

# **Webinar - JPAAC Presents: Justice of the Peace Ontario - Is this your Calling?**

**Hosted by Nick Charitsis, Chair**

**Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee (JPAAC)**

**Special Guest: Her Worship Libby Garg, Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace**

**Wednesday July 10, 2024**

**12:00pm-1:00pm EST**

**Microsoft Teams Live Events**

# Housekeeping: Before We Start

- Live webinar is being recorded.
- Webinar recording and transcripts will be available on the JPAAC website.
- Webinar slide deck (English & French) is currently available on the [JPAAC website](#).
- Closed captioning is available in English and French.
- Participants cannot turn on cameras or microphones.
- Questions were submitted in advance using Slido, most common questions will be addressed at the end of the webinar.

# Agenda

- Land Acknowledgement
- Introductions
  - Nick Charitsis, JPAAC Chair
  - Her Worship Libby Garg, Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace
- 2024 Justice of the Peace Vacancies
- JPAAC's Mandate and Manner of Operating
- Who We Are
- Process
- Role of a Justice of the Peace in Ontario
- Justice of the Peace Education
- A Day in the Life of a Justice of the Peace
- Questions and Answers
- Closing Remarks

# Land Acknowledgement

*Today we are gathered for this webinar with individuals joining online from all across the province of Ontario. Ontario has the largest Indigenous population of any other province in Canada. There are approximately 134 First Nations in Ontario and growing Inuit and Metis populations. Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and other agreements.*

*Acknowledging the land and traditional territory is a practice of Indigenous people, and can be helpful in learning about the land and area that we are on. Canada's history did not begin with the arrival of the settlers or the creation of Canada or Ontario. It recognizes that the history of the First Peoples in this continent began much earlier.*

*I am pleased to host this meeting today from the Town of Newmarket on the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe peoples, and home to other First Nations since time immemorial.*

*We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories. We are thankful to the Indigenous people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial.*

# Introductions

- Nick Charitsis, JPAAC Chair
  - Appointed as a member of the JPAAC in March 2019.
  - Appointed as Lead for the Central East Region in March 2022.
  - Appointed as Chair of the Committee in May 2024.
  - Called to the Ontario Bar in 2004.
  - Graduate of Osgoode Hall Law School and earned Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1999 from the Schulich School of Business at York University.
  - Has worked as a per diem Assistant Crown Attorney and has practiced criminal defence at his own firm Charitsis Law, since 2006.
- Her Worship Libby Garg, Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace
  - Was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2021.
  - Prior to appointment was an entrepreneur in the restaurant and technology sectors.
  - Called to the Ontario Bar in 2013 and practiced criminal law prior to transitioning to business.
  - Is Siylx and a proud member of the Okanagan Indian Band from British Columbia.
  - Graduate of UBC Law School and earned a Bachelors Degree in Commerce and Economics from UBC's Sauder School of Business.
  - Has served on numerous committees including JPAAC, the Gladue Bail Operations Committee, Gladue Youth Subcommittee, and the Indigenous Initiatives Advisory Committee.

# 2024 Justice of the Peace Vacancies

- **50** new Justice of the Peace vacancies throughout different regions of Ontario (including 10 Bilingual and 7 Indigenous) are live on the [JPAAC Website](#).
- Application deadline: complete applications must be received by **11:59 PM EST on Wednesday July 31, 2024**. Late applications will NOT be accepted.
- Instructions for completing and submitting an application can be found on the [JPAAC Website](#).
- To be informed of future vacancies, you may subscribe to [Vacancy Notifications \(via email\)](#).

# JPAAC's Mandate

- Established under the [\*Justices of the Peace Act\*](#) (1990), the Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee (JPAAC) is responsible for:
  - a) classifying candidates for appointment as justices of the peace;
  - b) reporting on the classifications to the Attorney General; and
  - c) providing advice to the Attorney General respecting the process for appointing justices of the peace in accordance with this Act.

