



Invitation to Apply for the Position of

President and Executive Director

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Washington, DC

Moving America Toward Justice

Search Summary

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (the "Lawyers' Committee") seeks an exceptionally talented and energetic leader to serve as its next President and Executive Director ("President"). Throughout its rich and dynamic 52-year history, the Lawyers' Committee has engaged lawyers in support of the on-going movement to secure full civil and human rights for all people, focusing on the interests of African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. The unique feature of the Lawyers' Committee that sets it apart from other important and successful civil rights entities is that the Lawyers' Committee is comprised of lawyers from the private bar, many from our Nation's most elite private law firms, who contribute thousands of *pro bono* service hours annually to work done in partnership with career civil rights staff lawyers to advance the cause of civil rights.

Serving as the President of the Lawyers' Committee is an extraordinary opportunity for a champion of civil rights, racial equity, and social justice to have a major impact and effect positive change in the nation's history. Working with an outstanding staff, a prestigious and engaged Board, and highly skilled members of the bar, the President will be a leading and influential actor in vindicating the legal rights of those who continue to be victims of serious inequities in civil rights confronting America. For someone wanting to make a difference in the field of civil rights and the rule of law, there is no other comparable leadership opportunity.

The successful candidate will embrace the mission of the Lawyers' Committee, have an understanding of the legal issues confronting the civil rights movement today, demonstrate high competence in managing human and financial resources in a complex organization, be a skillful fundraiser, and exhibit legal and strategic acumen and exceptional oral and written communications skills. In following a 26-year, widely recognized, and successful veteran as the Lawyers' Committee's President and Executive Director, the next President should also know how to navigate a leadership transition with grace, patience, and a measure of courage.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Lawyers' Committee has the responsibility and authority to select the next President, and to assist in that process the Executive Committee has selected and charged a nine-member Search Committee chaired by

Marsha Simms and Jack Londen to conduct the President search.¹ The Search Committee has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important endeavor. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

The Lawyers' Committee

The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization formed in 1963 to enlist the private bar's leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and the resulting inequality of opportunity. The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee is to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities.

History and Milestones²

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law was created at the request of President John F. Kennedy in the summer of 1963 following a meeting of 244 lawyers in the East Room of the White House. President Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy spoke at the conference and urged the lawyers to use their training and influence to move the struggle for the protection of civil rights from the streets to the courts. The lawyers who attended were from throughout the United States and included leaders of state bars and the ABA and 50 African-American lawyers. President Kennedy had held similar meetings with representatives of business, education, and the clergy, but the decision to call a meeting with the lawyers and the timing of the meeting was born of a sense of urgency about the absence of the organized bar in the civil rights movement.

The Lawyers' Committee also received the support and endorsement of President Johnson, who met with its leaders in May 1965. The objectives of the Lawyers' Committee were: to marshal the resources of the private bar, including its leadership for public policy advocacy; to educate the public and the bar on civil rights; to enlist the skills of lawyers as negotiators and mediators to help resolve disputes; and to provide *pro bono* legal assistance to victims of discrimination.

A small sample of more recent milestones in the Lawyers' Committee's 52-year history indicates the breadth and significance of the work that its participating law firms and staff lawyers, often in partnership with sister civil rights organizations, have accomplished:

- **Election Protection**: The Lawyers' Committee leads Election Protection, the nation's largest non-partisan voting rights coalition, which utilizes thousands of volunteer lawyers in providing information and support to voters using multi-lingual nationwide hotlines and field programs in targeted communities.
- **Post-Katrina Work**: In the decade since Hurricane Katrina, the Lawyers' Committee's work on behalf of devastated low-income and minority households includes successful litigation against FEMA and a case that led to the reinstatement of nearly \$200 million of housing recovery funds that had been diverted to expansion of a port. Community-based advocacy work has also been a significant part of this work.

¹ The other Search Committee members are Michael Jones, Jim Joseph, Adam Klein, Bettina Plevan, Eleanor Smith, and Co-Chairs John Nonna and Donald Rosenberg.

² Excerpts taken from *The History of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law 1963-2008* by Charles T. Lester, Jr. For more on the rich history of the organization, please visit the web site at <http://www.lawyerscommittee.org/about?id=0003> .

