



CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**MEETING OF
June 13, 2025**

MATERIALS

**CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF June 13, 2025**

MEETING MATERIALS

Tab 1: Meeting Agenda

Tab 2: Draft Minutes of March 14, 2025 Meeting

Tab 3: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Mission

Tab 4: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Roster

**Tab 5: OCLA Director's Report (including
attachments)**

TAB 1

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

June 13, 2025

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 (Sara Robbins, Director)
3. Approval of March meeting minutes (Chair Sanchez)
4. Recognition of Judge Faye Chess (Chair Sanchez)
5. Role of Chair and Vice Chair (Sara Robbins, Director)
6. Civil Legal Needs Study Update (Sara Robbins, Director)
7. State Budget Update (Stefanie Powell, Director of Operations)
8. Program Update: Long-Term Care Appointed Counsel (Beth Leonard, Program Counsel)
9. Children's Representation Program updates (Bailey Zydek, Program Director)
10. Public Comment/New Business
11. Adjourn

TAB 2

**CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE MEETING OF
March 14, 2025
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, March 14, 2025.

Members Participating: Chair Alé Sanchez, Vice Chair Angela Cruz Boldt, Judge Faye Chess, Judge Janet Chung, Natasha Damien, Megan Johnston, Molly Matter

Members Not Participating: Senator MacEwen, Senator Trudeau, Representative Thai

OCLA Staff: Sara Robbins (Director), Stefanie Powell (Director of Operations), Ali Kingston (RTC Program Manager), Philippe Knab (Program Director), Annalise Martucci (Program Director), Bailey Zydek (Program Director)

Guests: Jim Bamberger (community member), Abigail Daquiz (NJP), Monte Jewell (DVORA) Erin Shea McCann (Seattle University, School of Law), Karen Pillar, Michael Terasaki (Washington Pro Bono Council)

The meeting convened at 11:32 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions (Alé Sanchez, Oversight Committee Chair)

Chair Sanchez welcomed new committee member Molly Matter and asked her to give a short introduction. He then invited OCLA staff and meeting guests to introduce themselves. Chair Sanchez noted there will be limited attendance at this Oversight Committee meeting due to the legislature being in session.

2. Occupied Land Acknowledgment and Recognition of Responsibility (Sara Robbins, OCLA Director)

Sara Robbins provided the land acknowledgment. Sara also noted that the current request for proposals (RFP) for the Domestic Violence program includes a percentage of funding dedicated for the use of tribes and legal aid organizations working directly for the benefit of tribal members.

3. Approval of Minutes of December 6, 2024, Meeting

Chair Sanchez invited a motion to approve the December meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the December 6, 2024, meeting minutes: Molly Matter

Second: Megan Johnston

Action: Approved with 6 votes. *(Note: Judge Chess joined the meeting after the vote.)*

4. Civil Legal Needs Study Update (Sara Robbins, OCLA Director)

Beginning in the fall of 2024, OCLA convened a scoping committee to develop a report that will serve as a guide for the eventual RFP for the next iteration of the civil legal needs study. The scoping committee has met four times. These were productive meetings that included discussions on the study's audience, purpose, goals, and intended outcomes.

Following the scoping committee meetings, a small subcommittee is drafting the scoping committee's summary report. In addition, a separate subgroup of the scoping committee will meet to discuss how to ensure the upcoming study is based upon a trauma-informed approach and that this is reflected in the RFP scoring. The committee feels a trauma-informed approach is necessary as study participants are giving up their time to discuss sensitive topics.

The scoping committee has discussed timing of the study given the current environment, especially at the federal level. They have determined they should proceed as it is important to have information regarding civil legal needs. The scoping committee also recognizes the needs for civil legal aid are ever changing. More specifically, they recognized the needs have already shifted since the scoping committee began work five months ago, and needs will continue to shift. They recognize the need for a mindful approach during the study regarding how to approach communities, how to talk to people, and what people will be willing to discuss.

Going forward, the timeline remains flexible. Once the draft scoping committee report is finalized, it will be reviewed by the full scoping committee. They currently anticipate issuing the scoping committee's report by early fall 2025. Once the report is issued, next steps regarding the RFP for the study will be determined.

5. State Budget Update (Stefanie Powell, OCLA Director of Operations)

A high-level overview was provided relating to OCLA's state and federal funding in both the current fiscal year and the upcoming 2025-2027 biennium.

