



HALLMARKS

Washington State Alliance for Equal Justice (adopted March 28, 2014)

I. The Alliance for Equal Justice

We are lawyers, judges, legal workers, volunteers and community leaders committed to the fair, effective, and inclusive administration of civil justice in Washington State. In partnership with clients and communities of low-income and vulnerable people, we work to expand meaningful access to the civil justice system and to identify and eliminate barriers that deny justice and perpetuate poverty.

II. Our Vision

Poverty will not be an impediment to justice. Legal barriers that perpetuate poverty and inequality will be dismantled. Laws and legal systems will be open and equally effective for all who need their protection, especially those who experience unfair and disproportionately unjust treatment due to personal or community characteristics that place them on the margins of society.

III. Our Common Values and Commitments

Inherent Right to Justice. Justice and meaningful access to the civil justice system are inherent rights of all persons. We will work individually and collectively to ensure that the civil justice system is open, accessible, and available to protect and promote the rights of low-income, marginalized and vulnerable people to secure justice under the law.

Access to Our Services. Our statewide civil legal aid system will be equitably available to all who need our services, regardless of legal status or other defining characteristics. We will affirmatively reach out to those who experience obstacles to securing our help, and will adapt our delivery systems to meet their needs.

Full Range of Legal Services. We will use all legal tools at our disposal to secure just and lasting results for the low-income and marginalized individuals, families, and communities we serve.

Duty to Identify and Eliminate Barriers. We will use our legal skills to identify and eliminate systems—within our own community, the justice system, and greater society—that operate to deny justice to low-income members of racial, national, ethnic and social minorities and other low-income persons who experience barriers

due to explicit or implicit bias and other marginalizing dynamics. We appreciate the cultural, language and other differences among our clients, client communities and ourselves. We will take affirmative steps to develop and implement personal and organizational competencies and systems to bridge these differences without placing additional undue burdens on our clients.

Duty to Identify and Serve the Most Vulnerable. We will focus our limited resources on meeting the civil justice needs of those who are most vulnerable and/or in need.

Meaningful and Authentic Client Engagement. Meaningful and authentic engagement with the communities and clients we serve is essential to our work. We will learn and take direction from our clients. Where necessary, we will serve as their legal voice. Where possible, we will help and support them in speaking for and asserting/defending their own legal rights.

Transparency and Accountability. We will be transparent and accountable to our clients, the broader communities we serve, our Alliance for Equal Justice peers and partners and those who invest in our work.

Effective Use of Limited Resources. We will coordinate our efforts to maximize the impact of the limited resources entrusted to us, and to deliver the most effective and economical civil legal aid services, consistent with our common mission and core values.

Building Relationships and Partnerships. We will build relationships with others, including legal- and community-based organizations that work with our clients, to increase the reach and effectiveness of our work.

Continuous Leadership Development. We will continuously support members of our community in assuming leadership in their work with clients and client communities, in pursuing necessary change in the civil justice system, and in furthering the work of the Alliance for Equal Justice.