

Unemployment Law Project

News

Spring 2006

STAFF

Lynn Greiner

Executive Director

John Tirpak

Staff Attorney

Octavia Hathaway

Staff Attorney

Marc Lampson

Appellate Attorney

Meghann McCann

VISTA Attorney

Laurie Powers

Staff Attorney,
Spokane

Kevin Bender

Paralegal

Sarah Crowder

Legal Assistant

ULP Opens New Spokane Office

Realizing a long-time dream, the Unemployment Law Project opened a satellite office in Spokane in January. While we have served clients across the state since our inception in 1984, the reality was that only about 10% of our clients came from eastern Washington—largely due to a lack of visibility in that part of the State. Even though we assisted few clients there, the need was, and still is, high; thousands of individuals represent themselves at hearings at the Spokane Office of Administrative Hearings every year. These individuals would benefit from ULP's experience and expertise.

Our new office is staffed by attorney Laurie Powers (more about Laurie Powers on page 3.) We are very fortunate to have her on board as she is an excellent attorney, law office manager, community organizer, and volunteer coordinator. Over the past few months, she secured our office space, equipped it with furniture and supplies, hired law student interns from Gonzaga law school, got up to speed on unemployment/administrative law and procedures, and in turn trained law students and volunteer attorneys in the law and procedures.

ULP Spokane

35 W. Main Ave.
Suite 240
Spokane, WA
99201

1-800-940-9178

*"We're busy.
But there is so
much more to
do. To be
honest, I see no
limit for the
potential of the
Spokane office."
- Kevin Griffin,
Legal Intern ULP
Spokane*

Our satellite office is located in Spokane's Community Building--a vibrant and progressive community that houses a number of non-profit organizations, including the Center for Justice, a public radio station, a foundation, and the home office of Spokane's Senator Lisa Brown. ULP Spokane's interaction with these organizations has been an important first-step in publicizing our existence in eastern Washington.

Further publicity efforts are underway; over the next few months, we will contact community organizations, social service agencies, government agencies and labor unions in eastern Washington to alert them to our existence. Now that the Spokane office is open, our hope is that we can greatly increase the number of clients we serve in that part of the State!

News at Glance-

Visit our new website! In expanding our community outreach efforts, we have been working with a web-designer in creating a more modern and accessible website. The new and improved website will feature easier-to-navigate pages, more legal resources, and increased visibility of the ULP brand. Visit www.unemploymentlawproject.org to learn more.

Increased visibility across the State. In February, the ULP sent promotional materials in English and Spanish to WorkSource sites statewide. These posters advertise the fact that we represent clients at unemployment hearings, as well as advise those who navigate the system on their own. It is our goal to reach more of the estimated 25,000 unemployed workers who will have an unemployment hearing this year.

Cont. on page 2

ULP's Winter and Spring Interns and Volunteers

It is the ULP's pleasure to introduce our latest group of outstanding interns and volunteers. Without their help, we would not be able to serve as many claimants throughout the State. We thank these talented and highly motivated individuals!

*Paul Agid • Nowell Bamberger • Kelly Beissel
• Rachael Brown • Mike Brown • Kari Boyum
• Colin Charbonneau • Candy Correia • Vicky Daniels
• Susan Dennis • David Fentin
• Jennifer Filbert • Keith Ganey • Carrie Gargas
• Megan Goicoechea • Kevin Griffin • Wesley Hottot
• Rita Jen-LaPlante • Victoria Johnston • Le'a Kent
• Joan Kalhorn • Kim Krummeck
• Patrick Leary • Joel Nichols • Ana Omusoru
• Jennifer Pike • Matt Rabinovitch • Patrick Schaff
• Susannah Sharpe • Nicole Tadano • Yui Takayama*



Welcome ULP Spokane Volunteers and Interns!

Matt Rabinovitch, Victoria Johnson, Colin Charbonneau are three of our dedicated ULP Spokane Volunteers!

Thank You to All Our Donors!

Donations received between Oct. 2005 and April 2006.

