



Alberta College of
Speech-Language Pathologists
and Audiologists

2024 Annual Plan and Budget

Approved November 18, 2023

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Part I – Introduction and Background

1.1 Message from ACSLPA Council, Registrar, and CEO

ACSLPA regulates the practice of speech-language pathologists and audiologists on behalf of all Albertans by establishing, maintaining, and enforcing standards for competent, safe, and ethical practice. ACSLPA's regulatory work includes but is not limited to:

- setting admission standards for the professions,
- considering applications for regulated membership and issuing practice permits,
- creating and enforcing a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice,
- investigating complaints of unprofessional conduct,
- administering hearings and appeals,
- creating guidelines and practice documents, and
- enforcing Continuing Competence standards.

ACSLPA is an independent public agency created and empowered by *the Health Professions Act* (HPA). The College operates under a shared-governance model in which 50% of the governing Council are made up of individuals from the public appointed by Government (vacancies remain) and 50% are made up of registered members of ACSLPA.

Under shared governance, ACSLPA's members continue to experience many of the privileges of self-regulation, meaning that ACSLPA's regulation is shaped substantially by registered members of the College who are obligated to the public and to each other to uphold the public interest. Features of self-regulation continue to be present through the volunteer work of registered members on the ACSLPA Council, Registration Committee, Membership List, Continuing Competence Committee, IDEA Committee and various taskforces and working groups who meet throughout the year. Self-regulation is also demonstrated through the individual efforts of regulated members in their practice who uphold the public interest through their work and their commitment to competent, safe, and ethical practice each day.

In addition to fulfilling ACSLPA's mandate and incremental improvements to our operations, the focus of the 2024 Annual Plan and Budget is to implement the second year of ACSLPA's [2023-2025 Strategic Plan](#).

The 2024 Annual Plan and Budget is intended to help interested stakeholders learn more about ACSLPA's direction and priorities for the year. The annual plan has been prepared by staff and approved and endorsed by ACSLPA Council.

Nicole Baumbach

Nicole Baumbach, R.SLP
President

Susan Rafaat

Susan Rafaat, R.SLP
Registrar

Melanie Sicotte

Melanie Sicotte, R.SLP
CEO

1.2 ACSLPA Organizational Overview

ACSLPA regulates two distinct but related professions; audiology and speech-language pathology.

The College is a dynamic professional regulatory organization. It deals with duties and obligations of a regulator as well as the challenges and opportunities of a not-for profit organization.

Almost all ACSLPA's operating revenue comes from fees paid by its roughly 1,800 regulated members.

ACSLPA is governed by a Council that consists of:

- six regulated SLPs and Audiologists selected by members of the College through an election process, and
- six public members appointed by the Government of Alberta to represent the public (two vacancies remain).

The College staff currently consists of:

- three full-time employees,
- four part-time employees, and
- two casual employees.

ACSLPA has the following committees, which include volunteer registered members:

- Registration Committee,
- Competence Committee,
- Membership List (source of members for Hearing Panels and Complaint Review Committees),
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee, and
- Nominations Committee.

Ad-hoc committees, working groups, and taskforces are called as needed.

Part II – Planned Activities & Costs by Area

The total budgeted operating expense for ACSLPA's operational activities in 2024 is \$1,483,750 (2023 operating budget: \$1,451,250) against anticipated revenues of \$1,373,000 (2023 budgeted operating revenue: \$1,182,000). The result will be a budgeted shortfall of \$110,750 (2023 budgeted shortfall: \$269,250) which will be drawn from ACSLPA's invested savings. Invested savings plus reserves were \$1,416,192 on September 30, 2023, which is above our required reserved amount of \$1,100,000.

ACSLPA's 2024 capital budget is \$9,000 (2023 capital budget: \$59,500). Capital spending (e.g., computers) is amortized, or expensed against ACSLPA's operating budget, over the useful life of assets (i.e., multiple years).

I. Functional Area: Council & Governance (100)

2024 Area Budget: \$54,500

2023 Area Budget: \$54,000

The Council of ACSLPA fulfills leadership and adjudicative roles. In its leadership role, the Council is the governing body of the College. In its adjudicative role, the Council hears reviews and appeals from the registration and conduct areas of the College.

Upward inflationary cost pressure on postage and deliveries, travel, accommodations, and food for meetings and the in-person retreat are being offset by savings realized by reducing the number of Council meetings in 2024. Elected Council members will receive honorariums for attendance at meetings in accordance with policy. Budget is included for consultants for Council.

