



Chief Operations Officer
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
New York, NY

THE SEARCH

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) seeks a Chief Operations Officer (COO) who is mission-focused, energetic, results-oriented, experienced, and competent in directing and scaling nonprofit or business operations and implementing strategic initiatives. The COO will work with the President and Director-Counsel and with the Associate Directors-Counsel and play a direct leadership role in organizational development, strategic operations, and administration processes.

The COO is a member of LDF's senior leadership team, which provides strategic leadership and executive guidance for the entire organization. The COO has direct oversight of five departments: Human Resources, Information Technology, Security, Risk and Compliance, and Facilities/Operations. The COO directly supervises the leaders of these departments, as well as the special director of operational effectiveness, and an executive assistant. The COO indirectly oversees a team of 15-20 employees across these portfolio departments. The COO also works closely with the General Counsel and external consultants on matters of compliance, policy, and security.

LDF employs over 200 professional and support staff at its headquarters in New York City and offices in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, GA. The COO will be a key leader and drive the planning and execution of the organization's operational, infrastructure, and people and culture aspects.

The ideal candidate will be a skilled, strategic, and highly organized senior leader with over ten years of professional experience in the non-profit, government, or business sector and at least five to eight years of senior leadership experience in operational/administrative management. The COO will bring a well-developed capacity for systematic analysis, relationship-building, and leading complex teams of mission-driven professionals in a fast-paced environment with a culture defined by passion, deep personal commitment, excellence, and high performance. The COO must be a leader who can help others deliver

measurable, cost-effective, high-impact results that make LDF's organizational vision a reality. The successful COO will have the executive, cultural, and social competence and skills to help steward the rapid growth of a legacy organization and confidently tap into the power and promise of its multi-generational, multi-cultural staff.

This position will be located in LDF's New York, NY office and reports to the President and Director-Counsel and one of the Associate Directors-Counsel.

LDF has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

LDF is the country's first and foremost civil and human rights law organization. Founded in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall, who subsequently became the first African American U.S. Supreme Court Justice, LDF was launched at a time when the nation's aspirations for equality and due process of law were stifled by widespread state-sponsored racial inequality. From that era to the present, LDF's mission has been transformative—to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society. As the legal arm of the civil rights movement, LDF has a tradition of expert legal advocacy in the Supreme Court and other courts across the nation. LDF's victories established the foundations for the civil rights that all Americans enjoy today.

LDF's litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education programs in the areas of criminal justice, economic justice, education, and political participation seek to ensure the fundamental and basic human rights of all people to quality education, economic opportunity, the right to vote and fully participate in democracy, and the right to a fair and just judicial system.

LDF's historic desegregation campaign that culminated in the victory of *Brown v. Board of Education*, ending de jure segregation, was unequivocally one of the most transformational milestones in the history of the United States. LDF has spent more than six decades fighting to realize the full promise of Brown and to elevate the quality of education experienced by African Americans. As a critical component of its strategy for education equity, since the early 1960s, LDF has conducted one or more scholarship programs for undergraduate and law school students.

LDF is governed by a distinguished Board of Directors that meets approximately four times per year and consists of various standing and special Committees of the Board. For additional information, please visit LDF's website: www.naacpldf.org.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Serve as a strategic partner to the President and Director-Counsel and Associate Directors-Counsel to ensure that LDF's internal operations, practices, and procedures support the LDF in achieving its legal and educational mission and executing its strategic goals.

The COO will join the Senior Leadership Team as a thought partner and senior executive and will work with other members of LDF's senior leadership teams in decision-making and planning for office-wide initiatives. The COO will maintain familiarity and develop expertise in substantive developments, resources, approaches, and best practices in non-profit management and operations. This senior leader's knowledge will effectively inform organizational strategy and strategic planning that anticipates future trends, opportunities, challenges, and risks.

Lead the ongoing evaluation and benchmarking of operational and staff performance against the key performance indicators and objectives of LDF's strategic plan.

The COO will steward fidelity to the organization's strategic plan, focusing on workforce, operational, and key infrastructure priorities. The COO will implement and refine robust systems for tracking and reporting progress toward LDF's strategic priorities and benchmarks, institute programs that reward excellence and motivate the LDF team to advance their mission, and coach administrative directors while ensuring they have the resources to execute the strategic plan and serve LDF's mission of operational excellence.

Provide oversight of compliance matters while serving as an advisor to senior leadership on identifying, mitigating, and proactively managing potential operational risks.

The COO will supervise the director of compliance and have oversight for organizational compliance matters, including the submission and administration of lobbying reports, corporate registrations and filings, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) compliance, DBS registrations, etc. Additionally, the COO will advise and work in close partnership with other members of the senior leadership and executive teams to stay abreast of and proactively mitigate internal and external risks that may inhibit LDF's ability to operate and deliver on its program and mission priorities effectively.

Supervise the planning and administration of the LDF's Board of Directors and standing Board Committee meetings and provide significant input in the design and execution of other key convenings of LDF leadership and staff.

