

Panellists



Ask Me Anything
Celebrating Jewish Voices in
the Public Service

Time: 1:00 pm EDT **Date:** April 19, 2023 **Hosts:** Shannon Anderson and Adam Moscoe

Ask Me Anything: Celebrating Jewish Voices in the Public Service

Opening remarks: Alexis Conrad

Featuring: Elana Aptowitz, Dara Lithwick, Richard Baylin, and Joanne Pfeiffer

Co-hosted by: Shannon Anderson and Adam Moscoe

Date and time: Wednesday, April 19 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM EDT

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Register: [Online registration form](#)

Link to join: [Join the webinar](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA>.

Event Description

Join us for this month's Ask Me Anything event, "Celebrating Jewish Voices in the Public Service - in honour of Jewish Heritage Month! This event will feature Jewish speakers from across the public service to share their stories and heritage.

Throughout Canadian history, Jewish communities have greatly contributed to the growth and success of Canada. Our panellists will share the intersectionalities between the beauty of their cultures, celebrations, and their lives as public servants.

Join us this month on the Ask Me Anything stage as we celebrate Jewish voices in the public service.

About the Ask Me Anything series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything discussions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to have more inclusive organisations.

As individuals, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, the movies you watch, and the interactions with your community. The Ask Me Anything series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective of shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Opening Remarks, Alexis Conrad, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Economic and Regional Development Policy, Privy Council Office



Alexis began his career in the public service in 1999 as an analyst at the Climate Change Secretariat before moving to the Privy Council Office, and eventually to Industry Canada and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS). In 2008, the department now known as Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) as Director of Federal-Provincial/Territorial Relations.

He eventually became Director General of Horizontal Management and Integration and then the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Skills and Employment Branch. In 2015, he made a brief return to TBS, before being appointed as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Learning Branch at ESDC and Policy Horizons Canada in 2016. In 2020, he was on assignment at Health Canada as part of the COVID-19 Task Force and appointed as Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Security and Social Development and Policy Horizons Canada later that same year. In January 2023, Alexis joined the Privy Council Office as the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Economic and Regional Development Policy.

Alexis strongly believes in the importance of building linkages between social and economic policy in government decision-making, the power of quantitative and qualitative evidence, and inclusivity as a key policy and program objective. He is a strong believer in

the importance of diversity in the public service and in encouraging physical and mental health.

He has a Master of Arts (M.A.) from Queen's University and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) from Simon Fraser University. He proudly speaks both of Canada's official languages (English and French) and has travelled to every province and territory in our beautiful country.

Meet our amazing panellists



Elana Aptowitzer, Head of Speechwriting, Department of National Defence

Elana Aptowitzer is the Head of Speechwriting at Canada's Department of National Defence, where she and her team of speechwriters write between 250 and 360 speeches per year for the Minister of Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff, and other political and military leaders. She is also the Founder and Chair of the Government of Canada's Speechwriters' Community of Practice. Prior to speechwriting, Elana also worked as a spokeswoman and communications advisor in the department in the 17 years since she first joined. In 2019/20, she served as the Federal Public Servant In-Residence at Carleton University, where she developed and taught a professional speechwriting course. Elana graduated from McGill University, in Montreal, Canada, with an Honours Bachelors of Arts in Political Science and Sociology. She earned a Masters in Strategic Public Communications from American University in Washington, DC.



Dara Lithwick, Counsel, Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, House of Commons

Rabbi Dara Lithwick (she/ her) serves as Counsel in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel at the House of Commons, where she focuses on parliamentary and constitutional law, and is a member of the House Administration's Diversity Council. She also leads Positive Space training at the House and is an advocate for 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion. When not at work, Rabbi Dara chairs the Reform Jewish Community of Canada's Tikkun Olam (Social Justice) Steering Committee and is active at Temple Israel Ottawa. She is also a lead builder at [Bayit Builder's Blog](#), a go-to portal for Jewish ritual and spiritual

innovation, design thought, and practical tools for Jewish life. She can be found chasing her two children around Ottawa, and during the winter on local ski hills, as a volunteer member of the Canadian Ski Patrol at Sommet Edelweiss.



Chief Superintendent Richard Baylin, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

Richard joined the RCMP in 1991 out of Ottawa. After completing basic recruit training in Regina, Saskatchewan, he was posted to White Rock Detachment in British Columbia, where he conducted uniform General Duties on a variety of *Criminal Code* and federal investigations. In 1996, he transferred to the Greater Vancouver Drug Section, participating in investigations targeting the upper echelon of organised crime syndicates from Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2000, he transferred to RCMP National Headquarters in Ottawa.

Currently, Richard has over 31 years of international and domestic police experience as a manager, instructor, investigator, subject-matter expert and facilitator in a variety of areas. In his diverse law enforcement background, he has held positions overseeing the RCMP's International Operations, heading up INTERPOL Canada, and supervising RCMP engagement and involvement in United Nations Program Management and International Capacity Building. He has also been in charge of a number of areas within the RCMP Covert Operations Branch, which includes the Human Source Program and Undercover Program. In addition, he has worked in RCMP Protective Operations and in Professional Standards.

His current role is Chief Superintendent in charge of RCMP Covert Operations, Data Analytics & Science. Richard also currently participates in close personal protection duties in Canada and deploys internationally to coordinate protective duties where required. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Carleton University and a Graduate Certificate from the Australian Institute of Police Management (Australian Federal Police). He has also helped deliver the AIPM program as a Visiting Fellow.



Joanne Pfeiffer, Director, Border Services and Immigration Division, Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)

Joanne Pfeiffer is the Director of the Border Services and Immigration Division at TBS. Prior to this she worked as an executive at Natural Resources Canada and the Privy Council Office, and held policy analyst positions at the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada. Joanne is an experienced executive, having previously worked in policy, operational and central agency environments (including the Privy Council Office), providing strategic advice and briefings to deputy ministers, ministers, ministerial staff, as well as the Prime Minister's Office on complex files.

Meet our co-hosts



Shannon Anderson, Change Project Manager, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Shannon Anderson joined the Business Planning and Financial Management Office of the Chief Financial Office at Fisheries and Oceans Canada in July 2022 as a Change Project Manager, with a focus on increasing Diversity and Inclusion within the Sector.

Prior to her role at DFO, she was an Employment Equity Advisory at Canadian Forces Support Group (Ottawa-Gatineau) supporting the five local Defence Advisory Groups as well as the National Groups with their mandates.

She first joined the Public Service in 2002 as an FSWEP Student, and has occupied a variety of HR and Program Management positions within

National Defence, Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada and now Fisheries and Oceans.

Shannon graduated from trades school and ran her own small business before joining the public service full-time. Her motto about the Public Service is “ It’s never about the paper, it’s about the people”.



Adam Moscoe, International Trade and Finance Branch, Finance Canada

Adam Moscoe works at Finance Canada’s International Trade and Finance Branch, where he concentrates on Canada’s engagement at the World Bank to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. Adam is a member of the Federal Speakers’ Forum on Lived Experience. Active within the Jewish community, he is past president of the Tamir Foundation of Ottawa, which supports people with developmental disabilities and autism. He is also a singer.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can’t be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other’s experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, that workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a sense of belonging at work where people feel valued.

[#AMChallenge](#)

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organisation to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA: Team session discussion questions

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Canadian Armed Forces, Privy Council Office, Parliament, RCMP, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, and Department of Finance Canada.

Opening

MCs: Shannon Anderson and Adam Moscoe

Panellists: Alexis Conrad, Elana Aptowitzer, Dara Lithwick, Richard Baylin, and Joanne Pfeiffer

Production Team: Terri-Ann Hurst, Tara Lockhart, Shelby Racine, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Quinn Brown, Emily Princi, Bernadeth Betchi, Liliya

Ishkaeva, Kelly Brewer-Balch, Charlene Engmann, Lyrique Richards,
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