

West Scarborough Community Legal Services

Year 1 Practicum

Dates: January 10- May 31, 2024

Practicum Description:

West Scarborough Community Legal Services is a legal aid clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario since 1988 and is one of 2 legal aid clinics in Scarborough. We offer a variety of legal services to low income residents who live in 'west' Scarborough and who qualify financially. The clinic is administered by a volunteer Board of Directors, who are elected from our membership.

West Scarborough Community Legal Services provides services in the areas of tenants' rights; income maintenance programs including Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security; workers' rights issues such as employment insurance, employment standards and human rights; and immigration. We serve those living in the deepest poverty in our community, many of whom are racialized and Black, living with disabilities, newcomers and refugees, precarious workers and seniors. We engage in direct advocacy as well as systemic law reform and organizing work to further social justice in our community.

We are located at Kennedy and Eglinton, a short walk from Kennedy subway station and about 30 minutes via subway from the school of social work.

The legal clinic has been hosting MSW placement students since 2015 to assist our staff in providing wrap around supports as an adjunct to our legal services. Students provide direct services to clients including system navigation, the provision of warm referrals, and short-term case management. In addition, students become involved in an active community organizing project of the clinic so they can learn more about the intersections between direct and systems level social work and the challenges of a social justice oriented social work practice. This placement is a unique opportunity to learn about practicing social work in both a legal and "storefront" community agency.

Over the next year a particular focus of our organization will be continuing in our resilient recovery from Covid-19. Our clinic is open full time to the public, and we are seeing clients coming to the clinic in greater crisis due to housing and food insecurity and often seeking out non-legal supports. We are working to strengthen our referral pathways to other services and to better support clients with complex issues. This year we have engaged in a needs assessment process to reach out to four particularly marginalized communities in Scarborough being Black communities, Indigenous communities, racialized communities, and individuals living with mental health and substance use barriers. The social work student will be actively involved in helping to implement recommendations from the needs assessment.

This placement will be co-supervised by a lawyer with an MSW degree with a particular interest in medical-legal partnerships and by a community legal worker with a wealth of experience in community organizing with precarious and racialized communities.

Practicum Requirements:

- Covid Vaccinations
- Comfort working with the population being served
- Comprehensive report writing and documentation
- **A second language would be an asset but is not required. We frequently serve clients who speak Tamil, Bengali, Urdu, Arabic, and Dari amongst other languages.**

Does your practicum require any previous experience? If yes, please specify.

Lived experience or prior experience working with marginalized communities would be an asset. The legal clinic is a fast paced and less structured setting so we find students who bring some prior experience to the placement have benefitted more from the rich experiences available in this placement.

Please indicate whether this practicum will be in-person, remote or hybrid.

In person. There may be some hybrid work depending on the Covid-19 situation in 2024.

Please indicate whether this practicum will involve direct work or a mix of direct and indirect.

Mix of direct work with clients of the clinic and indirect work doing community organizing/law reform work.

Number of practicums offered? 1

Field Instructor(s') name and credentials (BSW and/or MSW)

Vanessa Emery, JD/MSW – Vanessa completed the combined JD/MSW program at U of T. She is the Legal Director and has been supervising MSW students for several years

Regini David, licenced paralegal - Regi is a community legal worker with a wealth of experience in community organizing with precarious and racialized communities. She will be supervising the indirect portion of the placement.

Do you require a resume? Or resume and cover letter?

Please provide a resume. A short cover letter is not mandatory but would be appreciated.

Accessibility Considerations:

- Will the student have access to a private space for notes or computer use? Yes
- Are there breaks between clients/patients/meetings? Yes
- Is the practicum considered fast-paced? Fast

- Is there a high noise level in the practicum? Medium
- Is the site wheelchair accessible? Yes
- What are the physical demands of the practicum? Minimal
- Are there any other accessibility considerations that potential applicants with disabilities should be aware of? We will work with any students to ensure any accommodation needs are met

Students registered with University of Toronto Accessibility Services may receive appropriate accommodations for practicum settings. To register: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/> or call 416-978-8060

If you are interested in this practicum, please send your application to miri.ben.dat@utoronto.ca by 4 pm on Wednesday October 4, 2023. Applications will be forwarded on to the site.