



The Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid:

UNDERWRITING THE FRONT-LINE CIVIL LEGAL AID RESPONSE TO COVID-19

THE STATE-FUNDED **NORTHWEST JUSTICE PROJECT**

PROVIDES CIVIL LEGAL AID SERVICES THROUGHOUT WASHINGTON STATE

OCLA-FUNDED COVID-19 EMERGENCY CIVIL LEGAL AID PROVIDERS:

Northwest Justice Project:
General Statewide COVID-19 Legal Aid Response

Unemployment Law Project:
Unemployment Claimant Assistance

LAW Advocates of Whatcom County:
Eviction Defense

Snohomish County Legal Services:
Eviction Defense; Individual and Family Safety

**Eastside Legal Assistance Program
(King County):**
Individual and Family Safety

Tacomaprobono (Pierce County):
Eviction Defense; Individual and Family Safety

Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services:
Eviction Defense; Individual and Family Safety

Kitsap Legal Services:
Eviction Defense

Clark County Volunteer Lawyer Program:
Eviction Defense

Yakima County Volunteer Attorney Services:
Eviction Defense

Chelan-Douglas County Volunteer Attorney Services:
Eviction Defense

Benton-Franklin County Legal Aid:
Eviction Defense

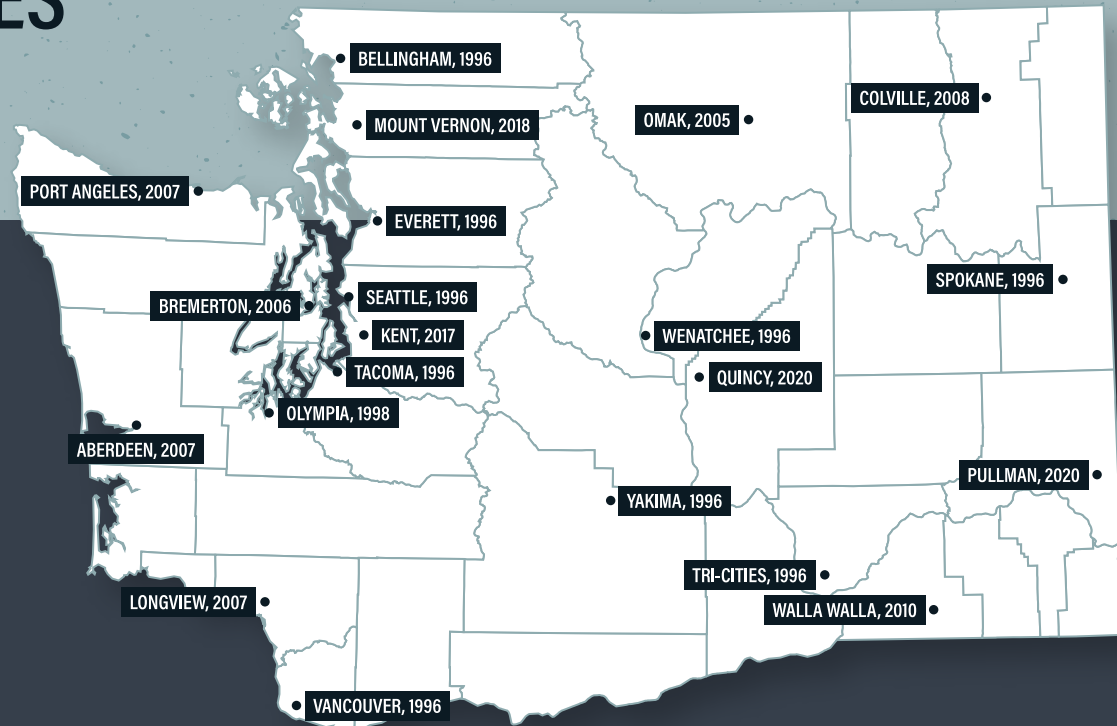
Spokane County Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program:
Eviction Defense

Legal Voice Sexual Violence Law Center:
Individual and Family Safety

Fair Work Center:
Employee Rights Enforcement

QLaw Foundation:
Support for COVID-19 Affected LGBTQ+ Individuals

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network:
COVID-19 Legal Aid Information and
Referral for Immigrants



WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT OUR WORK

"Our government needs to use every available lifeline to provide relief in this time of crisis. That's why civil legal aid, an essential part of our state's front-line response, must play an even larger role in the present emergency and during our recovery."

