



ACLU OF MICHIGAN SEEKS STAFF ATTORNEY OR SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY

Overview

For nearly 100 years, the ACLU has been at the forefront of every major civil liberties fight in our country's history. 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 all individuals from government abuse and overreach. With ACLU affiliate offices in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, we fight tirelessly to defend our rights in the courts, influence public policy, and empower communities to advance rights for all. 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. We are a passionate, highly motivated group of lawyers, public policy experts, lobbyists, community organizers, communicators and fundraisers, and we're looking for exceptional talent to join our team.

The ACLU is deeply committed to racial equity and social justice and is driven to act on these core values. Applicants 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.

This is an incredibly exciting time to join the ACLU. Our membership has tripled, and we are building a more expansive advocacy infrastructure to increase the ACLU's effectiveness in achieving its objectives. The ACLU of Michigan seeks an experienced staff attorney, who could be designated a Senior Staff Attorney depending on type and length of experience, to build, file, and litigate complex civil actions in state and federal court. This will increase our capacity to push forward our proactive litigation agenda as well as engage in fast-moving, defensive battles against the Trump administration's policies and other affronts to civil rights and civil liberties. In recent years, our attorneys have built and litigated high-profile class actions challenging [mass deportations to Iraq](#), [unconstitutional cash bail](#), [tax foreclosures](#), and the [Flint water crisis](#). Check out [our legal docket](#) for more information about how we are fighting to protect civil rights and civil liberties.

The Position

The person hired into this position will litigate a wide variety of civil rights and civil liberties cases at the trial and appellate levels in both state and federal courts, acting as lead or co-counsel, and often in partnership with volunteer attorneys, coalition partners, and lawyers from the national ACLU. They will collaborate with staff in other departments to set goals and implement strategies that advance ACLU priorities and campaigns. They will also represent the ACLU

publicly through speaking engagements, media interviews, and community engagement. They may also be assigned a supervision role if needed. A significant goal of this position is to enable the ACLU of Michigan to respond quickly when significant civil rights and civil liberties issues present themselves in our communities. The legal department is currently comprised of a legal director, three senior staff attorneys, one staff attorney, one legal fellow, one attorney focused on racial justice, one attorney focused on LGBTQ+ rights, an immigrant rights coordinator, a program associate, two paralegals, and an investigator. The ACLU of Michigan maintains staffed offices in Detroit and Grand Rapids.

Specific Responsibilities

(1) Legal

- Identify, investigate, develop and litigate high-impact civil rights and civil liberties cases in federal and state court. This includes identifying and recruiting plaintiffs, conducting factual investigation and legal research, preparing memoranda, writing demand letters, drafting pleadings and briefs, conducting discovery, arguing motions, trying cases, negotiating and overseeing implementation of judgments and settlement agreements, and representing clients in appellate proceedings if necessary.
- Write appellate and amicus curiae briefs.
- Supervise, lead, or staff litigation teams of associated attorneys; co-counsel cases with other public interest groups and the national ACLU staff.
- Contribute to case selection, formulating legal strategy, and identifying the ACLU's litigation priorities.
- Recruit and work successfully with ACLU volunteer attorneys.
- Work with local lawyers committees to screen and develop promising cases and facilitate and support the effective functioning of those committees.

(2) Leadership, Public Advocacy and Teamwork

- Serve as a public spokesperson for the ACLU. Respond to interview requests from reporters, write editorials and blogs, contribute to social media, and appear at speaking engagements.
- Work with ACLU staff to implement integrated advocacy campaigns and high-impact strategies utilizing the ACLU's communication, legislative, community organizing and legal programs.
- Engage with coalition partners, policymakers, and community groups working on similar issues.
- Demonstrate leadership by initiating cases, projects and programs that are sensitive to community needs, are inclusive, and expand the ACLU's network of supporters.

(3) Administration, Supervision and Support

- Recruit and/or potentially supervise attorneys and interns.
- Proactively communicate with all staff so they are well-informed of upcoming hearings, judicial decisions, and important developments in the legal department.
- Ensure that the Legal Director and Executive Directors are adequately informed of work. Solicit direction and input from them appropriately and consistent with professional standards.

- Prepare administrative and periodically provide support for grant reports, provide administrative and organizational support as needed, and adhere to internal systems for attorney recordkeeping and information sharing.

Supervision: The person in this position will likely report to the Legal Director.

Qualifications

- J.D. with a minimum of 4 years of leading litigation.
- Substantive knowledge and understanding of, and demonstrated commitment to, civil rights and civil liberties issues. Experience in civil rights litigation a plus.
- Exceptional skills in legal research, writing and analysis.
- Must be a member of the State Bar of Michigan, pass the next bar examination, or waive in from any state where you have practiced for three of the past five years.
- Demonstrated ability to litigate independently, jointly and under pressure.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with both legal and non-legal audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively on a variety of projects with lawyers, other staff members, and with community organizations and coalitions.
- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; a personal approach that values the individual and respects differences of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status, and record of arrest or conviction.
- Experience working with vulnerable or impacted communities, including but not limited to immigrants, incarcerated people, or indigent populations.
- Creative, result-oriented, self-starting, willing to learn, and able to manage an aggressive schedule, working beyond 9 to 5 as needed.
- Willingness to travel across the state for litigation, local lawyers committee meetings and speaking engagements.
- Proficiency with computers, particularly Windows, Microsoft Office, and Westlaw.

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 and commitment to the entire range of civil rights and civil liberties issues and their implications. Dedicated to building and promoting the ACLU.
- A reliable and creative person who can handle and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities; a self-starter and finisher.
- A team player, problem-solver and strategic thinker who inspires collaboration and functions decisively; self-reflective and focused on personal development; flexible and well-organized; excited to work with a diverse team and effectively partner with a diversity of people and communities.

Compensation

The salary for this position is \$87,000 per year, or if the candidate is hired as a senior staff attorney, \$104,000 per year. Excellent benefits, including health insurance and a 401(k) retirement plan with matching, are provided.

Application Procedure

To apply, please submit in digital form, by email, a resume, a detailed letter of interest that includes how you learned about the position, and a writing sample. Your application should be emailed to apply@aclumich.org and include the subject “**Staff Attorney Application.**”

The position will remain open until filled, but the hiring committee will begin to review applications on August 18, 2025.

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, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

The ACLU of Michigan is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. If you are a qualified individual with a disability and need assistance applying online, please email apply@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 accommodations for the interview process.

“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.