



CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**MEETING OF
SEPTEMBER 27, 2024**

MATERIALS



CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

MEETING MATERIALS

- Tab 1: Meeting Agenda**
- Tab 2: Draft Minutes of June 21, 2024 Meeting**
- Tab 3: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Mission**
- Tab 4: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Roster**
- Tab 5: Legislative Involvement Policy**
- Tab 6: OCLA Director's Report (including attachments)**
- Tab 7: OCLA Decision Package Spreadsheet**

TAB 1

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

September 27, 2024

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Via Zoom Link

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Sanchez)
2. Occupied Land Acknowledgment and Recognition of Responsibility (TBD)
3. Approval of Minutes of June 21, 2024 Meetings (Chair Sanchez)
4. Vice Chair Role (Chair Sanchez)
5. Update on Oversight Committee Composition (Director, Sara Robbins)
6. Legislative Decision Packages (Director, Sara Robbins)
7. Public Comment/New Business
8. Adjourn

TAB 2

**CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE MEETING OF
June 21, 2024
DRAFT MINUTES**

Pursuant to notice duly provided in advance the quarterly meeting of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee was held virtually through ZOOM on Friday June 21, 2024.

Members Participating: Chair Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima, Alejandro (Ale') Sanchez, Judge Rebecca Pennell, Judge Faye Chess, Megan Johnston, Rep. My-Linh Thai,

Members Not Participating: Senator Drew MacEwen, Rep. Greg Cheney, Senator June Robinson

OCLA Staff: Sara Robbins (OCLA Director), Hope Hough (OCLA Support Team), Jim Bamberger (Transitional Counsel), Annalise Martucci (VOCA and DV Programs Manager), Philippe Knab (Eviction Defense Program Manager), Jeff Adams (Children's Representation Training Coordinator)

Guests: Sandi Swarthout (EJC), Annie Chung (LCYC), Michael Terasaki (PBC), Caitlin Davis, Beth Leonard, Cesar Torres (NJP), Kari Petrsek (WSBA), Melisa Evangelos (Tacomaprobono), Kara Masters (EJC Chair), Abigail Daquiz (NJP), Judge Janet Chung

The meeting convened at 11:30 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima welcomed members and invited them to introduce themselves. She then invited guests to introduce themselves.

She noted that the meeting in March was the first meeting for new member Representative Greg Cheney who represents the 18th legislative district in the southern part of the state, but he was unable to attend that meeting. She invited Representative Cheney to talk about himself and his role on the Oversight Committee.

1. Occupied Land Acknowledgment and Recognition of Responsibility

Oversight Committee member, Megan Johnston, provided the land acknowledgment.

2. Approval of Minutes of March 29, 2024, Meeting

Chair Stallings-Ala-ilima invited a motion to approve the March 29, meeting minutes.

Motion to Approve the March 29, 2024, Meeting Minutes: By Judge Rebecca Pennell

Second: By Ale Sanchez

Action: Approved

3. Chair Transition (Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima and Ale Sanchez)

Sara Robbins thanks Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima for her time on the Oversight Committee and for taking on the role of Chair. Sara invited Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima to share thoughts on her service on the committee and her time as chair.

Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima thanked everyone for the support and work that is done for the Oversight Committee and OCLA, and helping to ensure that civil legal aid is accessible to the people of Washington. She appreciated the opportunity to serve on the Committee.

Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima thanked Ale Sanchez for taking over the role of the Chair. He said he excited about the future of the Committee and OCLA agency and welcomes the opportunity to lead as is needed.

4. Update on Oversight Committee Composition (Sara Robbins, OCLA Director)

There is currently active recruitment for three positions on the OCLA Oversight Committee. Two of the Washington Supreme Court positions are currently vacant. These positions are appointed by the Washington Supreme Court upon recommendation of the Access to Justice (ATJ) Board. Sara and the ATJ Board will be conducting interviews for these positions the week of June 24. The term will begin immediately upon appointment. One position is reserved for individuals with lived experience from communities most harmed by the legal system and who are eligible to receive civil legal aid services.

The other position with open recruitment is the WSBA position that is currently filled by Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima whose term will come to an end on June 30, 2024. The new committee member will start July 1, 2024, with the term ending June 30, 2027.

Senator Robinson will not be renewing for a 2nd term therefore this will be her last meeting. Sara thanked Senator Robinson for her time on this committee, her commitment to legal aid, and look forward to working with her during session. The Senate Democratic Caucus is working on an appointment for this position.

Judge Pennell has served two terms and this is her last meeting. Sara thanked Judge Pennell for her time on the committee, her commitment to justice and look forward to working with her in other capacities within the Access to Justice and Judicial communities.

Judge Janet Chung from the Court of Appeals, Division I, has been appointed by the Board of Judicial Administration for a 3-year term.

5. Oversight Committee Policies Update (Chair Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima)

Chair Stallings-Ala'ilima referred members to two policies (Tab 5) that need review by the Committee. Ale Sanchez led the effort to revise the Mission Statement. Ale explained the rationale behind revising the mission statement and gave more information about the changes. Changes were reviewed by a small group of the Oversight Committee including Senator Robinson and Judge Chess.

Approval was tabled for next meeting to provide time to continue working on it.

6. OCLA Program Updates (PowerPoint Presentations)

- Annalise Martucci, General Legal Aid, VOCA, and DV Programs Manager
 - General Legal Aid Contract (largest contract)
 - Kinship Care (2 smallest contracts with KCBA totaling \$470K)
 - Foreclosure Fairness (specialized services: housing counseling, mediation, submitting applications, consulting, and referring for bankruptcy, etc.)
 - Legal Aid for Survivors (VOCA and Civil Legal Aid for Survivors of Domestic Violence)
 - Crime Victim Services Funding
- Jeff Adams, Children's Representation Training Coordinator. His primary function is to ensure that the contracting attorneys are trained in standards-based representation as well as best practices in the realm of child representation.
 - Legally Free Children's Representation (representation for children who are six months post termination of parental rights and remain in dependency)
 - 1219 Children's Representation (taking over legally free program) (representation for children and youth 8+ who are subject to dependency proceedings (including Extended Foster Care) and all dependent children under the age of 8 where a petition to terminate parental rights has been filed)
 - 1219 Implementation. Went into effect in July 2021 and is being phased in on a county-by-county basis across the state, with full statewide implementation expected by January 1, 2028.
 - 2023 Program Highlights
 - Children & Parent's Rights Justice Initiative (certification program)
 - Training Advisory Committee (child welfare professionals and youth with lived experience to advise on the CRP's training curricula and strategy)
 - Families Stronger Together 2023 Conference. Partnered with the Office of Public Defense (OPD) to provide 2-day, in-person CLE & training in 2023 and 2024.
 - Looking Ahead

