



Public Counsel is a nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to advancing civil rights and racial and economic justice, as well as to amplifying the power of our clients through comprehensive legal advocacy. Founded on and strengthened by a pro bono legal service model, our staff and volunteers seek justice through direct legal services, promote healthy and resilient communities through education and outreach, and support community-led efforts to transform unjust systems through litigation and policy advocacy in and beyond Los Angeles.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Public Counsel's Community Development Project (CDP) strives to build healthy, inclusive, economically stable communities through the delivery of *pro bono* legal services to community-based coalitions, nonprofits, and small businesses in Los Angeles County. CDP builds strong foundations for healthy, inclusive, and economically stable communities through (1) legal services for nonprofits that assist lower income people and neighborhoods, and for small businesses and low-income entrepreneurs; (2) its Inclusive Development and Housing Opportunities, Preservation and Enforcement Unit (HOPE), which advances racial and economic justice by increasing housing and economic opportunities for lower income persons; and (3) its Early Care & Education Law Unit (ECE), which provides legal support to child care providers and increases child care capacity in low-income communities.

NONPROFIT AND TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS

CDP provides a wide range of transactional legal services to qualifying nonprofit organizations that share our mission, including:

- Assisting start-up nonprofits by helping them to incorporate, obtain tax exemption, and establish workable corporate structures and policies.
- Supporting the growth and development of established nonprofits by providing on-going assistance on matters including board and organizational liability, employment laws, intellectual property, laws affecting fundraising, and corporate and tax compliance issues.
- Drafting and reviewing contracts, including leases, loan and other financing documents, and partnership agreements.
- Supporting the development of affordable and supportive housing by assisting with pre-development issues, including land use and entitlements, and advising on the special issues nonprofits face when entering into partnerships.
- To ensure the continued work of nonprofits in promoting and advancing racial justice, advising nonprofits on their equity programming in light of recent attacks by opponents after the Supreme Court's affirmative action decision.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/MICROBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Public Counsel provides transactional legal assistance to micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses that are owned by low-income individuals. CDP assists entrepreneurs with choosing and creating a business entity, negotiating and drafting corporate documents such as contracts and leases, and legal advice regarding tax, employment, landlord-tenant, and intellectual property laws. CDP supports efforts to foster economic growth and revitalize commercial life in

distressed neighborhoods, including supporting community-based organizations to advance economic development policies that create and preserve small businesses and quality jobs in low-income areas. Our Early Care and Education Law (ECE) Unit assists in-home day care providers and child care centers caring for low-income children with landlord discrimination, land use and zoning barriers to operating child care facilities, compliance with state licensing regulations, drafting and reviewing contracts, and other legal issues related to operating child care businesses. The purpose of the ECE unit is to maintain and increase the supply of quality early care and education in Los Angeles County by helping providers overcome barriers to opening and operating their child care programs.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, PRESERVATION, AND ENFORCEMENT

CDP builds strong foundations for economically stable communities through its efforts to advocate and educate for the creation and preservation of affordable and supportive housing using federal, state and local laws. Our attorneys have many years of experience in advancing land use, affordable housing laws (including housing element, redevelopment and state density bonus laws), and fair housing laws to combat discrimination against subsidized housing and achieve the development and preservation of affordable and supportive housing across the region. Additionally, CDP fights for the preservation of existing affordable and rent stabilized housing by monitoring housing at risk of losing its affordability, advocating for compliance with state and local tenant protection laws, and partnering with community advocates. Finally, CDP ensures compliance with the above laws by engaging in impact litigation as necessary.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

CDP supports community led advocacy groups and community based organizations in their efforts to advance racial and economic justice and build power in low-income communities and communities of color. CDP supports these groups in their efforts to maintain a strong voice in the development of their communities by providing legal assistance, capacity building, and policy support. CDP assists with campaigns related to the creation and preservation of affordable housing, protecting tenants, quality employment opportunities, inclusive entrepreneurship, child care, access to open space, and ending the criminalization of poverty. We have recently supported campaigns to legalize sidewalk vending in the City of Los Angeles, establish renter protections in the County and City of Los Angeles, and ensure equitable development around transit in the City of Los Angeles.

What do student interns do in CDP?

CDP student interns gain hands-on experience in direct legal services, policy advocacy, and litigation. Student interns will have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the project's work outlined below. Interns will conduct client intakes; research and analyze legal issues to support our direct legal services, impact litigation, and policy advocacy work; draft client documents such as articles and bylaws, contracts, and demand letters; prepare and provide community trainings; attend coalition meetings; support with litigation as needed and advance policy advocacy efforts.



For information on submitting an application to intern with the Community Development Project in summer 2025, visit Public Counsel's website [here](#) or email Ritu Mahajan at rmahajan@publiccounsel.org.

Note that we will begin accepting applications for summer 2025 on November 1, 2024. We strongly encourage students to submit their applications no later than February 1, 2025.