



PRO BONO

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Stand Up for Justice: Volunteer with Public Counsel

Public Counsel works to protect civil rights, defend communities, and empower individuals through legal action and education.

Public Counsel invites you to join us in our work. Through a wide range of pro bono opportunities, volunteers can help address systemic injustice. By volunteering, you can stand up for justice and help ensure everyone has access to the protections, resources, and support they need. Together, we can advance dignity, opportunity, and equity for all.

Each pro bono opportunity on the list below has a contact that you can reach out to for more information about volunteering. **[If you have read through this menu and don't know where to start, please fill out this form to volunteer.](#)**

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### ***Limited Scope – Discrete Matters & Clinics (3 – 40 Hours)***

#### **ASSIST LOW-INCOME AND UNHOUSED ANGELENOS WITH PUBLIC BENEFITS**

Join Public Counsel's CARES Program (Connecting Angelenos to Resources and Essential Services) to help community members access critical public benefits such as General Relief, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and CalFresh. Volunteers receive training and, under the guidance of Public Counsel staff, provide in-person advocacy at Los Angeles DPSS offices to ensure clients receive the support they need. Open to all legal professionals, this is a hands-on opportunity to make a direct impact while gaining valuable insight into the realities of poverty and homelessness in Los Angeles.

**Sign Up:** <https://form.jotform.com/250495515362155>

**Time Commitment:** Approximately 3 hours (includes 1-hour virtual training + 2-hour in-person outing)

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#### **LEGAL EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, AND DEFENSE (LEAD) DEI ADVISORY INITIATIVE**

In the wake of the *Students for Fair Admission* affirmative action cases decided by the Supreme Court, Public Counsel and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area ("LCCRSF") have combined forces on a new DEI and racial equity pro bono project in California, the LEAD Pro Bono Legal Assistance Project. "LEAD" stands for *The Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense (LEAD) for Racial Justice Initiative*.



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The specific opportunities for pro bono assistance from law firms and individual lawyers include:

- Providing direct advice to California non-profit clients of Public Counsel and LCCRSF who need counseling and direction in developing and administering their own DEI and racial equity initiatives
- Conducting presentations, learning sessions, and limited-scope advice and counsel sessions, i.e., “clinics,” that are organized by Public Counsel and LCCRSF and that are for California non-profit clients of Public Counsel and LCCRSF
- Assisting with research and providing technical support to Public Counsel and LCCRSF as new issues and cases arise affecting the law and best practices related to DEI and racial equity initiatives

**Contact:** Carie Martin, Staff Attorney- [cmartin@publiccounsel.org](mailto:cmartin@publiccounsel.org); Ritu Mahajan, Directing Attorney- [rmahajan@publiccounsel.org](mailto:rmahajan@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** The time commitments involved in these opportunities vary depending upon the nature of the issues presented.

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## **ASSIST A NONPROFIT WITH ENTITY FORMATION, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND OTHER GENERAL CORPORATE ADVISORY AND TRANSACTIONAL MATTERS**

Public Counsel’s transactional and advisory opportunities for non-profits are segmented into specific practice areas related to the particular legal expertise we are seeking from the volunteer attorney. For this particular opportunity, Public Counsel’s Community Development Project provides comprehensive transactional and advisory services to nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities in the LA region. These clients include healthcare clinics, social service providers, economic development organizations, neighborhood-based CDCs, affordable and supportive housing developers, and more. The work ranges from assisting newly conceived nonprofits with incorporation and tax exemption, review of contracts, assistance with mergers, support involving fiscal sponsorships, reviewing and updating governing documents, and providing advice to established nonprofits to protect their sustainability. If you are an attorney licensed to practice in California who has expertise in one or more of the foregoing areas and are interested in volunteering, please reach out **and reference this particular listing**. This advisory work can be handled remotely.

**Contact:** Lilian Teran Mendoza - [lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org](mailto:lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org). Again, please refer to this particular listing.

**Time Commitment:** Varies

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## **ASSIST A SMALL BUSINESS WITH TRANSACTIONAL MATTERS - GENERAL CORPORATE EXPERTISE SOUGHT**



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Public Counsel's transactional and advisory opportunities for small businesses are segmented into specific practice areas related to the particular legal expertise we are seeking from the volunteer attorney. For this particular opportunity, Public Counsel's Community Development Project provides comprehensive transactional and advisory services to low-income micro-entrepreneurs that are often operating minority owned, family run and service oriented small businesses to advance access to racial and economic justice. Some of these businesses include child day care providers that serve families in communities of need. The work involves assisting small start-up businesses in specific general corporate and transactional subject areas, including reviewing and drafting contracts, choice of entity and entity formation, advice on general business questions, updating corporate documents, drafting website TOS and privacy policies, etc. If you are an attorney licensed to practice in California who has expertise in one or more of the foregoing areas and are interested in volunteering, please reach out **and reference this particular listing**. This advisory work can be handled remotely.

