



CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**MEETING OF
DECEMBER 6, 2024**

MATERIALS



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MEETING MATERIALS

- Tab 1: Meeting Agenda**
- Tab 2: Draft Minutes of 9/24/2004 Meeting**
- Tab 3: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Mission**
- Tab 4: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee Roster**
- Tab 5: Legislative Branch Policy**
- Tab 6: OCLA Director's Report**
- Tab 7: OFM Budget Memo**

TAB 1

CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

December 6, 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 September meeting minutes (Chair Sanchez)
4. Vice Chair Role (Chair Sanchez)
5. Oversight Committee and Legal Aid Community Feedback (Chair Sanchez)
6. Civil Legal Needs Study Update (Megan Johnston, Committee Member)
7. State Budget Update (Stefanie Powell, Director of Operations)
8. Legislative Involvement Policy-Informational (Sara Robbins, Director)
9. Recap of 2024 [Families Stronger Together Conference](#) (Jeff Adams, OCLA Training and Operations Manager)
10. OCLA Client Voice and Community Impact Coordinator (Bailey Zydek, Children's Representation Program Director)
11. Public Comment/New Business
12. Adjourn

TAB 2

**CIVIL LEGAL AID OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE MEETING OF
September 27, 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 September 27, 2024.

Members Participating: Chair Alé Sanchez, Megan Johnston, Angela Cruz Boldt, Natasha Damien, Senator Trudeau, Judge Janet Chung, Rep Thai

Members Not Participating: Judge Faye Chess

OCLA Staff: Sara Robbins (OCLA Director), Stefanie Powell (Director of Operations), Hope Hough (OCLA Support Team), Beth Leonard, Philippe Knab, Annalise Martucci

Guests: Jim Bamberger, Clay Wilson (Seattle University School of Law), Nadia Goforth (Equal Justice Coalition), Hickory Gateless (NJP), Abigail Daquiz (NJP), Rhea Yo (Legal Counsel for Youth and Children), Vanna Sing (ATJ), Andy Dugan (Skagit Legal Aid), Melissa Evangelos (Tacomaprobono), Kari Petrasek (CRP Attorney)

The meeting convened at 11:32 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Sanchez welcomed the new committee members (Hon. Janet Chung, Natasha Damien, and Angelea Cruz Boldt.) and asked each of them to give a short introduction. He then invited guests to introduce themselves.

2. Occupied Land Acknowledgment and Recognition of Responsibility

Oversight Committee member, Angela Cruz Boldt, will provide the land acknowledgment at the meeting in December.

3. Approval of Minutes of June 21, 2024, Meeting

Chair Sanchez invited a motion to approve the June 21, meeting minutes.

Motion to Approve the March 29, 2024, Meeting Minutes: By Megan Johnston

Second: By Ale Sanchez

Action: Approved

4. Vice Chair Role (Chair Sanchez)

The Oversight Committee is still seeking a Vice Chair. The Vice Chair sits for two years. Ale Sanchez requested a call for action for someone to volunteer to serve as Vice Chair. He will send an email to the Oversight Committee members.

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

Both Supreme Court positions are now filled.
Senate Democratic Caucus position is filled.

Board of Judicial Administration (BJA) position is filled.

The WSBA position that is open and currently recruiting. This committee member term is July 1, 2024, with the term ending June 30, 2027.

6. Office of Civil Legal Aid Decision Packages (Sara Robbins, Director)

FY 25 Supplemental

- Supplemental Funding Legally Free (LF) Children's Representation Program. We have a shortfall for funding for the LF CRP. When 1219 came into effect, it is phasing in across the state and fully phased in by 2028. OCLA expected a quicker decrease in the legally free contracts, so we're asking for \$850,000 for that program to align with caseload standards.

FY 26-27

- Continued Implementation of 2SHB 1219 – statutorily mandated implementation. This amount will cover two years of implementation. Also attempting to combine the budgets for children's budgets. We also have a built-in vendor rate adjustment to keep pace with increased costs due to inflation.
- Children's Representation Program Contractor (Vendor) Rate Adjustment.
- Law Student Recruitment Initiative. Working with law students for recruitment for students who are interested in children and parent representation. There is some private money to support it. The Office of Public Defense (OPD) and the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) have committed to get more money. OCLA is hiring for a Client Voice Coordinator and will set up a youth advisory board to advise and connect with our attorneys for best practices. Person has to have lived experience in the foster care system.
- Legal Aid Capacity, Infrastructure Preservation and CLEAR Hotline Staffing. Adding infrastructure. Central hub for referral to legal aid providers across the state and also a model of short service, e.g., brief advice. Serves as infrastructure of our legal aid system. However, it's difficult for people to get through on the hotline. Asking for funds for

additional attorney capacity. This also includes a vendor rate adjustment for the general contract and pass-through legal aid programs across the state.

