



# Northwest Justice Project

[www.nwjustice.org](http://www.nwjustice.org)

August 2011

**NJP's Vision:** Justice for all low-income people in Washington.

**NJP's Mission:** To secure justice through high quality legal advocacy that promotes the long-term well-being of low-income individuals, families, and communities.

As a dynamic statewide law firm, NJP pursues its mission through legal advice and representation, community partnerships, and education to empower clients and combat injustice in all its forms.

## NJP Office Locations

Bellingham

Everett

Seattle

Tacoma/Kitsap

Olympia

Vancouver

Wenatchee/Omak

Yakima

Pasco/Walla Walla

Spokane/Colville

Pt. Angeles

Aberdeen

Longview

## Commitment to Public Interest

Thank you for your commitment to public interest law and your interest in our program. The Northwest Justice Project (NJP) is a not-for-profit corporation established to provide civil legal services to low income persons throughout the state. NJP is the recipient of all of the federal Legal Services Corporation funds and is the fiscal agent for the State funds in Washington State's Alliance for Equal Justice. With more than 100 attorneys working in 17 offices located throughout the State of Washington, NJP's staff is highly diverse and multi-lingual. NJP operates a statewide centralized intake and referral system known as CLEAR, based in its Seattle office.

NJP also has several programs that provide specialized services to targeted populations, including a Farm Worker Unit, a Native American Unit, a Foreclosure project and programs that serve refugee and immigrant victims of domestic violence in King County and Wenatchee. Law students play a large role in NJP through summer internships as well as externships during the school year. Interested students should send resume and cover letter to [suee@nwjustice.org](mailto:suee@nwjustice.org). NJP also operates a web site at [www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org) which provides a significant library of client-oriented legal education materials.

A second NJP operated website, [www.advocateresourcecenter.org](http://www.advocateresourcecenter.org), a secure site, is a statewide brief bank and resource library for advocates serving low income people in the state.

NJP is an active and key participant in the Washington State Alliance for Equal Justice. This community has led the country in responding to the legal needs of low income persons in the face of limited federal funding by formulating a State Plan for the Delivery of Legal Services to Low-Income People that is widely considered as a model for other states.

**Learn more about NJP at [www.nwjustice.org](http://www.nwjustice.org).**

## CLEAR:

### Coordinated Legal Education, Advice and Referral

NJP operates a centralized intake and referral system known as CLEAR, based in its Seattle office. CLEAR, serving all 39 counties, has become the primary point of entry to the civil legal services delivery system for all low-income people in Washington State seeking legal help.

Low-income persons with legal problems call CLEAR on toll-free telephone lines. Once callers are screened for eligibility for services, CLEAR attorneys and paralegals then triage their legal needs by identifying their legal problem and diagnosing the need for services. CLEAR attorneys and paralegals provide advice and legal information as appropriate, make referrals to other providers if needed, and, as appropriate, undertake limited legal representation and self-help assistance. CLEAR attorneys and paralegals use state of the art computer technology for case management, an on-line database of referral sources, a web based library of legal information and materials, and computer assisted legal research. New CLEAR staff are provided intensive training, a one-on-one mentor relationship, supportive supervision, and the opportunity to work in a fun, dynamic public interest environment.



## NJP Field Offices

NJP's field offices are presently located in the following communities: Bellingham, Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Vancouver, Wenatchee, Omak, Yakima, Walla Walla, Pasco, Bremerton, Pt. Angeles, Aberdeen, Longview, Colville and Spokane. Most of these offices serve low income people in multiple counties. Office configurations vary but range from one to 20 attorneys and support staff. Field office case priorities consist generally of public housing, family law (limited to victims of domestic violence), consumer, employment, education, entitlements and health. To the extent permitted by funding source restrictions, staff attorneys use a broad range of advocacy tools in multiple forums to address client needs. NJP also has several programs that provide specialized services to targeted populations, including a Farm Worker Unit, a Native American Unit, and Foreclosure Prevention Unit.

## Litigation/Advocacy Coordination

NJP has four Statewide Litigation/Advocacy Coordinators who serve an integral role within NJP and the statewide Alliance for Equal Justice. The Coordinators work as part of a statewide team committed to technical advocacy support and professional development needs of NJP and other legal aid program staff.

## The Alliance for Equal Justice:

### Washington's Integrated Legal Services Delivery System in a Nutshell

NJP advocates, along with other low income legal services providers, participate in substantive law task forces, phone and video conferences, statewide trainings and other means of maintaining close, continuous coordination in order to best serve the legal needs of the low income people of Washington. The goal is for every component of the legal services delivery system to achieve its respective mission and advocacy role, to insure that all advocacy is client centered, and that no person is denied access to justice because he or she is politically disfavored. All legal aid advocates and clients benefit from the community, expertise and resources available at all levels of the delivery system in Washington.



## NJP Employment Opportunities and Recruitment Process

NJP's resources for hiring new staff attorneys and law clerks are limited and often unknown at the time of an initial interview, job fair or other contact. NJP advertises all attorney job openings on [www.nwjustice.org](http://www.nwjustice.org) as well as the WSBA, NLADA, Simplicity and PSLaw.net websites.

As positions open, NJP advertises the opening, initial interviews for attorney positions are conducted by field office or CLEAR staff, and final interviews are conducted by the Executive Director and Director of Advocacy. Persons interested in working for NJP should submit a letter of application referencing the position being applied for, a resume, references and a writing sample to Susan Encherman, Hiring Coordinator, by email at [suee@nwjustice.org](mailto:suee@nwjustice.org). All openings are posted to the NJP website, including those for law clerks.