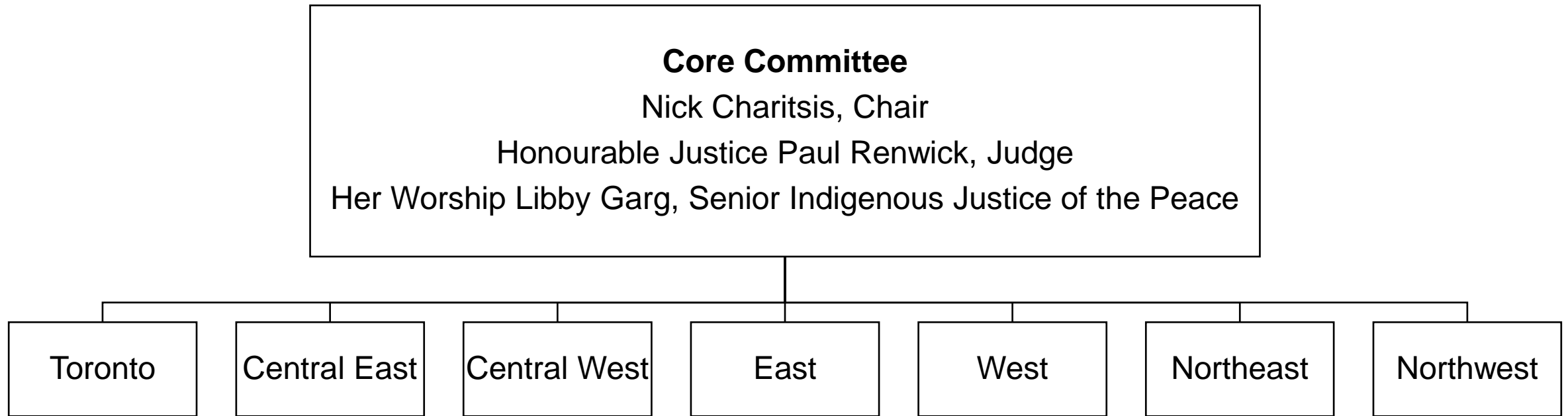
# JPAAC's Manner of Operating

- The manner of JPAAC's operating are set out in the [Justices of the Peace Act](#).
- Key functions include:
  - On the request of the Attorney General, advertise for applications for vacant justice of the peace positions.
  - Review and evaluate all applications received in response to the advertisement, including interviewing any of the candidates.
  - When conducting the review and evaluation process in accordance with the criteria established:
    - a) assess candidates' professional excellence, community awareness, and personal characteristics, and
    - b) recognize the desirability of reflecting the diversity of Ontario society in appointments of justices of the peace.
  - Classify candidates as "Not Recommended", "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended" and provide a list of the classified candidates to the Attorney General, with brief supporting reasons for the candidates classified as "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended".



# Who We Are

- JPAAC consists of up to a total of 38 members composed of the **Core Committee** and **seven regional committees**:



- Each of the seven regional committees is composed of:
  - Three lay members (appointed by the Attorney General);
  - One Law Society of Ontario Licensee (LSO) - paralegal or lawyer;
  - Regional Senior Justice of the Peace (RSJP).
- The Attorney General designates a regional lead for each region from among the regional members for that region.

# Process

- From start to finish, the entire process takes 10-11 months
- **Advertisement, generally 8 weeks:**
  - JPAAC advertises new vacancies on the request of the Attorney General.
  - Application form is updated every year.
  - For the 2024 advertisement, applicants are required to submit the [current prescribed application form](#) via email by Wednesday July 31, 2024 at 11:59pm EST.
- **Interview selection, 2-3 months:**
  - After applications are received, Regional and Core Committee members read **all** applications.
  - Committee discusses the applications to determine by vote who gets an interview.
  - Committee considers how candidates meet the [General Selection Criteria](#) for the position.
  - If you apply for a position identified as bilingual and are selected for an interview, you will be required to complete a standardized language proficiency test, on which you must achieve a Superior level of proficiency.
  - Professional and criminal background checks are conducted.
  - Candidates invited for an interview are required to submit proof they meet the education requirement.

# Process Cont'd

- **Interview:**
  - Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.
  - JPAAC aims to interview several candidates for each vacancy.
  - Interview format:
    - Fast-paced panel interview.
    - Interview is only 30-35 minutes – JPAAC urges candidates to be concise and mindful of the timeframe.
    - Questions are asked by various committee members.
    - Core committee members take part in the review and classification of all applicants.
    - If you applied to a single region, the interview panel will consist of eight JPAAC members.
    - If you applied to multiple regions, the interview panel may be considerably larger.
  - Each regional panel is balanced with representation from the members in the justice system and outside the justice system:
    - 3 judicial officers;
    - 1 LSO representative; and
    - 4 lay members.

# Process Cont'd

- **Interview, cont'd:**
  - JPAAC is looking for:
    - Candidates to demonstrate they meet the qualification criteria and exhibit the traits, character, temperament, disposition, presentation, and preparation needed to be successful in the role of a justice of the peace.
    - How well candidates handle the stress and command the interview process.
- **References and Discrete Inquiries:**
  - JPAAC members may undertake reference checks and/or discreet inquiries as part of the application process.
- **Classifications:**
  - JPAAC meets to discuss the totality of information (application, interview, references, discrete inquiry information, etc.) and votes on classification.
  - Candidates are classified as 'Not-Recommended', 'Recommended' or 'Highly Recommended'.
  - Classifications are provided to the Attorney General.
  - Candidates are not made aware of their classification or process status.

