CIAJ | ICAJ
Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice
Institut canadien d'administration de la justice

CONFERENCE

LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING CONFERENCE

Program

SEPTEMBER 9–11, 2026 | OTTAWA

OVERVIEW

CONFERENCE

Legislative Drafting Conference

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the organizing committee and the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ), we are proud to present the 23rd Edition of CIAJ's Legislative Drafting Conference, taking place September 9–11, 2026, in Ottawa and online.

This biennial conference brings together legislative drafters, legal professionals, academics, and others to explore the most pressing issues in modern legislative drafting, with a particular focus on the Canadian context.

The 2026 program offers thought-provoking discussions on the process of preparing legislative texts alongside reflections on recent developments shaping the field. Topics include the practical realities faced by drafters, new AI initiatives, Indigenous co-development of legislation, and the correction of legislative texts. Comparative approaches, ethical considerations, and interactive sessions will round out a rich and engaging program.

The conference will feature panels, networking opportunities, and collaborative activities, offering participants a unique chance to deepen their expertise and contribute to the future of legislative drafting.

Come join colleagues and experts from coast-to-coast-to-coast as we gather in Ottawa—and online—to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and shape the next chapter in legislative drafting.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Lerissa Thaver & Charlie Feldman
Co-Chairs

START TIME ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT TIME ZONES IN CANADA

PT: 06:00 am	MT: 07:00 am	CT: 08:00 am	ET: 9:00 am	AT: 10:00 am	NT: 10:30 am

Note: The time zone used in the program is Eastern Time.

LANGUAGE AND ACCREDITATION

Bilingual program with simultaneous interpretation.

Participation in this program is accredited in provinces where CLE requirements for lawyers are mandatory.

- **Total: 14h**

For provinces where professional hours apply:

- **Total: 12h30**
- **Professionalism (EDI): 1h30**

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS

- **Charlie Feldman**, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)
- **Lerissa Thaver**, Legislative Counsel, Ministry of Justice, Government of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)

MEMBERS

- **Elena Bosi**, Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Legislative Services (Branch), Justice & Public Safety, New Brunswick (Fredericton, NB)
- **Luc Gagné**, Senior Counsel, Transport Canada Regulations Section, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)
- **John Mark Keyes**, Sessional Professor, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)
- **Cassandra Porter**, Legislative Counsel, Regulations Section - Legislative Services Branch, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)
- **Ian Rennie**, Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislation Division, Department of Justice, Government of the Northwest Territories (Yellowknife, NT)
- **Jean-Félix Robitaille**, Legislative Lawyer, Sous-ministériat des affaires juridiques, ministère de la Justice du Québec (Québec, QC)
- **Alexandra Schorah**, Senior Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)
- **Mark Spakowski**, Chief Legislative Counsel, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario (Toronto, ON)
- **William Stephenson**, Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)
- **Christine O'Doherty**, Lawyer & Executive Director, CIAJ (Montreal, QC)
- **Danielle St-Hilaire**, Event Planner, CIAJ (Halifax, NS)

FORMER MEMBERS

- **Bhreagh Dabbs**, Legislative Counsel, Justice - Legal Services, Government of Yukon
- **Jaimie Graham**, Legal Counsel, Alberta Utilities Commission
- **Roxanne Guérard**, Legal Counsel, Department of Justice Canada
- **Scott Webber**, Legislative Counsel, Legal Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, British Columbia

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

8:00–10:00 AM **Registration and Breakfast**

For in-person participants

10:00–10:15 AM **Opening Remarks & Land Acknowledgment**

Co-Chairs:

- *Charlie Feldman, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Lerissa Thaver, Legislative Counsel, Ministry of Justice, Government of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*

Knowledge Keeper:

- *Grandma Karen MacInnis, Therapist / Knowledge Keeper, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health (Ottawa, ON)*

10:15–11:45 AM **Panel 1 | Henry VIII Clauses, Drafting Issues and Approaches**

Henry VIII clauses have been around for a long time and are often a useful tool for state intervention, including, more recently, to address tariff and trade challenges from the United States. This panel will explore the issues that arise when drafting Henry VIII clauses and the regulations made under them and ways of managing those issues.

