

# ALBERTA BRANCH **SECTION MANUAL**

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THE CANADIAN  
BAR ASSOCIATION  
Alberta Branch

# CBA ALBERTA SECTION MANUAL

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>INTRODUCTION</u></b> .....	4
<b><u>SOME BACKGROUND ON THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION</u></b> .....	4
The CBA's Mandate.....	4
The CBA Family.....	4
<b><u>WHAT IS A SECTION?</u></b> .....	6
Provincially.....	6
Nationally.....	6
<b><u>WHAT IS A SECTION CHAIR?</u></b> .....	6
<b><u>OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORTS FOR SECTION CHAIRS</u></b> .....	7
Your Executive.....	7
Legislative Review.....	9
Alberta Council and Committee Involvement.....	9
Help With Meeting Ideas.....	9
Socializing/Networking.....	10
Your Section Registrars.....	10
Your Section Coordinators.....	10
The Yearly Section Workshop.....	11
<b><u>ELECTIONS</u></b> .....	11
Timing and Other Election Issues.....	11
Post-Election Paperwork.....	11
<b><u>PLANNING YOUR SECTION CURRICULUM</u></b> .....	12
Executive/Planning Meetings.....	12
Scheduling Speakers and Topics.....	12
Holding Successful Section Meetings.....	13
Section Meeting Paperwork.....	14
After the Meeting: Meeting Materials and Recorded Meeting Presentations.....	14
<b><u>SECTION FINANCES</u></b> .....	14
Section Float.....	14
Section Expenses.....	15
Social Events.....	15
Acknowledging Your Speakers/Contributors.....	16
No-Shows.....	16

Travel Expenses.....	16
Bookkeeping.....	17
Grants.....	17
<b><u>STATEMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS.....</u></b>	<b>17</b>
<b><u>IMPLEMENTING PROVINCIAL REPORTS OR RESOLUTIONS.....</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>SECTION BEST PRACTICES.....</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>THE ALBERTA BRANCH WEBSITE.....</u></b>	<b>19</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Thanks to volunteers like you, the Canadian Bar Association is well into its second century. Whether you are a prospective section executive member or an existing one, the hope is that this manual will provide you and your executive colleagues with the tools, including best practices information, to make your CBA section successful.

But, first, some fundamentals.

## SOME BACKGROUND ON THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

As a member of the CBA Alberta Branch, you are part of a long-standing and celebrated national group of legal professionals.

The organization that was to become the CBA had its first meeting in Montreal in 1896, and was ultimately incorporated by a special act of Parliament on April 15, 1921. Today, the CBA represents over 37,000 lawyers, judges, notaries, law professors, and law students from across Canada.

The CBA provides a voice to its members in the development of law and policy in Canada, and has become a prime source of professional development. It has consistently worked closely with the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to monitor developments in all aspects of legal practice.

### The CBA's mandate

The CBA continues to provide service to the Canadian legal profession, promoting excellence in the delivery of legal services and fostering advancement of the profession through its mandate to:

