

Annual Report

2025

IMPROVING ACCESS TO
MENTORSHIP,
REPRESENTATION AND
JUSTICE

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Lyschin Smith



Chair

Message from Lyschin Smith

Welcome to OABP. As Chair of the organization, I am proud to welcome everyone into a community built on purpose, courage, and collective action. OABP was created to raise awareness, enable meaningful change, and help end systemic discrimination while increasing racial diversity within Ontario's legal system. This work is deeply personal because we know that Black paralegals, law clerks, and other legal professionals deserve spaces where they are seen, supported, mentored, and empowered to advance with confidence. We are equally committed to welcoming non-Black legal professionals who are ready to listen, learn, and take meaningful steps toward impactful allyship. We also recognize that lasting change is strengthened through collaboration, and we are committed to working alongside other paralegal organizations, associations, and community partners to share knowledge, expand opportunities, and advance a more equitable and inclusive profession. My hope is that everyone who connects with OABP feels a sense of belonging, responsibility, and possibility. Together, we can build a more collaborative, inclusive, open, and transparent legal community—one where we share honestly, grow together, and continue the important journey toward equity and justice.

Our Board Members

Our diverse team of dedicated professionals is committed to advancing the interests of Black paralegals across Ontario. With a common shared passion for justice, we strive to empower our members and combat systemic racism within the justice system. Get to know the faces behind our mission.