Moderator:

- *Mark Spakowski, Chief Legislative Counsel, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario (Toronto, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Paul Daly, Chair in Administrative Law and Governance, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Graeme King, General Counsel, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

11:45–12:45 PM **Lunch**

12:45–2:15 PM **Panel 2 | Government Lawyers and Conflicts of Interest**

This panel will address conflicts of interest that legislative drafters may encounter. It will explore this important aspect of drafters' ethical responsibilities in terms of the rules of professional regulatory bodies (law societies and the Chamber of Notaries) as well as rules applicable to public sector employees. Conflicts of interest will be considered in terms of drafting client interests and confidentiality as well as drafters' personal interests and policy views.

Moderator:

- *John Mark Keyes, Sessional Professor, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Marie Danik, Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Tara Partington, Deputy Chief Legislative Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Public Service (Toronto, ON)*
- *Leslie A. Walden, Part-time Professor, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)*

2:15–3:30 PM **Panel 3 | Co-Developing Legislation with Indigenous Governments: The Northwest Territories Experience**

For over five years, the Government of the Northwest Territories has been formalizing the involvement of Indigenous governments in the development of legislation, beginning with the adoption of the Legislative Development Protocol for land and resource legislation and continuing with emerging co-development commitments in the broader legislative process. Featuring voices from legislative counsel, counsel for Indigenous governments and Legislative Assembly staff, this panel will explore what co-development looks like in practice: how it impacts drafting, affects the role of legislative counsel and demands new approaches to collaboration.

Moderator:

- *William Stephenson, Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Larry Innes, Partner, Olthuis, Kleer, Townshend LLP (Yellowknife, NT)*
- *Jessica Iveson, Director of Core Governance, Dél̨ı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government (Dél̨ı̨nę, NT)*
- *Ian Rennie, Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislation Division, Department of Justice, Government of the Northwest Territories (Yellowknife, NT)*
- *Glen Rutland, Clerk of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (Yellowknife, NT)*

3:30–3:45 PM **Health Break**

3:45–5:00 PM **Panel 4 | An Instructing Officer and a Legislative Drafter Walk into a Bar…**

What did the instructing officer say to the legislative drafter? This session will take the form of an informal conversation between a legislative client and a legislative drafter about how they could make each other's lives easier and optimize legislative drafting.

Moderator:

- *Alexandra Schorah, Senior Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Philippe G. Giguère, Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, Senate of Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Aleksander Hynnä, General Counsel, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

5:30–7:30 PM **Reception (Hotel)**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

8:00–10:00 AM **Informal Networking Coffee and Breakfast (Hotel)**
Interested registrants will be assigned tables.

10:00–11:30 AM **Panel 5 | What's New in AI in the Legislative Drafting World**
This panel offers a virtual tour to learn about the latest developments in AI in legislative drafting in Canada, the States of Jersey and the United Kingdom, and includes the following topics:

1. Otto: Justice Canada's Generative AI Pilot Project
2. An Update on States of Jersey's Legislative Drafting Office's Computer-Readable Legislation Project
3. GenAI-Powered Rules as Code and Other Developments in Hybrid (Neurosymbolic) AI
4. More than words: using AI and legal data to get closer to what legislation means, not just what it says.

