

Nisha N. Vyas

Senior Attorney, Western Center on Law and Poverty
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Nisha N. Vyas is a Senior Attorney with Western Center on Law & Poverty. Her work includes providing support to legal services providers on housing matters, litigation to protect against displacement, and advising on housing policies that are of statewide concern. With a background in community law and fair housing, Nisha's advocacy is rooted in the belief that all persons should have access to safe and affordable housing of their choice.

Prior to joining Western Center, Nisha was the Directing Attorney of Public Counsel's Homelessness Prevention Law Project and responsible for coordinating its direct legal services programs, including eviction defense and benefits advocacy, for people experiencing homelessness and those at imminent risk of homelessness. She also worked with Public Counsel's Community Development Project, where her work included providing counsel to community-based organizations, including legal advice and capacity building support to nonprofit affordable and supportive housing providers, and affirmatively enforcing laws to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing and protections against displacement in the region. With two Public Counsel colleagues, she was a fellow in the 2017 class of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law's Racial Justice Training Institute, a national leadership program that equips anti-poverty advocates to address the role that racism plays in causing and perpetuating poverty.

Nisha started her career as a staff attorney, and later, deputy litigation director, with Southern California Housing Rights Center. There, Nisha represented tenants and homeowners in challenging discriminatory practices on the basis of race, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, and other protected characteristics in federal and state courts.

In 2010, Nisha was selected as the Jay M. Spears Clinical Teaching Fellow by Stanford Law School. As a Clinical Lecturer and Teaching Fellow with Stanford's Community Law Clinic, Nisha trained and supervised law students in the representation of low-income clients in a variety of matters, including eviction defense, affirmative habitability cases, and administrative hearings before the local housing authority. She also developed curriculum for and led seminars on unlawful detainer defense, client interviewing and counseling, developing case theory, and cross-cultural awareness.

Nisha serves on the Board of Directors for Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, a nonprofit affordable and supportive housing provider. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley and UCLA School of Law, where she completed the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy. She recently returned to the Law School as a Lecturer in Law, teaching the Problem Solving in the Public Interest seminar and a course on Los Angeles Housing Law and Policy.