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John Midgley, Director

## Memorandum

To: Attorneys seeking pro-bono opportunities

From: Nick Allen

Date: October 14, 2011

Re: Volunteers needed for new Legal Financial Obligations (LFO) Clinic

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Columbia Legal Services (CLS) will be opening a new legal clinic for low income persons who have legal financial obligations (LFOs) as the result of a criminal conviction.

### Clinic Location, Dates and Times

The clinic will take place every second and fourth Monday of the month, from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM at Village of Hope, 9421 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Seattle, 98106. The first clinic session is scheduled for Monday, November 14, 2011.

### Volunteer Time Commitment

There are no minimum time commitments for volunteer attorneys. They can participate as often or as rarely as they like.

### Experience

There is no requirement that volunteer attorneys have experience practicing in a specific area of the law. The only requirement is that attorneys are currently licensed to practice law in the State of Washington.

### Training

Required training takes place on **Tuesday, November 8, 2011** at CLS' Offices in Seattle (**101 Yesler Way, Suite 300**, Seattle, 98104)

- 2.75 CLE Credits Pending (2.25 General Credits and 0.5 Ethics Credits)
- Lunch provided.
- Topics include LFO legal issues, options for clients and the types of scenarios you may encounter as a volunteer.
- RSVP to Sharon Nyland at [Sharon.Nyland@columbialegal.org](mailto:Sharon.Nyland@columbialegal.org), or (206) 287-8625.



### **LFO Information**

- LFOs are the fees, fines, and restitution that courts impose on individuals following their convictions.
- Studies show that LFOs are a major barrier to re-entry, primarily because of their high interest rate (12% per year), and the financial status of most individuals returning from jail or prison. Failure to pay LFOs can have serious consequences. Non-payment can lead to incarceration and negative credit ratings, which affects peoples' ability to secure housing and employment and successfully reintegrate back into their communities.
- Nonpayment adversely impacts crime victims, who rely on LFO payments to compensate them for their losses.
- There are relief options for individuals who have LFOs; however, navigating through the system can be nearly impossible without proper guidance.

### **Clinic Coordinator**

CLS currently has an Equal Justice Works Fellow, Nick Allen, whose fellowship project exclusively focuses on LFOs.

If you have any questions, please contact Nick Allen at (206) 464-0838 ext. 231 or [nick.allen@columbialegal.org](mailto:nick.allen@columbialegal.org). Thanks in advance for considering volunteering for the LFO Community Legal Clinic.