**Contact:** Lilian Teran Mendoza - [lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org](mailto:lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org). Again, please refer to this listing.

**Time Commitment:** Varies

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## **ASSIST A SMALL BUSINESS WITH TRANSACTIONAL MATTERS - REAL ESTATE EXPERTISE SOUGHT**

Public Counsel's transactional and advisory opportunities for small businesses are segmented into specific practice areas related to the particular legal expertise we are seeking from the volunteer attorney. For this particular opportunity, Public Counsel's Community Development Project provides comprehensive transactional and advisory services to low-income micro-entrepreneurs that are often operating minority owned, family run and service oriented small businesses to advance access to racial and economic justice. Some of these businesses include small child day care providers that serve families in communities of need. The work involves assisting small start-up businesses in specific subject areas involving real estate, including land use and licensing advice, reviewing leases, negotiating leases, terminating leases, and supporting with landlord tenant disputes. If you are an attorney licensed to practice in California who has expertise in one or more of the foregoing areas and are interested in volunteering, please reach out **and reference this particular listing**. This advisory work can be handled remotely.

**Contact:** Lilian Teran Mendoza - [lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org](mailto:lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org). Again, please refer to this listing.

**Time Commitment:** Varies

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## **ASSIST A NONPROFIT OR SMALL BUSINESS WITH TRANSACTIONAL MATTERS - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY EXPERTISE SOUGHT**

Public Counsel's transactional and advisory opportunities for non-profits and small businesses are segmented into specific practice areas related to the particular legal expertise we are seeking from



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the volunteer attorney. For this particular opportunity, Public Counsel's Community Development Project provides comprehensive transactional and advisory services to community-based organizations and small businesses in the LA area on IP-related matters in order to advance access to racial and economic justice. Some of the businesses include small child day care providers that serve families in communities of need. The work includes providing IP consultations, completing trademark and patent applications, advising clients on copyright law, advising clients on specific IP questions, drafting IP agreements, assistance responding to USPTO office actions, and advice RE IP infringement. If you are an attorney licensed to practice in California who has expertise in one or more of the foregoing areas and are interested in volunteering, please reach out **and reference this particular listing**. This advisory work can be handled remotely.

**Contact:** Lilian Teran Mendoza - [lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org](mailto:lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org). Again, please refer to this listing.

**Time Commitment:** Varies

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## **ASSIST A NONPROFIT OR SMALL BUSINESS WITH TRANSACTIONAL MATTERS – LABOR & EMPLOYMENT EXPERTISE SOUGHT**

Public Counsel's transactional and advisory opportunities for non-profits and small businesses are segmented into specific practice areas related to the particular legal expertise we are seeking from the volunteer attorney. For this particular opportunity, Public Counsel's Community Development Project provides comprehensive transactional and advisory services to community-based organizations and small businesses in the LA area on employer-side labor and employment matters in order to advance access to racial and economic justice. Some of these businesses include child day care providers that serve families in communities of need. The work ranges from reviewing employee handbooks, advice RE classification of workers, advice RE volunteers and reviewing or drafting documents for volunteers, advising on disputes with employees, and answering general employment-related questions from clients. If you are an attorney licensed to practice in California who has expertise in one or more of the foregoing areas and are interested in volunteering, please reach out **and reference this particular listing**. This advisory work can be handled remotely.

**Contact:** Lilian Teran Mendoza - [lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org](mailto:lteranmendoza@publiccounsel.org). Again, please refer to this listing.

**Time Commitment:** Varies

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## **APPELLATE SELF-HELP CLINIC, SECOND DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL – AI TRACK**

For litigators interested in appellate practice who complete a one-hour training. This self-help clinic at the Court of Appeal is open Tuesdays through Thursdays for in-person appointments, or for video or telephonic consultations via Zoom. Technical support is provided by the clinic supervisor, Zoe Dolan. You will assist self-represented appellate litigants who need guidance and information about their cases, review selected documents from their court file and any applicable appellate record, and help them navigate the appellate process. This is an "information only" clinic; your work ends after you



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have provided brief guidance and information to the litigant at the Clinic or via video. ***Most of the self-represented litigants we see are already using generative AI in their cases, so we are very much in need of volunteers with interest or experience in AI and the Access-to-Justice movement.***

