



Dollars in Thousands

ABS024 Recommendation Summary
Office of Civil Legal Aid
2025-27 Regular Budget Session
OCLA2527 - OCLA 2025-27 Biennial Budget

	Average Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
CB T0PL Current Biennium Base	17.4	116,377	7,078	123,455
2023-25 Current Biennium Total	17.4	116,377	7,078	123,455
CL 6109 High-Potency Synthetic Opioids	0.2	252	0	252
CL 90K Real Estate Services to CSM	0.0	0	0	0
CL 92J CTS Central Services	0.0	60	0	60
CL 92R OFM Central Services	0.0	(11)	0	(11)
CL AA00 Civil Legal Aid Vendor Rate Adjust.	0.0	1,425	0	1,425
CL AD00 Children's Represent. Prog. Vendor	0.0	1,047	0	1,047
CL AF Tenant Right to Counsel Program	(0.8)	(3,052)	0	(3,052)
CL AF01 Tenant Right to Couns. Rate Adj.	0.0	616	0	616
CL BLAK State v. Blake-Civil Legal Aid	0.0	0	(5,234)	(5,234)
CL CYDC Counsel - Youth Dependency Cases	0.0	2,747	0	2,747
CL GL6 Non-Rep Recruitment/Retention	0.0	(11)	0	(11)
CL GL9 Non-Rep General Wage Increase	0.0	44	0	44
CL GLS Updated PEBB Rate	0.0	1	0	1
CL GLU PERS & TRS Plan 1 Benefit Increase	0.0	1	0	1
CL GLZ PEBB Rate Correction	0.0	3	0	3
CL PFTL Pre-Filing Tenant Legal Assistance	0.0	171	0	171
CL UAAL Plan 1 UAAL Rates	0.0	(6)	0	(6)
CL YYY Vaccine Booster Incentive	0.0	(10)	0	(10)
Total Carry Forward Level	16.8	119,654	1,844	121,498
Percent Change from Current Biennium	(3.4)%	2.8%	(73.9)%	(1.6)%
	0.0	0	0	0
Total Maintenance Level	16.8	119,654	1,844	121,498
Percent Change from Current Biennium	(3.4)%	2.8%	(73.9)%	(1.6)%
Policy – Other Changes				
PL 1A Continued Implement of 2SHB 1219	2.0	13,078	0	13,078
PL 1B Children's Rep Programs VRA	0.0	4,591	0	4,591
PL 1C Law Student Recruitment Initiative	0.0	1,500	0	1,500
PL 1D Domestic Violence Survivors VRA	0.0	525	0	525
PL 1E Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program	0.0	393	0	393
PL 1F Reentry Legal Assistance Program	0.0	156	0	156
PL 1G Civil Relief Under State v. Blake	0.0	0	5,496	5,496
PL 1H Kinship Care Legal Aid VRA	0.0	567	0	567
PL 1J Civil Legal Aid VRA	2.0	10,202	0	10,202
PL 1K Tenant Right to Counsel Program	1.0	8,874	0	8,874
PL 1L Long-Term Care Right to Counsel	1.5	2,032	0	2,032
Policy – Other Total	6.5	41,918	5,496	47,414

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Subtotal - Policy Level Changes	6.5	41,918	5,496	47,414
2025-27 Total Policy Level	23.3	161,572	7,340	168,912
Percent Change from Current Biennium	33.9%	38.8%	3.7%	36.8%

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PL 1A Continued Implement of 2SHB 1219

The Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is responsible for implementing an appointed counsel program for children and youth throughout Washington in dependency cases. Ongoing funding is requested to continue the implementation and staffing of the program for representation of children and youth in dependency cases required under RCW 13.34.212(3) (known as the “1219 program”) and for the maintenance of the program for the representation of children and youth in dependency cases required under the “legally free” program (RCW 13.34.212(1)).

PL 1B Children's Rep Programs VRA

Ongoing funding is requested to adjust the Office of Civil Legal Aid’s (OCLA) Children’s Representation Program’s (CRP) contract attorney (vendor) rates to levels necessary to facilitate recruitment and retention of qualified attorneys to represent children and youth eligible for appointment of counsel in dependency matters in the “legally free program” established under RCW 13.34.212(1), the “1219 program” established under RCW 13.34.212(3), and RCW 13.34.267(6), concerning the appointment of counsel for youth in Extended Foster Care subject to the implementation schedule delineated in RCW 13.34.212(3)(c). A vendor rate adjustment is requested for both the “1219 program” and the “legally free” program.

