



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION

Wisconsin

## Staff Attorney Job Description and Announcement

The ACLU of Wisconsin is seeking a staff attorney to join its legal team in the fight for civil rights and civil liberties. As the state affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Wisconsin works through the courts, in the state legislature, with local governments and with people in the community to protect and advance civil rights and civil liberties for all people in Wisconsin. The ACLU of Wisconsin legal team has contributed to major achievements in recent years, including overturning Wisconsin's ban on marriage for lesbian and gay couples, ending the use of pepper spray, punitive solitary confinement and shackling at juvenile prisons, and curtailing the excessive and racially biased police practice of massive traffic and pedestrian stops in Milwaukee. Our affiliate has legal challenges underway against Wisconsin's parole scheme for juveniles sentenced to life in prison; against Milwaukee police practices that led to indiscriminate arrests of peaceful protestors; and against attempts to deny LGBT students protection from harassment and discrimination. To achieve our mission, we deploy legal, legislative, advocacy, and public education programs on a broad range of constitutional issues, including discrimination, policing, mass incarceration, conditions of confinement, free speech, religious freedom, reproductive rights, LGBT rights, and information privacy. The ACLU-WI headquarters is located in Milwaukee's historic Third Ward, where we have a diverse staff of 15 people, including 5 lawyers in the legal department. (Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely the staff attorney will begin during a period of primarily remote work.)

**Position Overview:** Facing the historic challenge of protecting and advancing civil liberties and civil rights in an era of new threats, the ACLU of Wisconsin is looking for an experienced, dynamic, creative, and thoughtful attorney who will focus on a range of civil liberties and civil rights issues using litigation and other advocacy strategies. This person will investigate and analyze civil liberties and civil rights violations, and devise and implement impact litigation and, in collaboration with staff in other departments, other approaches – including policy advocacy, community education and organizing, and digital and media advocacy – to address those violations. The staff attorney will report directly to the ACLU of Wisconsin's legal director, but may also report to other attorneys or staff on particular projects. In most litigation, the staff attorney will work on a team of lawyers including both ACLU staff lawyers from the affiliate and/or from national ACLU and cooperating lawyers from the private bar.

**Qualifications and other Required Skills and Attributes:** Applicants must have a law degree from an accredited law school and be admitted to practice law in Wisconsin, or, if not currently licensed in Wisconsin, be licensed and in good standing in another state and willing and able to obtain a Wisconsin law license within six months. We seek to fill this position with an attorney with 2 or more years of litigation experience.

The successful applicant must also have a demonstrated commitment, through previous professional, volunteer or lived experience, to civil rights and civil liberties. The position requires excellent legal research, writing, and oral advocacy skills, as well as strong analytical, interpersonal, and time-

management skills. The individual must be an outstanding communicator who is able to effectively convey the mission and activities of the ACLU to a variety of diverse constituencies and to the broader public. Staff lawyers take on public speaking engagements and media inquiries and should feel comfortable explaining legal concepts and answering questions for general audiences.

We are looking for a flexible team player who is also comfortable working independently and taking initiative. Applicants must have patience, emotional intelligence, a sense of humor, and cultural competency. Applicants must be able to occasionally work evenings, weekends or variable hours as cases and other work may require, and to travel throughout the region and, occasionally, other parts of the country.

**Preferred Skills and Experiences:** Strong candidates will have demonstrated experience using litigation, advocacy, and community engagement strategies as part of a creative response to civil rights and civil liberties violations in affected communities. Experience in Wisconsin state or federal courts is a plus. Pertinent litigation experience could include drafting pleadings, preparing and responding to discovery, conducting and defending depositions, writing trial and appellate briefs, examining witnesses and arguing motions or appeals. Relevant advocacy experience could include writing letters to or testifying before government agencies or legislative bodies seeking policy changes. Community engagement may include work with other organizations on shared goals or objectives, preparation of know your rights materials or public education presentations. Fluency in languages other than English spoken widely in the community is a plus.

**Compensation:** Attorney compensation is based on relevant legal experience and skills, starting at approximately \$58,240. Benefits include paid vacation and sick leave, 10 weeks parental leave, medical and dental coverage, life insurance, short and long term disability insurance; and a 401(K).

**To Apply:** Please submit a resume, three references, a recent writing sample (no more than 5 pages, which can be an excerpt from a brief), and a brief cover letter describing your interest in the position to: [jobs@aclu-wi.org](mailto:jobs@aclu-wi.org). Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The ACLU of Wisconsin is an equal opportunity employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. We encourage applications from all qualified individuals without regard to arrest or conviction, race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability or veteran status.

To learn more about the work of the ACLU and the principles that animate our work, please visit [www.aclu-wi.org](http://www.aclu-wi.org), or visit us on Facebook or Twitter.

*Revised August 2020*