



Search for the Deputy Chief Financial Officer
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
New York, NY

THE SEARCH

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) seeks a Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Deputy CFO) who is mission-focused, analytically savvy, and forward-looking to contribute to the leadership, strategy, modernization, and best practices at this rapidly growing 86-year-old legacy nonprofit organization. Given LDF's recent transformation and continued ambitions, the Deputy CFO will work closely with the Chief Financial Officer and leadership team to establish and build out systems, processes, and controls that provide the organization with an increased level of financial sophistication and serve LDF's growing complexity.

The premier legal organization fighting for racial justice in the nation, LDF employs over 230 professional and support staff at its headquarters in New York City and offices in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, GA. The Deputy CFO will be a thought partner to the CFO and members of the senior leadership team on matters of financial planning and budgeting, infrastructure and operational needs, and investments. The role will be based in LDF's New York office and report directly to the CFO.

The ideal candidate will be an experienced, responsive, proactive, and data-informed leader who brings deep familiarity with nonprofit finance and management. The Deputy CFO should be well attuned to industry trends and best practices and able to provide counsel on opportunities for transformation and innovation across financial operations and systems, budgeting, planning and analysis, investments, treasury, and endowment management. The Deputy CFO will be a strategic thinker, relationship builder, and change manager with experience in fast-paced, rapidly evolving organizations with a culture defined by passion, deep personal commitments, excellence, and high performance. The Deputy CFO must be a service-oriented leader focused on providing the tools, analyses, and insights needed to meet the moment, mission, and goals of LDF.

LDF has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

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 all people are afforded 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's current work includes matters ranging from combating voter suppression and algorithmic bias, to advancing data-driven public safety models and equitable educational opportunities.

LDF is governed by a distinguished Board of Directors that meets approximately three or 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.

Financial Overview

In financial terms, LDF has an operating budget exceeding \$50 million. Major revenue sources include contributions, grants, gifts, and investment income.

Leadership

President and Director-Counsel

Janai Nelson is President and Director-Counsel of LDF. As the institutional thought-leader, she directs the organization's programmatic strategy and operations. Throughout her career, she has played a pivotal role in numerous landmark legal cases, shaping the fight for civil rights.

Nelson formerly served as Associate Director-Counsel and as a member of LDF's Litigation and Policy teams. She has also served as Interim Director of LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute and in other leadership capacities at LDF. Prior to joining LDF in June 2014, Nelson was Associate Dean for Faculty Scholarship and Associate Director of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights and Economic Development at St. John's University School of Law, where she was also a full professor of law.

A graduate of NYU and UCLA School of Law, Nelson clerked for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Theodore McMillian and U.S. District Judge David H. Coar. Nelson regularly speaks as a civil rights, constitutional law, and election law expert in the media, and at conferences and symposia nationwide. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights and a Trustee of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Nelson's leadership has been recognized nationally, and she is the recipient of numerous awards, including The Root 100, the New York University Distinguished Alumni Award, the M. Ashley Dickerson Diversity Award from the National Association of Women Lawyers, the Metropolitan Black Bar Association's Public Servant of the Year Award, and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Suffolk University Law School.

Chief Financial Officer

Kevin Thompson is LDF's Chief Financial Officer. He came to LDF as the Assistant Chief Financial Officer in 1992 and was promoted to Director of Financial Operations in 1997. In 2007, Mr. Thomson was again promoted — this time to CFO — and currently supervises a department of nine personnel. Prior to joining LDF, Mr. Thomson was an auditor with the accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick LLP. He is currently a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the National Association of Black Accountants, and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants. Mr. Thomson graduated from Brooklyn College with a B.S. in accounting.

ROLE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The inaugural Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Deputy CFO) will operate as an internal leader of the finance department and serve as a strategic financial partner to LDF's leadership. The Deputy CFO will be responsible for strengthening financial planning and analysis (FP&A), modernizing systems and processes, and elevating financial service delivery across the organization. The Deputy CFO will also work closely with the Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Finance to manage and oversee the day-to-day operations of the finance department. Reporting directly to the CFO, the Deputy CFO will operate as a hands-on, accessible, and trusted thought partner to the senior leadership team, particularly relating to operations, development, and programs. Along with the CFO, the Deputy CFO will also engage with the organization's Executive Leadership Team comprised of the PDC, ADCs, COO, and COS.

The Deputy CFO will lead significant transformations across LDF's financial infrastructure, holistically evaluating systems, controls, documentation, and workflows to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. This

includes building a modern FP&A function; leading multi-year planning, scenario modeling, and organizational forecasting; overhauling grants management and billing processes; introducing greater transparency and clarity to budgeting; and collaborating with the development team on revenue planning. The Deputy CFO will also partner with the CFO in supervising the annual audit, board committee reporting, and providing support and oversight of LDF's substantial investment portfolio.

Under the Finance Department's current organization, the Director of Finance and the Controller report to the CFO. The Deputy CFO will assist the CFO in oversight of these two staff positions. The Deputy CFO is envisioned as a key component of succession planning for the CFO role, and the Deputy will be granted opportunities to take on increasing levels of responsibility and oversight as they learn the organization.