# Appointments

- The Attorney General can only recommend a candidate, who has been classified as “Recommended” or “Highly Recommended” by the Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee, to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to fill a justice of the peace vacancy.
- The appointments are made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and announced on the Ontario Newsroom website:
  - [Subscribe](#) to the [Ontario Newsroom](#) for announcements.

# Role of a Justice of the Peace in Ontario

- Life-time, full-time appointment: mandatory retirement at age 65, however can continue serving full time or as a per diem Justice of the Peace until age 75. Must seek annual approval from the Chief Justice and be approved to serve as a Justice of the Peace from age 65 to 75.
- \$172,010/year + pension and benefits.
- Independent judicial officer ... can be an isolating position.
- Our Justice of the Peace complement is 348, when all positions in Ontario are filled. In addition, currently there are 84 Justices of the Peace who are retired but continue to work on a per diem basis.
- “The front-door to the Ontario justice system”:
  - Provincial offences, bail hearings, search warrants and production orders, criminal and provincial case management court, peace bond applications, and intake of court and private complaints.
- Extensive travel required
  - Travel is required to Toronto for 10 weeks of initial education throughout approximately the first year after appointment. In addition, during that first year and throughout the career of a Justice of the Peace, travel is routinely required to preside in various courts within the region you were appointed to, and occasionally throughout the entire province. Travel is also required to various locations throughout the province and within your region for semi-annual conferences, other seminars and annual regional meetings. “Seniority” of a Justice of the Peace has no bearing on the amount of travel.

# Role of a Justice of the Peace in Ontario Cont'd

- Working in-person
  - All Justices of the Peace are required to preside and work from a courthouse, the location of which will be assigned by the RSJP and can vary from day to day and week to week. Justices of the Peace cannot work from home.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule is required
  - Last minute (often morning of) schedule changes to the type and location of court assignment are common, and are determined by the RSJP based on operational needs of the court. Justices of the Peace do not control their own schedule. Work days can be very long due to long court lists, unexpected delays in court and sometimes due to travel. One or two bail courts per region and in some regions certain intake courts are open on weekends and all statutory holidays. Justices of the Peace are therefore sometimes required to work weekends/statutory holidays in these courts. Justices of the Peace are also sometimes required to work overnight or 12 hours days to receive Telewarrants (electronic search warrant applications).
- No base court location transfers for a minimum of 5 years and even then only if a base court has a vacancy and the transfer meets the court's operational needs.

# Justice of the Peace Education

- Upon appointment, 12-14 months dedicated to initial education and mentoring comprised of:
  - 10 weeks of in-person and in-class education in Toronto,
  - Shadow and mentoring by experienced Justices of the Peace in the court locations assigned to,
  - Will preside over various courts when ready in increments as the initial education program progresses,
- Ongoing education and continuous professional development.



# A Day in the Life of a Justice of the Peace

- What does a typical day look like as a justice of the peace?
  - Every day is different and it varies by region
  - Work always involves:
    - Making quick decisions that are based in law and supported by reasons
    - Balancing interests
- What do you enjoy most about being a justice of the peace?
  - The variety involved in the work and providing a public service for a diverse group of people
- What is most challenging about being a justice of the peace?
  - Being a small part of a much larger legal system
    - Distinct from other types of public social support systems
  - Limited jurisdiction but large breadth of matters within that jurisdiction
    - Must be at ease returning to an assignment after a month and be an expert without the muscle memory that comes from daily practice
  - The role can be isolating dealing with people in crisis and working as independent judicial officers in court

# Do You Have What It Takes?

- Minimum qualifications for consideration for an appointment as a justice of the peace are set out in subsections 2(1.1), (1.2) and (1.3) of the [Justices of the Peace Act](#).
- In addition, JPAAC has [General Selection Criteria](#) and the JPAAC website outlines the [Skills, Abilities and Personal Characteristics](#) desired in a justice of the peace:
  - Demonstrated decision making capacity and good judgement, including high ethical standards in work and personal life.
  - Demonstrated understanding of and connection to the community.
  - Cultural competency: understanding of diversity and issues specific to each community to which a candidate is applying.
  - Understanding of the role
    - Court observations, a true appreciation of the complexities and challenges, including the requirement to make difficult decisions in a fast paced, constantly changing environment.
    - Ability to learn and use new technology.
    - Ability to work independently in isolating situations.
    - Importance of confidentiality and discretion.
    - Impact on a personal level (flexibility required, travel, long-hours, witness to trauma, psychological and physical demands).
  - Empathy, compassion, patience and integrity.
  - Transferable skills.

