



Director of Policy
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
Washington, DC

Founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall, the [NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.](#) (LDF) is the nation's oldest and foremost civil and human rights law organization, playing a critical role in the fight to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society.¹ LDF launched at a time when America's aspirations for equality and due process of law were stifled by widespread state-sponsored racial inequality. For over 80 years, LDF has relied on the Constitution and federal and state civil rights laws to pursue equality and justice for Black Americans and other people of color. Its mission is transformative: to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society, using the power of law, narrative, research, and people to defend and advance the full dignity and citizenship of Black people in America.

LDF's litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education programs in the substantive areas of criminal justice, economic justice, education, and political participation seek to ensure the fundamental 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. 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—both in litigation and policy—established the foundations for the civil rights that Americans enjoy today.

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 Brown's full promise and elevate the quality of education experienced by Black people in the United States. 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.

Currently, LDF employs over 160 staff at LDF's headquarters in New York City and its offices in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, GA. [Janai S. Nelson](#) assumed the role of President and Director-Counsel in early 2022

¹ LDF has been fully separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957.

after serving nearly eight years as Associate and Director-Counsel. [Tona Boyd](#) joined LDF in January 2023 as Associate and Director-Counsel, following her role as Special Counsel and Special Assistant to the President in the White House Counsel's Office in the Biden-Harris Administration.

For additional information, please visit LDF's website: www.naacpldf.org

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY

LDF seeks an experienced Director of Policy who will serve as the lead architect and executor of the organization's federal, state, and local legislative and policy activities, initiatives, and advocacy, setting the overall strategic direction and priorities for LDF's policy group in consultation with the President and Director-Counsel and the Associate and Director-Counsel. The Director of Policy is a high-level strategic thought partner to the President and Director-Counsel and Associate Director-Counsel, one of the organization's foremost external representatives, and the institution's primary liaison on policy matters at the federal level. The Director of Policy also serves as a member of the senior leadership team, helping to develop and implement the organization's strategic direction. The Director guides the LDF policy staff members in the strategic implementation of the team and individual substantive goals and objectives and will be responsible for the creation and maintenance of structure and support for team members to properly articulate and execute LDF's policy initiatives.

You are a good fit for the role of LDF's Director of Policy if:

- You are passionate about advancing racial justice through strategic and civil rights-centered policy advocacy, with a track record of demonstrated impact through influence and advocacy.
- You bring significant expertise in one or more of LDF's four pillars: [Criminal Justice](#), [Economic Justice](#), [Education](#), and [Political Participation](#).
- You have a deep understanding of ongoing advocacy, policy, and social change efforts undertaken by LDF and peer civil rights and social justice advocacy organizations and a sophisticated knowledge of federal legislative processes and the strategy and politics of this work.
- You create a culture of transparency around you while also enforcing appropriate and necessary boundaries and maintaining confidentiality around sensitive matters.
- You can manage a team of policy professionals, drawing upon their expertise and enhancing esprit de corps, respect, trust, camaraderie, and credibility among your colleagues while driving performance and holding team members accountable.
- You are solutions-oriented and address challenges with a sense of clarity and determination without compromising the need for patience, understanding, and flexibility when warranted.
- Your approach is fundamentally collaborative, and you would be excited and inspired to work in partnership as a member of the senior leadership team to advance LDF's mission.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Serve as the lead architect and executor of LDF's federal and state legislative and policy activities, initiatives, and advocacy

LDF's Director of Policy should bring knowledge of major trends, issues, and concepts driving the present-day civil rights and racial justice policy, litigation, and advocacy agendas, as well as the social and intellectual context of these topic areas. They will set the strategic direction and priorities for LDF's policy group in consultation and collaboration with LDF's President and Director-Counsel and the Associate and Director-Counsel, work in collaboration and strategic partnership with the Director of Litigation Department, the Director of the Strategic Initiatives Department, and the Director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute, and lead LDF's team of policy counsels, policy associates, and administrative staff in articulating and executing policy work of the highest quality and efficacy. The Director will implement and coordinate strategy on civil rights legislation, including legislation in LDF's four core areas. They will also monitor and conduct advocacy concerning executive-branch policymaking and judicial nominations.

Represent LDF as a convener, facilitator, participant, and thought leader in high-level external relationships, platforms, and engagement opportunities

The Director of Policy will be a convener who can bring together allies to explore, address, and execute issues paramount to LDF's mission. As an energetic networker, they will build effective relationships with elected officials, private-sector leaders, and stakeholders in concert with and, where appropriate, independent of LDF's President and Director-Counsel and the Associate and Director-Counsel.

This will include cultivating strong relationships with leaders and staff in federal and state government and the private sector. The Director of Policy will identify and secure opportunities for LDF to influence policy reform, including providing oral and written testimony at federal and state congressional hearings and meetings with elected officials and their staff. They will also oversee and supervise LDF's responses to agency actions involving civil rights. The Director will participate in or organize meetings, policy briefings, and convenings with members of the US Congress, legislators, and agency officials in LDF's core focus areas. They will strategically build and nurture LDF's relations with influential members on Capitol Hill, including introducing relevant LDF staff to elected officials and their staff.

