, as well as preventing the creation of any bylaws, practices or policies that operate based on discrimination.

In 2022, Nina Taghaddosi bolstered existing work at Pivot by providing analysis of displacement in public space, through the lens of social condition, stigma, and criminalization:

”Media reports emerging over the past few weeks have been focused on highlighting the desires of the tourism and business industries, effectively shifting the narrative away from the needs and human rights of marginalized people and onto the well-being of businesses and profit margins. People living on the street are being dehumanized through the media, labeled as ‘zombies’ and framed as dispensable. This further fuels the violent rhetoric against people living in poverty and sheltering in public space by members of the general public who feel emboldened to target the most marginalized members of our society with acts of violence.

—Nina Taghaddosi | Pivot’s Anti-Stigma and Poverty Campaigner.

Highlighting the harmful and deadly consequences for stigmatized individuals and communities living in abject poverty, Pivot’s newest campaign sheds light on harmful public discourse that leads to the creation of increased criminalization through the law. These inequalities aren’t just an issue in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside but across the province and the country, where too many are experiencing income insecurity, precarious employment, debt and housing instability alongside the staggering increases to costs of living in 2022.

In our open letter to government, Pivot advocated for a means of legal recourse when people are discriminated against based on their social condition, calling for a shift to an equity lens and human rights-based approach to tent cities and other issues of poverty.
Dismantling BC’s Stigmatizing Family Policing System

On October 26, 2022, an open letter was released by West Coast LEAF; Keeping Families Together; PACK BC; YWCA Metro Vancouver; BC Association of Social Workers; and RainCity Housing, which urged for an immediate dismantling of BC’s Family Policing System, enforced by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

In support of this unified call, Pivot released a letter directed to government and Members of the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth advocating for a change to the MCFD’s current framework for investigation, intervention, child removal, and pathways towards reunification.

The system of supposed ‘child welfare’ upholds ongoing colonization in the lives of so many Indigenous communities and Nations. The issue of social condition discrimination connects deeply with MCFD’s culture of stigmatizing surveillance. Perceived risks are also rooted in intersecting oppressions including anti-homeless and anti-drug user stigma, gender, race, and level and source of income.

Pivot continues to fight for the vital work of keeping families and their communities together, healthy, and safe, by fighting for root-cause solutions to ending poverty and colonial dispossession, and by amending the BC Human Rights Code to protect a person against discrimination based on social condition.

Ensuring Essential Services Where They’re Needed Most: Canada Post

Reliable and accessible postal service is essential for most people, but especially for those living in poverty with limited access to transportation and technology.

When Canada Post announced in the spring of 2022 that it would be suspending mail delivery service to Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) due to a single instance of a purported safety issue, residents questioned the reasoning around this decision, especially with wealthy pockets of the neighborhood still receiving their regular mail delivery service.

This service suspension meant that critical mail, including income assistance and disability cheques, letters from home, and essential goods (such as prescription medications) were delayed for those that depend on them the most. The proposed alternate collection center was 14 blocks away; for a community of people grappling with poverty, homelessness, and the drug poisoning crisis, this move was a considerable barrier to accessing vital services and resources through the mail. This lack of accessibility especially affected those with disabilities and limited mobility who could not make the trip to the much farther collection centre in another neighbourhood.

In response to this guaranteed basic service violation by Canada Post, Pivot worked alongside allied groups, like the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), the Our Homes Can’t Wait (OHCW) coalition, the British Columbia Association of People on Opiate Maintenance, Disability Alliance BC, and the Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society, to push back against the service suspension in the DTES in a collective letter to government:

“The harm caused by this service suspension is immediate and serious. The majority of people living in the DTES do not have expendable income. Disruption in the arrival of expected finances (for example, government benefits delivered by mail) puts people at immediate risk of being unable to meet basic needs, including food, clothing and shelter costs. Disruptions in finances can also force people who use substances to engage in higher risk behavior, an impact with clear life and death consequences as we enter our seventh year of the overdose crisis being declared a public health emergency.”

