



Legal Director

Salary: \$150,000

Location: This position will work on a hybrid basis out of the Detroit or Grand Rapids office and includes occasional travel.

The ACLU of Michigan is pleased to seek nominations and applications for the position of **Legal Director**.

ABOUT ACLU OF MICHIGAN

For over one hundred years, the ACLU national network has been fighting to protect civil liberties across the United States. The ACLU of Michigan, founded in 1959, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public interest organization dedicated to the defense and expansion of civil liberties and civil rights in Michigan. Whether it's reducing the prison and jail population, achieving full equality for the LGBTQ+ community, reducing immigration detention, or ending unjust laws that strip people of their fundamental right to vote, we take up the toughest civil liberties issues to defend individuals from government abuse and overreach. We accomplish our work through an integrated advocacy model in which we work across teams to leverage a combination of legal and political advocacy, organizing, public education and strategic communication. We are a passionate, highly motivated group of lawyers, public policy experts, lobbyists, community organizers, communicators, and fundraisers. As an organization, we believe that our work in becoming a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace that centers a sense of belonging is a perpetual journey rather than a destination.

The next Legal Director will lead the affiliate's legal program in areas related to democracy and voting rights, free speech, criminal legal system reform and public safety, immigrants' rights, reproductive freedoms, and LGBTQ+ rights, among others. A full list of our current issue areas can be found [here](#).

ABOUT THE ROLE

Reporting to the Executive Director and as a member of the leadership team, the Legal Director will inspire and lead a talented and dedicated team to ensure its position as a formidable legal force defending the civil liberties and rights of the people of Michigan. The Legal Director will collaboratively shape a bold legal agenda and oversee complex state and federal litigation efforts while ensuring legal advocacy is integrated with the ACLU of Michigan's broader campaigns and partnerships. The Legal Director also ensures sound legal operations, equitable internal processes, and strong collaboration across

departments and with external allies. The Legal Director will work in concert with the leadership team and contribute to organization-wide initiatives, including continuous efforts to identify and work towards next steps in embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB), embracing our journey as an ongoing opportunity for growth. Specifically, the Legal Director can expect to lead in the following areas:

Strategic Vision: *Champion a bold legal vision that builds the conditions for and responds to protect the civil liberties and rights of Michiganders, especially those whose rights have historically been infringed upon. Steward litigation and broader legal advocacy efforts that powerfully advance the ACLU of Michigan's mission through an integrated advocacy approach.*

- Strategically shape and oversee the ACLU of Michigan's entire docket in federal and state court, generally consisting of 25-50 active cases, to ensure alignment with organizational goals and community needs.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director, leadership team, Board, and legal team to surface opportunities and provide legal support, including letters, know your rights materials, amicus matters, and other materials for campaigns and priorities.
- Collaborate with the team to develop alternative legal pathways for projects where litigation is not viable.
- In consultation with the Executive Director, and the Board when appropriate, authorize ACLU of Michigan involvement in litigation.
- Proactively and thoughtfully engage team members and partners for insights and perspectives and to communicate decisions.

Legal Strategy: *Facilitate and guide decision-making to ensure excellence in the ACLU of Michigan's legal strategies, tactics, and approaches.*

- Ensure excellence of the legal team's work, including litigation in state and federal courts, legal writing and memos, research and investigation, case selection, and formulation of the ACLU of Michigan's legal positions.
- Leverage the strengths of the team and organization to ensure effective oversight and management of every legal decision and case.

People Management and Development: *Support the professional growth and development of the legal team, fostering a culture of excellence, integrity, mentorship, and wellness to prepare a force that is resilient, effective, and inspired to creatively and thoughtfully protect civil rights and liberties now and for years to come.*

- Recruit, supervise, structure, and provide opportunities for growth and recognition to a skilled legal team split across two offices—including attorneys, fellows, paralegals, and an investigator. Recognize team members' strengths and provide feedback and equitable opportunities for growth and development.

- Champion a healthy and equitable workplace by promoting self-care, managing workload distribution, and ensuring staff have the tools and support to thrive.
- Oversee the internship and externship programs to cultivate emerging civil rights advocates and create pathways for diverse talent in the legal field.

Administration and Internal Processes: *Ensure equitable, transparent, and mission-aligned legal operations and communication.*

- Support equitable and effective legal operations through strategic delegation, clear processes, and transparent and thoughtful communication.
- Maintain systems to track legal projects, staff and volunteer attorney time, and case progress; ensure documentation supports compliance, grant reporting, and audit readiness.
- Prepare litigation activity reports for leadership and the Board and ensure the Executive Director is fully briefed on significant legal matters.
- Steward legal resources and reporting systems, manage the legal department budget with integrity, and pursue cost recovery and attorneys' fees.

