

Invitation to Participate: Focus Group on Demographic Data Collection

The Law Society is inviting legal professionals and law students to participate in focus groups to help us improve how we collect demographic data. Your input will shape more relevant, inclusive, and accurate questions, enabling us to better understand and address systemic inequality in the profession. Learn more below.

Study Purpose

In 2024, Law Society Benchers approved a new approach to demographic data collection. This approach involves gathering attributable (non-anonymous) data through updated demographic questions, which will enable us to conduct more advanced statistical analyses. These analyses will help explore systemic inequalities within the legal profession, examine the intersectional impacts of social hierarchies, and ultimately guide our policy decisions. As a first step, the Law Society of British Columbia is inviting you to participate in a focus group. Specifically, we are looking for your input on:

- improving the demographic questions under consideration to enhance their relevance, inclusivity, and accuracy;
- understanding perceptions and concerns about collecting and using demographic data to promote trust, transparency, and survey participation; and
- exploring the experiences of lawyers from diverse backgrounds and the barriers they may face.

Your insights will be invaluable in finalizing the demographic survey and shaping effective strategies for deployment, ultimately helping to better understanding of systemic inequalities.

What is Involved

As part of this focus group, you will join a small group of 6-8 members of the legal profession from across the province and have the option to participate in person or online, with in-person sessions held in downtown Vancouver. The session will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours and will be audio-recorded for accuracy. These recordings will be transcribed and analyzed to help inform our new approach to demographic data collection.

The focus groups will be held at the following dates and times:

- Wednesday May 21, 2025 – in person, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- Wednesday June 4, 2025 – online, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- Thursday June 12, 2025 – online, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
- Thursday June 26, 2025 – in person, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

When you complete the selection questionnaire [see section on How to Participate below], you will be provided with the opportunity to indicate what dates and times work best for you.

This focus group will be activity-based, meaning that instead of a traditional discussion format where participants share thoughts in a free-flowing conversation, you will engage in structured exercises designed to gather your feedback. Specifically, we will present different versions of the demographic questions under consideration and ask for your feedback and preferences. We'll also seek your input on ways to improve trust when collecting and working with attributable demographic data. This will be an open and informal discussion, where you can freely share your perspective. There are no right or wrong answers — we genuinely want your honest thoughts. While we ask that you respect others by allowing them to speak without interruption, we encourage you to express your views, even if they differ from those of other participants. We value diverse perspectives and are not seeking consensus. As the discussion may touch on sensitive topics, including systemic inequalities, we ask all participants to engage respectfully and acknowledge the realities of these issues both in society and the legal profession.

As a participant, please respect the privacy of other focus group members by keeping the content discussed during the session confidential. While we cannot guarantee complete anonymity in a group discussion, we expect all participants to maintain confidentiality outside of the group. This will help create a safe space for honest and open conversation. After the session, you will have seven days to contact the facilitator if you wish to revise or omit anything you said.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without providing a reason and without any consequences.

Risks and Benefits

Some topics, such as barriers faced by lawyers from diverse backgrounds, may evoke unpleasant memories or emotions. If this occurs, we encourage you to take advantage of the mental health resources available to licensees and articling students through the [Lawyer Well-Being Hub](#), such as Telus Health One, the Lawyer Assistance Program, and our Equity Advisor. Also please know, during the discussion, you are not required to share personal experiences unless you choose to do so; general observations or experiences you've heard about are also welcome.

As a token of appreciation, participants will receive a professional development incentive upon completing the session.

Confidentiality, Data Security, and Dissemination of Results

All audio files, transcriptions and recruitment survey responses will be stored on password-protected computers and servers, accessible only to designated staff for research purposes. No names or identifying details will be transcribed or linked to the collected data. In transcripts, participant codes will be assigned to anonymize responses. After transcription, audio recordings

will be securely destroyed. The consent form will be kept separately and never linked to the study data.

Following analysis, the findings will be used to refine the demographic questions the Law Society uses annually to collect this information and may also be included in future initiatives requiring such data. When sharing the data to fulfill our obligation to inform the public and the legal community, all quotes will be anonymized and deidentified, and only aggregate findings will be shared, ensuring both confidentiality and transparency.

How to Participate

If you are interested in participating, please fill out the [selection questionnaire](#). If you prefer to share this information over a call, please let us know, and we can arrange a time to reach you. The selection questionnaire is designed to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives is represented. While completing the screening protocol does not guarantee selection for participation in the focus groups, everyone's input is valuable. Feedback from the focus groups will help shape the draft questionnaire that will be posted on the Law Society website for feedback from anyone who wants to provide it. This will give all members of the legal profession as well as the public an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft questionnaire.

Privacy Notice

This data collection is authorized in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 165, s. 26 (c).

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Rashmi Nair at rnair@lsbc.org or 604.605.5377, or Claire Marchant at cmarchant@lsbc.org or 604.697.5811.

Thank you for your time and consideration!