



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## FAITH-INSPIRED JUSTICE WORK IN A CHANGING WORLD

*A message from CPJ's Executive Director and Chair of our Board of Directors*

Throughout 2024, CPJ's mission of promoting public justice in Canada remained critical and CPJ members and staff continued to make a faith-inspired and hope-filled impact!

2024 was a year of change: the intersecting cost of living and climate crises, along with diminished protections for migrants and refugees, wrought significant shifts in Canadian political and policy environments. Like many civil society organizations, CPJ urged the federal government not to lose focus on policies and programs that would uplift each person's right to an adequate standard of living, despite the pressure to react to the short-term news cycle.

During this tumultuous year, CPJ was present and effective at key moments to keep public justice front and centre in national conversations. In November, when world leaders gathered at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan to build agreements on climate finance—the agreements that will determine Canada's contributions to the global funding needed for a sustainable future—we were there as the only officially accredited member of the Canadian delegation from a faith-based organization. We amplified messages from our members and showed Canadian

an decision makers that people of faith are a strong and engaged constituency, and that we all have an obligation to care for creation through bold climate action.

In addition to engaging with decision makers and urging them to act for the common good, in 2024 CPJ was busy linking advocacy efforts between various civil society organizations and building impactful networks. Last fall, we co-convened the inaugural We Go Together Symposium, which brought together secular and faith-based civil society organizations advocating for an end to poverty in Canada.

Given our size, CPJ continues to show impressive capability in advocacy work and in shaping Canadian public discourse. At our 2024 AGM, attendees enjoyed a compelling panel discussion on the role of faith communities in driving change within public justice advocacy, which featured prominent experts in each of CPJ's policy areas. In connection with our #AsylumWithDignity Interfaith Campaign, which called on the federal government to implement a comprehensive plan that addresses critical gaps in the reception and support of refugee claimants, and our calls to end immigration detention, our former Refugee and Mi-

grant Rights policy analyst co-authored an op-ed in the Hill Times and took part in a parliamentary press conference.

The board was engaged throughout the year to support this important work. In addition to regular online meetings of the Board and committees, the Board met in person on May 31st and June 1st in Ottawa to thoroughly consider CPJ's financial situation and the need for a robust strategic planning process in 2025, which has now started. The Board also updated a comprehensive document on the roles and responsibilities of board committees and migrated board documents to a secure Google Drive. We are aware of our challenging financial operational context and are taking steps to ensure long-term financial stability for CPJ.

It is crucial that we continue to make our outsized and faith-inspired impact on Canadian public policy. Your support enables CPJ to contribute an essential element to civil society advocacy efforts in Canada: the belief that all people are created in the image of God, and that our love for God compels us to honour our neighbours' inherent dignity and share in God's work for justice.

—Willard Metzger and Ian Van Haren

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## POVERTY ELIMINATION IN CANADA

As we wrote in this year's *Poverty Trends* report, in 2024 several measures of poverty in Canada were moving in the wrong direction. However, in keeping with the report's subtitle, *Finding our Place in Systemic Change*, we also stressed that persistent poverty in Canada is not inevitable, and that each of us has a role to play in movements for change. Throughout the year, we connected with CPJ members and other advocates to call on leaders to choose a better, more just way.

When the federal government announced draft regulations for the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB), CPJ members played a key role in our campaign to 'make the CDB what it was meant to be!' Advocates had warned that the program would not prove to be adequate or accessible, so CPJ staff gathered public responses—which included powerful

insights from our members—to the proposed regulations and urged the federal government to make crucial changes to the program. And still, the fight for justice continues.

CPJ maintains a strong witness calling for an end to poverty and inequity through our policy submissions, meetings with parliamentarians, and non-partisan advocacy campaigns, as well as special events like the Basic Income Guarantee Forum and the We Go Together symposium.

In 2024, we had meaningful opportunities to amplify members' messages and public justice values in spaces with



CPJ's Socio-Economic Policy Analyst, Natalie Appleyard (middle), speaks at a parliamentary press conference ahead of a House of Commons vote on MP Leah Gazan's (left) private member's Bill C-223: an Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income. Senator Kim Pate (right) is sponsoring a parallel bill in the Senate, Bill S-233.

decision makers and civil society organizations. Leveraging our international commitments and counterparts, our Socio-Economic Policy Analyst, Natalie Appleyard, travelled to New York to participate for the second time in the Canadian Delegation at the UN High Level Political Forum on the Social Development Goals.

## REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RIGHTS

In a year that saw concerning negative trends in Canadian public opinion towards migrants, CPJ was proud to initiate and contribute to numerous campaigns and advocacy actions to recognize the inherent dignity of all people and to protect our most vulnerable neighbours.

Together with CPJ members, we made an important statement by collecting signatures for the #AsylumWithDignity Interfaith Campaign, which called on the federal government to implement a comprehensive plan that addresses critical gaps in the reception and support of refugee claimants, especially with respect to housing. Our members also joined us in marking 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence, which campaign was accompanied by the publication of the reflection and advocacy guide *A Community that Cares*.

