

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 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

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

Columbia Legal Services seeks a **bilingual (English/Spanish) Staff Attorney** to join our statewide advocacy team working to dismantle the structures that perpetuate poverty, racism, and other injustices in Washington and increase communities' access to political power. CLS staff attorneys work as part of a larger team, engaging in systemic, multi-forum legal advocacy and community engagement. **Note: this position is based in our Yakima office, but we may consider candidates in Kennewick or Wenatchee.**

Our offices in Eastern and Central Washington have historically had a strong focus on serving immigrant client communities, consisting largely of farmworkers and their families. Examples of recent and current work include:

- Class action litigation on behalf of H-2A farmworkers
- Raising federal anti-trafficking and state wage law claims
- Class actions to obtain the right to overtime pay for dairy workers
- Legislative advocacy to ban private, for-profit detention, including the Northwest Detention Center
- Supporting workers at fruit packing sheds in their efforts to gain union recognition
- Challenging county jails' practices of collaborating with ICE
- Advocating for regulations to protect residents of temporary farmworker housing from COVID-19

Because building relationships with our client communities is vital to this work, the ideal candidates for these open roles will have existing relationships with immigrant communities in Eastern or Central Washington and will live in close proximity to their home office. We seek a mix of both developing (0+ years) and more experienced candidates for our staff attorney positions; all interested applicants are encouraged to apply.

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.

CLS has a 35-hour workweek and provides generous benefits, including student loan repayment assistance for employees with less than 10 years of experience (see Compensation section for full list of benefits).

Additionally, all CLS staff have the ability to complete some work remotely; however, please note that 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.

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. Employees are also required to abide by our other current COVID-19 protocols, to support the continued safety of our staff, clients, and communities.

Responsibilities

- Collaborate with other 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 affect their rights or benefits, perpetuate poverty and racism, or impact access to political power, 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.

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

- **Bilingual skills in Spanish/English required.**
- Law degree and license to practice in Washington, or ability to take next Washington bar exam.
- Lived or other demonstrated meaningful and sustained experience with and understanding of the challenges and issues faced by people living in poverty; people of color, immigrant, or indigenous communities; immigrant farmworkers and their families; and/or the criminal legal system.
- 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.
- Ability to engage regularly with community in the geographical area near their home office.

- Ability to travel occasionally around the state to meet clients and to attend all-staff meetings and trainings.

Preferred:

- Experience in policy advocacy, complex litigation, or appellate advocacy.

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.

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 attorney with 0-10 years of experience is \$63,672 - \$81,902, which increases with years of experience.** Bilingual skills are compensated at an additional \$720 per year.

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)
- All positions eligible for some remote work

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

Send a cover letter, resume, and a 5-10 page writing sample in PDF format to careers@columbialegal.org. Please make **Eastern WA Staff 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 (see www.columbialegal.org/get-involved for current information on open positions). 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.