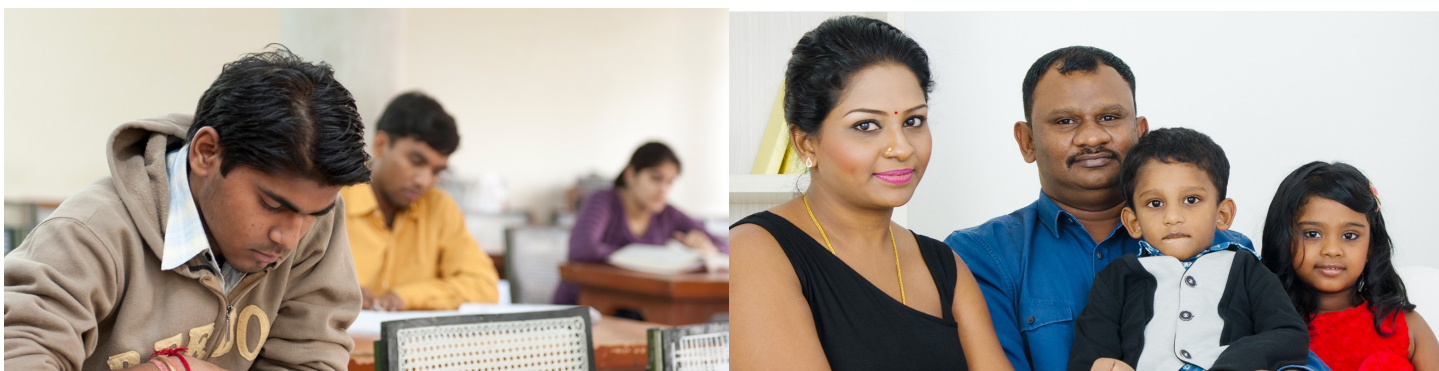


**SALCO**  
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario

**The South Asian Legal Clinic  
of Ontario (SALCO)**

**Annual Report 2024**





**Annual General Meeting**  
**South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)**

**Monday, November 25, 2024 @ 6:30 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

**106A - 45 Sheppard Avenue East**  
**Toronto, Ontario, M2N 5W9**

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# Agenda

**Annual General Meeting  
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)  
Monday, November 25, 2024  
6:30 pm—7:45 pm  
Zoom Meeting**

<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	Zoom Meeting Opens	All Attendees
<b>6:35 p.m.</b>	AGM Call to Order Land Acknowledgement	Chair, Board of Directors Mazahir Walji
<b>6:40 p.m.</b>	Approval of Agenda	Chair, Board of Directors
<b>6:42 p.m.</b>	Approval of 2023 AGM Minutes	Chair, Board of Directors
<b>6:45 p.m.</b>	SALCO Joint Chair and ED Report	Chair, Board of Directors ED, SALCO
<b>6:50 p.m.</b>	SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights	SALCO Staff
<b>7:05 p.m.</b>	i) Treasurer's Report on the Audited Financial Statements Of the Year Ending March 31, 2024	Treasurer, Board of Directors
.	ii) Approval of Auditor	Treasurer, Board of Directors
<b>7:15 p.m.</b>	Nominations to SALCO Board of Directors: slate and nominations/ Election from the floor	Nominations Com., Board of Directors
<b>7:20 p.m.</b>	Presentation to Sultana Jahangir (long serving SALCO Board Member)	Chair, Board of Directors
<b>7:30 p.m.</b>	Adjournment of Meeting	Chair, Board of Directors



We will begin the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario Annual General Meeting 2024 by acknowledging that we are meeting on Indigenous land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. As settlers, we are grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land - for thousands of years.

Long before today, as we gather here, there have been Indigenous peoples who have been the stewards of this place. In particular, we acknowledge that the land we meet, work and live on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabek, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. We also recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

As settlers, this recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities, and in particular to bring justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across our country.

**SALCO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 21, 2023, 6:30 pm-7:30pm**  
**Via Zoom, Toronto, Ontario**

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1. The AGM meeting was opened to the public at 6:31 pm with a welcome by the Board Chair, Lisa Amin.
2. **Land Acknowledgement:** Maria Ali, SALCO social support worker, provided a Land Acknowledgement. The full acknowledgment is in the Annual report. The land acknowledgement emphasized that the recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to making the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities, and in particular to bring justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across our country.
3. **AGM Business Meeting: Call to Order:** The AGM Business Meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Lisa Amin at 6:33 pm. Lisa welcomed and thanked everyone. She also explained the voting process: a poll would pop up on the screen and only current members who are eligible to vote should cast a vote as quickly as possible.
4. **Approval of the Agenda & Minutes from AGM 2022:** The Agenda and AGM Minutes 2023 were presented for approval. The Agenda was amended to include the item "Approval of Agenda". No amendments were made to the AGM Minutes 2022.

*Motion to Approve Agenda: The Agenda as amended was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Alizeah Khorasaneh, seconded by Sultana Jahangir, and duly passed. Voting results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%*

*Motion to Approve: The AGM 2022 Minutes (page 6 of the Annual Report 2023) was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Sultana Jahangir, seconded by Shivali Vig and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%*

5. **SALCO Chair and Executive Director's Report:** The Board Chair, Lisa, presented the Chair's message from the AGM package, and the Executive Director, Shalini Konanur, presented the ED's report.

**Chair's message (highlights):**

- South Asian communities in Ontario continue to fall into poverty at a higher rate than non-racialized Ontarians.
- We are seeing broad experiences of discrimination based on race and immigration status in all sectors

- International students experiencing issues with immigration, harassment and discrimination
- SALCO continued with satellite services across the GTA and surrounding areas in person and by phone
- This past year, SALCO continued to provide significant support through direct services to clients in legal advice, legal brief services, and legal representation in multiple areas of law
- This past year, SALCO was also delighted to expand its services to include a full-time social worker, and a new federally funded lawyer to support clients with family and immigration law matters.

**Executive Director's message (highlights):**

- This year we have been more involved in test case work; which is being done mostly with pro bono counsel to challenge what we are seeing in our case work at a systemic level.
- There has been an increase in community development, PLEs and law reform
- This past year, first year since the pandemic are we getting back into community in ways we were in the past and engaging in important non-casework work
- Thanked her colleagues in the clinic, because they are a great team, who are supportive of each other and committed to the communities we serve the casework.
- Capacity is outweighed by the demand, we know life is hard and we are seeing that in the desperation of our clients and the complexities of the cases
- Thanked the board, because our board has shown a lot of commitment which is evidenced by the committees that have been struck.
- Thanked our funders – Legal Aid Ontario, who is making the process much easier
- Seeing that in the desperation of our clients, and the complexities' of the cases
- Thanked our board for their commitment, which is evidenced by the committees that were struck
- Thank our funders – Legal Aid Ontario who is making the processes to get our funding much more easier; And the Canada Summer Job and DOJ, as well as United Way and Kassam Foundation who have assisted in funding for our Immigration/Family Lawyer, Social worker as well as funding for GBV.
- Finally, working on a new hub for services for South Asians which is being spearheaded by CASSA.

6. **SALCO Staff Highlights:** The staff presented highlights from the Staff Report in the AGM Package 2022:

**Atulya Sharman:** Senior/ Supervising Staff Lawyer. Atulya joined SALCO three weeks ago, after having previously worked with SALCO for several years prior. Since his return, he has been actively engaged with a high volume of cases, particularly in managing issues related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and immigration. The challenges are substantial, and the needs of our clients are

immense. Atulya emphasized SALCO's commitment to making a positive impact in any way possible.

**Rumpa Deb:** Community Legal Worker: Rumpa completed her placement at SALCO and is now serving as an intake worker/community legal worker under the guidance of the Executive Director and the Office Coordinator. Rumpa is fluent in Bengali and primarily clients with legal matters in immigration, social assistance, and housing.

**Maz (Mazahir) Walji:** Staff Lawyer. Maz is a family and immigration lawyer funded through the federal government's Department of Justice. He advises and represents clients at various stages of their legal journeys including motions, appeals, application, and hearings at the Immigration Refugee Board and in family court. He is proud of the numerous success stories achieved through collaboration with colleagues. Maz has also focused on the creation of written Public Legal Education (PLE) in family and immigration law in multiple South Asian languages and the delivery of PLEs in community in both areas of law.

**Gurmat Randhawa:** Staff Lawyer. This year, Gurmat has notably worked with many clients facing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), assisting them with their immigration challenges. She successfully facilitated several Temporary Resident Permits and Humanitarian and Compassionate applications under the Family Violence category, achieving positive approvals. Gurmat has also made significant contributions in Ontario Disability Support Program matters and has collaborated with Shalini to present PLEs with a segment delivered in Punjabi, highlighting the power of holistic client support alongside Maria.

