



## **HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS IN WASHINGTON<sup>1</sup>**

**May 15, 2013**

*The resources below are for civil (non-criminal) matters. If the youth has a criminal (or juvenile offender) matter, they should contact the public defense agency for the county, or the court to ask who provides public defense.*

*If the youth is in foster care, depending on the county, they may have a right to an attorney. For example, in King County, all youth ages 12 and older have a right to an attorney. In other counties, they may have to ask. You should follow the same approach as above.*

### Columbia Legal Services (CLS)<sup>2</sup>:

Youth Issues:	Only takes systemic issues on a wide variety of noncriminal issues that affect a large number of youth.
Geographic Area of Service:	Statewide.
Age Cutoff:	Does not have an age cutoff.
Other Restrictions:	None.
To Refer:	Contact CYP by phone or email, (206) 464-5936 ext. 289/ <a href="mailto:cyp@columbialegal.org">cyp@columbialegal.org</a> .

CLS is a nonprofit law firm that represents, through systemic change, low-income people with critical civil legal needs who have no other legal assistance available to them. CLS is able to do administrative and legislative advocacy, class actions, and to represent undocumented people. CLS only takes individual cases in limited circumstances.

CLS organizes its advocacy through the work of its project groups. The Children and Youth Project's goal is to improve opportunities for Washington's children to have safe and stable families and homes and to have access to education, health care, and economic stability that will lead them to a successful adult life. The Institutions Project represents youth confined in juvenile detention facilities, mental health facilities, and facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities and focuses on institutional conditions of confinement, discrimination, sentencing and placement, alternatives to institutionalization, and access to

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<sup>1</sup> This document was prepared under a grant from the Children's Justice Interdisciplinary Task Force.

<sup>2</sup> [www.columbialegal.org](http://www.columbialegal.org)

courts, as well as issues related to rehabilitation, reentry, and reductions in recidivism. The Basic Human Needs Project's goal is that children and their families and persons with disabilities receive food, health care, child care, affordable housing, emergency assistance and other forms of public assistance.

Northwest Justice Project (NJP):<sup>3</sup>

Youth Issues: Housing, healthcare, education, consumer, employment rights and barriers to employment and public benefits.  
Geographic Area of Service: Statewide.  
Age Cutoff: None.  
Other Restrictions: Cannot represent individuals who are undocumented.  
To Refer: Call CLEAR at (888) 201-1014 or 211 in King County.

NJP provides civil legal assistance to low-income people from 17 offices throughout Washington State. NJP handles a broad range of cases affecting basic human needs such as family safety and security, housing, protection of income, access to health care, education, consumer, employment rights and barriers to employment, and other legal needs. NJP's case work and community-based advocacy seeks to advance its mission to promote the long-term well-being of low-income families, individuals and communities.

NJP operates a toll-free intake and referral hotline called CLEAR (Coordinated Legal Education Advice and Referral).<sup>4</sup> CLEAR serves as the statewide, centralized point of access for persons seeking free legal help, including advice, education, limited legal services, self-help materials and, where available, referrals for further representation. Youth or their parents can call for help on many issues including emancipation, housing/homelessness, public benefits, and medical consent. Youth who have truancy, CHINS or ARY cases pending can be assisted before being assigned counsel or if they are denied counsel.

NJP also maintains WashingtonLawHelp,<sup>5</sup> a public website containing an extensive library of legal resources, self-help materials, including necessary court forms in areas of law needed most by low income persons, the great majority of whom are forced to appear in court unrepresented. This website specifically contains resources for youth that have juvenile offenses, that are homeless, emancipated, or in foster care.

TeamChild:<sup>6</sup>

Youth Issues: Education, healthcare, housing, and public benefits.  
Geographic Area of Service: Snohomish, King, Pierce, Yakima and Spokane Counties.  
Age Cutoff: 12-18, generally. TeamChild may accept cases of youth younger or older on a case by case basis.  
Other Restrictions: None.

