

**2023 Annual
Report**

FIPA

**Your Data
Your Rights**



Territorial Acknowledgement

FIPA acknowledges with respect the Indigenous Peoples on whose traditional territory we conduct activities. We acknowledge the insight and knowledge of Elders past, present, and emergent and their relationship to this land and these issues. While striving to increase privacy protection and access to information for everyone, we recognize that colonization and associated attitudes, policies, and institutions have significantly changed Indigenous Peoples' relationship with this land. For many years, those same things served to exclude Indigenous Peoples from the privacy protection and access to information afforded to others. FIPA is committed to redressing those historic and continued barriers.

Institutional Funders

The BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association thanks the Law Foundation of BC, the Province of British Columbia (Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch), the BC government Employees Union (BCGEU) and all our contributors including donors, funders, and volunteers for their ongoing support of our advocacy, programs, projects, and activities.



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Allies, and Partners,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to extend our warm greetings and our gratitude for your commitment to FIPA's mission and work as we gather for our Annual General Meeting.

This AGM report looks back on FIPA's activities throughout 2023, which was, by any definition, a busy year. I will also take the opportunity to share a few notes about our current program activities.

Governance highlights:

We welcomed Kelsi Dunman, a Research Librarian for Online Learning and Circulation, and Kieran Forde, a researcher and lecturer, to FIPA's Board of Directors at the last AGM. It has been a privilege to work with these new colleagues, and with the other Directors, over the past year. The members of our Board bring a diverse range of expertise and experience to FIPA, providing advice and feedback to our Staff, assisting with the supervision of professional experience students, and advancing FIPA's governance cycle.

On the technical side of things, this year's financial documents - our Review Engagement and supplementary financial reports - show that the work FIPA has undertaken to align our budget, financial policies, and reporting processes has been successful. The more efficient we are with this, the more Staff and Board time we can direct to FIPA's program activities.

At the previous AGM, the Members passed an update to FIPA's Bylaws. At that time, the Board also announced our intention to further revise the Bylaws - at this year's AGM - to eliminate the category of 'Honorary Member'. We presented a rationale for this move, grounded both in our commitment to informed consent and in recognition of the practical governance challenges that arise from open-ended honorary memberships. Having spent a year inviting feedback and consulting with Members, we are now in a good position to advance a motion to revise the Bylaws. I view this as an important step that will help us to focus on growing our membership over the coming years.

A look back on 2023:

An important aspect of FIPA's work involved continuing the cycle of updates to our core public education and assistance resources. Visitors to FIPA's website can access a range of updated 'Get Help' materials, including resources on political privacy, health information, freedom of information, and privacy rights, alongside an updated FAQ. Our website traffic data shows that we are seeing increased use of these 'everyday' resources, and we know that our partners and allies actively refer people to FIPA for this information. The currency of our resources is maintained by a continuous cycle of research, revision, and review.

2024 and Beyond:

A quick visit to the FIPA News portion of our website will show that 2024 for was an intensely busy year for FIPA, with plenty of activity in all of our major mandate areas. Rather than listing specific projects, I want to share a few overarching themes that will doubtless carry through into 2025.

Political Privacy:

What are the rules that govern political parties' handling of personal information? Are these rules followed in practice? How can the rules be improved? FIPA has worked on these issues from a variety of angles, including open letters, polling, direct surveys of political parties, public education resources, and support for court challenges.

The Mechanics of Information Management and Access:

I think that FIPA can probably claim the distinction of having filed more FOI requests for information about public body compliance with FOI and information management laws than any other organization in Canadian history. We have spent over a year developing an evidence-based understanding of the guidelines, procedures - and the gaps - that characterize the everyday functioning of FOI & Privacy offices. I look forward to sharing the results of this work with the public in 2025. Along the same lines, FIPA has provided recommendations to public bodies working to address policy gaps, including through our participation in Library and Archives Canada's consultation on public interest disclosure.



Extending the Conversation: In 2024, FIPA stepped back into the podcasting field with the launch of Access & Privacy Online, a weekly podcast that features a round-up of stories from our News Monitoring initiative. As the podcast has developed, we have expanded the ‘Commentary’ segment, and we now regularly feature interviews and conversations with lawyers, researchers, and advocates working in the areas of information and privacy rights.

