



# ACLU

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**National Political Director  
ACLU**

**New York, NY**

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"Our mission is to realize this promise of the United States Constitution  
for all and expand the reach of its guarantees."  
– *American Civil Liberties Union mission statement*

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# The Opportunity

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is the nation's premier guardian of the civil rights and liberties that define our democracy. Fundamental freedoms are under attack ranging from free speech, to voting, reproductive, and LGBTQ rights to racial justice. The work of the ACLU has never been more important and more urgent.

For over 100 years, the ACLU has been the foremost defender of rights and liberties across the political spectrum using the tools of advocacy and litigation. It is a formidable and unparalleled force with Affiliates in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington D.C. staffed with litigators and lobbyists, and a network of 1.7 million members. In 2015, the ACLU made a conscious pivot to deepen its nationwide political and policy agenda, even as it continued its longstanding work in the courts and the court of public opinion.

This agenda, led by the National Political Director and the National Political Advocacy Department (NPAD), strategically advances policy, electoral, political and legislative campaigns, and leverages the breadth and depth of the ACLU to affect change at the federal, state, and local level. The ACLU undertakes its policy and political work with an abiding commitment to nonpartisanship. In advancing freedom and justice for all - it works with leaders of both parties and holds accountable Democrats and Republicans alike when they fail to live up to the core principles and values that animate our democracy.

Over the last several years, NPAD has successfully supported voting rights ballot initiatives in Michigan, Nevada and Florida and sanctuary city laws in state and local jurisdictions. With a c4 budget that exceeds \$160 million, the national ACLU has the strategic, financial, and tactical resources to proactively advance priority issues both nationally and locally and to prime the

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political environment to enact policy change. The lion's share of those c4 resources are deployed in the ACLU's state Affiliates, while the NPAD budget for this fiscal year exceeds \$26 million with up to 75 full-time professionals in the department.

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## The Mandate

The mandate of the next leader is to work in collaboration with the senior executives and the NPAD team to establish a comprehensive national political and policy vision to address and remedy critical civil liberties concerns. The leader will work in partnership with national staff and Affiliates to leverage the work with the courts and in the states to advance the goals of the ACLU. Specifically, the next leader will:

- Develop, empower, and support a high functioning, collaborative team
- Define, balance, connect and communicate long term policy and power-building objectives with targeted campaigns, ballot initiatives, organizing and elections work
- Identify key states, districts and localities for direct action with the purpose of moving federal legislative agendas in those jurisdictions and by leveraging the influence and relationships of ACLU Affiliates and NPAD staff
- Strengthen the voice, presence, and power of the ACLU in Washington D.C. and at the federal level to affect the ACLU's priorities
- Align advocacy in Washington D.C. with advocacy in key states and local jurisdictions

- Advance concrete policy agendas through legislative, advocacy and organizing efforts while defending important gains in state legislatures in partnership with Affiliate leadership and staff in those states
- Work in partnership with the ACLU Affiliate Support and Nationwide Initiatives (ASNI) department to deepen the capacities of ACLU Affiliates, support multi-state initiatives, and galvanize constituents and leaders across the political spectrum
- Work in partnership with the Communications Department in designing and executing political communications strategies that leverage traditional and new media and targeting key constituencies to influence elected officials to advance policy change
- Work in partnership with technology and digital teams to fully maximize the voice and power of ACLU supporters through a nationwide volunteer action network
- Partner with and deploy the power of grassroots resources including the 1.7 million members and over 6 million supporters including through the ACLU's PeoplePower platform, organizing division and Affiliate programs
- Run a department in a manner that is consistent with the ACLU's high standards of integrity, ethics and risk management.

The next National Political Director will have the opportunity to chart a new course, reboot internal and external relationships, and harness a formidable political and policy force as the organization prepares to respond to short-term challenges, while setting strategies for long-term advancement of people's rights, particularly the most marginalized.



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The National Political Director will help lead the fight for freedom and justice especially over the next two years, as we ready the organization for the 2024 national elections.



Credit: Eugene Garcia/AP Images

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Critical assets of the next leader include an understanding of the legislative and administrative process at the state and federal levels.

The next National Political Director will inherit a talented and committed team currently led by an Acting Director. The National Political Director will help lead the fight for freedom and justice especially over the next two years, as we ready the organization for the 2024 national elections. The goal is to ensure that the ACLU is a juggernaut for justice, and battle ready for a critical inflection point in the nation's history.