- Team Growth
 - CRP General Advisory Committee
 - Families Stronger Together 2024
 - Virtual Training Academy
- Philippe Knab, Eviction Defense Program Manager
 - Tenant Defense Since Appointed Counsel (very first in country to become operational). Over 20,000 tenants represented by OCLA-contracted eviction defense attorneys in unlawful detainer cases since January 2022.
 - Fairness in Eviction Proceeding. Comprehensive homeless prevention.
 - Reentry Program (investment in community where individuals are most disenfranchised from accessing systems).
 - Blake Services

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

TAB 3

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure that all people in Washington share in the fundamental right to civil justice, the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee, consistent with its statutory authority, shall oversee and support the Office of Civil Legal Aid and shall periodically make recommendations to the Supreme Court, the Access to Justice Board and the Legislature as to the most efficient and effective use of state-appropriated civil legal aid funds on behalf of low-income people.

TAB 4

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ROSTER

(September 2024)

Position 1 (BJA 1):

Name: Hon. Janet Chung
Address: Washington State Court of Appeals, Div 1
600 University Street
Seattle, WA 98101-1176

Phone:
E-mail: Janet.Chung@courts.wa.gov
Appointing Entity: Board for Judicial Administration
Term Expires: June 30, 2027; eligible for reappointment

Position 2 (BJA 2):

Name: Hon. Faye Chess
Address: Seattle Municipal Court
600 5th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104

Phone: 206-684-5600
E-mail: faye.chess@seattle.gov
Appointing Entity: Board for Judicial Administration
Term Expires: June 30, 2025; not eligible for reappointment

Position 3 (Supreme Court 1):

Name: Megan Johnston
Address: P.O. Box 6188
Olympia, WA 98507-6188

Phone: (360) 628-9560
E-mail: mjohnston@resolutionwa.org
Appointing Entity: Supreme Court (on recommendation of the Access to Justice Board)
Term Expires: June 30, 2026; eligible for reappointment

Position 4 (Supreme Court 2):

Name: Natasha Damien

Address:

Phone:

E-mail: ms.damien.johns@gmail.com

Appointing Entity: Supreme Court (on recommendation of the Access to Justice Board)

Term Expires: June 30, 2025; eligible for reappointment

Position 5 (Supreme Court 3 – Client Eligible):

Name: Angela Cruze Boldt

Address:

Phone:

E-mail: cruzeangela@yahoo.com

Appointing Entity: Supreme Court (on recommendation of the Access to Justice Board)

Term Expires: June 30, 2026; eligible for reappointment

Position 6 (Senate Republican Caucus):

Name: Senator Drew MacEwen

Address: 115 Legislative Modular Building
PO Box 40435
Olympia, WA 98504

Phone: (360) 786-7668

E-mail: Drew.MacEwen@leg.wa.gov

Appointing Entity: Senate Republican Caucus

Term Expires: June 30, 2026; eligible for reappointment

Position 7 (Senate Democratic Caucus):

Name: Senator Yasmin Trudeau
Address: PO Box 40427
Olympia, WA 98504-0427
Phone: 360-786-7652
E-mail: yasmin.trudeau@leg.wa.gov
Appointing Entity: Senate Democratic Caucus
Term Expires: June 30, 2027; eligible for reappointment

Position 8 (House Republican Caucus):

Name: Representative Greg Cheney
Address: 406 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Phone: 360-786-7812
E-mail: greg.cheney@leg.wa.gov
Appointing Entity: House Republican Caucus
Term Expires: June 30, 2025; eligible for reappointment

Position 9 (House Democratic Caucus):

Name: Representative My-Linh Thai
Address: 424 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Phone: 206-333-4107
E-mail: My-linh.thai@leg.wa.gov
Appointing Entity: House Democratic Caucus
Term Expires: June 30, 2025; eligible for reappointment

Position 10 (Office of the Governor):

Name: Alejandro (Ale') Sanchez
Address: WA St. Department of Licensing
1125 Washington Street SE - HLB, FL 4 - MS: 48002
Olympia, WA 98501
Phone: 360-972-6356
E-mail: alsanchez@dol.wa.gov
Appointing Entity: Department of Licensing
Term Expires: June 30, 2027; not eligible for reappointment

Position 11 (Washington State Bar Association):

Name:
Address:

Phone:
E-mail:
Appointing Entity: Washington State Bar Association
Term Expires:

TAB 5



PO Box 41183
Olympia, WA 98504-1183
360-485-1544

Sara Robbins
Director
sara.robbsins@ocla.wa.gov

POLICY REGARDING OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID INVOLVEMENT IN PROMOTING OR OPPOSING BILLS BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

The Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is an independent judicial branch agency. The agency administers and oversees the use of state funding appropriated for the provision of civil legal aid services to eligible low income people in Washington State. OCLA's authority is set forth in RCW 2.53.030. OCLA does not play a general lobbying or policy advocacy function for low-income people unrelated to its core statutory functions.

I. OCLA's Involvement With the Washington State Legislature

OCLA develops, submits and educates members of the Legislature on matters relating to its budget and the operation of civil legal aid programs assigned to it by statute, budget proviso, and interagency agreements with state agencies. OCLA responds to legislative member and staff requests for information relating to agency budgets and operations.

As a judicial branch agency, OCLA also monitors and communicates with the Legislature on proposed legislation the passage of which could expand or otherwise affect funding for civil legal representation of low-income people in Washington State. OCLA actively monitors proposed policy legislation to assess its potential impact on its civil legal aid programs, including proposed legislation that, if enacted, might expand or reduce client service capacity or demand.

II. Establishment of Policy on Legislative Involvement

The purpose of this Policy is to clarify and distinguish OCLA's status as an independent judicial branch agency and make clear that OCLA (or any staff member thereof) will not involve itself in legislative matters unrelated to its budget, the agency's statutory or programmatic responsibilities or judicial branch budgets and operations without contemporaneous notice and consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair/Chair-Elect of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. This policy is necessary to protect OCLA's institutional integrity and non-partisan credibility.



