



Experienced Civil Litigation Attorney

Kennewick, Olympia, Seattle,
Wenatchee, or Yakima
Full-time

columbialegal.org

Who We Are

Columbia Legal Services is a civil legal aid organization that advances social, economic, and racial equity for people living in poverty. Through community-led movement lawyering and a systemic approach, we support communities and movements by bringing deep legal expertise that is grounded in – and strongly guided by – an understanding of race equity. **We share a deep commitment to serve and advocate alongside our clients as we seek justice together.**

We seek systemic solutions by bringing class action lawsuits, using cutting edge legal theories, engaging in policy advocacy, and supporting communities in building their own power. We have a special responsibility to serve people whose access to free legal services is restricted, focusing our advocacy on dismantling and transforming two of the key racialized systems that perpetuate poverty, injustice, and dehumanization: mass incarceration and the impacts of the immigration system.

At CLS we seek for our team to reflect our organizational values of community, race equity, and justice. This includes hiring staff with connection to the communities we serve, where feasible, and a commitment to strive for justice and equity in our hiring practices and in our staff culture.

Position Summary

Are you looking to use your litigation experience to make real, systemic change?

Columbia Legal Services seeks an Experienced Civil Litigation Staff Attorney to use their skills in litigation, mentorship, and collaboration as part of our statewide advocacy team working to dismantle the structures that perpetuate poverty, racism, and other injustices in Washington.

Our staff attorneys engage in systemic, multi-forum legal advocacy and community engagement, and CLS civil litigation cases are conducted collaboratively with a team of attorneys and legal support staff. This position will play a key but collaborative role on such teams, providing mentorship to less experienced attorneys and participating in joint decision-making processes. Examples of recent advocacy include:

- Stopping King County's inhumane practice of holding youth in solitary confinement;
- Successfully arguing that the exclusion of agricultural workers from overtime pay is unconstitutional, based on the law's racist history;
- Challenging county jails' practices of collaborating with federal immigration enforcement;
- Spearheading legislation to limit the construction of immigration detention facilities, protect tenants' rights, and reduce the collateral consequences of criminal convictions;
- Forcing the Department of Corrections to take action to better protect people in its custody from COVID-19; and

- Filing class actions on behalf of farmworkers, raising novel federal anti-trafficking as well as state wage law claims.

CLS brings its core values of community, race equity, and justice into all aspects of its work, and we seek an individual for this role who aligns with these values.

All CLS staff have the ability to complete some work remotely; however, this position will require some physical presence at the office, as well as an ability to attend required meetings at the office and in the community. **This position may be based in any CLS office; CLS office locations include Seattle, Olympia, Kennewick, Yakima, and Wenatchee.**

Beginning February 1, 2022, CLS requires that all employees adhere to our COVID-19 vaccine mandate through proof of vaccination or by requesting a medical or religious accommodation.

Responsibilities

- Lead teams and collaborate with advocates on complex litigation and appeals, including class action litigation, in state, federal, and administrative forums. Team lead responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - Assigning work to other team members
 - Providing ongoing feedback to team members and keeping them in the loop on all components of the advocacy
 - Leading legal strategy discussions and ensuring that advocacy proceeds forward in a timely and effective way
 - Guiding the team in communications and engaging with the press
 - Assisting with conflict resolution for the team
 - Guiding the team in race equity analysis and community engagement strategies
- Advance policy advocacy in the state legislature and at the local and federal level.
- Initiate and develop new advocacy and supervise and manage cases.
- Investigate practices and laws identified by the communities we serve that adversely affect their rights or benefits and devise creative strategies for addressing these problems.
- Collaborate with community groups to support their initiatives and strategies.
- Coordinate with other advocacy groups, legal services organizations, and the private bar to identify opportunities to advance the law for our client populations and communities.
- Analyze complex problems using a race equity lens and develop creative, practical, systemic solutions in conjunction with clients and communities most impacted by these problems.
- Develop legal and litigation skills of more junior staff attorneys, including being a thought partner on research projects and development of cases and investigations.
- Mentor and support advocacy team members.

This job description is not designed to contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee, and others may be assigned.

Qualifications

- Law degree and license to practice in Washington, or ability to take next Washington bar exam.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and litigate complex litigation and/or class action cases independently and collaboratively.
- Experience supervising and managing litigation teams.
- Lived or other demonstrated meaningful and sustained experience with people living in poverty, people of color, immigrant, or indigenous communities or the criminal legal system.
- Humility, humor, and flexibility.
- Commitment to exposing and dismantling all forms of structural bias and oppression.
- Demonstrated initiative and creativity, interest in learning and exploring different legal areas and ability to apply multi-forum advocacy approaches at a strategic level.
- Excellent written and oral communication, research, negotiation, and analytical skills.
- Commitment to continuous learning and openness to new ideas.
- Ability to work well on a team, prioritize responsibilities, and meet time-sensitive deadlines.
- Understanding of the importance of self-care, and a willingness to take breaks and vacations.
- Ability to travel occasionally around the state to engage with community and meet clients.

Preferred But Not Required:

- Experience in civil rights, constitutional, voting rights, administrative, labor (NLRB), or appellate law.
- Spanish language skills strongly preferred. Other language skills relevant to our client communities are a plus.

Compensation

CLS is proud to be a unionized employer. This full-time, exempt position is a bargaining unit position, represented by Washington Legal Workers, our in-house labor union. Salary is commensurate with years of experience, based on a scale governed by our collective bargaining agreement. The current salary range for an attorney with 7-15 years of experience is \$75,221 - \$87,787, which increases with years of experience and is expected to be adjusted upward through collective bargaining by the time this position is hired.

We also offer a comprehensive compensation package including the following:

- 14 paid holidays annually
- Winter Break office closure between Christmas and New Year's
- 12 sick days annually
- 15-21 paid vacation days annually (based on years of experience)
- 3-5 personal days annually (based on years of experience)
- Paid parental and family medical leave benefits
- Partially-paid sabbatical every 7 years

Additionally, we pay 100% of employee premiums for excellent health, vision, and dental benefits plus 50% of the maximum out-of-pocket limit and offer heavily subsidized family premiums.

We also offer a 403(b) retirement benefit with employer contribution and a match, disability and life insurance, a subsidized transit pass, an employee wellness program, and student loan assistance (for qualifying staff).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also provided home office setup support for working remotely, additional time off for vaccinations or illness related to COVID-19, and an additional small stipend for miscellaneous costs. We are continuing all of those benefits into 2022.

To Apply

Send a cover letter, resume, and a 5-10 page writing sample in PDF format to careers@columbialegal.org. Please make **Experienced Civil Litigation Attorney** your subject line. We accept and review applications on a rolling basis and will remove the position from our website once it is filled. If you need a reasonable accommodation for the application process, please contact the above email.

We are committed to an environment of mutual respect, collaboration, and equal opportunity for all employees, and strongly encourage applications from people of color, immigrants, people who have been affected by mass incarceration, and other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. We believe in building and sustaining an organization that is reflective of the communities we serve, and is diverse in work background, experience, education, race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, national origin, or sensory, mental and physical abilities. We believe that the resulting diversity is both a source of program strength and a matter of fundamental human fairness.