



CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
Alberta

2023-24 CBA Alberta Annual Report





Our Mission

To improve the law

To improve the administration of justice

To improve and promote access to justice

To promote equality in the legal profession and in the justice system

To improve and promote the knowledge, skills, ethical standards and well-being of members of the legal profession

To represent the legal profession nationally and internationally

To promote the interests of the members of The Canadian Bar Association



Our Vision

We are the essential ally and advocate of the legal profession and guardian of the rule of law in Canada. Our members are passionate about their Association — the good it brings to their lives and to the world. Staff and volunteers are inspired to exceed members' expectations every day.





A Message from Our President

I am proud to say that the Canadian Bar Association has been a partner in my career, ever since I joined during Orientation Week, in law school.

From the start, I saw the opportunities and the differences I could make through volunteering with CBA Alberta. I co-chaired the Law Students Section for all three years of law school; and benefited from the inclusion and community that CBA provides. It was the Honourable Justice Elizabeth Hughes and other members of the Bench, who encouraged me as a Crown prosecutor to deepen my engagement with CBA, through leadership of the Criminal Justice Section. That led to further engagement with CBA Alberta Council, the Access to Justice Committee, and the Executive Committee. I am most honoured and invigorated, to now serve as your 2024-25 CBA Alberta President.

CBA is the largest legal organization in the country, and I am still learning the multitude of ways that it delivers value. Members value professional development and Sections, opportunities to network with others in the profession; and the advocacy that CBA does on issues, big and small. Even the discounts and supports from preferred suppliers like Lawyers Financial, Rogers and Audi, can easily pay the cost of a membership.

I now know firsthand that what makes this organization impactful is the dedicated people who step up to give back; just a few of whom are listed on the back of this report.

- I want to acknowledge the work done by Section leaders who work every day to deliver thoughtful, high-quality programs for their peers.
- I admire those of you who contribute to our committees and our advocacy work; without you, we would not have been able to respond on so many issues this past fall; without your time and thought leadership, CBA would not stand as tall as the credible and influential voice of the profession.
- I am indebted to my fellow members of the Board of Directors and Executive who work passionately to deliver on CBA's mission here in Alberta, and to our professional and caring staff who support us all, every step of the way.

And to you, the members of CBA in Alberta, thank you for continuing to believe in CBA and its work; for choosing to make us a partner in your own career. Together, we represent the best of the profession, and together, we make the profession and the world a better place.

Robert D.L. Bassett, CBA Alberta President
2024-25

2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan

CBA Alberta continued to deliver on the commitments made in the 2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan, helping our members and our profession successfully move into the future.

Powerful Advocacy

- CBA Alberta advocacy initiatives are supported by Agenda for Justice, Voice of the Profession and Legislation and Law Reform Committees
- Launch of a quarterly member e-newsletter focused on Branch advocacy initiatives
- Regular meetings with the Courts, the Minister of Justice, government officials, and law schools

Looking ahead

- Addressing issues related to auto insurance reform and legal aid

Adaptive and Innovative Practice

- Sections hosted nearly 400 meetings in 2023-24 on wide-ranging topics including gen-AI, working with experts, chambers advocacy, pet custody, case law updates and many more
- Members enjoy boundaryless access to both North and South Section meetings, and increased flexibility with hybrid meetings as the default
- The Alberta Lawyers Insight Series focuses on topics that support well-being, skills and leadership development and conversations with leaders and influencers in the profession in Alberta
- The Modern Lawyer Series focuses on helping unlock the potential of technology for legal practice

Looking ahead

- Spring Inns of Courts programs in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton
- Conversation with the Minister of Justice; webinar planned for May 2025

Committed Membership

- Universal student membership and mentorship at both UCalgary and UAlberta
- Section leader summits held in Calgary and Edmonton to connect key volunteers
- Inns of Court Program, supported by a provincial Inns of Court chair and local organizing committees hosted events in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge
- New *Law Matters* web platform to support community building by Editorial Committee

Looking ahead

- Reduction in the Section enrollment costs for Community of Interest Sections.



Healthy Culture within the Profession

- Updates to the Inclusive Workplace Toolkit, supported by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Access to Justice Week celebrated lawyer's pro bono work and featured a webinar on Access to Justice for Victims of Economic Abuse
- The return of the popular "Spotlight" in *Law Matters* to feature members who are making a difference in our legal community

Looking ahead

- Resource guide for hiring Internationally Trained Lawyers

Wellness in Practice

- Increased support for the work of Alberta Lawyers Assistance Society
- Programming to recognize Lawyer Mental Health Week in May and World Mental Health Day in October
- Career Development Grant pilot has supported the aspirations of 11 Alberta members

Looking ahead

- *Retirement on Trial* documentary screenings in Calgary and Edmonton June 2025

High Performance Board Leadership

- Leader Development Committee assists with ongoing recruitment of Board members with diverse experience, backgrounds and areas of practice
- Engagement Task Force to provide deeper insights to the Board on ways to support members throughout their careers

Looking ahead

- Nomination period for the 2025 Board election opens April 1, 2025



Advocating for Alberta Lawyers

Public Opinion Research

CBA Alberta worked with Nanos Research to reprise 2020 public opinion research on the justice system, and again, Albertans agree that the system needs improvement. Specifically, Albertans have expressed concern with access to justice and were agreed on the importance of minimizing delays.

