



## Alberta Law Society Survey

In 2019, two surveys done by the Alberta Law Society, in conjunction with the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Law Societies, revealed that nearly one in three articling students and new lawyers have experienced discrimination or harassment during recruitment or articling. We understand students are likely concerned about how these results are being addressed in the workplaces they are considering. The City of Edmonton Legal Services Department has chosen to be transparent with our response to these results, and has developed this document to answer students' questions and concerns.

### How will the City prepare you for entry level practice?

The City Law Branch takes preparing our articling students for the practice of law seriously. This experience is your own, and will depend on your own interests and working style but there are a number of basic opportunities available to you as an articling student with the City including:

#### Law Society Learning Plan

The Law Society Learning Plan is mandatory for your articling year, however, your Principal has been instructed to collaborate with you on tailoring your articling experience to your needs. At the beginning of your articling term, an email is sent to the Branch introducing you to your colleagues, and outlining the areas of law you're especially interested in. After a review of your learning plan at the 6 month mark, an update and reminder email will be sent to remind the Branch of your areas of interest, potentially with the inclusion of new areas of interest that you discovered in your time at the City.

#### 6 month check-in with feedback

Just before the 6 month mark of your work at the City, your principal will send out an email to the Branch to gather feedback on your performance. You will then have a chance to sit down with your principal and discuss the feedback received. This is a great opportunity to hear how your work has been received, the difference you make in the office, and discuss with your principal how you want to continue learning during your articling year.

#### Practical experience in court, and with your own files

You will have the unique experience of taking conduct of your own litigation and solicitor files from the beginning of your articling experience. You will also have the opportunity to act on both contested and

uncontested court applications, prosecution of bylaw trials, and attending client meetings, all with the support of our lawyers when you need it. These lived experiences will provide you with a solid foundation in both the litigation and solicitor sides of the law, and lessen the steep transition from articling student to your first years of practice.

#### General feedback and Open door policy

The lawyers at Law Branch are generally quite good at providing helpful feedback, but you're always welcome to ask them for targeted advice. The lawyers also operate on an open door policy and often collaborate with one another. You are always welcome to knock on anyone's door with questions, whether you don't even know where to start and need a direction, or you've done some research and need someone with experience to weigh in.

#### "Ride-alongs" with bylaw, tribunals, council, client meetings, etc.

You will have many opportunities to see how things work and experience more complex legal files by taking part in "ride-alongs". Before you are asked to appear as Crown in Bylaw Court, as Counsel for Court actions or as a lawyer leading a client meeting, you will have the opportunity to shadow the lawyers who are appearing in those capacities. You will be able to see what is necessary in these positions, and will have a contact who can answer your questions on the process and preparation. For other more complex legal matters like Dispute Resolution Submissions, Appeal Trials, Tribunal Hearings and Council and Committee meetings, you may be asked to help in the preparation and have the opportunity to watch the process unfold.

#### Workload and time flexibility, especially around CPLED

The City provides a wide variety of legal work for their articling students, but is also committed to providing a work/life balance and supporting your CPLED requirements. Students are entitled to two weeks paid vacation during their articling year and take part in our earned day off program to give them the time to take care of themselves or work on their bar admission requirements.

### **Legal Services - Procedure for Harassment, Discrimination and Disrespect**

The City of Edmonton takes harassment and discrimination seriously, and has created a City-wide procedure to both encourage and facilitate a respectful workplace. A new [Respectful Workplace Administrative Procedure](#) was released in 2019, requiring employees to go through mandatory Respectful Workplace training, and setting out a procedure to deal with harassment, disrespect and discrimination in the workplace.

If you feel you have been harassed, discriminated against or disrespected by another City employee:

1. If you feel comfortable, talk respectfully with the person about what they said or did to make you feel this way.

2. If you are not comfortable talking directly with the employee, or need additional support, talk to your supervisor or someone in management. As an articling student, you may also talk to your principal.
3. If you don't feel comfortable talking with either the employee, or a supervisor, contact the Safe Disclosure Office. You may also use the Safe Disclosure Office to seek information, raise a concern, report an incident or file a complaint.
  - Call toll-free: 1-844-298-6782
  - Email: [questions@safedisclosure.ca](mailto:questions@safedisclosure.ca)
  - [www.safedisclosure.ca](http://www.safedisclosure.ca)
4. You can also talk with:
  - your Association representative if you are involved in the City of Edmonton Management Association (CEMA),
    - 780-496-2628
    - [cemaexecutivedirector@gmail.com](mailto:cemaexecutivedirector@gmail.com)
  - John Dowds - City Chaplain,
    - 780-496-7863
    - [john.dowds@edmonton.ca](mailto:john.dowds@edmonton.ca)
  - A Peer Support member,
    - Found on 9th and 10th floors with posters on their doors.
  - contact Homewood Health.
    - 1-800-663-1142 available 24/7
    - <https://homewoodhealth.com/corporate/services/stay-at-work/efap>
  - The Law Branch articling committee, or in confidence with any of its members
    - Members include: Allan Delgado, Amy Cheuk, Anna Turcza-Karhut, Cameron Ashmore, Carl Argo, Christina Hodgson, Kyla Schauerte, Margo Hoffner and Michael Teeling.
  - Your Principal will take active steps at the 6 month review and throughout your articling experience to check in with you in case there has been any harassment or discrimination experienced

**A flow chart outlining the differences in each procedure is included below:**

# Respectful Workplace Administrative Procedure

Do what feels right for you:

**A.** Employee decides to have a respectful workplace concern with the co-worker

Supervisor addresses concern in the workplace

Additional remedies to address the concern are explored.

**B.** Employee decides to share a respectful workplace concern with a Supervisor or Manager

Supervisor or Manager involves Labour Relations, when necessary

Labour Relations reviews the concern to determine if it falls under Harassment & Discrimination

Labour Relations informs employee of approach to address the concern (standard investigation or other workplace response)

Post-investigation actions developed to support restoration and prevention

Investigation is conducted, when required

SDO determines best method to investigate or address the concern (standard investigation or other workplace response)

SDO informs employee of approach to address the concern (standard investigation or other workplace response)

SDO reviews the concern to determine if it falls under Harassment & Discrimination

Findings are communicated

\*Confidentiality is maintained, except when there is a legal obligation to report, which includes:

- exploitation of minors;
- acting on reports of imminent harm; and/or
- harassment or violence is reported.

Issue addressed

Qualified applicants who have a concern about how a standard investigation was conducted can submit a request for a procedural review to the Director, Respect in the Workplace.

**You are not alone. Resources and supports are available for employees, supervisors and teams:**

- Homewood Health: 1-800-663-1142
- City Chaplain: 780-496-7863
- Safe Disclosure Office: 1-844-298-6782
- questions@safedisclosure.ca
- www.safedisclosure.ca
- City Management
- Employee Services
- Union or Association

This is how we **WORK**

\*March 29, 2019