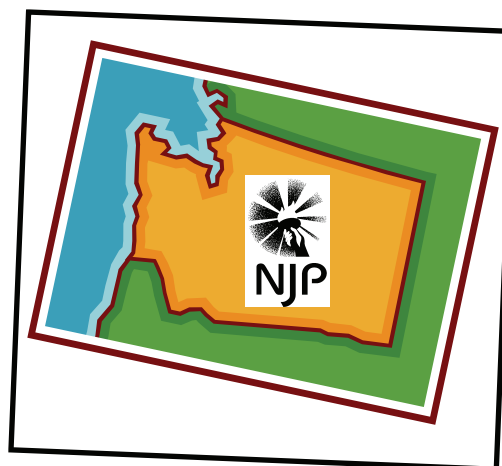
## Law Clerks, Externs and Work Study Students

NJP hires summer law clerks, externs and work study students as needed throughout the year. Cover letter and resume should be emailed to Susan Encherman at [suee@nwjustice.org](mailto:suee@nwjustice.org). Intern resumes are sent out to the offices of interest identified by applicants. Local office staff contact intern applicants for phone or in person interviews. NJP also works with law students and recent graduates to identify and structure Public Interest Fellowship opportunities and will work with those interested in preparing Fellowship proposals to organizations such as the Equal Justice Works, Skaaden Arps, law school based Public Interest Law Association fellowships, Legal Foundation of Washington's Goldmark Internships, etc.

**Northwest Justice Project**  
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[www.nwjustice.org](http://www.nwjustice.org)



## Employee Benefits:

### Law School Loan Repayment Assistance:

The Project has established a Law School Loan Repayment Assistance Program. Upon receipt of satisfactory evidence concerning the existence and amount of loan obligations undertaken to pay for law school, and as a part of an eligible employee's compensation, the Project pays up to Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) per calendar quarter towards the law school loan debt. Such payments end on the date the employee reaches 20 years on the salary scale. Prospective participants are required to first exercise any options they may have to receive repayment assistance from, or to have loans forgiven by, their law school.

### Medical, Dental, Vision and Life Insurance

The Project has secured group medical insurance coverage, within policy limits, for medical, dental, and vision. NJP provides the benefit dollars to cover the employee's premium (see Flexible Benefits Plan below) and affords staff members the option of applying additional, unused benefit dollars to pay for dependent coverage. NJP provides life insurance coverage for all staff. ***Benefits are effective the first day of the month following the day of hire.***

### Section 125 Flexible Benefits/Cafeteria Plan - Options

The Project currently offers the following additional employee benefits:

- A Flexible Benefits Plan, which enables each staff member to determine from among a limited number of available options where she or he wishes to direct the discretionary benefits monies, referred to as NJP dollars, made available by the Project.
- A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, under IRC §125, which enables staff to avoid both FICA (Social Security) and Federal Income Tax on qualifying child and dependent care expenses.
- A Health Care Flexible Spending Account, which enables staff to use "tax free" dollars to pay for certain health care expenses that are not covered by health insurance, including co-pays and deductibles.
- Mass Transit /Parking Reimbursement Account: This allows the employee to fund up to \$ 230 per month pre-tax for the purchase of a bus pass or mass transit vouchers or up to \$230 per month monthly parking reimbursement.

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

We recognize that a wide range of personal problems affect staff's performance in the workplace. Emotional or mental stress, marital, legal and financial difficulties, and drug and alcohol abuse and dependency can affect an employee's work performance, safety and general welfare. Before a problem becomes a crisis, the EAP can provide private professional assistance to aid the employee in recognizing and taking care of personal difficulties. NJP pays for this in full. This is a confidential service.

### Washington State Bar Association Dues

All attorney staff must maintain active membership in the WSBA and all staff are encouraged to be active in local professional and community groups, as appropriately related to their work. The Project is currently able to pay full-time regular staff WSBA bar dues.



## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Northwest Justice Project proudly subscribes to the *Hallmarks of an Effective Statewide Civil Legal Services Delivery System* and the *Plan for Delivery of Civil Legal Services to Low Income Persons in Washington State*, as adopted by the Access to Justice Board.\*

**The board and staff are united in the belief that the Project's work must be firmly grounded in and must consistently reflect the following convictions:**

**Equal access to the justice system – civil as well as criminal – is fundamental to a working democracy.**

**Effective advocacy requires active client involvement which can only be achieved through our conscious effort. Our efforts should compliment our clients' rights and need to be responsible for their own lives.**

**The Project has an obligation to understand and be responsive to the broad range of values, cultures and aspirations represented within our community. Diversity among staff and board members is a major component of this obligation which needs to be continuously monitored.**

**The Project owes a duty to become and remain knowledgeable about the legal problems faced by its client community and is committed to the highest levels of competency in its efforts to assist clients in resolving those problems.**

**Every member of the Project has the capacity and responsibility to significantly contribute to its work. All efforts to make these contributions are deserving of our support, encouragement and respect.**

**Teams are better than committees, and stature more important than status.**

**Our mission will be better served by mutual accountability and mentoring than by cumbersome hierarchies and rigid supervisory systems.**

**We cannot achieve a more just community unless we incorporate the values of our aspiration into our daily life – particularly in our relationships with co-workers and clients.**

**Striving for equal access to justice is hard work but it is work we choose because of the better community that will result.**