



City of Seattle Boards & Commissions Notice of Appointment

Appointee Name: <i>Leah N. Salerno</i>		
Board/Commission Name: <i>Seattle Social Housing Public Development Authority</i>		Position Title: <i>Member</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appointment OR <input type="checkbox"/> Reappointment	City Council Confirmation required? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Appointing Authority: <input type="checkbox"/> City Council <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Seattle Renters' Commission</i>	Term of Position: * Term Begin: <i>5/23/25</i> to Term End: <i>5/22/29</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Serving remaining term of a vacant position</i>	
Residential Neighborhood:	Zip Code: <i>98125</i>	Contact Phone No.:
Background: <i>Leah is an attorney with experience in disability rights, including previous work as a staff attorney at Disability Rights Washington, and experience in eviction defense. Leah has worked as a contractor with the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights. They believe that governance councils are very important and look forward to supporting their development. They also understand the importance of low barriers to housing accessibility and the life-threatening nature of evictions. As a Board member, Leah plans to follow both the letter and the spirit of the charter.</i>		
Authorizing Signature (original signature): <u><i>Lydia Felty</i></u> <small>Lydia Felty (01/12/2026 12:17:46 PST)</small> 01/12/2026 <u><i>Kate Rubin</i></u> <small>Kate Rubin (01/12/2026 12:19:38 PST)</small> 01/12/2026		Appointing Signatory: <i>Lydia Felty</i> <i>Seattle Renters' Commission</i> <i>Interim Co-Chair</i> <i>Kate Rubin</i> <i>Seattle Renters' Commission</i> <i>Interim Co-Chair</i>

*Term begin and end date is fixed and tied to the position and not the appointment date.

Leah N. Salerno

Attorney, Member in good standing of the Washington State Bar

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chickasaw Nation Industries contract with U.S. Dept. HHS Office for Civil Rights | May 2023 - July 2025

Contracted Equal Opportunity Specialist / Legal Investigator: On contract with U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Pacific Region. Investigated HIPAA and Civil Rights complaints with the Office for Civil Rights. Conducted interviews, records requests and review, and legal research regarding applicable administrative and civil rights laws. Identified and developed cases for enforcement action. Worked with complainants and investigated entities to appropriately resolve cases including through voluntary corrective action or technical assistance. Conducted outreach to educate covered entities, community advocates, and other public stakeholders about laws enforced by the Office for Civil Rights, including through large presentations.

Disability Rights Washington | Dec 2018 - Sept 2021

Attorney: Worked independently and as part of a team to represent people with disabilities in civil rights cases, including civil rights litigation as well as pushing for policy changes and other multi-modal advocacy strategies. Conducted policy research, investigations, and advocacy statewide; topics included: police and criminal justice reform, education rights of students, rights of youth in the foster care system, rights of parents to receive equal and non-discriminatory assessments and services from the state, physical accessibility of public streets and transportation, housing and more. Engaged in community outreach by building relationships with other intersectional organizations, participating in coalitions and stakeholder groups, and conducting presentations on disability rights topics. Provided mentorship, guidance, and supervision to legal interns.

Sexual Violence Legal Services | April 2018 – Sept 2018

Staff Attorney: Represented sexual assault survivors in court for protection orders and in criminal proceedings to enforce victim rights and privacy protections. Worked collaboratively with colleagues and community advocates to meet clients' needs in achieving safety and stability as the client defined it. Provided technical assistance to survivors, fellow community advocates, and other attorneys.

Disability Rights Washington | Jun 2016 – Mar 2018

Legal Intern / Contract Attorney: Provided technical assistance services directly to individuals with disabilities throughout Washington State, including those living in institutions, hospitals, jails, and prisons; answered questions and provided "know your rights" and self-advocacy information and resources, identified legal issues for further investigation as appropriate. Conducted record reviews and legal research as part of advocacy projects; including on the education rights of students with disabilities, employment rights of disabled individuals, right to live in the community/deinstitutionalization, and more.

The Defenders Association-King County Department of Public Defense | Jan 2017 – Mar 2017

Rule 9 Extern: Worked as a Rule 9 attorney in both juvenile court and adult misdemeanor divisions. Represented juvenile clients in preliminary court hearings; assisted with legal research and case development. Independently developed legal strategy for one client's misdemeanor appeal through review of trial record and wrote appellate brief which resulted in overturn of a misdemeanor conviction.

Immigrant Families Advocacy Project | Nov 2014 – Dec 2017

Student Advocate: Assisted immigrant survivors of domestic violence in filing a U-Visa application. Conducted client interviews, gathered evidence, and prepared U-visa applications to be submitted within a deadline.

Housing Justice Project, King County | Jun 2015 – Aug 2015

Legal Intern: Conducted intake interviews with low income clients facing eviction. Identified legal issues and briefed attorneys on cases. Assisted attorneys as needed. Trained new legal interns/volunteers.

COMMUNITY BASED COALITION AND ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Organizing Work | Sept 2021 - Present

Disability Rights and Justice Advocate: Participated in broad based coalitions in Seattle with a focus on cross-movement solidarity. Coalition and organizing efforts include: various campaigns focused on the Seattle City Budget and other legislation considered by the Seattle City Council, community coalition of environmental and urbanist organizations to influence the Keep Seattle Moving Levy in 2024, and ongoing organizing with the Seattle Clean Air Collective.

EDUCATION

University of Washington School of Law | Seattle, WA

J.D., with Honors, June 2017 | GPA: 3.67 | Class Ranking: Top 20%

University of California, Irvine | Irvine, CA

B.A., Anthropology & Political Science, *magna cum laude*, June 2012 | GPA: 3.85 | Campuswide Honors Collegium

