

The Law Society of British Columbia
2021 Bencher By-Election in the District of Kamloops (District No. 9)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

1. Election date

The Honourable Judge Michelle Stanford's appointment as a Judge of the Provincial Court of British Columbia has created a vacancy for the position of Bencher in the District of Kamloops (District No. 9). Accordingly, pursuant to Rule 1-38(1), a by-election will be held to fill the vacancy. The term of the Bencher elected will begin immediately upon election and will end on December 31, 2021.

Nominations of candidates for election must be received by the Law Society by **5:00pm on Monday, May 17, 2021**. Please send nomination forms by email to BencherRelations@lsbc.org. Voting will take place from **Tuesday, June 1 to 5:00pm on Tuesday, June 15**, and votes will be counted on **Wednesday, June 16, 2021**.

The by-election will be conducted in accordance with the [Legal Profession Act](#), [Law Society Rules 1-20 to 1-44](#) and the [Code of Professional Conduct](#). There is an expectation that candidates will conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner.

Benchers encourage diversity in candidates seeking office

The Benchers believe that the Law Society's mandate to protect the public interest in the administration of justice is best served by leadership from diverse backgrounds and experience. Diversity that brings the skill and richness of talent reflected in the peoples of British Columbia strengthens our legal community and the community at large. All lawyers who meet the qualifications for Bencher and want to contribute to the governance of the profession are encouraged to stand for election. We particularly encourage Indigenous lawyers, racialized lawyers, LGBTQ2+ lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, young lawyers, and those practising predominantly in solicitors' fields to stand for election, as these groups continue to be underrepresented among elected Benchers. Although the Law Society has achieved, and been enriched by, gender parity among its elected Benchers, it continues to encourage women to stand for election as part of its commitment to achieve leadership that is reflective of the talents and strengths of all British Columbians.

2. Candidate eligibility

Law Society Rules 1-22 and 1-23 outline the qualifications required of a candidate for election as a Bencher and the nomination process.

Members of the Law Society are eligible to be a candidate for election as Bencher provided the following applies:

- in good standing at the time of nomination,
- if a practising lawyer, maintain their chief place of practice or employment in District No. 9 (District of Kamloops), and
- if a retired or non-practicing member, reside in District No. 9 (District of Kamloops).

3. Nominations

Nominations must meet the following requirements:

- nominations must be in writing, signed by at least two members of the Law Society in good standing who are eligible to vote in District No. 9 (District of Kamloops),
- the nominee must consent in writing to the nomination, and
- the nomination and consent must be received by the Executive Director on or before **5:00pm on Monday, May 17, 2021.**

Please send nomination forms by email to BencherRelations@lsbc.org.

4. Roles and duties of the Benchers

The Benchers are the Law Society's volunteer board of governors. They govern and administer the affairs of the Law Society in accordance with the *Legal Profession Act*, set and enforce standards of professional responsibility for lawyers, and preside at discipline and credentials hearings.

Benchers can expect their duties to consume approximately seven or eight hours per week, four or five full days a month, or 200 hours per year. This is made up of preparation for and attendance at Bencher meetings, committee, task force or working group meetings, and sitting on hearing panels.

There are usually eight or nine Bencher meetings each year. Meetings take place in Vancouver, with the exception of one meeting each year, which is held in conjunction with a weekend retreat at a different location in the province. Bencher meetings are held on Fridays and generally run from 9:00 am to around midday. In light of the current provincial health directives, it is anticipated that Bencher meetings will take place virtually via Zoom until restrictions on gatherings and events have been lifted.

In addition to Bencher meetings, all Benchers generally serve on at least two Bencher committees, task forces or working groups. Most committees and task forces meet monthly for 1.5 to 2 hours (generally the day before the Bencher meeting).

For more information on the role of the Benchers, see the [Bencher Election page on the Law Society website](#). Videos of Benchers discussing their role as a Bencher and what to expect are available on this webpage.

At the first Bencher meeting after being elected as a Bencher, the Bencher must take an oath of office in the required form set out in [Rule 1-3](#).

5. Candidates' biographies and election statements on Law Society website

Candidates' biographical summaries and election statements will be available on the Bencher election page of the Law Society website after the close of nominations on May 17, 2021.

6. Voting

The Law Society will use a third party company, Simply Voting, to provide online voting for the by-election. An email communication will be sent to all eligible voters on June 1, 2021 which will include voting instructions, a randomly generated password, and a link to the voting site.

7. Important dates

Event	Time/Date
Nominations for candidacy in the 2021 Bencher by-election close	5:00pm on Monday, May 17, 2021
Voting instructions are provided to eligible voters and online voting begins	Tuesday, June 1, 2021
Online voting closes	5:00pm on Tuesday, June 15, 2021
Votes are counted and results are announced	Wednesday, June 16, 2021

8. Further information

If you have questions about the election process, please contact Avalon Bourne, Manager of Governance & Board Relations, at 604.443.5706 (toll-free 1.800.903.5300) or ABourne@lsbc.org.

April 12, 2021