

Organization and Opportunity Overview

Since 1920, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has been the nation's guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country. The ACLU is best known for litigation efforts as the country's largest public interest law organization; many of the ACLU's ground-breaking cases have changed lives and made history. The ACLU of Wisconsin (ACLU-WI) is the state affiliate of the national ACLU and is a non-profit, non-partisan, private organization. The ACLU of Wisconsin has 15,000 members and is dedicated to defending the civil liberties and civil rights of all Wisconsin residents.

The Legal Director will be a creative, dynamic, and visionary leader who will steward the growth of the ACLU-WI's legal department in advancing and shaping the civil rights and civil liberties landscape in Wisconsin. This is a full-time, exempt position. The Legal Director reports to the Executive Director and serves as a member of the ACLU-WI's senior leadership team, working cross-functionally to ensure that legal strategies are prioritized and aligned in support of the organization's long-term issue priorities. The Legal Director is responsible for overall strategy, coordination, and management of the legal department, including its litigation docket, staff, and network of volunteer cooperating counsel. The ideal candidate will be a skilled constitutional rights litigator, an inspiring leader with emotional intelligence, an experienced and visionary manager with deep commitment to EDIB work, with litigation experience as part of multi-disciplinary teams. Strong candidates will have demonstrated ability to initiate, develop, and pursue impact litigation as part of an integrated advocacy strategy as well as a demonstrated ability to work with, support, and inspire others.



To learn more, please visit us at: <https://www.aclu-wi.org>.

Primary Responsibilities

- Build, maintain, and oversee a robust docket of impact litigation and legal advocacy that advances the ACLU of Wisconsin's strategic priorities and responds to threats to civil rights and civil liberties.
- Work closely with the Deputy Director, and Executive Director in establishing and implementing operations, procedures, policies and strategies, with careful focus on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) issues throughout the work.
- Work collaboratively with a cross-departmental team to design litigation and to litigate existing cases that are aligned with strategic communications, long-term community engagement, development, policy advocacy, organizing and other strategies and tactics.
- Manage all aspects of the ACLU's litigation program, including coordinating case selection and election protection work with the senior leadership team and Executive Director.
- Oversee the investigation and development of cases prior to filing litigation.
- Build litigation teams with in-house lawyers, volunteer cooperating counsel, allied organizations, ACLU national legal staff, and other partners.
- Oversee all ACLU-WI litigation in federal and state courts.
- Maintain an individual caseload, manage warning and demand letters, public records requests, legal and policy reports and analysis, pre-litigation investigations, discovery, motion practice, brief writing, hearings and trials, settlement, appellate work, amicus briefs, and post-litigation or post-settlement monitoring.
- Supervise, proactively mentor, and train a team that includes staff attorneys, volunteer attorneys, support staff and law student interns. This includes cultivating educational and professional development opportunities for staff, as well as routine feedback.
- Coordinate recruitment and onboarding of additional legal staff with team members.
- Foster the organizational culture that empowers staff, encourages professional development, and emphasizes a commitment to upholding the highest ethical ideals of the legal profession and our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging values.
- Center the principles of 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.
- Deepen relationships among ACLU-WI departments, with national ACLU legal staff, cooperating and pro bono counsel, as well as other lawyers to elevate the visibility of the ACLU-WI.
- Help determine near- and long-term policy objectives for the ACLU-WI's core issue-area campaigns by working with the Advocacy Director on where litigation or legal strategies can be deployed to help teams achieve long-term policy goals.
- Help support near- and long-term community engagement objectives for the ACLU-WI's core issue-area campaigns by working with the Community Engagement Director on where litigation or legal strategies can be deployed to help WI community members and partners.
- Create and develop litigation or legal strategies where an objective may be to increase community pressure on decision-makers or have other political impact in concert with the Advocacy Director and Community Engagement Director.
- Work closely with the Development Director and team to engage donors and funders and support efforts to secure litigation funding.

