



Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR ATTORNEY REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENT TENANTS IN BENTON AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES

Overview

The Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is an independent state judicial branch agency that administers and oversees a range of civil legal aid programs in Washington State.

Recognizing that “the provision of civil legal aid services to indigent persons is an important component of the state's responsibility to provide for the proper and effective administration of civil and criminal justice,” the Washington State Legislature established OCLA in 2005 to manage the investment in civil legal aid services to low-income people in Washington State. OCLA’s statutory authority and responsibilities are outlined in [Ch. 2.53 RCW](#).

Consistent with [The Washington State Supreme Court’s June 4, 2020 Statement to the Legal Community](#), OCLA acknowledges that it and its contracted civil legal aid providers operate in a law and justice system historically grounded in racism, sexism, ableism, and other biases, and time and again has administered justice differentially depending on the identities of those involved and that time and again has administered justice differentially depending on the racial and other identities of those involved. OCLA was an initial subscriber and remains steadfastly committed to discharging its duties consistent with the [Washington Race Equity and Justice Acknowledgments and Commitments](#).

As outlined in its [Race Equity and Justice Statement of Purpose](#), OCLA is committed to being an active partner in carrying out the Washington State judicial branch’s commitment to ensuring equity and justice for people and communities throughout Washington State. OCLA does this by ensuring contractors are aligned, in policy and practice, to and do provide race equity-informed civil legal assistance and representation that, within the context of the particular program, addresses the needs of individuals and communities most affected by poverty, racialized, and other systemic injustices.

Among the programs administered by OCLA is appointed counsel to represent indigent tenants established in RCW 59.18.640. OCLA’s Appointed Counsel Program underwrites and oversees the system for effective, standards-based, and equity-informed representation of indigent tenants for whom attorneys are appointed under state law.

The Appointed Counsel Program is currently seeking an exceptional contract attorney with a passion for equity and justice for indigent tenants facing an unlawful detainer action in Benton and Franklin Counties.

Compensation: Full-time contracts are currently compensated at a maximum compensation rate of \$172,000 per year. Full-time contracts consist of an average of 100 cases annually, up to a maximum of 130 cases.

Support: Appointed Counsel- attorneys have access to appointed counsel community resources that include access to substantive legal, litigation skills, equity-informed representation and other relevant training; technical assistance;, and peer support.

Travel: Contract attorneys are expected to travel to meet clients and attend court hearings as deemed necessary for effective representation.

If you are interested in becoming a contractor with OCLA for representation of indigent tenants in Benton and Franklin Counties please follow the application procedures detailed below.

Qualifications

- Licensed member in good standing of the Washington State Bar.
- At least one year of experience practicing public interest law; experience representing tenants in unlawful detainer actions or related civil litigation is highly preferred.
- Ability and willingness to meet OCLA’s Appointed Counsel Program Standards for Attorney, including:
 - Participation in OCLA’s data tracking and submission requirements
 - Accept between 7 to 10 filed unlawful detainer actions per month on average
 - Completion of OCLA Appointed Counsel Program’s web-based eviction defense foundational training series
 - Participation in monthly provider meetings and attendance at supplemental trainings
 - Maintaining professional liability insurance
 - Submitting semi-annual narrative reports
 - Engaging in regular consultation with Appointed Counsel Program Counsel on issues relating to the provision of contracted legal representation.
- Demonstrated commitment to providing standards-based, culturally sensitive, and equity-informed representation to indigent tenants
- Ability to employ effective, trauma-informed and racial inclusive representation to indigent tenants
- Willingness to investigate and raise issues relating to racial inequities and systemic biases that are prejudicial to the represented community

For new attorneys or attorneys with limited experience representing indigent tenants, the following conditions are required in addition to those listed above:

- Willingness to actively participate in additional trainings
- Participate in additional oversight meetings with Program Counsel

RFQ Response Procedure

Responses to this RFQ will be accepted until available contract positions are filled. Responses should be sent to EvictionDefense@ocla.wa.gov with “Appointed Counsel Contract Qualifications.” Responses should include the following:

- Letter of interest which includes the following details:
 - Each of your qualifications as per above
 - The nature of your current practice, including caseload capacity

- Brief outline of your history and commitment to indigent tenant representation
- Examples of work that demonstrates your commitment to principles of equity-informed legal representation for members of communities historically harmed and lacking access to legal help
- Resume
- Three professional references to include at least one former employer
- Redacted, self-authored legal writing sample.

OCLA reserves the right to amend or rescind this RFQ and/or to refrain from contracting with any and all applicants. The RFQ does not obligate the State of Washington or OCLA to contract for the services specified.