

Position Title	Client Services Lawyer
Classification	Legal 2
Responsible to	Client Services Manager
Number of direct reports	Nil
Number of indirect reports	Nil

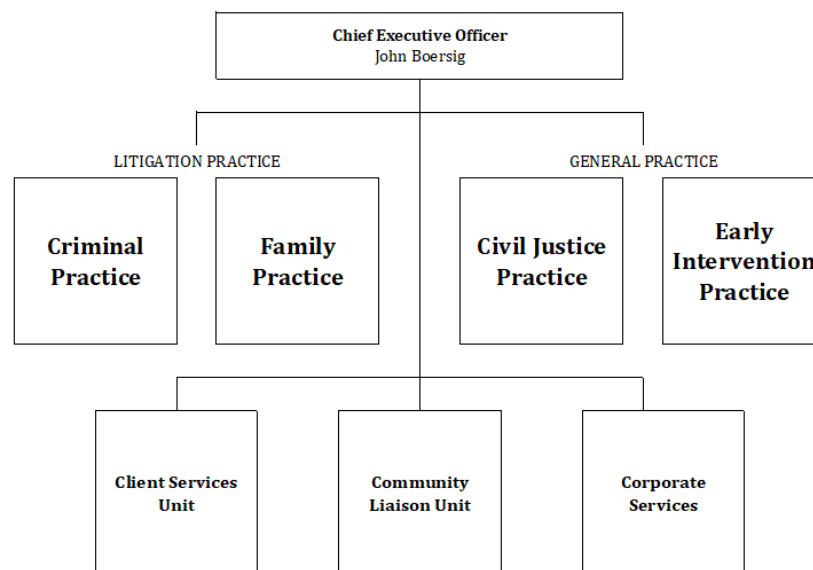
Legal Aid Commission (ACT) (Legal Aid)

Legal Aid, established under the *Legal Aid Act 1977*, is dedicated to promoting a just society in the ACT. Its mission is to ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals receive the legal services necessary to protect their rights and interests, enhance community understanding of the law, and advocate for law reform that benefits those in need.

Legal Aid focuses on early legal intervention, particularly for groups such as victims of family violence, children, the elderly, First Nations people, people with disabilities, and culturally diverse communities. Key objectives include:

- ensuring equitable access to legal services and facilitating early resolution of legal issues, with appropriate referrals to support services.
- improving service efficiency and timeliness to assist more people and enhance legal understanding within the community

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



Client Services Unit

The Client Services Unit provides operational and procedural administration of applications (grants) for legal assistance, including (but not limited to):

- processing applications (grants) and determining eligibility for assistance in accordance with means, merit and matter-type guidelines
- arranging and managing assignment of legal-assisted cases to in-house or private lawyers
- determining requests for extensions of assistance
- certifying accounts for professional fees and disbursements

The Client Services Unit also handles general enquiries and reception at the Legal Aid office.

Position Overview

The function of the Client Services Lawyer is to exercise delegated power to make grants of legal assistance in specified classes of matters, provide policy advice, draft documents (including guidelines and complex correspondence), handle complex enquiries, and generally assist the Client Services Manager in managing the section and its relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Legal Aid staff may be exposed to vicarious trauma through evidence or materials (listening or reading descriptions of traumatic events experienced by others) or as a result of witnessing violence, abuse or neglect against someone else.

The role will include but is not limited to:

Legal Services

- Exercise legal decision-making and administrative review powers appropriately and in accordance with the *Legal Aid Act 1977*, the Commonwealth funding agreement, and Legal Aid's Guidelines and Scale of Costs, in regard to the following:
 - a) make primary decisions on more complex, difficult or expensive applications for grants of legal assistance and commitment of appropriate funds
 - b) make decisions on requests for extensions of existing grants of legal assistance and commitment of appropriate funds
 - c) undertake reconsideration of primary decisions, where appropriate
 - d) prepare background briefings for matters before the Review Committee
 - e) represent Legal Aid before the Review Committee and ensure reasons for decision are properly recorded and communicated to applicants
- Liaise with stakeholders, including lawyers and clients in regard to applications and grants of legal assistance, including explaining decisions, where appropriate
- Prepare reports and short opinions in relation to emerging legislation, policies and procedures that may affect grants of legal assistance and Client Services generally
- Assist the Client Services Manager in responding to general enquiries and liaising with stakeholders such as the courts, private lawyers, community legal service providers and other relevant organisations
- Coordinate Legal Aid's responses for FOI and HRC requests
- Assist in the preparation of law reform submissions and responses to law reform proposals

Corporate Responsibilities

- Represent Legal Aid in a professional manner by upholding the ACT Public Service Values
- Contribute to continuous business process improvement and the development of procedures
- Work towards performance objectives and KPIs identified in strategic, operational and individual performance development plans
- Be responsible for applying WHS to daily tasks performed in the workplace, report all matters beyond your authority and take all practical measures to ensure that your workplace is safe and without risk to health or property
- Comply with all Legal Aid ACT policies and procedures
- Perform other duties as directed, consistent with the classification level of the position and in line with competencies

Position Requirements

The information below describes the capabilities that are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Qualifications

1. Current restricted Practising Certificate in the ACT

Professional / Technical Skills and Knowledge

1. Knowledge of ACT and Commonwealth law and procedure including ability to research and interpret a variety of legislation

Behavioural Capabilities

1. Sound organisational skills, including the ability to effectively manage multiple tasks, determine priorities and meet strict deadlines in high pressure situations
2. Highly developed written and oral communication skills and the ability to conduct cases with limited supervision. Advocacy skills or ability to quickly gain experience in advocacy
3. Initiative, sound judgement and the capacity to respond to requests for assistance in urgent matters while working in a team environment
4. Ability to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing physical or mental illness, and people from disadvantaged or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
5. Ability to prioritise self-care for mental health and wellbeing

