

# Disclosure | AAPP Newsletter



## President's Message | Heidi Semkowich

It has been a busy few months since our last publication!

### 2023 Conference and Awards Gala

Our first Legal Support Professionals' Conference was held on June 8-9, 2023 at the Red Deer Resort and Casino. I am so thrilled to report that this event was a resounding success! Attendance numbers far surpassed our expectations, and we are really excited to make this an annual event.

We welcomed attendees from as far north as Grande Prairie and as far south as Lethbridge, and numerous places in between. It was absolutely incredible to see everyone in person and celebrate our amazing profession. Seeing old friends, and making new friends was fantastic. I would like to thank all of our event sponsors, breakout session presenters and event volunteers that dedicated their time and energy to help make this a truly memorable event. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to everyone who attended. I cannot wait to see you all again at our next event.

The 3rd annual Professional Excellence Awards took place on June 9, following the conference. Having the opportunity to dress up and network with everyone who attended was a lot of fun.

Throughout the evening, we celebrated fifteen of our amazing colleagues, in several different award categories. Congratulations to all of the award winners! We are thrilled to honour your achievements.

Work has already begun on the 2024 conference and awards gala, so please stay tuned for more information.

### 2023 Salary Survey

The AAPP strives to provide our members and other industry interest-holders with up-to-date salary information for legal support professionals.

Our 2023 salary survey is currently open and we would love to hear from you! The response has been astronomical so far, so please keep passing the survey link onto your industry friends and colleagues. The more responses we have, the greater cross-section we can provide to you. If you haven't already completed the salary survey, please go to: <https://s.surveyplanet.com/1yh81afs>

The survey will remain open until July 15, and we anticipate having the report posted on our website in early August.

### Webinar Series

As you are aware, we have several committees working diligently on producing webinar series in several different areas of law. We anticipate that the first series will roll out in the Fall, so please stay tuned for details on this. These webinar series are being developed by legal support professionals, for legal support professionals. Each series will have multiple topics, and will span several weeks. Please watch your email for event announcements.

### Networking Events

We would like to plan networking events in a city near you! If you have ideas or suggestions for a venue in your city, please reach out to me. We will also be looking for a 1-2 people in each city to assist with planning and hosting duties. Directors from the Board will try to be at each event, schedules permitting.

### AGM

The 2023 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for October 18 from noon to 1:15p.m. via zoom. Please save the date so you can join us to hear about everything that has been going on over the course of the year.

There will be two vacant seats on the Board, so if you are interested in becoming a Director, please ensure you put your name forward!

I think that is everything I have to report on. We will likely have some updates on regulation in the coming months, now that the new cabinet has been sworn in. In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments about the topics discussed here, please feel free to reach out to me directly at: [president@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:president@alberta-paralegal.com)

I hope you all have a fun-filled, relaxing summer! I look forward to seeing you and chatting with you soon!

-Heidi

**ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF  
PROFESSIONAL PARALEGALS  
YOUR ELECTED 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Disclosure is published by the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals ("AAPP"). PO Box 21126, Lloydminster, AB T9V 2S1

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Disclosure is published four times a year. Articles up to 1,500 words will be considered, but are not guaranteed for publication. Articles may be edited for formatting, legal and/or other purposes.

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## COMMITTEE FORMATIONS—WEBINARS SERIES

A very special thank you to all of the volunteers that came forward when the call out was made – we were overwhelmed and thrilled at the numbers!

The AAPP Board is committed to continuing to provide high quality continuing education and professional development opportunities to our members. The expansion and growth of our membership has necessitated the creation of additional educational sub-committees to design and develop multi-part webinar series in: civil litigation, family law, real estate and wills & estates.

We would like to introduce you to these hard-working sub-committees.

### Civil Litigation

Heidi Semkowich (Committee Chair)  
Veronica McGuire  
John McDonald  
Shannan Hill  
Crystal Li  
Ruby Yao  
Adam Anderson

### Family Law

Ryan McDougall (Committee Chair)  
Bailey Curtis  
Andrea Galicia

### Real Estate

Katherine Quantz (Committee Chair)  
Andrea Galicia  
Claudia Li  
Ruby Yao

### Wills & Estates

Michaela Russell (Committee Chair)  
Darlene Kiss  
Andrea Galicia

We look forward to rolling out these webinar series in the Fall of 2023. Please watch your email and our social media channels for information about these amazing learning opportunities!

We wish to thank all of our members for your continued support. If you have any suggestions for a webinar series, please reach out to Katherine Quantz at: [education@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:education@alberta-paralegal.com)

## Lets Connect



[Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals](#)



[aapp.aralegal.assn](https://aapp.aralegal.assn)



[Alberta APParalegals](#)

## Upcoming Webinars

Katherine Quantz



We are taking a break for the Summer but will be back in the Fall with more webinars, so please watch for more announcements on this.

Be sure to check the [events page](#) on the AAPP website frequently - this is where you can find all the information on upcoming webinars and the links to register.

As always, we welcome your questions, feedback, suggestions, comments, and ideas with respect to the webinar series and our professional development programming. Please feel free to contact us by reaching out directly to Katherine Quantz, Director of Education and Professional Development via e-mail: [education@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:education@alberta-paralegal.com).

## Upcoming 2023 Salary Survey Results

We are still collecting responses for our 2023 salary survey. The results of the survey will be posted to our website in August. Please stay tuned!



## Membership Information and Updates

Thanks to every one of our members, we have increased our membership and are almost 300 strong - the excitement and momentum is catching on!

The AAPP is finally getting noticed by stakeholders across Alberta, some of which have been in the industry as long as the AAPP has been, and are only now becoming aware of our existence. We are excited to announce our partnership with the Legal Education Society of Alberta. Members of the AAPP are now eligible to receive a 10% discount on LESA courses, up to full day offerings (multi-day programs are not included). Please contact Heidi at: [president@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:president@alberta-paralegal.com) for the discount code.

We are also happy to announce that members can now receive discounted phones and plans through Bell Mobility. Please watch your email in July for the summer promotions being offered.

As mentioned above, our membership numbers are growing, but we want to see this number explode! Please chat with your firms/employers about the AAPP bundle pricing for organizations that have more than two members with the AAPP. The more members, the bigger the discount! The bigger our numbers, the louder our voice. The louder our voice, the more difficult it is to not hear us when we talk about regulation of our profession. Please keep up the amazing work promoting the AAPP!

Thanks to all who have joined and continue to participate in the development and promotion the Association. **Visit our site for more information:** <https://www.alberta-paralegal.com/join-us>

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Discounted insurance through Johnson Insurance

Highlander Wine Club

Perkopolis Membership

Discounts at Sherwin Williams

Private Shopping events at Ricki's

Continuing Education/Professional Development - monthly webinars on soft skills and technical topics

Mentorship Program

ARP designation (for paralegal members)

Performance Excellence Awards

Job Postings

Salary survey

Member Newsletter

Networking Events

Discount on courses offered by the ADR Institute of Alberta

Discount on courses (up to 1 day) offered by LESA

Discounted phones and plans through Bell Mobility

And more to come as we grow!

## 2023 Legal Support Professionals' Conference & Awards Gala

What an event! All I can say is wow!

The AAPP hosted its first legal support professionals' conference on June 8-9, 2023 in Red Deer, and we are over the moon about the success of this event. Thank you so much to everyone who attended the event. It was wonderful to see you all in person!

When the Board of Directors began discussing the possibility of hosting a conference, we had mixed feelings and thoughts about it. This type of event has not existed for many years so we weren't certain how well it would be received. The idea was conceived as a much smaller event (one day only) with fewer breakout sessions, but as the planning progressed we realized we would need more time to do all the things we wanted to do. As the idea grew, so did our questions. Would people attend? Would we be able to find quality presenters? Can we actually do this? It is with great pride that I can report the answers to all of those questions is YES! We initially planned for 50 attendees and that goal was far exceeded with 70 attendees! The awards gala boasted just shy of 80 attendees.

From the start of the networking event on June 8, to the end of the awards gala on June 9, we saw friendships blossom, existing connections strengthen, and a community form. Hearing your feedback and seeing you all enjoy this time is worth so, so much to all of us on the Board.

