

CONTRACT OPPORTUNITY - MANAGING LAWYER

LSS FAMILY LAW CENTRE - FAMILY & CHILD PROTECTION

PENTICTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Legal Services Society (LSS) is seeking applications from experienced family lawyers for a contract to be the Managing Lawyer of their family law centre (yet to be named) located in Penticton. The centre is a Law Foundation-funded project that both increases access to justice and nurtures and supports new lawyers to launch their own legal practice. The legal services offered will include family law legal aid, and private unbundled and traditional family law services, with some services offered at below market rates for low to middle income clients. In addition to direct client services, the Managing Lawyer (who will be an independent contractor) will provide leadership, mentorship and guidance for up to three junior lawyers, an articled student, two administrative assistants and oversight of the office. The junior lawyers will be immersed in learning the business and practice of law so that they will become able, confident and successful lawyers prepared to start or join a practice at the end of two years when they leave the centre. The term of the full-time contract is for two years, which may be extended by mutual agreement on an annual basis up to a total of five years, subject to performance and ongoing funding.

Interested applicants should have significant practice experience in family and CFCSA legal aid tariff and private work in both the Provincial Court and Supreme Court in British Columbia, in addition to the spectrum of dispute resolution processes.

LSS's Family Law Centre will:

- Offer the full scope of legal services to its clients and the community with a full time managing lawyer, up to three junior lawyers, an articled student, and two administrative assistants in fully-equipped office facilities
- Provide free legal advice and representation services in the areas of family and child protection to clients who meet LSS' financial eligibility and coverage guidelines
- Provide legal advice, representation and unbundled legal services in the areas of family and child protection to clients with low and middle incomes who earn too much to qualify for legal aid, and/or their legal issues are not covered by legal aid, for a fee which is income-based
- Operate as an independent law office, including administrative support
- Engage junior lawyers who have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and to serving low and middle income populations once they leave the centre
- Take on an articled student who has demonstrated a commitment to social justice and to serving low and middle income populations once they leave the centre

- Support the lawyers to build practical skills in the business of law, such as marketing, building a referral network, and trust accounting, with the goal of building a client base and goodwill that they can take with them upon leaving the centre
- Support the lawyers to build the legal and procedural knowledge base to have the skills and confidence to practice on their own or in a firm when they leave the centre
- Incorporate and experiment with innovative service delivery models, alternative fee arrangements, and unbundled/limited scope representation as a way to supplement in-person lawyer support and make legal services more accessible and affordable for low to middle income people

Responsibilities

The Managing Lawyer will:

- Provide direct family law and child protection legal services to family law centre clients;
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the office, including personnel;
- Provide mentorship and guidance to the new lawyers in the centre;
- Be able and willing to be Principal to an articulated student in the centre starting in Fall 2020; and potentially a second student after the first student has completed articles;
- Help develop the service delivery and business model for the centre;
- Help develop, participate in and deliver training for the centre;
- Provide advice to LSS about required resources and procedures to support the centre, including any identified need for additional resources;
- Participate in development of policies and procedures for the centre;
- Liaise with stakeholders and appropriate resource agencies;
- Participate in continuing outreach activities to promote and improve the centre;
- Ensure the collection of program performance information;
- Participate in design of program evaluation, as well as the evaluation itself; and
- Regularly report to LSS.

The family law centre project planning group will hold regular meetings to discuss policy and procedural issues. The Managing Lawyer will be an important participant in these discussions to ensure that client interests are respected. The client caseload expectations for the Managing Lawyer will be lower than the other lawyers due to the additional administrative and office management responsibilities.

Criteria for selection

The successful applicant will:

- Be a member in good standing with the Law Society with at least seven years' experience primarily in Family and Child Protection law;
- Have a satisfactory history with the LSS Audit and Investigation Department;
- Have a satisfactory recommendation, evaluation or reference from stakeholders contacted by LSS;
- Have an LSS vendor number;
- Have demonstrated expertise in assisting clients with family and child protection matters, including using DivorceMate for support issues;
- Have a valid drivers' license and use of a vehicle for carrying out the Managing Lawyer duties;
- Have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and to serving low and middle income populations;
- Have experience and ability in providing unbundled services or willingness to do so, including the ability to coach clients in advocating for themselves and presenting their case at court;
- Experience in supporting clients to prepare for and participate in mediation or other collaborative processes;
- Knowledge of the local challenges of providing legal services to persons representing themselves and available local resources including those available by internet;
- Have the ability to work with all family justice resources, including the Family Justice Counsellors and Court Services Branch;
- Have a demonstrated knowledge of family and child protection law, particularly:
 - Practice and procedure in Supreme Court under the *Divorce Act* and *Family Law Act*;
 - Practice and procedure in the Provincial Court under the *Family Law Act*, the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* and the *Family Maintenance Enforcement Act*;
 - Practice and procedure under the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act*; and
 - Excellent knowledge of *Provincial Court (Family) Rules*, *Provincial Court (CFCSA) Rules*, and *Supreme Court Family Rules*, including prescribed forms.

In addition, the following factors will be considered in the selection of the successful candidate:

- Practice experience in the Penticton Provincial and Supreme Courts;
- Familiarity with Penticton and surrounding communities and their available resources;
- Awareness of cultural diversity issues in and around Penticton and of the social and economic circumstances associated with the special needs of low income individuals;
- Have a general knowledge of social justice community issues and Canada's justice and legal system especially as pertaining to First Nations Communities.
- An understanding of Indigenous culture and child welfare;
- Familiarity with the roles and responsibilities of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and Band Representatives;
- Training in mediation, arbitration or collaborative processes;
- Training in cultural competency;

- Proven oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrated ability to operate a successful law practice, including supervision and oversight of legal and administrative staff;
- Experience as a principal to an articulated student;
- Proven ability to function independently and under pressure and ability to perform a variety of diverse tasks at the same time;
- Proven ability to function as part of a team; and
- Be highly action-oriented.

There may be opportunity for the successful candidate to bring their existing family law and child protection practice if this will facilitate the transition for the Managing Lawyer to the family law centre.

Compensation

This full-time contract will start December 1, 2019, or as soon thereafter as the successful candidate is available. There is opportunity to start earlier with the family law centre project planning group, on a part-time basis, some of which may take place in Vancouver, but could be done remotely. The contract term is two years, which may be extended on an annual basis, subject to performance and continued funding. Remuneration will be \$150,000.00 per annum plus a performance bonus (including 30 days personal annual leave for vacation, illness, or professional development).

The Managing Lawyer, who will be an independent contractor, will be responsible for maintaining their Law Society practice fees, insurance, and other professional overhead such as accounting services, bank fees, and ongoing technical support. Office space, furniture, business equipment, supplies and ongoing operating expenses will be provided by LSS.

Closing Date for Applications: 4:00 p.m., Monday, September 30, 2019

To apply, please send your resume and cover letter outlining qualifications to:

Attention: Olga Volpe
Manager, Family Law Services
c/o Carmen Chow
Legal Services Society
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3A8
E-mail: carmen.chow@lss.bc.ca

For further information, after October 1, 2019, you may contact Olga Volpe at olga.volpe@lss.bc.ca