



Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Centre pour les droits à l'égalité au logement

Job Posting: Lawyer

Contract Type: Full-time (position funded through March 2025 and an extension of the funding will be sought)

Start Date: April 1, 2022

Location: The successful candidate will reside in the Greater Toronto Area but work primarily from their remote office. Some in-person work will be required throughout the City of Toronto.

Closing Date: February 4, 2022 at 5:00 pm EST

Hours of work: Semi-flexible. Most work will be completed during business hours, but CERA's legal services program will provide services on evenings and weekends on an as-needed basis. The successful candidate must be available to support the program by being available to meet with and speak to clients on request outside of business hours.

Salary: \$75,000 - \$85,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications

Benefits: A generous benefits package will be made available following the end of the three-month probationary period, which includes health and dental benefits, AD&D, Long-term disability and life insurance. Group and individual professional development opportunities are also provided to staff.

Paid time off: Four weeks (20 days) of paid vacation are provided and CERA typically closes between Christmas and New Year's Day, providing a handful of additional paid days off for staff to rest and recharge. Full-time staff are provided with 10 paid personal emergency days annually.

Application Method: Cover letter + resume. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete an assignment and to participate in an interview. Please see instructions below.

About CERA

CERA is one of Canada's oldest charities working to advance the right to adequate housing. Founded in 1987, CERA has worked tirelessly for over thirty years at the intersection of human rights and housing and is one of Canada's leading NGOs working in the area of social and economic rights. CERA works to advance the right to adequate housing by:

- **Serving clients to help them stay housed:** CERA provides free services to tenants facing eviction and human rights violations in their housing, and we are experts in these fields. Each year we provide services to over a thousand tenants and we are highly effective in ensuring that some of the most vulnerable Ontario renters remain in their homes.

- **Providing education and training about housing rights:** CERA provides public education and training on housing rights and human rights in housing to diverse groups across Ontario, reaching approximately 1,000 people annually. We work with community partners to train individuals and communities about their housing rights and how to assert them, and we engage with landlords to educate them about their obligations as housing providers.
- **Advancing rights-based housing policy:** CERA advances rights-based housing policy through research, policy development, advocacy and litigation. Notable achievements include setting a legal precedent preventing landlords from discriminating against renters who receive social assistance, launching a constitutional challenge against the federal government for failing to take action against homelessness, and coordinating the Right to Housing Toronto Network (R2HTO).

Working at CERA

CERA is a small but growing collaborative and cross-functional team of motivated professionals committed to advancing the right to housing. We are entering the second year of our strategic plan, which prioritizes organizational growth, working nationally, developing innovative ways to engage communities and individuals to support their right to housing and building new, dedicated teams in the areas of policy advocacy, research and strategic litigation. CERA's four functional teams (Services and Education; Policy, Communications & Engagement; Research; and, Strategic Litigation) work collaboratively together to support each other's work in identifying and executing innovative ways to advance the right to housing.

CERA's head office is located at the Centre for Social Innovation (Spadina location), an exciting shared workspace that houses 250 non-profits and social innovators across multiple locations in downtown Toronto. It is accessible by transit and offers substantial opportunities to network with like-minded people and participate in a mission-driven, innovative community through various events. CERA's head office has several workstations which are available to staff who would like to work from the office on a part-time or occasional basis.

About the Role

We are seeking a motivated and committed lawyer with strong skills in client service and case management, and expertise in Ontario housing law. You will be part of the growing CERA team with an ambitious goal of advancing the right to housing for all. In this role, your ability to juggle multiple responsibilities under tight timelines is essential. If you are a self-starter with demonstrated experience representing clients, delivering public legal education and a passion for housing law, this could be the right role for you.

Reporting to the Manager of Services & Education, the successful candidate will carry a

caseload of clients and assist them in resolving disputes related to their tenancy including evictions, maintenance issues, above-guideline increases and other tenant applications. The role requires significant knowledge of Ontario housing law, cross-team collaboration, a strong customer service orientation and exceptional communications and time management skills.

Your responsibilities will include:

- Representing tenants before the Landlord and Tenant Board of Ontario at eviction hearings, at hearings related to tenant applications and providing summary advice to tenants.
- Engaging in mediation and negotiation (both orally and in writing) with housing providers or their representatives on behalf of clients.
- Representing tenants at Divisional Court and other courts and tribunals on matters related to their tenancies.
- Keeping accurate, up-to-date case notes, including demographic data, and entering data into relevant data and client management systems.
- Engaging in community outreach, building and maintaining relationships with community partners including but not limited to other service providers, housing providers, and non-profit organizations.
- Supporting the development of public education materials and programming to educate individuals and communities about their housing rights and the right to housing.
- Facilitating workshops and conducting presentations and information sessions about housing rights.
- Assisting the Manager of Services and Education with the administration of CERA's legal services program.
- Representing CERA in relevant sector conversations, networks, and working with stakeholders including funders and government to support the advancement of CERA's policy work.
- Supervising, coaching, and providing direction to students, interns and volunteers as needed.
- Performing other duties as required to support the organization, Executive Director and Board of Directors.

Qualifications

- Lawyer called to the Bar of Ontario and in good standing with the Law Society of Ontario.
- A minimum of 3 years of experience providing legal services related to housing to low-income clients in Ontario.
- Experience representing clients before the Landlord and Tenant Board of Ontario.
- Strong understanding of the housing and social sectors in Toronto and Ontario, housing law and the barriers facing equity-seeking groups in housing.
- Demonstrated ability to problem solve, facilitate resolutions and mediate conflict.
- Ability to keep accurate, up-to-date records, enter data into a data management system and manage multiple timelines.

- Strong time management and file management skills, including sound knowledge of work planning.
- Demonstrated skills in mentoring and/or teaching.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.
- Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and familiarity with legal case management software.
- Ability to serve clients in languages other than English is an asset.

Skills and attributes

- Outstanding organizational, analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to multi-task, thrive in a fast-paced environment, and adapt quickly to change.
- Ability to work accurately under pressure with attention to detail and deadlines, and with minimal supervision.
- Flexibility and entrepreneurial spirit to accommodate high levels of responsibility and multiple and sometimes shifting priorities.
- Strong strategic thinking skills, political acumen, diplomacy, discretion, tact and good judgement.

We recognize and value the unique perspective that people with lived experience of poverty and/or precarious housing bring in addition to the skills and qualifications listed above.

To apply for this job

Applications should include a resume and cover letter in one PDF document and should be submitted by email to opportunities@equalityrights.org with the subject line: Application - Lawyer.

At CERA, we believe that a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve strengthens our ability to achieve our mission. We strongly encourage applicants of all genders, racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, and with a range of life experiences to apply.

We are committed to full compliance with the *Human Rights Code*, the *Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and all other applicable legislation. We will provide accommodation during the hiring process upon request and information received relating to accommodation measures will be addressed confidentially.

We thank all applicants for their interest.
Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.
No telephone enquiries please.