

## Youth Criminal Law (YCJA) Roster Panel Competencies

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Any LAA roster lawyer is eligible to apply to join this panel. Competitive applicants will demonstrate the following competencies or will have a plan to develop these competencies:

- 1. Criminal law experience, including conducting trials and contested sentencing hearings.** Specialization in criminal law and in related practice areas is a considerable asset. Some ways lawyers may demonstrate this competence include: (a) by describing how much of the lawyer's practice is devoted to criminal law, (b) by summarizing how many contested criminal trials or sentencing hearings the lawyer has conducted over the previous five years, and (c) by listing any training seminars or other continuing legal education the lawyer has undertaken in relation to criminal defence.
- 2. Experience in proceedings under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and a demonstrated understanding of the unique nature of youth court proceedings.** This includes understanding youth-specific principles that apply to: (a) the rules of evidence, (b) judicial interim release, (c) extrajudicial sanctions, and (d) sentencing. Some ways lawyers may demonstrate this competency include: (a) by estimating of how many young people the lawyer has represented in criminal proceedings over the past five years, (b) by describing some serious, interesting, or reported youth-law cases the lawyer has been involved with, or (c) by listing training seminars or other continuing legal education the lawyer has undertaken in relation to youth criminal law.
- 3. Special interest or experience working or volunteering with the vulnerable young people and vulnerable populations who make up much of LAA's youth clientele.** This includes, for example, interest or experience working with youth from Indigenous and marginalized communities and youth who are experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction, or family breakdown. Lawyers should demonstrate their competency by explaining how their previous professional, personal, educational, or volunteer experience reflects their interest or experience in this area.
- 4. An understanding of the unique sentencing, extrajudicial sanctions, and other rehabilitative resources available to young people within the lawyer's geographic service areas.** For example, it is helpful to know whether a lawyer has experience referring clients to a local youth justice committee, or if the lawyer has previously helped a client access any treatment options available to young people within their jurisdiction.

**Lawyers do not necessarily require direct or extensive experience in all four areas listed above,** but if a lawyer lacks directly relevant experience in an area, the lawyer should have a plan for gaining those competencies while a member of the panel. For example, LAA encourages applications from criminal lawyers who have relatively little youth law experience, but who have a plan to gain more experience specific to youth defence law and working with young people. Lawyers at all stages of their careers are encouraged to apply.