**Athursh Vaithilingam:** Paralegal. Athursh noted that this has been a year of transition for the clinic as it adapts to Digital First approaches at the Tribunals. He has actively engaged with the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario (ACLCO) and the Ontario Project for Inter-Clinic Community Organizing (OPICCO) to address systemic issues related to Digital First implementation, including delays and accessibility challenges.

**Vanathy Wimalaswarans:** Office Coordinator. Vanathy highlighted the increasing volume of intake and walk-in cases, noting that many of these involve complex immigration matters. She appreciates the support from new staff, particularly Rumpa, in efficiently processing these intakes.

**Maria Ali:** Social Worker. Maria has enjoyed a fruitful year at SALCO, characterized by continuous learning and professional growth. She manages a significant caseload centered on GBV, which includes safety and crisis planning, applications for special priority housing, applications for income support, and assistance to navigate legal aid services and obtain certificates. Maria reported several success stories and participation in GBV conferences and various training events. Additionally, she has

commenced workshops for clients impacted by GBV, focusing on mental health and wellness.

**Khamalene Ganeshanathan:** Staff Lawyer. Khamalene joined SALCO in September after 13 years in private practice, complemented by international training. She commends the strong leadership and collegial environment at SALCO. In her short time, she actively participated in hearings at the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT) and anticipates more engagements. Khamalene previously served on the boards of organizations supporting these communities, allowing her to apply her theoretical knowledge in practical, on-the-ground situations.

**Anchal Bhatia:** Staff Lawyer. Anchal reported that this past year SALCO has seen an increase in employment law intakes. This is likely because of a SALCO Tik Tok Campaign, which has been running for 1 year. Since then we have 50+ videos and 500 followers. In addition to this, Anchal reported working on a Divisional Court intervention focused on what intimate partner violence can look like in a South Asian communities and how to assess it with cultural competence. Anchal noted that her favourite part of the clinic system is the community based element to everything that she sees through her own work and the inter-clinic committees.

**Shalini Konanur:** Executive Director/Lawyer: Shalini thanked her colleagues for their reports and noted that they have been very modest on all the work that they do, including taking on sudden and last minute work without hesitation. She also highlighted some of the trends from this past year: increases in reports of hate incidents / hate crimes (ex: refusal to allow international students to use food banks). SALCO will continue to think about ways in which we can play a role in combatting that anti- South Asian hate. The Ontario Human Rights Commission is actively monitoring this and we will work with them on any proposed campaigns.

7. **Treasurer's Report on Audited Financial for the stated year ending March 31, 2022:** Our treasurer, Alizeh Khorasanee, presented financial statements for March 2022. She went through the Audited Financial Statement and provided the following highlights:

- Our auditors provided a clean audit report with no issues raised and no recommendations
- The Clinic cash and cash equivalents was up, as is the grants SALCO received. Overall everything is moving in the right direction
- Our major funder is Legal Aid Ontario, but this past year SALCO also received project funding from the federal Department of Justice, the United Way Greater Toronto, and the Kassam Foundation to support our work within the South Asian community including those facing gender-based violence
- Alizeh, also recommended to continue to use our current auditor for the next year.

**Items for Discussion:**

- A member (Mo) asked about what the “professional dues” line was in the audit. The Treasurer confirmed that those dues are the Law Society of Ontario professional dues for the lawyers and paralegal who work at the clinic
- A member (Mo) also asked a question regarding SALCO’s rent, and why we have to pay rent. It was explained that our main funder, LAO, has a line item for rent costs in our service agreements, which is what funds our rent costs. We get an envelope of funding based on the projected rent amount. There is no provision for free rent, but we are a subtenant of Legal Aid Ontario who negotiates are rent (currently to 2025). While we wish rent was free, it is not. We are funded for rent and we pay it to our head tenant, Legal Aid Ontario.

*Motion to approve the audited financial statements was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Joanne D’Silva, Seconded by Anu Bakshi, and duly passed. Voting results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%*

*Motion to approve Rashidi LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants as auditors for year ending March 31, 2024 was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Rashmi Kumar, seconded by Jaspal Sangha, and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%.*

8. **SALCO Proposed By-Law Amendments:** The Board Strategic Planning and Policy Committee Chair, Jaspal Sangha, presented proposed By-Law Amendments. He explained that these amendments were developed and continued to be developed to be align with the *Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA)*. For this AGM he is presented 3 amendments for discussion and approval:

**Amendment 1:** Change to the number of directors that are required at any given time. The Current bylaw says we need 12 and *ONCA* says we can have a minimum of three. The proposal is to change the by-law to require a minimum of 4 board members and a maximum of 12 (a range 4-12).

**Items for Discussion:**

- A member (Anu) expressed concern that a minimum of 4 would be too low, because when the Board was initially set up, there was a desire to have representation from the various South Asian Communities, and a low number of directors could cause one South Asian Community to become over-represented. Anu acknowledged she didn’t expect 4 to be the goal. Jaspal and the ED noted that having a range with a minimum would help in emergency situations where we lose multiple board members, so as to ensure that we remain. Jaspal also mentioned that the other aspects of the by-law would remain (i.e.: that 2 directors have to be lawyers and 2 directors have to be community members).
- A member (Mo), asked, how many committees are there, and how would this change impact that. He suggested a range of 9 to 12 directors. The ED again

noted that a minimum of 9 would also be less flexible in case multiple board members resign. Mo suggest maintaining a list of back-up directors for resignations and it was confirmed that this is already in place but that our board selection policy would still require posting and following a longer procedure to find new interim board members. Mo also asked if there were any costs associated with being a director. It was advised that directors could expense travel to the clinic for meetings but from 2020 onwards, there have been no costs. Mo suggested a range of 8-12 as a balance.

*Motion to approve the friendly amendment that there be 8 to 12 directors instead of 4 to 12 directors, whereupon motion duly made by Mo. It was not seconded and so the motion was not put forth for a vote.*

*Motion to approve the friendly amendment that there be 6 to 12 directors instead of 4 to 12 directors, whereupon motion duly made by Anu Bakshi, second by Hussein Panj, and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%.*

**Amendment 2:** Change the number of years that a director can serve consecutively from 6 years to 10 years. The reasoning for this change is to ensure consistency on the Board, and to allow directors and appropriate amount of time to allow for real change, as it takes time to get up speed and take action.

**Amendment 3:** Change the number required for quorum. Currently it says a simple majority but not less than 2/5ths of the directors. We want to change it to No less than the greater of either 2/5s or three directors. Jaspal noted that the reason for this change is that the current wording is confusing, and will also provide flexibility with quorum issues.

**Items for Discussion:**

- A member (Anu) commented that 3 seems too low. There was agreement that based on the previous amendment it would especially be low, and it was suggested that 3 become 4.

*Motion to approve Amendment 2 as written in the Annual Report and Amendment 3 with the change from 3 directors to 4 directors was presented, whereupon motion duly made by Rashmi Kumar, seconded by Kish Mahmoud and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 92%, Abstains – 8%*

Lisa thanked the bylaw committee for their work and the members for the robust discussion.

## 9. Nominations to SALCO Board of Directors:

- a) Election of Slate of Nominees re-election/election for the 2023-2025 board term:** Shivali Vig (Chair of the Board's nominations committee): Shivali outlined the process for board nominations at SALCO, which are a hybrid model of a slate of nominees presented by the Nominations Committee and one position left vacant for election from the floor of the AGM. She highlighted the following:
- This year there were 6 vacancies, 5 regular and 1 student member; and 1 for election from the floor
  - The committee reviewed applications and proposed a slate to the SALCO Board, who approved the slate for presentation at the AGM
  - Shivali presented the slate proposed by the Nominations committee / SALCO Board (listed in the AGM package)
  - Lisa Amin – is the current chair. She loves the work she is able to do through the Board, she is a human rights lawyer with her own practice especially working with clients who are outside of the LAO financial eligibility but still low-income, she is committed to A2J and grassroots advocacy.
  - Jaspal Sangha – is secretary of the Board. He has been on the board for the past 4 years, and I have learnt so much from Shalini and SALCO staff. He appreciates the opportunity to contribute his time to an organization that does good work, as he does not get an opportunity to do such work directly. After being on the Board for the past 4 years, he is feeling more comfortable to take a lead on things like the Bylaw Amendments.
  - Rashmi Kumar – running for reelection. She worked in criminal defence and is now working in the Crow. She is able to provide a different perspective in terms of the justice, and there is a lot of intersectionality – so this helpful to both sides.
  - Chrishyami Sivaraj– running for reelection. She is in human resources, and is a director for HR in a federal agency. The Board is great group of people to work and learn from.
  - Tahlee Afzal – Running for election as a new board member. She was not able to attend and her description on page 32
  - Rutvi –Running for election for the student board member position 2023-2024. She is a second year law student, who spent the summer of 2023 with SALCO as a law student. She learnt and lot, and wanted to continue to support the important work SALCO does.