- Civil Legal Aid for Survivors of Domestic Violence Contractor (Vendor) Rate Adjustment to keep up with inflationary costs for our vendors.
- Kinship Care Legal Aid Appropriation and Vendor Rate Adjustment. Not fully funded. Asking for a vendor rate adjustment and administrative costs for OCLA.
- Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program Vendor Rate Adjustment. Housing cases that someone doesn't have a summons or complaint.
- Low Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program. Large eviction defense program. Last session we asked for additional FTE amount to support doubling of eviction filings per month and tenants coming through the eviction system. Received funding for one year because they didn't want to make a policy decision during a different time. Seeing 2,000 eviction filings per month for nearly a year. Need additional FTEs to keep up with caseloads.
- Civil Legal Aid for Blake-impacted Individuals.
- Reentry Legal Assistance Program. Helps people who are coming out of prison. Requesting a vendor rate adjustment.

Chair Sanchez asked for a motion to endorse the Decision Package budget requests.

Motion to Approve: By Angela Cruz

Second: By Hon. Janet Chung

Action: Approved

The meeting adjourned at 12:59 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

(November 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: 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: 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: 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.robbins@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: November 24, 2024

Civil Legal Needs Study

We are making good progress on the Civil Legal Needs Study. To date, we have had two meetings of the Civil Legal Needs Scoping Committee. As a reminder, the goal of the Scoping Committee is to develop a document that will guide OCLA in drafting the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the study.

The first meeting focused on two main questions: 1) Have you and/or your organization used the data from the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study and, if so, how did you use it; 2) Is there data or information related to civil legal needs that you wish that you had but currently don't?

After the first Scoping Committee meeting, we also solicited public comments through the Access to Justice Community listserv. The public comment survey focused on the same questions that were discussed in the first meeting. We will periodically ask for public comment to ensure a wide range of input.

The second meeting focused on: 1) Do we need to do an update to the previous studies as the 2015 study was an update to the 2003 study and primarily focused on the frequency and nature of civil legal issues faced by low-income Washingtonians; 2) If we do something different, what is it that we want to know?

Megan Johnston, the Oversight Committee representative will give more details during the December meeting. The next meeting of the Scoping Committee is scheduled for December 10.

National Legal Aid and Defender Conference and MIE New Director's Conference

In November, I attended two excellent national conferences in Atlanta, GA. The first was a New Executive Director Training presented by the [Management Information Exchange](#) (MIE). There were approximately 20 new executive directors from around the country that attended. It was a great opportunity to meet other directors and learn from other states. The training focused on the fundamentals

of being an executive director. The presentations and dialogue around building trust, how to engage in culture change, and communications were the kind of conversations that will help me be a better leader.

I also attended the [National Legal Aid and Defender Association Conference](#). It was the first time I attended this annual conference. Again, it was great to be with legal aid organizations from around the country and hear how other states are delivering legal aid and addressing pressing issues. I attended sessions that covered a wide range of topics including learning more about Alaska's Community Justice Worker Program, a national funding roundtable focused on federal funding, incorporating race equity into legal aid work, and learning more about disaster preparedness from states most impacted by natural disasters recently (Florida, North Carolina and Louisiana). Beth Leonard (another OCLA staff member) also attended, and we intentionally attended different sessions to get the most of out of the conference.

Oversight Committee Recruitment

I am happy to say that all positions are currently filled on the Oversight Committee! We had one open position to be appointed by the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA). WSBA appointed Molly Matter on November 21, 2021, for a term that will end on June 30, 2027, unless reappointed by WSBA for a second term. In her letter of interest, Molly wrote:

“I became a lawyer to challenge the status quo. I run a solo voting rights and human rights firm, Amend Law, where I partner with grassroot, statewide, and national organizations to litigate voting rights cases. I ask co-counsel to donate 10% of all attorney fee awards directly back to the impacted community, to grassroots organizations led by historically underrepresented people. Those impacted know how best to use resources. I also give presentations to 4-12th graders on the history of the right to vote, which is the history of white supremacy and social movements. My work is non-partisan.”

