

# Vendor Code of Conduct

## Purpose

Legal Aid BC (LABC) is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, respect, and public responsibility in all its operations. We expect our vendors to share and embody these values. This Vendor Code of Conduct outlines the principles and expectations for all vendors, contractors, consultants, and suppliers engaged with LABC.

## 1. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Vendors must comply with all applicable federal, provincial, Indigenous, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances in the jurisdictions where they operate. This includes, but is not limited to, laws related to labour, privacy, health and safety, environmental protection, and anti-corruption.

Vendors must respect the intellectual property rights of LABC and any third parties. This includes adhering to copyright, trademark, patent, and confidentiality laws and refraining from violating, misappropriating or breaching third party intellectual property rights. Vendors shall not use, disclose, or distribute any proprietary information, software, or content without proper authorization. Any use of intellectual property must be legal, ethical, and in compliance with applicable agreements and licenses.

## 2. Ethical Business Practices and Conflicts of Interest

Vendors shall conduct their business ethically, honestly, and with integrity and avoid conduct that may harm the reputation of LABC. They must avoid any form of corruption, bribery, dishonesty, or fraudulent activities. This includes offering, authorizing, giving, or accepting anything of value, either directly or indirectly through a third party, to obtain or retain business, direct business to any person, to influence a governmental employee or official, or otherwise gain an improper advantage.

Vendors must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to LABC. They should avoid situations where personal interests could conflict with their duties and responsibilities to LABC and its clients.

Gift-giving and hospitality is a common business and social practice. However, these must not create or appear to create any obligation, bias, or expectation of favourable treatment. Any gift or offer that could compromise or appear to compromise the independence or impartiality of LABC staff or Board members is strictly prohibited.

## 3. Labour and Human Rights

Vendors shall uphold fair employment practices, including the prohibition of forced labour, human trafficking, child labour, and discrimination. They must ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

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Vendors are required to provide a work environment for their employees that is free from harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, and any form of abusive or threatening behaviour. Vendors must establish and enforce policies to prevent such conduct, ensuring that all employees work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and safety. Any complaints of harassment must be promptly addressed and investigated with appropriate corrective actions taken.

Vendors are responsible for providing a safe and healthy working environment for their employees. They must comply with all relevant health and safety laws and regulations.

Vendors must respect workers' rights to freely associate, join unions, and participate in collective bargaining. Vendors shall not interfere with, discriminate against, or retaliate against employees who exercise these rights.

Vendors must take steps to proactively prevent, identify and address any practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of their Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or class of persons, in a manner contrary to human rights laws.

## 4. Environmental Responsibility

Vendors should operate in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. They are expected to comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations and strive to minimize their environmental impact.

## 5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Vendors must protect the confidentiality of all information entrusted to them by LABC or its clients. They should not disclose any confidential information without prior written consent from LABC. Additionally, vendors must comply with all applicable data protection, privacy, and anti-spam laws.

Vendors are expected to promptly report and make immediate efforts to contain any breach of confidential or personal information and cooperate with LABC in any reasonable response measures.

## 6. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect

Legal Aid BC is deeply committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation, and we expect our vendors to uphold the same principles. Vendors must demonstrate cultural knowledge and sensitivity, including acknowledging and respecting the unique histories, cultures, protocols, and rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada. In addition, vendors are expected to ensure that goods and services are trauma-informed and culturally-informed.

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Vendors must also actively support equity, diversity, and inclusion in their internal practices and interactions with LABC, its clients, and communities. This means ensuring that all services, communications, and engagements are respectful, inclusive, and free from discrimination or bias based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other protected characteristics. Vendors should strive toward systemic transformation and anti-oppressive organizational practices and investments, aligning with LABC's vision of a legal system transformed into one more equitable and inclusive.

## 7. Reporting and Accountability

Individuals are encouraged to report any unethical behaviour, violations of this Code, or concerns regarding illegal activities involving a vendor's relationship with LABC. For information on how to submit a report please visit: [legalaidsbc.ca/contact/complaints](https://legalaidsbc.ca/contact/complaints)

LABC strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith. Those who come forward with concerns will be protected and respected throughout the reporting process.

Vendors are expected to take corrective action promptly if any violation of this Code is identified. LABC reserves the right to investigate reported concerns and to take appropriate measures, which may include terminating contracts or partnerships if necessary.

Vendors must cooperate fully with any investigations conducted by LABC regarding compliance with this Code.

## 8. Compliance and Monitoring

LABC reserves the right to assess and monitor vendors' compliance with this Code. Vendors shall maintain records to evidence compliance with this Vendor Code of Conduct and LABC has the right to obtain proof of compliance with the standards set forth herein. Non-compliance may result in corrective actions, including termination of the business relationship.

By engaging with LABC, vendors acknowledge and agree to adhere to this Vendor Code of Conduct. We value our partnerships and look forward to working together to uphold these standards.

December 19, 2024: Approved by Executive Management Committee