- A. OCLA may take positions on proposed policy legislation if passage of such legislation will have a direct and consequential policy or fiscal impact on (a) the agency, (b) demand for civil legal aid services, (c) the ability of low income people to seek and secure civil legal aid services, or (d) the operation of programs assigned to or administered by the agency.
- B. To the extent possible in light of compressed timelines during the legislative session, the OCLA Director will inform the Chair and Vice Chair/Chair-Elect of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee before or shortly after taking a position on proposed policy legislation that meets the criteria of Section A. In doing so, the OCLA Director is encouraged to provide the following information:
 - 1. The bill number, prime sponsors, links to bill reports (if any) and a narrative description of its substantive focus and impact.
 - 2. The reasons why the OCLA Director believes passage or defeat of the bill will have a direct and consequential policy or fiscal impact on (a) the agency, (b) demand for civil legal aid services, (c) the rights of low income people to seek and secure civil legal aid services, and the nature of the impacts identified, or (d) the operation of programs assigned to or administered by the agency.
 - 3. The reasons why the Director believes it important that OCLA be actively involved in legislative deliberations relating to the bill.

TAB 6



PO Box 41183
Olympia, WA 98504-1183
360-485-1544

Sara Robbins
Director
sara.robbsins@ocla.wa.gov

To: OCLA Oversight Committee

From: Sara Robbins

Re: Director's Report

Date: September 13, 2024

Civil Legal Needs Study

It has been ten years since the last assessment of civil legal needs in Washington State and the Office of Civil Legal Aid began planning for a new iteration of the Civil Legal Needs Study (CLNS). An updated CLNS will allow policymakers and civil legal aid providers to respond effectively to the changes of the past decade (including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic); understand and assess the justice gap in Washington; assess the effectiveness and cost of possible solutions; and identify barriers to accessing legal assistance.

The Supreme Court and the Office of Civil Legal Aid with guidance from the Washington State Center for Court Research are in the process of convening a Scoping Committee to guide this effort. The Scoping Committee will determine the objectives, focus, target audience, and targeted populations. These factors will determine the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the study.

The Scoping Committee will convene over the next 6-8 months and produce a report that will determine the RFP for the study. As part of the materials, I have attached an initial scoping document prepared by myself and Chief Justice González and presented to En Banc on July 10, 2024.

Oversight Committee Recruitment

Senator Yasmin Trudeau has been appointed by the Senate Democratic Caucus for a term of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. Senator Trudeau represents the 27th legislative district in Pierce County. Senator Trudeau previously served as the legislative director for the Washington State Attorney General's Office.

Judge Janet Chung, Division I Court of Appeals, has been appointed by the Board of Judicial Administration (BJA) for a term of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. Judge Chung has extensive experience in civil legal aid as she was previously the advocacy director at Columbia Legal Services, a

statewide civil legal aid organization that works to advance social, economic, and racial justice for people living in poverty. Before that, Judge Chung was legal and legislative counsel at Legal Voice, a public interest organization that advances gender justice in the Northwest through litigation, legislative advocacy, and legal rights education.

Natasha Damian has been appointment by the Washington Supreme Court from a recommendation by the Access to Justice Board for a term of July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025.

Angela Cruze Boldt has been appointed by the Washington Supreme Court from a recommendation by the Access to Justice Board for a term of July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026.

Angela and Natasha will both introduce themselves at the Oversight Committee meeting.

There is currently active recruitment for the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) position that was recently vacated by Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima.

OCLA Staffing

Our Children's Representation Program is hiring a [Client Voice and Community Impact Coordinator](#). The CVCI Coordinator serves as a voice of legal system impacted individuals within the Children's Representation Program, as well as outwardly facing community partners. We hope to bring a new member on in early October.

Legislative Involvement Policy

At the June meeting, the Oversight Committee discussed OCLA's legislative involvement policy. We agreed that this was a policy of the agency and not of the Oversight Committee. I have revised the policy, drafted it as an agency policy, and provided a copy for reference in the packet.

OCLA in the News

Philippe Knab, OCLA Eviction Defense Program Manager, was interviewed on [KUOW's Soundside](#), to talk about the spike in eviction filings across Washington state and how the Eviction Defense program is responding and preventing many tenants from becoming homeless.

Jeff Adams, Children's Representation Program (CRP) Training Coordinator, co-authored an article for the American Bar Association (ABA) discussing cross-system collaboration within the child welfare space. A copy of the article, *Being the Change and Seeing the Change: Cross-System Improvement* is included in the packet.

Priorities

At the June meeting, I reported that my top priorities were onboarding the new Director of Operations, starting the scoping process for the Civil Legal Needs Study, and preparing for the 2025-27 biennial budget. All of these projects have remained my priorities over these last few months and will continue

to be priorities. As we get closer to legislative session, another priority will be to meet with legislative staff and legislators to discuss OCLA's decision packages and the needs of the agency.

Being the Change and Seeing the Change: Cross-System Improvement

[Jeffrey Adams](#), [Marci Comeau](#), [Laura Vogel](#), and [Kelly Warner-King](#)

Aug 09, 2024  0 min read

Summary

- Since the early 1990s, the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts has promoted collaboration among judicial, agency, and tribal entities, leading to improved outcomes in the child welfare system.
- Initiatives like the Court Improvement Training Academy and Family and Youth Justice Programs have provided training, technical assistance, and research to enhance court systems, with a strong emphasis on data-informed practices.
- Key projects, such as the Family Well-Being Community Collaborative and the Safety Summit Project, exemplify successful partnerships among diverse stakeholders, including those with lived experiences, to address systemic issues and promote family well-being.



Richard T. Nowitz via Getty Images

The foundation of Washington’s current model of multidisciplinary collaboration and continuous quality improvement was laid in 2007. At that time, Tim Jaasko-Fisher, a former assistant attorney general working for AOC, founded the Court Improvement Training Academy at the University of Washington Law School. Initial partnership with a university helped establish the academy as a valuable source of training and system improvement support. The academy created local cross-system partnerships that used data and research, and pioneered interactive, action-oriented trainings for judicial officers, tribal judicial officers, court administrators, attorneys, and child welfare professionals. These efforts demonstrated both the viability of cross-system collaboration and the measurable impact of it on continuous quality improvement.

Over time, AOC used the lessons learned from the Court Improvement Training Academy and secured additional federal grants and state funding to build the current [Family and Youth Justice Programs](#) (FYJP)—a more robust court improvement program that provides training, technical assistance, research and evaluation, and community-building to dependency courts and system partners across the state.

The cornerstones of this work continue to be the following:

Cross-system collaboration. Critical to Washington’s court improvement work is a commitment to bringing together people from all parts of the system to confront challenges and take ownership of solutions. In a non-unified court system with scant resources, this approach was both economical and elegant—and is now a part of standard operations. Importantly, facilitators of these collaborations are trained in

practices, like [Liberating Structures](#), that foster lively participation, build trust, and ensure all participants contribute.

