



FIRST UNITED CHURCH
COMMUNITY MINISTRY SOCIETY

JOB DESCRIPTION

Position title: Advocate
Department: Advocacy
Reports to: Advocacy Manager
Date: October 2020

Our Vision

A neighborhood where every person's worth is celebrated, and all people thrive.

Our Mission:

We seek a just society, nurturing spirits through ministry, housing, advocacy, and community services.

Our Core Values

Acceptance – we practice a presence of acceptance – caring for people no matter who they are, no matter where they are on life's journey, no matter their race, gender identity/expression, or who they love. We meet people where they are and offer help when asked.

Discernment – we develop and grow our skill at using critical thinking and judgement in our interactions with the community we serve. We know that behaviour is, in itself, communication and sometimes rules cannot be one-size-fits-all. And that the world does need rules. We use the same skills to plan how the organization should respond to the neighbourhood we serve.

Empathy – we practice empathy – truly seeing and hearing the experience of those around us. Empathy communicates to those we serve: "You are not alone."

Accountability – we show up and we go the extra mile. We deal with our own issues and we take ownership and responsibility for our work and its impact.

Social Justice – we aspire to a sustainable and equitable society.

Each job within the First United Church Community Ministry Society should in some way promote our accomplishment of this vision and mission.

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Provide advocacy assistance and representation to the Downtown Eastside community and others on a variety of issues generally encountered by low income individuals and families.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide one-to-one advocacy services including referrals, information, summary advice and/or full representation regarding the following legal issues: welfare (including disability), tenancy, employment insurance, WCB, Old Age Security, Canada Pension Plan (including CPP Disability), immigration, debt, employment-related issues (e.g. employment standards), human rights and others similar matters.
- Assist with forms (facilitating access to benefits): old age security, victim assistance, birth certificate applications, guaranteed income supplement, etc.
- connect clients to appropriate resources within our cultivated network of service providers and legal aid as required if we are unable to assist them
- Provide full representation at hearings, written submission of appeals and reconsideration of decision, written and spoken interventions at an administrative level with a number of government programs, interviews and investigations and basic assistance with a wide variety of applications.
- Contact numerous government agencies, social service agencies, housing providers, other community legal assistance organizations and individual lawyers in particular
- Assist in the delivery of public legal education workshops where appropriate.
- Engage in research that is directly related to the casework.
- Participate in weekly case review conferencing with other First United advocates
- Meet monthly and quarterly reporting requirements for Law Foundation or First United
- Engage in monthly legal supervision and file review (Law Foundation-funded advocates only)
- Other duties, as required.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisory/Management responsibility

None

Financial responsibility

Responsible for administering advocacy program budget

LATITUDE

The incumbent works fairly independently. If clarification is required, it is expected that the incumbent will request further direction from the Manager of Advocacy Services.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Regular communication is maintained with all levels of staff and management. Communication is also maintained with management and co-workers as work is assigned and completed, and information exchanged on an ongoing basis.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Good communication skills both oral and written.
- Up-to-date computer skills with Microsoft Office.
- Knowledge of the difficulties encountered by people living in the Downtown Eastside is an asset.
- Knowledge of statutes such as Residential Tenancy and Employment and Assistance Acts.

EDUCATION

- Law Degree or depending upon experience, a university undergraduate degree, para-legal training diploma or continuing education training in poverty law.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Up to one year experience would be an asset.