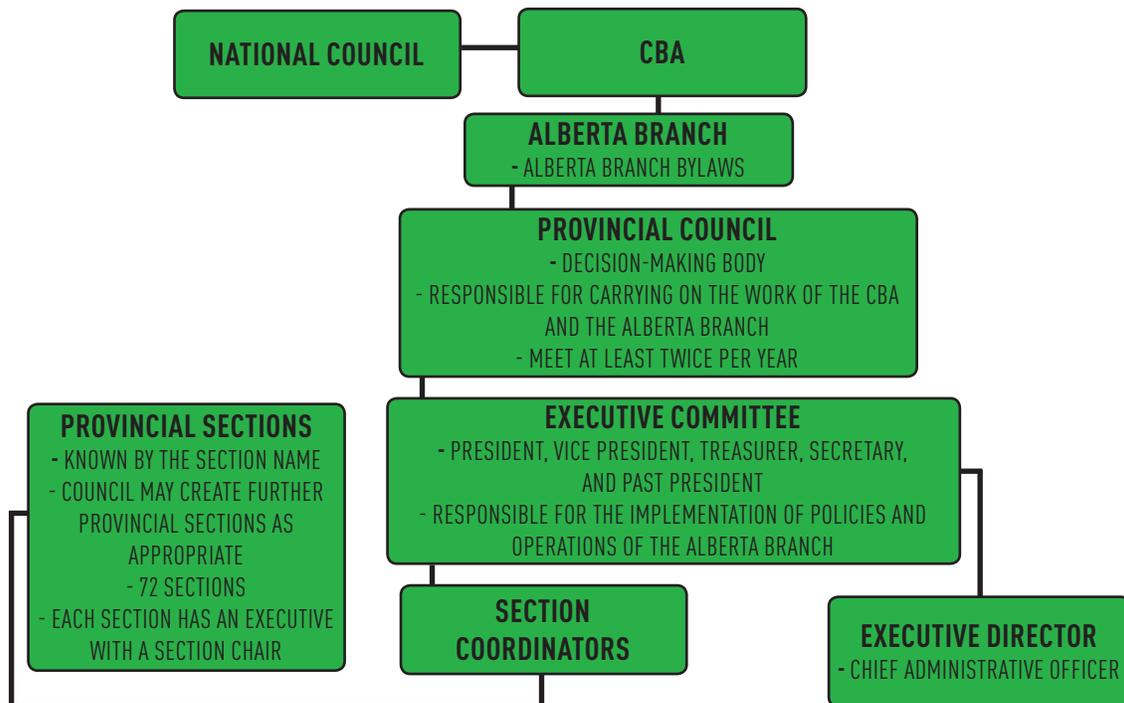
- improve the law and the administration of justice by providing a voice to the profession in making proposals to government, involvement in law reform and the initiation of studies aimed at improving legal services
- improve and promote access to justice
- promote equality in the legal profession and in the justice system
- improve and promote the knowledge, skills, ethical standards and well-being of members of the legal profession
- represent the legal profession nationally and internationally, and
- promote the interests of CBA members.

The CBA website ([www.cba.org](http://www.cba.org)) offers a myriad of resources for its members, including access to journals like the *Canadian Bar Review*, practice tools and legal news and information.

### The CBA family

The CBA fulfills a large portion of its mandate through its sections (provincial and national), committees and task forces at both the national and branch levels.

See the chart below for an idea of the CBA governance structure from an Alberta Branch perspective:



The national CBA office is in Ottawa, staffed by some 80 people. Many of its tasks mirror those performed at the provincial level, for instance, membership, legal education, accounting and other member support. The national office also administers the CBA’s role in legal monitoring and facilitating the 60 to 70 submissions made each year on behalf of the CBA members.

At the national level, the decision-making body is the National Council, which meets twice yearly and makes up about 225 voting members from across the country.

The Alberta Branch of the Canadian Bar Association is one of 13 (one in each of the provinces and territories). It is governed by the Alberta’s Provincial Council (which we call here the “Alberta Council”). The Alberta Council meets three times per year and makes provincial decisions, and creates provincial policies, projects and initiatives.

The Alberta Council membership includes all designated, appointed or Alberta-elected members of National Council, provincial committee chairs, past branch presidents and others.

Provincial section chairs like you are also *automatically included in the Alberta Council*, allowing you to stay in touch with all provincial news and initiatives and to contribute to the discussions and work done at the provincial level. You can make a difference! The Alberta Branch strongly encourages you to participate.

## WHAT IS A SECTION?

### Provincially

There are almost as many CBA sections as there are areas of legal interest and practice; and, where there is an interest among Alberta Branch members, and the willingness to get involved, a new section is born.

Sections are semi-autonomous, operating under by-laws approved by both the National and Provincial Councils. Generally, CBA sections enhance the practice of law in Canada by:

- allowing members to stay current with developments in their chosen areas of law through newsletters, the web and meetings, and
- allowing them a sense of community and involvement through live and electronic section meetings.

Each section is given the responsibility of designing its own programming and planning its own meetings and social events. Its members also decide whether, and how, to become involved with other aspects of CBA business, for instance providing comments on proposed legislation.

The Alberta Branch sections represent a large, member driven and member-run portion of the continuing legal education programming offered by the CBA. At last count, there were 33 north sections and 39 south sections. Any CBA member in good standing may become a member of any section.

Like all provincial chapters of the CBA, Alberta's sections are led by executive officers like you, elected by section members at the end of each section year.