In 2024, the work of the Council will include:

- Orientation for new and returning Council members,
- Nomination and election of Council members,
- Four regular hybrid Council meetings (full day), of which two will occur in Calgary and two will occur in Edmonton for those attending in person, and special meetings as needed,
- At least two Council dinners with stakeholders,
- One in-person retreat (1.5 days), which will be planned at a central location in Alberta,
- Registrar and CEO performance reviews,
- Training for members of Council, and
- Regular council committee meetings.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Implementing the new code of conduct, senior leadership performance review policy, and Council knowledge, skills and experience inventory self-assessment and self-identification tools,
- Finishing the College's risk register and determining ways to integrate consideration of risk and risk tolerance into decision-making,
- Refining regulated council member recruitment processes,
- Re-visiting the Council honorariums policy,
- Reviewing the College's reserves policies,
- Beginning to develop frameworks for measuring the College's and Council's effectiveness, and
- Finalizing a process for senior leadership succession planning.

II. Functional Area: Key College Documents (110)

2024 Area Budget: \$9,000

2023 Area Budget: \$15,000

Key College Documents are the set of directives or principles that govern the conduct of regulated members in their professional practice. ACSLPA has a legislated obligation to establish, maintain, and enforce standards of practice and a code of ethics, and to provide direction to regulated members in their practice.

Budget decrease reflects plan to have staff, rather than consultants, complete more work in this area in 2024.

In 2024, the routine work in the Key College Documents functional area will include:

- Ongoing incremental improvements and/or updates to key college documents as required.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Monitoring the need for a key college document related to artificial intelligence,
- Working with national partners to consider a future national update to the Competency Profiles for the professions,
- Revising Standard of Practice 4.6 Human Resources Management,
- Updating Guideline on Therapeutic Relationships, Professional Boundaries, and the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct,
- Developing a standard on ordering ionizing radiation for the purposes of videofluoroscopic swallowing studies,
- Creating a key college document on referral for medical consultation, and
- Reviewing and broadening existing anti-discrimination and anti-racism guidelines and standards to ensure they incorporate Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism.

III. Functional Area: Affiliations (120)

2024 Area Budget: \$27,500

2023 Area Budget: \$8,000

ACSLPA's effectiveness is enhanced through its affiliations with other organizations that have similar interests and needs. Working in association with others allows for harmonization of requirements, mutual assistance (particularly on complex regulatory matters), and sharing of costs and workload on issues of common concern.

The College expects a significant increase in work in this area in 2024 and an increase in related costs for professional fees (e.g., legal, consultants) and travel (e.g., to meetings where national audiology and speech-language pathology regulators will work on a new permanent structure for collaboration).

In 2024, the routine work in the Affiliations functional area will include:

- Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professions (AFRHP):
 - Continuing Competence Interest Group,
 - Registration Interest Group,
 - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Interest Group,
 - Professional Conduct Interest Group,
 - Hearings Director Interest Group,
 - Virtual Care Interest Group, and
 - Communications Interest Group.

- Other affiliations to maintain:
 - Alberta Education,
 - Alberta Health,
 - Alberta employers of speech-language pathologists and audiologists,
 - Alberta Association of Audiologists,
 - Council for the Accreditation of Canadian University Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CACUP-ASLP),
 - Including the National Regulatory Panel (NRP),
 - Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR),
 - Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE),
 - Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC),
 - University of Alberta Communication Sciences and Disorders Department and Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine,
 - The Working Group for Canadian Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Regulators, and
 - Individual Colleges in Alberta and Canada with common interests/needs.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Sharing information and developing new connections with Alberta employers of speech-language pathologists and audiologists,
- Strengthening ACSLPA's connection with Alberta Education,
- Collaborating with the Working Group for Canadian Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Regulators on a national language proficiency standard and work towards establishing a structure for ongoing collaboration,
- Actively participating as the regulatory representative to the CACUP-ASLP Secretariat and chairing the National Regulatory Panel,
- Pursuing an advanced authorization for speech-language pathologists to order ionizing radiation for videofluoroscopic swallowing studies,
- Strengthening and leveraging connections with affiliates to enable ACSLPA to gather information from the Alberta public and regulated members to inform the College's regulatory decisions and help ACSLPA fulfill its mandate of public protection, and
- Establishing connections with Indigenous peoples and First Nations to facilitate quality SLP and audiology services for Indigenous peoples.

IV. Functional Area: Registration/Renewal/Title Enforcement (200)

2024 Area Budget: \$25,000

2023 Area Budget: \$10,000

One of the key pillars of ACSLPA's regulatory mandate is to establish, maintain, and enforce registration, title use, and renewal standards for the professions. Registration includes admissions (applications), renewal, reinstatement, status changes, the public and internal registers, interprovincial mobility, foreign qualification recognition, and currency hours. Effectiveness in this area requires establishing admissions requirements and standards, engaging with pan-Canadian stakeholders, and close adherence to the *Fair Registration Practice Act*.

