



# Black Legal Action Centre

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

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## Executive Director and General Counsel Job Description

The Executive Director will lead a team of legal and other staff and volunteers to ensure the implementation of BLAC's strategic plans, goals and objectives. Collaborating with the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will guide the overall legal services, operational, financial, facilities and staff management activities. The Executive Director will represent BLAC, champion the legal rights of members of Ontario's Black communities and provide senior legal and/or analytic skills to the work of the clinic.

### ***Required Skills and Experience***

The Executive Director will be a member of the Law Society of Ontario with a minimum of seven years post-call experience, hold a minimum of a Juris Doctor or LLB degree, and have an established record of working in Black communities. The Executive Director should present evidence of:

- Awareness of the public education role of community legal clinics.
- Legal practice grounded in Black and racialized communities, including community legal clinic work that is current, innovative and impactful.
- Excellent race-based public policy contributions, presentations at academic conferences and Black community events, Black community and professional work, grant and research writing, or a combination of these skills and areas of experience.
- Solid understanding of formal and substantive equality and the barriers that require section 15 litigation.
- An understanding of the role of multiple grounds and intersectionality in eradicating race-based discrimination under section 15 and equality rights.
- Developed and established understanding of racial equality jurisprudence within a critical race-consciousness framework.
- Solid understanding of major issues facing Black Canadians from critical race and intersectional lenses.
- Solid understanding of constitutional litigation and race-based litigation.
- Solid understanding of poverty law, human rights law, and other legal service areas referenced in the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020.
- Skillset to be a trusted advisor to the Board of Directors.
- Ability to work effectively in a team.
- Strong leadership, administrative, management, and financial management skills.
- Excellent communication skills.

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Website: [www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca](http://www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca)

Email: [info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca](mailto:info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca)

Phone: 416-597-5831 • Toll Free: 1-877-736-9406 • TTY 1-800-855-0511

- Proficiency in conversational French for community outreach, or proficiency in legal French for the purposes of drafting pleadings and making arguments in French would be considered an asset.

### ***Description of Duties and Responsibilities***

#### **a) Legal File and Supervisory Responsibilities**

The Executive Director will lead a top-tier legal organization, including by:

- Acting as counsel to individual and group clinic clients
- Conducting and overseeing investigations and legal research
- Representing clients in the courts and at administrative tribunals
- Supervising and mentoring staff lawyers, community legal workers, and articling students
- Ensuring a high quality and quantity of legal work is conducted in a cost-effective manner
- Setting case management priorities
- Providing summary legal advice as necessary to members of the public
- Understanding and staying abreast of developments in areas of legal service provided by BLAC

#### **b) Administrative and Management Responsibilities**

The Executive Director is responsible for serving as an effective liaison with and trusted advisor to the Board of Directors, operational planning and oversight, human resources leadership, and risk management, including by:

- In conjunction with the Board, ensuring appropriate policies and administrative procedures are developed and maintained for all clinic functions
- Supporting BLAC's governance structure by being accountable to and maintaining an effective relationship with the Board, including by reporting clinic services and activities
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and policies
- Ensuring supervision and performance management for all personnel, office administration and staff training
- Maintaining ongoing contact and reporting requirements with respect to Legal Aid Ontario and other funders
- Securing adequate funding for the operation and growth of the organization
- Ensuring that a high quality and quantity of services are delivered by the clinic

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### **c) Black Community Service Responsibilities**

The Executive Director will champion the rights of members of Ontario's Black communities and seek the eradication of anti-Black racism, including by:

- Lobbying and advocating for systemic reform on behalf of Black communities
- Leading law reform and community development initiatives
- Serving as a resource person for community groups
- Supporting community group activism, outreach and development
- Providing community public legal education
- Engaging in Black communities on Human Rights issues that disproportionately impact Black communities and require race-based analysis and advocacy not litigated in courts (school suspensions, affordable housing, accessing mental health services, anti-poverty activism, employment, homelessness, LGBTQ+ rights, COVID-19, incarceration, racial profiling by police, etc.)

### **d) Financial Responsibilities**

The Executive Director will be responsible for providing financial leadership and management to the clinic, including by:

- Overseeing all ongoing clinic financial matters
- Preparing a comprehensive budget for approval by the Board
- Overseeing the preparation of clinic summary financial statements for monthly and quarterly reporting to the Board, LAO, and other funders as applicable
- Implementing the clinic's finances based on knowledge of funding and preparation of budget for the Board
- Implementing financial controls as approved by the Board to ensure adherence to an approved budget
- Entering into contracts for service with outside service providers on behalf of BLAC in accordance with applicable clinic policies, governmental directives, and requirements of funders
- Managing the "Trust Account" on behalf of the clinic and advising the Board
- Reviewing financial reports for discussion with the Treasurer, the Board, BLAC's accountant and auditors when requested or required

### ***Legislative Knowledge***

The Executive Director will be familiar with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Legal Aid Services Act, the Corporations Act, the Employment Standards Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Ontario Labor Relations Act, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and workplace policies as they pertain to employees' rights, management responsibilities, and related legislative policies and requirements.