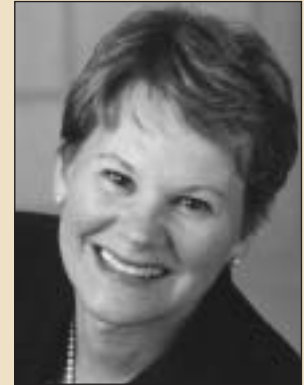


Laurie Salvador



How to Become a Notary Public in British Columbia

New clients, particularly those from out of province, are always interested to learn that BC Notaries can practise in more areas of the law than do Notaries in other jurisdictions. This authority stems from our historical roots in British common law.

According to our provincial archives, these rights were grandfathered to Notaries Public practising at the time of the amalgamation of the two colonies—The Colony of British Columbia and the Colony of Vancouver Island. “All Notaries Public duly appointed in the said late Colony (of Vancouver Island) at the said Proclamation (*1867 Ordinance*) shall be deemed to have been and be entitled to practise as such Notaries Public in the Colony of British Columbia.”

When BC eventually joined Confederation in 1871, the rights of BC Notaries were again grandfathered, and ratified by the revised *Notaries Public Appointment Act of 1897*, which carried all the rights and authority they had brought with them from their British forefathers.

What does it take to become a Notary in British Columbia today? Most North Americans are quite surprised to learn about our unique criteria and process.

Every year, The Society office will deliver more than 1,500 information packages to persons interested in our profession. Applicants receive a preliminary vetting in the areas of educational background and business experience; a Criminal Records check is conducted.

Candidates who speak more than one language and who are active in their ethnic community are welcomed, provided they

meet all other criteria. We want to offer notarial services to as many ethnic communities as possible. A large percentage of BC Notaries speak two languages; many speak multiple languages.

We also look for individuals of high moral character, and who have exemplary involvement with their communities.

The BC Notaries' course material is both challenging and stimulating.

Here are the guidelines for every BC Notarial applicant.

1. Candidates must be graduates of a recognized university and possess a sound business or employment background of at least five years' practical experience in a related field. Preference will be shown to those with a background of legal experience, professional accounting, banking (loans or management), insurance (nominee level), real estate, or other areas of noncontentious jurisdiction; all International credentials must be compared to our provincial and national systems.
2. Candidates must demonstrate above-average ability to communicate, verbally and in writing, in accordance with accepted business norms, and must successfully pass an English language

proficiency test (Language Proficiency Index or LPI).

3. Candidates are expected to be computer-literate and equipped and capable of accessing the Internet.
4. Candidates must be willing and able to set up an independent Notarial practice accessible to the public, and should not be involved in a business that might be considered a conflict of interest.
5. Candidates must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.
6. Candidates must not have a criminal or bankruptcy record, nor a conviction of moral turpitude.
7. Candidates should have a history of community service.

The BC Notaries' course material is both challenging and stimulating. Of the original applicants, approximately 15 to 25 will be chosen to take the Notaries' course offered through the University of British Columbia; 75 percent will finish the course and graduate to become BC Notaries, ready to practise in a district where a Seal is available. This process will take approximately two-and-a-half years.

We are pleased to welcome the 12 Notaries from the Class of 2002 to our prestigious Tradition of Trust. ▲

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