**Contact:** Zoe Dolan - [zdolan@publiccounsel.org](mailto:zdolan@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Volunteers are encouraged to commit to assisting self-represented litigants for 2-3 hours at least twice each month. This assistance can be provided either on-site in the Clinic's suite at the Court of Appeal or remotely by video, although we hope each new volunteer will spend at least one session, and preferably two, on-site to get acquainted. Person-to-person consultation sessions (whether in-person or remote) are scheduled for up to 45 minutes. For litigants new to the Clinic, volunteers are asked to spend a few minutes after each appointment writing a short case notes entry to help us track the type of assistance we provide, for grant purposes and future reference when a litigant returns to the Clinic.

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## **VOLUNTEER FOR THE FEDERAL PRO SE CLINIC**

Public Counsel is recruiting pro bono attorneys to volunteer at our Federal Pro Se Clinic. These volunteer opportunities present a discrete, time-limited, and collegial way to have meaningful client contact, to assist a court-sponsored project, and to fulfill a pro bono commitment.

The Federal Pro Se Clinic provides free legal assistance to pro se litigants with civil cases in the Central District of California. Located at the Roybal Federal Courthouse, the Clinic is staffed by two full-time Public Counsel attorneys and a legal assistant. The Clinic provides procedural guidance to pro se litigants and offers substantive advice on very limited terms. The Clinic routinely advises on cases involving civil rights, employment, social security appeals, intellectual property, and California substantive law.

Volunteers need not have extensive federal litigation experience; the Clinic itself will provide ample opportunity to become familiar with most aspects of federal court pleading, motion, and trial practice. The Clinic is supplied with all the relevant forms, sample documents, and reference materials. In addition, Public Counsel attorneys will provide a short training prior to each volunteer shift and will always be available to answer questions.

**Contact:** Frances Azizi - [fazizi@publiccounsel.org](mailto:fazizi@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Attorneys can assist the Clinic by volunteering on a Wednesday for a 2 hour window of time: from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m

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## **ASSIST AN IMMIGRANT WITH AN ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS APPLICATION**



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**Adjustment of Status:** For all attorneys. Assist a U Visa holder obtain lawful permanent residency, or a “green card.” This enables them to travel outside of the U.S., provides additional protection from deportation, and allows them to apply for U.S. citizenship when eligible. With fear of deportation rampant in the immigrant community, this is an opportunity to help immigrant crime victims with temporary status seek more permanency in an effort to avoid the threat of separation from their loved ones. This this work can be done remotely, and filings can be handled by mail.

**Contact:** Kathleen Rivas - [krivas@publiccounsel.org](mailto:krivas@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** About 30 hours. Petitions are adjudicated within about 18-24 months, and no hearings are required.

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## HELP FINALIZE ADOPTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE AND ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Opportunity:** set up a *Pro Bono* Adoption Program at your firm or company where a group of lawyers will handle adoptions of children from L.A. County’s foster care system.

Volunteers represent adopting parents in uncontested adoptions. Public Counsel provides comprehensive trainings and ongoing technical support throughout this process.

In addition to finalizing the adoption, volunteers advocate for children with special needs to obtain necessary services and the appropriate level of funding, including retroactive benefits. Benefits advocacy is a simple administrative process (no legal briefs or court hearings) and involves gathering medical records, submitting a Benefit Inquiry Letter (usually 1-3 pages long) to the County by e-mail and following up by e-mail.

We have a great need for volunteers who can assist adopting parents whose primary language is Spanish. Attorneys who speak Spanish can assist. In addition, attorneys can work with other professionals at their firm or company who speak Spanish and can assist with translation.

**Contact:** Karen Ullman - [kullman@publiccounsel.org](mailto:kullman@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** About 30 to 40 hours per case over about 6 to 8 months, depending on the number of children and the benefits advocacy required. Almost all cases involve follow-up on the benefits and submitting a Benefits Inquiry Letter by e-mail.

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## REPRESENT A VETERAN IN IMPROVING THEIR MILITARY DISCHARGE STATUS AND ABILITY TO ACCESS THE BENEFITS THEY DESERVE

For any licensed attorney or legal professional working on a team with a licensed attorney. Service members experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury often do not



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receive the treatment they need. As a result, their symptoms persist and are misconstrued by the military as misconduct that warrants a less than honorable discharge. These veterans are left with little or no mental health or other support. During World War II, less than 15% of military veterans were people of color. Today that figure is 35%, and most have suffered under longstanding systemic racism. This is an opportunity to advocate for a veteran's discharge status to be upgraded, which opens the door to VA healthcare and benefits, removes stigma associated with the initial discharge, and increases employment opportunities. The work includes drafting client affidavits, developing supportive evidence, requesting and reviewing military and medical records, and writing an advocacy brief. The totality of this work can be done remotely, and hearings do not require a physical appearance. Public Counsel's Center for Veterans' Advancement Team would be happy to arrange a virtual training with a group of individuals interested in doing this work and our Team will provide all of the technical support you will need for success.

