

VLS Volunteer Lawyers Service

THE VOICE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

The Volunteer Lawyers Service (VLS) is a pro bono program initiated by the United Way, the Canadian Bar Association Alberta, the Law Society of Alberta, and the Association of General Counsel of Alberta. The VLS assists eligible non-partisan charitable organizations in obtaining pro bono legal services that would otherwise be unavailable to them due to a lack of financial resources. Organizations may be eligible for our program if they meet two criteria. Firstly, they must be registered as a charitable organization, or organization whose mission is for charitable purposes as defined under the Income Tax Act. Secondly, they must demonstrate an inability to pay any amount for legal advice and services (excluding acceptable disbursements).

The Volunteer Lawyers Service was originally established because many lawyers who practiced as in-house counsel, or did primarily corporate work were looking for opportunities to use their legal skills in a pro bono capacity outside their daily work routine, with a different clientele. Today, our volunteer lawyers come from all practice areas and have the common goal of wanting to provide pro bono services to their community. One of the appealing features of this volunteer opportunity is its flexibility. As a volunteer lawyer you can donate as much or little time as you are able, to accommodate your busy schedule. Other benefits include networking opportunities, promoting the positive image of the legal profession, advertising your legal skills and broadening your personal areas of interest, all the while helping charitable organizations achieve their community development goals.

You can volunteer in several ways including: Working one-on-one with a charitable organization - Once a charitable group is approved for our services, we contact members of our volunteer lawyer roster and match them with a file according to practice areas and interests. Some of the services our volunteer lawyers have provided in the past include, but are not limited to:


- Preparing applications for charitable status
- Conducting risk and liability assessments
- Drafting privacy statements for brochures or websites
- Reviewing By-laws
- Drafting or reviewing employment contracts

Conducting a seminar or workshop - The VLS strives to provide information sessions pertaining to legal issues facing charitable and non-profit societies. A popular seminar we provide annually is, "How to Obtain Charitable Status". We hope to expand the number of seminars we offer this year and welcome your suggestions for new topics.

Working with Pro Bono Students Canada - there are PBSC chapters based out of the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta. The PBSC program places students with organizations over the academic year. Projects run from October through March and students contribute 1-3 hours of volunteer work per week. All projects must be supervised by a lawyer advisor. The time commitment required of a supervising lawyer is minimal as the student is intended to be doing the work. If you would like to volunteer with a PBSC student in a supervisory capacity, please indicate so by checking the appropriate box on the VLS application form. Your contact information will be passed on to the PBSC Coordinator in order to match you with a student and an appropriate file.

It is important to note that as a volunteer lawyer with the VLS, you are covered under the **Canadian Lawyer Insurance Association**. Also, please note that charities acquiring our services are informed that they must pay any disbursement fees that may arise.

If you are interested in joining our program, please contact Amy Cooper, VLS Coordinator at the following:
 Volunteer Lawyers Service
 1725, 311- 6 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2P 3H2
 Fax: 403-265-8581 Email: vls@cba-alberta.org
 Information and forms are also available from our **new website: www.volunteerlawyersalberta.com**.



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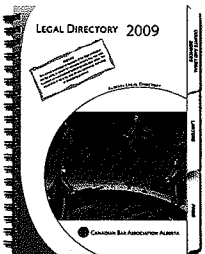
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