



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Legislative Assembly	Human Rights Officer	
Position Number(s)	Community(s)	Division/Region(s)
12-13055/13057	Yellowknife	NWT Human Rights Commission

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Human Rights Officer interprets and makes recommendations for the administration of, the NWT *Human Rights Act*.

The Officer also provides guidance, assistance, and education to government, non-government, union, landlords, and private sector management and employees in the area of human rights and the provisions of the NWT *Human Rights Act*.

SCOPE

This position is located in Yellowknife but serves the population of the entire NWT. Reporting to the Director of Human Rights, the Human Rights Officer (Officer) analyzes, investigates, and facilitates resolution of complaints received from the general public of the NWT pursuant to the *Human Rights Act* (the "Act"). The Officer acts independently in interpreting and applying the Act, legal precedent and appropriate policy to specific situations and in making recommendations to the Director on the disposition of complaints.

The Officer promotes compliance with the Act, and promotes equality and human rights in the Northwest Territories by providing technical information to the public, developing publications on rights and responsibilities under the Act, and developing and delivering programs of education and promotion.

The Officer's work contributes directly to the protection of the fundamental human right to equality in the NWT. The Officer's investigative and complaint resolution functions impact directly on the effective administration of the NWT *Human Rights Act*. Improper handling of complaints could lead to appeals, judicial reviews and to a loss of public trust in the complaint process.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Interprets, investigates, and makes recommendations to the Director of Human Rights on inquiries and complaints filed under the NWT *Human Rights Act*.

- Analyzes incoming complaints, interprets the sections contained in the NWT *Human Rights Act* as well as case precedent in the NWT and other Canadian jurisdictions, and determines if there are grounds for accepting a formal complaint.
- Prepares and ensures completion of the complaint form and complaint details to meet the requirements of the *Act*, case precedent, and related policies and procedures.
- Plans and conducts investigations into human rights complaints, including identifying issues to be investigated, interviewing the parties and witnesses to a complaint, accurately recording interviews, gathering evidence, and writing a report on the investigations.
- Recommends to the Director accepting or dismissing complaints or referring complaints for an adjudication.
- Provides information on human rights legislation, policy, and remedies, including interpretations and decisions on particular circumstances to employers, service providers, landlords, government agencies, unions, non-profit agencies and members of the public.
- Researches and maintains current knowledge of human rights case precedents and legislation affecting federal, provincial and territorial human rights issues.

2. Mediates and conciliates between complainants and respondents, union representatives, and legal counsel to resolve human rights issues.

- Attempts to affect an early, proactive resolution by facilitating informal discussions with complainants and respondents, their legal counsel and/or union representatives before a complaint is filed.
- Facilitates formal settlement discussions with complainants and respondents, their legal counsel and/or union representatives, once a formal complaint is filed.
- Drafts legally binding settlement agreements and manages the settlement process.

3. Further to the NWT Human Rights Commission strategic and business plans, develops and delivers a variety of educational programs to the public about the *Human Rights Act* in order to improve compliance with the *Act* and to promote human rights in the Northwest Territories.

- Develops and delivers seminars and presentations to schools, employers, service providers, government agencies, unions, non-profit organizations and members of the public on the provisions and intent of human rights law.
- Develops promotional and information materials pursuant to the relevant sections of the *Act*, and develops content for the Commission's website.
- Participates in planning and evaluation of the Commission's public education and information program and strategic planning.
- Liaises with other human rights commissions on new approaches or methods in the areas of human rights education.

4. Further to the NWT Human Rights Commission strategic and business plans, coordinates and conducts promotional activities to foster public recognition of the equality principles contained in the Act.

- Plans, develops, facilitates and manages multi-party, NWT-wide, projects aimed at fostering public understanding of the Act.
- Develops and leads outreach activities and initiatives.
- Researches and identifies human rights issues and develops appropriate communications plans and activities.
- Participates in special events as speaker, panel member, facilitator, or workshop leader and attends conferences and participates in committees on behalf of the Human Rights Commission.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Advanced writing skills and the ability to translate technical and legal information into plain language.
- Specialized knowledge of domestic human rights principles, theory, and legislation.
- Proven ability to deliver presentations to large and small groups and manage group dynamics.
- Proven mediation skills including dealing with angry, highly emotional individuals.
- Proven analytical skills required to interpret and apply legislation to specific situations.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively, clearly and concisely orally and in writing and in a cross-cultural setting.
- Proven client-service orientation.
- Proven organizational and project management skills, and ability to manage competing priorities and projects.
- Advanced research skills and the ability to research a variety of legal and academic sources for specific human rights issues and case precedents.
- Ability to maintain neutrality and confidentiality.
- Understanding and experience with the use of web-based communications and a proficiency in using computers and word processing, database, internet and e-mail applications.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A degree in a related academic discipline (law, communications, social sciences, humanities, development studies) and a minimum of three years experience in progressively interpreting and applying legislation, mediation, and developing and delivering education or communication programs.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual physical demands. Some travel to communities required.

Environmental Conditions

No unusual environmental conditions.

Sensory Demands

Most inquiries and interviews are conducted over the phone. On a daily basis, the Officer must listen to people on the phone or in person for long periods of time (up to 2 hours) while being required to accurately record their complaints, concerns, and submissions of evidence.

Mental Demands

The Officer works with, and must appropriately handle, unpleasant direct personal contacts or concerns about unpleasant situations during complaint intakes, investigations, and mediations on a daily basis.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security (check one)

- Position of Trust – criminal records check required