



Staff Attorney – Job Posting

Organization and Opportunity Overview

The ACLU-WI is a statewide non-profit, non-partisan, private organization with 21,000 members. The ACLU-WI is widely recognized as a cutting-edge and leading advocate for civil rights and civil liberties in the state, and works closely with other state organizations that share compatible goals. Our mission: The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin fights to protect, defend, and expand civil rights and liberties – particularly for communities historically denied their rights – through nonpartisan advocacy, community education, litigation, and organizing in order to create a more just future. The ACLU of Wisconsin’s combined operating budget is approximately \$4.5 million with headquarters in the City of Milwaukee. The organization has a diverse staff of up to 30 individuals.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin seeks to hire an experienced, passionate, and innovative Staff Attorney to investigate and litigate selected civil liberties and civil rights cases in Wisconsin state and federal courts.

JOB CONTEXT

The position is a full-time, salaried position. The position will report to the Legal Director and work with the Legal Department and other staff members across the organization to create high impact litigation strategies and handle all aspects of the affiliate’s ongoing and future litigation.

Responsibilities include:

Essential Functions

The Staff Attorney collaborates with the ACLU of Wisconsin’s communications, policy, organizing, development, engagement, and administration departments to advance the overall mission and specific affiliate priorities.

- Investigate and litigate a range of civil liberties and civil rights cases in state and federal courts, to include: conducting factual and legal research; interviewing clients and witnesses; preparing legal memoranda, Open Records Act requests, demand letters, and other materials in advance of litigation; drafting pleadings and briefs; managing discovery; participating in trials and appeals, including conducting *voir dire*, taking witnesses' testimony, and giving oral arguments; negotiating settlements; and identifying and drafting amicus briefs;
- Center the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in all work, embedding the values in legal program development and organizational practices and processes;
- Commitment to working collaboratively and respectfully toward resolving obstacles and/or conflicts;
- Cultural and social humility with colleagues, in interactions with clients, and with community partners. Provide supervision and mentorship to junior legal staff, including fellows and interns;
- Help assess requests for legal assistance as assigned, and identify appropriate cases for legal challenges;
- Develop and deliver trainings, CLEs, and other presentations to the Wisconsin legal community on ACLU issues;
- Develop and help maintain relationships with pro bono co-counsel, local officials, and others who can help the ACLU of Wisconsin accomplish its campaign objectives;
- Engage in legal advocacy work to advance civil rights and liberties through collaborative non-litigation means, such as writing public comments, participating in public education events, and assisting with analyzing or drafting public comment on proposed legislation, as necessary;
- Provide legal analysis to other ACLU staff as directed by the Legal Director;
- Serve as a spokesperson for the ACLU of Wisconsin on legal issues handled by our office, as assigned;
- Work with other program staff to implement campaign objectives and identify opportunities for reform through litigation;

- Ability to work in office and remotely based on a hybrid office model. Attorneys must be able to appear at hearings and trials remotely and in person throughout the State of Wisconsin.
- Strong writing, research and verbal skills in presenting both to lawyers and to non-lawyers; leadership and organizational skills in order to encourage volunteer lawyers and work cooperatively in coalitions; able to take initiative, think strategically, and share responsibility and credit across the organization and with partners.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Licensed attorney, usually with civil or criminal litigation experience, including experience taking/defending depositions, participating in evidentiary hearings and/or trials, and experience managing complex discovery.
- Experience in federal courts and in constitutional and/or civil rights litigation on the plaintiff's side.
- Law (J.D.) degree from accredited institution;
- Licensed to practice law in Wisconsin or ability to waive into the Wisconsin Bar or sit for the next available bar exam;
- Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging as core values;
- A strong commitment to the ACLU's mission and goals toward the advancement of social justice, racial equity, dismantling white supremacy and incorporating a structural power analysis into work, with knowledge and understanding of how power is manifested in matters of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, ability, socio-economic circumstances, and immigration status;
- Substantive knowledge and understanding of constitutional law and civil liberties issues;
- Ability to litigate independently and collaboratively, juggle multiple projects at once, and exercise good judgment under stressful situations;

