

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2018

### Property Assessment Appeal Board partners with the Justice Education Society for Online Dispute Resolution service

The BC Property Assessment Appeal Board and the Justice Education Society of BC announce a new Online Dispute Resolution service. Starting in April 2018, people who appeal their residential properties have the option to resolve their appeal completely online. This service allows them to access dispute resolution services at any time of day or night that is convenient to them.

In 2012, the Property Assessment Appeal Board began exploring the use of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). The Board had already been very successful in using alternate dispute resolution to achieve resolution rates of 90-95% of appeals.

In 2013, the Board began using ODR as a voluntary dispute resolution process for residential appeals and became the first administrative tribunals in the country to do so. From 2014 to 2016, the Board consistently achieved high resolution rates for appeals in ODR. The Board received 1,342 residential appeals over these 4 years and achieved a 7% higher resolution rate using ODR compared to standard telephone mediation. In those years, 298 appeals (or about 22% of the total residential appeals) used ODR.

In 2017, the Board was unable to offer ODR due to licensing issues with the US software provider. The Board has now found a locally-based alternative. The Board Chair, Simmi K. Sandhu says: “We are excited to announce our partnership with the Justice Education Society of BC. We are confident this product is better, and more user friendly than our previous ODR platform. In addition, we have been able to deliver it in very short order – in time for our new 2018 residential appeals in April 2018, at reasonable cost”.

Over the last 5 years, the Board has also offered a Solution Explorer product, called “Should I appeal?” This interactive web-guide helps the public decide whether or not they should appeal their property assessment. Through interactive questions the public can evaluate the strength of their case. The Justice Education Society also supplied the video technology for this service. The overall goal is to resolve homeowner’s concerns before they even file an appeal.

Finally, the Board implemented another Solution Explorer program with Online Dispute Resolution. This interactive ODR Guide provides users with information on assessments and an evaluation of their case.

The Board invites the public to check out these online tools on its website at: [AssessmentAppeal.bc.ca](http://AssessmentAppeal.bc.ca).

#### **About the Property Assessment Appeal Board of BC**

The Property Assessment Appeal Board (PAAB) is the second level of appeal for property assessments in British Columbia. Over the last 20 years, the Board has adopted dispute resolution practices to resolve appeals as quickly and efficiently as possible. Over the last 6 years, PAAB has been an innovator amongst administrative tribunals in BC, providing online tools to assist the public with appeal prevention and dispute resolution.

**About the Justice Education Society**

Established in 1989, the Justice Education Society (JES) is a non-profit organization with expertise in applying digital technologies that improve access to justice. The Society's legal help resources reach over 700,000 British Columbians each year. Their "ASK JES" service provides free answers to legal questions by phone, live chat and email. Learn more at [www.JusticeEducation.ca](http://www.JusticeEducation.ca).

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