

# Community Law

## METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER

### *Who We Serve, Why, and How*

The Community Law Division (CLD) is a branch of Metropolitan Public Defender (MPD), a non-profit law firm that provides criminal public defense and other legal services in an effort to remove barriers to advancement for vulnerable populations in the Portland metropolitan area. CLD serves past and current clients of MPD's Criminal Division and clients of our established community partners. We assist people who were and are involved, or are at risk of involvement, in the criminal justice system.

CLD's specialty is diminishing the downstream effects of criminal justice involvement. We help undo the damage done by an imbalanced criminal justice system by reducing social stigma and clearing our clients' records. These criminal record clearing services include expungement, felony reduction, reducing court fines and fees, correcting the legal record, warrant resolutions, and driver's license reinstatement.

CLD houses Immigrant Defense Oregon (IDO), a program that provides legal services in crimmigration and removal defense, with a focus on noncitizens with criminal histories facing deportation. And CLD's Veteran's Project provides civil legal services to veterans to help them reduce or overcome legal barriers to stable and permanent housing and assists veterans and veteran families with issues that interfere with their ability to obtain or retain supportive services (in coordination with Transition Projects and the Supportive Services for Veteran Families programs).

We also advocate for systemic changes to help all Oregonians previously involved in the criminal justice system. Some of our efforts include developing and running county-wide programs to reduce court debt, including Multnomah County Project Reset, Legal Services Day, and Clackamas County Project Reset. We advocate for legislative changes to widen statutory access to criminal record clearing.

In working with our clients, we evaluate their circumstances for other legal issues posing barriers to opportunity and stability. When beneficial, we will provide a fuller range of civil legal services. CLD's expanded services include immigration and removal defense, family law and protective orders, housing and homelessness prevention, public benefits, guardianship and other legal issue areas.

We partner with government agencies and organizations to serve their clients, working together to help clients navigate the legal system, remove barriers to economic opportunities, and deliver justice. CLD has established community partnerships with:

- Central City Concern
- CareOregon
- City of Portland – Cannabis Tax Allocation Grant; Portland Housing Bureau;
- Universal Immigration Representation Grant
- Healthy Birth Initiatives
- Home Forward
- Kaiser Permanente
- Multnomah County Anti-Poverty Programs
- Multnomah County Justice
- Multnomah County Sex Trafficking Victims
- Reinvestment Program
- Multnomah Defenders, Inc.
- New Avenues For Youth
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Supportive Services for Veteran Families
- Wallace Medical Concern