

**TITLE:** GENERAL COUNSEL**CLASSIFICATION:** BAND 5

## **JOB OVERVIEW**

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) exists to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. by shifting laws, policies, practices and cultures. We do this work through education, research, advocacy, inquiry and monitoring.

A member of the senior leadership team, the General Counsel acts as in-house legal counsel, providing advice to and representing the Commissioner on a range of legal issues that arise in the course of BCOHRC's work. This includes conducting legal research and analysis, preparing legal opinions, and providing legal advice, particularly related to the Commissioner's intervention and inquiry functions under sections 47.12(1)(j) and 47.15 of the *Human Rights Code*. In addition, the General Counsel leads BCOHRC's Legal team and contributes to BCOHRC's strategic direction.

## **ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- Leads the development and implementation of short and long-term strategic plans to establish the direction, goals, and objectives of legal initiatives that align with the Commissioner's strategic priorities.
- Functions as a member of the senior leadership team in the development of BCOHRC's long-range plans and priorities and providing expert advice to the Commissioner in the delivery of the Commissioner's mandate.
- Provides overall leadership to the Legal department including financial and operational management (e.g., overseeing departmental budget, contracts, and grants) and human resources (e.g., workload planning, recruitment, and supervision of staff).
- Provides leadership to direct reports including coaching and mentoring the development of staff, conducting performance evaluations and creating learning and development and succession plans, approval of leave, response to grievances and initiation of discipline processes.
- Applies a rights-based approach and an intersectional lens with a focus on decolonization and critical analyses.
- Provides legal advice, expertise and opinions to the Commissioner, leadership team and other staff of BCOHRC on aspects of human rights law and policy, freedom of information law and policy, and other relevant legal issues.
- Works with the Commissioner and the Legal team to identify and provide advice to the Commissioner about cases in which the Commissioner may intervene under section 47.12(1)(j) of the *Code*.
- Leads, conducts and acts as counsel in legal proceedings on behalf of the Commissioner, including interventions in cases involving systemic human rights issues.

- Works with the Commissioner and Legal team (particularly Senior Staff Lawyer, Inquiries and Investigations), as well as BCOHRC departments and other partners to identify systemic human rights issues for investigations and inquiries under section 47.15 of the *Code*.
- Provides oversight, strategic guidance and support to the Senior Staff Lawyer, Inquiries and Investigations, on inquiries and investigations under sections 47.14 and 47.15 of the *Code*, provides advice to the Commissioner on interventions and other legal matters, and ensures that work is conducted in accordance with the *Code*, established policies, and the principles of administrative fairness and natural justice.
- Briefs the Commissioner and senior leadership team on legal issues and cases that have the potential for significant impact or which are controversial, unusually complex or have a precedent setting nature
- Oversees the Legal team's delivery of internal legal education and external presentations.
- Ensures BCOHRC compliance with legislative requirements.
- Establishes and maintains expertise in the areas of law related to the Commissioner's statutory jurisdiction and acts as a resource with respect to the Commissioner's jurisdiction both to internal staff and the general public.
- Acts as BCOHRC's Privacy Officer, which includes responding to requests under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, overseeing Privacy Impact Assessments, and providing legal advice relating to privacy issues.
- Assumes other responsibilities relating to the provision of legal services as assigned by Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

- LL.B. or J.D. is required.
- A lawyer in good standing with a Canadian Law Society, with relevant practical experience, with at least ten years of call or equivalent experience. Must be eligible and willing to become a member of the Law Society of BC.
- Extensive progressive experience in a senior role, which must include:
  - Providing strategic and timely advice to senior leadership;
  - Practicing human rights law or engaging in systemic human rights work at a senior level;
  - Leading investigations or inquiries;
  - Representing parties in cases before courts and tribunals
  - Building, coaching, and leading teams; and
  - Strategic planning and financial management
- Successful completion of security screening requirements of the BC Public Service, which may include a criminal records check, and/or *Criminal Records Review Act* (CRRRA) check, and/or enhanced security screening checks as required.

### **WILLINGNESS STATEMENT: SOME TRAVEL MAY BE REQUIRED**

*Preference may be given to applicants with the following:*

**Date: April 9, 2025**

- To complement the diversity of the BCOHRC team, preference may be given to applicants who are Indigenous, Black or racialized, people with diverse gender identities or expressions, and/or, people with disabilities.
- Lived experience with human rights, which could be through your own identity and/or personal experiences related to human rights.
- Experience working with an independent Officer of the Legislature.
- Experience practicing human rights, administrative and/or constitutional law.
- Experience building relationships and/or collaborating on legal initiatives with Indigenous groups or communities.
- Experience developing initiatives and programs related to affirming the rights of disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as: Indigenous peoples; racialized people LGBTQ2SAI+people; persons with disabilities; ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities; and/or women and children.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**

