

Legal Aid Commission (ACT)

POSITION TITLE: Grants Officer /Graduate Lawyer
CLASSIFICATION: Legal 1

The Legal Aid Commission (ACT)

The Commission is established under the *Legal Aid Act 1977*. Its mission is to promote a just society in the Australian Capital Territory by:

- ensuring that vulnerable and disadvantaged people receive the legal services they need to protect their rights and interests
- developing an improved community understanding of the law, and
- seeking reform of laws that adversely affect those we assist.

Further information about the Commission can be found at <http://www.legalaidact.org.au>

The Position

Client Services is a section within the Legal Aid Commission (ACT) that is responsible for

- administering applications for legal aid
- granting legal assistance
- managing assignments of legally assisted cases to the Commission's Legal Practices and private lawyers.
- ongoing management of grants and accounts for grants related services
- managing external legal panel practitioners
- managing duty lawyer rosters
- facilitating Review Committee meetings
- undertaking compliance audits of external practitioners
- managing general enquiries and reception duties

Client Services interacts with and delivers services to the general public, existing or potential clients of Legal Aid and their legal representatives.

The function of a Lawyer in Client Services (Grants Officer) is to assist in the exercise of delegated power to assess applications for grants of legal assistance in specified classes of matters; approve funding on grants of legal assistance, assist in providing policy advice; and under supervision draft documents (including guidelines and complex correspondence). The Graduate Lawyer is a new or less experienced lawyer who will be supported in undertaking their essential duties and responsibilities within Client Services. Lawyers employed by the Commission have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as a member of the private legal profession, including the same professional requirements.

The Grants Officer works closely with all members of the Client Services team and is supervised by the Grants Manager/Senior Lawyer.

Essential duties and responsibilities

Under general direction:

1. Assist in exercising legal decision-making and administrative review powers appropriately and in accordance with the *Legal Aid Act 1977*, the Commonwealth funding agreement, and the Commission's Guidelines and Scale of Costs, in regard to the following:
 - a. Make primary decisions on applications for grants of legal assistance and commitment of appropriate funds up to limits identified in delegations;
 - b. Make decisions on requests for extensions of existing grants of legal assistance and commitment of appropriate funds;
 - c. Authorise payment of professional fees or disbursements within grant commitment, and in duty/advice matters;
 - d. Undertake reconsideration of primary decisions, where appropriate;
 - e. Prepare background briefings for matters before the Review Committee;
 - f. Represent the Legal Aid Commission before the Review Committee and ensure reasons for decision are properly recorded and communicated to applicants;
 - g. Assist with the management of the Commission's general practice panels; and
 - h. Undertake assessment of contributions
2. Liaise with stakeholders, including lawyers and clients in regard to applications and grants of legal assistance, including explaining decisions, where appropriate.
3. Assist the Grants Manager in responding to general enquiries and liaising with stakeholders such as the courts, private lawyers, community legal service providers and other relevant organisations.
4. Assist the Client Services Supervisor in undertaking file administration on complex grants matters.
5. Provide legal information and training sessions concerning grants-related issues to external groups and to Client Services staff.
6. Provide opinions in relation to emerging legislation, policies and procedures that may affect grants of legal assistance and Client Services generally.
7. Undertake audits of administration of grants of legal assistance by external legal practices.
8. Undertake special projects and other tasks relating to Client Services as required.

Selection criteria

- A working knowledge, or ability to quickly attain a working knowledge of relevant (civil, criminal and family) law procedures.
- Ability to supervise and train staff in a high pressure area.
- Well-developed analytical skills and initiative to implement improvements and efficiencies.
- Well-developed oral and written communication skills and ability to produce accurate and well-presented documents.
- Ability to work with minimum supervision, under pressure and to meet competing and tight deadlines.
- Ability to use and learn various computer software packages, including Word, Outlook, Excel and Visual Files

- Appreciation and adherence to equal opportunity, industrial democracy and workplace health and safety principles, guidelines and policies.

Applications should specifically address each of the selection criteria. Short listing for interview and selection will be based on claims and examples against these criteria.

Eligibility/other requirements

Eligibility to hold a restricted Practising Certificate in the ACT is required.

Submission of your application

Applications for this position should be forwarded to: hr@legalaidact.org.au

Or to:

HR Manager

Legal Aid Commission (ACT)

GPO Box 512

Canberra City ACT 2601

Applications for this position close at **11:59pm** on **Monday 2 August 2021**.

