



## **Associate Legal Director**

Montgomery, Alabama

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a leader in the fight against hate and bigotry in the United States, is seeking nominations and applications for the newly-created position of Associate Legal Director (ALD). Joining a legal team that uses impact litigation and policy advocacy as its primary tools to relentlessly pursue justice and equal rights, the Associate Legal Director will refine, build, and maintain internal systems that support a rapidly growing and highly talented legal team.

As fear, political and cultural division, hatred, and economic uncertainty persist in the American consciousness and manifest in discriminatory policies, speech and actions, individuals across the country are reigniting their commitment to justice for all. Southern Poverty Law Center's Legal Department is growing in response to the increased demand to protect Americans whose civil rights are being threatened in cities and states across the country. Because of this internal growth, there is an increasingly critical need for an internal systems-thinker who can assess, develop, and implement the consistent use of tools and practices designed to support the effectiveness of the legal team and build successful practices at every stage of litigation. In just the last 12 months, SPLC has increased its legal team by 50% and plans to continue a strong pace of growth in 2018.

Reporting to the Legal Director, the ALD will support and work collaboratively across six office locations and five legal practice groups in the areas of: Criminal Justice Reform, Children's Rights, Economic Justice, Immigrant Justice, and LGBT Rights and Special Litigation (including litigation against hate groups). The ALD will streamline internal systems to ensure that the appropriate frameworks, tools, systems, and policies are in place, will review monthly budgets and reporting, will oversee talent strategy for fellowship, internship, and recruitment programs, and will partner with the Legal Director to research new opportunities for growth.

The ideal candidate will be committed to SPLC's mission and the transformative power of impact litigation. He/she/they will hold a law degree and ideally have litigation experience, but will have shifted professional focus toward the administration of strong operational and management systems that support a legal enterprise. The ideal candidate will be a natural relationship builder and effective communicator with demonstrated project management success coordinating across, and synthesizing feedback from, multiple teams and locations. He/she/they will additionally have seasoned and successful experience in change/growth management and talent strategy, including recruitment and professional development. The selected candidate will have experience working with and supporting a strong and diverse team and will bring a healthy sense of humor and enthusiasm to the work environment.

This search is being conducted by Katherine Jacobs, Callie Carroll, and Erica Nicole Griffin of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Please find more information and application instructions at the end of this document.



## HISTORY AND MISSION

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Southern Poverty Law Center was founded in the late 1960s by Morris Dees and Joe Levin to secure the promises of the Civil Rights movement through impact litigation. While landmark court decisions of the 1950s and 1960s had set precedents to usher in widespread racial equality, states and local jurisdictions were reluctant to implement changes to ensure all people had equal access to public resources and equal protection under the law. Instead, vulnerable communities, especially Blacks in the South, were subject to discrimination in the workforce, in schools, in state legislatures and the criminal justice system and hate-driven terror in their communities. Dees and Levin committed their careers at SPLC to pro bono litigation, taking on cases that few were willing to pursue and aggressively pushing for decisions that would have widespread implications.

In 1971, civil rights activist Julian Bond was named as SPLC's first president and the organization began to campaign for and win national financial support. As SPLC grew and expanded, it restructured its work to focus on four crucial areas of programming in the fight for justice. These include:

- **The Intelligence Project**, (formerly known as KlanWatch) a team dedicated to monitoring, infiltrating, reporting, and shutting down the activity of domestic hate groups.
- **Teaching Tolerance**, which combats prejudice among our nation's youth while promoting equality, inclusiveness and equitable learning environments in the classroom.
- **Civil Rights Memorial Center**, located across the street from SPLC and near other historic sites, features the names and stories of martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement, a theater, classrooms, and the Wall of Tolerance.
- **The Legal Department** continues to seek justice and advocate for the rights of all people, just as Morris Dees and Joe Levin did at SPLC's founding.

With critical wins over the years against discriminatory practices by individuals, the private sector, the government, educational systems, and criminal justice systems, SPLC's legal team has inspired hope and brought justice to individuals in the farthest reaches of our society. Landmark cases against the Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Nation put hate groups out of business and the Intelligence Project's sophisticated tracking of these groups continues to support the ongoing work of the legal team.

Over the last decade the legal team expanded and organized into five practice groups each with related but unique priorities. They are:

- **Children's Rights** – The Children's Rights practice group works to improve the well-being of the South's most vulnerable children by fighting to stop the school-to-prison pipeline, improving educational equity, and ensuring that children with mental health challenges get the care and treatment they need to succeed.
- **Economic Justice** – The Economic Justice Project challenges practices that trap people – especially people of color – in poverty and punish or disadvantage them simply for being poor. Current priority areas are: ending debtors' prisons and reforming court debt abuses, bail reform, ending predatory lending, and protecting government safety nets for the poor.
- **Immigrant Justice** – The Immigrant Justice Project fights against worker abuse, defends the civil rights of immigrants against unlawful governmental action, and works to end unfair deportations and ICE abuses.



- **LGBT Rights and Special Litigation** – This practice group works to ensure that LGBT people achieve full equality under the law, engages in litigation that advances SPLC’s commitment to combatting hate, and brings litigation that advances SPLC priorities not addressed by other practice groups.
- **Criminal Justice Reform** – SPLC is using litigation and advocacy to help end the era of mass incarceration, to root out racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, and to ensure humane, constitutional standards for prisoners. Priorities include sentencing reform, litigation to improve prison conditions, juvenile justice, and fighting the criminalization and over-incarceration of immigrants.

