



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.

## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROJECT**

The Children's Rights Project at Public Counsel is an interdisciplinary team of attorneys, social workers, and advocates that address a variety of civil legal needs for children, youth, and their families. Our summer interns gain hands-on experience in both direct service and policy advocacy.

### **ADOPTIONS**

The Adoptions team provides representation to parents adopting children out of the Los Angeles County foster care system. The project, with the help of pro bono volunteers, completes adoptions for hundreds of children annually. In addition to completing the adoptions, the project conducts a comprehensive assessment and advocates to meet any unmet needs for benefits, Regional Center services, health care, mental health, and other services and supports to which the children are entitled.

#### **What do student interns do in Adoptions?**

Students who intern with Adoptions are trained to conduct client interviews remotely, identify gaps in services and/or benefits, and analyze legal issues pertaining to foster children in dependency and adoption proceedings. Students may also assist attorneys on cases, conduct research on legal issues, and help draft advocacy materials for general distribution to adopting parents and/or pro bono attorneys.

### **GUARDIANSHIP**

The Guardianship team runs a pro per guardianship clinic at the Stanley Mosk courthouse in downtown Los Angeles on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The clinic also conducts screening for other legal needs.

#### **What do student interns do in Guardianship?**

Students who intern with Guardianship are trained to conduct client intake interviews, navigate the legal software used to complete the required legal forms, and explain the relevant law and court procedures to pro per litigants. Students are also offered the opportunity to observe court hearings.

## **ADVOCACY FOR TRANSITION AGE YOUTH (TAY)**

The TAY team is a multidisciplinary team that provides legal and social work services to youth ages 16 to 24 who are or were in foster care. The team advocates for youth in the areas of tickets, housing, rights for expectant and parenting youth, family law advocacy, restraining orders, name change and/or gender marker correction petitions, and accessing government benefits. Our direct representation guides our work at a local and statewide level to challenge and change the child welfare system. The TAY team also conducts training to transition age youth and community-based organizations on legal issues affecting these youth.

### **What do student interns do in TAY?**

Students who intern with TAY are trained to conduct intake interviews with youth, evaluate the issues on each case, and conduct legal research to support our direct services work, impact litigation, and policy advocacy. Students, under attorney supervision, will be able to assist the youth directly in resolving issues.

## **EDUCATION ADVOCACY**

The Education Rights team uses a range of strategies, including direct service, litigation and administrative actions, policy advocacy, community education, and coalition building. The team works to confront and address race, class, and disability-related inequities embedded in the education system. In an effort to dismantle the school-prison nexus and close the longstanding opportunity gap, our direct services prioritize representation of the most marginalized students, including students of color, students in need of special education services, students being pushed out of school, and students impacted by the juvenile dependency and delinquency court systems. We believe in an education system that honors the dignity of all students – where education is valued as a human right and students are free from discrimination and criminalization in schools. As such, we apply a racial justice framework, as well as a systems-change approach to our advocacy. Specifically, we leverage the lessons we learn from our direct services cases and our community partners to inform strategic efforts to advance education equity locally and across the state.

### **What do student volunteers do in Education?**

Students who volunteer with Education are trained to conduct intakes, perform legal research and writing, represent students in school discipline hearings, and assist with special education Due Process Hearing filings. Students may also participate in coalition meetings and assist with legal research to support the coalition and policy goals.