



American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania
Search for the Executive Director
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

The [American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania \(ACLU-PA\)](#)—a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization serving as an enduring guardian of justice, fairness, and freedom working to protect civil liberties and advance equity for all, with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—seeks an inspiring, visionary, and mission-driven Executive Director. The next Executive Director will understand that [the current issues](#) addressed by the ACLU are not only a matter of social progress but also that they play a crucial role in improving the lives of affected communities. The Executive Director must possess strong organizational acumen, strategic planning, fundraising, and interpersonal skills; exhibit outstanding judgment; and be a critical thinker. While balancing many different interests of various groups and individuals, the Executive Director champions the organization's mission and values and leads the development of strategies for the organization's core priority areas in cooperation with the Board of Directors, the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and its other affiliates.

Since the 2016 presidential election, ACLU-PA's membership has grown by 100% and its budget by 200%. Additionally, the staff has increased more than three-fold in a decade. This executive leader will leverage this momentum and spearhead the next chapter of leadership with a focus on sustainably advancing ACLU-PA's mission and impact. The Executive Director must be adept at balancing internal management with external impact and visibility. In partnership with a statewide Board of Directors to whom they report, this leader will continue the local and national [legacy of liberty](#) that has defined the ACLU for more than 100 years. This is a compelling role for a leader and activist who is ready to navigate and influence key civil liberties and social justice policy and legislation at the municipal, state, and federal levels.

The new Executive Director will be enthusiastic about implementing and embedding people-centric workplace norms, values, and practices that embrace and nurture authentic belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity. This leader will welcome difficult conversations, foster connections, build the community, and value collaborative decision-making. The Executive Director will be intent on creating

intentional and sustainable internal culture, continually examining internal policy and working to advance beyond conversation and theory and will be eager to put theory into daily practice.

The successful candidate must be an outstanding communicator who is able to develop and maintain relationships that ensure financial health and stability, build important partnerships that maximize the organization's influence, and effectively convey the mission and activities of the ACLU to a variety of constituencies and the broader public. The Executive Director of ACLU-PA is expected to assume a prominent role in Pennsylvania's public interest, good government, anti-racist, and social change communities. The position requires a collaborative and driven leader with a broad range of knowledge and a significant commitment to the furtherance of civil liberties and civil rights. This Executive Director will represent a multi-issue, dynamic, and well-resourced organization with an excellent reputation and ample tools to draw upon, including a network of 50+ other executive leaders across the national umbrella organization and a robust Affiliate Support advisory structure in the national ACLU office.

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

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF PENNSYLVANIA

Organized in the early 1950s, the ACLU-PA is one of the ten largest local affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union, the nation's foremost guardian of liberty. With approximately 34,000 members, a staff of 38, and a total budget of almost \$8 million, the ACLU-PA engages in a closely coordinated and integrated approach to advocacy that encompasses litigation, organizing, policy and legislative advocacy, and communications to protect and promote civil liberties and civil rights throughout Pennsylvania. ACLU-PA comprises two separate, nonprofit corporate entities, the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania – a “social welfare” organization under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code – and the [ACLU Foundation of Pennsylvania](#), a section 501(c)(3) “public charity.” Both entities are tax-exempt, have the same overall mission, a joint board, and share office space and employees. Additionally, ACLU-PA is in the process of forming a PAC to engage in specific nonpartisan electoral activities. Donations to the Union are not tax-deductible.

ACLU-PA is headquartered in Philadelphia, with staffed offices in Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, and regional volunteer chapters throughout the state. In addition to partnering with staff members from our national offices and other affiliates on specific issues and projects, ACLU-PA frequently joins forces with other organizations to maximize its impact in Pennsylvania and beyond. The ACLU-PA is active in championing a broad range of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, association, press, and religion; the right to privacy; reproductive freedom; LGBTQ+ equality; voting rights; due process of law; freedom from police misconduct; rights in the criminal legal system; the rights of the disabled; and the right to fair and equal treatment under the law for all.

The ACLU's reputation is built on more than a century of effective advocacy at every level of federal, state, and local government and of the civil and criminal legal systems. While the organization undertakes exceptional work out of its national headquarters, the ACLU's greatest strength is its network of state affiliates, the more than 1,000 staff who work out of the affiliate offices, and its many lay and pro bono volunteers. While each affiliate enjoys significant autonomy in determining programs and priorities appropriate to its regional needs, the organization has increasingly operated as one nationwide organization rather than a federation of loosely affiliated local organizations.

THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer of ACLU-PA and provides leadership and direction to achieve the organization's mission, goals, and strategies. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and manages the Chief of Staff and the following five departments: Administration, Advocacy and Policy, Communications, Development, and Legal. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the organization is fiscally sound and harnessing its resources to best meet the current and emergent needs and interests of its constituents, including in the areas of programming, development, advocacy, and internal and external communications.

The Executive Director will embody what it means to be a people-centric leader. The Executive Director will be a compelling communicator and public voice for the affiliate, a facilitator of relationships, a fundraiser, and a shaper and champion of the organization's internal culture. Above all, this leader will represent ACLU-PA externally and internally and will be accountable for the financial health and sustainability of the organization, including fiscal responsibility and fundraising leadership. This leader will be a builder who draws on theory to inform their daily practice. They also will welcome the call to lead on the difficult internal and external conversations surrounding culture and climate as the nation continues to grapple with best practices with respect to implementing authentic belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity (ABIDE). This leader will engage in a wide range of partnerships across the state, region, and country to build and deepen community relations and coalition work and serve as the public face of ACLU-PA. Overseeing the execution of multi-issue campaigns at the local, state, and national levels will require expertise and experience as a leader in intersectional work and movements.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Define the next chapter of ACLU-PA leadership.

Informed by the [Strategic Framework 2021-2024](#) and under the collaborative governance of a talented, engaged, and diverse 25-member statewide Board of Directors, the Executive Director will guide the organization's leaders and staff toward a shared vision of goals and strategies that advance the ACLU's mission. As the chief communicator and marketer, the Executive Director will be an approachable and relational leader that ensures strong relationships with national ACLU staff and the Executive Directors of other ACLU affiliates to advance shared programs, communications, and operational priorities. With the

support of the Deputy Director, the Executive Director will foster a supportive team-oriented environment where independent and innovative thinking is encouraged, the staff acts with clarity of mission and purpose, and will ensure responsible budgeting and sound fiscal management. Together, they will drive a culture of accountability with clear program goals, strategies to accomplish, regular feedback and ensure staff have the resources they need to accomplish and thrive in the work.

Manage and sustain a growing organization through a shifting cultural and political environment.

This is the ideal position for an advocate with a keen interest in mission and vision setting and a strong desire to develop further the nonpartisan political advocacy and grassroots organizing work that has deepened in the years following the 2016 presidential election. While leading the legal programs will continue to be a strategic priority, the Executive Director will also play a key role in refining approaches to and investments in political and grassroots organizing, shoring up and building on the growth in membership, volunteers, and donors experienced over the past six years, and maximizing strategic opportunities in response to growing public awareness of civil liberties and social justice as areas of critical local, regional, and national concern.

Structure, operationalize, and nurture authentic belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity as institutional values and practices.

The Executive Director will lead ACLU-PA in its ongoing commitment to the intentional work of justice, anti-racism, sexism, disablism, xenophobia, and homophobia by ensuring that the framework, tools, vision, and support are in place to usher the organization into its next stage of growth and success. The Executive Director will have a demonstrated and strong commitment to social justice and a clear and well-articulated vision for advancing ABIDE and embedding these values and practices into the fabric of the organization. The Executive Director will be committed to developing and equipping senior leaders with the skillsets and tools necessary to appropriately manage, support, and inspire a diversifying workforce, including persons with disabilities, that is increasingly inclusive of directly impacted and historically marginalized people. The Executive Director will encourage learning opportunities for all staff and be strategic around developing staff skills and competencies across multiple identities and lived experiences.

The Executive Director will embrace differing perspectives and discourse as essential components of a strong and diverse team. The Executive Director will be an emotionally intelligent leader with experience mediating conflict and establishing healthy and courageous conversations. This leader will understand and value this work as a journey rather than a destination and foster a culture and community that values and prioritizes systemic and structural changes within a firmly established organization.

Enact both breadth and depth of knowledge to a wide range of civil liberty and social justice issues and serve as the primary representative of ACLU-PA.

An exciting charge of the next Executive Director will be uplifting marginalized voices and driving the advocacy vision of an affiliate on the front lines of national issues and many state and grassroots issues. The next Executive Director of the ACLU will be an effective external spokesperson for the myriad civil liberty issues facing the constituencies of ACLU-PA and national issues facing Pennsylvania as a political “battleground” state. The Executive Director will be relied upon to address a wide range of topics, including but not limited to decarceration, police and probation reform, voting rights and access, immigration, LGBTQ+ equality, reproductive rights, freedom of speech, disability rights, language access, and youth rights. The Executive Director will be passionate about networking and representing the organization to critical constituencies, including ACLU members, donors, the public, the government, and the media. This leader will be a compelling and evocative communicator and a champion for a wide range of lived experiences and identities and form deep partnerships and collaborations with a network of public interest, legal, and social justice communities throughout the state.

