



Poverty Law Advocate

Opportunities receives a grant from the Law Foundation of British Columbia to deliver a Poverty Law Advocacy Program on an ongoing basis. The Poverty Law Program provides services and assistance to low income residents in Campbell River and the surrounding area. Advocacy services are provided to people who experience barriers; physically, socially, mentally and economically, and the purpose is to assist them to access the rights and benefits to which they may be entitled.

More specifically, advocates provide information, assistance and representation in the following areas:

1. Provincial (BC) Income Assistance Programs

The legal advocate will assist clients to access income assistance benefits including assisting with appeals and representation at tribunals. The advocate also assists clients with all forms of income security related applications and appeals, including crisis grants, medical transportation costs, moving costs, etc.

The advocate provides assistance with disability related issues, including Person with Disability (PWD) applications and appeals. The advocate will often need to assist the applicant throughout the application process providing guidance to enhance applicant's application.

2. Federal Income Related Programs

The legal advocate assists clients with applications and appeals for federal income related programs including Canada Pension Plan (CPP), CPP disability applications and appeals, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, and Employment Insurance appeals.

3. Provincial Income Related Programs

The legal advocate assists clients with provincial income related programs including Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER), Fair PharmaCare.

4. Residential Tenancy Disputes

The legal advocate assists clients with residential tenancy issues and disputes including tenant's rights and responsibilities, mediation with landlords and representation in dispute resolutions. Advocating for low income renters has become a critical function of the advocate as housing security has been further jeopardized by a critical shortage of affordable rental units.

5. Consumer Debt Issues

The legal advocate assists clients in resolving consumer debt issues, including BC Hydro disconnect issues and communicating with creditors on a client's behalf.

6. Public Legal Education

Workshops, presentations and written materials are provided to the general public in the areas of tenancy, welfare, CPP, and consumer debt issues.

Qualifications & Experience:

Preferred qualifications:

1. Diploma or degree in a social service, counselling or legal related field.
2. Two years of social service experience: tenancy, disability, substance abuse, income support, case management or advocacy.
3. Knowledge of local community resources and agencies.
4. Or an equivalent combination of education, training and experience.

Abilities, skills and knowledge:

1. Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to work with marginalized individuals.
2. Good communication abilities, both written and verbal.
3. Ability to work as part of a team including staff, volunteers, professionals and other sector members.
4. Ability to read, understand and interpret legislation, regulations and policies.
5. Ability to support clientele to communicate with landlords, government workers and other agencies on behalf of clients.
6. Self-motivated with well-developed case management, organization and time management skills.
7. Understanding of poverty related issues.
8. Proficient computer skills in Microsoft Office products such as Word, Outlook, Excel.
9. Mandatory criminal record check, signed confidentiality form and approved reference check.

Benefits & Vacation:

1. Once they have passed their probationary period we offer a health spending account 100% paid by the employer.
2. Three weeks of vacation in first year of employment.