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<sup>3</sup> [nwjustice.org](http://nwjustice.org)

<sup>4</sup> [nwjustice.org/get-legal-help](http://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help)

<sup>5</sup> [www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org)

<sup>6</sup> [www.teamchild.org](http://www.teamchild.org)

To Refer: Contact the TeamChild office closest to your area.

TeamChild clients are low-income youth who are involved, or at risk of being involved, in the juvenile justice system. TeamChild attorneys work directly with youth to identify their goals and create a plan to achieve those goals. For example, TeamChild helps children get back into school, find safe and stable housing, get healthcare and mental health services, and access other public support. TeamChild also collaborates with public defenders to help youth achieve good outcomes in juvenile court.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP):<sup>7</sup>

Youth Issues: Legal Status – Special Immigrant Juvenile Status visa, U Visa and VAWA visa.  
Geographic Area of Service: Statewide.  
Age Cutoff: None.  
Other Restrictions: None.  
To Refer: If you live in Western Washington call (800) 445-5771, if you live in Eastern Washington call (888) 756-3641.

NWIRP promotes justice for low-income immigrants by pursuing and defending their legal status. NWIRP focuses on providing direct legal services and serves clients statewide. Through its legal services, NWIRP helps uphold basic human rights, preserve family unity, prevent persecution, protect children, and provide hope for justice. NWIRP represents minors that qualify for the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status visa. For youth over 18 years old, NWIRP provides representation in removal to assistance in applying for the U and VAWA visas for those that qualify.

Children and Youth Advocacy Clinic (CAYAC):<sup>8</sup>

Youth Issues: Emancipation, CHINS, dependency, sex offender deregistration, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, domestic violence protection and anti-harassment orders, public benefits and education.  
Geographic Area of Service: King County, primarily.  
Age Cutoff: Under 21.  
Other Restrictions: Only takes cases from September through March.  
To Refer: Contact CAYAC at (206) 543-3434.

CAYAC is a clinical law program staffed by law students who represent youth up to age 21 and who do so under the supervision of the University of Washington Law School faculty who are licensed to practice law. CAYAC represents youth on a wide range of civil legal needs including, but not limited to, emancipation, CHINS, dependency, sex offender deregistration, special immigrant juvenile status, domestic violence protection and anti-harassment orders, public

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<sup>7</sup> [www.nwirp.org](http://www.nwirp.org)

<sup>8</sup> [www.law.washington.edu/Clinics/Child/Default.aspx](http://www.law.washington.edu/Clinics/Child/Default.aspx)

benefits, anti-discrimination cases and educational advocacy. Because CAYAC currently provides services only during the school year through law students, we only take new cases from late September through March and the number of cases we handle is limited to what our students can responsibly service. We have a strong preference for cases that can be completed during the academic year. CAYAC's primary coverage area is King County but we have taken cases from as far South as Pierce County and as far North as Snohomish County. CAYAC also offers community education and has done programming with youth in juvenile detention as well as certain homeless youth service providers in King County.

Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC):<sup>9</sup>

Youth Issues:	Child welfare proceedings and juvenile court matters.
Geographic Area of Service:	King County.
Age Cutoff:	Birth to Age 21.
Other Restrictions:	None.
To Refer:	Contact LCYC at (206) 494-0323.

LCYC provides specialized, holistic legal advocacy for children in child welfare proceedings and other juvenile court matters. LCYC works to ensure each child's voice is heard, unique legal rights protected, court experience enriched and life improved.

LCYC also responds to calls from or regarding children in domestic crisis who are not yet involved in a court system. Many of these children are homeless; their existing familial challenges threaten their stability, safety and access to school, among other issues. LCYC meets in-person with all of its clients to learn more about their current familial situations and provide advice on their options moving forward. For example, LCYC may provide information on proceeding with emancipation or another avenue in family court such as non-parental custody. LCYC has also assisted in drafting a letter of parental consent authorizing another adult to care for the child and help meet the child's medical and educational needs. In some situations, LCYC has assisted the child in proceeding with a Child in Need of Services or Dependency petition.