Data-informed courts. FYJP partners with the Washington State Center for Court Research to help local courts understand and use data as a tool for system improvement and to increase transparency within the system. The CIP maintains a secure database that joins court and child welfare data; this enables local jurisdictions to assess how their system is working, identifies opportunities for improvement, addresses inequities, and evaluates the effectiveness of their interventions. An online public [Dependency Dashboard](#) provides local and state dependency court performance and outcome measures, with filters for child race/ethnicity and age.

Action-oriented learning. Grounded in principles of adult learning theory and sustainability, the trainings created by FYJP build the capacity of courts and system partners to effectively apply the law in dependency cases in ways that promote better outcomes for families. The non-unified court system has no state training requirement for judicial officers who hear child dependency cases. For that reason, FYJP strives to create engaging, interactive training content that aligns with the current expressed interests and needs of the court system. FYJP convenes cross-system partners and experts to design and deliver trainings on a variety of topics at in-person events, in live webinars, and through online asynchronous modules. FYJP also utilizes communities of practice (e.g., Judicial Community of Practice) that provide spaces for peer learning, idea sharing, and problem-solving.

Lived experience. Because FYJP consistently engages people with lived child welfare experience (youth, parents, and caregivers) in the design and delivery of FYJP's work, courts and partners now expect lived experts to be actively and authentically engaged in court system improvement work. Currently, FYJP is co-designing processes to recruit, onboard, compensate, and support parents, youth, and caregivers with lived expertise to meaningfully participate. In addition, FYJP's training and tools are developed in partnership with judicial officers, attorneys, peer partners, and court staff, to ensure they are useful and responsive to the needs of people doing the work.

Current Investments in Collaboration

Washington State's Family Well-Being Community Collaborative

In 2021, the AOC convened the [Family Well-Being Community Collaborative](#) (FWCC) under the existing FYJP. The FWCC serves as Washington State's CIP multidisciplinary task force. Endowed with a mission of collaboration, keeping "families safely together and supported in their communities," and radically reducing "inequities within the child welfare court system," the FWCC is integral to fomenting collaboration among system partners. We attribute the FWCC's success in modeling interagency collaboration to three indispensable qualities:

Leadership. In this space, AOC's leadership and demonstrable belief in the power of multidisciplinary collaboration are central to the FWCC's success.

Composition. As of 2024, the FWCC consists of more than 80 individuals from across the state. Among them are judges, attorneys, administrators, advocates, social workers, academics, and, importantly, individuals with lived experience. This breadth of [membership](#) is integral to the success of the FWCC. However, we acknowledge that the mere act of convening a diverse group with divergent interests is itself arguably insufficient to avoid performative collaboration and stagnation.

Action. The FWCC's mission is fully realized through collective action. As a whole, the FWCC meets about eight times a year to discuss a range of topics, including progress on individual agency updates, changes in the law, resource gaps, and initiatives. Yet, it is in the FWCC's workgroups that collective action effectively fuels enduring collaboration. As mentioned, the FWCC establishes initiatives such as creating resources and trainings related to the harms of removal. Understanding the limitations imposed by its size, the FWCC forms smaller, nimble, and similarly diverse workgroups to operationalize these initiatives. Within each workgroup, members from different and at times divergent positions work collaboratively to produce actionable results for the FWCC. Examples are the [Harm of Removal Workgroup](#), which is developing resources and trainings that support court communities in assessing and responding to the harm of removal in child dependency cases, and the [Guardianship Workgroup](#), which is working to identify challenges and develop practical tools to enhance the use of minor guardianships in ways that promote positive outcomes for families.

The combination of leadership, composition, and action, oriented to solve complex, systemic problems, has engendered a commitment to collaboration that is often elusive in a complex, adversarial system.

Expanding and Transforming Local Courts: Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Programs

The work of the FWCC is complemented by the work of the [Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Programs](#) (FJCIP). Similar to the FWCC, the FJCIP creates a regionally responsive space for multidisciplinary collaboration. The goal of the FJCIP is to expand the capacity of local court communities and transform systems to produce better outcomes for children and families.

Funded by the Washington State Legislature since 2008, the FJCIP is currently operational in 15 of 39 counties, covering about 80 percent of active state dependencies. Each participating court has a dedicated FJCIP coordinator who facilitates system improvement and cross-system collaboration efforts at the local level.

The FJCIP convenes professionals from across the participating counties' dependency court systems in a collaborative, non-adversarial setting to solve systemic issues. Importantly, each county-level FJCIP identifies issues pertinent to its regional practice and is endowed with the autonomy to establish its own initiatives. Through these initiatives and multidisciplinary teams, FJCIP courts act as "laboratories for innovation" where new ideas, resources, and practices are tested, legitimized by mutual development, and transmitted to otherwise independent court systems.

A Shared Understanding of the Safety Framework: The Safety Summit Project

In partnership with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF), AOC established the [Safety Summit Project](#). Originating from DCYF's Program Improvement Process, Safety Summits provide local court jurisdictions with high-quality training on safety framework practices within the context of a guided change management process that includes organization, planning, action, and evaluation phases. Safety Summits revolve around a half-day training event that focuses on helping local dependency court systems develop a shared understanding of how to assess and talk about child safety. This training teaches entire court systems how to effectively apply safety framework principles to crucial aspects of cases (safety assessment, safety planning, conditions for return, family time, and case planning) in tangible ways that ultimately result in a more effective dependency system and better outcomes for families. Importantly, Safety Summit events are delivered by a cross-system team of trainers, including the CIP, DCYF, Washington State's Office of Public Defense (OPD), and Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs.

Safety Summits have been held in eight Washington counties. Pre- and post-hearing quality evaluations conducted by [Dr. Alicia Summers](#) through the Capacity Building Center for Courts of four Safety Summit sites found clear evidence of statistically significant positive changes in the depth and breadth of safety discussions at 72-hour hearings and

in the quality and quantity of safety-related information submitted to the court prior to the hearing.

A Multidisciplinary Practice in Action

Pattern Pleadings and Forms for Dependency Matters

Pursuant to Washington State law, AOC is required to develop pattern pleadings and forms for mandatory use in dependency matters. Consistent with its practice of calling on multidisciplinary teams, AOC convened a Juvenile Court Forms Committee to revise forms consistent with changes in the law. Members included representatives from the Washington State Attorney General's Office, the Washington Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, OPD, and a state court judicial officer. In 2023, the Juvenile Court Forms Committee added four new members, a member of the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), a member of FYJP, a parent with lived experience, and an additional judicial officer. With new and diverse perspectives, the committee navigated the most significant changes and corrections to pattern forms in decades following the passage of sweeping changes to Washington State's removal statutes.