Moderator:

- *Cassandra Porter, Legislative Counsel, Regulations Section - Legislative Services Branch, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Angela Beck, Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Anna Logie, Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)* — ***Online***
- *Matthew Lynch, Lawmaker Service Owner, The National Archives (United Kingdom)* — ***Online***
- *Martin Perron, Lawyer and Legal Developer (Rules as Code), Platforms Directorate, Canadian Digital Service, Employment and Social Development Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Matthew Waddington, formerly from the Legislative Drafting Office (States of Jersey)*

11:30–12:30 PM **Lunch**

12:30–2:00 PM **Panel 6 | Civil Law vs. Common Law Drafting Styles**
Historically, it has been commonly accepted that there are two different styles of drafting, depending on whether the tradition is civil law or common law. In short, common law statutes tend to be more detailed, while civil law statutes tend to be more concise. In recent years, although the differences between the two styles have become somewhat blurred, they still exist. Our speakers will provide an overview of civil law drafting to enable drafters from all backgrounds to better understand it, draw inspiration from it, and see some of its practical applications.

Moderators:

- *Éliane Boucher, Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Jean-Félix Robitaille, Legislative Lawyer, Sous-ministériat des affaires juridiques, ministère de la Justice du Québec (Québec, QC)*

Speakers:

- *Marc-Alexandre Croteau-Thomassin, Legislative Lawyer, Sous-ministériat des affaires juridiques, ministère de la Justice du Québec (Québec, QC)*
- *Moïra Létourneau, Deputy Director and Senior Counsel, Specialized Legislative Services Section, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Sylvio Normand, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Law, Université Laval (Québec, QC)*

2:00–3:00 PM **Panel 7 | A Study of the Administrative Correction Powers of Statutes and Regulations in Canada**

Several Canadian federal and provincial legislatures have conferred administrative powers to the executive branch to correct statutes and regulations. This panel will discuss conferred powers, challenges and lessons learned. A look into the future will also be taken.

Part 1: Overview of Jurisdictions Respective Powers

Moderator:

- *Luc Gagné, Senior Counsel, Transport Canada Regulations Section, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Dan Blasioli, Senior Counsel, Advisory, Legislative Initiatives Services and Publishing Team, Specialized Legislative Services Section, Legislative Services Branch, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Julia Hood, Legislative Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Public Service (Toronto, ON)*
- *Ajay Ramkumar, Legislative Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Public Service (Toronto, ON)*
- *Thomas Ahlfors, Chief Legislative Counsel and Director, Legislation Division, Government of Nunavut (Iqaluit, NU)*
- *Ian Rennie, Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislation Division, Department of Justice, Government of the Northwest Territories (Yellowknife, NT)*

3:00–3:15 PM **Health Break**

3:15–4:30 PM **Panel 7 *(continued)* | A Study of the Administrative Correction Powers of Statutes and Regulations in Canada**

Part 2: Armchair discussion - challenges, lessons learned and look into the future

Moderators:

- *Sherina Dhala, Chief Legislative Counsel, Legislative Counsel Office, Legal Services Division, Alberta Justice, Government of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*
- *Luc Gagné, Senior Counsel, Transport Canada Regulations Section, Legislative Services Branch, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

4:30–5:00 PM **Interactive Activity**

Facilitator:

- *Charlie Feldman, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

8:00–10:00 AM **Breakfast (Hotel)**

10:00–11:15 AM **Panel 8 | Can you correct my bills ~~bills bills~~?**

Mis-stakes happen. Sometimes they are in panel descriptions, sometimes they are in bills before legislative bodies. This panel discusses corrections to bills through formalized powers conferred by the legislature, exploring the nature of the powers and their exercise in practice. It will discuss tensions and limits within what can be corrected administratively before a bill becomes law.

Moderator:

- *Charlie Feldman, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Valérie Boudreau, Chief Jurilinguist, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Marie Danik, Legislative Counsel, House of Commons (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Marc-André Roy, Senior Parliamentary Counsel, Senate of Canada (Ottawa, ON)*

11:15–11:30 AM **Health Break**

11:30–12:30 PM **Panel 9 | One Profession, Many Contexts: Legislative Drafting Across Offices and Jurisdictions**

This panel will examine legislative drafting in different settings through the perspectives of drafters who have worked in multiple offices across various jurisdictions. Panelists will share insights from their experiences at the municipal, provincial, federal, and international levels, exploring the distinctive ways our shared profession is practiced in different settings. The discussion will highlight how legal frameworks, institutional cultures, and practical realities shape drafting approaches and influence legislative texts.

