

# Disclosure | AAPP Newsletter

## President's Message | Heidi Semkowich

I cannot believe that we are already at the end of another year. It really feels like yesterday was just the start of 2023, and I blinked and we are on the cusp of celebrating another holiday season!

2023 has been an absolutely huge year for the AAPP. Membership is over 335 members and still growing. I thought that 2022 was a busy year, but this year has paled it in comparison. Looking back and reflecting on each year that I have been President, I cannot help but beam with pride over the amazing association the AAPP has become, and continues to develop into.

2023 saw the AAPP host its first in-person conference. When the Board set out planning, we had no idea what to expect, but we were overjoyed to see our registration target exceeded. Planning for the 2024 Conference and Awards Gala is underway and I am thrilled to announce that the event will be held October 1-3, 2024 at the Fantasyland Hotel and Conference Centre in Edmonton. Please stay tuned for more details as we expect to start making further announcements in the new year.

Our monthly webinars continued throughout this year and we were also able to host our first half-day webinar in October. As with the conference, registration far exceeded our expectations, and we are looking forward to bringing you more professional development and continuing education opportunities in 2024.

Our AGM was held in October, and I was very excited to welcome two new Directors to the Board. I have said this many times before, but I need to say it again — the Board of Directors never cease to amaze me. Their dedication and tireless hard work is truly awe inspiring. I am so, so grateful to be sur-

rounded with such an amazing group of people. To each of the Directors on the Board—thank you, thank you, thank you! You are an incredible group and your endless dedication to the association and our members is truly appreciated.

I think this year is probably the largest group of volunteers I have seen working behind the scenes, ensuring that the countless projects are completed. From mentors to the webinar committee, to the events committee to the countless other committees, groups, etc., thank you so much for all your hard work.

Last but certainly not least, to the members—thank you for your continued support for the AAPP. The AAPP continues to grow and thrive because of each and every one of you!

### What's ahead?

You will notice some changes coming in the early part of 2024. Due to the growth of the association, and success of our events, the AAPP is now required to charge GST. 2024 renewals will have GST added on. Going forward, all webinars and events will also have GST added onto the invoice.

Speaking of renewals, the 2024 renewal notices will be sent out on January 1, 2024. You will have 60 days to renew your membership once the renewal notices go out. Please watch your email for your renewal notice and invoice.



The 2024 Mentorship Program will be kicking off early in the new year as well. If you are interested in being a mentor in this amazing program, please get in touch with Anastasia at: [mentorship@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:mentorship@alberta-paralegal.com)

It has been an incredible year! I am truly looking forward to seeing what excitement 2024 brings!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish you all a joyous and safe holiday season, and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024!

All the best to you this holiday season!

-Heidi Semkowich

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

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**Alberta Association of  
Professional Paralegals**

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The views expressed in articles published in Disclosure do not necessarily represent the views of the AAPP. For permission to re-print articles or advertising, please contact the Newsletter Chair.

## 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 Quants at: [education@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:education@alberta-paralegal.com)

## Lets Connect



[Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals](#)



[aapp.aralegal.assn](#)



[Alberta APParalegals](#)

## Upcoming Webinars

Katherine Quantz



We have exciting webinars planned for the New Year so stay tuned!

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).



## 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 for the upcoming holiday 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 of 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!



## PARALEGAL POST-DIPLOMA PROGRAM

**INTAKE:**

**September 2024**

**PROGRAM LENGTH:**

**2 Years**

**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**



# ROBERTSON

## Paralegal Diploma Program

8 MONTH PROGRAM / 4 WEEK PRACTICUM

BECOME A  
**PARALEGAL**



ROBERTSON



### Program Highlights

**100% online program delivery:** program is delivered completely online through their online learning platform, Brightspace — so you don't have to quit your day job while you study!

**Unparalleled career service support:** As a Robertson student or graduate, you gain free, lifetime access to employment services and job search assistance through our dedicated Workforce team.

**Practical experience:** Gain valuable real-world experience through a practicum and ensure you're job ready upon graduation.

### Launch Your Legal Career with Robertson College's NEW Paralegal Diploma Program

Robertson College is a private post-secondary institution in Canada providing relevant career training for in-demand fields since 1911. Their focus has been on preparing learners to enter into a new world of work. Their programs are flexible and intensive, with a strong focus on helping learners develop and hone skills that are valuable, transferable and in-demand. Robertson College offers over 35+ hybrid and online diploma programs in the business, health, technology and community service industries.

