

Legal Aid Services of Oregon, Oregon Law Center, Lane County Legal Aid & Advocacy Center, and Center for Non-profit Legal Services

Advantages of contributing to CEJ rather than directly to legal aid

Legal aid programs worked together with private attorneys to create the Lawyers' Campaign for Equal Justice (CEJ) to be their development arm and to take donations for all four legal aid programs in Oregon. The legal aid programs in Oregon ask you to contribute directly to CEJ for these reasons:

1. **It is more efficient to make donations through CEJ** because it has the experience, expertise and systems necessary to take in donations, track pledges, provide matching incentives, send reminders, issue IRS receipts, and complete the complex reporting for donations. CEJ has the capacity to publicize donations and recognize donors through its annual report and other means, which encourages other lawyers to donate. This reduces duplication among the four programs and permits them to focus on providing civil legal services to clients.
2. **It is more effective to make donations through CEJ** where they can distribute the revenue to support the legal aid program, office or position where the money will do the most good for clients as identified through the statewide strategic plan created by all four programs working together. It would be unfortunate if donors had to try to figure out which office or program needed the money the most or if donors favored the local office rather than supporting the integrated statewide service delivery system that provides access to justice. While much of the wealth in Oregon is more urban, there are large pockets of rural poverty that desperately need help. We do not want to encourage the four programs to spend time competing with each other for donations from private attorneys rather than working together to serve clients. Oregon was one of the first states to start statewide fundraising to further these goals.
3. **Making contributions through CEJ supports a broad based community that helps legal aid in many important ways over a longer period of time.** Having an integrated fundraising approach mirrors the integrated approach Oregon has to delivery of legal services. In 1996, the Oregon State Bar Civil Legal Services Task Force ("Walters Commission") recommended that bar groups make CEJ, "the lawyers' charity" and a part of the legal culture in Oregon. For nearly 25 years, CEJ has worked to achieve this goal, with great success. Yes, the donation is incredibly important, but with CEJ there is something bigger at work (a community who has ownership of access to justice statewide and works together to support this goal over time). Over 300 lawyers volunteer to conduct the annual fund drive, seek contributions for the endowment, and educate the legal community about the importance of legal aid. CEJ has built a culture among the lawyers of Oregon that sees participation in CEJ as part of the profession and passes this sense of professional obligation from generation to generation. CEJ has the expertise and skills necessary to create higher quality materials describing the work done by legal aid and also works to keep materials consistent and with an emphasis on statewide legal services delivery. CEJ materials are less likely to appear to be self-serving comments by

legal aid lawyers about their own work. In addition to the annual fund, CEJ has successfully provided support for state and federal funding, foundation grants and other sources of revenue to help maintain the federal, state and private partnership. CEJ has received recognition and awards from the American Bar Association and Legal Services Corporation recognizing the excellence of this community effort and for the national leadership it has provided. Making contributions directly to legal aid, as an individual, is less powerful than joining a broad based community that supports legal aid.

4. **Janice Morgan or David Thornburgh** the executive directors of Legal Aid Services of Oregon and Oregon Law Center, would be happy to meet with anyone who would like to talk further about the advantages of contributing through CEJ. They can be reached at janice.morgan@lasoregon.org or d.thornburgh@oregonlawcenter.org. This document was prepared by legal aid and approved by the four legal aid programs in Oregon.



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WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

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