- Education Litigation: In *Coalition v. Maryland Higher Education Commission*, the Lawyers' Committee established that Maryland's policies and practices continue to promote segregation at its Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In *P.B. v. White*, the Lawyers' Committee reached a settlement agreement to address Louisiana's failure to ensure that schools in New Orleans comply with federal and state special education laws.
- Employment Litigation: In *Johnson v. Pritzker*, Lawyers' Committee's staff lawyers, a participating member law firm, and another organization obtained an order in 2014 certifying classes of African-American and Latino workers who applied to be enumerators in the 2010 Census, but whom the Bureau of the Census rejected because of criminal history of arrest or conviction. The total number of potentially eligible class members is estimated to exceed 400,000. The parties are now exploring settlement.
- Criminal Justice: After the shooting of Michael Brown, the Lawyers' Committee drafted a Unified Statement of Action to Promote Reform and Stop Police Abuse that 14 national civil and human rights organizations and leaders signed. The Lawyers' Committee has also mobilized 60 private law firms to participate in Clemency Project 2014, an effort begun after Deputy Attorney General James Cole asked the legal profession to provide *pro bono* assistance to federal prisoners who are seeking clemency.
- Voting Rights Litigation: The Lawyers' Committee's voting rights litigation has successfully vindicated the rights of tens of millions of voters in the last decade in cases involving issues such as Texas Photo ID requirement, Arizona's proof of citizenship requirement, and the failure of several states to provide voter registration opportunities at their public assistance agencies.
- Loan Modification Scam Prevention Network: In 2010, the Lawyers' Committee and partners created this initiative to fight widespread fraudulent operations designed to scam households facing foreclosure and in need of loan modifications. The Lawyers' Committee developed a central database of complaints used by law enforcement agencies and has enrolled many private lawyers to participate in 14 cases litigated with staff in the name of the Lawyers' Committee.
- Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP): PREP improves K-12 student achievement and retention by ensuring that parents are successful and effective advocates for their children's education. PREP offers parents information about their children's educational rights and options and trains *pro bono* volunteers to advise parents and develop action plans to ensure their children's educational needs are met.
- Exclusionary Zoning Litigation: In 2013, the Lawyers' Committee prevailed in a long-standing fair housing case on behalf of plaintiffs challenging a discriminatory and exclusionary zoning decision in Garden City, New York which perpetuated segregation and blocked plaintiffs from building affordable housing. The Second Circuit recently heard the appeal in this matter.
- Public Policy: In 2006, the Lawyers' Committee was integral in the Reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, providing planning and supporting the compilation of the extensive record that Congress adopted. In 2009, the Lawyers' Committee helped lead support for the Hate Crimes bill.
- Voting Rights Commission: After the 2013 Supreme Court's decision that effectively immobilized Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, the Lawyers' Committee created the National Commission on Voting Rights, which held over 20 hearings across the country and produced a report detailing widespread current discrimination in voting rights.

On March 19, 2015, the Lawyers' Committee announced that its President and Executive Director, Barbara Arnwine, who has led the Lawyers' Committee since 1989, had submitted her resignation and would be leaving her post in June. Her leadership of the Lawyers' Committee and the civil rights and racial equity movement has been powerful and effective. The Executive Committee has appointed a Transition Committee composed of three Board members and two senior staff members to lead and manage the Lawyers' Committee until its next President assumes that role.

Current Programs

Since 1965, the Lawyers' Committee has been at the forefront of the legal struggle to advance and protect the right to vote and to ensure that the right is afforded equally to all. Through coordinated and integrated litigation, investigations, advocacy, and education, the **Voting Rights Project** has had a tremendous positive impact on communities of color and other traditionally disenfranchised populations. The Project leads Election Protection, the nation's largest non-partisan voting rights coalition that operates the 1-866-OUR-VOTE voter hotline and mobilizes thousands of volunteer lawyers. Private lawyers teamed with Project staff attorneys have also successfully litigated numerous significant voting rights cases, including *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*; *League of Women Voters v. Brunner*; and *Texas State Conference of NAACP Branches v. Cascos*. The Project has also organized the National Commission on the Voting Rights Act and, subsequently, the National Commission on Voting Rights to examine racial discrimination in voting.

The mission of the **Fair Housing & Community Development Project** (FHCD) is to fight discrimination in housing through enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and to promote greater opportunity for low-income people of color by ensuring that development is equitable and inclusive and that low-income people of color have access to crucial resources and meaningful housing choice. Through litigation, community-based advocacy, and transactional legal services, FHCD promotes residential integration, affordable housing, environmental justice, community benefits, transit equity, living wage and local hiring, tenants' rights, and integrated housing for persons with disabilities.