LCYC practices in King County and represents children from birth to age 21 under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. Advice for children in domestic crisis is available for children up to the age of eighteen.

Lawyers Fostering Independence (LFI):<sup>10</sup>

Youth Issues:	Landlord/Tenant, debt/credit, child custody and child support, traffic tickets, social security benefits and sealing juvenile records.
Geographic Area of Service:	King County, primarily.
Age Cutoff:	17-23.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.lcycwa.com](http://www.lcycwa.com)

<sup>10</sup> [www.ccyj.org/initiatives/projects/lawyers-fostering-independence](http://www.ccyj.org/initiatives/projects/lawyers-fostering-independence)

Other Restrictions: Youth must have been in foster care, a group home or in kinship care. No immigration, dependency or pending criminal matter.

To Refer: Contact LFI at (206) 696-7503 x 17 or [lfiintake@ccyj.org](mailto:lfiintake@ccyj.org).

The *Center for Children & Youth Justice* is accepting clients for its LFI Program. LFI offers free legal help for 17-23 year olds who have been in foster care, a group home or kinship care. LFI's volunteer attorneys give legal advice or direct representation on civil issues, including landlord/tenant, debt/credit, child custody and child support, traffic tickets, social security benefits, sealing juvenile records, and more. Former foster youth ages 17-23 can make an appointment to speak with an attorney at (206) 696-7503 x 17 or [lfiintake@ccyj.org](mailto:lfiintake@ccyj.org). LFI serves primarily King County, but can serve clients in neighboring counties if able to travel.

King County Bar Association Kinship Care Solutions Project:<sup>11</sup>

Youth Issues: Non-parental custody (also known as third party custody).

Geographic Area of Service: King County.

Age Cutoff: 18 and over.

Other Restrictions: Must represent the adult seeking custody of a child. Does not assist in cases where the child is in foster care or adoption proceedings unless there is agreement.

To Refer: Contact Kinship Care Solutions at (206) 267-7086.

The Kinship Care Solutions Project provides free legal representation for relatives and other caregivers seeking nonparental custody (also known as third party custody) of a child/ren through a panel of volunteer attorneys. It only serves King County residents or cases that can be filed in King County Superior Court, individuals that are low-income and relatives or other caregivers with a significant relationship to the child/children.

Seattle Community Law Center (SCLC):<sup>12</sup>

Youth Issues: Social Security and disability benefits.

Geographic Area of Service: King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties.

Age Cutoff: 12-24.

Other Restrictions: First priority is given to cases of King County residents.

To Refer: Contact SCLC at (206) 686-7252.

SCLC is a legal aid organization dedicated to providing high-quality Social Security and SSI representation to the people who need benefits the most and are least likely to secure representation due to barriers preventing them from accessing the justice system. SCLC is committed to providing the accommodations and tailored services needed to overcome these barriers, help the clients keep their benefits claims on track, and secure the evidence needed to support a successful claim. SCLC prioritizes cases of residents of King County but also serves

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<sup>11</sup> [www.kcba.org/pbs/KC.aspx](http://www.kcba.org/pbs/KC.aspx)

<sup>12</sup> [www.seattlecommlaw.org](http://www.seattlecommlaw.org)

people in Snohomish and Pierce Counties. Beyond that, SCLC is only able to provide advice over the telephone.

SCLC has two projects that serve the Puget Sound region, giving first priority to cases of King County residents. All individuals, including youth ages 12-24, are screened and must meet the case acceptance criteria for the projects. The Disabled Homeless Advocacy Project (DHAP) helps people with disabilities who are homeless apply for disability benefits and navigate the appeals process if they are denied. The Social Security Advocacy Project (SSAP) helps people who are already receiving disability benefits when they face a threat of termination or reduction of their benefits for any reason, including overpayments. We consider cases at any stage in the appeals process for all of these issues.