LDF's Director of Policy will build or participate in coalitions working to advance criminal justice, political participation, economic justice, and education reform or oppose laws and policies that will undermine civil rights and the full citizenship of Black people in America. In a similar vein, the Director will persuasively write, publish, and widely disseminate policy briefs, reports, and other documents that will educate legislators, agency officials, and the general public about the critical need for effective policy in these areas.

Supervise and manage a high-performing team

The Director of Policy will lead an exceptional team of senior policy counsels, policy counsels and associates, and administrative staff. Working closely with the Deputy Director of Policy, the Director will create and maintain structures and supports for the policy team to articulate and execute LDF's policy objectives. They will guide the LDF policy staff in developing and strategically implementing policy and legislative reform strategies to advance LDF's mission in concert with LDF's substantive priorities.

The Director of Policy will oversee all administrative aspects of the policy group's operation and work, including grant writing and reporting, lobbying training and reporting, and drafting and managing the department's annual budgets. They will also ensure that policy counsel fulfills the requirements of all relevant grants and lobbying laws, including the management and tracking of time spent by staff to meet grant and lobbying law requirements. This will include obtaining ongoing professional development for LDF's policy counsel to ensure that staff is well-trained in the substantive areas of their practices and all relevant organizational policies and procedures. The Director of Policy will ensure that LDF's policy initiatives and programs adhere to the highest standard of legal and professional ethics.

Serve as a positive contributor and member of the senior leadership team and greater LDF community

As a senior leader at LDF, the Director of Policy will be expected to model the best qualities of a servant leader. Beyond the scope of their work and duties, the Director should be a willing and active contributor in ensuring that LDF maintains a cohesive, healthy, and positive organizational culture, providing thought partnership and guidance around important organizational and strategic questions to help advance the overall mission. This leader will collaborate with the Directors of litigation, strategic initiatives, and the Thurgood Marshall Institute, as well as LDF's Associate and Director-Counsel and the President and Director-Counsel, in building strong team spirit across the organization, creating professional growth opportunities and fostering a work environment that encourages independent judgment and values self-starters. The Director of Policy will participate in regular meetings and collaborative projects with other program leaders and perform other duties as requested by the President and Director-Counsel or the Associate and Director-Counsel.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

Professional Qualifications

- Juris Doctor with a license to practice law in Washington, DC (or the ability to obtain);
- At least 10 years of managerial experience leading a team of policy attorneys, with specific experience leading policy reform or advocacy at the federal, state, or local level in the areas of political participation, economic justice, education, and criminal justice;

- A proven track record using an integrated approach to social change, including strategic communications, research, policy, advocacy, organizing, and an understanding of litigation;
- Excellent research, writing, and public speaking skills for formal and extemporaneous presentations;
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain strong relationships and partnerships with coalitions, media, scholars, policy advocates, community members/leaders, and public (elected) officials;
- Ability to represent LDF to diverse audiences, including funders, scholars, government officials, and grassroots activists;
- Substantial experience using both personal narrative and data to create compelling arguments for change; and
- A team builder who can delegate and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities, who functions decisively, and with a well-established reputation for inspiring effective collaboration.

Personal Attributes

- Commitment to LDF's mission and a record of engagement with issues of racial justice;
- Capacity to lead via influence with an approach that attracts and inspires others;
- Self-confident, self-sufficient, and self-directed;
- A problem-solver who is resilient in the face of conflict;
- Ability to work comfortably in a diverse environment;
- Open, motivating, collaborative, and approachable working style and demeanor;
- Flexible, adaptable, and able to prioritize and multi-task when necessary; and
- Demonstrated integrity and a commitment to professional excellence.

This is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, skills, efforts, requirements, or working conditions associated with the job. While this is intended to reflect the current role accurately, management reserves the right to revise the job or require other or different tasks to be performed as assigned. This description does not constitute a contract of employment, and LDF may exercise its employment-at-will rights at any time.

Please note that LDF requires all employees to be fully vaccinated, including a booster shot against COVID-19, as a condition of employment. Accordingly, successful candidates must be fully vaccinated, including the booster shot against COVID-19, and submit proof of vaccination prior to the commencement of employment unless they qualify for a reasonable accommodation for bona fide medical or religious reasons.

Compensation and Location

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$200,000-250,000. LDF offers a rich platform of benefits, including medical (Empire), dental (Cigna), vision (NVA), flexible spending accounts (Flex Facts), transit/commuter plan, life insurance, AD&D, voluntary life & AD&D (UNUM), AFLAC, Employee Assistance Plan, and Health Advocate. As well as the many healthcare benefits, LDF offers a 403b plan with employer match and a robust vacation, sick, and personal time program to ensure employees have a healthy work-life balance.

TO APPLY

Applicants are required to send a resume and statement of interest describing how one's experiences meet the requirements of this position to the following web address:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/naacp-legal-defense-and-educational-fund-inc/director-policy>

Inquiries and nominations may be submitted to the same web address. Review of nominations and applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. All applications and correspondences regarding this position should be addressed to the search firm consultants noted below.

Ernest A. Brooks III, Partner
Kennedy Kearney-Fischer, Managing Associate
Lehman Robinson, Associate
Caroline Corry, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to providing equal employment opportunities to you without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, age, veteran status, medical condition or disability, genetic information, gender identity, or any other protected status under federal, state, or local law.