The **Educational Opportunities Project** uses a variety of strategies to ensure that all students have equal access to quality educational opportunities in public schools and institutions of higher learning, particularly students of color, low-income students, non-native English speakers, and students with disabilities. In partnership with law firms, the Project brings impact litigation to challenge segregation and discriminatory practices in the classroom. The Project seeks to eliminate the long-term consequences of the School to Prison Pipeline by assisting students who have been unjustly disciplined and/or are involved in the juvenile justice system to access appropriate school placements and services. The Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program works to reduce the racial achievement gap by assisting parents in becoming more effective advocates for their children's educational success. In addition to its site-based work, PREP's National Platform will leverage technology to assist parents across the country. The Project also engages with the Administration and members of Congress to promote legislation and policies which protect the civil rights of students in public schools, including charters.

The **Employment Discrimination Project** promotes increased employment opportunities for minority workers by removing barriers to employing them. The Project uses litigation by its staff attorneys and private law firms, as well as public education, to attack artificial barriers that not only obstruct equal opportunity for workers but also can prevent employers from considering candidates who have the best qualifications for the job. The Project is pursuing these efforts through two major initiatives: (1) the **Access Campaign**, challenging the inappropriate use of criminal and credit background check data, and (2) support for professional public safety officers (including police and firefighters) by challenging the improper use of written tests and other selection devices. These tests often impede minority candidates from entering public safety careers and advancing in their careers. The impact litigation undertaken by the staff and cooperating private law firms takes two primary forms: (1) Title VII disparate impact cases that attack policies (excluding applicants due to criminal records) or practices (paper-and-pencil exams for promotion); and (2) pioneering cases applying state laws that require fair consideration for job seekers with convictions. The Access Campaign also promotes major outreach events to introduce employers to other employers who attest to the benefits they have seen to the corporate “bottom line” from hiring workers who have records.

The **Public Policy Project** advocates for the effective advancement of civil rights laws at the federal and state level. Public Policy works across all projects and initiatives at the Lawyers’ Committee to coordinate the organization’s federal and state policy. Public Policy also manages the organization’s Judicial Diversity program. Public Policy is the chief liaison between the Lawyers’ Committee and the Administration and Congress. Examples of work include:

- The Lawyers’ Committee is playing a key role in efforts to fix the Voting Rights Act, including developing new legislation.
- The Lawyers’ Committee coordinates the Civil Rights Coalition on Police Reform and successfully advocated for the formation of the White House Task Force on 21st Century Police Reform and the release of the Department of Justice Racial Profiling Guidance.
- The Lawyers’ Committee has been a leader in the civil rights coalitions that have successfully brought about the passage of the Hate Crimes bill, Fair Sentencing Act, and many others.
- The Lawyers’ Committee led efforts in the development and eventual release of the Department of Justice/Department of Education Guidance on the Use of Race.

The **Legal Mobilization Project (LMP)** works with staff on utilizing a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to tackle today’s civil rights issues. Using the expertise of attorneys, organizers, and a technologist, LMP works across all subject areas through organizing, technology, infrastructure building, litigation, public policy, and public education. LMP specifically supports Election Protection, Clemency Project 2014, and PREP, to name a few. LMP also conducts the outreach and engagement efforts to recruit law firms and Board members for all the other projects. The Lawyers’ Committee is unique among national civil rights groups as it engages private lawyers in all of its work. On average, over 40,000 hours of *pro bono* legal assistance is donated annually to the Lawyers’ Committee and its clients. LMP also houses new initiatives such as the Criminal Justice Initiative, which has expanded on previous organizational work to combat the mass incarceration of African-Americans and eliminate racial disparities in the criminal justice system, including through Clemency Project 2014 and litigation addressing debtors’ prisons and systemic inadequacy of defense for indigent persons.

