

# Defund the VPD!

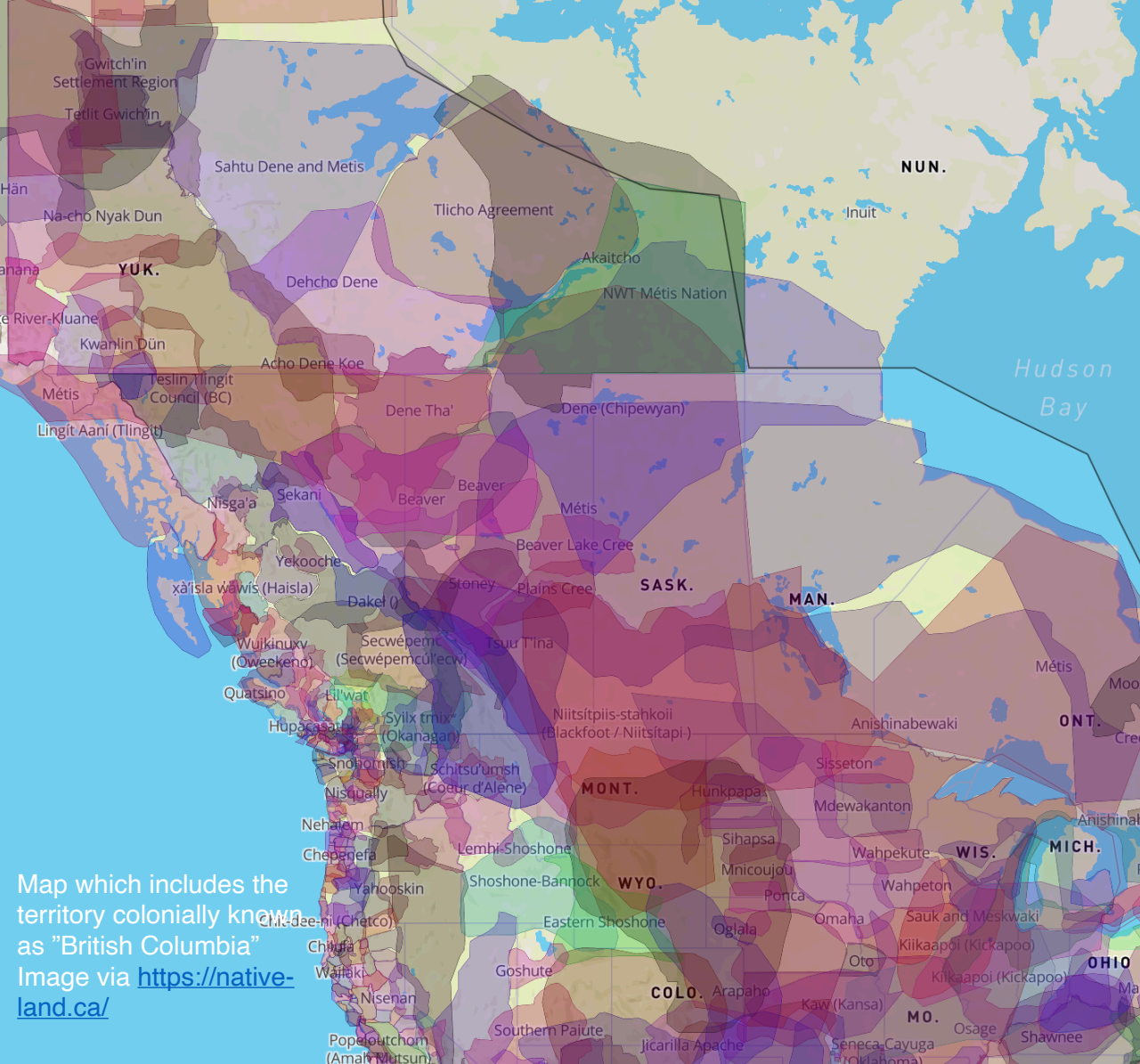
Prepared for DSOV

March 19, 2021

Meenakshi Mannoe (pronouns: she/her/hers)  
Criminalization & Policing Campaigner  
*Pivot Legal Society*



Chester Memorial  
DTES  
January 12, 2021



# Territorial Recognition

*Informed by the guidance of Ta7taliya Michelle Nahanee, Founder - [Decolonizing Practices](#)*

Pivot's work takes place on the stolen lands of the x̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔɬ (Tseil-Waututh) peoples.