*Motion to approve slate of nominees was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Sultana Jahangir, seconded by Hussein Panju, and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 87%, Abstains – 13%.*

- b) Election from the Floor: Shivali invited for the nominations from the floor:** Shivali called for anyone interested in running from the floor of the AGM. There were two people who put their name forward and Shivali invited them to present orally:

- Marium Yousef – She was very interested in legal compliance and the governance conversation. She has a lot of experience with international human rights, and refugee work. She has worked with Amnesty, on a global campaign in counter-terrorism. She has also advocated at the UN and served as a Board Member for the Amnesty Toronto Chapter. She volunteers at the oldest and largest refugee shelter. She is a proud immigrant and knew about these resources when she moved here, because she knows her father would have been more forth coming.
- Akasha Ara – She uses she/her pronouns. She has a long history in union work, and is the office manager for the public service union. She shifted from non-profit to paralegal. She is currently working for the Metro Tenants association and ACTO to provide tenancy advocacy. She also works as an Urdu translator and fundraises for cat shelter.

SALCO attempted to run a virtual poll to allow voting for one of the two candidates but it did not work so Shivali shifted to a manual poll by raise of hands.

*Voting for board member from the floor: Marium received 13 votes, and Akasha received 5 votes.*

*Motion to approve Marium Yousef, member elected from the floor, was presented for approval, whereupon motion duly made by Sultana Jahangir, seconded by Jaspal Sangha, and duly passed. Voting Results (via online poll): Yes – 100%, Abstains – 0%*

**10. AGM Business Meeting 2023 Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the meeting, the motion to adjourn was presented by the Chair, Lisa Amin.

*Motion to Approve: Motion to adjourn the AGM Business Meeting 2023 on November 21, 2023 was presented for approval, whereupon motion was duly made by Rashmi Kumar seconded by Sultana Jahangir, and duly passed and unanimously adopted at 8:45 pm (EST)*

Minutes prepared by: Anchal Bhatia

# Message from our Chair and Executive Director

Welcome to the 2024 Annual General Meeting for the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario. 2023-2024 was another busy and bustling year at SALCO.

As we have noted many times in the past, our most recent census data tells us that South Asian communities in Ontario continue to fall into poverty at a higher rate than non-racialized Ontarians. Census data shows that South Asians are the largest racialized population in Canada and in Ontario. Additionally, the influx of new immigrants (both permanent and temporary) includes a large population of individuals from South Asian communities, including international students. South Asian clients and communities continue to report:

- ❖ Growing xenophobia and hatred towards South Asian communities and scapegoating Indian international students as the reason for lack of housing and employment in Ontario, including deeply alarming comments on social media;
- ❖ Massive changes in immigration that are directly targeting South Asian temporary immigrants in Canada;
- ❖ International students experiencing issues with immigration, harassment in places of study, mental and physical health issues, inability to access income supports, employment law issues, and being mistreated and taken advantage of by landlords, including many South Asian landlords;
- ❖ Discrimination in employment (getting, keeping, and being promoted in jobs, and being paid equitably);
- ❖ Increases in hate incidents and hate crimes including growing incidents of Islamophobia (in particular resulting from the current global crisis of the Israel-Hamas war);
- ❖ Gender-based violence (ex: forced marriage, human trafficking, elder abuse, and intimate partner violence), with year-over-year increases on the percentages of South Asian people facing gender-based violence;
- ❖ In housing, eviction/loss of housing (including landlords evicting tenants in order to raise rents due to inflationary rent market); and
- ❖ Stagnant rates of social assistance make it nearly impossible for low-income clients to achieve a decent life in most parts of Ontario.

SALCO was extremely busy this year. Year over year the demand for service far outweighs the capacity, and this is true of most legal clinics across the province. More and more people in Ontario are falling into deep poverty resulting from inflation, a housing crisis, lack of immigration status and flat income support benefits that do not keep pace with the cost of life. SALCO, like so many others, has seen an increase in the need for food bank supports, clients living in cars and other precarious spaces, and a level of desperation that feels worse than it has in past years.

SALCO continued with satellite services across the GTA and surrounding areas in person and by phone and meeting clients in person at the SALCO office, in community spaces, shelters, prisons, and hospitals on a case-by-case basis. This past year, SALCO opened the door to its first satellite office in Scarborough, Ontario. SALCO continued to provide significant support through direct services to clients in legal advice, legal brief services, and legal representation in multiple areas of law, including immigration, housing, employment, income maintenance, and family law. SALCO was also the happy recipient of funding from Legal Aid Ontario for an articling student for 2024-2025.

Alongside the challenges of direct legal service, SALCO was actively engaged in public legal education, community development, law reforms, including appearances at an appearance at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and sitting on the Advisory for the Canadian Network for Equity and Racial Justice, which supports Canada's engagement in the tripartite Canada-U.S.-Mexico Partnership for Equity and Racial Justice.

To learn more about the work that SALCO has done over the past year, please look at the SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights in this AGM package.

We are always so grateful to work with such an incredible team of colleagues and our volunteer board members. Their work this year has kept our clinic functioning at high capacity, open to the public (with safety precautions in place), and serving the some of the most vulnerable people in Ontario.

- ❖ Thank you to SALCO's incredible staff for your commitment, for embracing change, for thinking constantly about what our communities need and how we can remain accessible to serve them, and for your earnest support for each other. Thank you also for your passion in advocating in every space possible to demand support for low-income South Asian communities and for your tireless work to educate our communities on what their rights are. A special congratulations to our Executive Director, Shalini Konanur, who received the South Asian Bar Association of North America's Public Interest Award for her work to advance access to justice and social justice for low-income South Asian communities in Canada;
- ❖ Thank you to the SALCO board for your continued oversight and commitment to the organization. This year the board worked to update financial management policies and SALCO's by-laws. The board worked on a number of governance / policy updates, and provided diligent oversight on financial management;
- ❖ Thank you to all of our funders for your support of our work. We would not be able to do this critical work without the support of Legal Aid Ontario, the federal Canada Summer Jobs Program, the United Way Greater Toronto, and the Federal Department of Justice, and the Kassam Foundation (who provides funding for support to serve people facing gender-based violence); and

- ❖ Thank you to our community partners and to the communities that we serve. The strength we see daily in the actions of our own clients and communities is an inspiration.

Ethno-racial clinics, like SALCO, serve a particular critical gap – they address barriers to service for low-income racialized clients who have faced systemic issues in access to justice and access to other legal aid services. SALCO’s client-centered model (linguistic services, cultural competence, satellites in community) is a great example of how legal clinics are able to provide holistic services to their low-income clients. Our newest census data (just released) confirms that South Asians are Ontario’s and Canada’s largest racialized population and that unfortunately our communities continue to fall into poverty at disproportionately higher rates. It is critical that we focus every effort to ensure the sustainability of SALCO and its direct legal services and advocacy on behalf of our communities. We must continue to advocate against the ways in which systemic racism and discrimination impact almost every life outcome for the communities we serve. We must demand equity and equality.

Lisa Amin,  
Chair, SALCO Board of Directors

Shalini Konanur  
Executive Director / Lawyer

# SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights

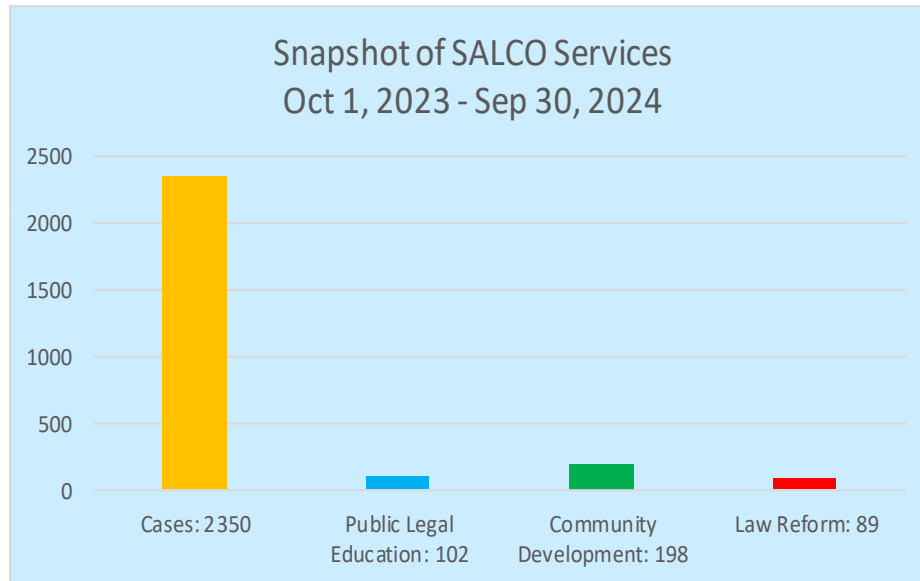
## (Joint Staff Report)