Demonstrate strong business acumen and the ability to cultivate and steward significant financial resources effectively.

The Executive Director will bring demonstrated, practiced business and financial acumen that strategically informs all decision-making. Working closely with the Board of Directors and staff leadership, the Executive Director will advocate for and promote a robust, sustainable, and balanced business model through the appropriate allocation of resources, fiscally responsible budgeting, practiced and sustained fundraising, and strategic investments in areas of growth. The Executive Director will also pay close attention to allocating and maintaining essential resources and infrastructure, including salaries, benefits, and programs needed to accomplish ACLU-PA's many goals and objectives.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Vision

- Lead effective management practices, ensuring the use of best practices.
- Exhibit courage and clarity when addressing highly controversial and complex issues.
- Guard the organization’s integrity, credibility, and non-partisanship.
- Motivate and maintain a cohesive staff, ensuring strong internal communication and collaboration.
- Foster an environment of continuous improvement, learning, and effectiveness.

Budget, Development, and Fundraising

- Oversee fiscal planning and financial oversight, ensuring compliance with all federal, state, and local regulatory obligations while embracing best practices that meet the highest standards.
- In partnership with the Director of Philanthropy, lead a robust fundraising program to protect the affiliate's long-term financial stability, steward key donor relationships, identify new major donor prospects, and solicit major donations.
- Collaborate with national staff to implement the national fundraising model, participate in national convenings, and ensure that fundraising platforms are used well in the affiliate.
- Ensure that the Board can meet its fiduciary responsibilities by proactively and transparently providing financial reports, securing regular audits, and engaging with the Board in the budgeting process.

Public Representation

- Represent the affiliate's priorities on key issues, articulating the organization's positions, and communicating its mission to increase the organization's visibility and the public's understanding of the goals and work.
- When needed, serve as an organizational spokesperson for the media, partner organizations, and the general public.
- Value a diverse set of voices to represent the organization's positions on its work.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no single candidate will likely have all the ideal qualifications, candidates should possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- At least ten years of relevant professional experience with a track record of increasing leadership responsibility and accomplishment. (An advanced degree, which may but need not be a JD, and prior nonprofit management experience are preferred.)
- Unwavering commitment to advancing the ACLU's longstanding values, mission, goals, and programs, with an understanding of the range of civil liberties issues and their implications.
- A demonstrated commitment to championing and implementing authentic belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity.
- Proven managerial, problem-solving, strategic thinking, and human resource experience in the private, not-for-profit, or public sectors.
- Evidence of a successful track record in creating and implementing programs; experience developing partnerships and collaborations.
- History of communicating effectively in writing and verbally, including excellent public speaking skills for both formal and extemporaneous presentations; ability to represent the ACLU to a broad public.

- A record of success working in partnership with a board, staff, and volunteers of diverse personalities and talents from divergent geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds and of all ages, genders, and cultures.
- Experience and ability in budgeting, fiscal management, and fundraising (including donor cultivation and stewardship)
- Ability to work independently and as a team member and have excellent problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Skill to work in a high-pressure environment and to multi-task.
- Creative, result-oriented, self-starting, and willing to learn.
- Someone creative, strategic, resourceful, and politically astute; and who understands the value of creating partnerships with other organizations to accomplish the ACLU's goals.
- An energetic person who can handle and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities; a self-starter and finisher who is flexible and well-organized.
- Clear and direct communicator; one who shares information readily, listens to, gives advice, and respects and enhances the abilities of others.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Compensation for this position will be between \$175,000 and \$205,000, depending on the candidate's experience. Benefits include health, dental, disability, life insurance, retirement plan, paid vacation, holidays, sabbatical, and sick leave.

TO APPLY

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in the recruitment of the Executive Director. Candidates are encouraged to apply by **May 5th**. Applications will be accepted and reviewed until ACLU-PA reaches a hiring decision. Inquiries, referrals, and resumes accompanied by a cover letter will be held in strict confidence and should be sent electronically to:

Tiffany Weber (she/her), Managing Associate | Search Lead

Tiara Mack (she/her), Associate

Ernest Brooks (he/him), Partner

Melanie Shiree (she/her), Senior Search Coordinator

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/american-civil-liberties-union-pennsylvania/executive-director>

ACLU-PA is an equal-opportunity employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. ACLU-PA encourages applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status, or record of arrest or conviction.