- Letter from DTES Peer Organizations in Response to Postal Service Disruption.

Additionally, the groups mentioned above coordinated a meeting between themselves and senior members of Canada Post management, supported by Pivot lawyers and legal advocates from Disability Alliance of BC, to create an immediate action plan to resume service to the neighbourhood and ensure that a service disruption would never happen to this community again.

Successfully, this advocacy, in conjunction with ground-level organizing, resulted in the essential service being returned, an apology from senior members of Canada Post, and commitments from Canada Post executives to avoid future harms and stigmatization against marginalized members of the DTES.
Sex Workers’ Rights

When adult sex work is criminalized, sex workers go without essential health and safety protections. Colonial laws and criminalizing the purchase and advertising of sexual services have direct impacts on sex workers, and continue to harm, stigmatize, and violate the basic human rights of sex workers across so-called Canada and globally in 2022.

In Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, street-based sex workers, including street-involved folks, face a high degree of state-sanctioned violence, displacement, and death. These dangers exist in large part due to criminalizing laws and are intensified by overlapping social and public health emergencies like the drug poisoning crisis, a lack of affordable and permanent housing, and the erosion of social safety nets. In 22 years of Pivot’s sex work advocacy, we’ve consistently called attention to this crisis.

We know that sex workers have consistently borne the brunt of policing and by-law enforcement efforts. The criminalization of sex work in public spaces, compounded by the intersections of poverty, and stigmatizing narratives, means that sex workers are often without a safe place to work indoors, leading to increased surveillance and targeting from police. These harms are particularly pronounced for queer, Indigenous, Black, and other racialized sex workers, who already face stigmatization and discrimination in our society.
Pivot has long argued that federal sex work laws violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by forcing sex workers into violent working conditions through criminalization, leading to undue harms and continued state-sanctioned violence.

The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (“PCEPA”) was introduced by the federal government after the Supreme Court of Canada’s ground-breaking Bedford decision in 2013, in which Pivot represented Sex Workers United Against Violence (SWUAV). This constitutional challenge, Canada (Attorney General) v. Bedford, ultimately led the Supreme Court to strike down three key provisions in Canada’s prostitution laws that criminalized sex work.

PCEPA was implemented in 2014 in response to this historic victory, and the Act continues to fuel the perpetual cycle of criminalization, discrimination, and stigmatization of sex workers to this day by violating fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association, security of the person, and equal treatment under the law.

The devastating impacts of PCEPA are numerous, and under it, sex workers are forced to work in untenable conditions to avoid the devastating consequences of criminalization. This includes heightened fears of arrest; displacement of sex workers trying to avoid detection, instead of being able to adopt basic health and safety measures like client screening; a mistrust of legal systems and policing that are responsible for much of the ongoing violence and assault inflicted upon sex workers; a compromised ability to negotiate condom use and consent to sexual services; barriers to working indoors and collectively; and exclusion from workplace health and safety regimes. Despite these harms, sex workers have built and rely on longstanding networks of mutual aid within their communities when dealing with critical and life-threatening situations.

PCEPA updates 2022: Pivot and PACE Society's Joint Submissions to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in its Review of PCEPA

PCEPA required the federal government to review its new suite of ‘prostitution’ laws five years after the passage of the bill. After advocacy by sex worker-led organizations calling for a review of PCEPA and the impacts of the existing legal regime, the federal government finally began its review of PCEPA in February 2022.

In March 2022, Pivot co-wrote submissions with PACE Society and presented directly to the Parliamentary Committee. Our submissions centered the health, autonomy, and well-being of sex workers, reminding the committee that people with lived and living experience of sex work are the true experts on the law’s real impacts and consequences. This direct experience is backed up by scholarly research that demonstrates criminalizing consensual sex work does nothing to address the root causes of inequality and structural poverty. The ongoing harms of colonization and criminalization mean that Indigenous, Black, racialized, and undocumented migrant sex workers are most at risk when working.

