

## STAFF ATTORNEY

MAY 23, 2022

The American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey (ACLU-NJ) seeks applicants for the full-time position of **Staff Attorney**.

The ACLU-NJ takes pride in our reputation of over 60 years of fighting for the rights of all New Jerseyans. And now – with ongoing challenges to civil liberties at the national level, the increased need to develop good policy at the local level, the still-evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil rights, and the 400-years overdue increased awareness of the impacts of systemic racism on every American institution— is a vital time to join us and make a meaningful, positive, long-term impact on the future of New Jersey and the United States.

As part of an organization that uses an integrated, inter-departmental approach to advocacy, the attorney will join a 10+ person legal team that engages in litigation and a wide range of advocacy tools to protect and expand civil rights and civil liberties and that works collaboratively with policy and communications colleagues to maximize the ACLU-NJ's impact. The ACLU-NJ's legal department has a robust civil rights litigation docket, including an active amicus practice in which we appear before the New Jersey Supreme Court more frequently than any other non-governmental party.

This position will be supervised by the legal director or the senior supervising attorney and will be based in Newark with a hybrid work

schedule that currently offers the option of working remotely up to three days each week.

## **Responsibilities**

The Staff Attorney will be responsible for working on a wide range of civil rights and civil liberties issues, concentrating on the ACLU-NJ's strategic priorities. The ACLU-NJ strives to examine all our work through the lens of racial justice, and our current priorities include decarceration and reforming the criminal legal system, protecting and expanding the rights of immigrants, and using legal tools to advance equity and equal protection of the laws for those historically denied their rights.

## **Litigation & Advocacy**

- Investigate, develop, and litigate impact civil liberties and civil rights cases at the trial and appellate level in federal and state courts and administrative forums.
  - All staff attorneys are responsible for identifying possible litigation and advocacy; conducting factual and legal research; evaluating legal theory and strategy; identifying, interviewing, and counseling clients and witnesses; writing demand letters; drafting pleadings, motions, and briefs; conducting discovery; working with experts; presenting oral arguments; negotiating settlements; handling appeals; and writing amicus briefs.
  - This staff attorney can expect to step into existing criminal legal reform cases and projects in development aimed at decarceration and protecting the rights of people with criminal convictions. They will gradually develop their own docket of new cases and areas of expertise, aligned with the ACLU-NJ's strategic priorities.
- Engage in the advocacy work of the legal department and the broader integrated advocacy campaigns of the organization,

including:

- Serving as a subject matter expert and advocate on priority issues.
  - Drafting and editing public education and non-litigation advocacy materials, in collaboration with the Policy and Communications departments.
  - Providing technical and other support for legislative and policy work, including analyzing bills and occasionally drafting and delivering testimony.
  - Engaging with coalition partners, law and policy makers, and community representatives working on similar issues.
- Engage in public speaking including representing ACLU-NJ positions to the media, at conferences, and on panels.
  - Provide oversight and support for litigation being handled by pro bono cooperating attorneys by reviewing litigation documents and ensuring alignment on strategy and approach.
  - Evaluate how cases, investigations, and projects are inclusive and responsive to community needs and in alignment with organizational priorities.

### **Leadership & Administration**

- Establish and cultivate collaborative relationships with community partners, coalitions, stakeholders, ACLU-NJ staff and colleagues from other ACLU offices.
- Assist in the development, mentoring, and supervision of more junior staff, fellows, and interns, including the direct supervision of interns.
- Contribute to a work culture that centers racial justice, inclusion, participation, and collaboration.

- Participate in the ACLU-NJ's internal and external racial justice and equity work and in the development of the legal department's vision, plans, and priorities.
- Assist with staff, internship, and fellowship recruitment and hiring and with recruiting volunteer attorneys.
- Provide administrative and organizational support as needed and adhere to internal systems for recordkeeping and information sharing.
- Engage in special projects and other duties as assigned.

## **Qualifications**

The ACLU of New Jersey anticipates hiring an attorney with 3-6 years of federal and/or state court litigation experience (including clerkships) for this position but will consider all applicants with that level of experience, strong advocacy, and litigation skills. Attorneys with 8 or more years of experience may be eligible for the title Senior Staff Attorney.

## **Required**

- Excellent analytic, research, writing, and communication skills.
- Ability to develop and litigate impact cases, including demonstrated ability to conduct thorough fact-finding and investigations.
- Excellent at working collaboratively on a variety of projects and building strong relationships with lawyers, other staff members, and with community organizers and coalitions.
- A strong understanding of, and demonstrated commitment to, civil rights and civil liberties.
- Proven project and time management skills, including a high level of organization, the ability to meet deadlines, and attention to

detail.