## The Candidate

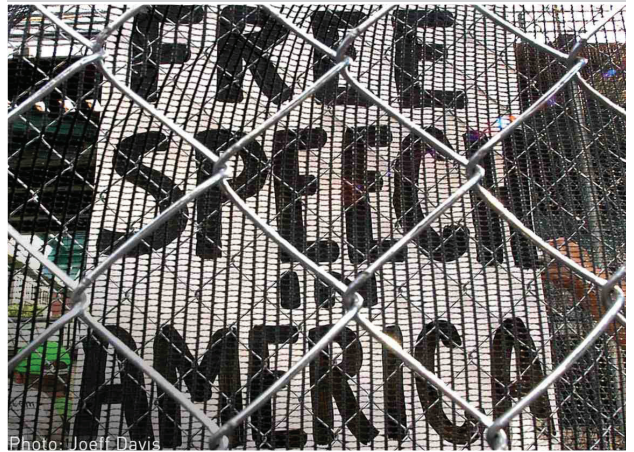
**The ideal candidate will be an inspirational and visible leader with high emotional intelligence and strong management experience.** Critical assets of the next leader include:

- Policy, political and legislative campaign experience with a significant track record of accomplishments
- Deep relationships and recognized stature in policy and politics
- Intuitive and experienced leader of people, with a demonstrated ability to listen, learn, heed and lead - demonstrating empathy and concern for colleagues while also manifesting a clear-eyed commitment to making an external impact on the ACLU's mission
- Proven ability to collaborate, build cohesive teams and positive culture
- Experience working in a national organization with a network of distributed federated offices
- An understanding of the legislative and administrative process at the state and federal levels
- Ability to prioritize and to make, and effectively communicate, tough choices
- Experience as a spokesperson and persuasive advocate

- Strong communication skills, emotional intelligence and evidence of effective teamwork inside and outside of an organization
- A consistently demonstrated commitment to an expansive vision of civil rights and civil liberties – ranging from racial justice to free speech, especially immigrants’, reproductive, voting, and LGBT rights, which are important organizational priorities
- An ability to center principles of equity, inclusion, and belonging in all work, embedding the values in program development, policy application, and organizational practices and processes
- Demonstrated commitment to the mission of the ACLU
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity within the office using a personal approach that values all individuals and respects differences in regards to race, ethnicity, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability and socio-economic circumstance
- Demonstrated commitment to work collaboratively and respectfully toward resolving obstacles and/or conflicts.

## The Organization

The ACLU was founded in 1920 to defend and protect the civil rights and liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the nation’s civil rights laws. It is known for assembling broad coalitions of conservatives, moderates, and progressives to advance civil liberties on a wide range of issues including Voting Rights, Immigration, Criminal Justice Reform, Reproductive Rights, LGBTQ Rights and Privacy. The ACLU stands up for these rights even when the cause is unpopular and sometimes when no one else will. When the Trump



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The NPAD team divides its work around the following issue areas: justice, equality, democracy, and liberty.

Administration began an attack on civil liberties, the ACLU was the first organization to challenge its policies. The same holds true during Democratic administrations, whenever civil rights and civil liberties are in jeopardy.

The ACLU consists of two separate nonprofits with a combined budget of \$375M between the ACLU and the ACLU Foundation. The ACLU is a 501(c)(4) corporation, and the ACLU Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible. The ACLU is funded by its 1.7 million members through membership fees and by the contributions of individuals and foundations. The 52 Affiliates are separately incorporated nonprofits, though a unified fund-sharing system allocates resources between and among Affiliates and the National Office. A National Board of Directors - with representatives from each of the Affiliates - sets overall policy for the national organization. There are over 1700 ACLU staff members across the nation.

The organization experienced substantial growth since 2016 almost doubling the budget and increasing staff by 70%. This growth was fueled in large part due to its ability to quickly mobilize and challenge threats to civil rights and civil liberties so prevalent during the Trump Administration. As the organization has experienced rapid growth, there is work currently underway to ensure priorities, work and resources are aligned and that the values espoused externally are experienced internally.

The NPAD department is critical to strengthen the efforts of the ACLU at the federal, state, and local levels through its political and policy agenda. It has a team of 75 and a budget of \$26M. The team divides its work around the following issue areas: justice, equality, democracy, and liberty. It also has an organizing unit and a federal policy team.

# The Relationships

The National Political Director reports directly to the Executive Director of the ACLU, is a part of the senior leadership team of the organization, and manages eight direct reports in a 75-person department.

# The Location

The National Political Director will ideally reside in either Washington D.C. or New York, NY.

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For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email [ACLU@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:ACLU@BoardWalkConsulting.com) or call **Crystal Stephens** or **Patti Kish** at 404-262-7392.

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