Today, I am joining from **Kemk'emeláy**, 'the place of many maple trees' or a grove of maples, in the area now known as the DTES.

“British Columbia,” includes land governed by treaties between the sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Crown. Informed by Indigenous sovereigntists, I work from a basis of solidarity, recognizing that the Rights and Title of distinct Indigenous Nations have never been extinguished.

I am grateful to Indigenous peoples for their continuous relationship with their lands and am committed to learning to work in solidarity as an accomplice in shifting the colonial default.

# Learning Objectives

- Map out the **systems of policing & criminalization** that shape the VPD budget
- Identify pressure points within **municipal** policy-making & budgets
- Understand the **diverse tools** organizers are using to call attention to police budgets
- Call out to **support existing work**



# About Pivot Legal Society

**Our mandate is to use the law to address the root causes of poverty and social exclusion. Our name is metaphor for our approach to social change - by making the most tangible violations of human rights the focal point of our efforts, we exert maximum pressure in order to shift society toward greater equality and inclusivity.**

## Overview of Campaign Areas:

- Drug Policy
- Police Accountability
- Rights of Unsheltered People
- Sex Workers' Rights
- *Project Inclusion: Confronting Anti-Homeless & Anti-Substance User Stigma (2018)*



Pivot Legal Society office  
November 29, 2019

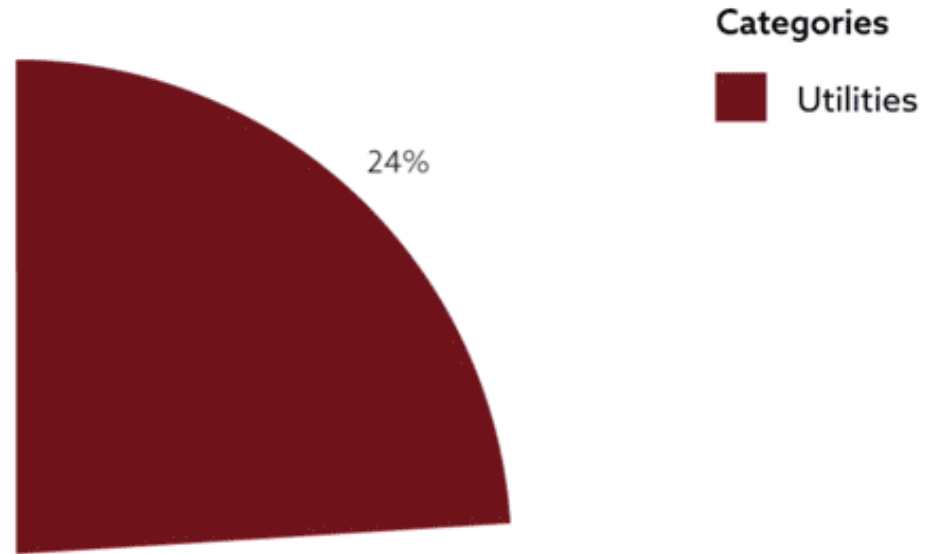
# Defund the VPD, for our collective safety!

There are serious public safety concerns in this province that require immediate and sustained attention. However, the majority of Vancouver's budgeted public safety expenditures – and a full one-fifth of the city budget overall – is put toward an institution that is not designed or equipped to anticipate and prepare for these emergencies, or to provide support to people during and after their occurrence. That institution is the Vancouver Police Department (VPD).

Chuka Ejeckam, "Defunding the VPD is an investment in public safety and collective well-being" (November 29, 2021)