- Ability and willingness to research and quickly learn new, complex legal issues and build lawsuits on short notice in response to breaking events;
- Ability to think creatively about non-litigation solutions to promote ACLU of Wisconsin objectives, as part of an integrated advocacy team;
- Proficiency with Westlaw and electronic case filing (state and federal);
- Preference for familiarity with legal case management and timekeeping software and other programs used in complex litigation, including discovery and document management software;
- Willingness to manage a fast-paced and occasionally demanding schedule to meet litigation or other programmatic deadlines;
- Experience taking initiative, being proactive, and anticipating litigation needs;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, along with a willingness to be patient, collegial, and supportive to all affiliate colleagues;
- Comfort with challenging conversations and situations leveraging strong and engaging interpersonal skills;
- Willingness to receive and respond to feedback, communicate directly regarding issues that arise in cases, and work as a cohesive and collaborative member of a multi-person and multi-firm litigation team;
- A personal approach that values the individual, respects diversity, acknowledges the intersectionality of the identities of colleagues and clients and community members, and approaches the work with an anti-racist lens and commitment;
- Other duties as assigned.

The following qualifications are preferred, but not required:

- Three or more years of experience in practice as a licensed attorney;
- State or federal court clerkship;
- Experience litigating class actions;
- Experience litigating Section 1983 cases;



- Experience litigating emergency motions, including preliminary injunctions and temporary restraining orders, in state or federal court;
- Experience managing and/or mentoring other attorneys.

Working Conditions: Hybrid work requirements consisting of approximately a 40-hour work week with work from home permitted when work responsibility allows, prioritizing caregiving and work-life balance needs. Attorneys are expected to travel to state and federal courts throughout Wisconsin, as required.

The position requires maintaining physical file records and word processing.

- *Ability to work at a computer for multiple hours a day;*
- *Prolonged periods sitting at a desk and working on a computer;*
- *Visual acuity for extensive reading, preparing, and analyzing information, and viewing a computer terminal;*
- *Ability to do light physical activity including occasional lifting and carrying of office supplies, packages, and equipment weighing up to 20 pounds to facilitate organization, filing, and event assistance*

Mental Demand: Decision making, emotional intelligence, giving and receiving feedback and building trusting, collaborative relationships. The nature of this work can be emotionally demanding and requires thoughtful communication.

COMPENSATION

Based on the experience necessary for this role, we anticipate an annual salary of no less than \$80,000 annually; commensurate with experience. The ACLU of Wisconsin offers excellent benefits, including medical and disability insurance, a 401(k) with a match program, professional development stipend and generous



vacation, holiday, and sick leave.

How to Apply: Please email a single document of the requested documents to hr@aclu-wi.org, please use '[YOUR NAME]-Staff Attorney/Senior Staff Attorney' in the subject line of the email. The requested items are the following:

- Cover letter explaining how you are qualified for this position and why you're interested in being part of the ACLU of Wisconsin;
- Resume that includes all relevant legal experience;
- Final interviewees will need three professional references.

Applicants will be reviewed beginning immediately and will be accepted until the position is filled.

This job announcement provides a general but not comprehensive list of the essential responsibilities and qualifications required. It does not represent a contract of employment. The ACLU of Wisconsin reserves the right to change the description and/or posting at any time without advance notice.

The ACLU of Wisconsin is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and strongly encourages people of color, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and formerly incarcerated people to apply. The ACLU of Wisconsin undertakes affirmative action strategies in its recruitment and employment efforts to assure that persons with disabilities have full opportunities for employment in all positions. We encourage applicants with disabilities who may need accommodations in the application process to contact us at hr@aclu-wi.org.

The ACLU of Wisconsin is composed of two separate corporate entities, the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin Foundation. Both organizations share office space and employees.

Updated September 16, 2026

