



2023 ANNUAL REPORT:

BC Provincial Board of Examiners

March 2024

B.C. PROVINCIAL BOARD OF EXAMINERS

2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT

MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND

The provincial Board of Examiners (Board) is responsible for awarding certificates to local government employees who meet the standards of qualification in local government administration as prescribed in the Regulation of the Board, and, in conjunction with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, for issuing scholarship awards to eligible local government employees. The principal goal of the Board is to improve the professional skills of local government employees throughout British Columbia.

The Board derives its authority from the *Local Government Act* and is comprised of three members appointed to a three-year term by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

One member is nominated by each of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the Local Government Management Association (LGMA), and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The Board members during this annual report term were Marijke Edmondson, Chair (Minister's appointee), Linda Glenday (LGMA nominee), and Marie Crawford (UBCM nominee). The Board's Administrator and Assistant Administrator functions are performed by staff in the ministry's Local Government Division.

Clients of the Board are local government employees who, for purposes of certification, have qualified based on their experience in local government and education in the field of public administration. For purposes of scholarship awards, priority is given to persons working in local government who are pursuing courses leading to certification. The second priority is given to persons wishing to upgrade their professional skills through enrolment in post-secondary courses of study and/or attendance at workshops or seminars relating to local government administration. See below for a description of the certification and scholarship programs.

The Board met on May 16, June 29, November 24, 2022, and March 22, 2023, to consider applications for certification and scholarship awards and review and revise the Board's policies as appropriate. Program activity regarding the certification and scholarship programs is reported in detail below.

KEY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR

The beginning of the fiscal year saw the departure of Nicola Marotz, Board Chair, Ron Poole, LGMA nominee, and the appointment of Marijke Edmondson (Strategic Advisor, Ministry of Municipal Affairs), as the new Board Chair and Linda Glenday (CAO, District of Squamish) as the LGMA nominee. Marie Crawford (General Manager Richmond Operations, UBCM) was reappointed to the Board on November 25, 2022. Long-time Administrator, Leta Hodge, also retired from this role in March 2022 and Katie Carrothers from the ministry assumed the role of Acting Administrator.

Towards the beginning of the year, remaining provincial public health orders and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic declared in March 2020 were lifted, and the Board's clients and partners continued adjusting to a 'new normal.' Education institutions offered increased in-person and hybrid courses while continuing to offer online courses to accommodate participants from distance and those not comfortable gathering in classrooms.

The number of certificates awarded increased by 44 percent from the previous fiscal year, following 2022/23 marketing efforts through partner newsletters blurbs, connections built with local government staff at the LGMA Conference, and email promotion of the certification program to scholarship recipients and their CAOs. Table 1 provides data on the year-over-year comparisons.

The number of scholarships awarded decreased by 24 percent from the previous fiscal year. While actual causation is difficult to assess, following the pandemic there may be increased comfort or preferences for virtual educational offerings or shifted priorities as local government employees may opt to pursue personal travel rather than education. Table 4 provides the year-over-year comparisons and Tables 5 – 7 provide scholarship data by geographic distribution, local government type, and institution.

The Board considered increasing the tuition award funding allocations, given the decline in the number of scholarship applications over the past few years due to the pandemic and the large fund balances. Three options for increasing tuition awards and their benefits/drawbacks were presented to the Board. The Board supported the recommended option to increase for-credit course awards by \$100, as it would enable support for as many local government staff as possible while drawing down the fund at a manageable rate. The Board also agreed to reassess the scholarship award values again in the new fiscal year, once post-Covid demand stabilizes, and program marketing actions are realised.

The Board was represented at the LGMA Conference tradeshow held in Penticton from June 21 – 22, 2022 to promote the Board's programs. This was the first time the Conference had been held since 2019, and an important opportunity to connect with local government staff face-to-face and raise awareness about the Board certification and scholarships. The Chair, former Administrator, and incoming acting Administrator attended an informal lunch meeting with representatives from some B.C. education institutions. The educators were interested to hear of the Board's activity levels through the pandemic and offered suggestions/assistance for marketing the certificate and scholarship programs. LGMA reflected information on the Board's annual activity related to certificates and scholarships awarded to local government staff in their Annual Report.

The Board remains open to new courses and refreshing accepted courses for certification through engagement with education partners. In this fiscal year, Simon Fraser University (SFU) expressed interest in having their new Urban Innovation course accepted as a core course towards Board certification. The course was considered at the March 22nd meeting; however, before making an assessment, the Board requested feedback from SFU on the inaugural class and an updated/revised syllabus if any adjustments were planned.