Moderator:

- *Lerissa Thaver, Legislative Counsel, Ministry of Justice, Government of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*

Speakers:

- *Hélène Dumas-Legendre, Legislative Lawyer, Department of Justice (Quebec), practicing at Santé Québec (Québec, QC)*
- *Charlie Feldman, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Patrick Orr, Independent Legislative Counsel, Barrister & Solicitor (Ottawa, ON)*

12:30–12:45 PM **Closing Remarks**

Co-Chairs:

- *Charlie Feldman, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice Canada (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Lerissa Thaver, Legislative Counsel, Ministry of Justice, Government of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*

NOTES

DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

CIAJ IN 2026

CIAJ marks more than 50 years of leadership in the advancement of the administration of justice in Canada. Since 1974, the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice has brought together legal professionals through its annual events, webinars, and publications, reaching a diverse and influential audience.

OUR MISSION

To promote excellence in justice through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas.

COMMUNITY

Join us and our members in shaping the future of justice.

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CIAJ is a multidisciplinary, independent, pan-Canadian, not-for-profit network across Canada.

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Planting the Seeds of Justice

Imagine a space where concrete solutions emerge to address the complex challenges of our Canadian justice system. This is what the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ) is all about.

Founded in 1974, CIAJ's mission is to promote excellence in justice through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas.

CIAJ acts as a conduit for change. As a non-profit and independent organization, we bring together individuals and institutions from diverse expertise—judges, lawyers, academics, policymakers, as well as social workers, law enforcement, and engaged citizens— to improve the administration of justice across Canada. Our multidisciplinary approach enables us to break down silos and mobilize diverse perspectives across a wide range of sectors, tackling fundamental issues in depth. Together, we develop concrete solutions tailored to the real needs of Canadians.

We are much more than event organizers: we are a driving force for change. At CIAJ, we build bridges where none existed before, ensuring that the justice system reflects the complexity, diversity, and aspirations of our society.

Join CIAJ: develop yourself, shape a better world, and make a difference.

By becoming a member of CIAJ, you join a community committed to transforming justice. Together, we have the power to influence policy, improve access to justice and build a more equitable system. Join us today to be part of this essential change.

JOIN CIAJ

Contact us

Please contact us for more information about our organization, the benefits of membership and how you can assist us with our mission.

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OCTOBER 27-28, 2026 | OTTAWA, ON

50th Annual Conference

Reimagining Law and Justice Through Restorative Approaches

This conference examines the growing role of restorative approaches in reimagining law and justice beyond traditional punitive models.
It explores how restorative justice principles can reshape the way harm is addressed, accountability is understood, and relationships are repaired across criminal, family, administrative, and community-based legal contexts.

Through practical sessions, case studies, and applied examples, participants will engage with emerging tools and real-world experiences, and reflect on the evolving role of legal actors in supporting meaningful change. The conference highlights concrete pathways to a more inclusive, humane, and trusted justice system.

This program is bilingual with simultaneous interpretation.
Participation in this conference is approved under Section 41(1) of the *Judges Act*.

MARCH 29-30, 2027 | TORONTO, ON & ONLINE

Conference: AI, Law, and the Future of Justice

CIAJ will hold **a national conference on artificial intelligence and justice.** This event will build on the reflections of the roundtables held in 2026, enriched by the perspectives of the various stakeholders consulted. It will aim to **formulate concrete recommendations to guide the use of AI in the Canadian justice system.**

This conference will be **a unique opportunity to assess the current state of affairs, share best practices, highlight grey areas and explore future avenues** compatible with the fundamental values of the justice system. It may also **contribute to the development of a pan-Canadian framework on the ethical, legal and technical issues** raised by AI.

This program is bilingual with simultaneous interpretation.
Participation in this conference is approved under Section 41(1) of the *Judges Act*.