

## *About the AHLA*

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The Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association is a not for profit industry association that was [founded in 1919](#) to:

1. Influence the government on questions of Prohibition;
2. Counter the criticisms of the Women's Christian Temperance Union;
3. Improve the public image of the hotel in the community by organizing sponsorship of sports teams, local fetes, and athletic and cultural events;
4. Reduce rivalry in the hotel industry;
5. Lobby municipal governments on local taxation matters;
6. Establish common policies regarding staffing, training, work hours, pilferage, security, and cheque cashing (then illegal);
7. Organize a common front to address the Bartenders' Union.

Today, [we continue to bring together Alberta hotels to help our members prosper](#). Currently, our objectives are:

1. Advocacy that helps our members prosper.
2. A skilled workforce for Alberta hotels.
3. Alberta hotels are equipped to manage emerging realities.
4. Bring together Alberta hotels & amplify our value for members.
5. AHLA is a high-performance association.

In 2018, the AHLA announced the creation of a new for profit subsidiary, the AHLA Services Corporation (ASC), which is wholly owned by the AHLA. ASC houses all of the AHLA's revenue generating programs, and is governed by a separate Board of Directors that has the business acumen required to make these programs profitable. ASC reports to the AHLA Board of Directors. Revenue generated through ASC funds the AHLA's advocacy, membership, and human resources initiatives. In 2026, ASC entered a new 3-year strategic plan, which is guided by:

1. ASC's Legacy Programs are the Suppliers of Choice for Alberta Hotels
2. Innovative & Integrated Solutions that Support Operations for Prospering Hotels
3. ASC is a High Performance Organization

Since January 1, 2020, the AHLA has been the official health & safety association for hotels and convention centres in Alberta. Safety associations represent the interests of employers and promote workplace safety through education and other initiatives. A portion of WCB premiums collected from employers is allocated to the AHLA to support health & safety initiatives. All employers in [WCB industry code 87503](#) are AHLA Safety Subscribers, regardless of whether they are AHLA members.

Led by a President & CEO that reports to the Board of Directors, the AHLA employs a committed team to deliver its programs, services, and advocacy efforts. The association is highly respected by government, stakeholders, and its sister hotel associations across Canada.

**Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association  
Board of Directors Nomination Form & Competency Matrix**

AHLA members interested in running for election must complete the [Candidate Competency Matrix](#) and nomination form below, by 4:00 p.m., Friday, February 20, 2026.

I, Jennifer Vantuil, representing Renaissance Edmonton Airport Hotel hereby nominate Rizwan Ahmed, representing Fairfield Inn by Marriott Edmonton Airport for election to the Board of Directors of the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association.

***For the Nominator:***

**Why do you believe the nominee should be elected to the AHLA's Board of Directors?**

I am pleased to recommend Rizwan Ahmed for appointment to the AHLA Board. Over the course of our professional relationship I have come to rely on Rizwan's clear strategic thinking, steady judgment, and genuine integrity. Rizwan combines analytical clarity with warm, approachable leadership. He listens carefully, asks incisive questions, and brings perspectives that consistently raise the level of any discussion. Colleagues respect him not only for his knowledge of Alberta's tourism and accommodation sector, but for his emotional maturity, honesty, and the calm decisiveness he brings to complex situations. He is a natural collaborator who builds trust quickly and fosters productive consensus without sacrificing principled decision-making. Rizwan understands the responsibilities of board service and consistently demonstrates the loyalty, care, and professionalism required of a director. He is committed to organizational values, reliably follows through on commitments, and elevates the teams and initiatives he supports. In short, Rizwan is a thoughtful leader and trusted colleague whose presence on the AHLA Board would strengthen governance, advocacy, and member relations. I recommend him without reservation.

***For the Nominee:***

**1. Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors of the AHLA?**

I am interested in serving on the Board of Directors of the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association because I believe in contributing beyond my own property and helping strengthen Alberta's hospitality industry as a whole.

With over 18 years in the hotel industry — including leadership experience in Edmonton, Calgary, and Grande Prairie — I have developed a strong understanding of Alberta's diverse hospitality markets. Each region presents unique economic drivers, labour dynamics, and

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demand patterns, and this provincial experience has given me well-rounded insight into the challenges and opportunities facing our industry.