The Alberta Branch by-laws permit more than one provincial section to operate within Alberta. Where there are two (one in Edmonton and the other in Calgary), they carry the same descriptive name and either a "North" or a "South" suffix, for example the Family Law Section (North) and the Family Law Section (South).

### Nationally

There are some 32 national CBA sections and 10 national forums, which represent a wide range of practice areas and common interests. All provide a platform for the development of legal specialties, and for the dissemination of important information and legal advancement to members.

## WHAT IS A SECTION CHAIR?

If you are a section chair, you are responsible for managing the affairs of your section. The job typically involves these duties:

### Planning your section's programming year:

- In June of each year, provide your registrar with all information required for inclusion in the section handbook. (This includes a list of new executive members).

## Programming and meeting facilitation:

- Establish section meeting dates (with the assistance of your registrar)
- Arrange for guest speakers to address section meetings
- Send meeting information to your section registrar at least 2 weeks prior to a scheduled section meeting (used to prepare meeting notices to section members), along with the minutes of the previous meeting (prepared by your section secretary)
- At least 48 hours before your scheduled section meeting, contact your registrar to reserve any required audio visual equipment and to arrange speaker gifts as required
- Be available to welcome, introduce and thank speakers invited to your section's meetings. Chair those meetings.

## Other duties include:

- Submit a brief report on section activity in the spring of each section year
- Attend related national section meetings and/or communicate with your section's related national section
- Attend CBA Council Meetings – Alberta Branch
- Respond to requests for section participation by the benchers or by the bar. Note that all representation made to the benchers, government or any outside organization must be approved by the CBA Branch Executive and by Council. (See Statements and Submissions, below, for more information).

Remember: As chair, you have the option of delegating any of your duties to your executive members.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORTS FOR SECTION CHAIRS

### Your Executive

If you are a section chair, you will learn that your executive members are your biggest support.

The expectation is that your executive is populated with energetic and motivated lawyers just like you, and that all executive members are willing to shoulder some of the responsibility of running an Alberta Branch section. Helping to achieve a fully functional executive means choosing its members carefully, where possible, and ensuring that each member has a job to do.

To take full advantage of the energy and talent at your section's disposal:

- Start early in your tenure as section chair to develop and implement a succession plan, and get your executive on board too. It is never too early to start recruiting your successors. Your goal is to encourage a continuous influx of people excited to get involved at the executive level and to create informative section programming
- Ensure that all executive members are involved in section programming. Hold

planning meetings to collect ideas for speakers and topics to be featured at your section's meetings

- Delegate to each member the responsibility for "hosting" one or more meetings. That member will take care of inviting the selected speaker to your meeting, preparing the pre- and post-meeting paperwork, welcoming the speaker on the meeting day and thanking him or her after the presentation
- Ensure that all executive members strive to attend all planning and section meetings
- Keep your executive involved. Consult with your executive on day-to-day decisions, as required.

Here are the titles and mandates for typical executive members:

- **Vice or co-chair**
  - Shares the duties of the chair and /or assumes those duties in the chair's absence
- **Treasurer**
  - Ensures that attendance is taken prior to the start of each section meeting.\*
  - Ensures collection of fees owed by "Materials Only" members and non-section members.\* ("Materials Only" section members pay a \$35.00 fee to receive section notices and pay an additional fee to attend meetings).
  - Reviews the financial statements provided by your section registrar and ensures that items have been properly charged to the section.
  - Prepares the section's yearly proposed budget, ensuring that both the budget and the proposed section activities are fiscally responsible.

**\*NOTE:** For most meetings a CBA representative is available to assist in these areas.
- **Secretary**
  - Researches background information for the various topics of discussion at section meetings
  - Takes notes at each section meeting, prepares minutes and sends them to the chair and the section registrar, for distribution to members.
- **Past chair**
  - Assists the chair as required.
  - Attends section executive meetings for planning and information purposes
- **Members-At-Large and other members**
  - Some section executives include co-chairs, program coordinators and members-at-large to assume some of the responsibilities outlined above.

## **Legislative Review**

If the size of your section's executive permits it, consider electing a legislative review officer to keep your members apprised of legislative changes. A legislative review officer can also keep on top of, and report to the membership on, the reports of the Legislative Review Committee.

The Legislative Review Committee is a joint committee of the Alberta Branch and the Law Society of Alberta, populated by members of the Alberta bar from diverse backgrounds.

