

DON VALLEY COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES JOB DESCRIPTION

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Job Summary:

The Staff member develops and implements robust community development / outreach plans that advance the strategic goals and vision of DVCLS (Don Valley Community Legal Services), a legal aid clinic that serves a large and culturally diverse community.

The Staff member is responsible for building and maintaining a strong network of partnerships with other community agencies/resources and engaging the community/constituents through various communications channels to create awareness about the clinic and its services and solicit community input. The Staff member also identifies and assesses emerging issues and legal needs and assists stakeholders/residents in community organizing efforts.

The Staff member works collaboratively with the clinic's intake and legal teams to develop and deliver public legal education and produces and disseminates collateral materials among the clinic's membership and throughout the community.

The Staff member communicates regularly with the clinic's membership and looks for opportunities to grow the membership recognizing that members can help identify local issues / legal needs and raise the clinic's profile within the community.

The Staff member reports to the Executive Director and supports the clinic's Community Services Committee which is comprised of Directors from the Board and community representatives.

Working primarily out of the clinic's Thorncliffe/Flemingdon Park office the Staff member spends time at the clinic's satellite office in the Ralph Thornton Community Centre and is actively involved in the community. Candidates must be able to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends within the catchment area.

The job description is quite varied, and accountabilities are broad. As such, the Staff member will work closely and collaboratively with other Clinic staff to deliver on accountabilities of the position providing leadership in the area of community development and community relations.

Main Responsibilities:

Community development, outreach, and engagement

- Plans, designs, implements, and advises on the clinic's engagement and outreach strategies related to the clinic's mandate and strategic initiatives
- Establishes, maintains, and builds new and effective working relationships with community partners, agencies, and other local groups to collaborate on legal issues of importance to the community and to share information, resources, and best practices
- Establishes and collaborates with local resident groups, associations, and resident networks to mobilize the community and stakeholders on local legal and emerging issues and campaigns such as combatting environmental racism and "renovictions"
- Develops and maintains strong working relationships with the constituency offices of local elected officials at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels to support community legal needs
- Collaborates with other clinic staff to communicate important information, resources, and campaigns and to mobilize community partners on local legal issues
- Works closely with intake and legal teams to identify emerging issues and the creation of resources/collateral materials for the community and constituents

Public legal education and consultations

- Organizes regular and timely public education and community forums (some are DVCLS events and others are in partnership with community agencies, partners, and local constituency offices)
- Works closely with clinic's law teams and together initiates, and/or provides workshops and seminars on specific community issues to targeted audiences through summary legal advice, referral, or public legal education workshops.
- Works with legal teams to create and disseminate legal information in plain language through clinic's website, social media and traditional media platforms and networks
- Identifies legal issues and trends of interest to low-income communities through ongoing dialogue with the community and partners
- Participates in/makes submissions (oral and/or written) to public consultations on issues of importance to the community within the clinic's mandate
- Represents the clinic at various community events to raise profile of the clinic and its services and to establish new community partnerships
- Identifies the need for new services or changes to existing services and programs based on community legal needs

Communications

- Develops and implements external communications strategies and initiatives including but not limited to social media and traditional "earned" media
- Creates and distributes newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, and other collateral materials to the community/constituents on specific emerging issues, areas of law and resources

- Develops regular content for the clinic's primary communications tool, its website, and ensures that content is up to date, relevant and accurate and that the website is user friendly, easy to use and intuitive
- Manages the clinic's social media platforms and keeps up with new and emerging social media best practices
- Develops and distributes public legal education materials, presentations, speaking notes and other materials to support the clinic's outreach and education programs – includes but is not limited to self-help packages to inform the public of their rights, obligations, and benefits
- Generates, drafts, edits, and proofreads a wide range of high-quality communications for various communications channels and tailors content to diverse audiences including many whose first language is not English
- Develops metrics to determine effectiveness of communications initiatives and produces regular reports for internal purposes, for the Annual General Meeting and for reporting to Legal Aid Ontario

Membership responsibilities

- Maintains clinic membership records, communicates regularly with, and promotes membership participation in clinic and community events.
- Identifies opportunities to grow the clinic's membership by networking with other like-minded organizations and demonstrating value of the work that the clinic does in the community
- Looks for opportunities to engage the membership in local issues, obtain their feedback/input and to solicit volunteers to assist with specific projects, initiatives, and campaigns

Advocacy and law reform

- Undertakes advocacy initiatives as developed by the clinic Advocacy Policy.
- Engages and supports the Community Services Committee to develop and implements advocacy goals and objectives.
- Works closely with the legal staff to identify issues for law reform based on feedback received from the community.
- Participates in /is aware of inter-clinic groups concerned with law reform in areas of law dealt with by the clinic.
- Participates in law reform initiatives under the direction of clinic management and supports organizing efforts around issues of concern to the community to appropriate persons, organizations, agencies, and government bodies.
- Collaborates with community members interested in forming associations for public legal education and helping them to work on broader issues of importance to the community
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Administrative/clinic operations

- Completes correspondence and documentation required to represent clients, community, and clinic.
 - Helps to manage vendor contracts such as web hosting services making recommendations for improvement
 - Works closely with other clinic staff to maintain a lawyer referral data base for the clinic as a whole, including referrals for areas of law we do not serve.
 - Trains other staff to provide back up for publishing on clinic's website and other social media platforms following appropriate approval processes/protocols.
 - Participates in skills development and attends Board/Committee meetings as required
- Essential Skills

- Bachelor's degree preferably in communications, public relations, public administration or equivalent
- Minimum of 3-5 years of work experience in field of advocacy, organizing, community development and/or stakeholder engagement
- Exceptional organizational and problem-solving and demonstrated experience building strong networks of community contacts and success in organizing campaigns around specific issues
- Ability to work with broad coalitions interested in social justice concerns
- Substantial experience in the production of a variety of written materials including developing digital content, brochures, newsletters, and other collateral materials tailored to specific target audiences
- Demonstrated experience taking complex and/or legal information and producing content in plain language that synthesizes information succinctly and accurately
- Superior communications skills including writing, proofreading, and editing skills with meticulous attention to detail
- Strong website and social media development and management skills
- Familiarity with digital media strategies and evolving best practices
- Demonstrated respect for and experience communicating through the lens of social justice, inclusion, and equitable practices
- Ability to work both independently and as a team player and ability to remain calm under pressure within tight timelines and limited resources
- Strong publishing and computer skills (MS Office) with capacity to develop new skills
- The successful applicant will be expected to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, subject to medical or Ontario Human Rights Code-based exemptions.

Assets

- Bilingualism and/or ability to be fluent in another language
- Previous experience in a non-profit community organization
- Previous experience providing staff support to an assigned committee and/or Board
- Driver's license [helpful but optional]

Working Conditions:

Work requires travel as part of the job.

Work involves restrictive deadlines or un-predicable priority changes causing time pressure on a daily basis.

Work extended hours as a result of weekend and evening presentations, and or events in accordance to strict deadlines subject to current legislation and contracts.

Work pace cannot be control