The ideal candidate will combine experience as a CFO or Deputy CFO with analytical sophistication and a service-oriented mindset, high-level management and team-building skills, deep mission alignment, and strong communication skills. They will be a change leader capable of influencing and quickly building trust and credibility with diverse stakeholders.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEPUTY CFO

Provide Strategic Financial Leadership

As the second-in-command finance leader for LDF, the Deputy CFO will work closely with the CFO and other senior leaders to support and advance the organization's strategic priorities and growth trajectory. Leveraging a data-informed approach, the Deputy CFO will provide information and analyses required for critical decision-making, including laying out alternatives, options, and comparisons as the organization continues to adapt, scale, and innovate. The Deputy will be well informed about contemporary financial practices and trends facing nonprofit finance, bring best practices and fresh perspectives to the organization, and modernize LDF's policies, contracts, budgets, and processes.

Build a Robust Financial Planning & Analysis Function and Practice

Given the organization's recent growth and ongoing dynamism, the Deputy CFO must be well adept at financial planning and analysis. The Deputy CFO will develop a robust practice within the finance team, producing sophisticated, data-driven insights that enable strategic decisions and planning. The Deputy CFO will also provide leadership and the board with the data, models, and analyses needed to gain a holistic understanding of LDF's activities, capture full implications of proposed initiatives, and provide pressure testing for each program. Moreover, to appropriately scale ongoing growth, the Deputy CFO will need to build multi-year plans capable of exploring scenarios and comparing options.

Support CFO Succession Planning

The Deputy CFO position is part of a thoughtful and proactive approach to succession planning for LDF's financial leadership. The Deputy CFO will help the organization prepare for an eventual planned CFO transition, evaluating and implementing systems and strategies to retain institutional knowledge and

facilitate a smooth and seamless process. In service to this goal, the Deputy CFO will act as an apprentice to the CFO, taking time to learn LDF's policies, procedures, systems, and history, build strong relationships across the organization, and gain exposure to board committee staffing and reporting.

Build, Simplify, and Modernize Operational Processes and Systems

LDF has seen incredible growth over the last six years, tripling the size of the staff and adding an additional office location. The organization needs expanded leadership capacity regarding financial and business operations to respond to LDF's current complexity and aspirations. The Deputy CFO will work closely with the finance team to review, develop, and implement processes, policies, systems, and structures that integrate, standardize, and streamline work across teams. The Deputy CFO will understand the importance of accessible and reliable data and will identify opportunities to maximize data capture, enhance reporting capabilities, and boost decision support. The Deputy CFO will strategically leverage technology, including AI-driven tools, to move initiatives forward and will know how to harness modern data practices, dashboards, and reporting to improve service, capacity, and impact. Across this work, the Deputy CFO must be a strong and proactive partner to the operations and development teams, ensuring that all process improvement efforts dovetail with ongoing projects in these areas.

Foster a Culture of Service Excellence Across the Finance Department

The Deputy CFO will assume a leadership role within the Finance Department, supporting the CFO in supervising the Director of Finance and the Controller, and directly supervising some other members of the Finance team. The Deputy CFO will cultivate a service-oriented culture that strives for continuous learning, problem solving, and shared accountability, and will hold their team to a high level of excellence befitting the preeminence of LDF, and a sense of urgency that matches the critical nature of the organization's mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Professional Qualifications

Technical & Functional Expertise

- Bachelor's degree required. Advanced education and/or training, including a CPA, MBA, or other advanced degree in accounting, finance, business, or related field is also required.
- 8–10+ years of progressive experience as a senior financial leader, ideally as a CFO or Deputy CFO, of a nonprofit organization.
- Experience leading multiple finance areas including FP&A, budgeting, and financial operations.
- Strong analytical skills with advanced proficiency in financial modeling, scenario analysis, forecasting, and multi-year strategic planning.

- Deep understanding of GAAP.
- Experience designing and implementing internal controls in evolving, multi-system environments.
- Demonstrated ability to modernize systems, migrate or optimize financial software, and improve cross-system data integrity, including implementing and managing financial technology systems and developing change management plans to support new technologies. Experience implementing and adopting AI tools and enterprise-wide automation would be a plus.
- Experience with investment reporting, endowment management, and supporting investment committees.
- Experience with grants management, restricted funds, cost allocation, and billing structures for complex, multi-funded organizations.

Leadership & Change Management

- Track record of leading teams through operational redesign, financial process improvements, and/or organizational transformation.
- Strong people management skills, with experience holding staff to a high standard of performance.
- Ability to engage in the details of the work, while also advising on and supporting the management of overall strategy.
- Ability to influence without formal authority and work effectively across departments, especially with development, operations, programs, and IT.
- Strong change management orientation with the ability to drive adoption of new standards, processes, and systems in rapidly growing environments with deep history.
- Exceptional communication skills, with the ability to translate — both orally and in writing — financial information for non-finance constituents and build trust organization-wide.

Personal Attributes

- Ability to work comfortably in a diverse environment.
- A leadership style that is open, motivating, and accessible, and that promotes collaboration.
- Mission-driven orientation and thoughtful steward of organizational resources.
- A problem-solver, thought partner, and collaborative strategist. Resilient in the face of challenges, and comfortable stepping into complexity or ambiguity.
- Service oriented and committed to raising performance, efficiency, and accountability across the finance function.
- Excited by challenges and able to excite others about the possibilities and benefits that come with change and modernization.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This position is based in LDF's New York, NY office. The expected salary range for this role is \$225,000 - \$250,000, depending on professional credentials and experience.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/naacp-legal-defense-and-educational-fund-inc/deputy-chief-financial-officer>.

Ernest Brooks, Partner + Practice Leader
Dan Rodas, Partner
Amble Ryan, Managing Associate
Nicole Sancilio, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

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.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by LDF would supersede any conflicting information in this document.