As I noted last year, these are important times for anyone interested in matters of transparency, accountability, and privacy, and I am proud of the work that FIPA is doing. I would like to see us do even more - especially by expanding our capacity to act beyond BC. I want to thank you for your continued support - and I want to encourage you to consider becoming a regular Donor, sharing information about FIPA’s work through your networks, and considering volunteering your time and expertise on our Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Larsen'.

Mike Larsen
President, BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2023 was another incredible year at FIPA.

Moving beyond the pandemic sees FIPA building off solid foundations. Existing and new contributors undertake activities that provide modern insight into access and privacy. The work they deliver is meant to speak for itself. It is informed from and reflects the increasingly diverse and dynamic experiences and needs we see in the public.

Our ability to draw from and support new entrants in the field bridges the gap. It builds skills and experience, keeps research and information current and delivers new insights. All of this creates meaningful impact.

FIPA continues to undertake the important work as a civil society organization you value. I continue to be excited by the opportunity to expand upon its capabilities and contribute everything I can to improve its ability to deliver. I look forward to continuing to expand upon the important work FIPA does.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the people who help me deliver FIPA's mandate. Without the contributors they make none of this is possible.

Sincerely,
Jason Woywada,
Executive Director, BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association

2023 - THE YEAR THAT WAS

The Numbers

Web Traffic

	2021	2022	2023
Visits Total	20,415	19,039	18,055
UPV Total	30,424	30,517	29,885
• Get Help	4,381	5,659	4,773
• Research Resources	1,095	851	2,305
• Transparency Matters	11,042	2,076	776
• Your Political Privacy		334	166

Assistance and Aid

	2023
Recorded Contacts	178
• Assistance (<30 minutes)	162
• Aid (>30 minutes)	16

Pro Bono Legal Contributions

- Two firms on retainer contributing additional pro bono hours.
 - Providing review of General and Health Help Topics
- One lawyer providing pro bono contribution for legal intervention.
 - File No. 40078 Supreme Court of Canada Intervention
- Two lawyers providing additional pro bono contribution for legal supervision.
 - Contribution supports FIPA hiring law co-op students

Program Highlights

Speaking to the numbers.

In aid and assistance, we can now fully track both volume and time on task of the contact to better manage and identify our client needs. With elections in BC and other provinces in 2024 major work has begun to develop material expanding your political privacy.

In web traffic. 2023 saw FIPA continue to refine and update its online infrastructure. All web assets now focus and redirect to [FIPA.bc.ca](https://fipa.bc.ca). This integrates and links with our social media platforms on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#). A decline in visitors was anticipated. Major shifts in the structure of the site, decommissioning of old content and the creation of new content meant a greater reliance on search engines, referrals and promotion. The significant increase in visits to the 'Research Resources' portion of the site is noteworthy, as it reflects growing interest in FIPA's recent training materials, legislative comparisons, and other resources, all of which directly relate to FIPA's public legal education and legal research program areas. With the new structure in operation, it is expected that these numbers will increase more consistently going forward.

With a combination of legal review and work by our practicum and law co-op students, FIPA is now repeating a top to bottom review and rewrite of our [Get Help](#) topics annually. These activities are managed with an annual legal review for accuracy and quality to ensure they remain as current and relevant as possible. With the increased capacity gained from managing this activity, we have now begun expanding material to provide more value to the public and members. This includes FIPA for Teachers and Leading Language.

Our first example, FIPA's [Health Information Privacy in British Columbia](#) was first launched in 2011. Legal review was conducted by Jackson Doyle at Harper Grey LLP in the fall of 2021. It was then implemented by Noah Escandor and Jay Artley as part of their 2022 Law Co-op placement. This was relaunched in our Get Help architecture under [Your Health Information](#). The process and cycle can repeat every year.

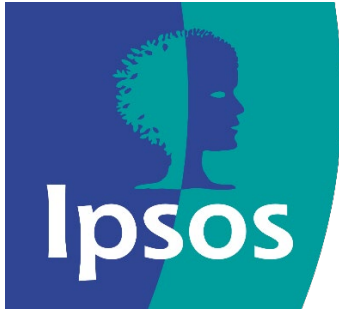
In addition to core content FIPA can leverage the expertise and interests of contributors to deliver an array of material that is novel and impactful with all of it finding a home online.