The committee's two divisions (North and South) meet weekly and independent of each other while the Alberta Legislature is in session. Both divisions review bills introduced in the Alberta Legislature from a drafting perspective and forward drafting and related practical comments on the bills to the Department of Justice and Solicitor General. The committee also coordinates and forwards comments from CBA sections or members of the Alberta bar at large. At the end of each session of the Alberta Legislature, the committee prepares a legislative summary, available to you, as a CBA member, on the Alberta Branch website ([www.cba-alberta.org](http://www.cba-alberta.org)).

Occasionally the Legislative Review Committee may consult with sections on legislation that impacts the section. The Alberta Branch executive committee may also contact the section for input into Alberta Branch advocacy or public policy consultations. This is an important responsibility of the CBA, and your assistance in coordinating feedback from the section is greatly appreciated. In the absence of a designated section Legislative Review Officer, the section chair serves as the default contact.

## **Alberta Council and Committee Involvement**

If you are a section chair, you are automatically a member of the Alberta Council, which meets 3 times per year, alternating between Edmonton and Calgary. Under the Alberta Branch by-laws, your section may be required to report to the Alberta Branch Annual Meeting, to the Alberta Council or executive committee. The by-laws also encourage sections to send a representative to each general meeting of the Alberta Branch.

As a chair, you are also a member of any national section or forum corresponding to your Alberta section. This entitles you to travel, on behalf of your section, to any national section meeting scheduled during your term as chair. See below under "Travel expenses " for more information on expenses covered.

As a CBA member, you are also eligible to sit on various CBA committees, and to make even more of a difference to the practice of law in Alberta.

## **Help with Meeting Ideas**

Section chairs receive notices of meeting generated by any Alberta counterpart to your section. That is, north section chairs receive the south meeting notices and vice versa. This initiative represents a helpful tool for use by your section executive in coming up with new meeting ideas.

## **Socializing/Networking**

Obviously, your largest opportunity to network with colleagues is your regular section meetings and the Alberta Council meetings.

In addition, the Alberta Branch section coordinators are pleased to host key volunteers, including all section chairs (accompanied by a guest) each spring at a leadership appreciation dinner event in each of Edmonton and Calgary. This event acknowledges the collective hard work of section chairs and allows them some time to socialize with CBA colleagues.

## **Your Section Registrars**

As a chair, you and your executive will learn to appreciate and rely on the support of your Alberta section registrars.

A main role of the 2 section registrars and their teams -- one in Calgary and the other in Edmonton -- is to encourage and support all Alberta Branch sections. These 2 section registrars take care of almost all of the administrative tasks required by a section, including these:

- Providing support and assistance with section organization (and set-up where required)
- Publishing (on-line) section handbooks and registration documentation
- Overseeing the processing of section registrations
- Sending out meeting notices to section members and invitees
- Booking meeting facilities (in-house and outside the CBA office)
- Ordering food
- Arranging speaker travel and gifts
- Bookkeeping
- Posting meeting materials on the Alberta Branch website
- A myriad of other day-to-day jobs.

Here is the contact information for the Alberta Branch's 2 section registrars:

### **South Section Registrar**

**Linda Chapman**

E: [sections@cba-alberta.org](mailto:sections@cba-alberta.org)

T: 403-218-4313

### **North Section Registrar**

**Heather Walsh**

E: [edmonton@cba-alberta.org](mailto:edmonton@cba-alberta.org)

T: 780-428-1230

## **Your Section Coordinators**

Your section executive has 2 section coordinators at its disposal. Typically acting on a 2-year term, these volunteer CBA members are the liaison between your section and the Alberta Branch executive committee, the Alberta Council and the other sections. They are always ready to lend a hand in any of these ways, and more:

- Provide help or advice should problems arise in your section, for instance, difficulties with attendance

- Provide speaker or topic ideas
- Act as your resource for contact information on other section chairs and executives
- Promote your section and its events and meetings through their section-related articles in each Alberta Branch Law Matters magazine
- Facilitate Alberta Council ratification for any submission to the government or a regulatory body, or any initiative planned by your section.

### **The Yearly Section Workshop**

In spring of each CBA year, the section coordinators in each of Edmonton and Calgary hold a workshop, supported by Alberta Branch staff, to give pointers on efficient section operation. The timing of the workshop is not accidental: It is scheduled to coincide with the sections' spring elections in the hopes that both outgoing and incoming chairs or executive members will attend, providing an opportunity for the sharing of ideas, problems and solutions, and a passing of the torch from the current to the new executive members.