# Preparing Your Application

- Refer to the [JPAAC website](#) for application form and instructions.
- Review the [Selection Criteria](#).
- Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Pay close attention to instructions on the Frequently Asked Question “How can I observe Justices of the Peace presiding in court?”
  - *Ontario Courts of Justice (Criminal and Provincial Offences Act)* court locations’ addresses and contact information are listed.
  - Observing courts is important to preparing a good application, start early and plan ahead!
- Begin compiling transcripts and proof of post-secondary education or an equivalency program (and translate, if applicable) as soon as possible.
- Referees
  - Provide current phone and email address.
  - Need to be people that can speak to the information you provided in your application (professional or community engagement).
  - Find referees who want to be referees and can speak to your skills, character and attributes.

# Submitting Your Application

- Pay attention to detail!
  - Use JPAAC's [current prescribed application form](#).
  - Incomplete applications and applications with missing information or documentation will not be considered.
  - Use required file naming convention.
- Do not miss the deadline.
- Only submit one application per candidate to: [JPAAC.Application@ontario.ca](mailto:JPAAC.Application@ontario.ca).
- Have questions? Contact us at [JPAAC.Info@ontario.ca](mailto:JPAAC.Info@ontario.ca).

# Preparing for the Virtual Interview

- If selected for an interview, all interviews will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.
- If selected for an interview, you should appear from a quiet and private location, free from distractions such as pets or other individuals passing through the frame of view. You must attend your interview alone and should not have anyone else in the room with you.
- Technical tips:
  - Arrange for a place with good internet connection.
  - Test the connection.
  - Take advantage of the offer to do a test run with the JPAAC support staff.
  - Save the e-mail with the link to the virtual interview.

# Apply and Spread the Word

- Are you interested in the position and think you have the required qualifications?
  - Apply!
  - Ensure you are able to preside in the locations/regions you are applying to:
    - No court location transfers for a minimum of 5 years and even then only if a courthouse has a vacancy and the transfer meets the court's operational needs.
- Encourage others to apply.
  - Share the message far and wide.
  - JPAAC is looking for a diversity of applicants from all corners of Ontario.

# Question 1: “Can I continue working in my current position or take on another part-time job after I am appointed as a justice of the peace?”

- On appointment, a justice of the peace must cease other employment and shall not engage in any other remunerative work without the approval of the [Justices of the Peace Review Council](#).
- Must disclose any professional organization or association to which you are or have been a member.
- It typically takes approximately two weeks from notification of the appointment to assuming the role of a justice of the peace.
- Justices of the peace must avoid any conflict of interest, or the appearance of any conflict of interest.
- Justices of the peace must not participate in any partisan political activity, including financial contributions to any political party.
- Justices of the peace may still be involved in community activities, provided such involvement is not incompatible with their judicial office.

## **Question 2: “I am currently working outside of the justice sector and do not have a legal background. Should I apply?”**

- This is a lay bench - you do not require legal education or experience in the justice system to apply.
- Onboarding, education and mentorship are provided to successful candidates.
- Successful candidates come from a diverse range of professional backgrounds, including but not limited to, education, law enforcement and business.
- JPAAC is looking at you as an individual and at your ability to make decisions.



# Question 3: “Who can I choose as my references?”

- References, also known as referees, who can speak to your professional qualifications and your community service efforts.
- The best referees truly understand the candidate as well as the role of a justice of the peace.
- References can come from within and outside of the justice system.

# **Question 4: “Why is community service a consideration in the application process? How will limited or lack of volunteer experience impact my application?”**

- Demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the community is one of the criteria considered by JPAAC.
- Public service is at the core of the justice of the peace position.
- Candidates should demonstrate they have an active connection to the community and an awareness and understanding of regional and social issues that give rise to cases coming before the courts.
- Volunteer experience is one of the best ways to demonstrate this.

# Question 5: “How can a candidate observe court and what emphasis is placed on court observations in the application process?”

- Observing Court:
  - Court proceedings can be accessed virtually or in-person and are open to members of the public, subject to any legislation, judicial direction or order.
  - Details can be found by reviewing instructions on the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) “How can I observe Justices of the Peace presiding in court?”
    - *Ontario Courts of Justice (Criminal and Provincial Offences Act)* court locations’ addresses and contact information are listed
- Application Process:
  - By observing court, applicants should appreciate and understand the role of a Justice of the Peace.
  - JPAAC highly recommends that you visit every court for which you are applying.
  - Most of the successful candidates have demonstrated an understanding of the role of a Justice of the Peace after many hours of court observation.

Thank You

[JPAAC.Info@ontario.ca](mailto:JPAAC.Info@ontario.ca)

[www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/jpaac](http://www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/jpaac)