

## Youth Criminal Law (YCJA) Roster Panel Standards

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### Purpose and Scope of Panel

This panel is comprised of roster lawyers with experience, aptitude, or interest in the area of youth criminal law. It covers matters where:

- a) The client is facing criminal charges, or is appellant or respondent in a criminal appeal.
- b) The client is a young person (ages 12 to 17) or is facing charges prosecuted under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* that were alleged to have been committed when the client was a young person.

Panel members will receive priority when LAA offers certificates to roster lawyers in this service area. While LAA reserves the right to appoint lawyers who are not on this panel, LAA plans to give panel members first preference when it appoints a lawyer from the roster.

This is a **province-wide** panel, but LAA will consider geographic service locations when assessing panel applications. Lawyers will initially be appointed to this panel for **three years**, subject to any changes to LAA's business needs. Panel members may reapply before their term expires.

### Panel Competencies

Any LAA roster lawyer is eligible to apply to join this panel. Competitive applicants will demonstrate the following competencies:

- Significant criminal law experience, including conducting trials and contested sentencing hearings. Specialization in criminal law and in related practice areas is an asset.
- Experience in proceedings under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and a deep understanding of the special nature of youth court proceedings. This includes, for example, understanding youth-specific principles that apply to the rules of evidence, judicial interim release, extrajudicial sanctions, and sentencing.
- Experience working or volunteering with the vulnerable young people and vulnerable populations who make up much of LAA's clientele in this area. This includes, for example, youth from Indigenous and marginalized communities and youth who are experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction, or family breakdown.
- An understanding of the unique sentencing, extrajudicial sanctions, and other rehabilitative resources available to young people within the lawyer's geographic service areas.

Lawyers do not necessarily require direct or extensive experience in all competencies listed above, but where a lawyer lacks directly relevant experience in an area, they should be prepared demonstrate a concrete plan for obtaining those competencies while a member of the panel.

## **Expectations of Panel Members**

### ***Number of Files***

The number of youth matters may vary substantially between geographic service areas. LAA cannot estimate of how many certificates it may offer to panel members, because this will depend on how many lawyers LAA selects for the panel and where these lawyers practice law.

Panel members are expected to maintain experience and currency in youth criminal justice matters by taking a reasonable number of youth files during their time on the panel. Lawyers on the panel must also be prepared to accept some files throughout their geographic service areas.

### ***Training and Continuing Legal Education***

In addition to taking these files, panel lawyers are expected to seek out continuing legal education opportunities relevant to the competencies listed above. This might include, for example:

- attending training conferences, seminars, or webinars offered by LAA's staff lawyers or others in the area of youth criminal law;
- reading treatises or textbooks relevant to youth criminal justice law or the representation of young persons; and
- undertaking cultural competency training or other training that helps the lawyer gain a greater understanding of the challenges facing LAA's youth clientele.

LAA may also direct panel members to undertake specific professional development activities. Lawyers who intend to reapply to the panel should be prepared to explain what continuing legal education they have undertaken in relation to the panel competences.

## **Panel Selection Process**

Lawyers who are interested in joining this panel must submit the application form and CV to LAA before the deadline noted on the LAA website. Lawyers will be selected for the panel in accordance with the process set out in LAA's Administrative Policy 6.

The panel selection committee will not interview applicants, but an LAA staff member may contact references listed on the application form to discuss the applicant's interest, aptitude, or experience. By applying to the panel, roster lawyers authorize LAA to make confidential inquiries into the lawyer's qualifications and competencies.