

# Marci Comeau

## Professional


### **Managing Attorney, Washington State Office of Public Defense, June 2022 – Present**


- Manage contracts for parent attorneys in dependency, termination, and guardianship cases in King County; for three pre-filing legal representation programs providing services to six Washington counties; and for OPD's Voluntary Placement Agreement Legal Consultation Hotline.
- Provide training to parent attorneys and other system partners, including training at statewide conferences, national conferences, annual judicial academies, monthly webinars, and OPD's trial training academy.
- Stand up and provide ongoing coordination of OPD's law school internship program and virtual training academy.
- Engage in statewide and national court improvement efforts, including participation in court improvement committees and authoring chapters to judicial benchbook.

### **Administrative Law Judge, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, September 2020 – June 2022**

- Presided over administrative hearings involving appeals of founded findings of abuse and neglect made by DCYF and APS, the entry and enforcement of child support orders, the administration of public assistance benefits, the revocation of business and professional licenses, and appeals involving unemployment insurance benefits.
- Developed a clear and complete hearing record, ensuring all factual and legal issues are adequately addressed.
- Demonstrated appropriate judicial demeanor and maintained control of legal proceedings involving multiple parties, including frequent hearings involving *pro se* litigants.
- Prepared timely initial and final written orders, making legally sufficient findings of fact and conclusions of law.

### **King County Department of Public Defense, Northwest Defenders Division, Senior Attorney II, July 2012 – September 2020**

 *Senior Attorney II, Family Defense Unit, July 2012 – December 2017; January 2019 – September 2020*

 *Senior Attorney II, Seattle Municipal Court/RALJ appeals, January 2018 – December 2018*

- Represented indigent parents and children in RCW 13.34 dependency, termination, and guardianship proceedings.
- Litigated 15-20 dependency and termination fact-finding trials on behalf of parent and youth clients.
- Advocated for clients in hundreds of contested motions, review hearings, and 72-hour shelter care hearings.
- Assisted, represented, and made referrals on behalf of clients in family court to resolve dependency cases.
- Provided mentorship and training for new attorneys, colleagues, and other stakeholders.
- Represented criminal misdemeanor clients at arraignments, warrant return hearings, and revocation hearings.
- Researched, briefed, and argued appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction in King County Superior Court.
- ✓ Honors: awarded Senior Attorney II designation in October 2016.
- ✓ Supervisory Experience:
  - Served as Special Duty Supervisor of Family Defense Unit from June 2019 to August 2019.
  - Rule 9 Intern Supervisor, King County Department of Public Defense (2017, 2018, 2019).



### **Washington State Attorney General, Assistant Attorney General, September 2006 – July 2012**

- Litigated approximately 45 dependency and termination fact-finding trials on behalf of DSHS/DCYF.
- Advocated on behalf of DSHS/DCYF in hundreds of 72-hour shelter care hearings, motions and review hearings.
- Researched, drafted, and filed persuasive briefing to proactively advance the position of DSHS in motions, review hearings, trials, and other relevant litigation.
- Reviewed and screened termination referrals submitted by DSHS for legal sufficiency.
- ✓ Honors: awarded Attorney General's Office Excellence Award in 2010 following complex termination trial.
- ✓ Supervisory Experience:
  - Law Clerk Supervisor, Attorney General's Office, Social and Health Services Unit (2010, 2012).
  - Supervisor, Attorney General's Office's Social and Health Services Law Clerk Program (2011).

### **Kenyon Disend, PLLC, Rule 9 Legal Intern – Prosecutor, May 2005 – May 2006**

- Prosecuted five misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor jury and bench trials.
- Managed daily municipal and district court arraignment, pretrial, motion, and contested traffic infraction calendars for cities of Kirkland, Kenmore, Tukwila, Burien, and others.
- Briefed and argued two RALJ appeals before King County Superior Court.

## Education

-  **Seattle University School of Law, Juris Doctor, *Summa Cum Laude*, May 2006**  
Honors: Dean's List, 2004 – 2005, 2005 – 2006
-  **University of Washington, Bachelor of Arts, Double Major: Political Science and Women's Studies, *Magna Cum Laude*, June 2001**  
Honors: Women's Studies Senior Thesis of the Year; Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