Trainers United: The Statewide Training Coordinator Affinity Group

The brainchild of OCLA's training coordinator, the Statewide Training Coordinator Affinity Group provides a space to foster training innovations and to reduce redundancies. Its member organizations are the Washington State Attorney General's Office, OCLA, OPD, DCYF's Office of Tribal Relations, and Akin (which houses Parents for Parents, a program that connects parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare system with parents who have recently come into contact with DCYF and the court system). The Affinity Group meets remotely every other month in an open space format to discuss opportunities for training collaboration, ways to share existing training materials, and training goals. Successes of the Affinity Group include the collaborative rewriting of several chapters of the [Washington State Juvenile Non-Offender Benchbook](#), interagency trainings provided to a variety of audiences (including stakeholder attorneys and judicial officers, and at statewide and national conferences), and strengthened connections between stakeholder agencies and their training programs.

Reimagining Reasonable and Active Efforts: Building Training Academies for Judges and Attorneys

Facilitated by the Capacity Building Center for the Courts and hosted by FYJP, the Reasonable and Active Efforts Academies provide an optimal opportunity for judges and attorneys alike to do a deep dive into the efforts required of the agency to keep families together at all stages of the proceedings. In 2022, Washington State held one [academy](#) devoted to judicial officers, and in 2023, Washington State held [academies](#) targeted toward attorneys. These academies used a cross-system team of trainers, including the Washington State Attorney General's Office, OPD, nonprofit attorneys, social workers, judicial officers, and other subject matter experts. Besides lectures and discussion, the trainings relied on demonstrations and simulations so that the relevant audience had the opportunity to practice the material and implement the lessons learned. Furthermore, as a result of the collaboration of the trainers at these academies, all dependency practitioners in Washington State can now benefit from the [WA Guide on Reasonable & Active Efforts](#) (Mar. 2022; updated Feb. 2023), a comprehensive manual of the statutes, case law, and policy—state and federal—giving critical guidance on reasonable and active efforts findings throughout the life of a dependency case.

Ready, Set, Go! Annual Dependency Judicial Training

Each year, FYJP hosts an [Annual Dependency Judicial Training](#) for judicial officers who are, or will be, presiding over matters related to dependency or child welfare law. These trainings familiarize judicial officers with black-letter statutory law and case law, dependency-related policy, research and authority relevant to dependency, and other important and helpful topics judicial officers must rely on in making important decisions about the families before them. Judicial officers are trained by attorneys from the Washington State Attorney General's Office, OPD, and OCLA, as well as DCYF social workers, judicial officers, parents with lived experience, and other subject matter experts. In Washington State, these annual trainings are critical; as previously indicated, Washington State does not have a unified court system, and judges may rotate off and onto the dependency bench, sometimes on an annual basis. Often, the Annual Dependency Judicial Training, though optional, provides the vast majority of the training judicial officers receive regarding dependency and child welfare. Past and recent judicial trainings have included participation from trial-level judges and commissioners, Washington court of appeals judges, and even state supreme court justices!

Hope and Justice: The Children's Justice Conference

The [Children's Justice Conference](#) is the largest child welfare-related conference in the Pacific Northwest. The conference brings together stakeholders from multiple disciplines—professionals in child welfare, law enforcement, medicine, psychology, and much more. The Children's Justice Conference is supported by a federal grant through the Child Abuse

Prevention and Treatment Act. The [program instruction](#) describes the grant application process and even details the tentative grant allocation for each state (see pages 29–30). In particular, the Children’s Justice Conference has carved out a specific dependency track devoted to a child welfare curriculum. Among the stakeholder trainers involved in supporting the dependency track are attorneys from the Washington State Attorney General’s Office, OPD, and OCLA, as well as DCYF, and OPD social service workers, parents with lived experience, community experts, and many others. In 2024, the Children’s Justice Conference’s dependency track included sessions from cross-system trainers on topics such as “Pitfalls and Strengths of Safety Planning,” “Life Experiences of Incarcerated Families Through the Lens of Children,” and “Teaming Up to Reach Resolution and What to Do When Collaboration Collapses.”

Three Heads Are Better Than One: Families Stronger Together Joint Annual Conference

Prior to 2023, OPD held an annual parents’ attorney conference for its contractors for almost 20 years. The conference was educational and inspirational, and it was a great opportunity to mix and mingle. However, in 2023, OPD, OCLA, and Akin made the insightful decision to come together and hold a joint conference, bringing parents’ attorneys, defense social workers, children’s attorneys, and the Parents for Parents program into the same space. On the whole, the collaboration was a tremendous success. Joining the resources of three agencies into one conference meant combining finances, staff, technological know-how, institutional knowledge, and training resources. With our combined financial resources, we were able to bring nationally known and compelling advocates to serve as our plenary speakers, including [Dr. Monique Mitchell](#) and [Corey Best](#). The collaboration was not without its difficulties; for example, some participants were uncomfortable sharing a conference with contractors outside their silo of work and wished for a conference that was entirely devoted to their own contractors. Despite these growing pains, OPD, OCLA, and Akin have already begun planning the joint conference for 2024, maintaining a strong focus on anti-racist and client-centered representation.

Keeping Families Together Through Cross-Systems Partnerships

On July 1, 2023, Washington State rolled out House Bill (HB) 1227, the [Keeping Families Together Act](#). This landmark piece of legislation raised the standard for child removal at the initial emergency hearing (or shelter care hearing), required courts to consider the harm of removal when making the decision to remove a child, and demonstrated lawmakers’ prioritization of family unification, prevention services, and relative placement.

In advance of the rollout, stakeholders worked together to train, and prepare, system partners for the implementation of this groundbreaking legislation.

Cross-System Regional Webinars

DCYF and FYJP worked together to offer [cross-system regional webinars](#). The webinars, tailored to each of the six DCYF regions in Washington State, provided high-level training on HB 1227, as well as opportunities for brainstorming and discussion among participants about the specific needs of, and resources available to, families in each region. At the end of each webinar, participants left with a customized list of prevention services and programs for families that are available and accessible in their specific region.

Readiness Retreats

In preparation for the rollout of HB 1227, many individual counties held “readiness retreats.” Spurred by the work of FYJP, these readiness retreats involved the joint efforts of the Washington State Attorney General’s Office, DCYF, OPD, OCLA, the Washington Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, judicial officers, and others. The retreats included trainings, discussion, and logistical preparations related to the new law. For example, in one readiness retreat, participants discussed whether HB 1227 might result in an increased number of contested shelter care hearings and, if so, whether the court should increase its courtroom capacity by adding additional court days or judicial officers.

