

Director, Office of Civil Legal Aid

Invitation to Apply

“The provision of civil legal aid services to indigent persons is an important component of the state’s responsibility to provide for the proper and effective administration of criminal and civil justice” - RCW 2.53.005.

OVERVIEW

The Washington State [Office of Civil Legal Aid](#) (OCLA) seeks an inspiring and innovative executive, experienced in delivering community-centered legal aid services, to serve as its next Director. The OCLA Director will lead a staff of 17 employees in underwriting and overseeing ten legal aid programs with approximately \$140M in funding for the current biennium. The Director reports to the Civil Legal Aid [Oversight Committee](#) and serves at the pleasure of the Washington State Supreme Court.

ABOUT OCLA

The Washington State Legislature established OCLA in 2005, as an independent agency in the judicial branch, to administer appropriated and other state funding for the benefit of low income and indigent Washingtonians. By statute, OCLA does not provide legal assistance directly to individuals. It contracts with organizational and individual providers across the full spectrum of its legal aid program portfolio.

OCLA’s **Mission** is to secure, invest and oversee the use of public funding for civil (not criminal) legal aid to low-income people in Washington State and to ensure accountability for public funds dedicated to this purpose.

Consistent with [the Washington State Supreme Court’s June 4, 2020 Statement to the Legal Community](#), OCLA acknowledges that it and its contracted civil legal aid providers operate in a law and justice system historically grounded in racism that time and again has administered justice differentially depending on the racial identities of those involved. OCLA was an initial subscriber to the [Washington Race Equity and Justice Acknowledgments and Commitments](#). As outlined in its [Race Equity and Justice Statement of Purpose](#), OCLA is committed to being an active partner in carrying out the Washington State judicial branch’s commitment to ensuring equity and justice for people and communities throughout our state. It does this by ensuring that it and its contractors are aligned—in policy and practice—and provide/support race equity-guided civil legal services for low-income individuals and communities in Washington State, focusing on those most affected by poverty and systemic injustices.

In the FY ‘23-’25 biennium, OCLA will administer approximately \$140M in total funding to underwrite and oversee legislatively authorized and assigned programs, including:

1. A general statewide civil legal aid program;
2. A program providing civil legal aid to victims of crime;
3. A program for court-appointed counsel to represent children and youth in dependency and termination (child welfare) cases;
4. A Court-Appointed Eviction defense program

5. A program to provide information, education, outreach, advice, and representation for tenants at risk of eviction but who are not yet involved in court proceedings;
6. A program to provide civil legal aid services to domestic violence survivors;
7. A program to provide civil legal aid services to individuals reentering civil society following completion of their terms of incarceration;
8. A program to provide civil legal aid services to individuals eligible for elimination of legal financial obligations and vacation of criminal convictions as required by the Washington State Supreme Court’s decision in *State v Blake*, which found the state’s simple possession law unconstitutional and all convictions under that law void;
9. A new community reinvestment program to provide civil legal aid to individuals disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs; and
10. A kinship caregiver legal aid support program and hotline.

OCLA’S TEAM

OCLA is made up of dedicated and passionate legal aid professionals located throughout Washington state. Although the team cannot practice law using the office’s funding, they do possess significant past experience as public defenders, defense attorneys, and child protection advocates. By December 31, 2023, OCLA will have a staff of 17 employees.

Administrative/Contract Support Assistant (5)	Data Strategies and Analytics Manager
Children’s Representation Program Counsel (3)	The Director (You)
Children’s Representation Program Manager	Director of Operations
Children’s Representation Program Training Coordinator	Eviction Defense/Reentry/Community Reinvestment Program Counsel (2)
Civil Legal Aid/Crime Victims/Domestic Violence Programs Manager	Eviction Defense/Reentry Community Reinvestment Programs Manager

THE OPPORTUNITY & OUR IDEAL CANDIDATE

The OCLA Director will lead and direct Washington State’s approximately \$140M and growing biennial commitment to fund and underwrite legal aid services across the full spectrum of [civil legal needs](#). Our ideal candidate will bring substantial experience representing low-income people in civil legal matters as well as excellent managerial skills to this role. Collaboration, respect for others, and transparency in dealing with the legal aid community and justice system interest holders, and experience working with legislators and their staff

are essential qualities for success as the agency's next Director. During the legislative session, the Director typically works onsite at OCLA's downtown Olympia office (blocks away from the Supreme Court and state legislative buildings) no less than 3 days a week.