CPJ's staff seized moments to amplify our members' calls to Canadian decision makers. In November, we were proud to

announce our role as a founding partner in the launch of the Canadian Chapter of Churches Witnessing with Migrants, an international platform for advocacy and action focused on global migration in all its forms. At lobby days organized by the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), we went to parliament to reinforce Canada's commitment to compassion and welcome for refugees and to advocate for policies rooted in inherent dignity and justice.

In addition to bringing messages of faith-inspired justice to Canadian lawmakers, we shared research that highlighted the systems that are denying refugees and migrants in Canada justice.



CPJ's Public Justice Intern for Refugee and Migrant Rights, Anna Miedema, attends lobby days organized by the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), along with Eunice Valenzuela from the Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre (left), former Green Party MP Mike Morrice (second from left), Anne Woolger, founding director of Matthew House (second from right), and Rahul Balasundaram, Policy and Advocacy Manager at the CCR (right).

In her report *Canada's Disposable Workforce: Addressing abuses against migrant workers*, our Public Justice Intern Asvini Uthayakumaran highlighted the shortcomings of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and provided key policy recommendations to reform it.



To respond to the ever-multiplying facets of the climate crisis—the cost of living, environmental disasters, and environmental racism, just to name a few—CPJ used numerous methods to advocate for climate justice in 2024.

To remind Canadian leaders that people in faith communities expect urgent climate action, staff and board members joined CPJ members in advocacy actions on the street. In September, we promoted and took part in Fridays for Future, a large youth-led climate justice demonstration in Ottawa, and called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies. That same month, in an action that continued our push for justice for Grassy Narrows First Nation—which can be traced back to

one of CPJ's founders John Olthuis' legal advocacy in the 1980s—we attended the Grassy Narrows River Run in Toronto and called for justice and freedom for the First Nation from mercury pollution.

In 2024, we also continued our history of advocating for climate justice through strategic climate litigations, which proved to be an impactful strategy. Throughout the year, we acted as an intervenor in the ongoing climate justice case *Mathur v. Ontario*, in which a group of Ontario youth are suing the provincial government for walking back its emissions reductions goals. Thanks in part to CPJ's presence as an intervenor, the plaintiffs saw several positive developments throughout 2024, including a compelling ruling from the Ontario Court of Appeal that overturned a pre-

vious dismissal of the case by a lower court. The youth continue to make their case that the Ontario government has an obligation to protect their Charter rights, and must consider climate justice when doing so.

2024 was also a year in which our members drove significant engagement. In our annual Lenten *Give it up for the Earth!* campaign, CPJ members contributed numerous signatures to an open letter to former Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbeault. Ultimately, these efforts culminated in securing a meeting with Mr. Guilbeault, in which CPJ staff and other faith-based civil society organizations called for bold climate justice action and care for creation.

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

At our 2024 AGM, we said farewell to two board members: Cherilyn Spraakman and Tienielle Patterson. We are sincerely grateful for Cherilyn's many contributions to CPJ during her six years as a board member, including her three years as board chair during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic, long standing work on the financial development committee, and as a continued support to CPJ's staff team. We are also deeply grateful to Tienielle for her three-year term on the board, she was very active on the policy and personnel committees and shared the role of Board Secretary during her last year on the board.

At the AGM, we welcomed Barnabas Sepase Gwaza and Jonathan Schmidt to the board and appointed Willow Baarda to a full term after an interim appointment to fill a vacancy in 2023. Monica Tang, Keira Kang, and Ian Van Haren were also confirmed to second terms on the board.

Later in 2024, Monica Tang, Vincent Yagayandi, and Wanda Walter resigned from the board, each due to changing or increased professional responsibilities. Monica, Vincent, and Wanda all made significant contributions during their time on the board including on various committees, and we miss their presence at our meetings!

Given the vacancies, the board appointed Kevin teBrake, an accountant and

ordained pastor, to join the board in December 2024. We have also prepared an excellent slate of nominees to join the board in 2025.

### BOARD MEMBERS IN 2024

Ian Van Haren (Northern Ontario / Quebec)

Cherilyn Spraakman (Ontario-at-Large)

Willow Baarda (Alberta South)

Marlene Bergsma (South-Western Ontario)

Paul Berry (Canada-at-Large)

Daniel Cho (Ontario-at-Large)

Michael deMoor (Northern Alberta/ Northwest Territories)

Barnabas Gwaza (Canada-at-Large)

Kiera Kang (Toronto)

Tienielle Patterson (Northern and Eastern Ontario)

Cathy Rogers (Eastern Canada)

Jonathan Schmidt (Ontario-at-Large)

Monica Tang (British Columbia/Yukon Territory)

Kevin teBrake (Ontario-at-Large)

Wanda Walter (Saskatchewan/ Manitoba/Nunavut)

Vincent Yagayandi (Canada-at-Large)

