



2024 ANNUAL REPORT:

BC Provincial Board of Examiners

August 2024

B.C. PROVINCIAL BOARD OF EXAMINERS

2023/24 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 and for issuing scholarship awards to eligible local government employees in conjunction with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). 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. Certificates are issued by the Board as prescribed in the Local Government Employees Certification Regulation (BC Reg 324/05; Regulation).

One member is nominated by each of the 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 nominee), 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 to consider applications for certification and scholarship awards and review and revise the Board's policies as appropriate on June 21, 2023, November 23, 2023, and March 21, 2024. Program activity regarding the certification and scholarship programs is reported in detail below.

KEY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR

The Board increased the scholarship programs tuition award funding allocations in June 2023, given the continued low number of scholarship applications and large fund balances. For-credit course awards were increased by \$150, and Municipal Administration Training Institute course awards increased by \$300, to support a greater percentage of tuition costs, which have not kept pace with institution increases or inflation. These increases enable the Board to continue to support as many local government staff as possible to a greater extent, while drawing down the funds at a manageable rate.

The number of certificates awarded decreased by 62 percent from the previous fiscal year, which may be explained by the fewer number of scholarships awarded in the previous fiscal year that led to fulfilling certification education requirements. Table 1 provides the year-over-year comparisons, and Tables 2 – 3 provide certificate data by geographic distribution and local government type.

The number of scholarships awarded increased by 50 percent from the previous fiscal year, following 2023/24 marketing efforts through partner newsletters blurbs, connections built with local government staff at the LGMA Conference, and targeted email promotions to Chief Administrative Officers and Human Resource staff. Table 4 provides data on the year-over-year comparisons, and Tables 5 – 7 provide scholarship data by geographic distribution, local government type, and institution.

The Board Chair and Administrator attended an Educators’ meeting with representatives from B.C. education institutions and partner organizations (educators) on June 22, 2023. In the meeting, each educator shared an update on their programs/initiatives, and time was allocated to the Board to seek feedback from the educators through various questions that could help inform the path forward for the Board’s programs. The educators recommended that the Board establish an Educator Advisory Committee (Committee) to evaluate course equivalencies/policies and collaborate on potential policy changes.

The Board convened the first Committee meeting on January 24, 2024, with a small working group of educators to explore how to refresh and resource the current equivalency request process. An overview of the Board’s programs, the 2011 Board of Examiners (BOE) Report and Recommendations including what has changed since, and the current course equivalency evaluation processes was provided as context for discussion. The educators shared information about their institutions’ course equivalency processes and offered suggestions on how to design and structure of the Board’s process. The Committee consensus was that the Board should develop a course equivalency decision matrix for each core course and establish a process for convening a review panel comprised of multiple educators to evaluate equivalencies. Work on the resulting actions from the meeting is underway, and an update will be provided at the Educators’ meeting in the new fiscal year.

The Board remains open to accepting new courses and refreshing accepted courses for certification through engagement with education partners. Conversations with Simon Fraser University and University of Fraser Valley regarding their interest in having courses accepted as core courses towards Board certification are ongoing since the previous fiscal year. Both institutions were informed that the certificate program equivalency process is under review and further consultation with the educators’ group is needed before the Board can make decisions on accepting new courses.

The Board continues to actively pursue all opportunities to promote its certification and scholarship programs. The Board was represented at the LGMA Conference tradeshow held in Nanaimo from June 13 – 14, 2023, to promote the Board’s programs and make connections with local government staff. With the 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.

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

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 Regulation. The Regulation defines the work experience and education criteria used by the Board when considering applications for certification; Board 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 2023/24, five certificates were awarded, a decrease from the 13 awarded in 2022/23 (Table 1). The Board is anticipating receipt of two papers and subsequent presentations to satisfy the requirements for the Certificate in Local Government Executive Management from applicants who have completed the educational and experience requirements. This certificate is the most stringent of the certificates and requires a reflection on a significant executive management challenge. This year, all certificates were awarded to staff from local governments outside the Lower Mainland and in four different regions (Table 2); each recipient represented a different local government (Table 3).

PROGRAM ACTIVITY – SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

The Board reviewed 63 scholarship applications between the two scholarship programs it administers in 2023/24, a 50 percent increase from the 42 received in 2022/23 (Table 4). Sixty (60) scholarships, valued at \$51,300, were awarded in 2023/24.