### Introduction:

The year 2023-2024 has been exceptionally eventful for SALCO, marked by new developments and challenges affecting low-income South Asian communities in Ontario. Escalating inflation has exacerbated poverty levels, pushing many individuals and families into deeper financial distress. Concurrently, recent changes in immigration policy have left a considerable number of international students, predominantly from South Asian backgrounds, vulnerable to increased incidents of hate crimes, workplace discrimination, and housing instability. Throughout this period, SALCO has assisted numerous clients facing pressing immigration issues, including international students, individuals experiencing domestic or workplace violence, and those who have been awaiting the processing of immigration applications for several years. We have also observed a troubling rise in incidents of hate crimes directed against various South Asian communities. In response to these challenges, SALCO remains committed to its mandate of providing direct legal services, conducting public legal education, advocating for law reform, and supporting our communities through diverse development initiatives. In addition to our extensive direct legal services, we have achieved notable success in public legal education, law reform initiatives, and community development projects aimed at fostering systemic change for the issues affecting our South Asian clients.

- ◆ South Asian was the single largest visible minority group, accounting for 29.6% of visible minorities and 8.7% of Ontario's total population;
- ◆ Approximately 215,000 South Asian people in Ontario live in poverty. That is approximately 18-20% of the South Asian population of Ontario. By contrast, 11% of the non-racialized people in Ontario live in poverty. South Asians continue to live in poverty at disproportionate rates; and
- ◆ The top South Asian languages spoken in Ontario are Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, and Bengali.
- ◆ Ontario is also home to Canada's largest population of international students, with India being the top source country. Approximately 100,000 South Asian international students are in Ontario
- ◆ South Asian and other racialized communities are facing higher rates of gender-based violence. SALCO had an increase of 29% in calls from clients reporting family violence.

# SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights

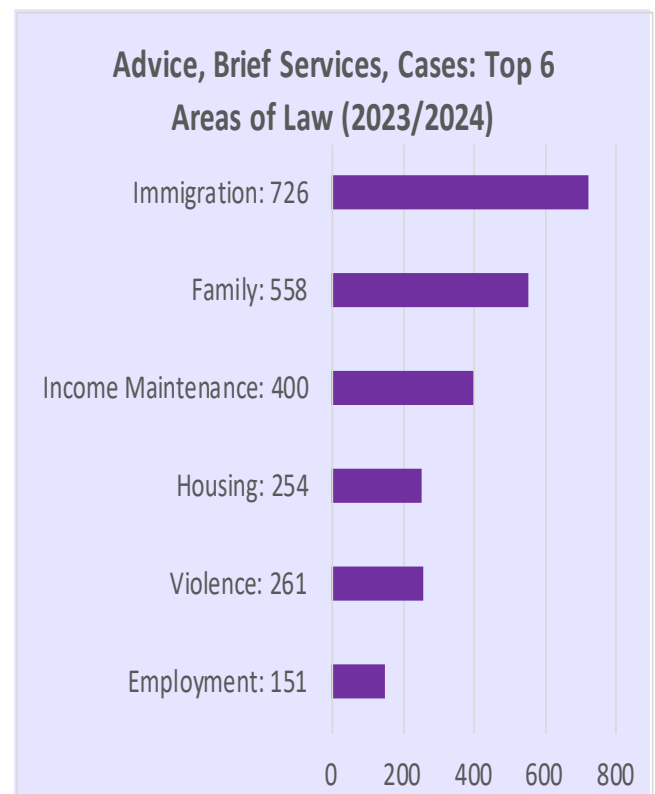


## Casework:

- ◆ In 2023/2024 SALCO worked with 23 clients who were facing issues of forced marriage in Canada and clients who had been taken overseas. This was a notable jump in cases from the previous year. In addition, several complex immigration cases including applications for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds for victims of family violence, represented clients for judicial review at the Federal Court, intervened at the Division Court, stay motion applications to stop deportation of clients, applications for temporary resident permits in cases of family violence and discrimination in the workplace, sponsorship appeals for low-income families. Immigration work has been challenging because of constant changing regulations that impact our clients disproportionately.

## Casework highlights include:

- ⇒ continued success with Ontario Works and Ontario Disability appeals
- ⇒ Small Claims Court – Employment Settlement valued as \$11,640.00
- ⇒ Assisted a client in obtaining an order to dispense with the opposing party's signature on their child's passport application. The opposing party withheld their signature for over a year, continuing abusive behavior from the marriage. Successfully rebutted frivolous allegations, attended case conferences, motions, and a summary judgment hearing, and ultimately won the case, including costs imposed on the opposing party.
- ⇒ Filed a HRTO claim for an individual who was discriminated against by Halton Police.
- ⇒ Assisted client in obtaining EI maternity benefits while on maintained immigration status, almost a year after client was initially refused
- ⇒ Approval of H & C matter within 100 days of submission (Routine processing of 2-3 years).
- ⇒ Assisted several women fleeing intimate partner violence in regularising their immigration status.



# SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights

## Public Legal Education (PLE):

- ◆ SALCO delivered extensive PLEs across various sectors, focusing on civil society organizations, the legal profession, client communities, law schools, and the judiciary. The sessions encompassed critical subjects including immigration, family law, violence, systemic racism, employment, income maintenance, and housing. Additionally, SALCO provided comprehensive education on human trafficking specifically within racialized communities. From October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024, SALCO conducted 102 public legal education sessions (PLEs), targeting low-income communities, front-line service providers, and governmental entities.

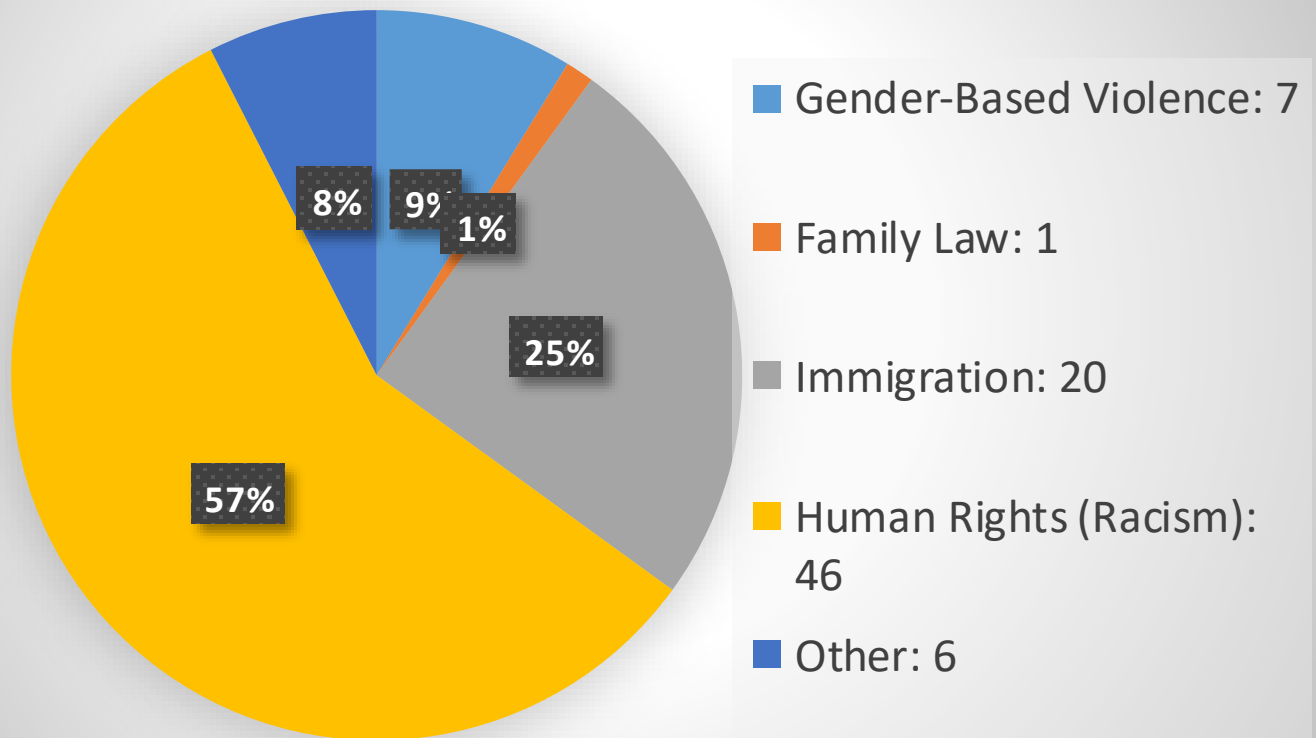


## ◆ Highlights:

- Human Trafficking training for NGOs.
- Subject matter reviewer for CLEO Tip sheets on immigration options for survivors of family violence.
- Delivered PLE session for an agency supporting newcomers to Canada- the information provided helped attendees navigate legal systems and settle in Canada more easily.
- Presented at the OCASI Leaders' Forum 2024 on recent trends in Canadian Immigration.
- Over 100 PLEs in community on housing, income supports, family law, immigration law, wills and powers of attorney.
- Presented PLE sessions to Tamil seniors in coordination with a community organization.
- Developed public legal education material that covers numerous family and immigration topics based on the most common questions that we get. The materials were translated into Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali and Punjabi.
- Continue to work with Tareekh pe Tareekh campaign to increase awareness on employment law rights in South Asian Languages. Going to add Immigration rights to our roster. We also received a grant from SABA North America.

# SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights

## Top 5 Areas for Law Reform: 2023-2024

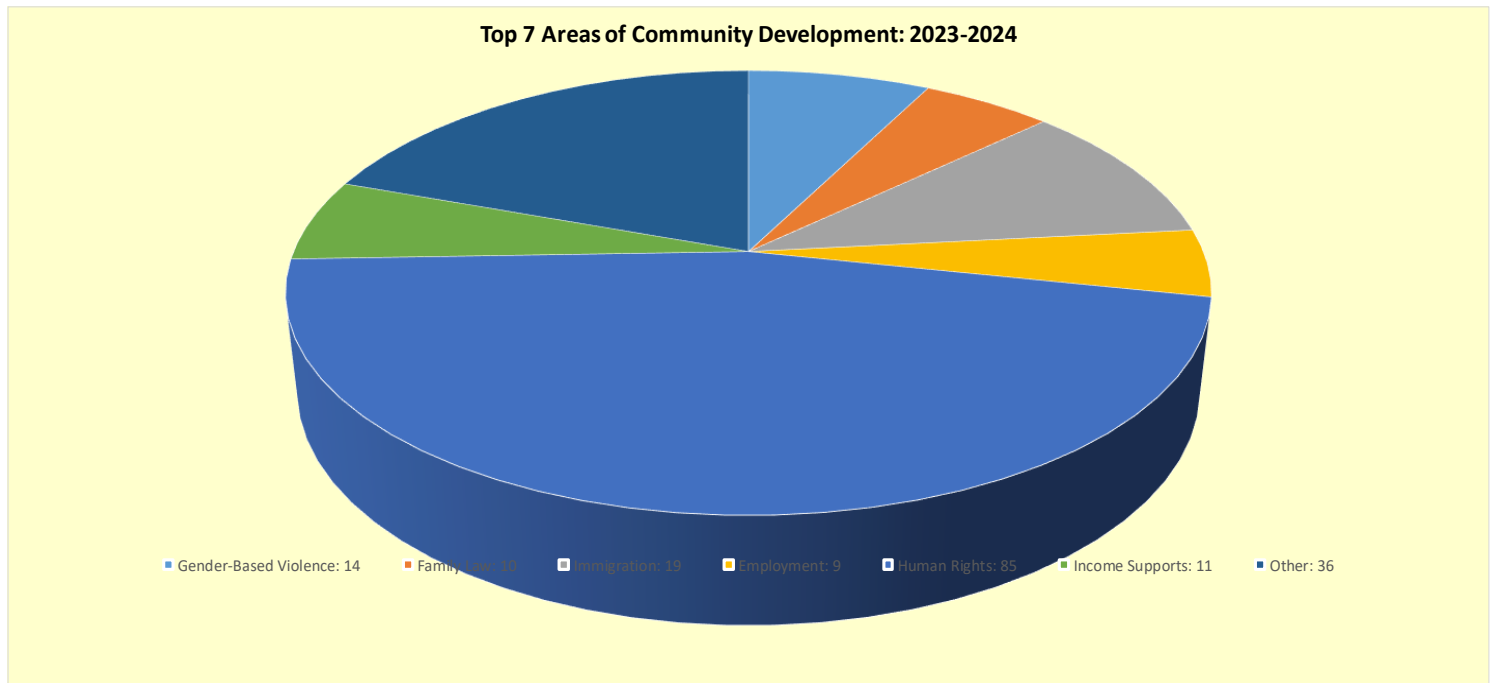


### Law Reform Highlights:

- ◆ SALCO has worked on a number of test cases at the Ontario Superior Court, the Ontario Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, and the Supreme Court of Canada. These cases involvement different issues that impact South Asian communities in Canada including the coverage of health care for migrant workers, the impact of systemic racism on criminal record checks and their use in hiring, challenging the Safe Third Country rule, and advancing cultural competence in family law when looking at cases of family violence. SALCO's ED was also appointed to the federal Expert Panel on Human Rights for the Court Challenges Program.
- ◆ Collaborated with the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) on a campaign supported by over 250 feminist organizations across Canada. The campaign advocated for a ban on the use of parental alienation accusations in family court, a concept criticized as an "unscientific pseudo-concept" and often used by abusers to perpetuate control. This campaign was supported by the UN Special Rapporteur on Vio-

# SALCO 2023/2024 Highlights

## Community Development highlights:



- ◆ Seeing constant growth of the two new satellite services with Malton Women's Centre and the Brampton Library to connect with low-income South Asians in the west end (Region of Peel)
- ◆ Presented at the LAO's Asian/South Asian Heritage Month Panel
- ◆ Represented SALCO at the Bordering Initiatives forum organized by the research team funded by U of T and UVic.
- ◆ Participated at the 2024 Social Justice Summit: Decolonizing Practices and Service Delivery: Agency to Racialized People and Resolute Allyship organized by CASSA.
- ◆ Participation in several inter-clinic working groups including WRAG, Provincial Steering Committee for Social Assistance & the regional Social Assistance Committee, ICIWG (immigration working group)
- ◆ Participated at the Racial Justice Summit 2024 organized by the Urban Alliance of Race Relations
- ◆ Member of Advisory Committee for South Asian Women and Immigrants' Services (SAWIS – formerly SAWRO) Financial Literacy and Empowerment Committee
- ◆ Presented at the Color of Poverty– Color of Change Provincial Summit on Employment Rights. The forum was organised to discuss, strategize, prioritize and mobilize for an equitable labour market in Ontario
- ◆ Steering Committee Member of the Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change (currently working towards the release of a report on the impact of racism on racialized employees and a provincial summit)
- ◆ SALCO provided submission to CBSA regarding their Guiding Principles and Commitments on Gender-Based Violence.
- ◆ SALCO presented at Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for Bill S-249 - An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for the prevention of intimate partner violence

# A Spotlight on SALCO's Work in Gender-Based Violence (GBV): 2024

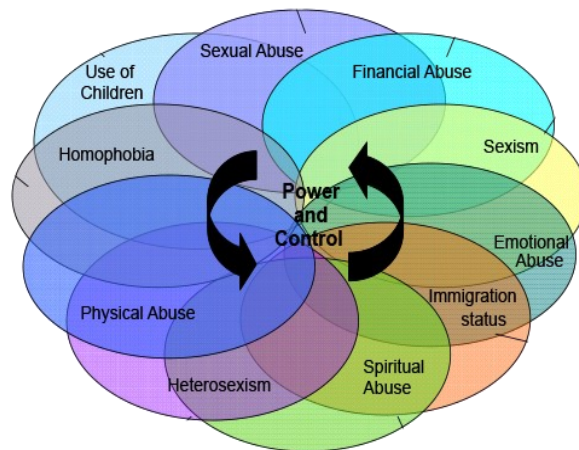
Approximately 47% of all of SALCO's clients report that they have faced gender-based violence. Most of these clients come to us to seek support because of that violence.

The federal *Department of Justice* and the *Kassam Foundation* provide funding to support direct legal services for low-income South Asian clients in Ontario facing gender-based violence. The United Way of Greater Toronto funds SALCO to provide non-legal supports to those same clients through a social worker/social support worker. And finally, Legal Aid Ontario funds SALCO to provide direct legal services to all low-income South Asian people in Ontario, but also critically supports our work in law reform to push for systemic changes to law and policy to eradicate gender-based violence, and in the meantime, to support racialized communities facing GBV.