A few program activity highlights for 2023:

- The launch of an updated FOI 101 video workshop resource.
- An ongoing News Monitoring project that provides visitors to FIPA's website with paywall-free full-text access to news articles about access to information and privacy.
- Intervention in a Supreme Court of Canada case concerning the public's right to access Ministerial mandate letters.
- The launch of a major ongoing research project, initially dubbed 'An FOI a Day', that uses a robust FOI-based research methodology to explore the policies and practices of public bodies as they pertain to information management and transparency.
- The launch of an audio-based Privacy Management Program Training Certificate geared towards small businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- A submission to the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor For Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools.
- The publication of an online privacy, access to information, and technological safety resource for teachers in the K-12 system.
- The publication of an interprovincial legislative comparison resource that tracks leading language in information and privacy law.
- FIPA made several appearances before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics (ETHI), as part of the Committee's study of Canada's Access to Information System. Our submission and remarks before the committee were extensively cited in the Committee's final report.

Program Deliverables

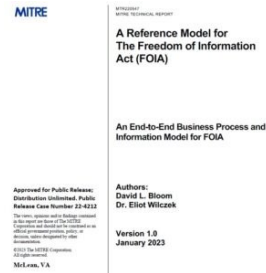
Research



[Insights into Access and privacy](#)



[Leading Language 2023](#)



[The MITRE FOIA Reference Model](#)



[FNIGC reintroduces OCAP](#)

Help Topic Updates and Expansion



[FIPA for Teachers](#)



[Get Help Relaunch](#)



[FIPA News Monitoring](#)

Education and Certification Updates



[2023 FOI 101](#)



[PMP Training Certificate](#)



[DtD Training Certificate](#)

Presentations



[Privacy Rights in British Columbia](#)



[FIPA at ETHI](#)



[FIPA at the CBA Privacy and Access Law Symposium \(2023\)](#)



[FIPA at Government Info Days 2023](#)

Working with others



[Supporting National Claims Research Directors](#)



[FIPA and AI Regulation](#)



[FIPA and the Right 2 Your Face](#)

Court Interventions and Submissions



[File No. 40078 Supreme Court of Canada Intervention](#)



[FIPA Submission to the Special Interlocutor](#)

Access to Information Activities



[Comparative
Analysis of
Assessment Methods](#)

[Information
Regulators Unite in
Resolution to
Enhance Access](#)

[FOI Commissioners'
Survey 2023](#)

[An FOI a Day](#)

[S.25 Public Interest
Paywall](#)



2024 AND BEYOND

Building off solid foundations

Through 2022 and into 2023 we were able to continue the top to bottom redraft of the [Get Help](#) section of the website with Noah Escandor. This included expanded reviews and updates from [Harper Grey LLP](#) and [Farris LLP](#) of [Your Health Information](#), [Rights to your Personal Information](#), [Rights to General information](#), [Complaint and Review Mechanisms](#), [Canadian Frameworks](#) and separate areas for [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Definitions](#). Our last outstanding update is in the [Privacy Rights](#) section of the website.

FIPA has launched its first certificate program focused on Privacy Management Program (PMP) training and follow that up with Duty to Document (DtD) training. We were very excited to work with our providers at ProDio to deliver these activity.

Law Reform Where It Matters

Continuing to leverage our research to act on law reform we started 2024 with a submission to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner answering their call for a review of their Biometric Guidelines. We will expand leading language to include trailing language and continue to expand analytical comparative research to be better able to make submission when called upon, available and in alignment with our mandate.

WHO WE ARE

Vision Mission Mandate

Mission

Improve and defend privacy and transparency as vital components of a free and democratic society.

Vision

Public agencies transparent in action and decision.

People in control of their privacy.

Privacy and transparency in law and policy.

Mandate

FIPA is one of Canada's few advocacy groups dedicated to access to information, transparency, and privacy issues. We conduct research into the public opinion, policy and law that intersect access to information and privacy frameworks in BC and across Canada. This includes monitoring the performance of public bodies, governments, and regulators in the sector. FIPA commissions studies and provides material that empower lawyers, journalists, students, and the public. In turn, we are frequently consulted on policy issues by politicians and government officials.

FIPA is a cornerstone of civil society in BC with an extended network across the country.

Our advocacy work focuses on transparency and privacy.

Our activities deliver programs that include:

legal research, public legal education, public assistance and aid, and law reform.

Core Activities

Legal Research Program

As a law-centered organization, legal research is a foundation in all of FIPA's program areas and activities. FIPA strives to consistently apply legal research methodology in all that it does. This includes ensuring strong representation and review by legal professionals and academics familiar with relevant case law and legal research practices. Current resources enable FIPA to hire law students to undertake legal research. This includes analysis of legislation, rulings, and orders. It also includes activities on specific access to information and privacy related matters through a combination of staff, contract, and pro bono contributors. In addition to conducting and commissioning our own studies, we supply research support in areas within our mandate to lawyers, journalists, students, and the public. Resources based on our research are published and available through our website and through our archives at Simon Fraser University.

Public Legal Education Program

Many FIPA activities are designed to increase public awareness of legal rights in areas of privacy and access to information. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. FIPA's program reflects many of the educational methods of teaching, training, storytelling, discussion, and directed research. FIPA's public legal education program area includes both passive and active delivery supported by multiple funders. Passive delivery is primarily web based. Our website [Get Help](#) as well as [Research Resources](#) provide a searchable form of public legal education. Their content is designed to supplement the materials provided by governments and industry, and to increase the dissemination of legal information to the public and increase their access to justice in mandate areas. The content is to be reviewed and updated annually to ensure accuracy and relevance. Active delivery includes specific presentations on topics related to our mandate areas. Repeatable training includes [FOI 101](#) and FOI 201 workshops. On an ad hoc basis it includes presentations developed and delivered on request and through solicitation to target audiences. This material is to be reviewed at regular intervals as part of a refresh cycle.

Public Assistance and Aid Program

Although generally part of public legal education efforts, specific individual inquiries received through community contact require responses which can be time intensive in comparison with passive or active education efforts. For this reason, and to facilitate and separate the supporting activities from education, we designate assistance and aid as a separate program area. Distinctions between assistance and aid are defined within the legal profession through time allocation. For this reason, FIPA estimates and tracks the time it spends per contact and can also track province of origin. Assistance is defined as any inquiry (e.g., telephone, email, social media) requiring a customized response in areas aligned with FIPA's mandate. Aid is defined as any assistance that requires more than 30 minutes of staff time to address. If aid requires legal intervention, it shifts to other sources of funding and may be referred to another party.

Law Reform Program

FIPA has a 30-year track record of constructive law reform activities. Law reform is a continuous process that needs sustained activities that culminate in advocacy to affect change that benefits people. It is reflective of and informed through activities that are part of public legal education, which includes stakeholder engagement and legal research with quantitative and qualitative components. Advocacy in law reform is best achieved when multiple groups act together on common issues. FIPA has more clearly established its own law reform efforts and regularly engages with an extended network of civil society groups in BC and across Canada to discuss and align activities to advance law reform in its mandated area. FIPA is an active member of both the Right to Information Alliance Canada and the federal Office of the Privacy Commissioner Civil Society Round Table. It remains a member of the Protect our Privacy Coalition, a group of more than 50 civil society and public interest organizations working to protect privacy and fight repressive legislation such as the *Anti-Terrorism Act*, 2015.

Operations

FIPA strives to maintain operation expenses below 10% of its annual budget. It remains focused on repeating and defining activities so that they can be managed and optimized. Recognizing our fiduciary responsibility means acting in a manner that provides value for the resources the organization receives. Acknowledging that these resources are limited requires that we strive to be both efficient and effective.

Walking the Talk in Transparency

Walking the talk in transparency means not only publishing but following our policies and bylaws. It also means supplying recognition where recognition is due. The board of directors and staff will continue to review and annually update the following online materials.

- Staff <https://fipa.bc.ca/about-us/staff/>
 - Designed to promote staff and their contributions.
- Contributors <https://fipa.bc.ca/about-us/contributors/>
 - Identifies part of our extended network.
- Advisors <https://fipa.bc.ca/about-us/advisors/>
 - FIPA continues to engage and diversify its advisors.
- Governance <https://fipa.bc.ca/about-us/governance/>
 - Our Bylaws were updated in 2023 and a call for feedback has been distributed on proposed further changes in 2024.
 - Our governing policies including: [Purpose, Identity and Perspective](#), [Strategic Management Plan](#), [Diversity Equity and Inclusion Policy](#), [Records Classification and retention schedule](#), [Board Roles and Responsibilities](#), [Terms of Reference Advisors and Advisory Groups](#)
 - Combining these created the ability to improve strategic recruitment for both the [board of directors](#) and [advisors](#). This includes the ability to strategically recruit on third party job boards.
- Work With <https://fipa.bc.ca/get-involved/work-with/>
 - Existing defined and developing employment opportunities.