There were several key themes that arose in the results of our public opinion research:

Speedy justice and access to a lawyer are seen as basic rights

Study respondents agree that fair outcomes are tied to having access to a lawyer. In 2020, 68% of student participants said that it was important to have access to a lawyer to ensure fair outcomes, and in 2024 that increased to 77%.

Albertans also agree that it is important to invest in the justice system to reduce delays. In 2020, 46% of participants said it was important to invest in the justice system to minimize delays. In 2024, that increased to 62%, with over 9 out of 10 respondents (92%) saying it is important or somewhat important.

Legal aid is essential for access to justice

The acknowledgement of the important role that legal aid plays in our justice system was consistent across regions, age groups, and gender identity. Overall, 92% of respondents agree that the services provided to Albertans by legal aid is important or somewhat important. The majority of respondents also felt that more investment in legal aid was warranted to make services accessible.

Additional resources for our justice system are needed

More than 8 out of 10 respondents support or somewhat support investment in both physical and digital court infrastructure. There is also support for investment outside the courts to address systemic issues that lead to criminality and the use of court time.

Confidence in the rule of law and the independence of the justice system need to be protected

There is some room for improvement in Albertans' overall confidence in our justice system, but Albertans are at least two times more likely to be confident than not in the rule of law being applied, and in the independence of the judiciary.



Advocacy Priorities

CBA Alberta is your collective voice on law reform and government policy. On behalf of our members, we work on the front lines of the justice system to impact legislation, regulatory and policy development, and to protect the professional interests of lawyers in Alberta. We have been busy the last 18 months with advocacy priorities including:

Legal Aid Advocacy

Legal aid has been a priority for the last year and CBA Alberta has provided valuable stakeholder input, including a January submission to the tripartite negotiations to ensure long-term, sustainable funding for legal aid, and support for the tripartite process and finalization of the new agreement. We consulted with CBA Alberta members via a Thought-Exchange survey to seek input on ways to improve legal aid, and we participated in stakeholder consultations with other groups and organizations around the legal community. We also conducted outreach to the Minister of Justice in late 2024 to express our concerns regarding changes to the statutory requirements of the Alberta Law Foundation to provide funding for legal aid, and the impacts these changes would have on access to justice in our province.

Family Justice Strategy

Family justice continues to be a focus of advocacy work from both a short-term and long-term perspective. As a result of CBA Alberta recommendations, the government acted to create Family Justice Roundtables, and the Courts responded to concerns we raised on Family Docket Court.

Auto Insurance Regime

CBA Alberta's auto insurance working group, which carefully balances plaintiff and defence bar, has worked for years to provide suggestions for improvement in the system that negate the need for a no-fault regime. Our most recent submission was in August 2024, but unfortunately, the government announced in November that it would proceed with private no fault insurance. CBA Alberta expressed its profound disappointment with this decision, and the working group continues its efforts and will be developing a strategy based on research to gauge public reaction to the proposal.

Court Modernization & Infrastructure

We regularly raise the issue of court modernization and infrastructure in meetings with the Minister of Justice and in conversations with the Courts. CBA Alberta's advocacy is rooted in the CBA national No Turning Back Report, which focused on how court modernization could continue, post-pandemic, in a sustainable way, and in the Court Modernization backgrounder in CBA Alberta's Agenda for Justice. We also engage members on this issue, and have conducted several ThoughtExchange surveys which gave members the opportunity to weigh in on how best to continue digital transformation of the Courts and improve access to justice.

Regulation of the Profession

CBA Alberta participated in in-person consultations on the government's review of professional regulatory bodies and engaged our membership by encouraging participation in the government's survey of legal professionals. The key points made to the government were:

- Freedom of expression is reasonably subject to limitations within the Law Society of Alberta Code of Conduct as related to conduct that may reflect negatively on the profession or harm public trust
- There is no mandatory training for Alberta lawyers not related to professional competence or ethical conduct
- Statutory changes to regulatory policy are unnecessary as the Law Society appropriately limits its oversight functions
- The Law Society should be empowered with tools to better manage vexatious or bad faith complaints

We recommended to the government that any changes that might be proposed as a result of the review should be subject to further consultation with the profession.