- Work closely with the Communications Director and team to engage the public, serving as a public-facing speaker for the ACLU-WI by participating in panels and public forums and interviews related to legal topics, working collaboratively and closely with our communications and policy teams.
- Assist with operational functions, including but not limited to: developing budgets, providing regular reports on legal department activities, research and education on legal cases, assisting with file retention policy implementation, managing intake correspondence, coordinating and supporting other departments and activities as needed.

Experiences and Qualifications

- 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.
- A team player who inspires collaboration and functions decisively and with flexibility; a person who assumes the best from colleagues and who resolves conflicts directly and deftly.
- A commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging; with an approach that values the individual and respects differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, socio-economic circumstance, immigration status, age, and lived experience as people impacted by the carceral system.
- JD from an accredited law school with a license to practice law in Wisconsin or licensed in another reciprocal state and/or qualified to apply for bar admission in Wisconsin within 1 year.
- Ten or more years of increasingly responsible legal experience, which should include substantial state and federal constitutional law experience; an understanding of modern applications of civil liberties principles is strongly preferred.
- Proven management and leadership ability, including experience creating team culture and supervising attorneys, in addition to encouraging volunteers, interns, and paraprofessionals.
- Dedication to social justice work, the ability to work with a diverse team, and an awareness of, and willingness to engage in, the difficult and transformative work of challenging systems of oppression, institutional and structural racism, and implicit bias.
- Demonstrated superior skills in leadership and ability to quickly establish relationships; interpersonal relations; analytic and strategic thinking; persuasiveness and problem-solving; ability to prioritize, take initiative, and attend to detail; ability to maintain grace under pressure and across prioritized work.
- Comfort with challenging conversations and situations leveraging strong and engaging interpersonal skills.
- Ability to plan effective legal strategies, establish realistic objectives, and evaluate progress.

- Commitment to working with and being responsive to community groups, including marginalized communities, in the planning and development of litigation.
- Experience designing and executing complex, sequenced litigation strategies.
- An ability to manage multi-year or multi-jurisdictional projects.
- A track record of leadership through strong communication, collaboration, relationship building and stewardship.
- Excellent problem-solving skills and demonstrated skills in participatory and equitable decision-making.
- Exceptional analytical, writing, and speaking ability.
- Ability to communicate effectively with clients, opposing counsel, staff, volunteers, & the public.
- Ability to convey complex civil liberties and civil rights issues to the public and media.
- Clear understanding of the range of civil liberties issues, and their implications.

Applicant Information

Interested candidates should assemble and email: a **letter describing your qualifications** for this position and **your interest in ACLU-WI's mission, a detailed and updated resume**, and the names of, your relationship to, and the contact information for, **three professional references**, combined into one document, to ACLU@leadingtransitions.com no later than **1:00 p.m. CT on April 30, 2023**:

*** References will not be contacted until a candidate has been notified.**



Commitments from the ACLU-WI

The ACLU is an equal opportunity employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. The ACLU encourages applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status, and record of arrest or conviction.

- 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 jobs@aclu-wi.org.
- The ACLU of Wisconsin is comprised of two separate corporate entities, the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin Foundation. Both are organizations with the same overall mission; they share office space and employees.
- The annual salary range for this position begins at \$85,000. Benefits include paid vacation and sick leave, paid parental leave, optional medical for employee and family (includes one plan at no cost to the employee), dental and vision coverage for employee and family, life insurance, short and long-term disability insurance; and an optional 401(K) with employer with a stepped employer match.
- There is a permanently hybrid work environment.
- All offers of employment are contingent upon clear results of thorough background and reference checks.
- All inquiries about and interactions with candidates are kept in strict confidence.
- This position will remain open until filled.

The ACLU undertakes affirmative action strategies in its recruitment and employment efforts to assure that persons with disabilities have full opportunities for employment in all positions.

Leading Transitions is committed to the vitality of mission-based, nonprofit, philanthropic, and community-centered efforts and organizations, and their leaders. The firm's inclusive practices provide the flexibility and creativity necessary to adapt to the intricacies and dynamics of any community. We believe that periods of change are transformational and bring great new opportunities.