PL 1C Law Student Recruitment Initiative

Washington State has a well-documented dearth of public defense counsel, particularly in rural areas. The Office of Civil Legal Aid requests funding to develop and support a pipeline program providing law students with the academic and practical experience necessary to represent children involved in the child welfare system. The pipeline program will support the agency’s ability to recruit a sufficient number of qualified attorneys to represent children and youth as the children’s representation program grows under RCW 13.34.212(3).

PL 1D Domestic Violence Survivors VRA

This package seeks an ongoing vendor rate adjustment to preserve civil legal aid capacity for individuals experiencing domestic violence in the face of known and measurable cost increases.

PL 1E Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program

The Pre-Filing Eviction Defense Program provides essential legal services to indigent tenants at risk of eviction or displacement, addressing affirmative cases, health and safety concerns, and landlord harassment. This program aims to resolve cases before they reach court, supporting Washington State's homelessness response, and plays a critical role pre-filing. This decision package seeks an ongoing vendor rate adjustment to address the rising operating costs to ensure the same level of program services.

PL 1F Reentry Legal Assistance Program

Funding is requested to continue the Reentry Legal Assistance Program (RLAP), established under Section 115(12), Chapter 357 Laws of 2020. As the sole dedicated funding source for reentry legal services, RLAP is essential for removing barriers faced by individuals with prior criminal justice involvement, facilitating their successful reentry into society. This funding enables the removal of Legal Financial Obligations, sealing of criminal records, re-licensure, and more through mass assistance community events, direct representation, legal advice, systemic advocacy, and appeals. A vendor rate increase is requested to ensure continuation of the same level of service despite rising costs.

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PL 1G Civil Relief Under State v. Blake

In 2021 the Washington Supreme Court issued the opinion in State v. Blake (Blake) declaring drug possession laws without an intent requirement are unconstitutional. It is estimated that over 150,000 individuals are affected by the State v. Blake decision. Since 2021, the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), through contracted civil legal aid providers, has delivered comprehensive civil legal information, advice, assistance, and representation to individuals affected by the Blake decision. This decision package requests funding to continue legal assistance to individuals eligible for civil relief as a result of the Washington Supreme Court's decision in State v. Blake.

PL 1H Kinship Care Legal Aid VRA

This package seeks ongoing funding to support the combined work of the Kinship Care Legal Coordinator and Kinship Care Legal Aid Hotline by fully funding existing work, increasing efficiencies through the use of paralegal support staff, and seeking a vendor rate adjustment to prevent capacity losses in the face of known and measurable cost increases.

PL 1J Civil Legal Aid VRA

The ability to maintain civil legal aid service throughout Washington is hampered by significant increases in costs and increasing workforce scarcity. In addition, the CLEAR hotline which is managed by the Northwest Justice Project (NJP) and provides critical services to ensure legal aid is available in all areas of the state, is unable to meet current demand with the existing resources. This package preserves existing legal aid client service delivery capacity and infrastructure at NJP and their subcontracted legal aid providers, addresses the retention challenges associated with public service attorney workforce shortages by promoting equitable benefit offerings across legal aid programs, and better equips NJP's CLEAR hotline to meet increasing client demand.

PL 1K Tenant Right to Counsel Program

Ongoing funding is requested to continue the core functions of the Low-Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program to provide legal representation to indigent tenants in unlawful detainer cases as established in RCW 59.18.640. This includes a continuation of increased funding from the FY 25 supplemental budget to address a substantial increase in eviction filings, funding to support the increased need in King County, and a vendor rate adjustment to address the rising operating costs to ensure the same level of program services.

PL 1L Long-Term Care Right to Counsel

PLACEHOLDER: According to the proposed rule changes outlined in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA) preproposal statement (CR-101) regarding amendments to WAC 388-76-388-78A, and 388-107(101-24-18-013 (004)), individuals being discharged from long-term care settings will become eligible for representation through the Low-Income Tenant Appointed Counsel Program. In anticipation of this rule change, the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) is submitting this decision package to ensure that residents receive due process in long-term care discharges, with legal representation and advocacy for essential medical benefits.

OCLA is seeking \$2,032,000 for the 2025-2027 biennium. This funding will cover contracts for attorneys to represent long-term care residents statewide, as well as support staff at OCLA to oversee and implement the program. This program will ensure due process in long-term care discharges and provide a safety net to prevent residents from being discharged without cause or process, ensuring that such discharges are neither unwanted nor preventable.

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