Individuals: Yusef Aden • Giovanna Alaimo • Samsidah Aly • Julie Anderson • Phyllis Baladez • Carol Barber • Victor Berdecia • Paz Beredo • Nanette Bishop • Denise Bowen • Olivia Buker • Cathleen Cass • George Cassinicos, Jr. • Susan Chamberlin • Rong Bin Chan • Felicia Chavez • Allanda Christenson • Barbara Christofferson • Shawna Clark • Shmuel Comidy • Melanie Cook • Jennifer Coughlin • Kerry Coughlin • Diana Dale • Karen Davis • Shante Davis • Yvette Dioubate • Dale Dixon Sr. • Hwa Duda • Deborah D'urso • Frederick Eke • Lisa Ewing • Denese Foltz • Brent Gadwa • Terri Galloway • Doyel Goard • Jeff Golden • Lindsay Graver • Robert Green • Philip Greenwald • Victoria Hagar • Gary Hamilton • Erika Hanson • Michael Hanson • Louis Hill Jr. • Teri Hudman • Kimberlee Hurley • Shannon Ingram • Padam Jain • Angela Jefferson • Doris Jensen • Doris Jensen • Jeremy Judd • Virginia Kime • John Koch • Erin Koerner • Joyce Kunkel • Howard Lake • Tam Le • Anna Lee • Berlina Leonardo • Ai Y Li • Linda Libelula • Amira Lions • Trevor Littlefield • Susan Lohr Nevitt • Thomas D. Martin • Michael Mason • Cathleen Moeller • Doug Monroe • Robert Morley • Patricia Navarro • Chung Ng • Minh Dieu • Nguyen-Wichman • Christina Nickell • Rafael Orozco • Pamela Pitre • Nina Platter • Dwight Pruitt • Ana Ramirez • Santiago Ramos • Jeff Robison • Vickie Roff • Judy Rosenfeld • Mary Sabin • Saeng Saetern • Brenda Sammons-Walters • Kimberly Say • Mike Searce • Kellie Schlegel • Dana Michael Schuett • Mary Ann Shaw • JoAnn Short • Mark Simon • Craig Smith • Therrin Smith • Bruce Stegner • Robert Stocco • Edie Stone • Betty Taylor • Tanya Taylor • Daniel Thompson • Barbara Tyler • Vickie VanDyken • Vivian Walters • Sheila Ward • Paulette Weston • Stephen Weyer • Stephanie Wikstrom • Debra Winters • Lisa Wright • John Yarbrough • Barbara Young • Walter "Joseph" Yurkevich • Jerry Zingmark

Friends: Paul Agid • Nina Dillon • Paul Drachler • Robert Friedman • Octavia Hathaway • Larry Kenney • Michael LaPonte • Deborah Maranville • David Mark • Marjorie McCanta High • Joel Nichols • James Oswald • Lee Price • Amy Stephson • David Stobaugh • Harriet Strasberg • Steve Teller • Janet Varon • Jennifer Yogi

Organizations: AFT Washington • Amalgamated Transit Union Local No. 587 • Carpenters Union Local No. 470 • Coalition of Labor Union Women • Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Labor Council • Graphic Communications Union Local No. 767-M • Hod Carriers and General Laborers • International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 17 • International Union Of Operating Engineers Local No. 286 • Intnat'l Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers & Helpers, Local # 502 • IUPAT Local Union 300 • IUPAT Local Union 300 • King County Labor Council Of Washington • Laborers Local 1239 • Musicians Association, Local 76 • Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 8 • Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild Local 37082 • Pierce County Central Labor Council • Sheet Metal Workers Local #66 • Street Pavers, Sewers, Watermain and Tunnel Workers Union 440 • UFCW Local 81 • United Ass'n of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Ind. #32 • UFCW Local 81 • IUPAT Local Union 300

News at a Glance- cont. from Front

Year-end fundraising campaign a success! At the end of 2005, ULP launched an end-of-the-year fundraising campaign. Through the help of our friends, former clients and colleagues, as well as Unions and Labor Councils, we raised over \$10,000. We thank everyone who has supported our work!

ULP assisted over 2000 claimants in 2005. Last year, we represented 1074 claimants at hearings, 181 claimants during the administrative appeal process, 73 claimants in Superior Court, 445 claimants through our helpline, and hundreds of others through our website and brief telephone contact. Of those who we represented, we won 70% of the cases!

We need your help! Our *Spokane fundraising campaign* is underway. In an effort to increase visibility and services to eastern Washington, ULP is launching a fundraising campaign; **our goal is to raise \$30,000** to cover start-up and operational costs of the Spokane office. Please help us help others! You can find more details about our campaign on the back page.

ULP Welcomes Laurie Powers to our Spokane Office

Laurie Powers is our newest staff attorney, charged with all operational aspects of the Spokane office. Hired last November as a half-time attorney, she has worked diligently to get our satellite office fully functional—the Spokane office is now handling the bulk of our eastern Washington claimants.

A native of Washington, Laurie first moved to Spokane to attend college at Gonzaga University. After graduation, she joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corp (JVC) and was sent to Kansas City to work at a battered women's shelter. During that year, she first contemplated becoming a public interest lawyer because of her commitment to social justice. Upon completion of her JVC year, she moved to Seattle and worked for the Seattle-King County Bar Association, working to implement Washington's newly enacted Domestic Violence Protection Act. This job reinforced her interest in the law; she entered law school at the University of Washington, graduating in 1991.

After law school, Laurie moved to Bellingham to join a small firm of former legal aid lawyers and focused on family, employment, and tribal law. After five years, she left, took a family-related break, and then began work as a staff attorney with LAW Advocates--Whatcom County's volunteer lawyer program. While there, she launched "Project SAFER" to provide family law representation to low-income domestic violence victims and then in 2002, became the organization's Executive Director.

In 2004, Laurie left LAW Advocates in Bellingham and moved back to Spokane, as her husband had been hired as the director of Spokane's Center for Justice. In the fall of 2005, Laurie's twin daughters entered kindergarten so she began her search for a meaningful part-time attorney position. Serendipitously, the ULP advertised the job opening for the Spokane attorney position soon thereafter—once we interviewed Laurie, we knew immediately that she was the perfect fit.

For her part, Laurie was drawn to ULP Spokane because of its commitment to serving *all* of Washington's temporarily unemployed, regardless of any individual's ability to pay and regardless of their geographic location. In her few months on the job, Laurie has been compelled by her clients, noticing that many of them have never received public benefits before and that they want nothing more than to preserve their dignity throughout the administrative process. According to Laurie, "my clients are good, hard-working people experiencing a demoralizing period of their lives. It's almost embarrassing for them to apply and fight for their benefits, so it's good that we're here."

Regarding ULP's expansion to Spokane, Laurie states: "Not enough people know about the Unemployment Law Project in Spokane. This is a great opportunity to make connections with other social service agencies on the eastside and to provide local access to attorneys and advocates handling unemployment



benefits cases." She adds, "Spokane is a great location for our second office. It's the hub of the eastside and it allows ULP to really understand the needs of the surrounding communities." Laurie anticipates that the office will continue to grow exponentially, noting "we've had many attorneys and energetic law students who have applied to volunteer or do an internship with us. We are lucky to have so many qualified and engaged people interested in the work we do." Indeed, with thousands of claimants in eastern Washington who could use help with their unemployment hearings, the ULP—and Laurie in particular—will call upon law students and volunteers to help with the workload. We are happy to have Laurie at the helm of ULP Spokane; she has the experience, compassion, and determination necessary to make ULP Spokane a huge success. ■

Volunteer Legend: Kevin Griffin

Kevin joined ULP in the Spring of 2005. After just a few days of training in the Seattle office, Kevin took his new knowledge of unemployment benefits and began representing clients out of his house in Spokane. Kevin became a pioneer for ULP; he represented 43 ULP clients while attending law school full-time. Kevin helped pave the way for the ULP Spokane office by training fellow volunteers and serving as an enthusiastic and highly competent hearing representative for the Spokane area. Thank you, Kevin!

Support ULP Spokane: Donate today!

Our Spokane office is now open and is serving our eastside clients! Opening this office is a milestone for ULP; a lot of planning, work, and money have gone into this effort.

In order to ensure the success of ULP Spokane, **we need to raise \$30,000**. This money will cover start-up costs, publicity efforts and basic office expenses- all of which will help us dramatically increase the number of eastern Washington clients we serve.

As you know, we do not charge a fee for our services. Our work is funded by grants and donations, as well as contributions from people just like you make up one-fourth of our budget. Participate in our expansion by supporting our new Spokane office through your generous donation.

"If I hadn't known about your organization, I would have just done the hearing myself. I'm so glad you were there. I can't tell you what a relief it is to know everything is being taken care of by intelligent people who know the law." -Erin K., Spokane

Your support will directly help people like Erin who have lost their jobs, been denied unemployment benefits, and face severe financial hardship. Help us provide services to increasing numbers of workers, on both sides of the State, who are wrongfully denied their unemployment benefits. ULP Spokane is ready and able to support the workers of our State. ■

Help us meet our \$30,000 fundraising goal!

Donate today! We very much appreciate your contribution; we will put your money to good use!

UNEMPLOYMENT LAW PROJECT

1904 Third Ave., Ste 604
Seattle, WA 98101

**The ULP relies on contributions to support our work!!!
Please send us a donation in the enclosed envelope.
We'll put your money to good use! ... Thanks!**

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