OCLA has not been asked to take any cuts and is not expecting any budget cuts for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Approximately 95% of OCLA's budget is spent on contracts with the remaining 5% going to overhead. As a result, OCLA is under contract with vendors through the end of the fiscal year for almost all of the current year's budget.

OCLA receives a limited amount of federal funding. Within the Children's Representation Program, approximately \$2 million of the annual budget of approximately \$11 million comes from federal Title IV-E funds. OCLA receives these funds on a passthrough basis under a subcontract with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). At this

time, DCYF has instructed OCLA to operate as usual in the current fiscal year regarding these funds.

Although the final amount is not yet determined, the state is anticipating an approximately \$15 billion budget deficit over the next four years. Executive branch agencies were asked to take 6% budget cuts, but judicial branch agencies have not been instructed to make cuts. However, OCLA has reduced decision packages for the upcoming biennium by about half, prioritizing requests to meet the most critical program needs.

There was discussion around funding beginning with the children's representation program. A committee member wondered if there are other options regarding the 1219 program for children's representation aside from delaying full implementation until 2032 as proposed. Questions were also raised on the ability to access Federal funds, and OCLA was unsure if DCYF currently has access to Federal funds as DCYF did not have the ability to drawdown Federal funds earlier this year. However, as noted above, OCLA has not been asked to make any changes in the current fiscal year as a result of potentially limited access to federal funds.

There was also discussion around funding for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program, and it was noted that as federal funding for the VOCA program has declined, the state has supplemented the funding. It was also shared that OCLA is included in the RCW related to VOCA which mandates OCLA receive a portion of VOCA funds. Although it has not moved forward during a challenging budget season, the Washington State Department of Commerce proposed SB 5362 which would have set a floor on VOCA funding, with the state covering any gaps in federal funding. It is anticipated that this will be revisited in future legislative sessions.

6. Legislative Update (Sara Robbins)

Many legislative topics were already discussed, and this update focused on programs that had not yet been addressed.

Funding for the Foreclosure Fairness program has been unstable in recent years as it has been based on a fee charged on foreclosure filings. SB 5686 would change the funding mechanism to a fee charged at the time of loan origination on mortgages. This bill passed the floor of the Senate last week and has a hearing in the House housing committee next week. This could provide a stable source of funding, and it would also increase funding from the current level.

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has asked OCLA to launch an appointed counsel program in long-term care discharge cases, as required for DSHS to come into compliance with current federal Medicaid rules. Based on a preliminary review, the new program appears to be eligible for a 50% Medicaid funding match. DSHS and OCLA are meeting with the Governor's office next week to discuss logistics surrounding establishing the program.

In general, OCLA's leadership team has been meeting with legislators to discuss decision packages, prioritizing programs with the greatest needs. The eviction right to counsel (RTC) program, has a particularly high need for funding as eviction filings continue to increase across state, and it is increasingly difficult for the program to keep up with the volume of filings in nearly all parts of the state. The requested decision package would continue to fund ten contracted attorneys that were added in the 2024 supplemental request, and it would add five additional contracted attorneys for King County where there is an acute need.

There was a question regarding the CLEAR hotline, which is a legal hotline for individuals in Washington with low incomes. OCLA submitted a decision package for the upcoming biennium requesting additional funding for the CLEAR hotline to assist in addressing a severe lack of capacity. If the decision package is not funded, the CLEAR hotline will stay at the current funding level.

There was also a question regarding how OCLA prioritizes what to discuss with legislators. It was shared that OCLA's Program Directors are more involved in legislative work than in prior years, which provides greater capacity to meet with legislators regarding all of OCLA's programs. The RTC appointed counsel program naturally rises as a priority as there is a statutorily required service level. OCLA also meets with providers, other stakeholders, and legislators to determine their priorities. Currently, existing programs are prioritized over new programs.

7. Public Comment/New Business

Public comments:

- Abigail Daquiz thanked OCLA and Michael Terasaki of the Washington Pro Bono Council for hosting the upcoming Statewide Legal Advocate Training (SLAT) conference. This is the first time the conference has been offered since COVID, and this has been a joint effort that included combining resources with the Legal Foundation of Washington (LFW) and the Northwest Justice Project (NJP) to make the conference free for most attendees.

New business: None

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 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

(March 2025)

Position 1 (BJA 1):

Name: Hon. Janet Chung
Address: Washington State Court of Appeals, Div 1
600 University Street
Seattle, WA 98101-1176
Phone: 206-464-7750
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:
Address:
Phone:
E-mail:
Appointing Entity: House Republican Caucus
Term Expires: June 30, 2025

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: Molly Matter
Address: PO Box 13203
Burton, WA 98103
Phone: 206-280-8724
E-mail: amendmentxv@gmail.com
Appointing Entity: Washington State Bar Association
Term Expires: June 30, 2027; eligible for reappointment

TAB 5



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

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

To: OCLA Oversight Committee
From: Sara Robbins
Re: Director's Report
Date: June 6, 2025

It has been a very busy at OCLA over the last three months. Here is a snippet of some of the projects we have been working on:

- We concluded two Request for Proposal (RFP) processes for Domestic Violence and Pre-Right to Counsel.
- We are now busy getting biennial contracts out across all our programs as we come to the end of the FY25.
- Annalise Martucci and Beth Leonard are continuing to work with the contractor, Komenge LLC, to complete an assessment of the CLEAR (Coordinated Legal Education and Referral) intake hotline at Northwest Justice Project.
- We held an in-person, all staff retreat at the end of April. OCLA staff work in almost every part of the state, and we all really value the time to come together in-person to collaborate. Some of the topics over the two days included program updates, conflict management strategies, how bias can show up in our work, and a team building scavenger hunt.
- Ali Kingston, Eviction Defense Program Manager, and I attended an Eviction Right to Counsel Convening in New York at New York Law School. We spent three days with attorneys and tenant advocates from around the country discussing topics such as attorney recruitment, legislative advocacy, and how to build a tenant movement to support the Right to Counsel. It was a great chance to hear from programs that are in every stage of operation and development and understand how our program in Washington is doing compared to other parts of the country.

OCLA Staffing

OCLA is excited to announce that we have hired Program Counsel for our new Long-Term Care Appointed Counsel Program. Max Mendez Kauffman is a civil attorney with over seven years of experience advocating for people affected by disability, institutionalization, and systemic inequities. Prior to OCLA, he was a Managing Attorney at TeamChild where he coordinated and oversaw contracts and deliverables while setting regional strategies across four Washington counties to boost access to Medicaid, education, housing, and reentry services access for youth. Through his work at TeamChild, he also served on the Tacoma/Pierce County Continuum of Care Board. At Disability Rights Washington and Disability Rights New Mexico, his work targeted upholding the rights of people with disabilities living in long-term care and behavioral health facilities, including psychiatric hospitals and emergency rooms.

Earlier in his career, Max served as a mental health attorney with the New Mexico public defender's office, where he developed and worked within therapeutic courts to advocate for alternatives to incarceration and improve

treatment access for individuals with serious mental illness. He co-chaired the Albuquerque Mental Health Response Advisory Committee, a cross-governmental and community-led body focused on improving crisis response. Max is profoundly passionate about the respect, autonomy, and justice for individuals in care settings.

Oversight Committee Membership

The House Republican Caucus position is currently vacant. A request has been made to the House Republican Caucus to appoint a new member. I have not yet heard back on the appointment. The term for this position ends on June 30, 2025, and the new member will be eligible for reappointment.

Judge Faye Chess' second term on the committee ends on June 30, 2025. I want to thank her for her commitment to this committee and civil legal aid. The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) will appoint a new member.

Eviction Defense

In December 2024, OCLA filed an Amicus Brief with the Washington Supreme Court in the case of *Sangha v. Keen*. The Court recently issued an [opinion](#) affirming that a default judgment cannot be entered against a tenant who timely submits a written notice of appearance in response to an eviction summons under RCW 59.18.365(3). The Court held that the statutory summons form explicitly allows tenants to respond with a notice of appearance and guarantees them a subsequent hearing. The trial court erred in defaulting a tenant who complied with that instruction. Critically, the Court clarified that civil rules permitting default do not override the specific procedural protections in Washington's unlawful detainer statutes including right to counsel.

OCLA's amicus brief supported this outcome, arguing that courts must not act unless the tenant has been screened and, if eligible, appointed counsel in compliance with RCW 59.18.640 and SPR 98.24W. That rule, which OCLA advocated for and helped draft, requires courts to advise unrepresented tenants of their right to counsel, refer them for screening, and continue proceedings to allow appointment of counsel. The amicus brief emphasized the Legislature's intent that tenants be meaningfully represented at all stages of the process—and that proceeding without appointed counsel amounts to a constructive denial of that right.