Training Attorneys in Three Parts: HB 1227 Parent, Child, and Appellate Attorney Training

FYJP, OPD, and OCLA teamed up to train parent, child, and appellate attorneys in advance of the implementation of HB 1227. The three-part training series consisted of (1) a high-level overview of the new legislation, presented by FYJP; (2) in-depth training in and analysis of the changes in the black-letter law, coupled with breakout groups and hypotheticals for group participants to test and apply the new law; and (3) a brief review of HB 1227 with parents’ attorneys, children’s attorneys, and appellate attorneys, followed by opportunities for these attorneys to apply the law to hypothetical factual scenarios at the trial and appellate level. The chances to apply the new black-letter law to the types of scenarios attorneys would soon be facing in the courtroom, coupled with the opportunities attorneys had to collaborate with, and learn from, other attorneys in different stakeholder positions, made these trainings meaningful and effective.

Conclusion

Cross-system collaboration has been essential in Washington State's efforts to foster a holistic approach to child welfare that addresses the multifaceted needs of families. By leveraging available funding and intentionally integrating efforts across various agencies, we have created a more cohesive and responsive framework that can better adapt to the ever-changing landscape of child welfare. This collaborative model helps ensure that system partners, including those with lived experience, can contribute their unique perspectives and expertise to the creation of the many supportive tools, trainings, and resources available in Washington. Ultimately, these partnerships have helped to align cross-system improvement work, enhance support for families, and create better long-term outcomes for children—paving the way for a more just and effective child welfare court system.

This article is dedicated to the memory of our dearly departed friend and colleague Tim Jaasko-Fisher, who helped pioneer the child dependency court improvement work in Washington State.

Author



Jeffrey Adams

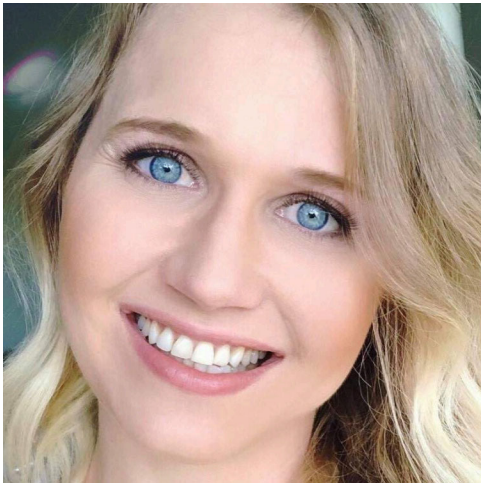
Jeffrey Adams, JD, MBA, CWLS Training Coordinator Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid, Children's Representation Program Jeffrey Adams is the Children's Representation Program's (CRP) training coordinator...



Marci Comeau

Washington State Office of Public Defense

Marci Comeau is a Managing Attorney with the Parents Representation Program at the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD). Prior to joining OPD in 2022, Marci served as an Administrative Law Judge for the...



Laura Vogel

As the CIP Co-Director and Training Specialist for the Administrative Office of the Courts' Family & Youth Justice Programs, Laura coordinates training opportunities for judicial officers and court system partners, along...



Kelly Warner-King

Kelly Warner-King is the manager of Family and Youth Justice Programs at the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts. She has extensive experience leading training and cross-system change efforts to improve...

Published by the American Bar Association ©2024. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This information or any portion thereof may not be copied or disseminated in any form or by any means or stored in an electronic database or retrieval system without the express written consent of the American Bar Association.

ABA American Bar Association |

<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/resources/newsletters/childrens-rights/summer2024-being-the-change-and-seeing-the-change/>



Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

PO Box 41183
Olympia, WA 98504
sara.robbsins@ocla.wa.gov
360-485-1544

Sara Robbins, Director

To: The Washington State Supreme Court Justices

From: Sara Robbins

Re: Washington State Civil Legal Needs Study

Date: July 2, 2024

Executive Summary

It has been ten years since we last assessed civil legal needs in Washington State and the Office of Civil Legal Aid has begun planning for a new iteration of the Civil Legal Needs Study (CLNS). An updated CLNS will allow policymakers and civil legal aid providers to respond effectively to the changes of the past decade (including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic); understand and assess the justice gap in Washington; assess the effectiveness and cost of possible solutions; and identify barriers to accessing legal assistance.

This document outlines the history of the Civil Legal Needs Study and proposes an approach for scoping and initiating the forthcoming CLNS.

History of Civil Legal Needs Studies in Washington

The first Civil Legal Needs Study of low-income residents of Washington was conducted in 2003. That report was the first of its kind in Washington and was conducted by the Washington Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding. The study:

- Found that three out of every four low-income households experienced at least one legal problem and that nearly nine out of ten who had a problem did not get the help that they needed.
- Chronicled the frequency and substance of the civil legal problems experienced by low and moderate income people, commonalities and differences between the problems experienced by members of different demographic groups and subgroups, differences between problems experienced by low and moderate income households, the degree to which legal assistance was available to those experiencing civil legal problems, and the impact that civil legal assistance (and the lack thereof) had on an individual's ability to effectively resolve their legal problem(s) and on their respect for the civil justice system as a whole.

In 2015, the Washington Supreme Court initiated a State Civil Legal Needs Study Update. This update is the most recent study in the state and found:

- Seven out of every ten low-income households in Washington face at least one significant legal issue each year and more than 75% of those who have a legal problem do not get the help that need.
- The average number of legal issues that a household faces increased dramatically from 3.3 in 2003 to 9.3 in 2015.
- Low-income people have limited confidence in the state's civil justice system and do not perceive it to be a fair system.

These two studies done over 10 years apart tell a very similar story: low-income Washington residents face multiple legal issues and most of the time must face their legal issues without the help of lawyer. However, the types of legal issues that people faced changed between 2003 and 2015. In 2003, the most prevalent legal issues were housing, family, employment, consumer and access to health care and public benefits. In 2015, the most prevalent were health care, consumer, and employment. All these issues can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences.

The world has changed dramatically in the ten years since the last Civil Legal Needs Study was published. We experienced a world-wide pandemic where our healthcare system was pushed beyond its capacity; many people lost employment; long-term health effects have continued to strain our healthcare system; students lost years of education; mental health crises increased; vulnerabilities in food security and supply chains increased; and many people could not afford to maintain housing.