- Commitment to and passion for human rights.
- Expert knowledge of B.C.'s *Human Rights Code* and other relevant legislation and regulations.
- Knowledge of human rights-based approaches, diversity and inclusion (GBA+), and Indigenous competencies.
- Well-developed analytical, strategic, and critical thinking skills.
- Superior oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to write and present in a format appropriate for the intended audience.
- Excellent leadership, interpersonal, project management and organizational skills.
- Ability to prioritize high volumes of time-sensitive and confidential work to meet operational deadlines.
- Ability to work in a dynamic environment with changing priorities.
- Ability to remain current on emerging human rights issues, legal decisions, trends, studies, and initiatives to inform BCOHRC initiatives and the Commissioner's Special Reports.
- Ability to exercise a high degree of discernment, tact and diplomacy in dealing with issues that may involve communication of information that could have a significant impact on the image and credibility of the Commission.
- Understanding of and commitment to the mandate, role and legal authorities of BCOHRC.
- Excellent interpersonal skills including sensitivity, empathy, discretion, and tact.
- Must be able to work independently, under pressure.

### **INDIGENOUS RELATIONS BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES**

- A **Credible Champion** shows courage and conviction in advocating for change for the betterment of Indigenous people. This means stepping forward, from a place of respect

and knowledge, to name needed change and to champion it. A credible champion remains self-aware and maintains effective relationships.

- **Cultural Agility** is the ability to work respectfully, knowledgeably and effectively with Indigenous people. It is noticing and readily adapting to cultural uniqueness in order to create a sense of safety for all. It is openness to unfamiliar experiences, transforming feelings of nervousness or anxiety into curiosity and appreciation. It is examining one's own culture and worldview and the culture of the BC Public Service, and to notice their commonalities and distinctions with Indigenous cultures and worldviews. It is recognition of the ways that personal and professional values may conflict or align with those of Indigenous people. It is the capacity to relate to or allow for differing cultural perspectives and being willing to experience a personal shift in perspective.
- **Empathy** is the ability to recognize, understand and directly experience the emotion of another. It involves listening with heart, accepting their message, and staying focused on their experience rather than reacting. It means understanding that the behaviour may be connected to something outside of the immediate situation.
- **Sustained Learning and Development** means continually increasing your ability to build and maintain respectful and effective relationships with Indigenous people. Central to this competency is appreciating that there are many other cultural understandings of knowledge and ways of working that have legitimacy and deserve respect – and therefore require our continual learning and development, including direct exposure to cultural and community ways.

## BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

- **Decisive Insight** combines the ability to draw on one's own experience, knowledge and training and effectively problem-solve increasingly difficult and complex situations. It involves breaking down problems, tracing implications and recognizing patterns and connections that are not obviously related. It translates into identifying underlying issues and making the best decisions at the most appropriate time. At higher levels, the parameters upon which to base the decision become increasingly complex and ambiguous and call upon novel ways to think through issues.
- **Impact and Influence** is the ability to influence, persuade or convince others to adopt a specific course of action. It involves the use of persuasive techniques, presentations or negotiation skills to achieve desired results.
- **Listening, Understanding and Responding** is the desire and ability to understand and respond effectively to other people from diverse backgrounds. It includes the ability to understand accurately and respond effectively to both spoken and unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings and concerns of others. People who demonstrate high levels of this competency show a deep and complex understanding of others, including cross-cultural sensitivity.
- **Building Strategic Alliances** involves knowledge and skills to engage in internal and external stakeholder analysis and to negotiate agreements and alliances based on a full understanding of power and politics.
- **Vision and Goal Setting** involves knowledge and skills in establishing official and operative goals for the organization/units and to establish a system of measuring effectiveness of goal attainment.
- **Creating and Managing Change** involves knowledge and skills to manage in the organization through setting direction and urgency, building a coalition of support,

communicating widely, handling resistance to change and facilitating implementation of successful change actions.

- **Solving Problems Creatively** involves knowledge and skills in fostering creative problem solving in the organization through critical reflection, problem analysis, risk assessment and rewarding innovation.
- **Promoting Empowerment** involves knowledge and skills in using processes such as delegation and information sharing to enhance subordinate ownership and empowerment over their task and performance.
- **Building Team Orientation** involves knowledge and skills in developing group identity, participative decision making and open and effective communication.
- **Executive Presence** involves knowledge and skills in influencing others and having an observable impact at the executive level, through personal credibility, leadership, confidence, and an understanding of other people's perspectives and interests.
- **Concern for Image Impact** is an awareness of how one's self, one's role and the organization are seen by others. The highest level of this competency involves an awareness of, and preference for, respect for the organization by the community.

**For more information on competencies, see:**

[Competencies in the BC Public Service](#)

[BC Public Service competencies list](#)

[Indigenous relations behavioural competencies](#)