## **ELECTIONS**

### **Timing and Other Election Issues**

Plan to hold your section's election each spring (typically in May), as formally or informally as your executive wishes.

Some sections organize themselves based on a yearly rotation. Under that model, a secretary is elected yearly, with the existing executive simply moving up in the ranks – the current secretary becoming the treasurer, the current vice chair becoming the chair, and the current chair retiring. Other executives elicit expressions of interest from their membership for all positions and elect a whole new roster yearly. In the case of smaller sections, the executive can remain constant for years, with members simply trading or changing positions for each section year.

As a section chair, you will find succession planning critical. Under s 7(9) of the Alberta Branch by-laws, a section chair may only hold office for 2 consecutive years, although exceptions have been allowed.

If you, as chair, find yourself in the position of having to (or wanting to) run for a third term as chair, talk to your section registrar or your section coordinators.

### **Post-Election Paperwork**

No matter how you handle your section election, your executive will report the results to the Alberta Branch office each year by mid-June.

Before the deadline imposed, your executive must:

1. **Complete and submit Section Information ("Form A")**, providing information on:
  - which executive members are to act as chairs, vice-chairs or co-chairs and other executive positions

- the number of meetings to be held by your section in the upcoming season
- the proposed section membership fee
- the proposed monthly meeting date, for instance, the 3rd Thursday of each month (typically unchanged from the previous year).

Your proposed membership fee must cover the cost of materials distribution, bringing in speakers, any gifts for those speakers, the cost of meals served at meetings and any other section expenses your executive anticipates, as well as contribute to paying the overhead costs of running sections. Your section registrar can help in setting this membership fee.

2. **Complete and submit Executive Information ("Form B")** providing the name, position and contact information for all newly-elected executive members.
3. **Complete and submit Section Budget, ("Form C")** with input from the CBA Alberta office, and often unchanged from the previous year. Your section registrar will give you an opening balance. The only rule is that there can be no deficits in your budget, meaning you must govern the section within its means.

For CBA policies relating to section budgets, see "Section Finances", below.

4. **Complete and submit Speaker and Topic Information ("Form D").**
5. **Have your portrait taken for the section manual, as required.** (This includes your co-chair, where you have one). Speak to your section registrar to arrange a photo on your next visit to the office, or submit your firm profile photo.

## PLANNING YOUR SECTION CURRICULUM

### Executive/Planning Meetings

Depending upon your budget, it is reasonable for you, as chair, to organize 1 or 2 executive planning meetings to discuss potential speakers, ideas for topics and other section programming. To save money, consider convening an executive meeting immediately after a section meeting.

For CBA policies relating to section budgets, including budgetary constraints, see "Section Finances", below.

### Scheduling Speakers and Topics

It is the responsibility of the entire executive (and not just the section chair or co-chairs) to plan for and facilitate regular meetings during the section year (between September and June). Here is a list of recommended practices and policies:

- Hold section meetings at the same place, at the same time and on the same day of the month (for instance, the 3rd Thursday) each month (or as the case may be)
- The opportunity to properly promote a meeting's speaker and topic do make a difference to participation. Plan meetings as far in advance as possible (even planning several meetings concurrently), providing your section registrar with all of the details

and the required paperwork at least 3 weeks before each meeting

- Do not invite salespeople to speak at your section meetings. (The exception is where the speaker is to present on an area of expertise collateral to his or her role in sales of a product)
- Arrange your section's initial meeting in September of each year by the previous June. Concurrently send the information on that meeting to your section registrar
- Provide meeting materials to your section registrar at least 48 hours in advance of any meeting, for copying and loading onto a laptop
- Advise your section registrar immediately if it is necessary to reschedule a meeting. A new date can be booked based on meeting space availability in the CBA offices (or elsewhere as the case may be).

In Edmonton and Calgary, certain section meetings are webcast, which extends the outreach of the section. If you would like to know more about what is involved in webcasting your section meetings, please consult your section registrar.