# 2021 Operating Expenditures

VPD Budget as a Portion of City Budget

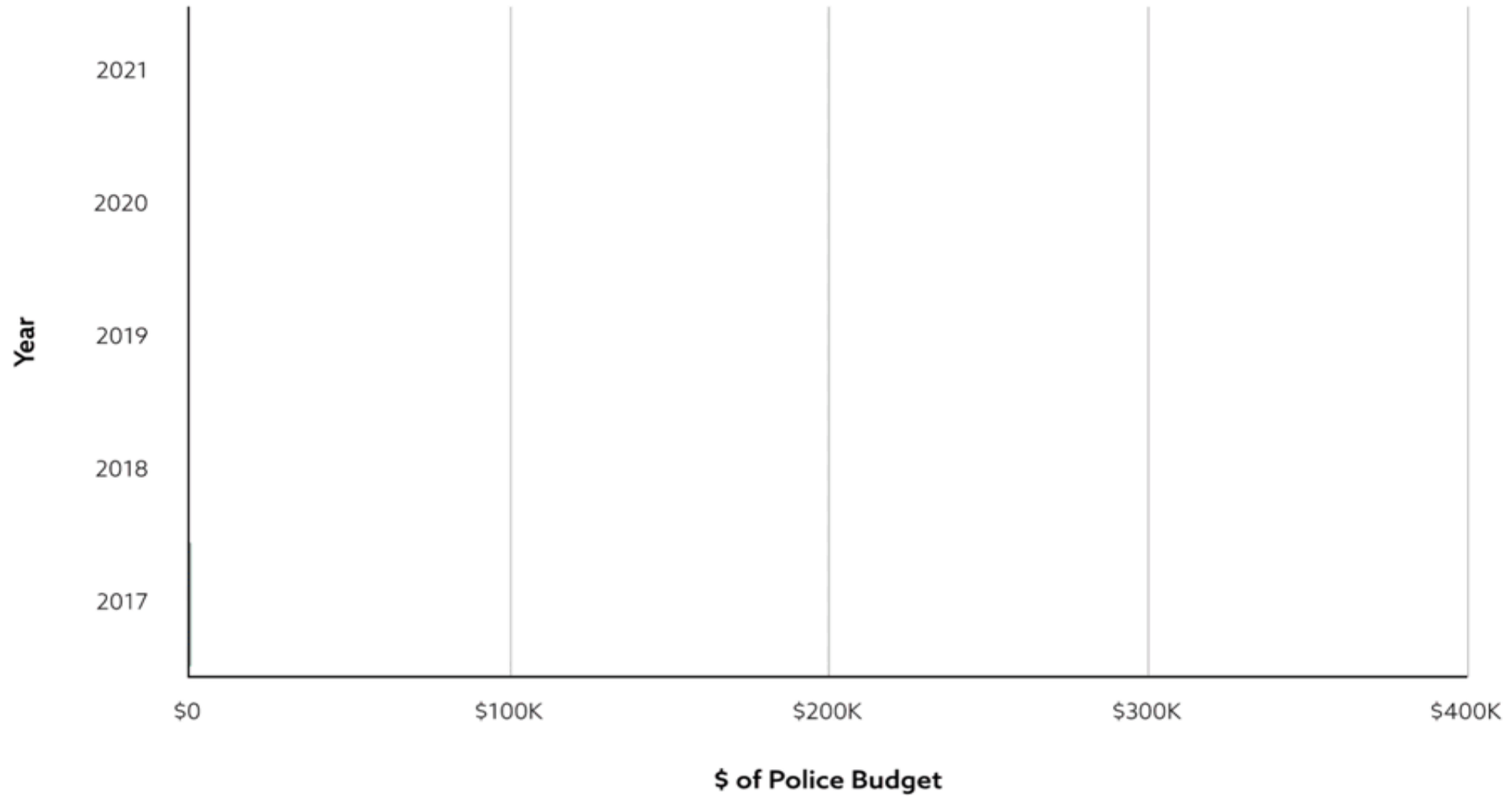


# How is the police budget made?

- The **Vancouver Police Board** determines the appropriate operating budget for the VPD to meet the legislated requirement for adequate and effective policing
- Vancouver Police Board submits VPD Operating Budget to City Council for approval on or before November 30 (*Police Act* Section 27(1))
- City Council decides on the police budget as part of its annual budget deliberations
- Vancouver Police Board can appeal Council decisions to the **Director of Police Services** (ADM within MPSSG)

# VPD Budget Increase over Five Years

VPD Budget as a Portion of City Budget



Funding for the VPD ranges between 21% and 23% of the total city budget for all years from 2017 to 2021