**Contact:** CVA Administrative Assistant - [cva@publiccounsel.org](mailto:cva@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** 10 – 20 hours.

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## **HELP ENSURE STABILITY FOR CHILDREN THROUGH GUARDIANSHIP**

Public Counsel's Guardianship Clinic seeks to provide low-income families with access to justice by assisting friends or family of children, whose parents are either unable or unwilling to care for them, in filing applications for probate guardianship. The Clinic also assists parents or guardians with petitions for termination of guardianship, petitions for visitation, and objections to guardianship petitions. All assistance is done in pro per, meaning the Clinic does not represent the litigants. Students conduct client intake interviews, navigate the legal software used to complete the required legal forms and are educated about the court process and legal requirements so that they may explain the relevant law and procedures to litigants. Estimated time commitment: 6-8 hours per week.

**Contact:** Ylianna Perez-Guerrero - [yguerrero@publiccounsel.org](mailto:yguerrero@publiccounsel.org)

**Location:** In person at the Skadden Arps "Pro Per" Guardianship Clinic in the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

**Time Commitment:** Varies.

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## **EMPOWERING AND DEFENDING CONSUMERS: DEBT COLLECTION DEFENSE CLINICS**

In-person and remote clinics held three times per month:

First Friday of the month: commencing January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, in-person alternating at the Vermont Square Library or R.L. Stevenson Library, from 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Third Friday of the month: via Zoom from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Under the guidance of Public Counsel staff, you will assist consumers in defending against debt collection lawsuits. You will help prepare responses to complaints, requests to waive court fees,



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discovery responses, and claims of exemptions to protect the income of consumers who are low-income. You will also provide counsel and advice related to defending cases in superior court, usually in the limited civil division. Plaintiffs are usually banks or debt buyers who have purchased debt from banks, installment lenders, hospitals, or other consumer debt originators. Bilingual English/Spanish attorneys are encouraged to volunteer.

**Contact:** Danielle Garcia - [dgarcia@publiccounsel.org](mailto:dgarcia@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** 4 hours per month.

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## **COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC SATURDAYS IN PASADENA**

Community Legal Clinic at the JACKIE ROBINSON COMMUNITY CENTER, PASADENA on the 2nd Saturday of the month (9:00 AM – 12:30 PM). Volunteers are asked to arrive at 8:45 AM. Open to all attorneys barred in CA. Additionally open to attorneys barred in other jurisdictions and administrative volunteers who speak Spanish or Mandarin and can provide interpretation or assist with attorney/client matching and other administrative duties. After conducting a brief intake, attorneys will provide brief counsel and advice and/or referrals to clinic participants. Public Counsel's Supervising Attorney aims to match attorneys to participants in their practice areas. However, depending on need, attorneys may be matched with participants outside of their practice area to provide information or a referral under the guidance of Public Counsel staff. We are seeking attorneys with experience in a variety of legal areas, especially landlord-tenant law, family law, general civil litigation, probate and bankruptcy/consumer debt. Bilingual English/Spanish volunteers (with and without a JD) are encouraged to volunteer.

**Contact:** Kelly Evans - [kevans@publiccounsel.org](mailto:kevans@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** 3-4 hours per clinic. Coffee and breakfast items provided.

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## **VOLUNTEER SPECIALISTS**

Many of our litigation disputes require experts to support the theories and analysis of the case. These experts can include doctors, physicians, therapists, vocational experts, accountants (CPA's), private investigators and actuarial analysts. We are also in great need of Web Design specialists.

**Contact:** Sandra Madera - [smadera@publiccounsel.org](mailto:smadera@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Varies.

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## **LANGUAGE TRANSLATORS**



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For all who are bilingual, particularly in Vietnamese, Tamil, Amharic, and Thai. Public Counsel's projects often need translation services for client interviews & document translation. This work can be done remotely.