As a General Manager representing ownership interests while working within a major brand system, I bring both an asset-focused and operational perspective to decision-making. I understand the realities of cost pressures, workforce development, rate integrity, and long-term sustainability from both the operator and ownership viewpoints.

I am motivated to support effective industry advocacy, strengthen workforce initiatives, and provide strategic, practical guidance to hotels of all sizes across Alberta. Serving on the Board would allow me to apply my experience, collaborative leadership style, and market knowledge to help guide the industry forward.

**2. What skills, abilities & experience would you bring to the AHLA's Board? What other boards do you presently serve on?**

I bring strong financial acumen, strategic operational leadership, and an asset-focused mindset. In my role as General Manager, I am responsible for full P&L oversight, capital planning, labour strategy, revenue performance alignment, and long-term asset sustainability. This has strengthened my ability to analyze financial results, assess risk, and contribute to informed, data-driven decision-making at a governance level.

I also bring a well-rounded understanding of Alberta's diverse hotel segments. My experience includes working closely with downtown properties, non-downtown and suburban hotels, and airport-based operations — each with distinct demand patterns, cost structures, and operational challenges. Through my work with Hotel Equities and my collaboration with other ownership groups, brand partners, and industry stakeholders, I have supported both full-service and limited-service hotels, gaining insight into the operational realities of different business models. This exposure has helped me understand the needs of both larger branded properties and smaller, independently operated hotels.

Leadership development has been a consistent priority throughout my career. I have mentored emerging leaders and department managers, helping strengthen operational accountability, service culture, and team performance. Customer and client care have remained central to my leadership approach, as I believe guest experience, brand reputation, and long-term asset value are closely interconnected.

I would approach Board service with professionalism, preparation, and a commitment to practical, balanced solutions that support hotels of all sizes across Alberta's hospitality industry.

**3. What AHLA programs & services does your property participate in?**

Our property maintains active membership with the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association and regularly engages with the association's industry updates, advocacy communications, and regulatory guidance.

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We participate in workforce development and training initiatives, utilizing AHLA educational resources and industry programs to support onboarding, leadership development, and ongoing professional growth. We also reference AHLA guidance on labour standards, workplace policies, and operational compliance to ensure alignment with provincial regulations and industry best practices.

In addition, we closely follow and adopt AHLA Health & Safety guidelines to maintain a safe environment for our guests and team members. These standards support our internal policies and reinforce our commitment to responsible operations.

We value AHLA's advocacy efforts and remain engaged with tourism updates, government relations initiatives, and sector-wide programs that impact Alberta's hospitality industry.

#### **4. What do you believe are the greatest challenges our industry faces?**

Alberta's hospitality industry is navigating several interconnected challenges that require coordinated leadership, advocacy, and long-term strategic focus.

##### **1. Labour Shortages and Workforce Stability**

Although travel demand has recovered, workforce stability remains a significant concern. Recruitment, retention, wage pressures, and training costs continue to impact service consistency and operating margins. Sustainable workforce development, immigration alignment, and stronger career pathways are critical to long-term success.

##### **2. Rising Operating Costs and Margin Compression**

Hotels are facing sustained increases in utilities, insurance, property taxes, food and beverage costs, and capital replacement expenses. In many markets, rate growth has not kept pace with these increases, resulting in margin compression and increased pressure on asset sustainability.

##### **3. Growth of Short-Term Rentals and Regulatory Fairness**

The expansion of short-term rental platforms, including Airbnb, has changed the competitive landscape. While alternative accommodations meet evolving consumer demand, consistent regulatory standards, taxation policies, and safety requirements across all accommodation providers are essential to maintain fairness and protect long-term investment in the sector.

##### **4. Regulatory Complexity and Industry Representation**

Evolving labour legislation, municipal bylaws, and compliance requirements create additional operational burdens, particularly for smaller and independent properties. Strong industry advocacy is necessary to ensure balanced and practical policies.

##### **5. Strategic Marketing of Alberta and Indigenous Tourism**

Beyond operational challenges, continued collaboration to market Alberta as a premier destination remains essential. Promoting Alberta's natural assets, cultural experiences, and growing Indigenous tourism initiatives can strengthen demand across all regions. Supporting Indigenous partnerships and authentic cultural representation not only enhances the visitor experience but also contributes to inclusive, sustainable industry growth.