Liz Smith
Chair



Scott Kennelly
Treasurer



Benaiah Eche
Board Member



Shenell Monteith
Board Member



Danielle Monsegue
Board Member



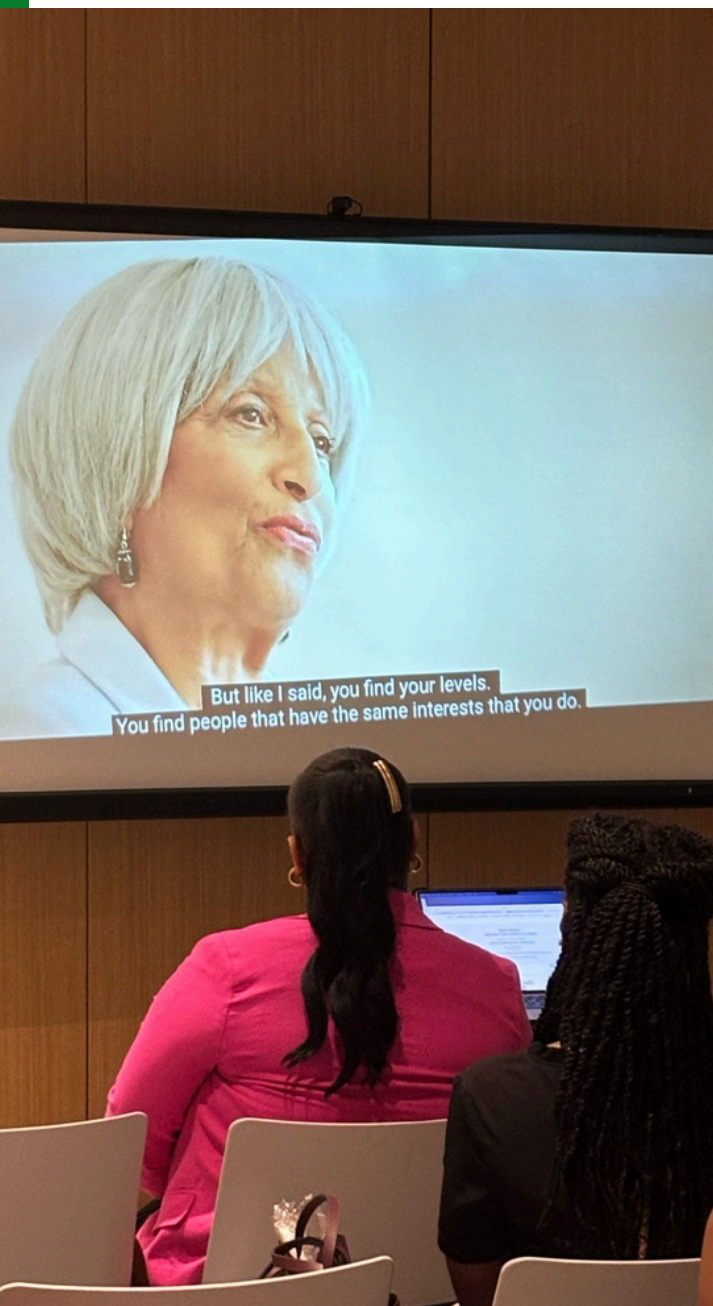
Alicia Clarke
Board Member



Khadija Da-Silva
Board Member

***Note:** At the end of 2025, the organization changed its structure to a co-chair model.

Our Mission



OABP exists to raise awareness and enable change to end systemic discrimination and increase racial diversity in the legal system. We educate and mentor Black paralegals and law clerks in Ontario, creating a supportive network to help them confidently advance their careers. We encourage and support non-Black legal professionals in the pursuit of learning more about systemic discrimination and racism in the workplace, and how it impacts their colleagues and clients through sharing strategies for impactful allyship.

You can count on us to do this in ways that are collaborative, inclusive, open and transparent, with the goal of creating a safe space to share and grow for everyone who hopes to be part of the journey to end systemic racism.

PEER MANDATE

Our "PEER Mandate" improves access to justice and combats systemic racism within the justice system by:

Providing mentorship opportunities for Black paralegals to help build capacity within the Black legal community and promote career equality and advancement

Equipping Black paralegals with the tools to navigate systemic injustice in the workplace

Eliminating the economic barriers which inhibit racialized Ontarians' ability to pursue civil matters related to racism, discrimination, diversity and inclusion.

Recognizing, denouncing and combating systemic inequality in the justice system while equipping all legal professionals with the tools to do the same.





Strategic Planning

Our Committees

Our diverse team of dedicated professionals is committed to advancing the interests of Black paralegals across Ontario. With a common shared passion for justice, we strive to empower our members and combat systemic racism within the justice system. Get to know the faces behind our mission.

Education Committee



Danielle Monsegue
Chair



Carla Graham
Committee Member

Membership Engagement Committee



Benaiah Eche
Chair



Nickisha Lee
Committee Member



Khadija Da-Silva
Committee Member



Thomasina Smith
Committee Member

Communications Committee



Sephrah Luke
Chair



Asha Walker
Co-Chair



Keisha Knibb
Committee Member



Liz Smith
Committee Member

Law Clerks Committee



Sehmani KingSun- Leo
Chair



Danielle Monsegue
Co-Chair

Governance Committee



Shevaun Pierre
Committee Member



Halim Rayo
Committee Member

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4 Key Pillars

In 2023, OABP had the privilege of working of working with Endeavour Consulting to create our very first strategic plan. The plan sets out the organization's immediate and long-term goals for growth, the organization's immediate and long-term goals for growth, capacity building, sustainability and succession.

Over the next 5 years, OABP's key pillars are:

Governance : To establish a formal organizational structure, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, operating process, controls and policies, and performance evaluation standards.

Engagement: To improve engagement and attendance from the target audience and members.

Education: To develop a certain number of CPD workshops focusing on practical knowledge for legal professionals to fill the gaps between formal education and workplace needs. As well, as to keep ourselves up to date with general legal knowledge.

Communication: To build brand awareness and clear messaging of OABP offerings within the community, to have a functional system in place to support those from racialized communities and to build intentional, value-adding relationships, establish stronger collaboration and more effective resource sharing with legal or cross-profession organizations.