"GBV is not limited to physical violence and can include any word, action, or attempt to degrade, control, humiliate, intimidate, coerce, deprive, threaten, or harm another person. GBV can take many forms including cyber, physical, sexual, societal, psychological, emotional, and economic. Neglect, discrimination, and harassment can also be forms of GBV." (Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html>)

There are many forms of GBV including:

- Sexual Assault
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Elder Abuse
- Coercive Control
- Femicide
- Unwanted Sexual Behaviour
- Human Trafficking
- Forced Marriage



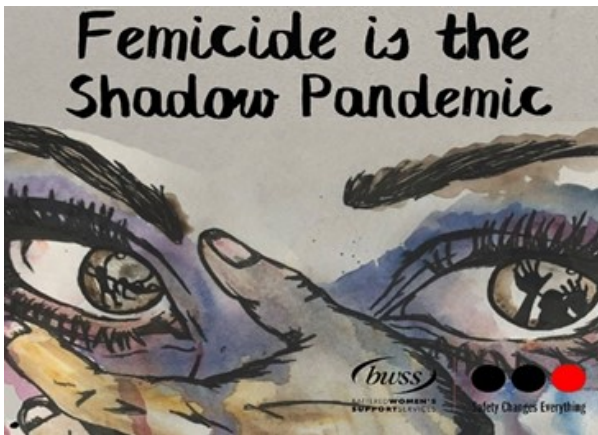
## Alarming Statistics:

Statistics tell us that gender-based violence is an epidemic in Ontario. Several municipalities in Ontario have officially recognized gender-based violence as an epidemic. In Ontario, Bill 173 - the *Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act, 2024* is currently making its way through the legislature, and would require the Government of Ontario to recognize that intimate partner violence is an epidemic in Ontario.

- ◆ Sexual assault is a highly gendered crime, with women and girls accounting for nine in ten (90%) victims involved in incidents reported to police in 2022. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2024001/article/00006-eng.htm>)
- ◆ In 2023, family violence reached its highest record level in Canada for seniors and youth/children (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/241024/dq241024b-eng.htm>)

# A Spotlight on SALCO's Work in Gender-Based Violence (GBV): 2024

- ◆ In 2022, 44% of women or 6.2 million women aged 15 and older have reported some kind of abuse in their intimate partner relationship (<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/FEWO/Brief/BR11643004/br-external/ArmaghHouse-WEB-Brief-10588690-e.pdf>)
- ◆ Between November 26, 2022 and November 25, 2023, 62 women and children lost their lives in gender-related killings (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-stands-standing-together-against-gender-based-violence-now-through-decisive-actions-prevention-empowerment-supports#:~:text=Intimate%20partner%20and%20family%20violence%20in%20Ontario&text=Between%20November%2026%2C%202022%20and,were%20killed%20by%20family%20members%20.>)



## What We See At SALCO:

In 2023-2024 clients reported different types of gender-based violence:

1. Sexual Assault / Rape;
2. Physical violence including stabbing, hitting/punching/slapping, burning, pushing, kicking, shoving; Psychological violence including verbal abuse, threats of harm, threats to family members, threats against children, devaluing statements, manipulation, threats of being killed;
3. Online violence including posting sexualized photos, posting online hate, posting lies and threats online, stealing social media accounts, online monitoring;
4. Financial violence including no access to finances, controlling finances, forcing abused person to take loans and credit cards, stealing money, taking all government benefits; and
5. Coercive Control: Manipulation, isolation, threat of deportation or loss of immigration status, threats of calling the police to have the victim charged, threats of being kicked out of the home, and threats of losing children.

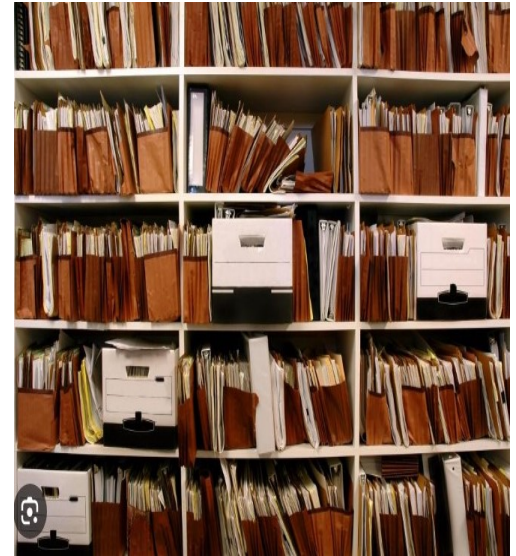
## What We Did in 2023-24:

In 2023-2024 SALCO worked with 1004 clients who reported gender-based violence. We provided supports in multiple areas of law through direct legal services, public legal education, and advocacy/law reform:

# A Spotlight on SALCO's Work in Gender-Based Violence (GBV): 2024

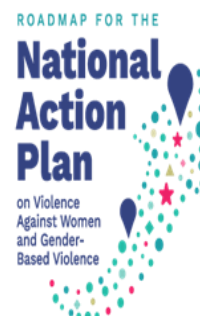
## Direct Legal Services:

- ◆ Immigration
  - Temporary Resident Permits – Family Violence stream
  - Humanitarian and Compassionate Applications – Domestic Violence stream
  - Extension of temporary permits (visitor, work, student)
  - Removals from Canada
  - Open work permits for vulnerable workers
- ◆ Family
  - Divorce
  - Separation
  - Child Support
  - Spousal Support
  - Decision-Making / Parenting Time (formerly custody and visitation)
- ◆ Employment
  - Employment Standards Claims for temporary workers / non-status workers
- ◆ Housing
  - Application and appeals for special priority public housing based on violence
- ◆ Income Supports
  - Applications and appeals for Canada Child Benefits
  - Applications and appeals for social assistance
- ◆ Forced Marriage
  - Support to come home for people who have been removed from Canada
- ◆ Referrals
  - In-house referrals to our social working for non-legal supports like supportive counseling and safety planning
  - Referrals to outside services for counseling, medical supports, victim's supports, and wellness



## Advocacy / Law Reform (highlights):

- Co-author of the Roadmap to a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence
- Submissions to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- Co-author of SALCO Toolkit on Forced Marriage In Canada
- Member of the provincial Domestic Violence Death Review Panel



We're ready  
to get the NAP  
on the road!  
Are you?

# A Spotlight on SALCO's Work in Gender-Based Violence (GBV): 2024

## Public Legal Education (highlights):

- Creation of family and immigration law material in several South Asian languages on common issues arising in cases of gender-based violence
- Training for not-for-profit organizations on forced marriage and human trafficking in South Asian communities
- Training for settlement agencies on immigration options in cases of violence



## Conclusion

We are grateful for the support of our funders, the Kassam Foundation, the federal Department of Justice, the United Way Greater Toronto, and Legal Aid Ontario for funding our work with low-income South Asian people facing gender-based violence. While the direct legal work is critical to supporting individual clients, we must continue to advocate for significant system changes to address this growing epidemic in our communities.

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**MARCH 31, 2024**

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of  
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario ("the Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, the statement of operations, the statement of changes in net assets, and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario as at March 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

#### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing these financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (Continued)

### ***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Richmond Hill, Ontario  
July 30, 2024

*Rashidi LLP*

Chartered Professional Accountant  
Licensed Public Accountant

## SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT MARCH 31, 2024

## ASSETS

	<u>Legal Aid Fund</u>	<u>Legal Disbursement Fund</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Forced Marriage Fund</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>(Notes 7, 8)</u>
<b>Current</b>						
Cash	\$ 4,703	\$ 6,962	\$ 267,555	\$ 15,757	\$ 294,977	\$ 266,652
Grants receivable	-	-	9,562	-	9,562	2,565
HST recoverable	41,815	12	220	-	42,047	28,877
Prepaid expenses	14,149	-	1,525	-	15,674	14,487
	<u>60,667</u>	<u>6,974</u>	<u>278,862</u>	<u>15,757</u>	<u>362,260</u>	<u>312,581</u>
<b>Interfund balances</b>	<u>( 9,257 )</u>	<u>6,530</u>	<u>2,727</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><b>\$ 51,410</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 13,504</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 281,589</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 15,757</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 362,260</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 312,581</b></u>

## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

<b>Current</b>						
Bank indebtedness	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,260
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	37,723	-	-	-	37,723	57,899
Deferred grants (Note 3)	-	-	45,000	-	45,000	4,688
Grants repayable (Note 7,8)	-	-	-	-	-	3,246
	<u>37,723</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>45,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>82,723</u>	<u>67,093</u>
<b>Fund balances</b>	<u>13,687</u>	<u>13,504</u>	<u>236,589</u>	<u>15,757</u>	<u>279,537</u>	<u>245,488</u>
	<u><b>\$ 51,410</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 13,504</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 281,589</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 15,757</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 362,260</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 312,581</b></u>

