

Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada's 2026-27 Departmental plan

Vision, mission, raison d'être and operating context

Vision

The Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada (ORSCC) is recognized as a leader in court administration.

Mission

The Supreme Court of Canada is Canada's final court of appeal. It serves Canadians by deciding legal issues of public importance, thereby contributing to the development of all branches of law applicable within Canada.

The Court is committed to:

- the rule of law;
- independence and impartiality; and
- access to justice.

The Office of the Registrar supports the Court by:

- providing administrative services tailored to the Court's needs;
- encouraging the dedication, pride and professionalism of its staff;
- respecting diversity and linguistic duality;
- collaborating with other courts and legal institutions.

Raison d'être

Created by an Act of Parliament in 1875, the Supreme Court of Canada is Canada's final court of appeal. It serves Canadians by deciding legal issues of public importance, thereby contributing to the development of all branches of law applicable within Canada.

The independence of the Court, the quality of its work and the esteem in which it is held both in Canada and abroad contribute significantly as foundations for a secure, strong and democratic country founded on the rule of law. The Supreme Court of Canada is an important national institution, positioned at the pinnacle of the judicial branch of government in Canada, separate from and independent of the executive and legislative branches of government.

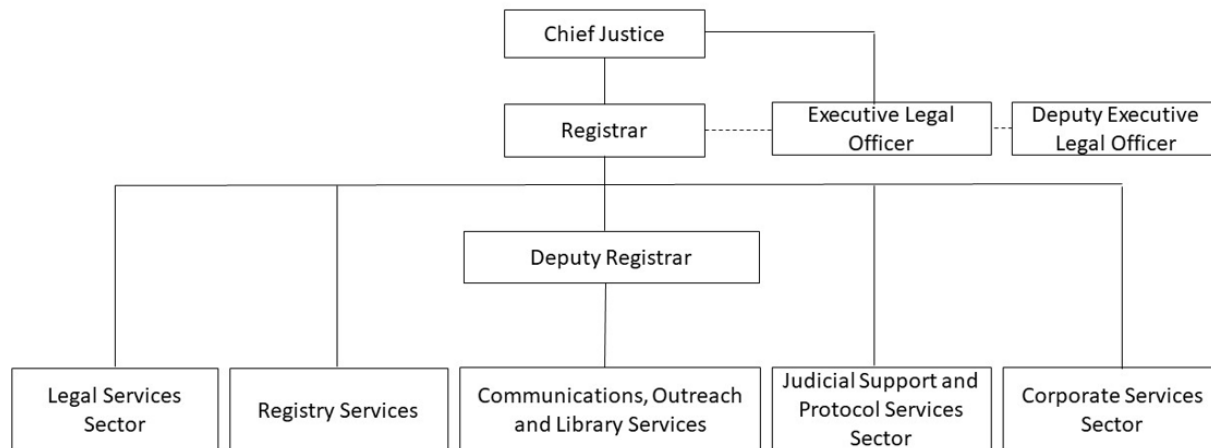
The ORSCC provides all necessary services and support for the Court to process, hear and decide cases. It also serves as the interface between litigants and the Court.

More detailed information on the Court’s responsibilities, the hearing process and judgments is available on the [Supreme Court of Canada website](#).

Operating context

In accordance with the *Supreme Court Act*, the Court consists of nine judges, including the Chief Justice of Canada, all of whom are appointed by the Governor in Council. The Court hears appeals from the decisions of the highest courts of final resort of the provinces and territories, as well as from the Federal Court of Appeal and the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada. In addition, the Court provides advisory opinions on questions referred to it by the Governor in Council. The importance of the Court’s decisions for Canadian society is well recognized. The Court assures uniformity, consistency and correctness in the articulation, development and interpretation of legal principles throughout the Canadian judicial system. Its jurisdiction is derived from the *Supreme Court Act* and other Acts of Parliament, such as the *Criminal Code*.

The *Supreme Court Act* provides that the Registrar shall, under the direction of the Chief Justice, superintend the officers, clerks and employees of the Court, report and publish the judgments of the Court, as well as manage and control the library of the Court. The Registrar is appointed by the Governor in Council and heads the ORSCC, being responsible for the management of its employees, resources and activities. The organization of the ORSCC is depicted in the following diagram and further explained in the paragraphs below.



