

**CALIFORNIA  
CHANGELAWYERS**

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**COMMUNITY WATER CENTER**  
EL CENTRO COMUNITARIO POR EL AGUA

**Community Water Center  
California ChangeLawyers Year-Long Legal Fellow  
Location: Visalia, CA  
Start date: once filled**

Over a million Californians each year lack access to safe and affordable drinking water. In addition to systemic racism, one of the root causes of water inequality is under-representation and unresponsive representation at the local level. Local elected leaders drive efforts to plan, pursue, and finance community-driven water solutions. Without responsive and empowered local leadership, drinking water solutions are rarely explored or pursued, planned or built.

**About Community Water Center**

The Community Water Center acts as a catalyst for community-driven water solutions through organizing, education, and advocacy in California. As a guiding principle, we believe that clean water is a human right, not a privilege; safe, clean and affordable water can and must be a reality for all communities.

CWC was founded on the belief that the people directly impacted by water contamination must be at the forefront of creating and advocating for solutions to the problem. Much of CWC's work revolves around intensive capacity-building activities with community members, so they are equipped to engage in water infrastructure planning and funding processes. CWC strives to reduce barriers that prevent residents from participating effectively in local, regional and state decision-making that affects their access to safe, affordable drinking water, including ensuring water quality information is provided in appropriate languages, and water governance structures and planning processes include local residents.

**About the California ChangeLawyers Legal Fellowship Program**

California ChangeLawyers (formerly California Bar Foundation) is a statewide foundation that empowers the next generation of lawyers, judges, and activists to create a more diverse legal profession, a fair justice system, and a better California. The foundation believes that a state as diverse as California should have a justice system led by advocates of all ethnicities and races.

ChangeLawyers Fellowships support bright, diverse ChangeLawyers who are committed to righting historical wrongs. Grants are awarded to legal aid organizations to cover the cost of hiring legal fellows from diverse backgrounds. This is a double impact investment. The foundation supports organizations on the front lines of social justice while at the same time creating jobs for diverse lawyers. This creates better, more authentic outcomes for communities—communities who can see and interact with lawyers who look like them.

### **Position Description**

With support from California ChangeLawyers, CWC seeks a full-time, year-long Legal Fellow to provide legal assistance to communities without safe water and local water board members; create and update resources for community members and legal practitioners regarding drinking water governance and advocacy; and provide legal and advocacy support for other CWC programs as needed. This position will be based in CWC's headquarters in Visalia, California. The Legal Fellow will also work with the UC Davis School of Law Aoki Water Justice Clinic to create materials that can be used by water board members and service providers that train and assist local water boards.

CWC currently runs a leadership program for elected water board members—the Community Water Leaders Network. That program supports local water leaders' ability to pursue drinking water solutions for their communities. Recognizing the need to support community members who transition from grassroots activists to elected leaders, CWC is currently developing and implementing an unprecedented program to actively recruit and support local residents to run for seats on their local water boards. This effort focuses on supporting members of underrepresented groups (including low-income people of color, women, and particularly Latinas) that are often the most impacted by water injustices and are discouraged from pursuing positions of elected leadership. During the 2018 election cycle, CWC's sister organization, Community Water Center Action Fund, endorsed several successful candidates for local water decision-making bodies. But newly elected leaders often do not have access to the resources and training that experienced and supportive colleagues and staff would typically provide to enable them to succeed in their positions. CWLN and CWC hope to fill that gap in services by providing peer-to-peer trainings, accessible resources, and counseling to ensure local leaders are effective in serving their constituencies.

To learn more about special district elections, visit the webpage CWC developed:

[https://www.communitywatercenter.org/water\\_board\\_elections](https://www.communitywatercenter.org/water_board_elections)

### **Primary Responsibilities**

Responsibilities of the Legal Fellow will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Practice community lawyering with local community groups to support community-driven water solutions in California's Southern San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast.
- Provide direct legal assistance to members of the Community Water Leaders Network (CWLN) in group and one-on-one settings.
- Co-lead the growth and further development of the CWLN.
- Support new recruitment program for CWLN.
- Develop materials and written resources for CWLN trainings.
- Help host and facilitate workshops and presentations on how community members can run for election to their local water boards.
- Develop a framework for trainings to prepare community leaders file for candidacy and run successful campaigns for the 2020 elections cycle.
- Work in partnership with the UC Davis School of Law Aoki Water Justice Clinic to develop materials for practitioners working for and alongside local water boards.
- Update CWC's *Community Guide to Drinking Water Advocacy* to reflect current laws and regulations to ensure elected officials, community leaders, and practitioners have the best resources to support their efforts.
- Assist with other CWC programs as needed, including work on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and various groundwater pollution control regulatory programs.

## **Educational and Experience Requirements**

J.D. required, with admission to practice law in the State of California.

## **Required Skills**

- Strong passion for, and commitment to, social and environmental justice.
- Strong legal analysis and writing skills.
- Strong interpersonal verbal communication and writing skills, with sensitivity to appropriate delivery depending on target and audience.
- Experience working with rural, low-income communities and/or communities of color.
- Outstanding organizational skills.
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines.
- Strong ability to work individually, and with teams and coalitions.
- Creative and comprehensive problem-solving skills and ability to quickly adapt strategies to new, changing or unexpected circumstances.
- Ability to accept and provide praise and critical feedback—the ideal candidate will value self-improvement and seek and provide regular feedback.
- Fluency in English and Spanish, and ability to provide written and oral translation.
- Proficient with basic computer skills including, at a minimum, Microsoft Office and Google Apps. Ability to troubleshoot basic software and computer equipment problems.
- Willing and able to travel to communities in the San Joaquin Valley, work weekends, and attend night meetings when necessary.
- Valid California Driver's License.

## **Preferred Qualifications**

- Experience living or working in small unincorporated communities in the San Joaquin Valley or Central Coast.
- Knowledge of California water and environmental law.
- Experience in California land-use, civil rights, and municipal law.
- Experience working with local elected officials with varying degrees of electoral experience.
- Experience practicing community lawyering in low-income communities and communities of color.
- Ability to analyze and respond to technical documents related to groundwater quality and supply, public finance, governance, and public health.

## **Salary Range**

\$50,000 plus full benefits (see below).

## **Reports To**

The Fellow will report to CWC Staff Attorney Debi Ores as the Fellow's primary supervisor, and the Fellow will also receive support, training and direction from UC Davis School of Law's Aoki Water Justice Clinic Director, Camille Pannu.

## **To Apply**

Applications, including a detailed cover letter, resume, and three references, should be submitted online to [Deborah.ores@communitywatercenter.org](mailto:Deborah.ores@communitywatercenter.org). Cover letters should describe the experiences that have honed the candidate's ability to exercise the core skills that CWC seeks. The cover letter should not summarize the candidate's resume.

Applications that do not contain all of the above-listed required materials will not be considered. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled, and we encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible.

**Benefits**

CWC offers a comprehensive compensation and benefits package that includes: medical, dental and vision insurance; generous vacation, family and sick leave, and holiday policies; a flexible work schedule; professional development opportunities; and more. Benefits eligibility vary by tenure and employment status, among other factors.

Community Water Center is committed to providing equal opportunity to qualified job applicants and employees and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability (including pregnancy), mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, military service status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

To learn more about the Community Water Center, visit our website at:

[www.communitywatercenter.org](http://www.communitywatercenter.org)