

MISSION STATEMENT

The Law Society serves the public interest by regulating the competence and integrity of legal service providers, promoting the rule of law and lawyer independence, and improving access to justice.

VISION

To be a leading regulator that promotes a culture of innovation and inclusivity when responding to challenges and opportunities in the delivery and regulation of legal services.

VALUES

Integrity

We act honestly and ethically.

Transparent

We are open in our processes and communications, and report publicly on our decisions.

Inclusive

We embrace and promote equity, diversity, inclusion and cultural respect within our leadership and staff, as well as in the legal profession, the justice sector and the public.

Objective

We seek data-driven solutions, apply evidence-based decision-making and measure our results.

Innovative

We are adaptive in our approach to regulation with the goal of achieving efficient, fair and appropriate outcomes.

Responsive

We are aware of the changing needs of the public and the profession and respond to such changes in a timely manner.

Fair

We treat the public and the legal profession with respect and are consistent in the application of our policies, procedures and practices.

Strategic Objectives

LEADING AS AN INNOVATIVE REGULATOR OF LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

GOAL:

Continuously improve the regulation and education of lawyers, the legal profession and legal services in the public interest.

Policy, Rules and Governance

- Continuously improve regulatory structures to keep up-to-date with evolving money laundering risks, guided by regulatory best practices and constitutional imperatives
- Revise regulatory processes to support and promote mental and physical health
- Clarify and strengthen governance to support our mandate
- Revise the rules to permit innovations in alternate business structures and reduce the complexity of current multidisciplinary partnership rules
- Ensure policy development is data-based, evidence-driven and informed by the views of the public and the profession
- Introduce alternative pathways for entry into the legal profession
- Create new training on managing the business of practising law
- Develop resources to improve support for in-house counsel and government lawyers

WORKING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

GOAL:

Implement initiatives to take meaningful action toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the justice system.

Reconciliation within the Justice System

- Support increased representation and retention of Indigenous lawyers in senior positions throughout the justice system
- Address the unique needs of Indigenous people within our regulatory processes
- Update our Rules and Code to reflect Indigenous law and experiences
- Support the advancement of the principles set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy, and support the continued implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Introduce cultural competency training to foster understanding of Indigenous perspectives
- Work with K-12 education providers, including the First Nations Schools Association, the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the Métis, to increase awareness of careers in law and the wider justice system within Indigenous communities

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

GOAL:

Increase availability of affordable legal services and access to the courts, administrative tribunals, other dispute resolution providers and our regulatory processes.

Access and Innovation

- Reduce regulatory barriers to improve delivery of legal services
- Develop and implement an innovation sandbox for provision of a wider range of legal services and providers, including licensed paralegals
- Increase the availability of legal services to people in the communities where they live
- Enhance engagement with governments, courts and other stakeholders to identify areas of improvement in the delivery of legal services
- Advocate for greater access to non-adversarial dispute resolution in family law matters
- Advocate for funding to address gaps in the delivery of legal services
- Maintain and enhance measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that have improved access to legal services and the justice system

PROMOTING A PROFESSION THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF THE PUBLIC IT SERVES

GOAL:

Greater diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and equitable treatment of every individual who interacts with the Law Society.

Policy Development

- Implement and communicate equity, diversity and inclusion work plan
- Ensure current and future regulation and policy development adhere to equity, diversity and inclusion principles
- Develop and deliver cultural competency training, as well as training addressing implicit and explicit biases in the profession
- Revise the language of forms and publications to ensure they conform to current principles of inclusion
- Update the demographic data of BC legal professionals to inform policy initiatives
- Partner with community organizations to educate youth from diverse and equity-seeking groups about the role of lawyers and to encourage entry into the legal profession
- Collaborate with organizations to increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse lawyers

INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN THE LAW SOCIETY, THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW

GOAL:

Greater public confidence in the ability of the Law Society to regulate in the public interest and greater public awareness of the importance of the rule of law and lawyer independence

Law Society Processes

- Increase timeliness of Law Society processes, decisions and communications
- Obtain legislative changes to increase fines and recover investigation costs
- Clarify authority to obtain an order of restitution where misconduct has resulted in a loss to a party
- Increase use of victim impact statements in disciplinary processes
- Enhance the independence of the Law Society Tribunal through further administrative separation from the Law Society
- Update disclosure and privacy policies relating to Law Society processes
- Increase the Law Society's engagement with the profession and the public about initiatives, regulatory developments and other relevant information, including the basis for decisions affecting regulation
- Engage the Ministry of Education to incorporate more information about rights and obligations, the rule of law and the role of lawyers and judges into school curricula
- Improve communication and outreach explaining the role of the Law Society in the justice system, the importance of the rule of law in a civil society and the role of an independent, self-governing legal profession in preserving the rule of law