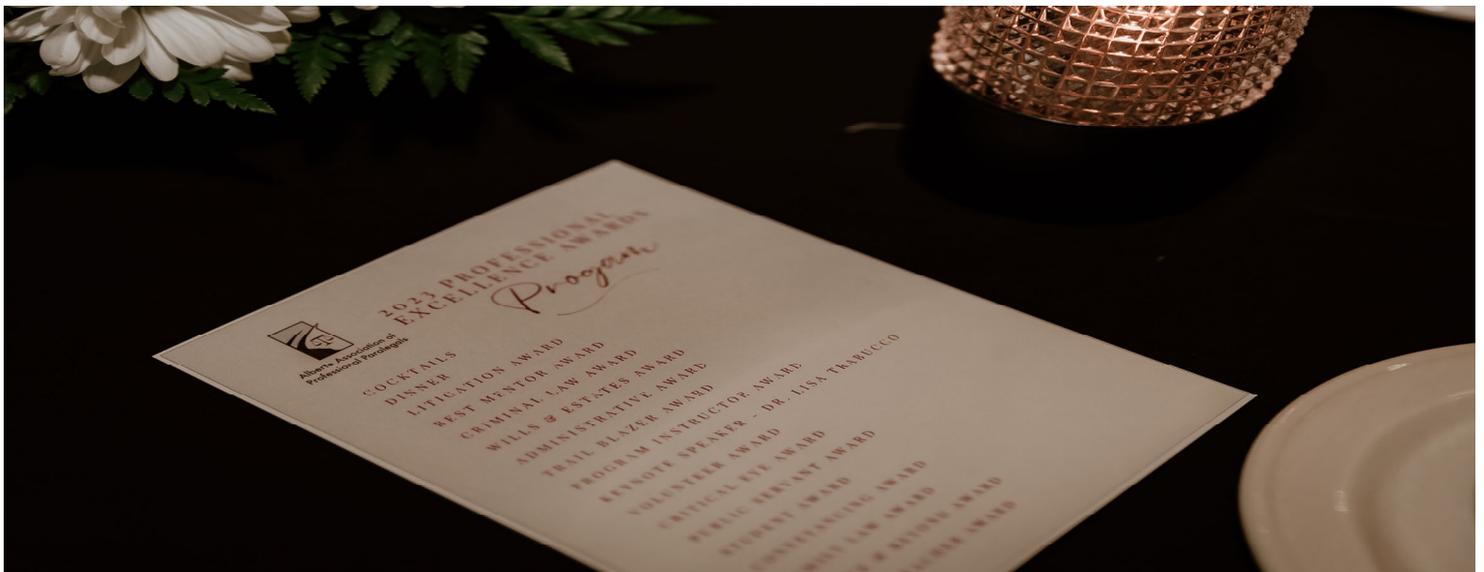
As with every new event, we had some growing pains this year, but rest assured, we have been receiving all of your feedback with open minds and we are excited to bring you an even better event in 2024! The planning is already in its infancy stages as we want to ensure that this conference becomes a well sought after, popular event. Watch your email for details on next year's event. Then spread the word. We cannot wait to see you all again at the 2024 conference!



## 2023 Professional Excellence Awards—Winners

Congratulations to all of the winners from this year's conference:

**Litigation Award:** Karie Bell  
**Best Mentor Award:** Anastasia Lussier  
**Criminal Law Award:** Katrina Rindahl  
**Wills & Estates Award:** Terrill Bish  
**Administrative Award:** Jessica Kyca  
**Trail Blazer Award:** Angie Calliou  
**Program Instructor Award:** Angie Keibel  
**Volunteer Award:** Nikki Ebbers  
**Critical Eye Award:** Christina Babcock  
**Public Servant Award:** Mariya Mahalyas  
**Student Award:** Erin Bast  
**Conveyancing Award:** Charlene Fehr  
**Family Law Award:** Bailey Curtis  
**Above & Beyond Award:** Ashley Stasiewich  
**Best Teacher Award:** Terrill Bish



# 2023 Professional Excellence Awards



# 2023 Conference—Highlights

**A huge thank you to the Red Deer Resort & Casino for hosting!**



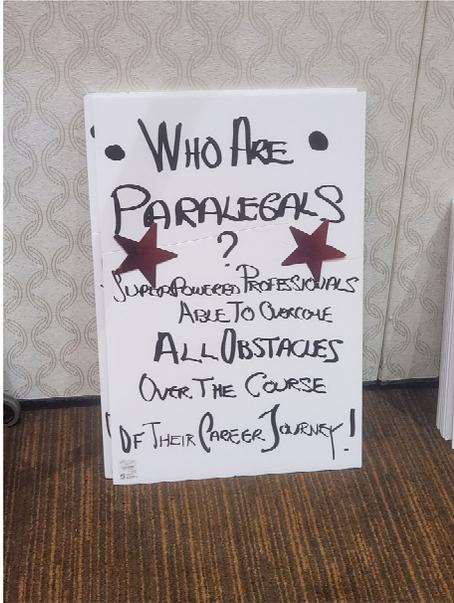
Thank you to our sponsors for contributing items for our swag bags!!

Look at all of the attendees!!!

## Breakout Sessions



Group Session—Powerful Play—Identifying our SUPER POWERS!!



Did we mention the FOOD!?!



Networking—build your own poutine



Coffee stations—fuel for legal support professionals



Snacks after breakout sessions were a must!!



Dinner and Dessert—perfect for an Awards Gala

## 2023 Conference - Smudging Ceremony



Smudging is a cultural ceremony practiced by a wide variety of Indigenous people in Canada and other parts of the world. Smudging is the practice of burning various medicinal plants to cleanse and connect with one's spirit and with the Creator. It may also be used to cleanse, purify, and bless the part of our mother earth.

Indigenous Elders teach that all smudging ceremonies must be entered into or begun with good intent. During the ceremony, the smoke rises, and prayers rise to the Spirit world of their grandfathers, grandmothers, and the Creator.

The smudging ceremony helps participants centre or ground themselves. Negative energy, feelings, and emotions are lifted away and used for healing of mind, body, and spirit, as well as balancing energies. Smudging also unifies the energies and the people within the circle.