The Board continues to actively pursue all opportunities to promote its certification and scholarship programs. With the generous assistance of both the LGMA and CivicInfo BC, individuals who are awarded a Certificate are recognized in LGMA's "Exchange" magazine and CivicInfo BC's electronic newsletter. The LGMA, CivicInfo BC, and the UBCM all include articles promoting the Board's certification and scholarship programs throughout the year in their respective publications. CivicInfo BC also serves as the electronic host for all research papers (www.civicinfo.bc.ca/collections) prepared by recipients of the Board's Certificate in Local Government Executive Management. The Board remains grateful for the support it receives from these organizations.

Over the course of the year, a number of the Board's procedures were streamlined and policies were updated to reflect Board decisions and are available on the Board website at, www.gov.bc.ca/localgov-board-of-examiners.

Finally, the Board's administrative staff continue to share their expertise by providing information and advice to local governments, educational institutions, and others on the Board's Regulation, goals, policies, and programs.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Board recognizes the professional standing of local government employees, and supports the work they perform, by awarding certificates to individuals who have satisfied the education and work experience criteria, as set out by the Local Government Employees Certification Regulation (BC Reg 324/05). The Regulation defines the work experience and education criteria used by the Board when considering applications for certification, and certification is often used as selection or advancement criteria by local governments.

Four levels of certification are available under the Regulation and may be awarded to employees of municipalities, regional districts, and improvement districts in British Columbia.

- ***Certificate in Local Government Service Delivery*** – recognizes local government employees who are not in management positions, statutory officials, or department managers;
- ***Certificate in Local Government Administration*** – recognizes management staff who occupy non-statutory positions;
- ***Certificate in Local Government Statutory Administration*** – recognizes staff who occupy statutory positions in corporate or financial administration; and,
- ***Certificate in Local Government Executive Management*** – recognizes the roles and responsibilities of Chief and Deputy Chief Administrative Officers. A Professional Development Endorsement, to encourage a commitment to ongoing learning, is offered to holders of this certificate.

Each certificate requires a level of competency in local government administration and management, services, finance, law, policy, economics, and public sector leadership and management, as well as relevant work experience.

In 2022/23, 13 certificates were awarded, which is an increase from the nine awarded in 2021/22 (Table 1). Five applicants had not yet met the educational requirements; these certificates were not awarded. Two additional applicants have met the educational requirements of the Certificate in Local Government Executive Management, and either need to submit an outline or a revised outline of their required paper to the Board for approval. Six out of 13 certificates were awarded to staff from the Lower Mainland (Table 2) and notably four staff from the City of Chilliwack were issued certificates while each other recipient represented a different local government (Table 3).

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

The Board reviewed 42 scholarship applications between the two scholarship programs it administers in 2022/23, a decrease from the 55 in 2021/22 (Table 4). One application was withdrawn, and one application was not awarded as the applicant did not meet the eligibility requirements.

1. **UBCM Commemorative Fund:** The provincially-funded scholarship program commemorates UBCM'S 75th anniversary and provides financial assistance to persons working in a municipality, regional district, improvement district and First Nation with membership in the UBCM in the province who are taking courses leading to BOE certification or upgrading their professional skills through post-secondary studies or other local government administration related courses. \$77,490 was carried over from FY2021/22, bringing the total available for FY2022/23 to \$127,490. Twenty-five (25) UBCM Commemorative scholarships, valued at \$18,400, were awarded in 2022/23; a balance of \$109,090 will be carried over to FY2023/24.

2. **Jeff McKelvey Fund:** This fund was established by the UBCM in the spring of 1986 upon the retirement of the late Jeff McKelvey, who served as executive director of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities for 14 years. The fund, which is also administered by the Board provides \$7,500 annually for local government employees who are taking courses which will assist in improving their job skills. This year \$5,600 was carried over from the previous year, providing a total of \$13,100 available for awards in FY2022/23. Fifteen Jeff McKelvey scholarships worth \$7,050 were awarded in FY2022/23 leaving a balance of \$6,050 to carry over to FY2023/24.

The Board was pleased to note that by far most requests for scholarship assistance are for courses leading to certification, and scholarship monies continue to especially support local government employees outside the Lower Mainland (Table 5). The City of Terrace received the most scholarships of any municipality with 7 in total (Table 6), which is likely linked to previous Board member Ron Poole's long-time promotion of the Board's programs. Nearly all scholarships awarded to individuals taking courses at Capilano University and Coast Mountain College (Table 7). The funding of these two scholarship programs has sustained the Board's support for persons working in local government who are pursuing courses leading to certification or who wish to upgrade their professional skills through post-secondary courses of study.