Evidence from Vancouver indicates that 72% of sex workers interviewed reported no improvements in their working conditions or safety with the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act while 26% reported increased harms.

- Pivot and PACE Society’s Joint Submissions

After the hearings, the Committee released a report with recommendations, entitled Preventing Harm in the Canadian Sex Industry: A Review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

Several positive recommendations that support the health, safety and human rights of sex workers were included in the report, including repeal of some of the laws under PCEPA which have harmful impacts on sex workers. These recommendations have yet to be implemented by the federal government.

Sex workers certainly didn’t achieve their goal of decriminalization through this review process but the repeal of certain Criminal Code provisions as well as some Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations is a foot in the door if these changes actually do occur. We continue to fight alongside sex workers in the hopes that one day, sex workers will be able to open that door and walk through to a fully decriminalized future.

- Kerry Porth, Pivot’s Sex Work Campaigner

Despite the PCEPA’s avowed aim of protecting vulnerable people from exploitation, bans on purchasing sex, communicating for the purposes of selling or purchasing sex, working collectively, and advertising sexual services replicate many of the dire consequences for sex workers’ health and safety identified in Bedford. There is little doubt that the PCEPA is unconstitutional and actively prevents people who sell or trade sexual services from exercising their fundamental Charter rights.

- Evaluating Canada’s Sex Work Laws: The Case for Repeal

Continued Advocacy: Taking Direction Directly from Affected Communities

Pivot’s work in decriminalizing adult sex work is directly informed by the lived and living experience and expertise of adult sex workers across Canada. Developing from the work cultivated over the years at Pivot, policy consultant Kerry Porth continued consulting and advocating alongside sex workers and sex worker-led organizations in researching and collectively pursuing evidence-based solutions to sex work criminalization throughout 2022, and Pivot welcomed Simone Akyianu in November 2022 as Sex Workers’ Rights Campaigner.

In our work, Pivot acknowledges the invaluable labour, knowledge, and advocacy of sex workers in promoting sex worker rights, health, safety, wellbeing and working conditions. This long tradition of rights-based advocacy, both local and global, against state-sanctioned discrimination and structural violence, guides our sex work campaign. The lived expertise of directly affected communities propels Pivot’s advocacy in fighting against oppressive laws and practices, such as PCEPA. Pivot holds steadfast in our belief that full decriminalization of consensual adult sex work is the first step to safer working conditions for sex workers by removing stigma and barriers to improved health, safety, and human rights.
Community & Public Legal Education

Through dedicated and intentional engagement with communities we work with, Pivot staff continue discovering ways in which Pivot and our resources and capacities can be of best use. Whether it’s through on-the-ground interventions, training legal observers or facilitating community actions, Pivot remains committed to life-affirming tactics.

There is much work Pivot staff undertakes that is often unspoken of, including caring for community members. This often looks like supporting folks through Kafkaesque bureaucracy or facilitating relationships with allied organizations and individuals (lawyers, advocates, etc.), among other ways our staff show up for those we work with. Pivot strives to undertake this sort of work with care and compassion while respecting and upholding people’s autonomy and privacy. Our staff are especially adept at empowering collectives for self-advocacy and realizing the power and potential their collective has. From helping folks write legal counsel, press releases or letters to editors, our staff recognizes and fosters the existing skills and abilities of everyone we work with.

Throughout 2022, Pivot lawyers provided movement legal support by offering training to tent city residents and supporters regarding the rights of protest in Canada, sometimes in collaboration with the BC Law Union. Staff continued to be present at community-led actions and events throughout the year, often participating in planning and logistical processes, as well as taking on roles including legal observing and police liaison.

2022 was also another year of introspection. We are proud to say that we continue investing in equitable accessibility. In 2022 we were able to extend $31,095 in direct monetary supports to organizations and individuals, including payment for labour (photo submissions, community meetings, drafting blogs, etc.), performed in support of our shared struggles.
This quick snapshot paints a picture of our commitment to the communities we work with and the movements we are a part of. Beyond these numbers exist relationships and stories of struggle and joy. We appreciate and thank the numerous people and organizations who have provided us with opportunities to contribute, learn, and fight alongside.
Our People

Staff
Anna Cooper
Asha Kaur
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David Marshall Richards
Drew Dennis
Emily Capel-Shyu
Eva Ureta
Kerry Porth
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Nina Taghaddosi
Sarah Millman
Simone Akylanu
Sozan Savehilaghi
Steph Wiafe
Taz Khandiwani
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Amanda Burrows
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Julie Guenkel, Treasurer
Kit Rothschild
Kyle Thompson
Naomi Moses
Stephanie Sweetnam
Stephen Mussell, Chair

Board members who served prior to the June 2022 AGM
Naomi Moses, Vice Chair
Nikida Steel

Our Community

Peer Collaborators & Community Leaders
Aero Marion
BeeLee Lee
Brian O’Donnell
Brittany Graham
Chloe Noir
Chrissey Brett
Corrina Keeling
Daniella Barreto
Dave Hamm
David Cockett
Deeliah Gregg
Demi London
Dianne Campbell
Didi Dufresne
Earl Greyeyes
Elder Clint (Anishnaabe)
Elder Sandy Laframboise (Algonquin/Cree-Métis)
Elder Veronica (Anishinaabe)
Ell Oda Sheiner
Ell Taylor
Elroy Desjarlaiss
Fiona York
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Gabrielle Peters
Garth Mullins
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip (Syilx, Penticton Indian Band)
Greg Fress
Hannah Dempsey
Harsha Walla
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Howard Calpas
Hugh Lampkin
Independent Black Media
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J eff Louden
Jennifer Taylor
J oe Ralthby
Jon Braithwaite
Joshua Goldberg
Kali Sedgemore
Kevin Yake
Kirala Raine
Kit Rothschild
Kukpi7 Judy Wilson (Secwépemc, Neskonlith)
Kwitsel Tatel (Stó꞉lō)
Lama Mugabo
Laura Holland
Laura Shaver
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Lil Michel
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Magin Payet
Makeda Martin
Mama Marcy Jacobs
Manuel Axell Strain (Secwépemc, Syilx, and xʷməθkʷəy'əm)
Mara Selander
Martha Martin
Meghan McDermott
Myles Harps
Naneek Naytowhow
Nathan Crompton
Nicole Luongo
Odette Auger
Olumoroti Soji-George
Paul Henry
Richard (Our Homes Can’t Wait)
Ryan Maddeaux
Ryan Sudds
Samona Marsh
Scotty Archondous
Sonia Marino
sx̱emtana’t S’ágid Jaad, Audrey Siegl
(xʷməθkʷəy’əm)
Te’ta’-in, Elder Shane Pointe (xʷməθkʷəy’əm)
Tonye Aganaba
Tyson Singh Kelsall
Vince Tao
Vivienne Bessette
Wulf Zapf
Collaborating Organizations

Abolitionist Care and Belonging Working Group
Aboriginal Front Door
AIDS Vancouver
ANKORS
Anti-Oppression Educators Collective
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
Black Lives Matter – Vancouver
Canadian Civil Liberties Association
Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
Centre for Gender & Sexual Health & Equity
CMHA – BC Division
Coalition Against More Surveillance – CAMS Ottawa
Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War – CPDWD
Community Action Initiative
Community Legal Assistance Society
Cops out of Schools
Defund 604 Network
Disability Alliance BC
Distro Disco
Downtown Eastside SRO-Collaborative
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
Drug User Liberation Front
DTES Neighbourhood House
DTES Response
Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education
Exchange Inner City
Femmes de diverses rigins / Women of Diverse Origins
First United Church Community Ministry Society
Friends of Carnegie Community Action Project
Gallery Gachet
Harm Reduction Nurses Association
Hastings Folk Garden
HIV Legal Network
Hives for Humanity
Hogan's Alley Society
Homelessness Services Association of BC

