



# FIRST UNITED

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### Staff Lawyer

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Staff Lawyer
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Legal Advocacy
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Director of Programs
<b>STARTING WAGE:</b>	First United Exempt Wage Grid 7 (min. \$63,195)

**OUR VISION** is a neighborhood where every person's worth is celebrated and all people thrive.

**OUR MISSION** is to seek a just society by nurturing each person's spirit through ministry, housing, advocacy and community service.

**OUR VALUES** are acceptance, discernment, empathy, accountability, and social justice.

Each job within **First United** should in some way promote our accomplishment of this vision and mission and all staff aspire to embody our values.

### POSITION OBJECTIVE

First United's Staff Lawyer is an experienced poverty law advocate, familiar with the multiple systemic barriers facing the community and residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). The position initially will be responsible for three main areas of practice: Working with the Legal Advocacy Team to develop a potential law reform agenda in partnership with other legal organizations in the DTES; acting as Principal to two Articling Students; and assisting the Legal Advocacy Team with individual case matters, as needed. The Staff Lawyer must be a member in good standing with the Law Society of BC.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Principal Articled Students

- Ensure that First United's articled students have access to as much variety in legal practice as possible to meet the standards required by the Law Society of BC
- Ensure that First United's articled students attendance and work hours are in compliance with the Law Society of BC requirements
- Assign legal work to articled students, or arrange secondments where necessary in partnership with other charitable legal practice as appropriate
- Completion of mid-year and final reports to the Law Society of BC

#### Development of Law Reform Agenda

- Work with the Legal Advocacy Team, the Leadership Team, and other poverty law organizations to develop a law reform agenda and/or program for First United. This could be amplifying the

Located on unceded X̱w̱məθkwəy̱əm (Musqueam),  
Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), & Səḻílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) lands.

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work of our partner organizations or starting our own law reform practice as informed by the individual matters we respond to in our Advocacy clinic.

- Using trauma-informed approaches deeply informed by the community and our allies, engage in public consultation to ensure the needs of our community are centered in our practice.
- Work with First United's Ministry, Engagement and Development staff to engage First United's supporters through digital and in-person presentations and communications, as able.
- Engage in research related to law reform.

### **Legal Assistance**

- Provide legal advice on the various legal options and limited legal assistance (e.g. assistance with documentation, negotiations, legal coaching), to clients of First United's Legal Advocacy Clinic.
- Attend to Court as required.
- In instances where in-person consultations are not possible, provide legal advice by phone or video conference (currently staff are largely working remotely).
- Provide information and referrals to appropriate ancillary services to clients.
- Assist in the delivery of public legal education workshops where appropriate.
- Engage in research directly related to casework.
- 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.

## **SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Management responsibility**

None.

### **Financial responsibility**

TBD.

### **Latitude**

The incumbent works independently. If clarification is required, it is expected that the incumbent will request further direction from the Director of Programs or the Advocacy Manager as appropriate.

## **INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Regular communication is maintained with all members of the Legal Advocacy Team, the Director of Programs, and the Law Society of BC. May be required to participate in meetings with the Law Foundation of BC.

## **EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS**

- A minimum of 5-8 years in full-time practice of law in Canada
- An ability to Principal up to two (2) articulated students (as defined in Section 2-57 of the Law Society Rules (referring to Principals))
- JD or LLB Degree
- Member in Good Standing of the Law Society of BC
- Solid knowledge and experience in poverty law – specifically income security, employment security and housing security.
- General knowledge of debt issues, consumer law, family law, and criminal law in the ways they intersect with issues of poverty law.
- Experience or demonstrated interest in bringing a trauma-informed approach to your practice.
- Awareness and understanding of ongoing, systemic issues affecting vulnerable populations,
- Sensitivity, empathy and an ability to deal with a diverse range of people of different genders and lived experiences in a compassionate and professional manner,
- Lived experience as an Indigenous, racialized, non-binary, and/or person living with a disability is an asset.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively in a team environment.

## **SPECIAL TRAINING AN ASSET**

- Occupational First Aid and CPR; Naloxone Administration Training; non-violent communication,
- Understanding of Law Foundation of BC Database Software

*We encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the B.C. Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person.*