Data from the 2022 Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Justice Gap Report shows that low-income Americans are more likely to have civil legal issues because of the pandemic and less likely to receive legal assistance, that nearly three-quarters (74%) of low-income households have experienced at least one civil legal problem in the past year, and that 38% of low-income Americans have experienced a civil legal problem that substantially impacted their lives in some way (even for these "substantial" problems, they only sought legal help 25% of the time). This is consistent with what the data tells us about the justice gap in Washington, but we need updated information to specifically assess the situation in Washington and assess solutions. [Justice Gap Full Report 2022.pdf](#)

Scoping Committee

The Supreme Court and the Office of Civil Legal Aid will convene a Scoping Committee to guide this effort. The Scoping Committee will determine the objectives, focus, target audience, and targeted populations. The following organizations will be recruited for this committee:

- The Washington Supreme Court
- The Access to Justice Board
- Legal Foundation of Washington
- The Office of Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee
- Minority and Justice Commission
- Gender and Justice Commission
- Equal Justice Coalition
- Northwest Justice Project
- Columbia Legal Services

- Northwest Immigrants Rights Project
- WSBA Small Town and Rural Practice Committee
- Washington Law Schools
- Tribal Representation
- Washington State Community Action Partnership
- Office of Public Defense
- Disability Justice Taskforce
- Tribal State Court Consortium

Objectives

The 2015 Study was an update to the 2003 Study. The 2003 Study served as the baseline demonstrating the civil legal aid issues that were experienced by low-income people and access to legal assistance. The Scoping Committee will need to determine if we take the same approach to this update or if the goals of the Civil Legal Needs Study are better met by assessing new questions. Some initial questions could be:

1. Do we want to know the nature of the legal issues that people are facing or is it enough to know that low-income Washingtonians face many legal issues and that those legal issues can have significant consequences?
2. What are the systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing legal assistance?
3. When people are able to access legal services are their legal needs being met?
4. What are the changes in funding and capacity of our legal aid system since the last study?
5. Do we want this Study to serve as a basis for further discussion and strategic direction for legal aid delivery system planners, providers of civil legal aid services and other community-based organizations? Additionally, do we want to identify how additional funding could expand legal aid and what the outcome of that could be for low-income people in Washington?

Target Audience

The 2015 Study identified multiple audiences and several purposes to be served by the study. The Scoping Committee should determine if the targeted audiences have changed? The following principal target audiences were previously identified:

1. Federal, state and local governmental funders (Congress, Washington State Legislature, Counties and Cities)
2. Private supporters and investors
3. Local and statewide opinion leaders
4. Health, education, human and social services providers
5. The general public

Targeted Populations

The 2015 study asked how race, gender, age, disability, and other factors affect the complexity and type of civil legal problems people experience. The 2015 study also assessed differences in accessing support

and achieving long-term solutions across these demographic groups. The Scoping Committee should ask if there are additional targeted populations that we want to reach and, if so, is it for the same purpose or a different purpose?

At minimum, the Scoping Committee will likely wish to include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (hereafter referred to as “LGBTQ”) individuals. During the 2015 study LGBTQ people were insufficiently represented in a state-wide probability survey, and a supplemental report on LGBTQ legal needs was published in 2016.

Although low-income LGBTQ people face many of the same socio-economic and legal challenges that other low-income people who share their race, ethnicity, age, and disability do, there are additional challenges and legal needs that are specific to sexual orientation and gender identity. The Scoping Committee should consider how we ensure that we do not leave out specific populations with unique legal challenges.

Administration

This study will require effective oversight and administration. The statutory responsibility for this study falls within the purview of the Office of Civil Legal Aid,¹ but the study’s policy findings also implicate the Washington State Courts, funders, and the civil legal aid community broadly. The previous study was done in partnership with the Washington Center for Court Research who assisted in design and administration. The scoping committee will need ensure that there is robust oversight and administration that includes OCLA, the Washington Supreme Court, and the legal community.

Cost

This type of study will have a significant cost. The scoping group will need to both calculate an informed estimate of that cost and explore possible options for funding, including but not limited to a budget request from the Legislature.

Timeline and Next Steps

July, 2024: The Supreme Court and the Office of Civil Legal Aid will release a joint press release announcing the renewal of the Civil Legal Needs Study.

July/August, 2024: The Office of Civil Legal Aid will contact the organizations identified in the “Scoping Committee” section to ask for their nominees to the Scoping Committee.

September, 2024: The Scoping Committee begins its work as outlined in this document.

TBD: The Scoping Committee concludes its work as outlined in this document and releases an RFP for the design and execution of the Civil Legal Needs Study.

¹ RCW 2.53.020(3)(c)

TAB 7



2025 Supplemental Budget Request

2025 OCLA Supplemental Decision Package	Maintenance or Policy Level	Estimated FY25 Request
<p>Supplemental Funding for Legally Free Children's Representation Program</p> <p>Previously projected reductions for professional service contracts for fiscal year 2025 for the "legally free" Children's Representation Program (CRP) have not been realized. However, the funding is essential to provide statutorily mandated representation. In addition, OCLA previously entered into contracts with attorneys to provide services for fiscal year 2025, and the contracts must be honored.</p> <p>This requests supplemental funding for FY 2025 to support contracts (contracted attorneys), goods and services, and travel.</p>	Maintenance	\$850,000

2025-27 Biennial Budget Requests

2025 OCLA Supplemental Decision Package	Maintenance or Policy Level	Estimated FY25 Request
<p>Continued Implementation of 2SHB 1219</p> <p>OCLA is responsible for implementing an appointed counsel program for children and youth throughout Washington in dependency cases. Funding is requested to continue the implementation and staffing of the "1219 program" and for maintenance of the "legally free" program.</p> <p>In accordance with the Legislature's implementation schedule, the program will expand to 16 additional counties in Washington over FY26 (Asotin, Chelan, Clark, Columbia, Douglas, Garfield, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, and Whitman) and FY27 (Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom).</p> <p>This funding is intended to implement the 1219 program in the 16 counties identified by the Legislature for FY26 and FY27 implementation while simultaneously funding the phase</p>	Maintenance	\$5,172,000*