## Presentations, Trainings, and Volunteer/Community Activities

### Presentations and Trainings

1. "Depositions 101: Tools and Tricks of the Trade," CLE Training, Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD) Family Defense Trial Training Academy, May 2025; OPD Parents Representation Program (PRP) Webinar, June 2023; King County DPD "Celebrating Harmony" CLE, September 2018; OPD PRP Annual Conference, June 2018;
2. "Live from Washington: Recent History and Current State of Dependency Law," Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Judicial Academy, May 2025.
3. "Caselaw and Legislative Update," AOC Judicial Academy, May 2025, May 2024, and May 2023.
4. "Keeping Families Together with Pre-Filing Representation and Early Legal Consultation," National Association of Public Defense Virtual Conference, March 2025.
5. "Washington State's Voluntary Placement Agreement Legal Consultation Hotline," Employment Security Department UI Summit June 2024; National Preventative Legal Advocacy/Pre-Petition Cohort Monthly, November 2024.
6. "Litigating Shelter Care Hearings: Your Client is the Star!", OPD Family Defense Trial Training Academy, April 2025; OPD PRP Annual Conference, September 2024.
7. Caselaw/Caselaw and Legislative Update, OPD PRP Annual Conference, September 2024, September 2023, and August 2022.
8. "Live from Washington: Legislative and Caselaw Updates," Children's Justice Conference, May 2024.
9. "Prefiling Representation Done Two Ways: Early Legal Representation and Parent Ally Support to Keep Families Together," American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2024.
10. "Interagency Collaboration to Advance Child Welfare and Address Systemic Inequities," American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2024.
11. "You Can Disagree Without Being Disagreeable: But What is Disagreeable?", Washington Association of Child Advocates Program Statewide Conference, October 2023.
12. "Let's Change Your Mind: Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness Among Dependency Practitioners," National Association of Public Defense Women's Virtual Conference August 2023; ABA National Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Conference May 2023; and OPD PRP Annual Conference, September 2022;
13. HB 1227 Trial/Appellate 3-Part Training Series, Joint OPD/OCLA Training, June/July 2023.
14. "#SAYHERNAME: The Intersection of the Child Welfare System, Law Enforcement, and Other Barriers to Family Reunification, and How Family Advocates Can Help Flip the Script," National Association of Public Defense Virtual Conference, March 2023.

15. "Discovery Rules and Practice: Getting in the Game," OPD PRP Annual Conference, August 2022 and September 2019.
16. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect Committee – Spokane Valley All-Staff Meeting Group Presentation, December 2021.
17. "Mock Negotiations for Shelter Care Hearings," Presentation, King County Dependency Summit, October 2019.
18. "Strategies to Better Engage Black and Brown Parents in the Dependency System," Fishbowl Discussion, Washington State OPD PRP CLE, September 2019.
19. Joint interview with KUOW reporter Sylvia Brownstone (public defense perspective on retailers pressuring law enforcement and City of Seattle to bring criminal charges against indigent clients for minor thefts of basic necessities.) See Brownstone, "Homeless man steals clothes from a Seattle Goodwill, goes to jail. His story isn't unusual," KUOW, April 17, 2019, available at <https://www.kuow.org/stories/a-homeless-man-steals-clothes-from-a-seattle-goodwill-goes-to-jail-his-story-isn-t-unusual>.
20. "#SayHerName: The Intersection of Law Enforcement, The Criminal Justice System, and Dependency Courts, and How Parent Attorneys Can Help Flip the Script," American Bar Association National Parent Attorney Conference, April 2019.
21. "Common Hearsay Objections in Family Defense Practice," Presentation/Training, King County Department of Public Defense (DPD) All-Family Defense Meeting, January 2019.
22. Interview with Seattle Weekly journalist Josh Kelety (defense perspective regarding difficulties of the cash bail system for indigent and homeless clients.) See Kelety, "Locked Up and Poor," Seattle Weekly, September 25, 2018, available at <https://www.seattleweekly.com/news/locked-up-and-poor/>.
23. Law Clerk/Intern Training, Arraignment/Bail/Pre-Trial Release Advocacy for Misdemeanors, King County DPD, June 2018.
24. "Guardianships: The Other Permanent Plan," Presentation/Training, King County DPD Family Defense Attorneys, December 2017.
25. "The Harm of Removal: Using Empirical Research to Our Advantage in Court," CLE Training, King County DPD "Cultivating Harmony" CLE, July 2017.
26. Open Adoption Agreement Brown Bag Training, Presentation/Training, King County DPD Family Defense Attorneys, 2017.
27. "A Review of Dependency Caselaw: We Did the Research So You Don't Have To," CLE Training, King County DPD "Creating Harmony" CLE, February 2016.
28. Washington State Assistant Attorney General's Office, Training for Child Protection Services Social Workers, Petition Drafting Training, all Children's Administration Region 2 Offices, Multiple Presentations.
29. Washington State Assistant Attorney General's Office, Training for Child Welfare Services Social Workers, 72 to Permanency Training, all Children's Administration Region 2 Offices, Multiple Presentations.

### **Volunteer and Community Activities**

1. Juvenile Law Section Member, Washington State Bar Association, February 2021 to date.
  - ✓ Secretary, 2022-Present
  - ✓ -Chair, Dependency and Child Welfare Committee, 2021-2022
2. Administrative Law Section Member, Washington State Bar Association, 2021-2022.

3. Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Membership Committee, Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings, 2021-2022; Subcommittee: Litigant Accessibility, 2022.
4. Volunteer Defense Attorney and Judicial Officer, Court Simulation, University of Washington Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence, Multiple Presentation Dates, 2012 to date.
5. King County Juvenile Court Open Adoption Agreement Enforcement Workgroup, 2016-2017.
6. King County Local Juvenile Court Rules Task Force, 2015-2016.
7. Volunteer Legal Training, DSHS Children's Administration Region 2 Social Worker Training Academy, Multiple Presentation Dates, 2008-2012.
8. King County "Reasonable Efforts" Symposium Planning Committee, 2011.
9. Volunteer Coordinator, Washington State DSHS Children's Justice Conference, 2007-2008.