

Jefferson Coulter

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Academic Profile

Legal educator, senior legal services executive, and experienced litigator with more than two decades of law practice, leadership, advocacy, and professional training experience. Teaching experience includes designing and teaching law school seminars with experiential litigation simulations and supervising student practice in self-help and limited scope clinics. Current law school leadership focuses on pro bono, public interest, community engagement, and experiential learning. Practice background includes business and consumer litigation, intellectual property, contract drafting and negotiation, and complex civil advocacy. Research and teaching interests center on poverty law, access to justice, business and nonprofit law, and experiential legal education.

Current Position

Director of Pro Bono, Public Interest, & Community Engagement

University of South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law (May 2025–Present)

- Lead the law school's pro bono, public interest, and community engagement initiatives, with responsibility for program development, student engagement, and external partnerships.
- Implemented several new experiential and service programs, including the GROW SC Business & Nonprofit Clinic and the Pro Bono Clinic.
- Created a mediation training program to expand students' practical dispute-resolution skills by serving as pro bono mediators.
- Develop and oversee programs connecting students with courts, legal services organizations, nonprofits, government partners, and practicing attorneys.
- Advise and mentor students pursuing public interest, public service, and pro bono opportunities and careers.
- Coordinate with faculty, administration, alumni, and community stakeholders to expand experiential learning and access-to-justice initiatives.

Education

Master of Urban and Regional Planning, Eastern Washington University, 2020

Juris Doctor, Gonzaga University School of Law, 1998

Bachelor of Arts, West Virginia University, 1996

Academic Experience

Adjunct Professor, Poverty Law

Gonzaga University School of Law (2020–2022)

- Designed and taught a seminar on poverty law and civil legal aid systems.
- Integrated experiential, skills-based litigation simulations and role-plays into the course.

Professional Experience

Legal Aid Society, Louisville, KY

Executive Director (2021–2025)

- Directed operations across a 15-county service region.
- Partner with Board of Directors on mission advancement, strategic planning, and fund development.
- Develop program priorities, create and manage budgets, and ensure fiscal integrity.
- Co-led a statewide expansion plan to increase access and strengthen recruitment and retention of a diverse staff, volunteer base, and board.

Northwest Justice Project, Seattle, WA

Statewide Advocacy Counsel (2020–2021)

Managing Attorney (2013–2020)

- Developed statewide strategies for civil legal aid delivery and access in consumer, employment, and reentry advocacy.
- Advanced advocacy prioritizing treatment over incarceration in criminal-justice-involved populations.
- Provided leadership in
- Collaborated on disability rights, healthcare access, debt imprisonment, and criminalization of mental illness and homelessness.
- Trained advocates in negotiation, trial practice, discovery, and appellate advocacy.
- Designed and launched the Health Justice Initiative, a medical–legal partnership, growing it into a fully funded unit.
- Established funding for legal services to patients at Eastern State Hospital.
- Partnered with the City of Spokane and a regional foundation to implement a community bail fund.

Coulter Martin Smith PLLC, Seattle, WA

Member Attorney (2008–2011)

- Represented clients in intellectual property, business, and unfair competition matters.
- Litigated in state and federal courts.
- Achieved favorable outcomes including vacated patent injunctions, dismissed trademark claims, and summary judgments.

AXIOS Law Group PLLC, Seattle, WA

Member Attorney (2004–2008)

- Represented clients in business, consumer protection, and unfair competition litigation.
- Argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (A G Design v. Trainman Lantern Company).
- Managed firm budgeting, accounting, and supervision of attorneys and staff.

Commerce One Global Services, Arlington, VA

Counsel (2000–2002)

- Advised on copyright, trademark, and trade secret protection.
- Negotiated and drafted technology and e-commerce agreements.
- Counseled executive leadership on contract interpretation and risk management.

National Wildlife Federation, Reston, VA

Staff Attorney (1999–2000)

- Managed licensing, trademarks, and copyright matters.

Regulatory Experience

PAI Consulting, Alexandria, VA

Senior Regulatory Analyst (2011–2013)

Regulatory Analyst (2002–2004)

- Supported federal agencies in regulatory drafting and rulemaking.
- Provided regulatory analysis and compliance support for U.S. government projects.

Professional, Civic, & Charitable Activities

Midlands Mediation Center

- Board Member (2026 – present)
- Mediation Instructor (2026 – present)
- Mediator (2026 – present)

Rainy Day Fund

- Board Member (2026 – present)
- Volunteer Attorney (2025 – present)

SC Access to Justice Commission

- Pro Bono Committee, Member (2025 – present)

Legal Services Corporation

- Performance Update Advisory Committee (2024 – 2025)

Kentucky Equal Justice Center Board

- Board Member 2021 – 2025

Washington State Bar Association

- Steering Committee, Statewide Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid (2020 – 2024)
- Court Rules and Procedures Committee, Chair (2016 – 2020)
- Equity and Disparity Workgroup (2015 –2016)

Northwest Justice Project

- Volunteer Attorney. Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project. 2008-2010

Bar Admissions

- Kentucky
- South Carolina (Clinical Limited License)
- Washington (inactive)
- US Bankruptcy Court (Washington, Eastern and Western), Kentucky (Western)
- Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- US Tax Court
- US Veterans Administration