**Sign Up** for our Volunteer Translator Database: <https://goo.gl/forms/Zv2JnPFIBoY9jmK42>

**Time Commitment:** Varies.

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## *In Depth Matters (40+ Hours)*

### ASSIST ASYLUM SEEKERS AT RISK OF PERSECUTION IF SENT BACK TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

For all attorneys. Represent asylum seekers who have been persecuted or fear persecution because of their nationality, race, religion, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group – including claims based on gender and anti-LGBTQAI violence. Depending on the procedural posture of the case, you will prepare for and appear at a non-adversarial interview at the Asylum Office in Tustin, or trial (typically half a day) in immigration court with the opportunity to put on witnesses. Public Counsel staff provide extensive training and technical support throughout.

**Contact:** Rachel Odio - [rodio@publiccounsel.org](mailto:rodio@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Depends on the individual case, but on average 80 hours for affirmative cases that only require an interview; 150 hours for defensive cases requiring Court appearances.

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### AFFIRMATIVE HOUSING RIGHTS MATTERS OR EVICTION DEFENSE CASES THAT PROTECT VULNERABLE TENANTS

For California licensed attorneys affiliated with a law firm that can provide the necessary litigation support. Represent vulnerable low-income tenants who are at risk of losing their housing and who face landlords represented by aggressive lawyers. Some clients will bring affirmative lawsuits to prosecute violations of fair housing laws and to protect the habitability and safety of their homes, or seek damages for illegal eviction. Other tenants will defend against the immediate threat of eviction by their landlords. All cases offer the opportunity to gather evidence, conduct discovery and get into court. You will be provided with training and ongoing technical support by Public Counsel staff throughout.

**Contact:** Gigi Lam - [glam@publiccounsel.org](mailto:glam@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Varies but cases involving the defense of a tenant facing the immediate threat of eviction (i.e., unlawful detainer cases) are typically resolved within 6 to 8 weeks from the filing of the complaint.



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## **CONSUMER FRAUD AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

For California-licensed attorneys with at least three years of experience; or, you can be supervised by a more senior attorney at your firm or company. Assist a vulnerable client who has been defrauded out of her home, personal property or life savings, or who has a debt collection case. Most cases are filed in L.A. Superior Court and offer a rich opportunity to gain litigation experience, including client and witness interviews, strategizing and shaping the case plan, drafting and filing the complaint, propounding and responding to discovery, preparing and arguing dispositive motions, and taking the matter to trial. In addition to full-scope litigation opportunities where you would handle the entirety of the case, we also hope to recruit and train a cohort of pro bono attorneys who will be available to take on discrete debt collection matters for settlement or litigation, depending on the facts. Let us know if you are interested in being part of this group.

**Contact:** Ghirlandi Guidetti - [gguidetti@publiccounsel.org](mailto:gguidetti@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Varies.

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## **HELP A VETERAN SECURE DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR SERVICE-RELATED INJURIES**

For any licensed attorney who is either accredited, or is willing to become accredited, by the VA. Many military veterans come home with injuries – physical and mental – as a result of their active duties. Public Counsel’s Center for Veterans’ Advancement (CVA) helps homeless and low-income veterans navigate the VA’s complex benefits system by representing them in their applications and appeals for service-connected disability compensation. Cases involve drafting client affidavits, developing evidence of in-service injuries, requesting and reviewing military and medical records, and writing an advocacy brief. This is a great opportunity to work one-on-one with a veteran to obtain the benefits they have earned.

**Contact:** CVA Administrative Assistant - [cva@publiccounsel.org](mailto:cva@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** 40-50 hours.

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## **IMPACT LITIGATION: PARTNER WITH PUBLIC COUNSEL’S OPPORTUNITY UNDER LAW PROJECT TO CREATE A FORCE IN THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY**

Public Counsel’s Opportunity Under Law program is led by nationally-recognized team of civil rights lawyers and its mission is to address causes of economic injustice in communities that are losing ground in the fight for opportunity.

The creation of Opportunity Under Law dramatically expanded Public Counsel’s impact litigation program, which also develops alliances with organizations specializing in economic research and policy analysis, communications, as well as political and social action campaigns. Consistent with Public Counsel’s long history of *pro bono* collaboration, Opportunity Under Law works closely with many law firms and gifted lawyers committed to volunteering their time in support of the program’s



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mission. Whether you are interested in dedicating a team of litigation attorneys within your firm to partner with Opportunity Under Law in the fight for equality, or you would like to donate much needed communication, data analysis or other supportive services to further the cause, Public Counsel wants to work with you.

**Contact:** Public Counsel's Pro Bono Department - [probonodept@publiccounsel.org](mailto:probonodept@publiccounsel.org)

**Time Commitment:** Varies.