Internal and External Collaboration: *Build powerful partnerships and foster collaboration across departments, with community and legal partners, and through statewide and national networks.*

- Serve as a member of the Senior Leadership team, holding legal and organizational leadership perspectives to help guide decisions.
- Chair the state lawyers committee, recruiting diverse and qualified members and strengthening their connection to the ACLU of Michigan's mission and work.
- Collaborate across the organization to ensure the legal program supports advocacy campaigns, communications, and fundraising efforts and positions the legal team as a vital part of the organization's integrated advocacy approach.
- Develop and sustain partnerships with the national ACLU network, legal services agencies, law firms, volunteer attorneys, legal community groups, and other community partners to amplify the ACLU of Michigan's reach and influence.
- Serve as a trusted thought partner on complex, challenging decisions, including on legal strategies and matters.
- Represent the ACLU of Michigan in public speaking events, with the media, with legislators, policymakers and community groups, and in development and fundraising events by publicizing the ACLU's work and articulating the ACLU's views to the public on a wide range of civil rights and civil liberties issues.

DESIRED QUALITIES & CHARACTERISTICS

While we expect any candidate to have learning curves in the role, we are excited to consider candidates who bring strengths, abilities, and alignment with the ACLU of Michigan's values in the following areas:

Legal Expertise

- The candidate should have led at least one complex lawsuit from beginning to end and been involved in significant capacities in several others in federal and state courts, including constitutional, civil rights, or appellate matters. We think this is mostly likely consistent with someone who has been litigating for at least 7 years, but we are receptive to candidates who have otherwise demonstrated that level of legal skill related to the understanding of impact litigation strategy and civil procedure.
- J.D. and membership in the State Bar of Michigan (or willing and able to sit or waive into the bar),
- Deep grounding in constitutional law and civil liberties at the federal level with recognition and appreciation for state court strategies.
- Legal research, writing, and analytical skills, with the ability to translate complex legal issues for legal and non-legal audiences.

Strategic Leadership Grounded in Integrated Advocacy

- Demonstrated commitment to defending and advancing civil rights and civil liberties, with a clear understanding of the ACLU's mission and values.
- Ability to set vision and strategy for the legal work of the ACLU of Michigan.
- Nuanced understanding of the range of legal strategies that support an integrated advocacy approach and collaborative ecosystem of organizations and partners.
- Ability to manage and oversee legal work.
- Experience in nonprofit, advocacy, or community-based settings is highly valued, and experience and knowledge of Michigan is a plus.

People and Team Leadership

- Demonstrated leadership skills and ability to motivate others, including successfully directing staff and volunteers.
- Proven ability to supervise and develop staff, holding both the needs of the individual and team together with care and shared accountability.
- Consultative leadership style with the ability to move decisively when needed.
- High emotional intelligence and communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to manage and lead diverse teams with compassion and clarity.
- Skilled in building inclusive, effective, and collaborative teams, fostering a culture of excellence and wellness, seriousness of purpose and levity.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB)

- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; a personal approach that values the individual and respects differences of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ability, and socio-economic circumstance.
- Self-awareness in navigating power, identity, and difference, especially during times of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- Demonstrated experience working alongside impacted communities, with humility and respect for diverse voices and lived experiences.
- Awareness, or openness, to principles of restorative justice as a means of addressing conflict and harm in the workplace.

Organizational Acumen and Collaborative Spirit

- Superb organizational skills with attention to detail, strong follow-through, and the ability to handle and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities, to supervise and delegate, and to meet tight deadlines.
- An adaptable, reliable, and creative team player who inspires and models collaboration across internal departments and external coalitions.
- A strong relationship builder who is able to thoughtfully collaborate with ACLU National, other affiliates, law firms and partners.
- Able to effectively communicate about the ACLU's legal work to a wide range of internal and external audiences, including the media.
- Comfortable with irregular hours, some travel, and participation in evening or weekend events as needed.

Note to Potential Candidates: We know that not all strong candidates will have every skill we list. That's OK. 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.

Compensation and Benefits:

The ACLU values equity, transparency, and clarity in pay. Consistent with the ACLU's compensation philosophy, there is a set salary for this role. The annual salary for this position is \$150,000. Excellent benefits, including health, vision, and dental insurance and a 401(k)-retirement plan with matching contributions, an individual professional

development budget, and an employee assistance program are provided. The ACLU also facilitates a wide range of nationwide employee resource groups.

How to Apply:

This search is being supported by Callie Carroll of CLC Endeavors. Please send application materials to ACLUMI-LD@clcendeavors.com. Applications should include a resume and cover letter that communicates your interest and qualifications for the role. **Priority will be given to applications received by September 26th**, though applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled.

Equal Opportunity Employer:

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, or record of arrest or conviction. 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 call 313-578-6800 or mail a letter to 2966 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI, 48201. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request accommodation for the interview process.