

Who We Are

Columbia Legal Services is a nonprofit civil legal aid organization that advances social, economic, and racial equity for people living in poverty. We support communities and movements by bringing deep legal expertise that is grounded in – and strongly guided by – an understanding of race equity.

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, due to institutionalized or immigration status.

At CLS we seek a team that reflects our organizational values of community, race equity, and justice. This includes hiring staff with connections to the communities we serve whenever possible, and a commitment to strive for justice and equity in our hiring practices and in our staff culture.

Position Summary

Columbia Legal Services seeks a full-time **Advocacy and Community Engagement Specialist** to join our statewide advocacy team working to dismantle the structures that perpetuate poverty, racism, and other injustices in Washington.

Our advocacy and community engagement specialists ensure that our work centers community needs and voices by building and maintaining meaningful relationships with our community partners and identifying opportunities to transform systems. This position works closely in collaboration with other CLS advocacy staff on litigation teams and external stakeholders to gather and evaluate priorities, investigate issues, and engage in policy and litigation advocacy. Examples of recent ACES work include:

- Creating educational materials during the legislative session on bills involving immigration issues or mass incarceration for people in Department of Corrections custody;
- Attending weekly meetings with community groups and partners, including meetings outside of the 9-5 workday;
- Planning and implementing an in-person community resource event, including partner organizations and community members

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 option to complete some work remotely and have some flexibility in determining their own work schedule; however, this position will require an ability to regularly travel around the state and in the local community in and around Seattle, and to attend required meetings at the office. **This position is based in the Seattle office and regularly requires work during evenings and/or on weekends.**

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. Staff are also required to follow CLS COVID-19 protocols while engaging in in-person work in our offices and in the community.

Responsibilities

- Establish and maintain long-term, accountable relationships with legal aid partners, current and prospective clients, and community-based organizations.
- In collaboration with other advocacy staff, assist in the creation and implementation of an organizational statewide engagement strategy.
- Regularly organize and attend community and tabling events, including virtual events and in-person events in the local community and in other parts of the state, often during evenings or weekends.
- Support litigation through field investigations, interviews, document review, and research.
- Develop, draft, and distribute advocacy information such as talking points, videos, reports, and one-page summaries, in partnership with community partners and other CLS advocates.
- Research, develop, and advocate for policy reform and proposals with community partners; track and support policy initiatives; and provide updates and education to community partners
- Present and advance community-identified policy initiatives to legislators and stakeholders.

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

The ideal candidate will have all or most of the experience below, or have a combination of comparable experience where they have demonstrated similar skills or responsibilities.

- Two years of experience in community mobilization, coalition building, or other relevant work.

- Lived or other demonstrated meaningful and sustained experience with people living in poverty; people of color, immigrant, or indigenous communities; and/or the criminal legal system.
- Commitment to confronting, exposing, and dismantling all forms of structural bias and oppression, and an ability to identify issues within communities.
- Demonstrated understanding of and interest in advancing anti-racist grassroots organizing strategies.
- Ability to work well on a team, prioritize responsibilities, and meet deadlines.
- Strong interpersonal, presentation or storytelling, and problem-solving skills.
- Reasonable flexibility, and the ability to travel and regularly attend evening and weekend events as well as complete other work or attend meetings during CLS' standard office hours of 9am to 5pm. Note: the employee will work with their supervisor to determine a schedule that allows for attending meetings within and outside of the 9-5 workday while also ensuring that the employee can generally keep to a workweek of 35 hours.
- Understanding the importance of self-care, compassion, and empathy, and a willingness to take breaks and vacations.
- Regular and reliable access to a personal vehicle or other means of transportation to travel throughout the local community and throughout the state, including to areas with limited public transportation, with or without accommodation.
- Proficient ability to read, write, and speak Spanish; other language skills relevant to our client communities are a plus.

Preferred

- Experience working in the legal field and/or understanding of the litigation process, including class action litigation.
- Familiarity with the state legislature and legislative process.

Compensation

CLS is proud to be a unionized employer. This full-time, non-exempt position is a bargaining unit position, represented by Washington Legal Workers, our in-house labor union.

Columbia Legal Services is committed to providing an equitable work environment, including a commitment to pay equity. As part of this commitment, all employees' pay is based on years of experience in their role or in previous roles doing substantially similar work and set on a standard pay scale for their position, rather than on negotiations, which have been shown to contribute to pay disparities. **The current salary range for an Advocacy and Community Engagement Specialist with 2-5 years of experience is \$51,010 to \$53,750.**

CLS has a 35-hour workweek. 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
- Paid sabbatical every 7 years
- Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program (for employees with less than 10 years' experience)

Additionally, we pay 100% of employee premiums for excellent health, vision, and dental benefits plus 50% of the maximum out-of-pocket deductible 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, and an employee wellness program.

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

To Apply

We accept and review applications on a rolling basis, with priority given to applications received before August 22, 2022. We will remove the position from our website once it is filled.

Send a cover letter and resume in PDF format to careers@columbialegal.org. Please make **Advocacy and Community Engagement Specialist** your subject line. 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.