

Who We Are

Columbia Legal Services is a legal advocacy organization that advances social, economic, and racial equity for people living in poverty. We hold government agencies, institutions, and other actors accountable to address the root causes of racism and their manifestation in unfair treatment and inequitable access to resources, power, and opportunities based on race. We focus on dismantling unfair systems of mass incarceration and immigration. We believe that communities should have a voice in the creation and implementation of the policies, laws, and legal systems that impact them.

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.

Position Summary

We seek applications from third-year law students and recent graduates to partner with us to submit a joint application for external funding for a public interest legal fellowship to begin in 2020. We are able to offer fellowships only if external funding is granted. Our Legal Fellows join our statewide advocacy team to work on a special project that uses systemic, multi-forum legal advocacy and community engagement to dismantle the structures that perpetuate poverty, racism, and other injustices in Washington. This position may be based in any of our statewide offices. Legal Fellow responsibilities:

- Collaborate with advocates on complex trial, appellate, and class action litigation in state, federal, and administrative forums.
- Advance policy advocacy in the state legislature, at the local and federal level, and in administrative forums.
- Investigate and identify 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 create strategies to advance their goals.
- Coordinate with other advocacy groups, legal services organizations, and the private bar to identify opportunities and execute strategies 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.
- This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee, and others may be assigned.

Qualifications

- Third-year law student or recent law graduate.
- Admitted to a bar or ability to take next bar exam.
- Commitment to confronting, exposing and dismantling all forms of structural bias and oppression.
- Demonstrated initiative and creativity, including interest in exploring different legal areas, ability to operate at a high advocacy level, and consider multi-forum advocacy approaches.
- Commitment to advancing systemic advocacy on behalf of low-income communities.
- Excellent written and oral communication, research, negotiation, and analytical skills.
- Ability to work well on a team, prioritize responsibilities, and meet deadlines on time-sensitive projects.
- Humility, humor, and flexibility.
- Dependable computer skills in word processing and legal research.
- Understanding of the importance of self-care, and a willingness to take breaks and vacations.
- Ability to travel occasionally around the state to attend meetings, engage with community, and meet clients.
- 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 a plus.

To Apply

If you are interested in pursuing a fellowship in partnership with Columbia Legal Services, send a cover letter, resume, legal writing sample, and the completed [Equity Statement](#) as one PDF document to careers@columbialegal.org. Please ensure that your cover letter describes the project or issue that you wish to pursue, how it aligns with our [strategic priorities](#) ([visit our website for more information](#)), and why specifically you are suited for this work. Make **2020 Legal Fellow** your subject line. Applications are due on **September 2nd**. Applicants may apply to work at any of our statewide offices, located in Kennewick, Olympia, Seattle, Wenatchee, and Yakima. Please indicate which location you are applying to work in. CLS will only contact you if we decide to pursue your application. If you need a reasonable accommodation for the application process, contact careers@columbialegal.org.