The COO, in collaboration with the Chief of Staff and the Office of the President and Director-Counsel, will lead the planning and execution of all LDF Board and standing Board Committee meetings, including preparing minutes, drafting and preparing Board resolutions, and providing pre-meeting and post-meeting reports for the Board in a timely manner.

Effectively model and steward LDF's mission to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.

In addition to the strategic, operational, and managerial responsibilities, the COO will maintain familiarity with and a working knowledge of LDF's overall substantive work, including a comprehensive understanding of LDF's history, mission, and record of achievement. As a senior executive leader at LDF, the COO must be a strong and compelling standard-bearer for the LDF mission and the importance of its ongoing work to internal and external audiences.

The day-to-day management responsibilities of the COO include:

- Supervise and manage the leaders of Human Resources, Information Technology, Operations, Facilities, Compliance, Security, and Operational Effectiveness.
- Manage and oversee LDF's safety and security operations, including cybersecurity, staff physical safety, and security of LDF office space.
- Manage and oversee LDF's plans and protocols related to workplace health and safety, including emergency suspensions of in-person work and fully remote operation as needed.
- Manage and oversee implications of growth and staff fluctuation, including real estate acquisition and space need studies.
- Support professional development opportunities for LDF management.
- Provide LDF Senior Leadership with timely, accurate, and concise information that facilitates informed, data-driven decision-making and effective policy and procedure development.
- Introduce and oversee the implementation of best practices in office management policies and procedures in coordination with the Senior Director of Human Resources.
- Provide staff with a strong day-to-day leadership presence and help reinforce the bridge between LDF's New York headquarters, Washington D.C. office, and Southern Regional Office in Atlanta.
- Ensure timely responses and maintain open communication channels between management and staff.
- Cultivate a respectful and inclusive organizational culture.
- Foster a work environment of learning and teamwork and place a high priority on strong, collegial, professional and interpersonal relationships.
- Assist and, in some instances, lead in developing special projects and perform other related duties as assigned by the President and Director-Counsel.
- Organize requests for assistance from department leaders to the General Counsel and outside counsel, where appropriate. Review insurance policies and negotiate with insurers on risk management, claims, and renewals to ensure LDF and its employees are adequately covered.
- Manage and supervise LDF's compliance matters, including the submission and administration of lobbying reports, corporate registrations and filings, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) compliance, DBS registrations, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER:

This is an extraordinary opportunity to contribute as a leader within the nation's premier civil rights legal advocacy organization. The COO must be strategic and highly organized, with a well-developed capacity for systematic analysis, relationship-building, and leading complex teams of professionals. Ideally, the COO should have worked in a senior leadership position in a non-profit organization or law firm. While no one person may possess all the qualities enumerated below, the ideal candidate will have many of the following professional and personal characteristics:

Professional Qualifications

- BA/BS and JD degrees required; MBA or other advanced degree in management a definite plus.
- Minimum 10 years of professional experience in the non-profit, government, or business sector, with at least five years of senior leadership experience in operational/administrative management.
- Thorough, substantive knowledge and understanding of financial management and accounting oversight, especially for non-profit entities, internal control systems, regulatory compliance and reporting issues that relate to non-profit enterprises, information technology and office equipment systems, property management, and HR matters, including employee training, evaluation, and support programs and practices.
- Broad experience with the full range of business functions and systems, including strategic development and planning, budgeting, business analysis, finance, information systems, human resources, and marketing.
- Proven track record in conducting organization-wide strategic planning.
- Experience successfully identifying opportunities to utilize resources and ensure ongoing program and operational excellence most effectively.
- Exceptional capacity for managing and leading diverse teams operating multiple functions across an organization.
- Proven track record of relationship and team-building efforts, along with enforcing accountability and learning the strengths and weaknesses of team members to set others up for success.
- Experience successfully partnering with a board of directors.
- Ability to demonstrate tangible examples of reporting and program measurement and evaluation.
- Ability to work in a dynamic, fast-paced environment while driving solutions forward.
- Demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities and guiding investment in people and systems.
- To be considered for the General Counsel role, candidates must have a Juris Doctorate.

Personal Attributes

- Ability to work comfortably in a diverse environment.
- Open, motivating, and collaborative management style that promotes excellence.

- Flexible work style with the ability to multi-task.
- Demonstrated integrity and excellence in their work.
- Capacity to lead and inspire with a vision that attracts others.
- Collaborative and approachable in style.
- Self-confident, self-sufficient, and self-directed.
- A problem-solver who is resilient in the face of conflict.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This position is based in LDF's New York, NY office. The expected salary range for this role is \$215,000 - \$270,000, depending on professional credentials and experience.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

LDF has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strict confidence and should be directed to:

Ernest Brooks, Partner + Practice Leader

Janette Martinez, Senior Associate

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/naacp-legal-defense-and-educational-fund/chief-operating-officer>

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Applications and nominations submitted by May 15, 2025, will receive priority consideration.

LDF is an Equal Opportunity Employer. LDF is committed to providing equal employment opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, veteran status, sexual orientation, and disability.