
FEDERATION OF ONTARIO LAW ASSOCIATIONS PROPOSED 2023 BENCHER ELECTION QUESTIONS

The below questionnaire has been developed by the FOLA board for bencher candidates in the upcoming election. Feedback can be directed to our executive director, at katie.robinette@fola.ca.

When finalized, the questionnaire will be distributed to nominated candidates electronically. FOLA will review the responses and use them to identify “FOLA Friendly” candidates whose views on libraries (practice resource centres) and other issues align with our priorities.

The below questionnaire is subject to change and responses from candidates are not being accepted at this time.

Are you a “FOLA Friendly” Candidate?

The Federation of Ontario Law Associations (FOLA) represents approximately 12,000 lawyers who belong to 46 local law associations across Ontario.

In advance of the bencher election set for April 28, 2023, we are working to provide our members with an easy way to identify “FOLA Friendly” candidates who:

1. are contributing members of their county or district law association;
2. will support a properly funded law library system, consisting of courthouse-based practice resource centres, to support licensee competency; and
3. support a sustainably funded Legal Aid system that ensures access to justice for low-income Ontarians and ensures Legal Aid work continues to be viable for the private bar.

Are you running to become a bencher in the upcoming election? If so, please complete our short questionnaire on your views and commitment to these issues. You will also be asked to share your insights on paralegal scope of practice.

Your completed questionnaire will help us identify who is a FOLA Friendly candidate. We will feature a summary profile of FOLA Friendly candidates on our website. This will be a way for you to reach members of the profession who can vote in the upcoming election.

Please note that being designated a “FOLA Friendly” candidate is not an endorsement and should not be described as such. In the interest of transparency, all responses will be published on FOLA’s bencher election website. FOLA reserves the right to excerpt and quote portions of the responses.

Here are FOLA’s questions:

Law Association Involvement

1. What county and district law associations are you a member of?

[Checkbox List of all 46 Associations]

2. When did you become a member of each of these associations?

[Comment Box]

3. Why are you a member of each of these associations? (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

LiRN Funding and Practice Resource Centres

4. If elected as a benchler, will you support the Law Society maintaining its current level of funding for the Legal Information and Resource Network (LiRN), adjusted annually for inflation?

[Yes or No]

5. Do you recognize the importance of supporting the LiRN budget, given the impact on regional law association libraries that play a critical role in maintaining licensee competence?

[Yes or No]

6. Please explain the previous two responses more fully. (100 words maximum)

[Comment Box]

7. If you are an incumbent benchler, do you regret voting to cut the LiRN budget by 10% at the November 2020 meeting of Convocation?

[Yes, No, I did not vote to cut the LiRN budget; or Not an incumbent]

8. If you are an incumbent benchler, please explain the previous response and reasons for your vote. (maximum 100 words)

[Comment Box]

9. Do you support offloading funding for law libraries to the Law Foundation of Ontario?

[Yes or No]

10. Why or why not? (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

Legal Aid Ontario Funding

11. If elected benchler, I will advocate for LAO sustainability and viability to ensure that being a Legal Aid-empanelled lawyer remains a viable area of practice for the private bar.

[Yes or No]

12. If yes, how? (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

13. Please describe efforts that you believe can and should be undertaken by the Law Society to advocate for investment in LAO and increased financial allocation to LAO from the provincial and federal governments' budgets. (maximum 300 words)

[Comment Box]

Paralegals

14. Should paralegals' scope of practice be expanded from the current services they can provide? (maximum 200 words)

[Yes, it should be expanded; No, it should remain the same; No, it should be reduced]

15. If you answered "yes", to the previous question, in what ways, why, and what additional training (if any) should be required? (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

16. Would you support a requirement for paralegals to pay a competency levy – as lawyers do – as part of their licensing fees to contribute towards practice resource centres?

[Yes or No]

17. Please explain the previous response. (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

Bonus Questions: Osgoode Hall

18. Metrolinx is proposing to construct a station for its new Ontario Line on the historic grounds of Osgoode Hall, which is the home of the Court of Appeal, the Law Society, and the Great Library. The project will turn the property into a construction site with heavy truck traffic for years. Do you support the selection of Osgoode Hall for this project? (maximum 200 words)

[Yes, No]

19. Please explain the previous response. (maximum 200 words)

[Comment Box]

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE