



Black Legal Action Centre

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

Friday, January 13, 2023

Staff Lawyer/Paralegal

Job Description

PURPOSE OF POSITION

Reporting to the Legal Director, the Staff Lawyer/Paralegal will be responsible for the delivery of the clinic's legal services, including the provision of summary legal advice, brief services, and representation. The Staff Lawyer/Paralegal will also be involved in test case litigation, the development of public legal education materials, and law reform initiatives, including community development. The proportion of time spent in these activities may vary from time to time and is periodically reviewed.

MINIMUM HIRING REQUIREMENTS

- Member in good standing of the Law Society of Ontario (LSO)
- Experience providing advice and/or representation in the areas of discrimination, discipline, special needs, bullying, the *Education Act*, and Ontario *Human Rights Code*
- Demonstrated commitment to increasing access to justice and combatting anti-Black racism
- Ability to work with minimal administrative support
- Ability to manage a high caseload independently
- Effective research and oral and written advocacy skills

MAJOR DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Summary Legal Advice, Brief Services and Representation

- Provide high-quality legal aid services in all areas of law practiced by BLAC in a manner that complies with BLAC's vision, mission, policies, and practices
- Make reasonable efforts to remain informed about upcoming or recent changes in the areas of law in which BLAC delivers legal aid services
- Identify issues to be resolved and make preliminary calls or conduct relevant research as necessary
- Provide legal information and advice in a clear and concise manner ensuring the client understands the advice and direction given
- Refer clients to appropriate legal, community, social or government agencies where necessary
- Assess when a matter requires legal services beyond summary advice
- Draft materials as required, including correspondence, forms, affidavits, etc.

Website: www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca

Email: info@blac.clcj.ca

Phone: 416-597-5831 • Toll Free: 1-877-736-9406 • TTY 1-800-855-0511
Toll Free Facsimile: 1-844-302-2694 • Correctional Facilities: 1-877-279-0680

- Maintain appropriate records of services provided using BLAC's data base, indicating summary advice or brief services
- Supervise support staff and students in providing legal information and referrals
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director

Casework

- Provide legal services to individual and group clients in accordance with service guidelines and eligibility policies adopted by BLAC
- Identify legal issues, assess merit and develop an appropriate case strategy in consultation with the Legal Director and Executive Director
- Interview clients and investigate issues to ensure accurate and thorough knowledge of all relevant fact
- Take primary responsibility for litigation files before both courts and tribunals; participate in appellate advocacy in collaboration with the Legal Director and Executive Director
- Develop litigation strategies to assist clients and to promote law reform goals adopted by BLAC
- Document all work in electronic data base and maintain files as dictated by policy
- Comply with LSO and office policies with respect to trust accounts, ticklers, personal bring forward systems, global diary and docket
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director

Public Legal Education

- Participate in public legal education activities within the clinic's areas of expertise
- Research, prepare and produce oral and written public legal education and training sessions
- Participate in events as public speaker/conference presenter
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director

Outreach/Community Development

- Participate in community development activities and law reform activities designed to further the legal interests and improve the lives of Black Ontarians
- Participate in committees and organizations representing client concerns
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director

Law Reform/Research

- Conduct research for law reform litigation and participate in other law reform activities including participation on public/government/consultation committees
- Prepare or assist with preparation of briefs and responses to new legislation and police
- Prepare proactive materials and presentations on law reform issues
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director



Administration

- Assist in preparation of legal services reports for BLAC's Board of Directors
- Attend staff meetings
- Assist in preparation and review of quarterly and annual statistical reports for Parents of Black Children (POBC)
- Identify training needs and arrange for training as required
- Other duties as assigned by Legal Director or Executive Director

WORKING CONDITIONS

- The successful applicant must be able to travel (by airplane, train, or car) throughout Ontario
- Evening and weekend work as required including overnight travel as needed
- Likely to regularly be subject to emotional situations
- High volume of contacts and requirement to multi-task
- Use of electronic equipment and information technology
- Possibility of remote work, with office attendance as required, particularly for client meetings and staff engagement

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- 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
- Ability to organize, plan, and implement activities appropriate to advance organizational objectives
- 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
- Proficiency in MS Office (MS Word and MS Outlook, in particular); familiarity with email scheduling tools