### **Holding Successful Section Meetings**

Here are some suggestions for successful meetings:

- Keep in mind you have committed on behalf of all section members to host a certain number of meetings each year. Be organized and plan as far in advance as you can.
- Consider holding a joint meeting with another section on a topic related to both sections. This can yield a larger number of attendees.
- Consider inviting another section to your section meeting, which involves collecting a meeting fee from the other section members. This idea can yield a larger number of attendees and also additional revenue for your section.
- Inviting a member of the judiciary to speak to a section meeting is typically a guarantee of a good turnout. CBA members appreciate the opportunity to learn from the bench. Some levels of court have designated a CBA liaison to help facilitate these appearances. Contact your section registrar for more information.
- Where your section is on a tight budget, consider hosting a speaker via Skype instead of the more expensive alternative of paying his or her travel expenses.
- Prior to confirming an out-of-town speaker, ensure your section has sufficient funds or has budgeted for travel expenses.
- Ensure that the executive member responsible for scheduling a speaker:
  - requests biographical information from the speaker for the purposes of an introduction,
  - confirms with a scheduled speaker a few days in advance of the meeting, and
  - attends the meeting to welcome, introduce and thank the speaker.
- In the event your speaker must cancel at the last minute, consider holding a case review or roundtable to discuss changes in your practice area.

## Section Meeting Paperwork

Prior to each meeting, these forms must be provided to your section registrar:

- Videotaped section meeting checklist (D-1), which provides the CBA with information on your speaker, his or her topic and all of the details surrounding the scheduled meeting
- Webcast section meeting checklist (D-2)
- Hotel section meeting checklist (D-3)
- Any PowerPoint presentations to be loaded onto an Alberta Branch computer, and any hand-outs to be copied.

## After the Meeting: Meeting Materials and Recorded Meeting Presentations

Some of the Alberta Branch section meetings, including those which are webcast, are recorded and posted on the branch's website after the section meeting has wrapped up. Those recordings are made available to section members later.

After your meeting, branch staff load any hand-outs or the recorded presentation (if the proceedings are recorded) onto the Alberta Branch website for access by those section members that could not attend the meeting, or for materials-only members of your section.

If you are section chair, prepare (or delegate the preparation of) an annual report for the Alberta Branch outlining your section's completed activities and its work in progress for the year. These reports are distributed to the national sections, and must be submitted to your Alberta Branch office by June 15. Besides serving as an important archival record, these reports can be very helpful for future meeting planning.

## SECTION FINANCES

The Alberta Branch fiscal year runs from September 1 to August 31. All sections must submit a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year by June 15. A typical budget includes a proposed membership fee and any anticipated expenditures.

Preparing a budget is easier than it sounds: Your section registrar will provide you, as section chair, with a copy of your section's last season's budget and the registrar's recommendations for the next year's budget, including the section membership fees.

If your executive plans an increase to the section membership fees for the next CBA season, let your registrar know prior to June 1st.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, there should be no deficit in your section's budget. Any deficit budget must be approved by the Alberta Branch executive committee.

## Section Float

Each section may begin a CBA season with a maximum float of \$4,000, carried over from the previous year. It is Alberta Branch policy that any funds over \$4,000 remaining in a section's account are automatically returned to the Alberta Branch general operations. This is a means of covering the large amount of unfunded section administration costs incurred yearly.

## Section Expenses

All section expenditures must be for a purpose in line with CBA objectives and incurred with the intention of providing benefit to the greatest number of section members possible.

Before committing to an expenditure, your executive must determine that spending the money is in the best interests of the section and the CBA, and that your section has the money in the bank. Any non-typical expenditure must be approved by your section registrar or a section coordinator.

The cost of social or other special events or executive meetings should not exceed:

\$30.00 per attendee for a lunch event, and  
\$45.00 per attendee for a dinner/evening event.

If your section executive plans on exceeding these limits, consult with your section registrar or the executive director before committing to the overage.

Typical section expenses include these:

- Meeting costs, including the cost of food and space rental (where the meeting is held outside the CBA premises)
- Photocopying and any mailing charges
- Speakers' reasonable travel, and accommodation if necessary (when flight and accommodation arrangements are made by the section registrar)
- Speakers' gifts/acknowledgements
- The reasonable expenses of the section executive and any committees, for instance, the cost of lunch at an executive lunch meeting to plan for section events. (For reimbursement, the meeting attendee list must be attached to the expense form)
- Section chair travel expenses relating to attendance at national section meetings. For more information, see below under "Travel expenses"
- A \$40.00 per member section administration fee collected by the Alberta Branch to cover administrative costs. (This fee helps to cover some of the section-related administrative costs previously covered by the Branch's general revenues)
- The cost of welcoming law students (U of A, U of C) to your section meetings. (Law students are invited to all section meetings free of charge. The cost of students' meals is covered by the host section).