The Search Committee will identify three final candidates for approval by the Access To Justice Board and Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee and, by November 17, 2023, forward their names to the Washington state Supreme Court for selection to the position. The new Director will participate in the 2024 Legislative Session, but official start date is negotiable.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director will collaborate with colleagues across the organization, the Oversight Committee, legislative members and staff, civil legal aid partners, and representatives of communities served by OCLA-funded programs. The Director will prioritize OCLA's Race Equity and Justice Commitments and ensure that its programs deliver excellent legal services to those most affected by poverty and systemic injustices.

THE DIRECTOR'S DUTIES SHALL INCLUDE:

- a. Contract with one or more qualified legal aid providers to provide civil legal aid services authorized by RCW 2.53.030;
- b. Monitor and oversee the use of state funding to ensure compliance with chapter 2.53 RCW;
- c. Report quarterly to the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee and the Supreme Court's Access To Justice Board on the use of state funds for legal aid;
- d. Periodically assess the most prevalent civil legal problems experienced by low-income people in Washington state and the capacity of the state-funded legal aid system to meet the legal needs arising from such problems;
- e. Report biennially on the status of access to the civil justice system for low-income people eligible for state-funded legal aid; and
- f. Submit budget requests.
- g. Additional non statutory duties shall include:
 - i. Compliance with all laws,
 - ii. Strategic Planning, and
 - iii. Staff professional development.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Admission to practice law in Washington state for at least five years;
- Experience in representation of low-income people in civil matters, which experience may be in the form of volunteer representation;
- Knowledge of and demonstrated commitment to promoting access to the civil justice system for indigent persons; and
- Proven managerial or supervisory experience.

COMPENSATION

\$145,000 - \$165,000 Depending on Experience and negotiated with the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee

BENEFITS

- Health / Vision / Dental Insurance
- 401(k) Retirement Plan and Employer Contribution
- Minimum two weeks' vacation (accrued) (subject to negotiation with the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee)
- 6 days of Sick and Safe Time PTO (accrued)
- 11 Paid Holidays Annually
- 1 Floating Holiday (to be used at the employee discretion)

THE OFFICE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID IS COMMITTED TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION LAWS. OCLA WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY PERSON ON THE BASIS OF RACE, CREED, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, SEX (INCLUDING GENDER IDENTITY), MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERAN OR MILITARY STATUS, OR THE PRESENCE OF ANY SENSORY, MENTAL, OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY, OR THE USE OF A TRAINED DOG GUIDE OR SERVICE ANIMAL BY A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY.

[Applications due by September 29, 2023](#). The Search Committee will submit their top 3 candidates to the Washington State Supreme Court on November 17, 2023. In your application, in addition to discussing your ability to meet the above expectations, please answer the following questions:

1. What is your managerial style? How will you manage a team of self-directed work-from-home professionals who have significant legal aid expertise? Please include accomplishments (especially in legal aid) relevant to this role.
2. Consider a time you have been called out or in for a harm that you have caused. How did you respond, repair, and move forward?
3. How have you incorporated "Anti-Racism, Equity, and Justice Fairness" in your current or past organizations' or in your professional life?

We invite interested applicants to submit a cover letter including your answers to the 3 questions above, salary requirements, three professional references and resume to: Norman@Clear-Consulting.Biz. Please write "Director of OCLA" in the subject line. No phone calls please. Only complete applications will be considered for this opportunity. If you know of persons who might be a great fit for this opportunity, please forward them this Invitation to Apply. Thank you for your time and interest in the future of OCLA's leadership.