Leadership Challenges and Opportunities

The Lawyers' Committee is a complex nonprofit organization with multiple stakeholders, all of whom embrace a shared vision for justice, civil rights, racial equity, and fairness for all people. The overarching responsibility of the President is to synthesize and harmonize these diverse stakeholder constituencies – Directors, Trustees, Staff, Funders, and Law Firm Members – and their contributions of time, talent, and treasure into a highly functional, successful, well organized, and powerful community. The Lawyers' Committee is seeking a leader who has the experience and capacity to harness these unrivaled assets in the cause of justice. This is an unparalleled opportunity for a resourceful and hard-working champion to collaborate within the organization and within the larger civil rights community to build on the successes of the past, and achieve impact in translating the ideals of America's democracy into the daily lives of people all across the nation.

The next President's overarching, facilitating, and empowering responsibility has four constituent challenges and opportunities that, while interconnected and co-dependent, require the President to draw on distinct experiences, skills, and creativity. The success of the next President will be measured in terms of how well s/he meets these challenges and takes advantage of these opportunities.

The major, primary goal for the President is to create opportunities for service for attorneys and others to engage in advancing civil rights under law. This is what President Kennedy had in mind back in 1963 – harness the passion, intelligence and skills of the private bar in making civil rights a reality for all people. It is incumbent on the next President to encourage and facilitate the active engagement of a diverse and highly accomplished Board and other members of the private bar, with particular outreach to younger lawyers, to maintain relevance to the civil rights issues of the modern era and to sustain the future of the organization for decades to come. Achieving this goal may require changes in how the organization is governed and operated, for example, by opening the doors of the organization, engaging in shared governance, decentralizing decision-making, and sharing successes and the spotlight that comes with victory. The contribution of the current Board of over \$25 million per year in *pro bono* services is unrivaled. But it could be double or triple that amount. Coordinating teams of private law firms and staff lawyers – neither a centralized, staff-led model nor a *pro bono* clearinghouse model – is a difficult challenge. Maintaining quality and coherence needs to be weighed in the balance, but the pay-back could be enormous. In addition, once lawyers are involved in a Lawyer's Committee litigation or policy advocacy initiative, the more likely they will be to contribute money, as well as time, and to raise financial resources from others. Developing this “virtuous cycle” is the essence of empowerment.

The President will also have a significant opportunity to educate and engage with other civil rights leaders, Members of Congress and the Administration, and other policy-makers at the federal and state levels in developing legal strategies that confront some of the most persistent and troubling issues of the times. This is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who cares about the future direction of the country with respect to civil rights and social justice and wants to make a difference. Because the Lawyers' Committee is unique in organizing an impressive measure of free legal services and has an established history of leadership in managing large civil and human rights [coalitions](#), the President comes to the civil rights forum with a strong hand. There is incentive to engage constructively and collaboratively with the larger civil rights community

and in the movement for racial and social justice as it currently exists and as it has begun to evolve over the course of the last 12 months. The Lawyers' Committee has a comparative advantage and is recognized for its special and significant contributions. It does not have to duplicate effort or compete on other fields.

The President will be the principal – although not the only – face of the Lawyers' Committee, and s/he should feel comfortable in that role. The President will be expected to be an engaged and active participant in the civil rights forums along with the leaders of sister organizations. In this visible, external role, the President should be prepared to advance the narrative of the Lawyers' Committee and enhance its brand as a major contributor to the history of the civil rights movement and a leader for the future as well.

The President will also be expected to be a thought-leader for civil rights law and policy and actively engaged in the enlistment of practicing lawyers in the civil rights movement. Strong communications and coalition-building skills along with credibility and sincerity are essential in meeting this challenge.

An important challenge and opportunity for the President is increasing and diversifying financial resources to sustain and augment the Lawyers' Committee's work. Every nonprofit organization leader faces this challenge, of course, but not every organization has the “three R's” that the Lawyers' Committee enjoys: Relevance, Record, and Relationships. The issue of racial injustice, for example, is not new, but the recognition of, and revulsion towards, this injustice among the media and the public are in the forefront of the nation's conscience. People and institutions want to help, and the Lawyers' Committee is an excellent vehicle for addressing through legal means these persistent and pernicious flaws in our society; the Lawyers' Committee is relevant. The Lawyers' Committee also has a record of success as described above; contributing to the Lawyers' Committee is a safe bet in terms of securing meaningful legal and social change. Finally, the Lawyers' Committee has an enviable, expansive Board, a loyal cohort of long-term, generous funders, and a cadre of supporters within the private bar. With these relationships as a base, the President should be able to develop a network of relationships that can support the organization financially well into the future. The President has a staff of development professionals who work tirelessly to raise funds from foundations, law firms, individuals and corporations. The Board is also engaged. The task for the next President is to expand this circle of relationships and capitalize on the goodwill of the organization and its constituents.