**FORMER WA ST. CHIEF JUSTICE MARY FAIRHURST AND FRED RIVERA,
SEATTLE TIMES**

"Ensuring access to justice for everyone helps us all. Every worker able to secure their essential benefits, every resident able to stay safe and healthy in their home, every person protected from violence and instability, reduces the impact of this crisis on our community."

**FORMER WA ST. AG ROB MCKENNA AND SALVADOR MUNGIA,
TACOMA NEWS-TRIBUNE**

"Timely and effective civil legal assistance can prevent problems from piling up, help families stabilize and recover, and provide a path out of poverty. Resolving these problems also reduces the strain on other public resources, which is especially important amid the economic fallout of the pandemic. Mitigating the harm of this crisis on our communities and our state requires expanding civil legal assistance to as many people as we can."

SEN. ANN RIVERS AND REP. MONICA STONIER, THE COLUMBIAN

"People denied unemployment insurance, or faced with eviction, or buried in debt, or trapped in the web of court proceedings after being the victim of domestic violence...All may find themselves facing supercharged versions of the poverty-related challenges that afflict people who have no access to legal aid for civil procedures."

SHAWN VESTAL, SPOKANE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

HOW TO GET HELP:

► **NJP CLEAR Statewide Legal Aid Hotline**
1-888-201-1014

► **NJP CLEAR*Sr (FOR AGES 60+ REGARDLESS OF INCOME)**
1-888-387-7111

► **NJP CLEAR Online**
<https://nwjustice.org/apply-online>

► **NJP CLEAR in King County**
Dial 2-1-1

► **Washington LawHelp (Self-Help Resources Center)**
www.washingtonlawhelp.org

► **Unemployment Law Project Helpline**
888-441-9178 ext. 0

► **Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Hotline**
1-844-724-3737

ON THE FRONT LINES MEETING COVID-19 CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic turned many into front-line responders to the challenges faced by millions across our state. Thanks to leadership from the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), the expertise of the Northwest Justice Project (NJP), and the strong support from Alliance for Equal Justice partners in the public and private sectors, Washington State has been better able to meet the civil legal needs of the most vulnerable people in our state.

Just consider the type of critical legal problems which many lower-income neighbors faced during this most uncertain year:

- ▶ Access to unemployment insurance benefits
- ▶ Protection of housing and shelter for people affected by eviction/foreclosure
- ▶ Increased threats, such as domestic violence, to individual and family safety
- ▶ Protecting employment and other means of maintaining economic security
- ▶ Protecting the rights of essential low-wage workers

And, here's how the OCLA-led response stepped up to the front line on behalf of those in need:

- ▶ Secured \$5.5 million in emergency state and federal funding to establish dedicated COVID-19 legal aid efforts in each core area of need
- ▶ Contracted with the Northwest Justice Project, community-based volunteer attorney programs, regional Housing Justice Projects, and others to expand capacity to meet COVID-19 related needs
- ▶ Recruited, trained, and deployed more than 100 private attorney contractors to help individuals with COVID-related unemployment insurance and shelter preservation
- ▶ Expanded self-help resources available through www.Washingtonlawhelp.org
- ▶ Maintained baseline legal aid capacity to address the continuing needs of low-income people in WA

All of this happened in less than nine months, and thanks to the ongoing support from the state legislature and the Office of Financial Management, OCLA and its Alliance for Equal Justice partners enter 2021 better enabled to help the increasing number of Washingtonians needing civil legal aid assistance.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Office of Civil Legal Aid is pleased to offer this update to legislators, staff, and advocates across the state on our front-line legal services during the COVID-19 pandemic and our office's everyday work "to administer and oversee the delivery of state-funded civil legal aid services to eligible low-income people in Washington State." We hope this provides you a better understanding of how our state's longtime commitment to Justice for All works in the civil justice context, and how the efforts of thousands of civil legal aid proponents are making sure that we carry that commitment to those facing civil legal challenges during the pandemic... and every day after that.