



Staff Attorney

Kennewick, WA

Yakima, WA

Full-time

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 multiple full-time bilingual (English/Spanish) **Staff Attorneys** 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 and increase communities' access to political power. We seek a mix of both developing (0+ years) and more experienced candidates. All interested applicants who meet the qualifications are encouraged to apply.

These positions are based in **Kennewick, WA** and **Yakima, WA**. These offices have historically had a strong focus on serving immigrant client communities in Eastern and Central WA, 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; and advocating for regulations to protect residents of temporary farmworker housing from COVID-19.

Due to the pandemic, CLS staff have been working from home. Once it is safe to reopen the offices, this position may still do some work from home but 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.

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 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.
- Experienced attorneys are expected to provide mentorship to others at CLS.

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.
- Experience in policy advocacy, complex litigation, or appellate advocacy is a plus.
- 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 in the office geographical area to engage with community, and around the state to meet clients and to attend all-staff meetings and trainings.

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 salary range for an attorney with 0-10 years of experience is \$62,424 - \$80,295, which increases with years of experience and includes an annual cost-of-living adjustment. Bilingual skills are compensated at an additional \$720 per year. We also offer a comprehensive compensation package with 15 paid holidays, between 15-21 paid vacation days, 12 sick days, and between 3-5 personal days each year, as well as paid parental and family medical leave benefits and a partially-paid sabbatical every 7 years. 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, a student loan repayment assistance program, and an employee wellness program.

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 applications on a rolling basis. CLS will only contact you 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.