

LEADERSHIP PROFILE



**Director of Thurgood Marshall Institute
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
New York, NY (HQ) & Washington, DC**

Launched in 2015, the Institute complements LDF's traditional litigation strengths and brings critical capabilities to the fight for racial justice including research and targeted advocacy campaigns.
From the Thurgood Marshall Institute's Mission

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Democracy in America is at a watershed moment. The nation is deeply divided, and the civil rights of marginalized communities are under assault from the voting booth to the criminal justice system and beyond. The work of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF), America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice, has never been more critical. The Thurgood Marshall Institute (Institute), a think tank within LDF, is essential to LDF's comprehensive approach toward protecting and expanding civil rights in the United States.

Named to honor the legacy of LDF's founder, Thurgood Marshall, and established to deepen and broaden LDF's critical work, the Institute is an interdisciplinary hub within LDF. It integrates cutting-edge research and innovative thinking to inform, elevate and frame the litigation and policy work of LDF, and contributes to targeted advocacy campaigns to focus resources on specific civil rights challenges. The Institute also houses LDF's Archives, a collection of materials chronicling the legal history of the Civil Rights Movement.



The Thurgood Marshall Institute Director will support the work of LDF and help elevate, shape and frame the narrative of the modern civil rights movement by providing critical research, strategic communication, collaboration and advocacy. As a member of the senior management team, the Director will be a thought leader and partner to the staff supporting the current work of LDF, as well as an advisor and brain trust regarding emerging civil rights issues.

THE ORGANIZATION

LDF is the country's first and foremost civil and human rights legal organization.

Founded in 1940, LDF's core focus areas are political participation, criminal justice reform, education equity, and economic justice. LDF was the legal arm of the civil rights movement in the 1960's and is at the forefront of today's most pressing civil rights matters.



Through litigation, advocacy and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.

LDF has a tradition of expert legal advocacy in the Supreme Court and other courts throughout the nation. In addition to working through the courts, LDF also works through advocacy to the executive and legislative branches, educational outreach, monitoring of federal and state government activity, coalition building and policy research. Through its scholarship, fellowship and internship programs, LDF helps students to attend and graduate from college and law school.

The Thurgood Marshall Institute expands and supports the work of LDF through its research, advocacy and the strategic use of LDF's archives.

The Institute's research capacity has enabled LDF to proactively define civil rights issues and sustain targeted communications in areas such as policing reform, voting rights and education equity. The Institute produces scholarly publications which provide support for litigation, advocacy and public education by illustrating the real-world impact of government actions and policies. Publications include: [Ferguson in Focus](#), [Democracy Diminished: State and Local Threats to Voting Post-Shelby County](#), [Alabama v. Holder](#), [It Matters if You're Black or White](#) and [Our Girls, Our Future](#). The Institute also convenes TMI Labs, one day events that bring together scholars, advocates and

experts to examine emerging civil rights issues. Previous labs have focused on policing reform, implicit bias, affirmative action, GOTV and base building strategies, and origins of the criminal justice system, among other topics.

The Institute team contributes to multi-year issue campaigns to build political and public support for civil rights reforms through research, strategic communications, and policy analysis. The Institute's current Policing Reform Campaign studies and promotes strategies such as reimagining public safety, increasing officer accountability and improving police-community relations.

The LDF archives, which are housed in the Institute, are a national treasure and invaluable resource to LDF's legal team and select scholars as they seek to understand our nation's history and the struggle for racial justice and equality. The Archives team builds and manages a repository of LDF's historic records, provides library services to attorneys and staff, and oversees records management, adding to the Institute's research capacity and providing direct support to LDF's legal work.



THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director will manage the Institute to achieve next-level excellence, vitality, growth and impact. Building upon the infrastructure and processes established in the start-up phase of the Institute, the Director will:

- 1. Conduct and/or oversee multidisciplinary research projects and provide thought leadership** to support and shape current work and provide insight on emerging civil rights issues.
- 2. Grow the Scholars and Fellows in Residence Program to strengthen relationships** with legal scholars and social scientists on evolving scholarship on race, as well as to develop new advocacy approaches.
- 3. Develop and/or supervise the development of strategic, research-based publications and communications** to shape and frame the narrative on critical civil rights matters.

4. Convene civil rights leaders, scholars and subject matter experts through the Institute's Labs and conferences to examine emerging civil rights issues.

5. Manage the archives team and provide leadership in defining and prioritizing the process of archiving and enabling access to sensitive material.

6. Enhance the operational infrastructure and be an effective manager of the people and the Institute. Bring management acumen and the ability to recruit, lead, develop and empower staff.

7. Work in collaboration with the President & Director-Counsel and Director of Development to identify and advance fundraising efforts to support the needs of the Institute.

8. Work collaboratively with LDF senior management as both a thought leader and peer manager in support of the broader LDF mission.



PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate is a respected leader with a commitment to LDF's mission and a record of engagement with issues of racial justice. Desired assets include:

- Intellectual thought leadership with a body of work in civil rights advocacy and research, including a history of publication or demonstrated ability to build a written body of work.
- Familiarity with leading scholarly currents in areas of racial justice or civil rights; existing relationships with academic institutions, think tanks or other institutional centers engaged in civil rights research or scholarship;
- Strong collaboration skills with the ability to engage and inspire teammates, staff and partners
- Effective public speaking experience with the proficiency to identify, represent and advance issues on behalf of the Institute and LDF
- The nimbleness, responsiveness, work ethic and capacity to meet the demands of the day in a fast-paced, dynamic environment
- Proven management skills with the ability to hire, build and motivate a team

- An organized and disciplined approach with the experience to manage budgets and multiple demands
- Depth and sophistication on issues such as criminal justice reform, voting rights, educational equity, or economic security
- An ability to garner and inspire trust, build consensus, unify and lead
- Possession of a law degree and experience working in collaboration with other lawyers



THE RELATIONSHIPS

The Director is a vital member of the LDF senior management team, responsible and accountable for leading the Thurgood Marshall Institute. The Director also:

Reports to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President and Director-Counsel • The Associate Director-Counsel NAACP LDF
Manages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Director of the Institute • Senior Researchers • Archives • Operations • Institute Fellows
Key Relationships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Litigation • Director of Policy • Chief Communications Officer • Civil Rights thought leaders • Academics, historians and community leaders

THE LOCATION

Thurgood Marshall Institute staff are located in the LDF's Washington D.C. office and its headquarters in New York City.



**For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect,
 please email LDFTMI@BoardWalkConsulting.com
 or call
 Crystal Stephens and Patti Kish at 404-262-7392.**