This marks the first time the Washington Supreme Court has directly addressed the Eviction Defense Appointed Counsel program, and it strongly reaffirmed the mandatory nature of the right to counsel and its central importance to the unlawful detainer process. The Court's opinion affirms that courts have an affirmative duty to inquire about eligibility and to ensure appointment of counsel before any substantive proceedings take place. This affirmation will undoubtedly be a critical tool for protecting tenant rights and ensuring due process statewide.

Civil Legal Needs Study

The Civil Legal Needs Study Scoping Committee had its last meeting at the end of January 2025. After that meeting, a small subgroup met to discuss how to incorporate trauma-informed principles into the report and eventually into the study itself. From these meetings, a draft report has been prepared and sent to the Scoping Committee members for feedback. After the Scoping Committee provides feedback, there will be a public comment period to solicit feedback before finalizing the report.

Budget and Legislative Session

I have included a spreadsheet in the packet that I also shared with you after legislative session that shows the outcome of each of our decision packages. The Governor signed the budget on May 20th and OCLA's budget remained the same as the Conference Budget. A few key things from the budget and session:

- **Blake Funding**-OCLA's funding relating to *State v. Blake* that helps individuals vacate unconstitutional drug possession convictions and obtain their Legal Financial Obligation (LFO) refunds was completely eliminated. This was a loss of over \$5mil for the biennium. Here is an article that was published on the loss of funding: [WA civil legal aid organizations mourn state funding cuts: 'It's a gut punch' | InvestigateWest Reports | InvestigateWest](#)
- **Eviction Appointed Counsel Program**-OCLA received full funding for FY26, but not for FY27. If eviction filings remain at the current, historical high rates, we will have to ask for the remainder of the money in the supplemental legislative session in order to provide services as required under RCW 59.18.640. Here is an article that draws attention to the current eviction crisis: [Evictions in WA skyrocket, overwhelming legal aid program for low-income renters | InvestigateWest Reports | InvestigateWest](#)
- **Long-Term Care (LTC) Appointed Counsel Program**-OCLA received money to establish an appointed counsel program for Medicaid residents being discharged from LTC settings in partnership with DSHS-Aging and Long-Term Care Support Administration. The funding OCLA received is significantly less than we believe is necessary to set up the program, so we are working closely with DSHS to work on a slightly delayed and phased in implementation.
- [SB 5761](#) delays the implementation of the Children's Representation Program by an additional four years, pausing the implementation of additional counties until 2029(waiting on Governor signature).
- [HB 1621](#), Housing Commissioner bill, states that OCLA will assist the Administrative Office of the Courts to train new Housing Commissioners. We have already begun this work (waiting on Governor signature).

Even though it seems like the legislative session just ended, it is already time for OCLA to prepare decision packages for the 2026 supplemental session that starts in January 2026. I will present our final 2026 supplemental decision packages at the September 2025 Oversight Committee Meeting.

Upcoming OCLA Priorities

- I will be working closely with Stefanie Powell, Director of Operations, to close out the FY25 budget and finalize FY26 and FY27 budgets.
- All the Directors and I will be planning for the Supplemental Decision Packages.



2025 Supplemental Budget Request

| 2025 OCLA Supplemental Decision Package | Maintenance or Policy Level | FY25 Request | Funding in Conference Budget |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Supplemental Funding for Legally Free Children’s Representation Program 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. This requests supplemental funding for FY 2025 to support contracts (contracted attorneys), goods and services, and travel. | Maintenance | \$850,000 | Different program funded: -\$850,000 in FY 2025 supplemental funding received for CRP’s 1219 program (not CRP Legally Free program, as requested) |

2025-27 Biennial Budget Requests

| 2025 OCLA Supplemental Decision Package | Maintenance or Policy Level | Funding Requested for 2025 – 2027 Biennium (As of February 2025) | Funding in Conference Budget |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Continued Implementation of 2SHB 1219 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. 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, | Maintenance | \$1,800,000 | Decision package funded based on continued program implementation delayed until January 2030 -Funding received to fully implement January 2025 cohort (\$900k/year program funding increase) |



| | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <p>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 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>Total Program Funding*: FY25: \$7,711,000 FY26: \$8,611,000 FY27: \$8,611,000</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>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</i></p> | <p>Maintenance</p> | <p>\$2,640,000*</p> | <p>Not Funded</p> |



| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <p><i>qualifying expenses. Amount shown is net amount after the Title IV-E reimbursement.</i></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 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>Policy</p> | <p>\$500,000</p> | <p>Not Funded</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 | <p>Maintenance/Policy</p> | <p>\$5,273,000</p> | <p>-Decision package partially funded -VRA received: FY26 = 3%, FY27 = 2%</p> <p>VRA = \$2,332,000 (biennial amount)</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | | | |
| <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> <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> | Maintenance | \$258,000 | <p>Program funding continued, no increase</p> <p>Total Program Funding: FY25: \$2,000,000 FY26: \$2,000,000 FY27: \$2,000,000</p> |
| <p>Kinship Care Legal Aid Appropriation and Vendor Rate Adjustment</p> <p>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 | Maintenance/Policy | \$567,000 | <p>Decision package funded</p> <p>Total Program Funding*: FY25: \$350,000 FY26: \$604,000 FY27: \$607,000</p> <p><i>*OCLA provides additional funding from general funds</i></p> |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% administrative overhead to cover appropriate administrative staffing at OCLA to support the program | | | |
| <p>Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program</p> <p>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> | Maintenance | \$393,000 | <p>Program funding continued, no increase</p> <p>Total Program Funding: FY25: \$2,579,000 FY26: \$2,579,000 FY27: \$2,579,000</p> |
| <p>Low-Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program</p> <p>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 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 | Policy | \$8,874,000 | <p>Decision package partially funded -VRA received: FY26 = 3%, FY27 = 2% -FY 2025 supplemental funding continued for FY 2026 only</p> <p>Total Program Funding: FY25: \$17,965,000 FY26: \$19,612,000 FY27: \$16,898,000</p> |



| | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|
| <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> | <p>Maintenance</p> | <p>\$4,710,000</p> | <p>Not Funded, Program Eliminated</p> |
| <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> | <p>Maintenance</p> | <p>\$0*</p> <p><i>*Included with original decision packages but eliminated with February 2025 update</i></p> | <p>Program funding continued, slight decrease in FY26</p> <p>Total Program Funding: FY25: \$1,022,000 FY26: \$1,007,000 FY27: \$1,022,000</p> |
| <p>Long-Term Care Right-to-Counsel</p> <p>Funding is requested to provide legal counsel for Medicaid-eligible residents facing discharge or transfer from long-term care facilities. This request follows a determination by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that Washington's protections for residents in certain long-term care settings are insufficient to meet federal standards. To address these compliance issues, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will update state regulations to guarantee the right to legal counsel for eligible residents. This funding will support statewide legal contracts and staffing at OCLA to administer the</p> | <p>Policy</p> | <p>\$5,854,000</p> | <p>New program funded</p> <p>Total Program Funding*: FY26: \$1,566,000 FY27: \$1,566,000</p> <p><i>*Program funding is 50% state funds (\$783,000/year) and 50% Medicaid match</i></p> |



| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|--|
| program, ensuring that vulnerable long-term care residents experience safe, lawful discharge and are protected from unnecessary displacement. | | | |
| E2SSB 6109 Funding is provided to OCLA under E2SSB 6109 which relates to improving services and clarifying the child removal process in circumstances involving high-potency synthetic opioids. This funding is utilized by the Children’s Representation Program (CRP). | n/a | n/a | No decision package requested, slight funding increase received Total Program Funding: FY25: \$156,000 FY26: \$204,000 FY27: \$204,000 |

Programs Funding via Interagency Agreements (IAAs)

| 2025 OCLA Supplemental Decision Package | Maintenance or Policy Level | Estimated FY25 Request | Anticipated FY26 Funding |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Civil Legal Aid to Victims of Crime (VOCA) The VOCA program supports essential civil legal services for victims and survivors of crime throughout Washington State. The program is funded through an interagency agreement (IAA) with the Washington State Department of Commerce’s Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA), which administers the state’s VOCA plan. | n/a | n/a | Commerce received an additional \$20M and OCLA’s IAA amount is still be finalized. |
| Foreclosure Fairness The Foreclosure Fairness program utilizes specially trained attorneys to provide legal advice and representation to low and moderate income homeowners at risk of foreclosure. SB 5686 creates a new revenue stream to fund the program beginning in FY 2026 using a fee at mortgage origination. This program is funded through an IAA with the Washington State Department of Commerce. | Policy | n/a | Program funding is anticipated to increase due to the new funding mechanism in SB 5686. |



| | | | |
|---|-----|-----|--|
| Community Reinvestment A program through Washington State Department of Commerce to uplift communities disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs. The goal is to create lasting economic benefits, build wealth and ensure everyone has a fair chance at success. | n/a | n/a | The program at Commerce was funded at a reduced amount from the last biennium, and OCLA has not heard from Commerce about a renewed IAA. |
|---|-----|-----|--|