More information on these, and other CBA Alberta advocacy initiatives can be found at cba-alberta.org/Advocacy.

Professional & Career Development

Through our dedicated team of staff and volunteers, CBA Alberta is committed to delivering valuable professional development, career development and networking opportunities across the province to help our members stay current and connected.

Alberta Sections

In 2023-24, 2,439 CBA Alberta members were enrolled in Alberta Sections, including nearly 1,000 articling students and members in their first three years of call who we support with complimentary enrollment in the Articling Student and Young Lawyer Sections.

Together, CBA Alberta Sections delivered nearly 400 networking and CPD events for our members with distinguished speakers including government representatives, members of the bench, senior practitioners, academics, and experts from across Canada. Our Sections continue to deliver programming on issues that are top of mind for our members, with topics including generative AI and legal research, presenting cultural evidence in family and child welfare matters, and fraud awareness for small and solo practitioners.

Webinar Series

Last year, we expanded CBA Alberta's professional development offerings with the introduction of new and refreshed webinar series to meet the evolving needs of our members. The Alberta Lawyer Insight Series was re-launched and welcomed distinguished speakers such as the Minister of Justice and the Chiefs of Alberta's Courts to engage with members on the latest developments in the legal profession, and offered presentation topics on wellbeing to support members in their wellness journeys.

We also introduced the new Modern Lawyer Series of webinars, an innovative technology series designed especially for lawyers, which delivered webinars on cybersecurity and document management. Both of these webinar series are available to CBA Alberta members at no charge, and past events are available to members on demand.

Inns of Court

Our popular Inns of Court program has expanded to include regular events in Lethbridge and Red Deer, as well as semi-annual events in Calgary and Edmonton. These programs follow the English tradition of dining with senior practitioners and judges in an intimate setting, and provide early-career lawyers with the opportunity to hear from leaders in the profession, ask questions, and engage in casual conversations. We hosted five Inns of Court events around the province last year with over 100 early-career lawyers participating.



Building a Strong Membership

CBA Alberta membership continued to grow in 2023-24, with over 5,400 lawyers, judges, law students and articling students adding their voices to the largest professional association for lawyers in the country.

Our membership increased by more than 5% over the previous year, with growth in almost all categories. Our strong membership numbers were driven by our expanded universal law student membership programs for undergraduate law students at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta, as well as by growth in our new lawyer category.

Membership

By the Numbers*

5,428 **+5.3%**

Members

3,678 **+0.7%**

YOC 4+

713 **+5.5%**

YOC 1 – 3

831 **+30%**

Students

206 **+8.4%**

Other

*As at May 31, 2024

Statement of Operations

Year ended August 31, 2024

Abbreviated from the audited financial statements

	2024 (\$)	2023 (\$)	Change (%)
<u>REVENUE</u>			
Membership Revenue	1,392,424	1,307,288	6.51
Sections	427,238	444,494	-3.88
Other Revenue	287,276	278,433	3.18
TOTAL REVENUE	2,106,938	2,030,215	3.78
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Personnel – Staff	1,070,726	982,603	8.97
Administrative	397,524	390,976	1.67
Committees	190,253	113,207	68.06
Personnel – Officers	142,822	143,079	-0.18
Sections	146,193	109,117	33.98
Meetings	50	10,500	-99.52
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,947,568	1,749,482	11.33
NET BEFORE OTHER ITEMS	159,370	280,733	-43.23
<u>OTHER ITEMS</u>			
Amortization, gain/loss on marketable securities	134,411	(47,561)	382.61
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	293,781	233,172	25.99

CBA Alberta

Leadership

Board of Directors

Robert D.L. Bassett President	Yoko Azumaya Director
Christopher Samuel Vice-President	R. Travis Bissett Director
Sarah Vincella Coderre Treasurer	Sania Chaudhry Director
Kathy M. Briere Secretary	Jonathan Griffith Director
Kyle Kawanami, K.C. Past President	Sifa Serushago Director
	Michael Thorne Director
	Sierra Yanush Director
	Nerissa Young Director

Branch Staff

Maureen Armitage Executive Director	Sandra Meyer Manager, Professional Development & Sections
Marija Barcan South Section Registrar	Mina Okumura Digital Marketing Coordinator
Krista Dejager North Section Registrar	Chani Samresh Executive Assistant
Lee-Anne Hateley Manager, Member Services & Communications	Sandra Schrempp Member Services Coordinator
Tara Iles Bookkeeper	Chi Tran Section Administrator

Committee Chairs

Access to Justice	Tiana M. Knight Teri Lynn Bougie
Agenda for Justice & Advocacy	Amanda M. Lindberg, K.C.
Editorial	Jillian Gamez Mosi Taylor-Cole
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	Shetal Jas Daniela Perez-Taylor
Inns of Court	Peter Banks Sasha Joshi Carly Toronchuk Wendy A. Young
Voice of the Profession	Sania Chaudhry Adam J.C. Norget
Leader Development	Sarah Vincella Coderre Christopher Samuel
Legislation & Law Reform	Omolara Oladipo Bernard Joseph Roth, K.C.