Workshops

Round Table Discussion

In 2025, the OABP led a Round Table Discussion CPD called Current Climate of the Legal Profession: A Roundtable Discussion in order to continue the discussion regarding discrimination faced by black individuals within the legal community. The CPD included Nana Adjei-Poku (Owner and Licensed Paralegal, Infordus Legal Services), Ada Maxwell-Alleyne (Assistant Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Toronto Faculty of Law), Leon Presner (Owner and President, Defend-it Legal Services; paralegal, private investigator and CCRTIS fingerprinting and background-screening officer), Nicole Robinson (Senior Paralegal and Notary Public, EmploymentParalegal.ca), Pako Tshiamala (Founder and CEO, Blink Equity) and Shalini Konanur (Executive Director and lawyer, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario; Benchers, Law Society of Ontario).



Pre-Screening: Judged before the Judge

In 2025, our organization launch a pre-screening of Judged Before the Judge. This documentary pre-screening was held in tandam with our Equity Summit research in order to make individauals aware of the issues that black legal professionals face and to enhance our researching reagarding these issues. The event took place over two days at the Wildseed Center which is the headquarters of Black Lives Matter Canada. During the first Screening a discussion was held with Lavinia Latham and Carl Alphonse.



A blurred background image showing three people in a meeting. A woman with dark hair is on the left, a man with a beard and glasses is in the center, and another person is on the right. They are all looking towards the camera. The background is a wooden wall with a framed picture.

Networking

Networking

Equity Summit 2025

The Ontario Association of Black Paralegals was proud to be one of the groups chosen to present at the LSO's inaugural Equity Summit. Our study examines systemic barriers hindering the retention and advancement of Black legal professionals, including paralegals and law clerks. By addressing issues such as racism, lack of mentorship, and exclusion from networks, the research will develop actionable recommendations to enhance inclusion and career advancement opportunities, ultimately building a more equitable legal profession.



Networking

LSO Events:

Access to Justice Week 2025, Paralegal Reception

OABP co-hosted two programs during Access to Justice Week. These virtual programs were catered to the public and licensed Paralegals. The two programs hosted by OABP were A2J Week 2025: Ready for Anything: Prepare for the Unexpected with Contingency Planning for Paralegals and A2J Week 2025: Starting Strong: New Paralegals, New Possibilities. OABP looks forward to next year's event to help legal professionals and the public by providing programming that advances systemic change in the justice system.

OABP also attended the LSO's Paralegal reception which was held twice this year. During the ceremony, we were able to connect with many newly licensed Paralegals. Our various board and committee members that attended introduced those within our community and allies to OABP's mission and membership benefits. It was a great opportunity to network, learn, welcome new Paralegals and see the variety of voices that can advocate and work to provide more Access to Justice.



Networking

Access to Justice Week 2025

Recordings

Click the images below to watch the recordings of our two events:



**ACCESS TO
JUSTICE
WEEK
2025**

October 27 to 31

10 Years Forward:
Expanding Justice, Embracing Inclusion

**A2J Week: LSO & Ontario
Association of Black Paralegals
– Starting Strong: New
Paralegals, New Possibilities**

This program contains 2 hour of
Professionalism Content



Access to Justice Week 2025

This program contains 1 hours and 30 hours of Professionalism Content

**Ready for anything: Prepare for the unexpected with Client
Contingency Planning for Paralegals**

Networking Equity Advisory Group

Click the images below to watch the recordings of our two events:



**ACCESS TO
JUSTICE
WEEK
2025**

October 27 to 31

10 Years Forward:
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**A2J Week: LSO & Ontario
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– Starting Strong: New
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This program contains 2 hour of
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Access to Justice Week 2025

This program contains 1 hours and 30 hours of Professionalism Content

**Ready for anything: Prepare for the unexpected with Client
Contingency Planning for Paralegals**

Funding

Funding

Since 2021, OABP's main funder has been the Government of Canada via the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI). Funds are dispersed through an intermediary--Tropicana Community Services.