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 UBCM First Nation members who are taking courses leading to BOE certification or upgrading their professional skills through post-secondary studies, or other local government administration related courses. \$109,090 was carried over from FY2022/23 and an additional \$150,000 was available from an accelerated 3-year grant from the ministry to UBCM, bringing the total available for FY2023/24 to

\$259,090. Forty-seven (47) UBCM Commemorative scholarships, valued at \$43,750, were awarded in 2023/24; a balance of \$215,340 will be carried over to FY2024/25.

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 to assist in improving their job skills. This year, \$6,050 was carried over from the previous year, providing a total of \$13,550 available for awards in FY2023/24. Thirteen (13) Jeff McKelvey scholarships worth \$7,550 were awarded in FY2023/24 with a balance of \$6,650 to carry over to FY2024/25.

The Board was pleased to note that most requests for scholarships are for courses leading to certification, and the funds continue to support local government employees outside the Lower Mainland who often have reduced financial capacity (Table 5). The North Coast and Nechako Region received the most scholarships of any region with 23 in total (Table 5). Nearly 70 percent of scholarships went to individuals employed by cities or regional districts (Table 6). Most scholarships were awarded to individuals taking courses at Capilano University or Coast Mountain College (Table 7).

As intended, the Board continues to assist a broad a range of local government employees as possible. The funds of the scholarship programs continue supporting a high level of skill and professionalism of employees in the local government field.

TABLE 1: BOARD OF EXAMINERS – CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY

Year	SD	LGA	SA	EM	PDE	Certificates Not Awarded / Pending	Total Awarded
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
2023/24	3	1	1	0	0	One LGA certificate is pending Board decision. Two EM Certificates are pending.	5

LEGEND	
SD	Certificate in Local Government Service Delivery
LGA	Certificate in Local Government Administration
SA	Certificate in Local Government Statutory Administration
EM	Certificate in Local Government Executive Management
PDE	Professional Development Endorsement

TABLE 2: CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

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

TABLE 3: CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE

Cities		Districts		Towns		Villages		Regional Districts	
Fort St. John	1			Esquimalt	1	Radium Hot Springs	1		
Quesnel	1								
Victoria	1								
Total	3				1		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 by Applicant
2019/20	84	1	66	15	2	81	1
2020/21	58	6	37	16	0	53	0
2021/22	55	4	34	17	0	51	3
2022/23	42	1	25	15	1	40	0
2023/24	63	2	47	13	1	60	1

TABLE 5: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

UBCM Area Association	#	Region	#	Region	#
AKBLG	7	East Kootenay / Rocky Mountain	8	Okanagan Valley / Similkameen	8
AVICC	5	Lower Mainland	13*	Peace River	0
LMLGA	12*	North and Central Vancouver Island / Sunshine Coast	4	South Vancouver Island	1
NCLGA	26	North Central / Cariboo	5	Thompson / Shuswap / Columbia	2
SILGA	10	North Coast / Nechako	23	West Kootenay / Boundary	0

**Note: One LMLGA / Lower Mainland award was declined.*

TABLE 6: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT TYPE

Cities		Districts		Townships		Town		Regional Districts	
Abbotsford	1	Coldstream	2	Langley	3	Gibsons	1	Alberni-Clayoquot	1
Burnaby	3	New Hazelton	6	Spallumcheen	2			Cariboo	2
Chilliwack	1	Peachland	1					Cowichan Valley	1
Coquitlam	1	Sparwood	2					Central Okanagan	2
Fernie	3	Squamish	2*					Cowichan Valley	1
Mission	1							East Kootenay	1
Nanaimo	1							Kitimat-Stikine	8
Prince George	2							Sunshine Coast	1
Prince Rupert	1								
Revelstoke	2								
Terrace	7								
West Kelowna	1								
Total	24		13		5		1		17

*Note: One District of Squamish award was declined.

TABLE 7: SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY INSTITUTION

Institution	UBCM Commemorative Scholarship	Jeff McKelvey Scholarship
Capilano University	24	8*
Coast Mountain College	18	3
Local Government Management Association of B.C.	1	1
Thompson Rivers University	1	1
University of British Columbia	1	0
University of Victoria	2	0
Total	47	13

*Note: One Capilano University award was declined.