According to the latest employment projection data from Job Bank Canada, 18,900 new Paralegal positions are expected to be created between 2022 and 2031, leaving a huge demand for qualified Paralegals to fill those openings. To meet industry demand, Robertson is proud to be launching a Paralegal diploma in Alberta.

Robertson College's NEW Paralegal Diploma Program will prepare you for a dynamic career within the legal field through a strong foundation in the Canadian legal system and focused theoretical courses in specific areas of the law and legal procedures. Developed in collaboration with the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals (AAPP) and industry experts, the program will provide you with the most up to date knowledge, practical skills and real-world experience needed to excel in the legal field.

Throughout your studies, you will gain knowledge of Canadian law, with focus on specific areas including Commercial and Corporate Law, Criminal Law, Family Law, Property Law, and Contract Law. You will also explore areas relevant to the scope of paralegal practice including the Litigation Process, Legal Analysis and Legal Drafting.

### Admission Requirements

- You must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident residing in Alberta
- A minimum of one year of experience working in a legal assistant role and successful completion of a legal assistant diploma program as verified by transcript.
- Successful interview with a Robertson Student Admissions Advisor

Admission requirements for students applying as a Mature student:

- Student must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident residing in Alberta
- A minimum of two years experience working in a legal assistant role
- Must be 19 years of age and one year out of high school

At Robertson College, we help students find ***meaningful work***. To learn more about our Paralegal diploma program and apply today, please visit [www.robertsoncollege.com/programs/paralegal-professional](http://www.robertsoncollege.com/programs/paralegal-professional)

## 2023 Holiday Networking Event - Thursday, December 7, 2023

The AAPP hosted its first Holiday Networking event on December 7, 2023, that was held in Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer. Thank you so much to everyone who attended the event. It was wonderful to see you all in person and via Zoom as we logged into each location in each respective city to be connected with each other and say hello! A grand prize of one night's stay at the Fantasyland Hotel during the 2024 Conference & Awards Gala was also given away to one lucky winner in Calgary!

### Calgary:



### Edmonton:



# AAPP Membership Types Defined

There is a lot of discussions, and a bit of confusion, as to the different positions within the legal industry and what their roles may be. As it is getting close that time of year where AAPP memberships are coming up for renewal, we thought we would take this time to define the different levels of AAPP membership in hopes that we are able to shed some light and provide some clarification, especially when it comes to what AAPP membership you may qualify and apply for.

## WHAT IS A LEGAL ASSISTANT?

Put simply, a legal assistant is a legal professional who completes work—typically administrative —on behalf of a lawyer. A legal assistant's work is geared toward organizational and administrative tasks in support of the day-to-day operations of a law firm.

Part of the value of a legal assistant is that their exact role and responsibilities can vary depending on a law firm's specific needs. However, the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) categorizes legal assistants as individuals whose work output includes some administrative and secretarial tasks to assist a lawyer, with some tasks overlapping with that of a paralegal. These paralegal tasks may include legal research, if the individual has sufficient training and experience.

Legal assistants work closely with lawyers to take care of some of the time-consuming administrative work that reduces lawyer efficiency and productivity.

While the terms “legal assistant” and “paralegal” are often used interchangeably, the roles of today’s legal assistants and paralegals are different.

Legal assistants and paralegals are legal professionals that support the work of lawyers—they both add value to a law firm. But they are not the same.

## WHAT DO A LEGAL ASSISTANT DO?

Legal assistants support law firms by working with others on the team—from paralegals to lawyers—on behalf of lawyers. But what exactly does a legal assistant do?

Typical legal assistant tasks include:

- Managing client communications and customer service: From answering calls and emails to responding to a live chat to greeting clients, legal assistants can help make a law firm's communications more responsive. With legal assistants, firms can deliver a better client-centered experience.

- Calendar coordination: Legal assistants can schedule meetings and interviews and make appointments for lawyers and clients.
- Client billing and accounting: Legal assistants can help lawyers send out and process invoices, as well assist with resolving billing issues with clients.
- Document organization and management: This could include tasks like gathering documents that a lawyer needs for a case or filing and organizing documents.

Legal assistants typically have a certificate or degree in legal studies or a related field and may specialize in a particular area of law.

Legal assistants can work in law offices, legal departments of large organizations, courts, justice departments, real estate companies, insurance companies, mortgage brokerages, banks, municipal offices, and land title offices.

Legal assistant memberships can be found under Legal Support Professionals on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$100.00. Check with the firm you work with as they may pay for your AAPP membership.