Justic for Girls
Justic for J aired
Law Union of BC
Masks4EastVan
Megaphone Magazine
New Page Foundation
North Shore Unitarian Church
Open Media
Our Homes Can't Wait
OUR STREETS
Overdose Prevention Society
PACE Society
PAN
Rural Empowered Drug Users Network
Sanctuary Health
Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group – SFPIRG
SOLID Outreach Society
St. John's Ambulance – Accidental Drug Poisoning Crisis Community of Practice
#StopTheSweeps Coalition
The Shift
Together Against Poverty Society
TORO – Tenant Overdose Response Organizers Project
UBC Office of Regional and International Community Engagement
UBC School of Social Work
Union of BC Indian Chiefs – UBCIC
UVic Law students for Harm Reduction and Decriminalization (H.A.R.D)
Vancouver Tenants Union
Vancouver Unitarians
Vancouver Women's Health Collective
VANDU - Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users
Vines Art Festival
WAHRS - Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society
Watari Counselling and Support Service
WePress
West Coast LEAF
WISH Drop-In society
Women Transforming Cities
Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice

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Meredith Burney
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Joe Hermer, University of Toronto
Martin A. Andresen, Simon Fraser University
Nick Blomley, Simon Fraser University

A Note of Gratitude

Peer experts, community organizers and groups, funders, and supporters, are all a critical part of our work which at its heart, involves creating space for and learning from, people directly impacted by poverty and criminalization.

To all who have stood alongside us on the streets and in the courts; to all who have sent emails and showed up to serve food; to all who have spent countless hours collaborating with us and to all those who have opened your doors for us, we thank you!

Your trust and generosity have allowed us to fight back against discriminatory and deadly laws and policies while striving for healthier and stronger communities.

In solidarity,
Staff - Pivot Legal Society
In Loving Memory of

Chrissy Brett
Elroy Desjarlais
Flora Munroe
Greg Fresz
Kyle Reakes
Lenora Louise Blue
Mari-Louise Harpe
Myles Harps
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? Apply online at: https://www.pivotlegal.org/membership_signup

The following individuals served as members of Pivot at some point in 2022:

Aaron Samuel  
Adam Bans  
Alex Ward  
Alexandra Kanezaki  
Amanda Burrows  
Amy Comish  
Angela Noel  
Arnold Schenderling  
Aurora Picciottoli  
BeeLee Lee  
Brandon Bourne  
Carley McGrath  
Catherine Reid  
Chanelle Lajoie  
Christina Batstone  
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David Bouvier  
David Fai  
Dean McMillan  
Denea Bascombe  
Douglas Bjorkman  
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Elizabethe Costa  
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Emily Blyth  
Emily Solows  
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Harpreet Bahia  
Hayli Millar  
jack pollner  
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Muhammad Aunain  
Myriam Devlin  
Naomi Moses  
Nicole-Bailey Staats  
Nikida Steel  
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Susan Asams  
The Milne Family  
Vancouver 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.

Monthly Donors in 2022

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Sarah Sharp  
Sean Konrad  
Seth Klein  
Shawn Norman  
Sheena Starky  
Theresa Riley  
Zena Sharman

Individual Annual Donors in 2022

Adrienne Boon  
Beverly Spring  
Brenda Grunau  
Brendan Barlow  
Brianna Mau  
Christopher Verral  
Claire Laville  
Dan Shoorn  
Darby Honeyman  
Dianne & Michael Goldberg  
Donna Clark  
Drew Dennis  
Elizabeth Caskey  
Elizabeth Mathers  
Elien Pond  
Emily Kugel  
Francisco Javier Barajas  
Fu Guo  
Heather Holroyd  
Henry Tsang  
j ayce Salloum  
j ay Rutledge  
John pacey  
Kathleen Ruff  
Kimball Cariou  
Kristyn Izowski  
Linda Brock  
Linda Robertson  
Linda Robertson  
Lisa Slater  
Mary Beam  
Margaret Asch  
Mark Strong  
Mary Maillard  
Mary Ungerleider  
Melora Koepe  
Michael Feld  
Michael Fraser  
Michelle Yung  
Nancy Pollak  
Naomi Moses  
Patrick Walker  
Reg Rose  
Rene Perey  
Rethink Lp  
Richelle Muscroft  
R K Popkin  
Ruth Herman  
Sam Boskey  
Sandy Bauer  
Scott Mahr  
Seth Klein  
Sharon Mackay  
Suzanne Girard-Fortier  
Theresa Riley  
William & Gloria Hall  
Zg Stories

If you made a donation to Pivot in 2022 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

Annual and Project Funders

Abundance Canada  
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies of BC  
BC Community Gaming  
BC General Employees Union  
Hugh & Betty Legacy Fund via the Vancouver Foundation  
Law Foundation of BC  
Lubin Family Fund  
Nicola Family Foundation  
Provincial Employee Community Services  
SPARC BC  
University of British Columbia Partnership Recognition Fund  
Vancity Community Fund  
Vancouver Unitarians  
Victory Square Law Office LLP  
We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia  
Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Canada

Our Community

Thank you!
Financials

Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS (Note 5)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$ 418,186</td>
<td>$ 734,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Deposits (Note 3)</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>6,992</td>
<td>6,992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>18,922</td>
<td>20,710</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>645,050</td>
<td>954,826</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property and equipment</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>8,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>650,541</td>
<td>962,848</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$ 16,406</td>
<td>$ 27,088</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue (Note 7)</td>
<td>263,865</td>
<td>499,755</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>280,271</td>
<td>526,843</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General fund</td>
<td>64,779</td>
<td>127,983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invested in property and equipment</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>8,022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internally restricted contingency fund</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>370,270</td>
<td>436,005</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>650,541</td>
<td>962,848</td>
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Statement of Operation December 31, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charitable foundation contributions</td>
<td>$ 181,750</td>
<td>$ 201,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community group, union contributions</td>
<td>13,763</td>
<td>28,484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate contributions</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual donations (Note 9)</td>
<td>210,794</td>
<td>195,261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest income</td>
<td>2,179</td>
<td>2,079</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Foundation grants</td>
<td>157,000</td>
<td>190,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous earned revenue</td>
<td>14,489</td>
<td>8,926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Society Foundation grant</td>
<td>71,690</td>
<td>65,650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial grants</td>
<td>283,435</td>
<td>234,383</td>
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<td>Public Foundations grants</td>
<td>108,578</td>
<td>54,120</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,082,158</td>
<td>978,314</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>101,156</td>
<td>96,173</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operation expenses</td>
<td>43,352</td>
<td>28,767</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>30,272</td>
<td>33,285</td>
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<td>174,580</td>
<td>158,235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization &amp; resource development</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund development</td>
<td>8,385</td>
<td>9,489</td>
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<td>Organizational development</td>
<td>35,715</td>
<td>32,561</td>
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<td>44,100</td>
<td>42,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaigns expense</td>
<td>67,132</td>
<td>50,130</td>
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<td>Legal education</td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>16,096</td>
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<tr>
<td>Litigation expenses</td>
<td>3,719</td>
<td>3,719</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication and outreach</td>
<td>15,348</td>
<td>11,909</td>
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<td></td>
<td>84,194</td>
<td>81,854</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages &amp; benefits (Note 11)</td>
<td>842,488</td>
<td>792,981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amortization</td>
<td>2,531</td>
<td>3,547</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,147,983</td>
<td>1,076,777</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deficiency of revenue over expenditures for year</strong></td>
<td>$ (65,735)</td>
<td>($ 99,363)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>