



# JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

## STAFF ATTORNEY CONSUMER RIGHTS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE PROJECT

### 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, social, 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 Irmas 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.

A few of CREJ’s 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.” However, the program has no effective consumer protection requirements and, as a result, 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, that alleges conspiracy to fix the price of bail premiums at 10%. This case is pending in the United States District Court for 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 class has been certified, the parties are awaiting rulings on dispositive motions and will next prepare for trial in the United States District Court for the District of Arizona.

**4. *Rodriguez v. City of Los Angeles*** (settlement implementation)

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 alleged 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 are litigating a writ petition on behalf of a low-income elderly cancer patient whose car was ticketed, towed, and later sold by the City while he was hospitalized. Our writ challenges the City's towing practices and policies, which disproportionately affect indigent people who can not afford off-street parking or the fines and fees associated with towing, and who rely on their vehicles as a lifeline to work, school, and medical care.

**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 Staff Attorney position is a one-year (12-month) position for a new attorney (0-2 year). This includes attorneys completing post-graduate judicial clerkships or fellowships. Recent law graduates who qualify for, and obtain, a Provisional License from the California State Bar may also be considered. The successful candidate will join the Consumer Rights & Economic Justice Project's Director, three staff attorneys, one contract attorney, three paralegals/ legal assistants, and a variety of volunteer attorneys. The principal responsibilities will be to: join the teams litigating the Project's complex federal and state cases, handle intakes and litigate, (or support pro bono attorneys litigating), smaller individual cases.

The Staff Attorney will also participate in legal clinics that we conduct in the community (COVID-19 restrictions permitting), undertake outreach, prepare self-help and educational materials, participate in lobbying activities, draft amicus briefs and comment letters, network with other advocates, gather and collect data and assist in grant-reporting, and provide trainings and information to the public as well as other consumer and civil rights attorneys. Our work focuses both on issues within the State of California and nationally.

## **ESSENTIAL JOB SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED**

- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Spanish-language fluency is highly preferred;

- Demonstrated ability to litigate independently and under pressure, preferably in a civil rights or public interest context;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work well as part of a team;
- Admission to California Bar (post-graduate Provisional License may be considered);
- Comfort working with low-income, racially diverse, and non-English speaking clients;
- A commitment to economic, racial, and social justice;
- Valid driver's license and access to transportation.

## **START DATE AND COMPENSATION**

- Salary is commensurate with abilities and experience
- Immediate full-time, exempt position
- Public Counsel offers a competitive benefits package including: (1) medical, dental, and vision coverage with both HMO and PPO options, (2) the option to enroll in a Flexible Spending Account, (3) a 403(b) retirement plan with elective contribution and an employer contribution after a year of employment, and (4) employer-paid life insurance and disability plans.
- Public Counsel follows all emergency state and local orders arising from the current COVID-19 crisis. Though generally this position is office-based, currently all staff must work remotely from their homes. Public Counsel will assess when the physical office will reopen in a manner consistent with public health and local and state emergency orders.
- This position is part of a special program created using designated funds. **There is no assurance of ongoing funding or employment beyond a 12-month period.**

## **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Continuous until position is filled.

## **TO APPLY**

Please send a cover letter and resume to:

Cindy Pánuco

Vice President and Chief Program Officer | Interim Director, Consumer Rights & Economic Justice Project

Public Counsel

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Email: [clpjob@publiccounsel.org](mailto:clpjob@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.*