

PIAC Practical Legal Training Placement Volunteer Position Job Description



The Public Interest Advocacy Centre

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre is a leading social justice law and policy centre. We build a fairer, stronger society by helping to change laws, policies and practices that cause injustice and inequality.

Our work combines:

- legal advice and representation, specialising in test cases and strategic casework;
- research, analysis and policy development; and
- advocacy for systems change and public interest outcomes.

We actively seek to collaborate and partner in our work to maximise its impact. Our priorities include reducing homelessness; First Nations justice; climate change and social justice; equality and non-discrimination; asylum seeker rights; and the fair use of police powers.

About the work

Successful applicants will work in the Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS) team. In the HPLS team, volunteer placements may assist with the provision of free legal services to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This may involve tasks such as face-to-face interaction with clients at various outreach locations around Sydney, speaking to clients and community workers on the phone for intake and triage, drafting documents, conducting legal research, and other administrative tasks.

Relationships

HPLS includes a Principal Solicitor, a Managing Solicitor, a Criminal Solicitor Advocate, a Senior Solicitor for the Women's Homelessness Prevention Service, secondeed solicitors, a Project Officer, a Policy Officer, a Paralegal and an Administrator. Practical Legal Training placements may be required to undertake work for and under the supervision of all lawyers engaged in legal practice.

Decision-making

The Principal Solicitor is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the legal practice. Issues relevant to the legal practice are discussed at legal practice meetings that all members of the legal practice attend.

Tenure

Student Volunteers are required to work at least one day per week for a minimum of 6 months. However, we are open to requests for flexible working arrangements. All volunteer placements will be required to work at the PIAC office at Level 5, 175 Liverpool St, Sydney. There will be opportunities to attend outreach with the Outreach Team on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

This is an unpaid position.

It would suit law students who have completed at least 2 years of their degree and have an interest in social justice. Through this position you will gain practical legal experience and exposure to a range of areas of law. You will have significant opportunities to build sought-after skills including client management and communication, taking instructions, providing referrals, problem solving and supporting workflow in a busy legal practice.

Major accountabilities

- Answer telephone enquiries
- Conduct triage and intake processes for client and potential clients
- Assist with casework under the supervision of Solicitors, including taking instructions, drafting correspondence, preparing documentation, undertaking legal research;
- Conduct research to assist staff with casework and policy projects.
- Attend various Outreach locations to assist the solicitors to record client instructions.

Selection criteria

- Strong communication skills including a good telephone manner;
- Proven ability to deal sensitively and effectively with people with diverse backgrounds, education levels and experiences;
- Sound time-management and organisational skills;
- Legal research skills;
- Experience using legal databases or capacity to quickly acquire such skills
- Writing skills to enable drafting of legal documents;
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues facing socially and economically disadvantaged people
- Demonstrated ability to work co-operatively as part of a team.

Applications

An application should comprise:

- a cover letter addressing the selection criteria (max 2 pages);
- a current CV; and
- a copy of your academic transcript.

All applications must address the selection criteria and should be sent by email to: jobs@piac.asn.au

PIAC strongly encourages applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people living with a disability.

Applications close: 26 November 2023 and we'll contact you following that date to provide an update on your application.

Placements will commence in mid to late January 2024 on a date to be confirmed.