

CY PRES AWARDS HELP US DELIVER JUSTICE FOR CALIFORNIANS IN NEED

Class action lawsuits are often brought on behalf of consumers with low incomes and small claims who would be powerless on their own against large, institutional defendants.

Public Counsel helps Californians who can't afford a lawyer to have a voice in court. Without legal help people with low incomes can lose their homes, face fraudulent bankruptcies and foreclosures, or even lose their livelihood. We assist consumers who face fraud on both a small and large scale.

Cy pres awards have helped Public Counsel to expand legal clinics



for people fighting foreclosure, to develop online materials about auto title fraud, and to combat bankruptcy-related scams.

PUBLIC COUNSEL'S LEVERAGING EFFECT: \$135,000 INVESTMENT BRINGS \$5 MILLION IN FREE LEGAL HELP

Public Counsel uses the power of *pro bono* attorneys to amplify our reach and impact. We give one-on-one legal assistance to more than 30,000 individuals, small businesses and nonprofits every year. With the support of nearly 5,000 *pro bono* partners we create \$8 of impact for every \$1 we spend.

A recent *cy pres* award shows

our model at work. In the case of *Walker v. Westlake Financial Services*, Westlake sent notices of intent relating to motor vehicle repossession that did not comply with California consumer protection laws. After distribution of \$63,708,590 to the class members, Public Counsel received a *cy pres* award of \$135,982, which was used to support its consumer law project. Supported by this award, Public Counsel's six attorneys leveraged the power of more than 300 *pro bono* attorneys to provide over \$5 million in free legal services to help vulnerable consumers.

"People lose their homes, their cars, and their financial security every day because they become victims and don't have an attorney to fight for them. *Cy pres* awards for legal services help preserve fairness in our justice system and protect consumers."

-Hernán Vera
President and CEO

A TOOL TO PROMOTE 'JUSTICE FOR ALL'

The California Legislature endorsed the use of *cy pres* awards with the enactment of Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 384: "It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this section to ensure that the unpaid residuals in class action litigation are distributed, to the extent possible, in a manner designed either to further the purposes of the underlying causes of action, or to promote justice for all Californians."

Cy pres opportunities also exist in federal cases.

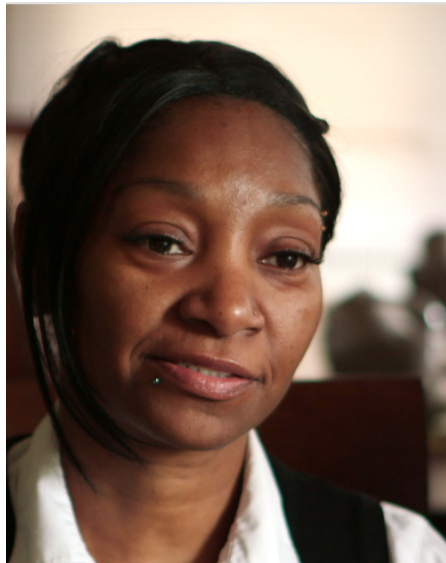
LEGAL HELP STOPS A FAULTY FORECLOSURE

The Sinclair family's story shows the difference an attorney can make. Ceith and Louise had lived for more than 15 years in a small home in Altadena, the same home where Louise grew up as a foster youth. They raised their children there and created the stable family life that Louise always wanted.

When Ceith and Louise fell behind on their mortgage payments during the economic crisis, they applied for and received a loan modification.

Or so they thought.

Although the Sinclairs paid their modified loan for many months, a new servicer took over their loan and instituted foreclosure proceedings. The Sinclairs were on the brink of eviction when Public Counsel went to court to reverse the foreclosure.



Louise nearly lost the home where she grew up as a foster youth to a faulty foreclosure.

Just before Christmas, the Sinclairs got word that the eviction and foreclosure threats had ended.

Without an attorney, the Sinclairs would have been another casualty in California's never-ending mortgage crisis.

PUBLIC COUNSEL IS:

120

attorneys, social workers and staff

5,000

pro bono partners from leading law firms, top universities and major corporations

30,000

individuals and nonprofits receiving legal help

OUR PRACTICE AREAS

Public Counsel provides a wide range of legal help to Californians with low incomes and community-based organizations:

- Appellate Law
- Children's Legal Issues
- Consumer and Debtor Issues
- Federal Court Cases
- Homelessness Prevention
- Immigration
- Nonprofits and Small Businesses Serving Low-Income Communities
- Veterans' Assistance

CY PRES SUPPORTERS

These law firms designated Public Counsel as a *cy pres* beneficiary in 2013:

- Chavez & Gertler
- Gaines & Gaines, APLC
- Kemnitzer Barron & Krieg LLP
- Law Offices of Scott A. Miller, APC
- Steven L. Miller, APLC
- Strange & Carpenter
- Trueblood Law Firm

CONTACT US

Public Counsel
610 S. Ardmore Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90005

Tracy Rice,
Development Director
(213) 385-2977 x120
trice@publiccounsel.org

Public Counsel has six offices in Los Angeles and legal projects in the Bay Area and New York City.