

Access to Justice Board

Volunteer Position Description

The Washington Supreme Court created the Access to Justice (ATJ) Board in 1994 in response to a lack of justice in the civil legal system for people who experience racism, poverty, and other oppression. For almost 30 years, the ATJ Board has been working toward a more accessible and equitable civil legal system in Washington. The ATJ Board serves as a catalyst to change systems and convenes the Alliance for Equal Justice, which is a network of Washington State social justice organizations that support and deliver civil legal aid to people who experience poverty and injustice. The ATJ Board grounds its work in race equity and centers the voices of people who experience racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression.

Examples of the ATJ Board's most recent work include:

- Organize the [Access to Justice Conference](#)
- Develop and promote the [Access to Justice Technology Principles](#)
- Develop and promote the [COVID-19 Legal Needs Check-Up](#)
- Work towards increased access to justice for people who are not documented
- Map out where current legal services are offered and identify gaps
- Monitor funding for civil legal aid and support efforts for increased funds
- Creation of a Community Advisory Panel to center the voices of those most harmed by the legal system

The Access to Justice Board has staff support provided by the WA State Bar Association.

For more information about the ATJ Board, see <http://allianceforequaljustice.org/access-to-justice-board/who-we-are/>. See the Board's most recent [annual report here](#). You can watch past Access to Justice Board meetings on our [YouTube Channel](#) or attend an [upcoming meeting](#).

Position overview:

ATJ Board member responsibilities include:

- Attending 10-12 regular half-day Board meetings (location varies, will have Zoom option);
- Engagement in meaningful discussions, activities, and actions to promote equity and inclusion with the ATJ Board and throughout the justice system, with an emphasis on race equity.
- Participating in 1-2 day-long retreats to assess progress on priorities, identify what is and is not working, and determine a course of action if changes are needed (location varies, will have Zoom option);
- Participating in 2 multiple day trips (2-3 days each) throughout Washington to meet with community-based partners and engage in relationship building (location varies, will have Zoom option)
- Attending the biennial Access to Justice Conference (location varies);
- Serving as co-chair or liaison to at least one standing committee of the Board;
- Serving as ATJ liaison to at least one Supreme Court Board or Commission, and/or one partner organization; and
- Active participation in Board initiatives.

Time commitment: Appointment is for a three-year term with eligibility to be reappointed for one additional three-year term. Service on the ATJ Board requires a substantial time commitment estimated at 10-20 hours per month.

Requirements: The ATJ Board has two open positions that may be filled by an attorney or a person who is not an attorney.

Preferred qualifications and skills: We are seeking leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to equity and justice through professional and/or personal work. The work should show a history of collaboration, strategic thinking, communication, and helping to break down silos to build a stronger community. We are looking for a commitment to a unifying process that fosters renewal and creates new leaders.

We strongly encourage applications from people who are or have been eligible for civil legal aid services or who can center the voices of communities most impacted by racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression.

Personal/professional experience working with community-based organizations, civil legal aid programs, pro bono programs or public defense is a plus.

Benefits:

- Open space to include community representatives as authentic partners whose voices and experiences add a broader perspective in addressing the issue impacting communities most harmed by our current justice system
- Significantly influence, improve, and support civil legal aid and pro bono services across the state
- Participate in a statewide network of equity and justice advocates seeking to dismantle systems of oppression that perpetuate racism and poverty
- Make connections with legal system partners like the Supreme Court, government agencies and nonprofit organizations to effect change
- Build leadership skills in systems-thinking, communications, project management, facilitation, and race equity among others
- Opportunities to receive and provide mentorship with fellow equity and justice leaders

Compensation for Lived Experience: In January 2023, the Access to Justice Board approved a policy to pay Access to Justice Board members with lived experience facing poverty, racism, and other forms of oppression within the legal system. The policy seeks to pay Board members with lived experience a quarterly stipend of \$2,250. To qualify for this stipend, a Board member must attest that they have been individually impacted by the legal system or represent a community that is directly impacted by poverty, racism, or any other form of oppression, is not participating in a paid, professional capacity, and has financial barriers would limit their ability to meaningfully participate in Board service. While the Board passed the policy, the funds have not yet been secured from the Board's funders for these positions. The ATJ Board is working diligently to request the funds to begin implementing the policy, but it is not currently guaranteed.

Travel reimbursement policy: Reasonable travel expenses may be reimbursed per the WSBA Expense Reimbursement Policy.

Selection and appointment process: Appointments are made by the Washington Supreme Court upon nomination of the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors in consultation with the Access to Justice Board.

For further information: See <http://allianceforequaljustice.org/access-to-justice-board/who-we-are/>.

How to apply: <https://www.mywsba.org/personifyebusiness/MyProfile/VolunteerApplication.aspx>. If you do not already have a myWSBA account, please select “create account” to access the portal.

Deadline is April 17, 2023.

In the application, please upload documents that describe your commitment to equity and justice and your experience and contributions to promote race equity and centering community voices. Documents may include a résumé or a summary of experience and a letter of interest. You may also include one letter of recommendation.

We are committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion on the Board and strongly encourage folks from a diverse array of backgrounds to apply. We define diversity broadly to include age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, indigenous background, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, and veteran status.

If you have any questions about the application process or have any issues accessing the application portal, please contact atj@wsba.org.