The federal government has provided a total of \$146,997.50 between 2021-2024 through SBCCI:

2021 - \$30,637.50

2022 - \$26,360.00

2023 - \$45,000.00

2024- \$45,000.00

This funding has supported the following initiatives:

- Development & delivery of the Navigating Racism in the Workplace Series
- Professional Accounting Services
- Social Media Consulting
- Development of OABP Governance Manual
- Pre-production of the Documentary

In 2025 OABP also received the Equity Summit grant from the LSO to conduct research regarding the discrimination Black legal professionals face. We were provided with \$38,6723 from the LSO. This gave us the opportunity to partner with Blink Equity in order to do qualitative and quantitative research. This also allowed us to create an Equit Summit Group, which was in charge of organizing the research, preparation, and writing the report.

Financial Statement

Ontario Association of Black Paralegals

Financial Statements

For the year ended January 7, 2026
(Unaudited)

Prepared on
June 2026

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Ontario Association of Black Paralegals

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at January 7, 2026
(Unaudited)

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	13,560	5,638
GST/HST Receivable	2,225	3,966
Investment - Membership Capital	30	30
Total Current Assets	15,815	9,633
TOTAL ASSETS	15,815	9,633
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	1,399	78
Accrued Liabilities	2,880	-
Deferred Contributions	13,560	5,638
GST/HST Payable	-	(242)
Total Current Liabilities	17,839	5,474
Total Liabilities	17,839	5,474
Net Assets (Deficit)		
Unrestricted Net Assets (Deficit)	(2,024)	4,160
Total Net Assets (Deficit)	(2,024)	4,160
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	15,815	9,634

Ontario Association of Black Paralegals

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended January 7, 2026
(Unaudited)

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Grants and Contributions	39,749	40,629
Membership Fees	2,333	1,168
Canada Summer Jobs Reimbursement	-	5,071
Sales - Webinar	2,100	2,012
Interest Revenue	13	9
Other Revenue	-	5
Total Revenue	44,195	48,894
Expenses		
Advertising and Promotion	6,892	-
Bank Charges	65	73
Insurance	757	1,488
Meals and Entertainment	106	1,236
Office Expenses	105	232
Office Supplies	-	584
Payroll Expenses	-	6,041
WSIB Expense	26	74
Accounting Fee	3,470	4,798
Consulting	3,014	4,425
Legal Fees	3,844	-
Subcontractors	32,100	28,733
Total Expenses	50,379	47,457
(Deficit)/Excess of Revenues over Expenses	(6,184)	1,437

Ontario Association of Black Paralegals

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

As at January 7, 2026
(Unaudited)

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Balance, beginning of year	4,160	1,741
Prior period adjustments	-	982
(Deficit)/Excess of Revenues over Expenses	(6,184)	1,437
Balance, End of Year	(2,024)	4,160



Our Partners

Our Partners

The following companies and organizations have provided support to OABP through collaboration and/or providing discounts to our members:

Alterna

Aspire CPA

CPD Online

Emond Publishing

Endeavour Consulting for Non-Profits

Downsview Park: The Hub

Government of Canada, The

Intuit Quickbooks

Journal That Talks Back, The

Law Society of Ontario, The

Legal Line

Paralegal Pathway Ontario

Storwell Self Storage

STR Consulting

The Paralegal Townhall

Toronto City Hall

Tropicana

Vision in Numbers

York Region Paralegal Network



Social Media: Growth and Impact

Social Media: Growth and Impact

With the addition of our Communications Committee, OABP has seen tremendous growth on our social media platforms. The Committee has been crucial in providing updates on various social media platforms and updating our members and subscribers about upcoming events and opportunities. This year, OABP's LinkedIn profile grew by over 200 followers.

With more exciting collaborations and events we expect to see more growth in 2026.

Instagram: 400 followers

LinkedIn: 910 followers

Newsletter Subscribers: 150+

JOIN OABP

If you are interested in becoming a member, joining one of our committees or collaborating please don't hesitate to reach out.

Stay tuned for all of the wonderful projects we have planned for 2026!



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