



American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan Is Hiring: West Michigan Legal Fellow

Do you want to use your law degree to fight for justice and change the world? Do you want a future in impact litigation and the mentoring to get there? Are you excited to live in one of Michigan's [most interesting cities](#)? If so, the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan's legal fellowship may be for you.

This two-year, internally-funded position in the ACLU's western regional office in Grand Rapids starts in fall 2024 and is designed to provide emerging social justice leaders with excellent training and experience in impact litigation and integrated advocacy. The ACLU is committed to developing the next generation of civil rights leaders, recognizes that talent comes from a variety of backgrounds, and has created this position to develop the talent of that next generation. The ACLU is deeply committed to racial equity and social justice and is driven to act on these core values. The fellow must be able to recognize ways our identities intersect and play out in the work, especially with communities we serve, and must demonstrate the cultural competency to work with a diverse team and effectively partner with historically marginalized communities.

The fellow will work closely with the West Michigan office's Senior Staff Attorney to help develop and litigate cases at the trial and appellate level in state and federal courts on a wide variety of cutting-edge civil liberties and civil rights issues. Recent ACLU of Michigan fellows have worked on [Pueblo v. Haas](#) (securing ability of parents in same-sex relationships to seek custody and parenting time for their children); [Malam v. Adducci](#) (challenging immigration detention during the pandemic); [Hamama v. Adducci](#) (challenging mass deportation and detention of Iraqi nationals to face persecution, torture or death); [Does III v. Whitmer](#) (challenging Michigan's sex offender registry as unconstitutional); [Corridore v. Washington](#) (seeking habeas jurisdiction based on lifetime electronic monitoring); and [Johnson v. Vanderkooi](#) (challenging police practice of taking fingerprints during *Terry* stops). Check out our [docket](#) for more about how we are fighting to protect civil liberties and civil rights.

The West Michigan Legal Fellow will participate in both litigation and non-litigation advocacy activities on a broad range of issues. The Legal Fellow will be involved in investigation, client interviewing, legal and factual research, discovery, and brief writing. In addition, the Legal Fellow will have the opportunity to engage in non-litigation advocacy, including policy work, public speaking, and community engagement. Examples of past fellow activities include writing amicus briefs that led to favorable criminal law rulings in the Michigan appellate courts, taking and defending depositions in *Does III*, conducting know your rights trainings for detained *Hamama* class members, leading advocacy efforts to oppose ordinances targeting the unhoused in Grand Rapids, and arguing in the Sixth Circuit in *Corridore*.

We want to hear from you: We know that not all strong candidates will have every skill we list. That's OK (except we do require a JD). We still want to hear from you. Research shows that women, non-binary people, and people of color are less likely to apply for a position if they don't meet every skill listed. At the ACLU of Michigan, we believe our collective differences enable us to make better

decisions, drive innovation, and deliver better programmatic results. We are committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable state and nation, and we know that begins with us doing the work ourselves.

Specific Responsibilities

(1) Legal

- Participate in investigating, developing and litigating impact civil liberties and civil rights cases in federal and state court.
- Conduct factual and legal research, draft pleadings and briefs, prepare memoranda, draft Freedom of Information Act requests, write demand letters, conduct discovery, and help write appellate and amicus briefs.
- Review, comment, and edit letters and briefs of co-counsel and other ACLU staff.
- Communicate with clients; answer client questions and manage class member interactions in several ongoing pieces of class action litigation.
- Support the legal work of the ACLU's Legal Department, as needed.

(2) Advocacy/Public Education

- Advocate for civil liberties and civil rights and represent the ACLU at events and in coalitions, as appropriate.
- Work with ACLU staff to implement integrated advocacy campaigns and high-impact strategies utilizing ACLU's communication, legislative, field organizing, and legal programs.

(3) Administration, Coordination and Support

- Contribute to the maintenance of the legal docket.
- Work with volunteer lawyers to screen and develop promising civil liberties and civil rights cases.
- Assist in managing the West Michigan office.

Supervision

The Legal Fellow will work within the Legal Department under the direct supervision of the West Michigan office's [Senior Staff Attorney](#). The Legal Department is supervised by the [Legal Director](#). The Legal Fellow may also work on assignments with other departments (e.g., political) as needed.

Qualifications

- Must have JD. Must be admitted to a state bar (Michigan or elsewhere), or become admitted within six months of starting the position.
- A strong understanding of, and demonstrated commitment to, civil liberties and civil rights.
- Exceptional writing, research and analytical skills, which can be demonstrated through clerkship, clinical, summer internship, or other experience.
- Excellent communication skills to both legal and non-legal audiences.
- Ability to work cooperatively on a variety of projects with lawyers, other ACLU staff, and community partners.
- A commitment to diversity; a personal approach that values the individual regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status, or record of arrest or conviction.

- Proficiency with computers: Windows, Microsoft Office, and Excel in particular.
- Applicants with language skills relevant to immigration-related work in Michigan are encouraged to apply.

Personal Characteristics: Ideally, the successful candidate will be the following:

- Personally committed to advancing the ACLU’s values, mission, goals and programs, with an understanding of a broad range of civil liberties and civil rights issues and their implications.
- Creative, flexible, well-organized and reliable, able to handle and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities and manage a demanding schedule; a team player who is able to work independently, jointly, and under pressure; willing to learn; a self-starter and finisher.
- Willing to work beyond 9-5 as needed, including occasional weekend meetings and travel.
- Cultural competency to work with a diverse team and effectively partner with diverse communities.

Compensation

This is a two-year, ACLU-funded position with a salary of \$62,000. Excellent benefits including health insurance, a 401(k) plan, and generous vacation time.

Application Procedure

Please submit in digital form, by email, a detailed letter of interest addressed to Miriam Aukerman, a resume, a legal writing sample and contact information for three references. Send to westmichiganfellow@aclumich.org. We will begin considering applications on October 9, 2023, and will continue to consider them on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

The start date in fall 2024 is negotiable and the position will remain open until filled. In your letter of interest, please indicate when you would be available to begin the fellowship, if selected.

Interviews will be conducted by phone and videoconference based on candidate comfort. Accommodations will happily be made to adjust to restricted internet, computer, or technology access.

The ACLU of Michigan is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities. If you are a qualified individual with a disability and need assistance applying online, please e-mail westmichiganfellow@aclumich.org and include “Accommodation” in the subject line. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.

The ACLU of Michigan 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, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status, record of arrest or conviction and any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

“ACLU of Michigan,” as used in this job description, refers collectively to two separate corporate entities, the ACLU of Michigan and the ACLU Fund of Michigan. The two entities share the same mission, office space, and employees.