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## 5. What role do you think the AHLA should play in addressing these?

The Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association plays a critical role as the unified voice of our industry. In addressing these challenges, AHLA should continue to lead through strong advocacy, practical member support, and strategic collaboration.

First, AHLA must remain proactive in government relations — ensuring that regulatory frameworks, labour policies, and short-term rental legislation are fair, balanced, and supportive of long-term industry sustainability. Clear representation at the provincial and municipal levels is essential to protect the interests of hotels across Alberta.

Second, AHLA should continue strengthening workforce development initiatives by expanding training resources, supporting immigration alignment for hospitality roles, and promoting hospitality as a viable long-term career path. Industry-wide collaboration is necessary to address labour shortages effectively.

Third, the association can play a coordinating role in marketing Alberta and supporting tourism growth, including collaboration with Travel Alberta and Indigenous tourism partners. By aligning messaging and promoting Alberta's diverse experiences, AHLA can help stimulate demand across downtown, regional, and airport markets.

Finally, AHLA should continue providing practical tools and guidance to members — particularly smaller and independent properties — to help navigate compliance, safety standards, and operational best practices. Ensuring that all members, regardless of size, have access to strong support reinforces the industry's overall strength.

Through advocacy, collaboration, and member engagement, AHLA can help position Alberta's hospitality sector for long-term stability and growth.

## 6. How would you work to bring this about as a member of the AHLA's Board?

As a member of the AHLA Board, I would contribute through preparation, active engagement, and collaboration. I would approach Board service with a commitment to thoroughly reviewing materials, participating constructively in discussions, and supporting informed, data-driven decision-making that benefits the broader industry.

I would work to serve as a bridge between different hotel segments — including downtown, airport, suburban, and smaller independent properties — ensuring diverse operational perspectives are reflected in Board conversations. Drawing from my experience working with ownership groups, brand partners, and industry stakeholders, I would advocate for balanced solutions that support both operational realities and long-term asset sustainability.

Workforce development would remain a key focus. As a member of the NAIT Hospitality Program Advisory Committee, I actively engage with educational partners to support curriculum relevance and industry alignment. In a Board role, I would continue strengthening collaboration between hotels and post-secondary institutions to help groom emerging talent, promote hospitality as a viable career path, and build stronger pipelines into our industry.

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Additionally, I would support AHLA's advocacy initiatives by engaging with industry peers, encouraging participation in association programs, and sharing best practices. My goal would be to contribute thoughtfully, represent responsibly, and help position Alberta's hospitality sector for long-term stability and growth.

**7. How will your employer/ownership support this commitment if you are elected?** The AHLA's Board of Directors has three full day in person meetings each year, as well as a two day offsite retreat, in addition to committee work and occasional virtual meetings. All candidates are asked to provide a letter of support from their ownership/employer.

I have discussed the Board commitment with both ownership and my management company and understand the expectations, including in-person meetings, the annual retreat, committee participation, and virtual sessions.

Both ownership and my management company are supportive of my involvement at the industry level and recognize the value of active engagement in advocacy and sector leadership.

Operationally, I have a strong leadership team in place that allows for effective delegation and continuity. With proper planning, I am confident I can fulfill Board responsibilities while maintaining operational performance.

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February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to confirm that I, Raj Chollangi, Senior Regional Director of Operations for Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Edmonton International Airport, operated by Hotel Equities, fully support the nomination of Rizwan Ahmed to the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association's Board of Directors for a two-year term.

I acknowledge the time and energy that Rizwan Ahmed will need to commit in order to fulfill their duties as a duly elected member of the Board of Directors, including:

- Participation in Board of Director meetings and any subsequent committee work;
- participation in the Board of Director's annual retreat; and,
- participation in the AHLA's annual *Ascend* Conference.

I further acknowledge that the AHLA Board of Directors represent the interests of the membership as a whole and not any one group or constituency.

Rizwan Ahmed will be a valuable asset to the AHLA Board of Directors in achieving their established goals and continuing the important work the association undertakes to help its members prosper and bring together Alberta hotels.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Rajesh Chollangi  
Senior Regional Director of Operations  
Hotel Equities Canada Inc.  
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