



Black Legal Action Centre

Suite 221 – 720 Spadina Avenue • Toronto • Ontario • M5S 2T9

The Black Legal Action Centre is seeking a Research and Policy Coordinator.

The Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC) is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of Ontario to combat individual and systemic anti-Black racism by providing legal services to members of Ontario's Black communities, including engaging in advocacy, community development, law reform, test case litigation, and public legal education. BLAC is an independent community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

JOB TITLE: Research and Policy Coordinator

REPORTS TO: Executive Director/Research Lawyer

This is a full-time contract position with a possibility of renewal based on funding.

PURPOSE OF POSITION

The Research and Policy Coordinator is responsible for assisting the BLAC team in all aspects of the clinic work including community outreach, public education, legal research, policy analysis, and advocating law reform. Client intake, and providing other assistance to members of the community to ensure awareness, understanding and achievement of their legal rights are also key components of the position.

The proportion of time spent in these activities may vary from time to time and is to be periodically reviewed.

MINIMUM HIRING REQUIREMENTS

The successful applicant must have a diploma, degree or courses in a relevant field such as political science, social sciences, social work and/or law. In all cases, candidates must have experience in an advocacy, and policy or research capacity.

Demonstrated commitment to community and/or legal work related to anti-Black racism, human rights and/or anti-discrimination. Experience dealing with the public is essential. Computer literacy is essential. The ability to communicate well, both orally and in writing is essential. Must be able to work occasional evenings.

Desirable: Relevant experience specifically related to clinic services. An additional language is an asset.

Website: www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca

Email: info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca

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MAJOR DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Research/Law Reform

- Conduct extensive legal and academic research on various legal issues facing Black Ontarians. Research will be legal, but will also focus on current events, government, and the social sciences
- Review relevant developments in the law, including legislative and regulatory amendments for potential law reform litigation and participate in other law reform activities including participation on public/government/consultation committees, as assigned
- Assist with preparation of briefs and responses to new legislation and policy, as assigned. This may include drafting memoranda, legal opinions, and policy positions for cases, interventions, and deputations to government bodies
- Provide legal advice and analysis to the clinic on a variety of matters, with the primary focus being on human rights and administrative law

Community Development, Outreach and Education

- Identify issues for public legal education based on knowledge of legislative or policy developments
- Develop educational materials and self-help packages to inform the public of their rights, obligations and benefits
- Distribute educational materials and self-help kits to increase client awareness and understanding of legal issues
- Participate and/or present, as assigned, in community development activities and law reform activities designed to further the legal interests and improve the lives of Black Ontarians
- Conduct research to identify the need for new or changes to existing services and programs
- Advocate clinic services to increase community awareness
- Participate in public legal education activities within the clinic's areas of expertise
- Research, prepare and produce oral and written public legal education sessions and in-house training sessions on legal issues, and participate in events as public speaker/conference presenter on behalf of BLAC

Intake

- Carry out intake function in compliance with the office practice and procedures
- Greet clients in a professional and courteous manner
- Ensure privacy and maintain confidentiality of clients at all times
- Assess client needs to ensure that the clinic can serve them and/or determine other appropriate services/ legal services
- Transfer incoming calls to appropriate staff based on knowledge of functional responsibilities and clinic operations
- Respond to inquiries from the public to provide information regarding clinic services, processes and procedures
- Assess the urgency of the client's needs; where necessary, engage with caseworker staff to assist the client based on urgency
- Refer potential clients and the public to other legal services, social agencies, or government services based on knowledge of community services; assist with the services and follow up as needed and as appropriate



- Conduct initial conflict of interest checks and update the conflict list by adding names when directed
- Obtain necessary intake information from client to complete necessary intake documentation and forms
- Provide basic information using the intake manual, without giving legal advice, and document details for review by caseworker staff.

Administration/Clinic Operations

- Assist in preparation of legal services reports for the clinic's Board of Directors
- Preparation of operational statistics to inform Board of clinic services and activities; attend Board meetings, as required
- Assist in preparation of monthly, quarterly and annual statistical reports for LAO
- Assist in preparation of annual funding application to LAO
- Attend meetings with staff, as required

- Other duties, as determined by the Executive Director

WORKING CONDITIONS

- The successful applicant will work in an open-concept workspace, which is designed to facilitate teamwork, frequent consultation, and professional communication among colleagues
- The successful applicant will work under the direction of the Executive Director/Research Lawyer who will provide advice, guidance and support to the Coordinator
- The successful applicant must be able to travel occasionally (by airplane, train, or car) throughout Ontario; occasional overnight travel may be required
- Work may involve frequent exposure to difficult situations (e.g.: providing services to upset or agitated client(s))
- High volume of contacts and requirement to multi-task
- Use of electronic equipment and information technology
- Work at a desk in an open area with access to public on a daily basis
- Possibility of remote work due to COVID-19

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Possess strong legal skills including research and analysis, negotiation and advocacy
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Ability to work effectively in an organization under the direction of a volunteer Board of Directors
- Ability to negotiate and manage third party relationships, including with partner organizations, as assigned
- Ability to organize, plan, and implement activities appropriate to advance organizational objectives



- Commitment to social justice, particularly combatting anti-Black racism, and delivering high quality legal services to low income individuals and groups
- Excellent computer skills
- Willing and able to work independently, and to make independent decisions (under the direction of the Executive Director/Staff Lawyer)
- High ethical standards
- Excellent time management skills and ability to multi-task and prioritize work
- Strong interpersonal skills focused on building and maintaining positive relationships with all levels of staff, clients, volunteers and external stakeholders
- Attention to detail and problem-solving skills
- Demonstrated ability to advocate for clients with the public at large and similar organizations
- Ability to utilize analytical, interpretive, evaluative and constructive thinking
- Proficiency in MS Office (MS Word and MS Outlook, in particular); familiarity with email scheduling tools

SALARY

Salary will be based on relevant experience and be within the range of average salaries of Research and Policy Coordinators in other LAO-funded clinics.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please apply via e-mail with a cover letter and resume by **September 21, 2020** to the Hiring Committee at info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca. Please use the subject title "Research and Policy Coordinator" in your email.

All information received will be kept in the strictest confidence.

If you require any accommodation during the interview process please contact BLAC at info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca to make appropriate arrangements.

While we thank all applicants for their interest, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

We welcome applications from people who are reflective of the diverse communities we serve.