Section members, including executive members, are not authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the CBA. This means that you will refer any contracts to your section registrar, who will arrange signature by a signing officer.

## Social Events

Keep in mind that all funds in your section's account represent fees paid by members, and must be used only for their collective benefit. The Alberta Branch has the discretion and

reserves the right to limit events to CBA members, or to charge cost-recovery fees to non-section members.

For events planned to take place outside the CBA premises, consider that your section's cost per member should remain consistent with the cost per member guidelines for these types of events.

Consider that reimbursement of section expenses are in the discretion of the executive director, depending on the nature of the expense; and that the Alberta Branch may decide not to reimburse the cost of an event/meeting/social occasion that is not open to or does not benefit your entire section. When in doubt about a particular expense, or when planning a social event, contact your section registrar or a section coordinator well in advance of committing the section to that expense.

Be familiar with the Alberta Branch's host policy. Contact your section registrar with any questions or concerns.

### **Acknowledging Your Speakers/Contributors**

Lawyer speakers addressing section meetings are usually acknowledged through a contribution to the Assist program. Non-lawyers are typically thanked with a modest gift, arranged by your section registrar.

Recognizing that the CBA is built on volunteerism, it is CBA policy that no section member is paid for his or her contributions to a section, nor does the Alberta Branch pay speakers a fee or honorarium. This does not, however, restrict your section from recognizing that person with a modest gift.

### **No-Shows**

Catering your section meetings (or holding them at a hotel) is probably your section's biggest expense. In fact, the cost of food is not completely covered by the fees paid by your section members, requiring subsidy from the Alberta Branch. Members that confirm and then do not attend a meeting represent a significant cost to the Alberta Branch and can affect a section's bottom line. For this reason, some sections have implemented a no-show policy, under which no-shows are charged the cost of their unclaimed meal.

Consider implementing such a policy if no-shows are a problem for your section.

### **Travel Expenses**

As a section chair, chances are you will be travelling to and from Alberta Branch Council meetings (in either Edmonton or Calgary). These meetings are held 3 times per year, alternating between the two cities.

The Alberta Branch will compensate you for most of your travel expenses. See the Alberta Branch expense reimbursement policies for more information.

Where you act as chair of a section that has a corresponding national section or a national forum, you may be travelling out of the province to that national section's meetings. (Note

that not all Alberta sections have a corresponding national section). Under the Alberta Branch policy, where there are two Alberta sections, each chair typically attends the national meetings on alternate years.

In a year where you, as chair, represent Alberta at a national section meeting, the national office will compensate you for some of your travel expenses; and the Alberta Branch will cover some of the expenses not covered by the national branch. For more information, talk to your section registrar or section coordinators.

Note that under the Alberta Branch expense reimbursement policies all flights and accommodation, the cost of which is to be reimbursed by Alberta Branch, must be booked by your section registrar.

### **Bookkeeping**

Sections have a dedicated bank account maintained by the Alberta Branch office, and each section's revenue and expenses are tracked separately.

Your section treasurer submits all invoices and bills to your section registrar for payment. The treasurer can consult at any time with your section registrar on the balance of the section account.

### **Grants**

Your section may be eligible for a grant of up to \$300.00, to be used for a special project or toward the cost of bringing in a speaker where it does not have the means to cover that project or speaker's expenses. Apply to the executive director.

## **STATEMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS**

Under s 12 of the Alberta Branch by-laws, any statement or submission you tender on behalf of your section must meet the following criteria:

- It must be supported by an existing resolution of the Alberta Council
- Where there is no relevant resolution of the Alberta Council, your statement or submission must be referred to the next meeting of Council whenever practicable
- When the subject matter is, in the opinion of the Alberta Branch president, of sufficient importance and urgency that a statement cannot await the direction of Council, it must be approved by the Alberta Branch executive committee where practicable or, failing that, by any 2 of the President, Vice-President and Treasurer, or failing that, by the President alone.