Legal Services Sector: Composed of the Law Branch and Reports Branch this sector is responsible for the provision of legal advice and operational support for the judges of the Court in regard to case management, from the initial filing to the publication of the final judgment on an appeal.

Registry Services: The Registry is the point of contact between the Court and litigants and provides information and services to counsel and litigants, including self-represented litigants via telephone, live chat and email. The Registry processes, records and directs the flow of all documentation filed by parties and members of the public; records all steps and events during the life of a case before this Court; plans and manages the scheduling of the Court’s hearings as well as the logistics for the SCC

courtroom; processes documentation for all cases after judgment has been rendered and makes case-related information available to the public. The Registry also provides records management services and support in managing the lifecycle of Court case records.

Communications, Outreach and Library Services: Communications and Outreach Services develops and implements communication strategies, plans and programs to increase public awareness and understanding of the Supreme Court of Canada, and to enhance access to justice and to judicial information. It responds as well to requests for information and provides guided tours of the Court building. It also works to enhance internal communications within the Court. The Library provides a substantial research base for the Court to consult in performing its role of deciding questions of public importance. Its collection includes a variety of information, from statutes, law reports, periodicals and treatises from major common and civil law jurisdictions, as well as print, microform and electronic holdings. The Library accesses a vast range of electronic networks and databases and holds a collection of rare books.

Judicial Support and Protocol Services Sector: The Judicial Support and Protocol Services Sector is responsible for the delivery of all judicial support services to the Chief Justice of Canada and to the judges of the Court, including protocol matters and facilitating the Court's international role, as well as the development and delivery of integrated judicial support programs and services, judicial support administration and the Law Clerk program.

Corporate Services Sector: Administrative and operational support for all the Court's judges and staff is provided by the Corporate Services Sector, which is responsible for: strategic, business and resource planning; corporate reporting; management accountability; integrated risk management; finance; procurement; accommodations (including telecommunications, mail and printing services); human resources; security; health and safety; emergency management and preparedness; IT and IM services; as well as business continuity planning.

The operating environment of the ORSCC is continuously evolving. The focus in recent years has been on business process improvement, information management and enhancing electronic access for litigants and the public. As the ORSCC prepares for its move to the West Memorial Building in 2026, resources are dedicated to finalizing the logistical and operational components necessary to support a successful transition. In parallel and in close collaboration with Public Services and Procurement Canada, dedicated efforts continue to support the planned rehabilitation of the Supreme Court of Canada building.

In recent years, the Court has seen relative stability in its caseload, but there continue to be operational pressures on the ORSCC. These arise from the requirement to (i) provide more services to the Court, litigants, and the public; (ii) meet the needs of a significant number of self-represented litigants; and (iii) maintain operations with limited resources.

There is also a continued focus on the electronic exchange of information between or from the judges, Court staff, the legal community and the public, since there is an expectation that electronic tools and processes can be used to obtain or provide Court information, as well as to file documents. There is an

ongoing focus on the critically important business transformation initiative. Having met the major milestones of that initiative, including the implementation of a secure electronic filing portal and a new SCC website, the focus will be on the enhancements to the e-filing portal and reviewing and updating critical software platforms.

In addition to the above, self-represented litigants brought 34% of the applications for leave to appeal in 2024–25, which represents a significant percentage of the Court’s filings. This underlies the continuous need for the Registry Branch to enhance its resources for self-represented litigants, whether the resources are maintained by Court staff or with external stakeholders, such as Pro Bono Ontario.

The Court also continues to face heightened concerns about physical and information security, which must be balanced with the need to provide a secure environment in the context of the operational requirements of a Court which is accessible to the public. As well, when responding to demands by government for operational efficiencies by way of the consolidation of various services, the ORSCC must ensure the protection of judicial and institutional independence.

The operating environment is evolving from an outreach and communications perspective, with increased public interest in the Court’s cases and growing visibility of its judges in Canada and abroad. As such, raising awareness among the public and stakeholders, and improving access to justice and judicial information remains a priority for the ORSCC.

The Court’s 150th anniversary commemorations provided an excellent opportunity to connect with Canadians through various initiatives, including judges’ visits to five cities across the country to speak about the Court’s work. Exhibits and the release of a \$1 commemorative circulation coin offered tangible ways for Canadians to reflect on the Supreme Court of Canada’s 150-year legacy and learn more about its role.

In light of all the factors described above, the ORSCC continues to dedicate ongoing efforts aimed at ensuring that all resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible.