

The Commons Law Center

About the Organization

The Commons Law Center is on a mission to revolutionize access to basic legal services for underserved Oregonians, and we are looking for talented and passionate professionals to join us. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal services on a sliding scale basis, free community legal education, and practical training for new legal professionals.

Last year The Commons:

- Launched an eviction defense program, hired a team to staff it, and worked with other nonprofits and legal service providers to adapt to shifting needs.
- Helped persuade Portland Housing Bureau to extend its support for the Housing Asset Preservation Program beyond the pilot phase, enabling our team to continue creating pro bono estate plans for the City's historic African American community.
- Doubled down on unbundled, or limited scope, legal services to break the mold of expensive, time-intensive, and traumatic family law trials.

This year, we hope to engage in community-wide conversations about the future of the legal profession, from bar exam reform to limited licensure for paralegals, to share our experiences and ideas. Internally, our team is focused on doing our best work – not the most work, not the biggest work – the work that sustains, elevates, and empowers the people we serve and those working in public service. Because we are a learning organization, we strive to empower every one of our team members with the tools, the support, and the autonomy to further our overall mission.

About the Role

The Commons Law Center seeks a licensed Oregon attorney in their first few years of practice to join our Estate Planning and Probate Program as a Fellow Attorney. We designed our three-year fellowship program to train new lawyers in law practice methods that financially sustain them while expanding legal services to underserved communities. Fellow Attorneys in the Estate Planning and Probate Program are counselors, advisors, strategists, problem solvers, and, sometimes, litigators.

The attorney will work closely with the Homeownership Asset Preservation Program, a program in partnership with the African American Alliance for Homeownership and City of Portland Housing Bureau. The program provides civil legal services to mitigate the history of policies that displaced the African American community. Basic estate plans protect assets and facilitate intergenerational wealth transfer. This is especially important for those whom the law previously denied access to ownership.

Roles & responsibilities:

- Help develop program infrastructure to scale service delivery, including document automation, workflow management systems, templates, and forms;
- Commit to learning how to provide limited scope legal services to scale access to legal help;
- Collaborate with the program team, including director, other fellows, paralegals, and clerks, and with the broader organization to deliver and improve services;
- Support community legal education program development, including outreach, curriculum building, networking, volunteer recruitment, and ambassadorship;
- Oversee and manage law clerks, interns, and volunteers;
- Use the organization’s tech stack to optimize workflow and communications;
- Use and help build the organization’s internal knowledge base regarding substantive legal and operational issues;
- Manage communication with clients, opposing parties, attorneys, and witnesses;
- Do extensive, substantive estate planning and probate law work, including research, discovery compilation and analysis, negotiations, and trial preparation—formal and informal—such as memos, witness exams, motions, etc.; and
- Help make it fun because life is too short for work to be a bummer.

Requirement: Oregon law license in good standing

Career Path:

Our goal is for lawyers to leverage their three-year fellowship to confidently step into their next career phase. That might involve starting your own practice, working for another firm, or even staying on with The Commons to help build our organization in a more senior role. Wherever you envision your career path taking you, we hope you’ll consider starting it with The Commons Law Center. We are one of the only places where you will learn an entrepreneurial approach to lawyering, gain new skills using organized training pathways, and help shape the future of legal services while you grow as a lawyer. All while providing critical services to communities that need them.

Salary: \$50,000

Benefits: REMOTE WORK, employer-sponsored health and dental care, paid vacation, flexible schedule, and annual performance increases.

To Apply: Please send a single PDF to jobs@thecommonslawcenter.org with cover letter, resume, unofficial transcript (if applicable), three references, and short writing sample.