# Case Study: 2021 Police Budget

- June 2020: **Vancouver Police Board** rejects call from city hall to cut 1% of its budget amidst pressures of COVID-19
- November 2020: **Vancouver Police Board** approves a \$321.7M net operating budget + additional \$0.35M for CPCs.
- December 2020: **Vancouver City Council** froze the police budget at \$315.3M (2020 budget)
- March 2021: **Vancouver Police Board** appeals Council decision to the **Director of Police Services**
- November 2021: Vancouver Police Board approves a net operating budget of \$341.5M
- December 2021: Vancouver City Council approves the budget put forth by VPD
- Unknown Dates: Director of Police Services contracts Peter Lockie (Inverleith Consulting) and retired RCMP superintendent Peter Lepine to study & report back
- March 2022: **Director of Police Services** reversed Council's budget freeze, adding \$5.7 million back to the 2021 VPD budget

## Joint Statement Re: Vancouver Police Department 2021 Operating Budget

Last week, Vancouver City Council passed a 2021 operating budget which allocated over \$340 million to the Vancouver Police Department. In the lead-up to budget proceedings, many speakers appeared before City Council and spoke to the importance of defunding the police - as a matter of community safety and survival. Today, 14 community organizations and advocacy groups, including Pivot, are speaking out against the budget and elected officials' failure to defund the VPD. We remind elected officials and policy-makers that the route to justice comes from investing in community-led safety initiatives and peer-led crisis response, rather than continued reliance of policing and criminalization.



# 2022 Realities



2022 approved budget: \$367M total.



VPD now receives over \$1M per day in funding

# Systems of Policing and Criminalization (a non-exhaustive list)

- VPD (obviously)
- Vancouver Police Board
- Vancouver City Council
- Director of Police Services
- Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General
- Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner
- Independent Investigations Office of BC
- Director of Civil Forfeiture
- Community Policing Centres
- Business Improvement Associations
- Non-profits, NGOs
- Media outlets
- Karens

# Challenging the Police Budget – People’s Budget 2021



**THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET:  
REIMAGINING HOW WE  
SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER  
IN OUR COMMUNITIES**

The goal of the People's Budget 604 survey is to better understand the needs of communities left out of current City of Vancouver budget consultations, particularly those who have been underserved, over-policed, and purposefully marginalized.

The Defund 604 Network People's Budget working group believes that the City of Vancouver's budget is a moral document that must reflect our values as citizens and community members. In Vancouver, over **340 million dollars** of public money per year is given to the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), representing **twenty-one percent** of the City of Vancouver's operating expenditures.

Our online and paper survey ran from May 1 to September 30, 2021. Survey questions asked about priorities for spending public money. In total there were 761 responses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2020, the VPD undertook a survey to understand public perceptions of crime. This survey had 755 respondents.

When asked, 86% of survey participants responded "YES" to the question: "Do you support reinvesting fifty percent of the Vancouver Police Department's (VPD) budget to community services and programs that support the health and well-being of every member of our community?"

In addition, survey respondents identified the following priorities:

## PEER-LED NON-VIOLENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE, SUPPORTS, AND WELLNESS CHECKS

When asked what community members need when experiencing a mental health crisis People's Budget 604 survey respondents overwhelmingly answered: peer-led and non-violent mental health service, supports and wellness checks.

The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to create a non-carceral and peer-based mental health emergency response system - developed by and for community members most impacted by police-based mental health responses.

## ACCESSIBLE NON-MARKET HOUSING; END THE DISPLACEMENT OF HOUSELESS PEOPLE



The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to build accessible non-market housing (social, supportive, and/or co-operative housing) and end the displacement of houseless people.

The City of Vancouver will immediately end the criminalization of poverty by ending street sweeps and building peer-run and low-barrier storage spaces for precariously housed and unhoused community members. At the same time the City of Vancouver must invest public money to alleviate the housing crisis and build long-term solutions to house all.

## PEER-LED INDOOR SEX WORKER SPACES

The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to create peer-led indoor sex worker spaces.

The City of Vancouver will immediately decriminalize indoor sex work and use redirected public money to fund the creation and day-to-day operation of peer-led indoor work spaces created by and for sex workers. This research-supported industry model would support peer-led safety protocols and reduce the feigned need of law enforcement to police and criminalize people engaged in the sex trade.

## LAND BACK & A TRADITIONAL HEALING CENTRE AT CRAB PARK



The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to fund initiatives that give land back to Indigenous Communities - including, but not limited to, the creation of a traditional healing center at CRAB park.

The City of Vancouver must give land back to Indigenous communities. Decolonizing stolen x'meik'eyam (Musquam), Skwxwú'mesh (Squamish), selilwetá? (Tsílel-Wautut) land is one important way to provide much needed space for Indigenous forms of justice and community wellness to re-emerge and bloom.

## PEER-LED ACCESS TO SAFE DRUG SUPPLY

The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to fund peer-led access to safe drug supply.

The City of Vancouver will fund the creation and day-to-day operation of the proposed DULF Fulfillment Centre and Compassion Club. This proposed model will take existing illicit drugs, test them, label them, and reintroduce them into the market without profit - increasing safety by circumventing the toxic drug supply and reducing the feigned need of law enforcement to police and criminalize people engaged in drug use.

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

The People's Budget 604 demands that the City of Vancouver defund the VPD and redirect public money to fund a participatory budgeting process in order to divest from policing and build a community safety framework grounded in community-based alternatives to policing.

The City of Vancouver must work with most impacted community members to build a community safety framework that prioritizes community programs, social services, housing programs, mental health outreach teams and emergency response teams, all grounded in peer-led models - built by and for affected community members.

Share the People's Budget 604 demands widely - with friends, family, co-workers, and other community members who want to amplify the call to defund the VPD by 60% so that we can build safe, healthy, and sustainable communities for everyone.



Now is the time to act! Budget hearings start December 1. Learn more about the Defund 604 Network: [linktr.ee/DefundNetwork](http://linktr.ee/DefundNetwork) Questions? Please contact: [peoplesbudget604@gmail.com](mailto:peoplesbudget604@gmail.com)

# Challenging the Police Budget – Tools

- Direct Action
- Mutual Aid
- Strategic Motions (ex. Decriminalizing Poverty)
- Service & Policy Complaints

# Realities: No strategy is perfect

- Every action we take requires compromise
- No strategy is perfect
- Invitation to all folks working to defund & abolish policing to act in principled ways + be accountable to errors and missteps



Pivot Legal Society office  
Date unknown

# Callout for support

- I am inviting DSOV & allies to support “Honour Their Names”
- Event closes tonight, 6 PM
- Please send an **e-transfer to [info@defund604.com](mailto:info@defund604.com)**, note: DSOV
- All funds from this workshop will go directly to **Martha Martin** (mother of Chantel Moore & Mike Martin) and **Laura Holland** (mother of Jared Lowndes)

ART + ORGANIZING + COMMUNITY

JUSTICE FOR JARED PRESENTS  
**HONOUR THEIR NAMES**



**OPENS MARCH 15 - INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY**

**MARCH 15-19 | 12-6 PM DAILY | GALLERY GACHET | 9 W HASTINGS**

**OPENING FEAST // WORKSHOPS // SPEAKERS //**

THIS IS AN INDIGENOUS-LED EVENT, ORGANIZED ON THE UNCEDED TERRITORIES OF THE XʷMƏΘKʷƏYƏM, SƏLÍLWƏTƏʔL AND SKW̱XWÚ7MESH NATIONS

SUPPORTED BY



BLACK LIVES MATTER | gallery gachet | LAW UNION OF BC | PIVOT LEGAL SOCIETY | VINES ART FESTIVAL

# Additional resources

## Additional Resources

- [Abolish the Police: A Reader](#)
- [Choosing Real Safety](#) - A Historic Declaration to Divest From Policing and Prisons & Build Safer Communities for All
- [Crackdown Podcast](#): The Drug War, Covered by Drug Users
- [Defundthepolice.org](#) - Enough is Enough. Let's take action now. We call for a national defunding of police. We demand investment in our communities and the resources to ensure Black people not only survive, but thrive
- [Defund.ca](#) - In response to the ongoing violence and harassment in our communities around the world, this site offers several contact tools to help you call upon your local representatives to defund the police with just a few clicks.
- [Defund 604 Network](#) – Linktree
- [Grief, Rage & Resistance: Black and Indigenous Women in the Downtown Eastside in Conversation about the Impacts of the Drug Poisoning Crisis](#) (Pivot Legal Society & Gallery Gachet)
- [JusticeForJared.org](#) – Learn about Justice for Jared Campaign
- [Policing Black and Indigenous Lives in Canada: A Digital Teach-In](#) (BCCLA)



**Thank you!**

[www.pivotlegal.org](http://www.pivotlegal.org)



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