Section Chairs

Section Coordinators (North)	Stephanie Chau Kent West
Section Coordinators (South)	Michelle Lee Cass Lintott
Aboriginal Law (North)	Janet Lynn Hutchison
Aboriginal Law (South)	Kaitlin Long
Administrative Law (North)	Vivienne M. Ball Emma Banfield
Administrative Law (South)	Laurie Baptiste
Alternative Dispute Resolution (North)	Paulette DeKelver
Alternative Dispute Resolution (South)	Stacey Haskins Filippo Angelo Titi
Articling Students	Ahmed Selim
Business Law (North)	Jeffrey Arsenault Ryan McKenna
Business Law (South)	Elsy Gagne Lindsay E. Amantea
CCCA (North)	Jason White
CCCA (South)	Devadeep Jagdev
Charities Law	C. Yvonne Chenier K.C. Cam Schwartz
Child & Youth Law (North)	Elizabeth L. Turner Elizabeth Kinhnicki
Child & Youth Law (South)	Suchetna Channan, K.C. Meghan M. Hanson
Civil Litigation (North)	Stephanie Chau Anna Turcza-Karhut
Civil Litigation (South)	Kelly Moffet-Burima
Commercial Property & Leasing (North)	Roshan Kalra
Constitutional & Human Rights (North)	Andrew Foster
Construction Law (North)	Allan Noel Delgado Peter Clark
Construction Law (South)	Peter Vetsch
Creditor & Debtor Law (North)	Stephanie Wanke
Criminal Justice (North)	Gabriel Sandstrom Stephanie Brown
Criminal Justice (South)	Janice K. Walsh Andrea Lillian Serink

Elder Law (North)	Anna Choles	Real Property Law – Residential (South)	Dionne Levesque Daniel MacAulay
Elder Law (South)	Donna Lynn Gee		
Environmental, Energy & Resources (North)	Fiona N. Vance Jacob Marchel	Securities Law (South)	Andrew P. Wilson, K.C.
Environmental Law (South)	Brenda Heelan Powell	Sexual & Gender Diversity Alliance	Dustin W. Klaudt Will Randall
Family Law (North)	Megan Tupper	Small, Solo & General Practice (North)	<i>Vacant</i>
Family Law (South)	Crystal Marie Thompson Stacey Haskins	Solo, Small & General Practice (South)	Jonathan Ablett
Foreclosure Law (South)	Cassidy J. Lintott Rafael Enrico Badiola	Taxation Law (North)	<i>Vacant</i>
Health Law (North)	Ashley A.V. Reid Vita Wensel	Taxation Law (South)	Daniel Downie
Health Law (South)	Laura Comfort	Technology & Intellectual Property (South)	Brendan Joel Sawatsky F. Julian Dobre
Immigration Law (North)	Robert J. Normey Anna Kuranicheva	Wills, Estates & Trusts (North)	T. Colleen Feehan
Immigration Law (South)	Karen Howley	Wills & Trusts (South)	Lindsey Louro, TEP Katharine Zhang
Insolvency Law (South)	Ryan E. Algar	Women Lawyers' Forum (North)	Sarah Dargatz Shauna Gibbons
Insurance Law (North)	Colten Harrish	Young Lawyers (North)	Megan Harris Kirsty Vogelesang
Insurance Law (South)	Kass Freeman Raphael Jacob	Young Lawyers (South)	Shiny Chhina Bronwhyn Simmons
Labour & Employment Law (North)	Iain Walker Chaylene Gallagher		
Labour & Employment Law (South)	Todd M. Lee		
Law Firm Management & Leadership (South)	Loretta Bouwmeester		
Law Students (University of Alberta)	Madalyn Mandziuk		
Law Students (University of Calgary)	Sergio Plazas Claire McCarvill		
Legal Research & Knowledge Management (South)	Sarah K. Lulman Ronke Omorodion		
Municipal Law (North)	Kevin Haldane Paul Michael Barrette		
Municipal Law (South)	Jennifer Sykes		
Natural Resources (South)	Keely Cameron		
Personal Injury Law (South)	Michael G. Massicotte		
Privacy & Access Law (North)	Lorne Randa Steve Hughes		
Privacy & Access Law (South)	Natasha Lakhani Adam LaRoche		
Real Property Law (North)	<i>Vacant</i>		
Real Property Law – Commercial (South)	Shetal Jas		



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