The exceptions are statements/submissions made by your section to internal recipients like the corresponding national section's chair, the Alberta Branch Executive Committee, members of the Alberta Branch and others. See s 12 of the by-laws for more information.

Generally, where your section intends to comment publicly, prepare a form of resolution, with back-up material, and forward it to your corresponding Alberta section (if there is one), to your 2 Alberta section coordinators and to the executive director. The views expressed in your section's statement or submission must represent the views of a majority of your

section members, and be made on notice to all section members. The material is then circulated to the Alberta Branch executive, which will then include it for consideration at the next Alberta Council or Alberta Branch executive committee meeting if it is deemed appropriate.

It is becoming more common for the provincial government to reach out to Alberta Branch for public policy consultations. Advocacy on behalf of the profession is an important responsibility of the CBA, and the Alberta Branch executive committee greatly appreciates your assistance in coordinating timely feedback from the section.

For further guidance on statements and submissions, please contact the executive director (403-218-4315 or [executivedirector@cba-alberta.org](mailto:executivedirector@cba-alberta.org)).

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

If the media contacts you as a section chair, remember that you can only give your own educated opinion; do not comment on behalf of the section or the Canadian Bar Association. Comments made on behalf of the Association must be made by the Alberta Branch president or alternatively a member designated by the executive committee.

## **IMPLEMENTING PROVINCIAL REPORTS OR RESOLUTIONS**

As chair of an Alberta Branch section, you may be involved in implementing any report or resolution (purely provincial in scope) passed by your section. Before doing so, under s 13 of the Alberta Branch by-laws, you must get the approval of the Alberta Council, the executive committee, or the president with the ratification of the executive committee. Where there is a question of whether the matter is provincial in scope (as opposed to one affecting the entire CBA organization nation-wide) the Alberta Branch president submits the matter to the CBA National President for a ruling.

## **SECTION BEST PRACTICES**

Here is a re-cap of some of the common executive best practices discussed in this manual:

- As chair, you have committed to governing the section in the best interests of all section members. Plan to develop a full program of meetings to deliver exceptional value to your members.
- Recognize that governing a section is not a one-person job. That's where the section executive comes in. Ensure that your executive shares in the section governance and planning responsibilities and that all executive members strive to attend all planning and section meetings.
- Ensure that your section executive develops and implements a succession plan, to ensure a yearly influx of people excited to get involved and create a full year of section programming.
- Meet as an executive at the beginning of the section year (and one to two more times as required) to brainstorm meeting ideas and to allocate responsibility for facilitating those ideas.
- Consider holding a joint meeting with another section on a topic related to both sections. This can yield a larger number of attendees.

- Also consider inviting another section to your section meeting, which involves collecting a meeting fee from the other section members. This idea can yield a larger number of attendees and also additional revenue for your section.
- Inviting a member of the judiciary to speak to a section meeting is a guarantee of a good turnout. CBA members appreciate the opportunity to hear from the bench.
- For sections with a tight budget, consider hosting an out-of-town speaker via Skype instead of the more expensive alternative of paying his or her travel expenses.
- Plan meetings well in advance.
- Arrange your section's initial meeting in September of each year by the previous June. Concurrently send the information on that meeting to your registrar.
- Provide meeting materials to your registrar at least 48 hours in advance of any meeting, for copying and loading onto a laptop.
- Ensure that the executive member responsible for scheduling a speaker:
  - requests biographical information from the speaker for the purposes of an introduction,
  - confirms with a scheduled speaker a few days in advance of the meeting, and
  - attends the meeting to welcome, introduce and thank the speaker.

On behalf of the entire Alberta Branch organization, we hope your volunteer experience with the CBA is a fun and rewarding one, and remember, there are lots of people and resources you can call on to help!

### **THE ALBERTA BRANCH WEBSITE**

The Alberta Branch website ([www.cba-alberta.org](http://www.cba-alberta.org)) offers a lot of information and many supports, including:

- Branch contact information
- The Alberta Branch by-laws and policies
- Alberta Branch section calendar and section handbook (which includes contact information for all section chairs and co-chairs)
- The CBA Alberta Member Directory
- Meeting checklists and forms
- Expense reimbursement form
- Host policy
- Sample section-related templates and forms:
  - Section executive information
  - Section handbook information
  - Budget form
  - Section speakers and topics
  - Section budget worksheet