There is still work to do in developing our policies and governance. On the horizon are policies for transparent procurement.

2023 RESOURCE LINKS

1. FOI 101 Updated <https://fipa.bc.ca/2023-foi-101-update/>
2. Insights into Access and privacy <https://fipa.bc.ca/2023-insights-into-access-and-privacy/>
3. Privacy Rights in British Columbia - <https://fipa.bc.ca/privacy-rights-in-british-columbia/>
4. FIPA News Monitoring Launch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-news-monitoring/>
5. Supporting National Claims Research Directors <https://fipa.bc.ca/supporting-national-claims-research-directors/>
6. Get Help Relaunch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/get-help-relaunch/>
7. PMP Training Certificate Launch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/research-resources/pmp-training/>
8. The MITRE FOIA Reference Model. <https://fipa.bc.ca/the-mitre-foia-reference-model/>
9. File No. 40078 Supreme Court of Canada Intervention - <https://fipa.bc.ca/file-no-40078-supreme-court-of-canada-intervention/>
10. FIPA at ETHI - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-at-ethi/>
11. An FOI a Day Launch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/an-foi-a-day/>
12. Comparative Analysis of Access Assessment Methods - <https://fipa.bc.ca/comparative-analysis-of-assessment-methods/>; which resulted in,
 - a. Information Regulators Unite in Resolution to Enhance Access - <https://fipa.bc.ca/information-regulators-unite-in-resolution-to-enhance-access-to-government-information/>
 - b. FOI Commissioners' Survey 2023 Results - <https://fipa.bc.ca/foi-commissioners-survey-2023/>
13. S.25 Public Interest Paywall - <https://fipa.bc.ca/s-25-public-interest-paywall/>
14. FIPA and the Right 2 Your Face - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-and-the-right-2-your-face/>
15. FIPA and AI Regulation - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-and-ai-regulation/>
16. First Nations Information Governance Centre reintroduces OCAP® - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fnigc-reintroduces-ocap/>
17. FIPA Submission to the Special Interlocutor - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-submission-to-the-special-interlocutor/>
18. FIPA at the CBA Privacy and Access Law Symposium (2023) - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-at-the-cba-2023/>
19. FIPA For Teachers Launch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-for-teachers/>
20. Leading Language Launch - <https://fipa.bc.ca/leading-language-2023/>
21. FIPA at Government Info Days 2023 - <https://fipa.bc.ca/fipa-at-government-info-days-2023/>

<p>Executive</p>	<p>President: Mike Larsen - Faculty and Co-Chair, Criminology Department, Kwantlen University Vice-President: Robert Tremonti - Privacy Professional Secretary / Treasurer: Ali Yusuf - Lawyer, Faculty, Criminology Department, Kwantlen University, Law Co-op Supervision</p>
<p>Members At Large</p>	<p>Samantha Delechantos - Lawyer, Privacy Professional, Law Co-op Supervision Keith Reynolds - National Research Representatives, Canadian Union of Public Employees Alexandra Wieland - Information and Privacy Archivist, Simon Fraser University, Professional Experience Supervision Ben Parfitt - Information and Privacy Archivist, Simon Fraser University, Professional Experience Supervision Matthew Hetu - Master of Archival Studies & Library & Information Studies</p>
<p>2023 Staff & Placements</p>	<p>Jason Woywada - Executive Director Elizabeth Day - Duty to Document Training and Volunteer Management Development Noah Escandor - Legal Researcher Jerika Caduhada - Legal Researcher Gage Smith - Legal Researcher Spencer Izen - Legal Researcher Kate Harrison - Professional Experience Eleanor Graham - Professional Experience Marion Arnott - Professional Experience</p>

Thank You

to

Donors and Members Across Canada

and

Our Institutional Funders