Approved on behalf of the Board:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024**

	<u>Legal Aid Fund</u>	<u>Legal Disbursement Fund</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Forced Marriage Fund</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>(Notes 7, 8)</u>
<b>Balance, beginning of year</b>	\$ 12,943	\$ 10,617	\$ 206,171	\$ 15,757	\$ 245,488	\$ 178,666
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<u>744</u>	<u>2,887</u>	<u>30,418</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,049</u>	<u>66,822</u>
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	<u><u>\$ 13,687</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 13,504</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 236,589</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 15,757</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 279,537</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 245,488</u></u>

*(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)*

## SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

	<u>Legal Aid Fund</u>	<u>Legal Disbursement Fund</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Forced Marriage Fund</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>(Notes 7, 8)</u>
<b>Revenue</b>						
Grants (Note 4)	\$ 962,004	\$ 6,700	\$ 167,317	\$ -	\$ 1,136,021	\$ 1,137,012
Interest & other income	5,119	4	47,965	-	53,088	65,479
	<u>967,123</u>	<u>6,704</u>	<u>215,282</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,189,109</u>	<u>1,202,491</u>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Salaries & benefits	801,739	-	164,419	-	966,158	948,083
Occupancy	90,034	-	2,000	-	92,034	82,614
Travel	12,302	-	1,498	-	13,800	6,986
Communication & publicity	4,270	-	5,134	-	9,404	23,249
Purchased services	22,381	-	625	-	23,006	27,315
Equipment	7,092	-	-	-	7,092	7,115
Professional dues	16,554	-	4,509	-	21,063	18,374
Library	596	-	-	-	596	837
Supplies & services	11,411	3	6,679	-	18,093	12,170
Legal disbursements	-	3,814	-	-	3,814	8,926
	<u>966,379</u>	<u>3,817</u>	<u>184,864</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,155,060</u>	<u>1,135,669</u>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses (Notes 7,8)</b>	<u>\$ 744</u>	<u>\$ 2,887</u>	<u>\$ 30,418</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 34,049</u>	<u>\$ 66,822</u>

*(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)*

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024**

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>(Notes 7, 8)</u>
<b>Cash provided by (used in)</b>		
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$ 34,049	\$ 66,822
<b>Changes in non-cash working capital items</b>		
Accounts receivable	-	1,800
Grants receivable	( 6,997 )	( 2,565 )
HST recoverable	( 13,170 )	( 15,690 )
Prepaid expenses	( 1,187 )	( 3,666 )
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	( 20,176 )	17,987
Deferred grants (Note 3)	40,312	4,688
Grants repayable (Note 7,8)	( 3,246 )	2,072
	<u>( 4,464 )</u>	<u>4,626</u>
<b>Increase in cash during the year</b>	29,585	71,448
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year</b>	<u>265,392</u>	<u>193,944</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year</b>	<u><b>\$ 294,977</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 265,392</b></u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents represented by:</b>		
Cash	294,977	266,652
Bank indebtedness	<u>-</u>	<u>( 1,260 )</u>
	<u><b>\$ 294,977</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 265,392</b></u>

*(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)*

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024**

**INCORPORATION AND PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION:**

The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario ("SALCO") was incorporated in Ontario on February 6, 2001 as a not-for-profit organization without share capital.

SALCO was established to increase access to the justice system for low-income South Asians in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner.

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:**

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations set out in Part III of the CPA Canada Handbook - Accounting.

Outlined below are those policies considered particularly significant:

**a) Revenue recognition**

*Contributions*

The Organization uses the deferral method in accounting for contributions which include donations, government grants and other contributions.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Operating grants and contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Grants approved but not received at the end of an accounting period are accrued. Where a portion of the grant relates to a future period, it is deferred and recognized in that subsequent period.

*Fees for services*

Fees for services are recognized as revenue when services are rendered.

*Investment income*

Investment income consists of interest earned from short-term deposits and savings accounts held with Canadian banks. Interest income is recorded as earned when received.

*All other income*

All other income including membership fees and recovery of costs are recognized as revenue when earned and the related services are provided.

**b) Expense Recognition**

Expenses are recognized on the accrual basis.

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024**

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES: (Continued)**

**c) Income taxes**

The organization is a not-for-profit organization under the Income Tax Act (Canada) and, as such, is exempt from income taxes.

**d) Contributed Services**

Volunteers contribute significant time to assist the organization in carrying out its services and activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.

**e) Financial instruments**

Financial instruments consist of cash, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Financial instruments are initially recorded at historical cost. If subsequent circumstances indicate that a decline in the fair market value of a financial asset is other than temporary, the financial instrument is written down to its fair market value. Unless otherwise indicated, it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair market value of these instruments approximate recorded amounts because of the short period to receipt or payment of cash.

**f) Capital Assets**

Property, plant and equipment are initially recorded at acquisition cost. Amortization is provided at the following rates which are formulated to charge operations with the cost of the property and equipment over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Furniture and fixtures	20% Straight-line
Leasehold Improvements	20% Straight-line

Amortization is recognized in expenses when the asset is available for use. The above rates are reviewed annually to ensure they are appropriate. Any changes are adjusted for on a prospective basis. If there is an indication that the assets may be impaired, an impairment test is performed that compares carrying amount to net recoverable amount. There were no impairment indicators in 2023.

**g) Internally restricted funds**

The Organization has internally restricted net assets to be used for specific purposes. These funds are not available for operations without approval of the Board. The internally restricted reserve funds are as follows:

*General Fund*

These funds are used to provide a range of legal and paralegal services, including information, advice and representation, to low-income individuals and families.

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024**

**1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES: (Continued)**

**g) Internally restricted funds (Continued)**

*Legal Disbursements Fund*

These funds are used to provide for certain direct expenses incurred in the representation of the organization client's in legal proceedings.

*Legal Aid Fund*

This fund holds the operating surpluses of the organization that have been funded by Legal Aid Ontario and are used to fund future operational expenditures related to legal aid activities.

*Forced Marriage Fund*

These funds are used to provide for certain direct expenses incurred in the representation of the organization client's in forced marriage cases.

**2. CAPITAL ASSETS:**

	<b>2024</b>			<b>2023</b>
	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Accumulated Amortization</b>	<b>Net Book Value</b>	<b>Net Book Value</b>
Leasehold improvements	\$ 17,995	\$ 17,995	\$ -	\$ -
Furniture	20,373	20,373	-	-
	<b>\$ 38,368</b>	<b>\$ 38,368</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

Amortization for the year is \$0 (2023 - \$0).

**3. DEFERRED GRANTS:**

Deferred grants are summarized as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Canadian Heritage - Court Challenges Program	\$ 45,000	\$ -
Department of Justice Canada	-	4,688
	<b>\$ 45,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,688</b>

Continuity of deferred grants for the year is as follows:

Deferred grants, beginning of year	\$ 4,688	\$ -
Add – received/receivable during the year	1,176,333	1,141,700
Less - grant revenue recognized in the year	( 1,136,021 )	( 1,137,012 )
	<b>\$ 45,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,688</b>

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
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**4. GRANT REVENUE RECOGNIZED IN THE YEAR:**

Grants are comprised of the following:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Legal Aid Ontario (LAO)	\$ 968,704	\$ 944,296
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians	-	23,150
Employment & Social Development Canada	4,255	7,012
Department of Justice Canada	95,625	113,325
United Way	67,437	49,229
	<u>\$ 1,136,021</u>	<u>\$ 1,137,012</u>

**5. USE OF ESTIMATES:**

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenditures during the reported period. Significant items subject to such estimates and assumptions include the useful lives of capital assets, prepaid membership dues and year-end accrued liabilities. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future.

**6. CAPITAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE:**

The organization includes cash, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, deferred operating grant revenue, and net assets in its capital management consideration. The organization's objectives when managing capital are to safeguard its ability to continue as a going concern and continue to execute its mandate within the restrictions that the organization is not in receipt of core funding.

The organization monitors these items to assess its ability to fulfil its ongoing financial obligations. The organization relies primarily on grants, fundraising and donations to fund its operations and makes adjustments to its budgeted expenditures in light of changes. The organization is not subject to externally imposed capital requirements.

The organization is dependent on government grants for continued operations.