The AAPP would like to express a special thank you to Kenyn McDougall for attending the conference on June 9, to teach us about smudging and the meaning behind the tradition.

# 2023 Conference & Awards Gala Sponsors

Another huge thank you to our amazing sponsors!

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## Platinum Sponsor



## Silver Sponsors



## Bronze Sponsors



## Paralegal's Role in Questioning Preparation | Michael A. Kirk

Paralegals play an important role in civil litigation files. The “discovery” component as set out in Part 5 of the Alberta *Rules of Court* is one of the most important phases in civil litigation. There are two important steps in that phase, and they are “record” discovery by way of an affidavit of records (*Rules* 5.5 to 5.16), and oral discovery (*Rules* 5.17 to 5.33) through questioning (previously called examinations for discovery). For the purpose of this article, I will only deal with the preparation phase for questioning.

Paralegals play an important role in Questioning preparation, but that preparation starts from the file opening. A paralegal will assist in writing to the client to set out the obligations to produce records and the scope of the production of the documents. Once the documents are received, they must be sorted for relevance, privilege and then listed in the affidavit of records (“AOR”). This step is essential and necessary for a successful and thorough Questioning Preparation.

A useful tool that a Paralegal can assist with for Questioning prep is to provide the client or witness at questioning (where the witness is the corporate representative, or employee/ex-employee of a corporate party) is a briefing package for the witness. The essential elements in the briefing package would include the pleadings, the documents produced by all parties and any statements that may have been provided by the witness. Creating a good template for a briefing package is invaluable.

It is also important that the Paralegal have as good of an understanding of the case as the instructing lawyer. Why? Knowing the “ins and outs” of the case is equally as invaluable both during the preparation phase and at Questioning. Working with instructing counsel as part of a team will assist the client during briefing and increase the efficiencies at Questioning. A good example of these efficiencies is being able to identify key documents during the briefing that need to be reviewed by the witness for the preparation process and helps them focus on the issues.

Paralegals are often a second point of contact for the client (or maybe even the main point), and having a Paralegal participate in the preparation and briefing may help put the client at ease as many clients have not participated in a similar process. The briefing can be just as intimidating and overwhelming for the client.

If there is an opportunity and depending on the specific case, the Paralegal can assist at Questioning in terms of assisting with documents or even transcripts if it is a continuation or Questioning on undertakings. In one Questioning, the Para-

legal who was working with me was able to quickly search the prior transcript to confirm whether opposing Counsel had asked specific questions previously (which he had) and this enabled a “real-time” opportunity to formulate objections from Questioning that had happened many months prior.

The importance of a Paralegal's role in civil litigation matters cannot be understated, and one area is Questioning Preparation. A good lawyer will engage a Paralegal throughout that process and utilize the Paralegal's skill and expertise to advance the client's case or defence. With the cost of civil litigation being enormously expensive, clients are appreciative and expect that Paralegals will play an important and cost-effective role in all steps including Questioning Preparation.

\*\* Michael Kirk is a litigation partner with the national firm of Miller Thomson LLP in the Edmonton, Alberta office



# Red Deer Polytechnic

## PARALEGAL POST-DIPLOMA PROGRAM

**INTAKE:**

September 2023 & January 2024

**PROGRAM LENGTH:**

Under Review

**DELIVERY METHOD:**

Online

The Paralegal Post-Diploma Certificate program is a part-time program for those who are already working in the legal field as Legal Assistants. This is the only paralegal program endorsed by the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals. This one-year certificate includes eight theory-based courses and one consolidated practicum course. This program will prepare graduates to focus on contract law, professional ethics, legal research, legal drafting, torts, rules of evidence and legal interviewing. The Paralegal Post-Diploma Certificate will allow graduates to take on more responsibility within the legal field under the supervision of a lawyer.

**PRE-REQUISITES:**

- High School diploma with English 20-1 or 20-2 with a grade of at least 60%
- Graduate of an approved legal assistant program
- Minimum of 3 years experience working as a legal assistant
- Candidates, where English is a Second Language (ESL), must meet the English Language Proficiency requirement in addition to the Academic English requirement. Equivalencies are as follows:
  - \* Required Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) of a minimum of 7 in each of the 4 language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and not an average of 7; or
  - \* By completing high school in Canada. Studies must have been in English at an approved Canadian high school (grades 9, 10, 11, 12) with at least three consecutive years of full-time academic study; or
  - \* By completing a recognized post-secondary degree or diploma program in Canada.

The program must have involved at least two full years of full-time, consecutive academic study in English.

Follow the link for more information: <https://rdpolytech.ca/programs/extended-education/programs-and-courses/paralegal-post-diploma-certificate>.

**A program for paralegals taught by fellow paralegals and lawyers**