

# **Ernestine!**s

## **Women's Shelter**

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### **Legal & Housing Counsellor**

Ernestine's Women's Shelter is an organization run by women that provides support and shelter for women, youth and children experiencing violence. Within a solidarity model, Ernestine's acknowledges the multitude of issues facing survivors of abuse and provides crisis intervention and a range of holistic services.

Legal & Housing counsellor provides resources and support to clients residing in the shelter. The counsellor assists clients resolve their housing and legal issues by helping them navigate systems and by providing referrals where necessary. The incumbent will work closely with counseling staff and other shelter programs to support the needs of the clients engaged with the Legal and Housing systems. This position is also responsible for working collaboratively with women and their children to establish a plan, which will facilitate a safe and effective path to independence.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSABILITIES**

#### **Counselling**

- Assesses client needs, develops plans, and sets goals based on their individual housing and legal needs.
- Provides crisis counselling, de-escalation counselling and grounding interventions.
- Offers client centered solution-focused counselling.

#### **Client Support**

- Facilitates support assistance with agencies such as Legal Aid, Toronto Social Housing Connections, Ontario Works and Canada Immigration and Citizenship.
- Provides emotional support and accompanies women to court and when they visit other community agencies or as they assess housing options.
- Assists clients as they complete housing applications under the special priority program for women survivors of domestic violence.
- Matches clients with desired locations, connects them with resources in that area and ensures safety and adjustment in the new community.
- Provides information and support to clients as they navigate through the social justice system and or immigration.
- Works in partnership with landlords from the public and private sector to ensure clients maintain their residents.
- Conducts case conferences with clients and involved agencies to support client needs.
- Advocates on behalf of clients with lawyers and judges during the court process.

## **Agency and Team Support**

- Participates on agency committees and contributes to events, which includes participating in team meetings and staff meetings.
- Communicates with team members to share information, provide debriefing opportunities and resolve problems.
- Represents Ernestine is and volunteers on a variety of committees or at events to promote the Shelter, share information and resolve problems.

## **Assessment and Referral**

- Advocates on behalf of clients to provide support and warm referrals.
- Assesses client needs and provides information and referrals.
- Conducts research to identify services for referral and makes referrals.
- Consults with Counsellors regarding available services and client needs.
- Follows up with clients to see how they are and receives feedback related to referrals.

## **Administration**

- Maintains comprehensive and accurate clients' records.
- Keeps accurate documented statistics of all clients housed through Ernestine's Women's Shelter, making it available on an ongoing basis to the collective or board for funding purposes.
- Responsible for providing written annual report to United Way, regarding housing situation and the larger social implications.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- A minimum of three (3) years' experience delivering legal and housing support to women who have experienced abuse;
- Thorough knowledge of social services, housing, and legal aid systems;
- Experience providing information and referrals specific to the needs of women fleeing violence;
- An understanding of the issues and dynamics related to the provision of transitional and housing support services to children and women who have experienced abuse consistent with a feminist anti-oppression analysis;
- Experience working within a diverse work setting and with a diverse client population;
- Intermediate computer skills;
- Excellent administrative skills and letter writing skills;
- Demonstrated commitment to team work and team building;
- Be a self-starter and highly motivated;
- Strong advocacy skills are a must-have with this position;
- Excellent communication and conflict management skills; and,
- Fluency in a second language would be considered an asset.

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**The hours of work** for this positions are varied, as needed (this may include evenings and weekends)

**Please note:** Prior to hiring, the successful candidate is required to have both a police reference check and CPR certification.

**Submit your cover letter and résumé by September 22, 2017**

**Email:** [contact@ernestines.ca](mailto:contact@ernestines.ca)

Ernestine's promotes the principles of anti racist/ anti-oppression and adheres to the tenets of the Ontario Human Rights Code. We encourage applications from women of all ethnic origins, religions, abilities and sexual orientations. Ernestine's provides accommodation during all parts of the hiring process, upon request, to applicants with disabilities. If contacted, please advise us if you require any accommodation.

While we thank all candidates for their interest, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. No telephone enquiries please.