



Volunteering Position: Human Rights Advocate

Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition (VIHRC) is seeking volunteers for our advocacy program in Victoria, BC.

About VIHRC

Working since 1983, the Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition (VIHRC) is committed to carrying on the work of protecting human rights in BC. VIHRC provides advocacy, support, and human rights education throughout Vancouver Island to further the goals of the BC Human Rights Code and work towards a more inclusive society. This work takes various forms, ranging from filing complaints with the BC Human Rights Tribunal or Canadian Human Rights Commission to offering online webinars on the scope of human rights in BC. Compassion and accessibility are central to both our advocacy and educational services because human rights mechanisms are not straightforward.

Role Description

Under the supervision of VIHRC's managing advocate, the volunteers provide and assist with advocacy in Human Rights cases – primarily with complaints to the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal. Due to the time sensitive nature of the human rights complaints process, knowledge of community resources as well as an anti-oppressive approach is key to ensuring the greatest success for individuals.

Responsibilities

Advocacy and Office Duties under the supervision of VIHRC's managing advocate:

- Provide intake services to new clients
- Provide legal information and para-legal advocacy to individuals who have faced discrimination
- Provide appropriate support and referrals for individuals who may be in crisis
- Assist with forms and letter writing on behalf of or with clients
- In collaboration with other staff or volunteers and at times independently, maintain office hours and ensure VIHRC is accessible to as many people as possible
- In collaboration with staff Advocate and at times independently, participate in the day to day functioning of the office including telephone inquiries, drop-in services, answering phone and email
- Ensure that Coalition policy is followed, and identifies and evaluates risks to the organization's people (clients, staff, management, volunteers), property, finances, goodwill, and image and implements measures to control risks

- In collaboration with Advocate or volunteers assist in the development and delivery of human rights education and workshops
- Communicate with community organizations or services, government agents, BC Tribunal members, other lawyers and clients as a Human Rights Advocate

Research Work:

The volunteers would engage in legal research on issues affecting marginalized people (such as welfare law, tenancy, human rights and immigration) for the purposes of referrals and advocacy. In research for the purposes of filing human rights complaint, student would have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of human rights with the goals being to:

- Inform their human rights (or other areas) of legal advocacy work
- To provide comprehensive and clear information and advice for the clients
- Network available to the volunteer including BC Human Rights Tribunal, CLAS, the Law Centre, TAPS, and Disability Alliance BC.

Qualifications

- Exceptional written and communication skills, including the ability to effectively communicate with persons of limited (English) literacy and comprehension.
- The ability to undertake advocacy duties in an ethical, professional manner and with regard to confidentiality.
- Have knowledge of (**or able to learn quickly**) BC Human Rights Law and Procedures and the structure of human rights in Canada.
- Be highly organized and able to manage a diverse and busy caseload.
- Commitment to unlearning internalized oppressive values.
- Significant comprehension of and personal experience with the nature and effects of oppression and social disparity, as well as the ability to recognize, articulate, and explain the operation of systemic oppression.
- Good understanding of anti-oppressive and trauma-informed frameworks.
- Experience working within a non-profit organization is considered an asset.
- A background in advocacy and the ability to focus on positive client outcomes is also an asset.

Commitment and Requirements

- Duration: 6 months to 1 year
- Weekly hours: between 5 and 15 hours a week
- Criminal Records Check is required
- Training and supervision will be provided

To apply

Please submit your resume and cover letter via email at contactvihrc@gmail.com, addressed to our Operations Director and Managing Advocate, Sareh Shojaei.