



ACLU

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Chief Strategy Officer

New York, NY

"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*

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 ranging from free speech to voting, reproductive, LGBTQ rights, and racial justice are under attack. The work of the ACLU has never been more critical and more urgent.

For over 100 years, the ACLU has used the tools of advocacy and litigation to defend civil rights and liberties across the political spectrum. Over the last seven years, the ACLU experienced explosive growth and expanded its reach, presence, and capabilities. 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. It also increased the capacity of its strategic communications department. As a result, the ACLU 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.

As the capabilities of the ACLU have grown, so too has the need to strategically leverage and coordinate its work to maximize its impact on critical issues and increased assaults on civil liberties. Working collaboratively over the last year, the ACLU has identified ways to accelerate its impact by improving collaboration, integration, and alignment across all its endeavors. The ACLU seeks a Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) to drive this integration and collaboration.

The CSO will serve as the lead architect of the ACLU's strategy, combining the appropriate legal, electoral, organizing, and strategic communication tactics needed to achieve our priorities. The CSO will be a multi-disciplinary thinker, who serves as the connective tissue between our departments, their strategies and the resources that support

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The Chief Strategy Officer will provide oversight and cohesion between departments to ensure the ACLU operates with one voice in a coordinated and strategic fashion.

them. The CSO will also be the principal futurist of the ACLU, constantly scouting the horizon for nascent civil liberties threats and opportunities where the ACLU is uniquely positioned to lead, and elevating these to Senior Leadership. Further, while core responsibilities will be internal, the CSO will also identify and maintain strong relationships with peer organizations and funders to maximize partnership opportunities for increased impact.

The CSO sits within the Executive Department of the ACLU, the critical nerve center of a 600-person national nonprofit with an operating budget of over \$350 million. The CSO will report to the Deputy Executive Director for Strategy and Culture with a dotted line to the Executive Director, interfacing with the Executive Director for strategic input and counsel.

The Mandate

The Chief Strategy Officer will be a forward-thinking, collaborative, consultative leader - adept at change management and able to coordinate collective assets of the ACLU for maximum impact. Specifically, the CSO will:

Lead strategic planning for the ACLU

The CSO will lead the organization-wide strategic planning process and be the lead champion for an integrated advocacy approach to the most pressing issues on which the ACLU works. To that end, the CSO will implement a level of strategic rigor and consistency across the organization by:

- Developing, proposing and implementing a collaborative, transparent system to establish and review organizational priorities; and to monitor and evaluate progress against them. The system will weave in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) principles.
- Consulting with Department Heads, senior leadership team members, programmatic

experts, and the Affiliate network as a peer and thought partner to coordinate and develop organizational goals and strategies. .

- Developing and overseeing the annual strategic planning process and ensuring the budget process aligns with and supports organization-wide priorities.

Monitor and assess risks to civil liberties

The CSO will monitor the horizon of civil liberties threats and opportunities to determine areas where the ACLU should be leading and marshalling resources to, and elevating those areas to the Senior Staff. This includes overseeing the ACLU's "innovation fund" which identifies and incubates new capacities, leaders, and pilot projects. Three million dollars have been set aside to capitalize the fund for the fiscal year 2023.

Build and manage the department

The CSO will build a department (The Strategy Office) to support cross departmental strategic coordination. This department will initially contain 2 - 3 "Strategy Leads" who report to the CSO and who will aid them in the day-to-day management and facilitation of cross departmental strategy for the ACLU's priority issues. The department will reflect the values of integration, collaboration, and alignment.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate is a strategist adept at planning, prioritizing, organizing, and leading a team to execute high-impact plans.

Professional experience:

- Visionary leadership and a proven track record of creating and managing change and delivering impactful programs in support of civil liberties or other related advocacy campaigns



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The CSO will maintain a pulse on threats and risks to civil liberties and develop a system for tracking and systematically rating relative threats.



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The CSO will be a seasoned and effective manager with a record of developing and maintaining a highly talented and diverse staff and managing budgets and administration.

- Significant experience in a senior leadership role in a comparable advocacy organization or nonprofit
- Outstanding track record of facilitating diverse stakeholders around a common agenda
- A seasoned and effective manager with a record of developing and maintaining a highly talented and diverse staff and deploying financial resources toward key program goals
- Proven experience in organizational and staff development, strategic management, and strengthening relations among affiliate and, or regional offices
- Ideally, demonstrated and proven leadership experience operating successfully in an organization with a federated structure with multiple chapters, affiliate offices, and coalition partners in diverse communities

Personal assets:

- Solid understanding of the legal and philosophical principles underlying civil liberties
- A good listener who inspires trust and confidence, remains open to the ideas of others, and is not threatened by input and feedback.
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills, including exceptional attention to detail, the ability to resolve disputes, and maintain a high degree of discretion and confidentiality
- A management style that is accessible, flexible, decisive, and inclusive
- A team builder who inspires staff to work together in pursuit of a shared mission and holds them accountable for the accomplishment of objectives

- Ability to negotiate conflict and maintain constructive working relationships with people at all levels within and outside of the organization
- Unimpeachable integrity, self-confidence, a high level of energy, and a sense of humor
- Ability to work across multiple disciplines and to more directly engage coalition partners, donors, and activists in ACLU's programs
- Adaptability and an ability to adjust and operate in ambiguity
- An ability to work calmly and effectively under pressure and to transmit that composure to others
- Outstanding communication skills demonstrated ability to handle controversial issues, respond rapidly to crises and translate complex information for broader audiences
- Provides clear direction, delegates well, and assumes ultimate responsibility

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. For example, when the Trump 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.



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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 largely fueled due to its ability to quickly mobilize and challenge threats to civil rights and civil liberties so prevalent during the Trump Administration.

The Relationships

The Chief Strategy Officer will report to:	Deputy Director for Strategy and Culture
Manage:	Three Strategy Leaders
Partner with:	Senior Leaders

The Location

The Chief Strategy Officer will ideally be based at the headquarters location for the ACLU at 125 Broad Street, New York, New York.

Salary Considerations

The ACLU is committed to providing compensation that is competitive and equitable. The expected salary range for this position is \$281,000 to \$337,000.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

ACLU@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Crystal Stephens, Patti Kish** or **Lysondra Sommerville** at 404-262-7392.
