



JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

DIRECTING ATTORNEY CONSUMER RIGHTS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Public Counsel is the largest *pro bono* public interest law firm in the country. Founded in 1970, it is dedicated to advancing equal justice under law and addressing economic, racial, and other inequities by delivering free legal and social services to the most vulnerable members of our community. Public Counsel operates eight legal projects: Children’s Rights, Community Development, Consumer Rights & Economic Justice, Homelessness Prevention, Immigrants’ Rights, Veterans’ Rights, the Audrey Irmes Project for Women & Girls’ Rights, and our impact litigation project, Opportunity Under Law. Public Counsel has a full-time staff of over 130. We seek to have a racially inclusive staff.

Public Counsel’s Consumer Rights & Economic Justice (CREJ) Project is one of the oldest projects within Public Counsel. Our mission is to advance economic justice by providing legal counsel for, and advocacy on behalf of, low-income individuals and their families, addressing inequalities in bargaining power, opposing those who take advantage of the vulnerable, and holding wrongdoers accountable.

Our priority areas are:

- Fraud or unfair business practices
- Criminal justice debt
- Student loan debt
- For-profit school problems
- Predatory lending
- Real estate fraud
- Mortgage servicing abuses and foreclosure
- Financial abuse of an elder or a disabled person
- Debt collection, including creditor harassment, default judgments, and wrongful wage garnishment or bank levies
- Identity theft related to the items listed above
- Civil Rights

A few of our current cases include the following:

1. PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) (real estate fraud)

We have filed two class actions involving the “PACE” program, which advertises the ability to get home improvements to make homes more energy efficient, through a “government program.” Many individuals are lured into financing agreements without any

determination that they will be able to afford the payments. Thousands of low-income homeowners are at risk of losing their homes because their property taxes have skyrocketed to repay the financing. The cases are currently pending in LA Superior Court in the Complex Department.

2. *In re Bail Litigation* (bail reform, price-fixing and collusion in the bail industry)

We are co-counsel in a federal anti-trust case against the bail industry in California, as represented by the bail sureties and some of the largest bail bond storefront companies. We allege conspiracy to fix the price of bail premiums at 10%. The case is pending in the Northern District of California.

3. *Puente v. City of Phoenix et al.*, (constitutional rights of anti-Trump protesters)

We are class co-counsel in a federal lawsuit that has been certified as a class action on behalf of at least 6,000 anti-Trump protesters who were violently dispersed without warning by the Phoenix Police Department in violation of their First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendment Rights. The case has been certified as a class action, and is pending in the United States District Court for the District of Arizona.

4. *Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles* (constitutional rights, settlement enforcement)

We are currently in the implementation phase of a settlement agreement with the City of Los Angeles. The case was a class action against the City of Los Angeles for serving unconstitutional gang injunctions on purported gang members. As part of the novel settlement, we have 1) a \$30,000,000 Jobs and Education program available to class members or a family member; and 2) a tattoo removal process. The City has stopped enforcing all gang injunctions against persons, and we are assisting class members access benefits.

5. *Morrissey v. City of Los Angeles, et al.*, (unconstitutional towing practices)

We have filed a state court action for injunctive relief, and a federal action for damages on behalf of a low-income elderly cancer patient whose car was ticketed, towed, and later sold by the City. The cases are pending in Los Angeles County Superior Court, and in Central District of California.

6. *Criminal Justice Debt* (potential cases)

We are investigating potential litigation regarding numerous aspects of the interaction between debt and the criminal justice system, including unconstitutional property seizures by local governments, money bail, fines and fees, and disproportionate policing of people of color.

JOB SUMMARY

The Directing Attorney of CREJ will:

- Supervise CREJ staff attorneys, legal assistants and volunteers to provide direct legal services and representation to indigent victims of consumer fraud.
- Litigate a docket of state and federal court cases involving home equity fraud, financial elder abuse, misrepresentations and unfair business practices, auto fraud, criminal fines and fees, and civil rights.
- Identify and file impact litigation cases on behalf of low-income individuals.
- Engage in public policy and legislative work, with organizations such as the California Reinvestment Coalition and the California Low Income Consumers Coalition, that seek to advance the interests of low-income consumers throughout the state.
- Provide legal support to a large network of *pro bono* attorneys to handle consumer cases referred by CREJ.

- Supervise a bankruptcy sub-project that offers legal advice, resources and referrals to people who have filed or are thinking of filing a bankruptcy petition; assists people who file Chapter 7 petitions *pro se*; and refers Chapter 7 cases to *pro bono* attorneys.
- Supervise Public Counsel's Federal *Pro Se* Clinic that offers legal advice, resources and referrals to people who have been sued in federal court or who have filed, or are thinking of filing a federal action *pro se*.
- Supervise Public Counsel's Appellate *Pro Se* Clinic that offers legal advice, resources and referrals to people who have *pro se* matters in state courts of appeal.
- Provide litigation advice, counsel, and cocounsel as appropriate with other projects at Public Counsel, on cases including housing, community development, women and girls, children's rights, veterans, immigrants, and others.
- Coordinate with other legal service organizations and government agencies to engage in community education on consumer issues.
- Work with staff members to maintain information and data necessary for funding and other reports, draft and review funding proposals, assist with identifying other funding sources and maintain and cultivate relationships with foundations and other funders.

ESSENTIAL JOB SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

- Must be a member in good standing of the California Bar, with ten to twenty years of litigation experience that includes trial experience.
- Familiarity with consumer law desired but not required.
- Excellent leadership qualities, including the ability to lead a diverse team of attorneys, staff, and volunteers.
- Outstanding interpersonal and communications skills, including the ability to act as coordinator in large litigation teams including *pro bono* counsel, interact with the media and funders, and advocate with relevant influence groups including the legislature.
- Commitment to racial, social, and economic justice and the mission of Public Counsel.
- Ability to read, write and speak fluently in Spanish is strongly preferred.

START DATE AND COMPENSATION

This position is available immediately. This is a full-time, exempt position. Salary is commensurate with abilities and experience. Excellent benefits.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Continuous until position is filled.

TO APPLY

Please send a cover letter and resume to:

Margaret Morrow

President & CEO

Public Counsel

610 S. Ardmore Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90005

Fax: 213/385-9089

Email: pcapplicant@publiccounsel.org

No phone calls please.

Public Counsel is an Equal Opportunity Employer

All qualified applicants shall receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic group identification, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, political affiliation, condition of physical or mental disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, in accordance with requirements of Federal and State laws.

All qualified applicants with criminal histories will be considered in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Los Angeles Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring.