



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS **PRE-FILING EVICTION DEFENSE SERVICES**

Overview

The Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is an independent judicial branch agency that administers and oversees a range of civil legal aid programs in Washington State.

Recognizing that “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 civil and criminal justice,” the Washington State Legislature established OCLA in 2005 to manage the investment in civil legal aid services to low-income people in Washington State. OCLA’s statutory authority and responsibilities are outlined in [Ch. 2.53 RCW](#).

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, sexism, ableism, and other biases, and that time and again has administered justice differentially depending on the racial and other identities of those involved. OCLA was an initial subscriber and remains steadfastly committed to discharging its duties consistent with 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 Washington State. OCLA does this by ensuring contractors are aligned, in policy and practice, to provide race equity-informed civil legal assistance and representation that, within the context of the particular program, addresses the needs of individuals and communities most affected by poverty, racism, and other systemic injustices.

Subject to final bill passage and signature by the Governor, OCLA anticipates receiving \$5,551,400 in legislatively appropriated state funding for FY 2026 and 2027 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026; July 1, 2026– June 30, 2027) to award to contractors to provide civil legal information, advice, and representation to tenants at risk of eviction and against whom an unlawful detainer action has not yet commenced.

By this Request for Proposal (RFP), the Office of Civil Legal Aid seeks proposals from qualified tenant-defense or civil legal aid organizations to establish, continue, and/or expand dedicated pre-commencement tenant defense services for low-income tenants who are at risk of displacement and not yet eligible for appointed counsel eviction defense services. This funding has been previously used to provide representation to tenants under the temporary Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) and for eviction prevention legal services after the sunset of ERPP. The goal of these funds is to stabilize housing for tenants most at risk of displacement



and to serve tenants who experience barriers that make them less able to effectively access appointed counsel eviction defense services.

Priority will be given to proposals that target and prioritize services that serve low-income tenants who

- a. Identify as members of communities that disproportionately experience high rates of eviction (formal and informal)
- b. Are at greatest risk of eviction
- c. Experience disparate lack of access to existing legal aid and related services due to race/ethnicity, culture, language, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, or other barriers.

Priority will be given to proposals designed to reduce or prevent unlawful detainer filings and incorporate direct representation for tenants. Priority will be given to proposals that effectively integrate Pre-filing Eviction Defense and Eviction Defense Appointed Counsel legal services.

Proposals are not limited to any geographic area within Washington State. They may target services locally, regionally, or on a statewide basis.

As part of funding decisions, OCLA will also consider:

- Geography
- Service types proposed
- Activities that address needs of underserved populations
- Applicants' history of grant/contract performance, including failure to meet deadlines, spending, and compliance with requirements from previous and current contracts

OCLA reserves the right to reject proposals that fail to meet the requirements for this RFP. OCLA will initially screen each proposal to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria as stated in this RFP. If a proposal does not meet the eligibility requirements for this RFP, OCLA will consider the proposal non-responsive and withdraw it from consideration.

Contracts will be issued on a biennial basis, anticipated to commence on July 1, 2025, and run through June 30, 2027.

I. Project Requirements

Qualifying proposals must:

- Identify the target geographical area(s) and communities intended to benefit from proposed services
- Outline the services that will be provided including, but not limited to:
 - Individualized legal assistance for members of the target community(ies)
 - Strategic outreach to target/priority populations

- Streamlining access to legal services, including appointed counsel once eligible, and referrals to community-based resources
- Explain how the proposed services will complement and not duplicate existing appointed counsel eviction defense services
- Explain how the proposed services will aim to prevent eviction filings and assist tenants in remaining housed
- Incorporate meaningful feedback from impacted communities and incorporate OCLA's REJI Commitments
- Demonstrate the ability to successfully collect OCLA defined data points via LegalServer

II. Minimum Organizational Criteria

In order to be eligible, contracting organizations must meet the following minimum organizational criteria:

- A non-profit organization with the demonstrated capability to host, ethically oversee, and operate a dedicated legal aid program staffed with attorneys licensed to practice in the state of Washington
- A demonstrated history and competence in providing legal assistance and housing advocacy
- Eligible to contract with the State of Washington
- Must not have been debarred from contracting with the federal government in the past five years

III. Components of Response to RFP

Applications submitted in response to this RFP shall be organized as follows:

- Introduction and Statement of Organizational Purpose
- List of the organization's staff leadership and staff members who will be involved in the project
- An outline of outcome related objectives and metrics that will be employed
- A project narrative explaining how the proposal will address each of the components outlined in Section I of this RFP
- A 24-month project budget form broken down for FY 26 and FY27. This should include the salary ranges for any position that will be funded, even in part, by this funding

IV. Deadline for Submission of Proposals

To be considered, proposals must be submitted on or before 5:00PM PST on Monday, March 12, 2025.



Proposals must be submitted electronically to:
Office of Civil Legal Aid evictiondefense@ocla.wa.gov

Questions related to this RFP may be sent to: evictiondefense@ocla.wa.gov.

OCLA will provide the answers to questions publicly on its website for all potential applicants to review. Questions must be submitted by Friday, March 3rd before 4:00PM to ensure an answer.

The RFP Coordinator is Ali Kingston, ali.kingston@ocla.wa.gov.

OCLA reserves the prerogative to withdraw or revise this RFP or decline to issue an award and issue a new RFP if, in its exclusive judgment, it determines that insufficiently responsive applications were submitted, there is a change in funding, or there are other changes in circumstances warranting withdrawal or revision.