### STAFF IN 2024

**Executive Director:** Willard Metzger

**Climate Justice Policy Analyst & Communications Coordinator:** Maryo Wahba

**Refugee and Migrant Rights Policy Analyst:** Emilio Rodriguez (until July)

**Socio-Economic Policy Analyst:** Natalie Appleyard

**Communications & Public Engagement Specialist:** Scott Cooper (from August)

**Communications and Development Specialist:** Michael Krakowiak

**Social Policy Researcher:** Étienne Eason (June-August)

**Social Media Coordinators:** Jessica Hiebert (until March), Julia Sterling (April-August)

**Grant Coordinator:** Jenna Williams (January-May)

**Public Justice Interns:** Asvini Uthayakumaran (until August), Anna Miedema (from September)

**Student Interns:** Alisha Maxwell (until April), Karina Schut (until April), Ashley Thum (May-August), Charlene Rhead (May-August), Dr. Mansoureh (Suri) Ebrahimi (May-August), Eyanda Sally Abang (from September), Téa Maalouf (from September)

# FINANCIAL NOTES

With my six years on the Board, both my final term and position as Treasurer are quickly coming to an end. This will be my final Treasurer's report to an AGM.

Revenues in 2024 are comparable to the previous year, and that is notable despite given the anniversary campaign in 2023. CPJ benefits from the stable support received from its membership. However despite this positive support, the operating deficit increased significantly due to increasing expenses. There is no ongoing revenue category that increased significantly in 2024 over last year. The strike at Canada Post did impact on the end of year mailing usually made by CPJ, and the contributions usually mailed in at the end of the year. It unknown how this impacted revenues

Expenses were higher than in the previous year, with salaries and wages increasing by almost 10%. Approximately half of this increase is due to increases in wages resulting from increasing living costs. CPJ has still not made any significant new hiring. The other notable increase was in interest costs, due in part to increases in the mortgage rate of interest, as the mortgage was renegotiated in 2024 at a higher rate.

CPJ has reached a point where it will have to either significantly increase its fund-raising or manage to find some way to lower costs. On the expense side none of the alternatives are easy ones to make. An exciting initiative for 2025 is that CPJ will be going through a process of strategic planning which among many things will also focus on new and creative ways to increase funding. Furthermore, our hope is to have close to a balanced budget for 2025.

As always I benefited from the advice and wisdom of the Finance Committee. There are two former board members and Treasurers on the committee, I am very grateful for what they are able to do. I also would like to thank the Executive Director and the staff who have assisted the finance committee with its work.

—Paul Berry, Treasurer



**Citizens for Public Justice**  
334 MacLaren St - Suite 200  
Ottawa, ON K2P 0M6  
Unceded Algonquin Territory

613-232-0275 | cpj@cpj.ca | cpj.ca  
Charitable number: 89438 3512 RR0001  
(CJL Foundation)

## CJL FOUNDATION OPERATING AS CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS\*

Balance Sheet as of December 31	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash	\$168,332	\$129,677
Investments	4,220	306,149
Government remittances receivable	19,473	23,319
<b>Total</b>	<b>192,025</b>	<b>459,145</b>
Endowment investments	58,250	73,250
Property and equipment	1,264,741	1,206,859
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,515,016</b>	<b>\$1,739,254</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Line of credit	\$19,934	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	13,623	11,267
Mortgage payable	593,577	627,439
Deferred contributions	24,339	34,339
Note payable	10,000	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>661,473</b>	<b>683,045</b>
CEBA loan	-	60,000
Deferred contributions related to property and equipment	194,326	202,423
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$855,799</b>	<b>\$945,468</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted Net Assets	-	-
Internally Restricted - Bequest Fund	159,217	293,786
The CPJ Public Justice Endowment Fund	500,000	500,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$659,217</b>	<b>\$793,786</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,515,016</b>	<b>\$1,739,254</b>

Statement of Operations	Budget 2025	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
<b>Revenue</b>			
Contributions	\$769,000	\$655,513	\$654,305
Rental income	42,000	39,637	41,756
CEBA loan forgiveness	-	20,000	-
Miscellaneous income	9,300	4,036	4,019
Interest income	4,100	8,024	21,553
Amortization of deferred contributions related to property and equipment	10,000	8,097	6,705
Special Refugee Rights Funding	20,000		
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$854,400</b>	<b>\$735,307</b>	<b>\$728,338</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salaries and wages	\$473,519	\$504,909	\$453,444
Travel costs - executive director	46,915	85,214	69,128
General and administrative	85,740	83,757	79,549
Interest and bank charges	54,799	47,880	27,651
Occupancy	52,415	43,913	67,953
Amortization (see note)	28,262	38,619	36,279
Program expenses	65,075	34,286	14,110
Travel costs - other	15,000	20,124	18,539
Fundraising	39,700	11,174	7,585
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$861,425</b>	<b>\$869,876</b>	<b>\$774,238</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenues over expenses**</b>	<b>(\$7,025)</b>	<b>(\$134,569)</b>	<b>(\$45,900)</b>

\* The complete audited statements are available upon request.

\*\* Expenditures are done using both actuals plus allocations across categories.

Note: Principal Repayment used for Cash Budget instead of Amortization Expense.