Please join me in welcoming Molly to the Committee!

OCLA Staffing

As of November, OCLA is fully staffed! We added one staff member, Nicolas Guzmán, whom you will meet during the Committee meeting. Here is a brief bio to learn more:

Nicolas Guzmán is excited to join the Office of Civil Legal Aid as the Client Voice and Community Impact Coordinator. With a passion for meaningful change, Nicolas is dedicated to creating frameworks that elevate the voices of young people with lived experience, ensuring their insights drive the work toward race equity and justice at OCLA. Having spent time in foster care at age 10, Nicolas brings a deep empathy and understanding of the challenges within these systems, alongside a commitment to advocate for youth and address the biases and inequities they often face.

Beginning his career in the service industry, he quickly moved into management where he learned the value of servant leadership and building environments where everyone can thrive. Driven by a strong personal mission, he transitioned into the non-profit sector. Working for a youth advocacy organization, he led statewide outreach, built strategic partnerships, and, most importantly, worked directly with young people who had experienced foster care and/or homelessness. He's grateful for the chance to connect and uplift those with lived experience and looks forward to making a lasting impact alongside his new team at OCLA.

OCLA in the News

Administrative Office of the Courts wrote an excellent [article](#) on the transition of the OCLA director from Jim Bamberger to me. It has a great deal of information on the history of OCLA.

Through our Eviction Defense program, we work directly with Gonzaga Law School ([Gonzaga Law Students Gain Internship Opportunity While Tenants Receive Representation | Gonzaga University](#)) and Seattle University School of Law to engage law students in the work of representing tenants at risk of eviction. We believe it is important to get law students involved in civil legal aid to help create a pipeline flowing from law school into lawyers that want to work in civil legal aid.

Priorities

- The Civil Legal Needs Scoping Committee remains a priority in calendar year 2025.
- I will continue to work closely with Stefanie Powell, Director of Operations, the legislature, and the judicial branch on the 2025-2027 biennial budget.
- With the legislative session starting in January, I expect that most of my time will be focused on the legislative session and OCLA's decision packages, and the needs of the agency.

TAB 7



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Insurance Building, PO Box 43113 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3113 • (360) 902-0555

November 8, 2024

TO: Agency Directors
Statewide Elected Officials
Presidents of Higher Education Institutions

FROM: Pat Sullivan
Director 

SUBJECT: BUDGET REDUCTIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND 2025-27 BIENNIUM

This year's revenue forecasts, rising costs, and expanding needs require reductions to propose a balanced budget. The Governor's operating budget will prioritize continuing essential programs and addressing caseload increases, while not expanding existing programs and services.

The magnitude of the operating budget deficit is **between \$10 and \$12 billion** over the four-year outlook period. This deficit is due to the recent revenue forecasts that were adjusted down and the increase in caseloads and the cost to maintain existing programs. The budget is a work in progress, and we need your assistance to propose a budget that best reflects the needs of our state.

Transportation budget revenue projections also have trended down for several forecasts. That, along with rising costs and increasing demands, has created a situation where revenues are not covering current commitments.

To assist with this effort, I direct agencies to propose operating and transportation budget reductions, starting with pauses or delays of programs, and to identify savings options for both the 2025 supplemental budgets and 2025-27 budgets. Please consider measures that will result in immediate savings, such as hiring and other freezes.

Your [OFM budget advisor](#) has already contacted your staff about these reduction proposals. Please work with your advisor to propose options by **November 15, 2024**. Thanks to those of you who have already provided options.

Please propose the following operating or transportation budget reduction options for your agencies:

- Under-expenditures, premium adjustments and efficiencies
- Mainly Near General Fund accounts (General Fund-State, Education Legacy Trust, Opportunity Pathways, and Workforce Education Investment), but consider all accounts for savings
- Use of other funds in lieu of General Fund-State whenever possible
- Program eliminations, reductions, and delays especially for those programs or services that do not meet the agency's core mission.

Please also consider the following:

- Central services charge programs (would the action impact central service costs?)

- Offsets to savings (does the reduction in one program move the problem and cost to another program?)
- Overlapping programs (does the reduction cross programs and/or agencies?)
- Timing of savings (how long would it take to implement the reductions?)

Although this budget savings options exercise applies to cabinet agencies, I urge the presidents of higher education institutions, boards and commissions, and our separately elected officials to undertake a similar budget savings exercise for their agencies and institutions.

cc: Agency Budget Officers
OFM Budget Advisors