



## 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 40 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 a dedicated staff attorney to build, file, and litigate complex civil actions in state and federal court. This staff attorney position will increase our capacity to push forward our affirmative 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 staff 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 Staff Attorney, who could be designated a Senior Staff Attorney depending on experience, 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. The Staff Attorney will collaborate with staff in other departments to set goals and implement strategies that

advance ACLU priorities and campaigns. The Staff Attorney will also represent the ACLU publicly through speaking engagements, media interviews, and community engagement. 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 comprised of a legal director, deputy legal director, five staff attorneys, two legal fellows, two paralegals, a program associate, and an investigator. It is anticipated that this position will be based in Detroit.

## **Specific Responsibilities**

### **(1) Legal**

- Identify, investigate, develop and litigate high-impact civil rights and civil liberties cases in federal and state court. Identify and recruit plaintiffs, conduct factual investigation and legal research, prepare memoranda, write demand letters, draft pleadings and briefs, conduct discovery, argue motions, try cases, write appellate briefs and amicus curiae briefs, and negotiate and oversee implementation of judgments and settlement agreements.
- 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 supervise law students 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 and solicit direction and input appropriately and consistent with professional standards.

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

**Supervision:** The Staff Attorney will report to the Legal Director.

**Qualifications**

- J.D. with litigation experience or a judicial clerkship.
- A strong understanding of, and demonstrated commitment to, civil rights and civil liberties.
- 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.
- Substantive knowledge and understanding of constitutional law and civil liberties issues.
- 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 range for this position is \$75,000-\$85,000 per year, depending on experience. 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 detailed letter of interest, resume, writing sample, and contact information for three references. Your application should be emailed to [staffattorneyjob@aclumich.org](mailto:staffattorneyjob@aclumich.org).

The position will remain open until filled, but the hiring committee will begin to review applications on February 3, 2020.

*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, and record of arrest or conviction.*

*“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.*