Budget increase reflects allocation of member portal database licensing and maintenance costs to individual functional areas rather than having all these costs allocated to the Administration functional area.

In 2024, the routine work in the Registration/Renewal/Title Enforcement functional area will include:

- Registrations, renewals, reinstatements, retirements, and status changes,
- Ongoing incremental improvements and/or updates to registration processes and policies,
- Monitoring non-compliance related to professional liability insurance (PLI) and completion of jurisprudence requirements,
- Receiving complaints against individuals and corporations for inappropriate use of reserved SLP and audiology titles,
- Identifying non-compliance related to title use through self-initiated searches, and
- Contacting individuals and organizations that are suspected of being non-compliant to educate them about the reserved title provisions of the *HPA* and promote compliance. In some instances, legal action may be required to ensure compliance.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Participating in a national working group re-examining national English language proficiency requirements,
- Developing training and resources for individuals participating in supervised practice,
- Considering changes to requirements for registered members who do not hold an active practice permit (non-practicing),
- Investigating use of entry-to-practice exams and/or supervised practice for all applicants, and
- Supporting registered members returning to active practice with information about requirements and processes.

V. Functional Area: Conduct (210)

2024 Area Budget: \$23,250

2023 Area Budget: \$27,250

One of the key pillars of ACSLPA's regulatory mandate is to receive and investigate complaints against members for unprofessional (unskilled or unethical) practice. The Complaints and Investigations functional area requires the legislated authority of the Complaints Director and Investigator(s) at various points. Primary areas of focus include establishing and communicating appropriate processes, conducting investigations, administering fair and impartial processes and decision-making, identifying opportunities for improvement in other regulatory areas and supporting their adoption, and elevating general awareness of professional conduct among members and the public.

In 2024, the routine work in the Complaints/Investigations functional area will include:

- Receiving and responding to complaints,
- Optimizing professional conduct processes, and
- Advising from a conduct perspective on other regulatory projects and College work.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Implementing publication policies introduced in 2023,
- Completing transition to electronic management of complaints data,
- Reviewing processes around fitness-to-practice and capacity related complaints and concerns, and
- Learning more about how other Colleges are eliciting feedback from individuals involved in the complaints process and how they are using the data they collect.

VI. Functional Area: Hearings & Appeals (220)

2024 Area Budget: \$42,000

2023 Area Budget: \$0

As part of ACSLPA's key pillar to receive and investigate complaints against members for unprofessional (unskilled or unethical) practice, ACSLPA also administers hearings, appeals, registration reviews, and complaint reviews. Hearings are called for the purpose of determining whether a member has engaged in unprofessional conduct. Appeals, registration reviews, and complaint reviews exist as an accountability measure to ensure decisions are fair and appropriate in the circumstances. The Hearings and Appeals functional area requires the legislated authority of the Hearings Director, the Complaints Director, Complaints Review Committees, Hearing Tribunals, and Council at various points.

It is not possible to accurately predict income or expenses for this functional area each year as they depend on the complaints that are received and decisions of the tribunals or committees with respect to fines imposed and cost recovery awarded to ACSLPA. Historically, in most years ACSLPA has no hearings, review committees and appeals, and thus no income or costs. In 2023, no hearing and reviews were anticipated, so \$0 was budgeted. In 2024, hearings and reviews are anticipated. If costs exceed budget, funds may be moved from the Professional Conduct Reserve to cover additional costs for current year tribunals and committees as needed. The Professional Conduct Reserve will be replenished the following year, and this amount will be included in that year's budget.

In 2024, the routine work in the Hearings/Appeals functional area will include:

- Receive requests and applications, and
- Hold hearings, appeals, registration reviews, and complaint reviews as requested.

Area of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Documenting and optimizing hearing processes.

VII. Functional Area: Continuing Competence (240)

2024 Area Budget: \$14,000

2023 Area Budget: \$7,500

One of the key pillars of ACSLPA's regulatory mandate is to establish, maintain and enforce a Continuing Competence Program (CCP). Primary areas of focus include establishing and communicating the requirements of the CCP, administering fair and impartial processes and decision-making, conducting an annual audit of participation by members in the program, addressing competence concerns, and elevating general awareness of the importance of Continuing Competence among members and the public.

ACSLPA staff completed practice assessments during the 2023 pilot. Beginning in 2024 contract practice assessors will assist with practice assessments. Budget increase reflects this change plus the allocation of member portal database licensing and maintenance costs to individual functional areas rather than having all database costs allocated to the Administration functional area.

