

Who We Are

Columbia Legal Services is a 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 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

Columbia Legal Services seeks an experienced **Staff Attorney** to join our statewide advocacy team. Our staff attorneys engage in systemic, multi-forum legal advocacy and community engagement to dismantle the structures that perpetuate poverty, racism, and other injustices in Washington. **The candidate may choose to be based in any of our five offices.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CLS staff have primarily been working remotely. Once it is safe to fully reopen the offices, this position may still do some remote work but will also require some physical presence at the office, as well as an ability to attend required meetings at the office and in the community.

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 and at the local and federal level.
- 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.

In addition to the above responsibilities, experienced attorneys have these additional responsibilities:

- Develop legal and litigation skills of more junior staff attorneys, including being a thought partner on research projects and development of cases and investigations.

- Initiate and develop new cases and supervise and manage cases.
- 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:

- Demonstrated ability to develop affirmative litigation on behalf of plaintiffs.
- Experience in Section 1983 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 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 expect to continue some or 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 **Staff Attorney (Experienced)** your subject line. We accept applications on a rolling basis, with priority given to those received before December 20. CLS will contact you only if we decide to pursue your application. 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.