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## WHAT IS A PARALEGAL?

Paralegals are professionals who are educated in Canadian Law and can perform important law work. They can work for corporations, law offices, and other legal settings. Paralegals are skilled in legal research, document drafting, interviewing, advocacy, corresponding with opposing counsel, developing case theories, and so much more.

Rather than performing the important administrative duties of a Legal Assistant, the Paralegal works directly with and on behalf of a Lawyer. Lawyers depend on Paralegals to prepare casework, assist during trials, and perform other important duties.

Hiring a paralegal can be an effective solution for law firms that need assistance with substantive legal work.

# AAPP Membership Types Defined—continued

## WHAT DOES A PARALEGAL DO?

Key Paralegal duties include:

- Research cases: Important research can include fact-checking, getting formal statements and affidavits, interviewing, and developing case theories.
- Draft documents: Paralegals can draft important documents for Lawyers, such as memorandums, briefs, legal arguments, and legal forms.
- Organize casework: Under the supervision of a Lawyer, Paralegals can process and organize important case files, such as medical records or transcripts. Paralegals use their advanced office software skills to store and retrieve important documents.
- Upload and file documents: Paralegals can upload documents for official filing and stamping under the supervision of a Lawyer. This includes documents like affidavits, claims, briefs, statements, and so forth.
- Interface with clients and opposing counsel: This includes interviewing clients for the case. Paralegals can also communicate with opposing counsel.
- Manage projects: Paralegals can be trusted to delegate work, prepare for deadlines, and keep cases organized. Paralegals may work with Legal Assistants to achieve their goals.
- Attend court: The Paralegal can join the Lawyer for important court dates, but they can't represent the client. They can help manage casework, retrieve documents, prepare files, and more.

Because paralegals take on higher-level legal work on behalf of lawyers, they often acquire more formal education or certification.

While Paralegals in Canada perform similar work, there are unique restrictions nationwide. Each province has its standards of practice for legal professionals, such as standards for giving legal advice. Currently, the only province with an official Paralegal regulatory board is Ontario.

With so many fine details, it is a good idea to join a Paralegal association. These associations grant members access to a professional network, valuable resources, and other perks.

Paralegal memberships can be found on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$120.00. Check

with the firm you work with as they may pay for your AAPP membership.

## WHAT IS AN INDEPENDENT PARALEGAL?

Because an independent paralegal does not work under the supervision of a lawyer, there are limitations on what services an independent paralegal is allowed to provide. Independent paralegals need to be very careful to avoid practicing law by preparing pleadings that require providing facts that are not common knowledge or not considered basic information. Independent paralegals must also be careful to only provide information about legal topics and procedures and not legal advice.

The benefits of running your own Independent Paralegal service can provide a good work-life balance by providing a flexible schedule as well as flexibility in who you take on as a client. You are able to set your own hours and decide what work you will perform and when you choose to do so. There are however many challenges in being an independent paralegal. Running a business is hard work, requires self-discipline, motivation, and a certain amount of understanding of all aspects of owning and running a business, such as taxes, invoicing, accounting, and marketing. Being an independent paralegal can also be very challenging to complete legal documents and provide general information to the public without crossing the line into practicing law. As an independent paralegal you should stay up to date on what is considered the practice of law in your respective province, and put procedures in place that help ensure that you do not engage in the unauthorized practice of law.

Currently, Ontario is the only province that has an official Paralegal regulatory board. In Ontario, Paralegals are an integral part of the legal system. Paralegals in Ontario are professionally educated and insured and are licensed by the Law Society of Ontario to serve the public and provide access to justice.

Paralegals can provide an affordable option for those in need of legal services or representation. This helps to reduce self-represented litigants in court cases and deters people from seeking advice from non-regulated legal resources or individuals who may lead them astray.

# AAPP Membership Types Defined—continued

While paralegals typically must work under the direct supervision of a lawyer, those with a licence can practice independently. If Independent Paralegal appeals to you, you must go over the necessary education, testing, character, and licencing requirements for the certification to start your own paralegal practice.

Independent paralegals often have many years of experience in court and at tribunals. This type of paralegal is licensed to independently represent people in small claims court and other lower court proceedings, traffic court (such as violations), some criminal matters, landlord and tenant matters, name changes, before tribunals and administrative bodies, and other issues within their jurisdictions.

To qualify for a licence as an Independent Paralegal, you need to take a paralegal education program accredited at an institution recognized by your respective province, recognized by the Association, and in some cases, the Law Society of your respective province. Regardless of your education program type, getting a paralegal licence requires you to take professional responsibility and ethic courses.