<p>out of the legally free program in those same counties, and the maintenance of the legally free program in those counties where the 1219 program is not yet scheduled to be implemented. This funding will ensure children and youth are appointed counsel in accordance with RCW 13.34.212 and RCW 13.34.267.</p> <p>This requests funding to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract attorneys in the expanded counties • OCLA Staff – 1.0 FTE Managing Attorney, 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant necessary to oversee the further implementation of the 1219 program <p><i>*Per legislative directive, OCLA enters into an interagency agreement with the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DYCF) to secure partial reimbursement from the federal government for Title IV-E qualifying expenses. Amount shown is net amount after the Title IV-E reimbursement.</i></p>		
<p>Children’s Representation Program – Contractor (Vendor) Rate Adjustment</p> <p>Funding is requested to adjust the Children’s Representation Program’s (CRP) contract attorney (vendor) rates to levels necessary to facilitate recruitment and retention of qualified attorneys to represent children and youth eligible for appointment of counsel in dependency matters in the “legally free program” and the “1219 program.”</p> <p>The Legislature funded rate increases for CRP contracted attorneys in 2023-25 to help address a parity gap, and this funding is the final step in addressing a parity gap over two biennia.</p> <p><i>*Per legislative directive, OCLA enters into an interagency agreement with the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DYCF) to secure partial reimbursement from the federal government for Title IV-E qualifying expenses. Amount shown is net amount after the Title IV-E reimbursement.</i></p>	<p>Maintenance</p>	<p>\$1,419,000*</p>
<p>Law Student Recruitment Initiative</p> <p>Washington State has a well-documented dearth of public defense counsel, particularly in rural areas. The Office of Civil Legal Aid requests funding to develop and support a</p>	<p>Policy</p>	<p>\$750,000</p>



<p>pipeline program providing law students with the academic and practical experience necessary to represent children involved in the child welfare system.</p> <p>Funding requested assumes a combination of programs designed to establish and support the development of pipelines flowing from the three accredited law schools in Washington State. It is anticipated that a pipeline program will include a combination of clinical programs with dedicated faculty and staff attorneys, specialized classes with targeted curricula, and agency-facilitated internships with experienced practitioners. Child welfare operations are a core state government function, and the state has a strong interest in ensuring a ready workforce for the specialized attorney positions at OPD, OCLA, and the AG's office.</p>		
<p>Legal Aid Capacity, Infrastructure Preservation, and CLEAR Hotline Staffing</p> <p>The ability to maintain civil legal aid service throughout Washington is hampered by significant increases in costs and increasing workforce scarcity. In addition, the CLEAR hotline which is managed by the Northwest Justice Project (NJP) and provides critical services to ensure legal aid is available in all areas of the state, is unable to meet current demand with the existing resources.</p> <p>This requests funding to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A vendor rate adjustment including fringe benefit adjustment and inflationary increases for infrastructure expenses• Additional support for the CLEAR Hotline• Goods and services, travel, and equipment for the OCLA staff to ensure appropriate program oversight• OCLA Staff – 0.5 FTE Program Manager, 1.0 FTE Program Counsel, 0.5 FTE Program Staff necessary to oversee the program	Maintenance/Policy	\$3,319,000
<p>Civil Legal Aid for Survivors of Domestic Violence – Contractor (Vendor) Rate Adjustment</p> <p>The Washington State Legislature appropriated \$2,000,000 in funding per year beginning in FY 2023 "to expand civil legal aid services for survivors of domestic violence, including legal services for protection order proceedings, family cases, immigration assistance, and other civil legal issues arising from or related to the domestic violence they experienced."</p>	Maintenance	\$206,000



<p>This requests funding to support a vendor rate adjustment due to known and measurable cost increases to contracted attorneys for both personnel and overhead as the result of inflation. In addition, this package seeks 5% administrative overhead to cover appropriate administrative staffing at OCLA to support the program.</p>		
<p>Kinship Care Legal Aid Appropriation and Vendor Rate Adjustment OCLA operates two contracts to support kinship care legal aid: the Kinship Legal Aid Coordinator and the Kinship Care Legal Aid Hotline. Both contracts are with a single nonprofit legal aid organization with the collective purposes of providing legal advice and referrals, building resources, training public and pro bono attorneys, and coordinating efforts to support access to free legal services for kinship caregivers across Washington.</p> <p>This requests funding to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full funding of the Coordinator position • A vendor rate adjustment to support the hotline • 5% administrative overhead to cover appropriate administrative staffing at OCLA to support the program 	<p>Maintenance/Policy</p>	<p>\$268,000</p>
<p>Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program The Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program provides essential legal services to indigent tenants at risk of eviction or displacement, addressing affirmative cases, health and safety concerns, and landlord harassment. This program aims to resolve cases before they reach court, supporting Washington State's homelessness response, and plays a critical role pre-filing.</p> <p>This requests funding to support a vendor rate adjustment to ensure the same level of /program services despite rising operating costs.</p>	<p>Maintenance</p>	<p>\$129,000</p>
<p>Low-Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program Funding is requested to continue the core functions of the Low-Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program to provide legal representation to indigent tenants in unlawful detainer cases. RTC's legal services providers saw an increase from 7,064 cases in FY 2023 to 10,606 cases in FY 2024. To address the increase, OCLA sought and was granted additional funding from the legislature to support the equivalent of 10 more contracted full-time attorney positions in FY 2024. Cases remain at an elevated level overall, and in</p>	<p>Policy</p>	<p>\$3,763,000</p>



<p>King County there is an increased demand due to new court processes for UD (unlawful detainer) hearings.</p> <p>This requests funding to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A continuation of increased funding from the FY 25 supplemental budget• Funding to support the increased cases in King County• A vendor rate adjustment to address the rising operating costs to ensure the same level of program services• OCLA Staff – 1.0 FTE Program Counsel to help oversee the program		
<p>Civil Legal Aid for Blake Impacted Individuals</p> <p>In 2021 the Washington Supreme Court issued the opinion in <i>State v. Blake (Blake)</i> declaring drug possession laws without an intent requirement are unconstitutional. Since 2021 OCLA, through contracted civil legal aid providers, has delivered comprehensive civil legal information, advice, assistance, and representation to individuals affected by the <i>Blake</i> decision.</p> <p>This requests funding for contracted attorneys to continue legal assistance to individuals eligible for civil relief as a result of the Washington Supreme Court’s decision in <i>State v. Blake</i>.</p>	Maintenance	\$2,748,000
<p>Reentry Legal Assistance Program</p> <p>Funding is requested to continue the Reentry Legal Assistance Program (RLAP). RLAP is essential for removing barriers faced by individuals with prior criminal justice involvement, facilitating their successful reentry into society. This funding enables the removal of Legal Financial Obligations, sealing of criminal records, re-licensure, and more through mass assistance community events, direct representation, legal advice, systemic advocacy, and appeals.</p> <p>This requests a vendor rate adjustment to ensure continuation of the same level of service despite rising costs.</p>	Maintenance	\$51,000