- Ability to balance and prioritize multiple tasks and responsibilities.
- Ability and willingness to travel throughout the state of New Jersey, and occasionally to other states for conferences and training.
- Ability to manage a demanding schedule and work occasional weekend and evening hours, as needed.
- Admitted to practice law in the state of New Jersey or willingness to promptly take the New Jersey bar exam, and a commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards.

## **Desired**

- At least three years of experience litigating in complex civil cases and/or class actions in federal and/or state courts.
- Ability to synthesize complex issues and communicate them effectively to diverse audiences, including elected officials, attorneys, judges, community partners, supporters, the media, and the public.
- Experience with the criminal legal system, including parole, probation, or sentencing.
- Experience with data analysis as an advocacy or litigation tool.
- Experience working with or representing vulnerable clients, particularly those involved in the criminal legal system.
- Experience with discovery, depositions, hearings, oral arguments, and/or appellate litigation.
- Experience with communications strategies for advocacy, such as drafting op-eds or serving as a spokesperson.

- Familiarity with or experience working on social justice issues in New Jersey and/or with organizations working on those issues.
- A demonstrated commitment to and track record of doing intersectional advocacy, using multiple strategies to achieve a particular goal.
- Knowledge of Spanish or another language likely to be spoken by clients with limited English proficiency.

## **Compensation**

The ACLU of New Jersey pays staff attorneys according to its salary bands and based on years of litigation experience. Currently, the salary range for 0-2 years is \$69,000-\$76,000; for 3-6 years, \$79,000 to 94,000; for 7-15 years is \$97,000-125,000; for 16-30+ years is 127,000-\$145,000. The ACLU-NJ supports and plans for staff member professional growth and skill development through internal and external opportunities. We offer a comprehensive compensation and benefits package which currently includes 16 days paid time off, 12 office holidays and 12 health care leave days; medical, vision, and dental insurance; 80 days paid family leave life and long-term disability insurance; pre-tax transit benefits; and a 401(k) plan with employer match. This position is full-time, salaried, and exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

## **About our Culture**

We are a diverse workforce and take pride in our ability to attract and retain employees with a huge array of backgrounds and experiences. We work hard, but also like to celebrate our successes.

We strive to bring humility, empathy, kindness, and generosity to our work, internally within the organization and externally with our partners and those whom we are serving. We seek to build a work culture with a sense of respect and collegiality, and a willingness to be generous with our expertise and resources.

Our organization is currently a team of 30 who care deeply about the work of the ACLU. We view our work as advancing our goals of liberty and justice for all and we work to achieve these through our approach and practices. We enjoy working together and remain inspired by the remarkable work of our amazing local and national colleagues.

## **TO APPLY**

If you're excited about bringing your talents and skills to the ACLU-NJ, [complete the application](https://boards.greenhouse.io/aclu/jobs/6161476002#application)

(<https://boards.greenhouse.io/aclu/jobs/6161476002#application>) upload a resume, letter of interest, and legal writing sample (no longer than 10 double-spaced pages). Your letter should explain ways in which you satisfy the skills and qualifications specified above. We also invite applicants to include in their letter information about how their background and/or experiences could contribute to the diversity, cultural vitality, and perspective of our staff and advocacy work.

Application materials will also be accepted via postal mail (P.O. Box 32159, Newark, NJ 07102), but electronic filing is strongly preferred. Applications will be reviewed beginning immediately. We will accept applications until the position is filled, at which time the job announcement will be removed from our website. We hope that one of those applications is yours.

The ACLU-NJ makes every effort to assure that its recruitment and employment provide all qualified persons, including persons with disabilities, with full opportunities for employment in all positions.

The ACLU-NJ 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 email [careers@aclu-nj.org](mailto:careers@aclu-nj.org) (<mailto:careers@aclu-nj.org>). If you are selected

for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.

The ACLU-NJ is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest organization, dedicated to defending and enhancing civil rights and civil liberties through litigation, legislative advocacy, organizing, and community education.

*The ACLU-NJ is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture of belonging. It is our policy to employ qualified people without regard to race; color; religion; sex; national origin; age; ancestry; disability; sexual orientation; veteran's status; marital status; civil union status; arrest or court record; citizenship; credit history; genetic information; gender identity or expression; status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking; or any other characteristic protected under federal or state law. The more inclusive we are, the better we are.*