The aim of the Board continues to be to assist as broad a range of local government employees as possible. The funds of the scholarship programs have been put to good use in helping to ensure a continuing high level of skill and professionalism of employees in the local government field.

TABLE 1: BOARD OF EXAMINERS – CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Year	Service Delivery (SD)	Local Government Administration (LGA)	Statutory Administration (SA)	Executive Management (EM)	Professional Development Endorsement	Certificates Not Awarded / Pending	Total Awarded
2018/19	7	5	7	1	1	One SD Certificate, one LGA Certificate and one SA Certificate were not awarded.	20 not including Endorsement
2019/20	12	1	2	0	0	One EM Certificate is pending. The applicant needs to submit an outline of their paper to the Board for approval.	15
2020/21	12	3	5	0	0	One SD Certificate and one SA Certificate were not awarded. Three EM Certificates are pending. One Certificate was re-issued.	20
2021/22	4	3	2	0	0	Two SD Certificates were not awarded. Three EM Certificates are pending.	9
2022/23	9	2	2	0	0	One SD Certificate and three SA Certificates were not awarded. One EM Certificate was not approved to proceed to the written and oral presentation step. Two EM Certificates are pending.	13

TABLE 2: CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY UBCM AREA ASSOCIATION AND REGION					
UBCM AREA ASSOCIATION	#	REGION	#	REGION	#
AKBLG	1	East Kootenay / Rocky Mountain	0	Okanagan Valley / Similkameen	3
AVICC	2	Lower Mainland	6	Peace River	1
LMLGA	6	North and Central Vancouver Island / Sunshine Coast	1	South Vancouver Island	1
NCLGA	1	North Central / Cariboo	0	Thompson / Shuswap / Columbia	0
SILGA	3	North Coast / Nechako	0	West Kootenay / Boundary	1

TABLE 3: CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE

CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY TYPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE									
CITIES		DISTRICTS		TOWNS		VILLAGES		REGIONAL DISTRICTS	
Chilliwack	4	Squamish	1	Comox	1			Okanagan-Similkameen	1
Coquitlam	1			Osoyoos	1				
Duncan	1								
Fort St. John	1								
Trail	1								
Vernon	1								
Total	9		1		2		0		1

TABLE 4: BOARD OF EXAMINERS – SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITY

UBCM Commemorative Scholarship (Fiscal year: April 1– March 31) and
 Jeff McKelvey Scholarship (Fiscal year: June 1– May 31)

Year	Total # of Applications	Withdrawn	UBCM Commemorative Awards	Jeff McKelvey Awards	Not Awarded	Total Awarded	Declined
2018/19	91	0	64	27	0	91	2
2019/20	90	2	70	16	2	86	1
2020/21	57	5	37	16	0	52	0
2021/22	51	4	34	17	0	51	0
2022/23	42	1	25	15	1	40	0

TABLE 5: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

UBCM Area Association	#	Region	#	Region	#
AKBLG	1	East Kootenay / Rocky Mountain	1	Okanagan Valley / Similkameen	6
AVICC	8	Lower Mainland	8	Peace River	0
LMLGA	8	North and Central Vancouver Island / Sunshine Coast	2	South Vancouver Island	6
NCLGA	13	North Central / Cariboo	0	Thompson / Shuswap / Columbia	4
SILGA	10	North Coast / Nechako	13	West Kootenay / Boundary	0

TABLE 6: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE

CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY TYPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE									
CITIES		DISTRICTS		TOWNSHIPS		VILLAGES		REGIONAL DISTRICTS	
Burnaby	2	Kitimat	1	Esquimalt	1	Chase	1	Central Okanagan	3
Colwood	1	Metchosin	2	Langley	4	Harrison Hot Springs	1	Kitimat-Stikine	1
Kelowna	1	New Hazelton	2	Spallumcheen	1	Telkwa	1		
Kimberley	1	North Cowichan	1						
Revelstoke	2	Sechelt	2						
Terrace	7	Sicamous	1						
Vernon	1	Squamish	1						
Victoria	1	Vanderhoof	1						
Total	16		11		6		3		4

TABLE 7: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY INSTITUTION

Institution	UBCM Commemorative Scholarship	Jeff McKelvey Scholarship
Capilano University	19	7
Coast Mountain College	5	5
Local Government Management Association of B.C. (LGMA)	0	2
University of Victoria	1	1
Total	25	15