In 2024, the routine work in Continuing Competence will include:

- Assisting regulated members to participate in the Continuing Competence Program by responding to inquiries and facilitating access to the online tools,
- Completing the annual CCP audit, and
- As needed, completing record reviews and on-site visit components of the CCP practice review.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Completing full online operationalization of CCP, including all practice assessment stages,
- Continuing competence committee retreat focusing on required training,
- Training CCP practice assessors, and
- Piloting at least the record review component of the CCP practice review.

VIII. Functional Area: Committee Development & Recognition (300)

2024 Area Budget: \$15,750

2023 Area Budget: \$17,500

The purpose of Committee Development and Recognition is to develop and recognize the volunteer members of our statutory, standing, and ad hoc committees. Education and training are provided for committee members to assist them with fulfilling their committee responsibilities. Members of Statutory Committees will receive honorariums for attendance at meetings in accordance with policy.

Year-over-year budget change reflects that less committee members are claiming honorariums than initially expected offset by an expected increase in honorariums for hearings and appeals.

In 2024, the routine work in Committee Development & Recognition will include:

- Training for committee members, and
- Recognizing the contributions of committee members.

IX. Functional Area: Regulatory Support (310)

2024 Area Budget: \$1,000

2023 Area Budget: \$3,000

Regulatory support includes providing proactive information to members on professional regulatory issues and topics including Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Advisory Statements, and Practice Guidelines. Some information is pushed out to registered members, and some is provided in response to individual or group inquiries. Member education aims to provide opportunities for members to increase their competence and awareness of professional regulatory issues. Topics are selected based on their current relevance, particularly in relation to potential risk to the public.

The year-over-year budget decrease reflects ACSLPA's plan to have most webinars provided by staff.

In 2024, the work in Regulatory Support will include:

- Virtual member education sessions on professional regulatory issues and key college documents,
- Regulatory support to members via telephone, email, website, social media and written articles, and
- Participation in student training in the University of Alberta Communication Sciences and Disorders Department on a range of professional topics to better equip them for success as practicing professionals and to better familiarize them with the role of ACSLPA as a public agency.

Areas of special focus for 2024 will include:

- Indigenous cultural safety and cultural humility, and
- Health and wellness for regulated members.

X. Functional Area: Administration (400)

2024 Area Budget: \$294,750

2023 Area Budget: \$332,000

2024 Capital Budget: \$9,000

2023 Capital Budget: \$59,500

The Administration functional area encompasses all the overhead costs required to support ACSLPA except salaries and wages. This includes everything from paper and postage to contract professional fees and information technology (IT) security.

The year-over-year budget decrease reflects work towards realizing savings on all administrative areas (e.g., bank charges, IT support, publications and printing, professional fees), allocation of member portal database costs to individual functional areas, and anticipated decrease in depreciation (due to savings realized in 2023 on website re-design and transition away from physical IT server). Some of these savings are offset by anticipated inflation-related increases for insurance, rent, travel, and meetings.

Capital spending (e.g., computers) is amortized, or expensed against ACSLPA's operating budget, over the useful life of assets (i.e., multiple years).

In 2024, the routine work in Administration will include:

- Providing operational support and resources for all regulatory and governance activities,
- Accounting, year-end audit, and annual reporting,
- Management and stewardship of investments and accounts,
- Maintenance and support of IT infrastructure and security,
- Human resources support,
- Communications, and
- Ongoing incremental improvements and/or updates to finance, human resources, IT, occupational health and safety, and communications processes and policies.

Areas of special focus in 2024 will include:

- Evaluating whether to introduce a monthly pre-authorized pre-payment plan for renewal,
- Providing IT training for staff,
- Implementing new ACSLPA Style Guide,
- Adding new jurisprudence modules to ACSLPA's website,
- Continuing the ongoing review of ACSLPA's HR policies and implementing changes resulting from the first year of the HR policy review in 2023,
- Beginning development of an annual engagement survey to gather information from registered members to inform the College's regulatory decisions and help ACSLPA evaluate its effectiveness, and
- Adopting a communications strategy that will include data tracking and metrics for the College's communications channels.

XI. Functional Area: Salaries, Wages & Benefits (410)

2024 Area Budget: \$977,000

2023 Area Budget: \$977,000

Salaries, wages & benefits are by far ACSLPA's largest cost center. The reason for this is that we provide services to people (members, the public, other stakeholders, etc.) and the bulk of those services are provided by staff. ACSLPA does not have significant materials, facilities, or product costs because, unlike some other businesses, our materials and products are mainly ideas and words (written, spoken, or otherwise).