In addition to increasing revenues from existing income streams, the President will have an opportunity to tap new sources of funding in order to balance fundraising strategies. The challenge is to develop financing models that augment restricted program grants with unrestricted funding, ensuring sustainability and a healthy array of revenue streams. Currently some programs enjoy financial security while other programs are under-resourced, leading to staff insecurity and a situation where funding determines priorities. A President who has met these challenges in the past or who has the creativity to figure out how best to use the “three R's” to engage new funders will be most successful.

Finally, an immediate focus on resource management is essential in order to unlock and empower the staff and Board at the Lawyers' Committee. The Lawyers' Committee has enormous resources and assets: an annual budget of approximately \$9 million; a staff of about 60 talented, mission-driven, resourceful individuals who share a noble vision and care about its

implementation; an unrivaled cadre of Directors and Trustees who rank among the best attorneys and policy experts in the United States; and a brand that is appropriately respected nation-wide based on the history and significant achievements of the Lawyers' Committee over the past five decades. Managing these human, financial, and reputational assets is a principal challenge and responsibility for the President, not single-handedly, of course, but by building a team of leaders on the staff and on the Board that embraces transparency, accountability, and pride in directing these resources for greatest mission-driven impact.

The President will have an unparalleled opportunity to develop collaborative relationships among staff attorneys, policy advocates, and legal mobilization organizers that avoid silos and allow for mutual support, as well as shared leadership and responsibility for the overall success of the organization, including both substantive programs and administration and development efforts. In the same vein, the President will have an opportunity to develop strong relationships between the staff and the private bar, starting, of course, with the Directors and Trustees.

To achieve these objectives the President will lead a process that examines the organization and deployment of the staff and the matrix of its programs and initiatives and, in the course of that process, work with the Board to make some choices about priorities. In addition, within the next few years, the President, along with the staff and Board leaders, will engage in a renewed strategic planning effort that examines the organization's strengths and comparative advantages in the context of emerging civil rights and social justice issues. Achieving these objectives will require a leader who has an appreciation for nonprofit management issues, such as those described, and the courage to lead and make change.

Desired Qualifications and Experience

The Search Committee will consider the following factors in evaluating candidates for this important leadership role. While no single individual will possess all the desired experiences and qualifications, the successful candidate should possess many of the following characteristics:

- A JD degree and experience practicing law is strongly preferred;
- Broad, diverse experience in several aspects of civil rights policy or law and/or substantive, deep experience in at least one of the areas of law and policy in which the Lawyers' Committee is engaged are strongly preferred;
- A commitment to the mission and goals of the Lawyers' Committee, including nurturing diversity and inclusion, and an understanding of the centrality of racial equity in the civil rights movement are critical;
- Significant experience managing and leading a nonprofit organization of a size and scope comparable to the Lawyers' Committee, or a private sector enterprise, including a law firm, or a government agency;
- A demonstrated record of successful fundraising from foundations, law firms, major individual donors, corporations, and the public at large;
- A record of successful public interest advocacy in a paid or volunteer or *pro bono* capacity, as well as experience and capacity to connect with those communities most affected by injustice and the lack of civil rights;
- The ability and desire to lead a team of professionals and work collaboratively with talented, mission-driven staff;

- Experience or demonstrated capacity to work successfully with a Board of Directors and within a shared governance structure;
- Excellent skills communicating with all organizational stakeholders, including the media, policy-makers, funders, staff, Board, and the general public;
- Capacity to synthesize across functions and issues and develop coherence and strength across organizational units;
- A track record of engaging in collaborative endeavors and building partnerships with peer organizations and other individual leaders;
- High energy level, good humor, courage, unimpeachable ethical integrity, and contagious optimism that inspires others with a sense of possibility, progress, and hope.

Application Procedure

Applicants are asked to send a cover letter and resume to the following web address: www.imsearch.com/5439. Inquiries and nominations may be submitted to the same web address or to the search firm representatives at the contact information below. **Electronic submission of applications and correspondence is strongly preferred.** Review of nominations and applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

Tim McFeeley or Karla Saunders
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Apply via our website: www.imsearch.com/5439
202-682-1504

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