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Building From the Ground Up: How the Women of Color Legal Education Fund is Supporting New Lawyers from Historically Excluded and Underrepresented Communities in the Yakima Valley

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JULY 12, 2023 Written by

The Yakima Chapter of Washington Women Lawyers (WWL) is dedicated to furthering full integration of women in the legal profession and believes it is critical that the profession reflect the diversity of Washington and of the Yakima Valley region. Toward that end, the WWL Yakima Chapter recently established the Women of Color Legal Education Fund mentorship program to support women of color with ties to the Yakima Valley region who seek to join the legal profession. That support includes facilitating professional development, encouraging academic achievement, and providing direct financial support. Co-founded by Keally Cieslik of Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and me, and entering its second full year of programming and financial support, the Women of Color Legal Education Fund is vital to achieving the full integration of lawyers from historically excluded and underrepresented communities in our legal system. Mentorship has been instrumental in the development of my legal career, and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the next generation of legal professionals in the Yakima Valley.