Independent Paralegal memberships can be found on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$120.00.

We also have other membership options for:

- **Student Members** who are enrolled in full-time or part-time studies, in a legal assistant or paralegal program at an institution recognized by the provincial legislation in Alberta, and recognized by the Association. Student memberships can be found on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$20.00.
- **Affiliate Members** are individuals who are either a member of the Law Society of Alberta, or any other law society in Canada at the discretion of the Board, OR a member of an educational institution approved by the Board endorsing legal support professionals, Legal Assistants and Paralegals, at the discretion of the Board. Affiliate memberships can be found on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$100.00.
- **Corporate Member** is any organization or corporation which supports the purposes of the Association. A Corporate Member shall be represented by a single individual and is not intended to provide a means for a law firm to extend membership privileges to employees who would otherwise qualify for membership under another category. Corporate memberships can be found on our

website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$300.00.

- **Alumni Member** is reserved for existing AAPP members who have retired from the profession, but wish to maintain their membership with the association. Alumni memberships can be found on our website under Membership. The annual membership fee is \$100.00.
- **Bundle Memberships** If an employer enrolls more than 2 employees for either a legal support or paralegal membership, a discount will be applied to membership fees. Discounts will be applied as:

2-10 members - 10%

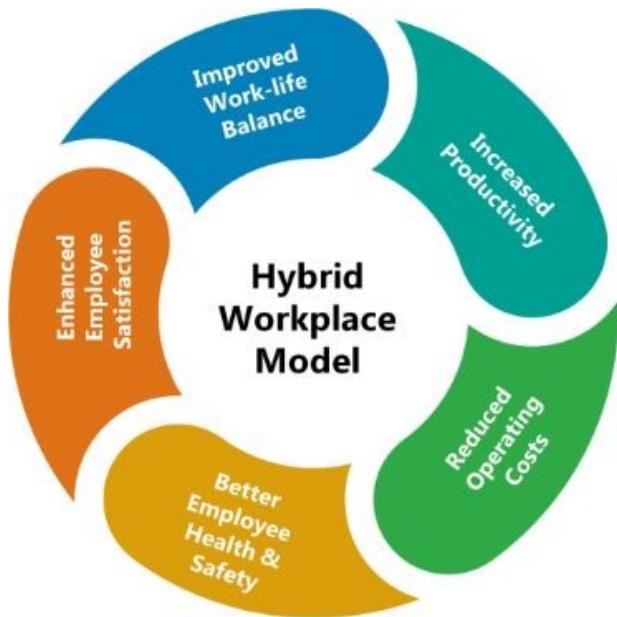
11-29 members - 20%

30-49 members - 30%

50 or more members - 40%

If you would like more information on bundled memberships please contact us at: [membership@alberta-paralegal.com](mailto:membership@alberta-paralegal.com)

# Bringing human connection to a hybrid workplace



It looks like the hybrid workplace is here to stay but how do we maintain co-worker connections? You know the ones that kept employees engaged, aided in productivity and employee retention. Working remotely can provide a desirable work-life balance, but what impact does it have on businesses?

According to Canadian HR Reporter, when employees feel less connected to the workplace and its culture, the chances of quality of work declines by 90% and the probability of employee burnout increases by 11 times. Furthermore, the odds that employees will leave within 3 years increases by 6 times.

The question then remains, what can businesses adopt to make the hybrid workplace more enjoyable in ways that allow all of us to stay connected?

Some suggestions have been to:

- Organize monthly virtual team activities such as lunches, virtual coffee chats, virtual team-building events such as Pictionary;
- Recognize and appreciate employees regardless of their location—recognition, in any form, can prove vital for any level of business;
- Strengthen team collaboration by engaging with technology—use virtual interactive collaboration boards/software to facilitate brainstorming as a team;
- Embrace and encourage diversity and inclusion—bringing people from all walks of life, race, ethnicity and

experiences to work together and feel part of a team; and

- Encourage flexible working hours so employees can balance their family and professional needs, which in turn keeps employees happy and productive. Employees who feel engaged and have satisfaction in their workplace, tend to have increased productivity.

The goal for businesses is to redefine the way they work and implement solutions that connect people to information and each other—from anywhere.

There are many different companies worldwide that can assist with online solutions for a hybrid workplace.

Want to read more about this topic, head on over to the following blog post:

<https://blog.ricoh.ca/2022/05/19/bringing-the-human-connection-to-the-hybrid-workplace/>