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND):<sup>13</sup>

Youth Issues:	Relief before immigration courts.
Geographic Area of Service:	King County.
Age Cutoff:	None.
Other Restrictions:	Youth must be detained.
To Refer:	Contact KIND at (206) 359-6200.

KIND is a pro bono legal representation project in Seattle that offers free legal assistance to detained children and youth immigrants seeking asylum or other forms of relief before the immigration courts. KIND matches attorneys in the Seattle area with detained immigrants who have claims for relief, ensuring that detainees receive much-needed representation.

Sexual Violence Law Center (SVLC):<sup>14</sup>

Youth Issues:	Protection orders, privacy, education, employment, housing, immigration and criminal cases.
Geographic Area of Service:	King County.
Age Cutoff:	13 and older.
Other Restrictions:	None.
To Refer:	Legal Resource Line (888) 998-6423.

Through the Sexual Assault Legal Services and Assistance (SALSA) program, SVLC helps sexual assault survivors rebuild their lives by protecting their privacy, safety and civil rights through legal advocacy and public education. SALSA's core services include holistic legal services (including direct representation) for survivors in King County, and many statewide services including a confidential Legal Information and Referral Helpline, publications to help survivors understand their legal rights, community education events, pro se clinics, and trainings and technical assistance for attorneys and advocates who are assisting survivors. SALSA specializes in working with vulnerable populations including teen survivors, survivors with disabilities, and survivors who are homeless.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.supportkind.org](http://www.supportkind.org)

<sup>14</sup> [svlawcenter.org/section\\_home/index.htm](http://svlawcenter.org/section_home/index.htm)

Legal Voice:<sup>15</sup>

Youth Issues:	Health, safety and security.
Geographic Area of Service:	Statewide.
Age Cutoff:	None.
Other Restrictions:	Information is provided via telephone only.
To Refer:	Legal Information and Referral line (866) 259-7720.

Legal Voice pursues justice for all women and girls in the Northwest by bringing cases that change the law throughout several states in the Northwest; drafting, analyzing and advocating for bills affecting women and their families in Washington State; and providing free legal and practical information for women and men who cannot afford attorneys, or do not know where to turn to solve legal problems that threaten their health, safety, security, and the well-being of their families.

The volunteers on the Legal Information and Referral Line can give basic legal information and then refer callers to a private attorney, a legal service, or a self-help method. They can also send free written materials. They do not meet with callers; they provide information by telephone only.

Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington (SYLAW):<sup>16</sup>

Youth Issues:	Housing, education, employment, family law, consumer law, and public entitlements.
Geographic Area of Service:	Downtown Seattle and Capitol Hill.
Age Cutoff:	None.
Other Restrictions:	Only provides legal information and referrals. Cannot provide legal advice or representation.
To Refer:	SYLAW does not take referrals. For information, contact SYLAW at <a href="mailto:info@sylaw.org">info@sylaw.org</a> .

The Seattle University and University of Washington chapters of SYLAW are law student-run groups working to eradicate the civil legal barriers that homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness face and which prevent them from becoming self-sufficient. Student volunteers participate in weekly drop-in legal clinics in the Capitol Hill and Downtown areas and provide a monthly record-sealing clinic via TeamChild for eligible former juvenile offenders. The schedule for record sealing clinics in King County can be found at [www.teamchild.org/index.php/education/118/juvenile\\_record\\_sealing\\_project](http://www.teamchild.org/index.php/education/118/juvenile_record_sealing_project). Seattle drop-in Clinics also take place at the Orion Center every Wednesday at 4pm and at PSKS every Friday at 1pm.

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<sup>15</sup> [legalvoice.org](http://legalvoice.org)

<sup>16</sup> [sylaw.org](http://sylaw.org)