

Position Description

Statewide Executive Director



Columbia Legal Services advocates for people who face injustice and poverty. We seek to achieve social and economic justice for all, using policy reform, litigation, and innovative partnerships to reveal and end actions that harm the communities we serve.

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Columbia Legal Services (CLS) Mission and Values

CLS:

- Makes strategic use of full-range, multi-forum advocacy tools including policy and legislative advocacy, administrative rulemaking, impact litigation, communications (including social media), and innovative community-based partnerships;
- Gives legal voice to the poorest and most marginalized communities to ensure that laws, policies & the justice system operate in ways that foster social and economic justice for all by tackling root causes of poverty and differential treatment of marginalized communities in ways that lead to durable change;
- Serves as an active strategic partner in Washington State's Alliance for Equal Justice;
- Is committed to tackling, exposing and dismantling all forms of structural bias and oppression that intersect with and are compounded by poverty; recognizing that such biases are often based on the treatment of individuals or communities as "other", based, e.g., on race, ethnicity, able-ism, misogyny, religion, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, indigenous group membership, national origin, etc.;
- Engages in continuous organizational self-examination and processes of renewal to ensure fidelity to mission and commitment to all its values.

CLS, through its leaders, has always been guided by a common vision: that everyone belongs within what Professor John A. Powell calls "The Circle of Human Concern", and that the law must affirmatively promote equity and justice for communities that are marginalized, oppressed, differentially treated or delegitimized. CLS, its predecessors and strategic partners, have repeatedly morphed and restructured, shedding organizational identities whenever necessary to protect this vision and strengthen our ability to promote the interests of people and communities who are most vulnerable to exploitation, denial of individual and collective rights and differential treatment in our state through our capacity to provide full-range, multi-forum advocacy. Never in the organization's 50-year history has this equity and justice capacity been more important.

What We Are Looking For

- A visionary leader with impeccable integrity who is committed to carrying forward our history, advocacy capacity, and role as counsel for the community-based movements of our time (as opposed to someone interested in running a not-for-profit law firm, e.g.);

- A servant leader who actively promotes strategic partnerships with the Alliance for Equal Justice and the equity and justice community at large at local, regional and national levels;
- A demonstrated understanding of and commitment to protecting the vision and core values of CLS and the Alliance for Equal Justice;
- The ability to work across differences, bring together, respect diverse perspectives, inspire and motivate engagement and action;
- Strategic and systems thinking;
- Self and other-awareness;
- Ability to foster multi-generational leadership development consistent with inclusion, diversity & cross-difference competence;
- Strong adaptive leadership skills to meet threats to the well-being of marginalized and vulnerable client communities, ensuring full integration of anti-bias “critical lenses” into all aspects of our work and organizational culture;
- Demonstrated ability to model courage and creativity through willingness to experiment, try new approaches and take risks necessary for fidelity to vision and values despite resistance and push-back.

Operational Responsibilities

Promote and protect CLS vision and values through leadership behaviors, oversight, and guidance for:

- All aspects of CLS management;
- Integration of initiatives to tackle structural racialization and other forms of structural bias into all aspects of CLS, especially as these intersect with poverty and compounding bias dynamics;
- Human resource management and development including professional development and performance management infrastructure and systems for staff;
- Board relations and development including effective governance, direction, policy, goals development and rigorous fiscal oversight; recruitment of new board members; ongoing Board development training;
- Fiscal resource development including grant writing, fundraising & donor cultivation;
- Sustaining and expanding strategic partnerships and producing networks with community-based groups, staffed legal services organizations, dedicated pro bono organizations, legal aid providers, the private bar and law firms;
- Regular program-wide, statewide and national travel.

Qualifications

- Member of the Washington State Bar or willingness to seek admission;

- Demonstrated understanding of and direct experience with full-range, multi-forum advocacy tools such as policy and legislative advocacy, administrative rulemaking, impact litigation, communications (including social media), and innovative community-based partnerships;
- Demonstrated ability to achieve long-term goals through supervision, mentoring, teambuilding and empowering a highly talented and diverse staff;
- Passion & commitment to anti-poverty equity & justice-related work;
- At least 10 years of increasingly responsible relevant experience, including experience in administrative leadership and collaborative team work;
- Ability and willingness to work with multiple teams intra and inter-organizationally, and to manage multiple tasks and projects in a timely manner;
- Demonstrated initiative and creativity;
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and narrative storytelling skills, active listening skills, negotiation and conflict resolution skills, cross-difference competence, and experience working with low-income client communities;
- An outsized sense of humor, a healthy self-awareness, ability to manage change, and to take enjoyment from creating and supporting a positive, high-performing organizational learning environment.

Compensation

CLS offers a competitive compensation package with a salary scale commensurate with experience and skills, and good holiday, paid time off, and health care benefits.

Applications

Applications are due March 24, 2017, via email if possible. If you apply by e-mail, please make Executive Director your subject line, and send a letter of interest, resume and dynamic writing sample to:

EDSearch@columbialegal.org; if you send via snail mail, please mail well in advance of the deadline to:

Ada Shen-Jaffe
c/o Hing Hay Co-Works
409B Maynard Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104

Program Policy

Columbia Legal Services is committed to a policy of pluralism and equal opportunity in an environment free of barriers and discriminatory practices for its client communities, Board and staff. Pluralism refers to the active promotion of mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who are diverse in work background, experience, education, race, color, national origin, sex, age, religious preference, marital status, sexual orientation, sensory, mental and physical abilities, veteran status, or any other perceived differences. The resulting diversity is both a source of program strength and a matter of fundamental human fairness. If

you need a reasonable accommodation for the application process, contact Sharon Nyland at 206-464-1122 or jobs@columbialegal.org.