**7. GRANT REPAYMENT**

Where SALCO incurs a surplus from the annual budgeted operating funds provided by Legal Aid Ontario (Legal Aid Fund), such a surplus does not constitute earned grant revenue and is repayable to Legal Aid Ontario. Where SALCO retains a surplus for a project specifically funded by Legal Aid Ontario outside of SALCO's core funding, that surplus does not constitute earned grant revenue and is either repayable to Legal Aid Ontario or requested to be transferred to another clinic that is taking over management of that project.

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
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**8. PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT:**

Legal Aid Ontario, during the fiscal year covered by these financial statements, has reallocated the surplus from the previous fiscal year by reducing the 2024 funding paid to SALCO by that amount. These statements have reduced the revenue from grants for the 2023 fiscal year by the amount calculated. The effect on these financial statements is as follows:

	As previously reported	Adjusted	Difference
Revenue from Grants 2023 fiscal period	\$ 947,542	\$ 944,296	\$ 3,246
Grants Repayable as at Mar 31, 2023	\$ -	\$ 3,246	\$ 3,246
Closing Surplus 2023 fiscal period	\$ 248,734	\$ 245,488	\$ 3,246

**9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS - RISK MANAGEMENT:**

**a) Interest Rate Risk**

Interest rate risk is the risk of potential financial loss caused by fluctuations in their fair value of future cash flow of financial instruments due to changes in market interest rates.

**b) Credit Risk**

Credit risk is the potential for financial loss should a counter-party in a transaction fail to meet its obligations. Due to the nature of the contributions and general operations, the Organization does not face any significant concentration of credit risk.

**c) Liquidity Risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Organization manages this risk by preparing and monitoring detailed forecasts of cash flows from operations, anticipating investing and financing activities and holding assets that can be readily converted into cash.

The organization's financial instruments consist of cash, accounts and grants receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, credit or liquidity risks. The fair value of these financial instruments approximates their carrying values.

The extent of the organization's exposure to the above risks did not change during 2024.

**SOUTH ASIAN LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
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**10. COMMITMENTS:**

The Organization is committed to a lease for its satellite office at 705 Progress Avenue located in Scarborough, Ontario, which requires the following annual minimum payments:

2025	\$	7,200
2026	\$	7,200
2027	\$	7,200
2028	\$	7,200
2029	\$	1,200

The term of this lease commitment expires on May 31, 2028.

# SALCO AGM 2024

## Returning Directors and Proposed Slate

### Returning Directors (not up for re-election)

Lisa Amin (2023-2025)	Lawyer (employment and human rights_
Marium Yousef (2023-2025)	NGO (governance and human resources)
Chrisyami Sivaraj (2023-2025)	Director of HR (CRA)
Tahlee Afzal (2023-2025)	Human Rights Consultant

### Non-Returning Directors

Sultana Jahangir, Jaspal Sangha, Rashmi Kumar

## Proposed Slate of Nominees to the Board of Directors

**Alizeh Khorasane (Running for Re-Election: Board Term 2024-2026):** Alizeh has served on the SALCO Board of Directors as a Board Members from November 2020 to present. Alizeh is the board's current Treasurer where she oversees SALCO's day-to-day expenses, SALCO's audit, and the updating and creation of financial management policies. Alizeh oversees the due diligence required for accountable, transparent, efficient, and effective financial management at the clinic. As Treasurer Alizeh has a solid understanding of SALCO's financial structure and funding. Alizeh is a CPA (Chartered Professional Accountant) and is also a CA and CFA. She currently works with the Ontario Securities Commission with a focus on compliance and risk management. Alizeh has also volunteered her time with War Against Rape in Pakistan, and is connected to the work that SALCO does in multiple South Asian communities in Ontario.

**Kish Mahmud (Running for Re-Election: Board Term 2024-2026):** Kish Mahmud has served on the SALCO board since 2022 and is running for a second terms. Kish is the present chair of the board's Financial Management Committee. She is currently a Commercial Account Manager, RBC Commercial. Her role includes the implementation of robust market plan to achieve and exceed growth targets ensuring client centric execution and the analysis of financial statements for Not for Profit Clients. Kish has an extensive background in banking and financial management. Kish is hoping to leverage her education, work experience in the not for profit sector as well as her personal life experience with an organization whose values aligned with her own. She hopes to bring her own diverse background to the Board. Having both South Asian and Indigenous heritage, she feels strongly that the work the SALCO does is essential to create a healthy and sustainable ecosystem for an equitable future for all.

**Shivali Vig (Running for Re-Election: Board Term 2024-2026):** Shivali Vig has served on the SALCO board since 2022 and is running for a second terms. Shivali is the present chair of the board's Personnel Committee and this past year worked on revisions to personnel policies for SALCO. Shivali is a litigation lawyer specializing in employment and human rights law, who believes that creating greater access to justice is essential for positive change. She believes that the most meaningful change is born from work that integrates empathy and advocacy, and it is this belief that brought her to SALCO. Having experienced and observed the challenges faced by members of the South Asian community, Shivali values the opportunities, security, and guidance that SALCO's initiatives provide, and hopes to be an ally in its mission. As a member of the Board of Directors, Shivali is eager to utilize her transferrable skills and passion to contribute to the ongoing growth and success of SALCO. In her spare time, you can find Shivali tackling Sudoku puzzles and caring for any animal she comes across.

**Rutvi Patel (Running for Re-Election for the student board member position 2024-2025):** Rutvi held the position of student board member on the SALCO board for the 2023-2024 term. Rutvi is a third year law student at the University of Ottawa. Rutvi spent the summer of 2023 working at SALCO as a law student and got to learn a lot about the amazing work the staff there do. As a Board of Directors member, Rutvi took part in actively supporting governance that allows SALCO to make the impact that they do on the lives of thousands of South Asians. As a law student, she also brought forward the student perspective to discussions as well as developing her own skills in board participation.

**Mackinder Samrai (Running for election as new board member 2024-2026):** Mackinder is running to become a new board member on the SALCO Board. Mackinder has a strong financial background and is currently working at Sunlife Financial as a Manager in the Reporting and Analysis Department, where he reviews financial reporting to ensure compliance and alignment with the company's mandate. Mackinder is also working towards their Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation with an expected completion in 2024. In the application to become a SALCO Board member Mackinder noted a view that most institutions are inherently flawed, where the intended demographics are not actually benefitting from their policies. Mackinder hopes to volunteer with an organization that is actually helping. Mackinder also noted that a lot of individuals from our community, especially the newcomers, are working multiple jobs, are barely making ends meet, are getting taken advantage of by their employers, their landlords, and he wants to be apart of an organization that champions against all that.

**Priyanka Bahl (Running for election as new board member 2024-2026):** Priyanka is running to become a new board member on the SALCO Board. Priyanka is a lawyer who practices in estates and civil litigation. Priyanka is deeply committed to supporting South Asian causes. She was the President of the South Asian Law Students' Association and was also mentored other South Asian women through the South Asian Women Legal Mentorship Program. Priyanka was honoured to receive the Student Award from the South Asian Bar Association (SABA). She remains a member of SABA. Priyanka's professional work in estate litigation, civil litigation, and public policy has

further exposed me to the systemic challenges many South Asians encounter when navigating the legal system. These experiences fuelled her desire to be part of an organization like SALCO that is dedicated to breaking down these barriers in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. She hopes to bring her passion, experience, and dedication to SALCO, whose values align with her own.

**Shanjana Rahman (Running for election as new board member 2024-2025):**

Shanjana is running to become a new board member on the SALCO Board, and would be stepping into a board position for a member who had to resign mid-term. Shanjana currently works with the South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO) as a Women's Activist Leader where she has participated in organizing and implementing GBSV education programs, events, and training sessions. She also has a legal background with a law degree and masters in law from Bangladesh. Shanjana's interest in joining the SALCO Board stems from her long-standing commitment to social justice and her desire to empower the South Asian community in Ontario. She has always been passionate about advocating for marginalized communities and ensuring everyone can access legal resources and support. She hopes to bring a unique perspective to the Board, combining her professional expertise with a personal commitment to the South Asian community, her connection to the low-income Bangladeshi community, and her background in legal practice, community outreach, and policy development will allow.

# SALCO ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## SALCO Staff

**Shalini Konanur, Executive Director / Lawyer**

**Vanathy Wimalaswarans, Office Coordinator**

**Anchal Bhatia, Staff Lawyer**

**Khamalene Ganeshathasan, Staff Lawyer**

**Gurmat Randhawa, Staff Lawyer**

**Atulya Sharman, Senior/Supervising Staff lawyer**

**Mazahir Walji, Staff Lawyer**

**Hemant Badhana, Community Legal Worker**

**Maria Ali, Social Support Worker**

**Shreyosi Pal, Articling Student**

## SALCO Funders



**Canada**

**Canada Summer  
Jobs / Department  
of Justice**



**United Way  
Greater Toronto**