



Denise Stiffarm

PARTNER

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PRACTICE AREAS

Municipal Law Pubic Policy and Political Matters
School Districts

Pronouns:
she, her, hers

Denise Stiffarm practices in the areas of municipal, land use, real estate, and education law. She spends a significant portion of her practice providing special counsel to public school districts. She also has experience working on a variety of public/private joint ventures and regularly advises public development authorities and other special purpose public entities.

Denise works with public clients on a range of issues, including growth management, land use planning and permitting, environmental (NEPA/SEPA) review, feasibility and site selection, acquisition/sale/lease of real property, eminent domain, facilities planning, and development and implementation of school impact fee programs. Denise's practice includes work on behalf of school districts in policy matters related to regional and local land use planning, and addressing comprehensive school mitigation in the context of large residential developments and master planned communities. She has drafted and negotiated a variety of complex real estate documents, interlocal agreements, and development agreements. In addition, she regularly counsels clients regarding the State Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act, as well as general public agency compliance matters. Denise is an experienced advocate before state and local legislative bodies.

Prior to joining Pacifica, Denise was a partner at Preston Gates & Ellis LLP and its successor firm, K&L Gates.

Denise is an enrolled member of the Gros Ventre (A'aninin/White Clay) Tribe and is an active member of Seattle's Urban Indian community. Denise has a long history with and commitment to community volunteer activities.

Bar Admissions:

- Washington

Education:

- Washington State University, B.A., Sociology and Criminal Justice
- University of Washington School of Law, J.D., Notes & Comments Executive Editor, *Washington Law Review*, Order of the Barristers, Moot Court Honor Board

Honors:

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* in Education Law 2012-2021, and as Lawyer of the Year (Education Law, Washington), 2012, and as Lawyer of the Year (Education Law, Seattle), 2017 (Copyright by Woodward/White, Inc., of Aiken, SC)
- Selected for *Washington Super Lawyers*, 2011-2020
- Selected for *Washington Rising Stars*, 2004-2009

Community Involvement:

- YWCA (Seattle/King/Snohomish), Board of Directors, 2011-Present (Chair-Elect 2021)
- YWCA People of Color Executive Council
- University of Washington President's Minority Community Advisory Committee, 2013-Present (Elected Chair, 2018)
- College Spark Washington, Board of Trustees, 2016-Present
- Seattle Art Museum, Board of Trustees, 2017-Present
- United Way of King County, Board of Directors, 2020-Present
- Chief Seattle Club, former member, Board of Directors, 2002-2019 (President of the Board, 2008-2017)
- YouthCare, former Board member
- Audubon Washington, former Board member
- Seward Park Environmental and Audubon Center, former Board member
- Pioneer Square Preservation Board, former Board member
- University of Washington, Law Alumni Ambassador (conducting outreach to college, high school, and junior high school students of color)
- Leadership Tomorrow, Class of 2001
- King County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, former Trustee

Professional Organizations:

- Northwest Indian Bar Association
- National Native American Bar Association