For more information on Southern Poverty Law Center please visit: <https://www.splcenter.org/>

Over the last 12 months, the growth of this team has been unprecedented. Under the direction of Legal Director Rhonda Brownstein, the Deputy Legal Directors (DLDs) have had to quickly expand their teams and increase capacity to meet the increased demands for justice. The new Associate Legal Director will collaborate with Rhonda and the DLDs to develop and execute operational systems and practices that enable the team to operate with precision, consistency, and widespread impact.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE ASSOCIATE LEGAL DIRECTOR

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Work at the Southern Poverty Law Center is both a great privilege and responsibility. SPLC’s mission to fight hate and bigotry and to seek justice for the most vulnerable members of society is a clarion call to professionals who are willing to commit their professional skills to the defense of a greater nation for all.

Reporting to Legal Director Rhonda Brownstein, **the Associate Legal Director will work together with Deputy Legal Directors and across the Legal Department to streamline internal systems and to collaboratively engineer and nurture an infrastructure that supports exceptional performance across the five legal practice groups.** This is a position of critical influence to the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the SPLC legal team, particularly in this period of tremendous growth for the team and the need for SPLC’s work in ensuring that the arc of American social and political evolution bends toward justice for all.

Some of the opportunities facing the Associate Legal Director will include:

***Provide oversight of administrative practices and procedures for the Legal Department, coordinating as appropriate across SPLC to ensure seamless integration of systems and communication.***

In consultation with the Legal Director and Deputy Legal Directors, the Associate Legal Director will oversee all administrative systems of the legal team and identify opportunities for improvement. He/she/they will encourage practices that enable consistent and effective communication across the organization, such as strengthening the collaborative relationship between the Legal Department, Teaching Tolerance, and Intelligence Project teams. The ALD will work with the finance and administrative departments to manage space needs in regional offices and oversee the opening of additional offices. He/she/they will collaborate with digital and communications to identify ways to amplify the work of the Legal Department and create awareness of the legal team’s work.



***Identify and implement systems and procedures that promote effective and efficient litigation.***

In collaboration with the Legal Director and Deputy Legal Directors, the ALD will assess the current operational systems for the legal team, identify inefficiencies or areas for improvement, and collaboratively develop and implement solutions. This includes activities such as leading the department in adapting modern discovery tools and software, refining and standardizing data sharing and storage practices, streamlining consistent communication within and across practice groups, and ensuring attorneys in each practice group are compliant with state licensing and bar policies and that the entire Legal Department is in compliance with all federal and state policies. Additionally, the ALD will oversee department-wide efforts to update the legal docket on a semi-annual basis and to recruit and coordinate pro bono law firms to co-counsel cases.

***Liaise with the Deputy Legal Directors and Human Resources to ensure a robust talent strategy, pipeline development, and process.***

At a time when the SPLC is expanding to respond to increased demand for Civil Rights advocacy and representation, the ALD will support the Legal Department as it recruits and vets candidates for senior level roles across the practice groups and will shape professional development opportunities and policies for team members of all levels. The ALD will also ensure the ongoing development of talent in the field by managing the internships and fellowship programs, and developing and implementing training and professional development plans for law fellows.

***Refine financial and budget systems to ensure timely budget submission and approval, thorough review of expenditures, and equitable and appropriate allocation of resources across practice groups.***

Given the specific needs of each practice group, the ALD will provide procedural consistency as he/she/they collaborate with the Legal Director on the allocation of funds to new projects and partners. He/she/they will also be called upon to work with the Legal Director on monthly review of the Legal Department's financial documents and the development of annual budgets.

***Research, assess, and contribute to the planning and development of new project areas and cross-cutting programs in partnership with the Legal Director.***

In order for the Legal Department to succeed, it must expand project areas and meet the changing needs of clients and stakeholders. The Associate Legal Director will support the Legal Director to review opportunities for growth, including partnering with the Legal Director to identify new areas for litigation and legislative initiatives and determining the feasibility of regional expansion and growth opportunities. Additionally, the ALD will oversee the Strategic Litigation Grants program, ensuring that grantees are fully supported and have access to appropriate technical assistance.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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The Associate Legal Director will have the opportunity to pursue a role that calls forward legal, administrative, and management skills in service to social justice. It requires a seasoned, skilled professional who is uniquely qualified to transform and maintain the operations of a large legal team. The ideal candidate for this role will be a mission-driven systems-thinker who is perfectly suited to engineer an infrastructure that enables the Legal Department to operate at the highest levels of performance. While no one candidate will have all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will be a trained attorney and have the following skills, qualifications, and abilities:



- A sincere commitment to social justice and a keen awareness of the indelible relationship between impact litigation and social change;
- Significant, proven organizational or administrative management experience with demonstrated success creating systems and driving implementation of organizational and operational best practices;
- A thorough knowledge of litigation practices including but not limited to the use of litigation management tools, billing software, cloud-based document storage, and client communication portals;
- Experience litigating as a public interest attorney is preferred;
- Excellent interpersonal and public communication skills with the ability to translate vision, strategy and outcomes into external messaging and branding;
- Experience liaising between senior leadership and team members in areas such as operational strategy, talent development, and professional development;
- An entrepreneurial spirit and an inherent curiosity for exploring new project areas and opportunities for growth;
- Experience collaborating with senior leadership on financial management;
- A command of federal/state policies governing legal practice including but not limited to: bar admittance and compliance, licensing procedures and policies, and policies governing attorney conduct;
- A high tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to adapt quickly to change; an optimistic outlook, a natural orientation towards collaboration, and the natural tendency to forego individual promotion in the interest of mission and team;
- Patience, a sense of humor, gravitas and the flexibility to lead and respond to team members in diverse locations with diverse perspectives and diverse goals;
- The ability and willingness to travel regionally.

## TO APPLY

This search is being conducted with assistance from Katherine Jacobs, Callie Carroll, and Erica Nicole Griffin of Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, and applications will be reviewed as they are received. Please send nominations and/or applications including cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position to: [SPLC-ALD@nonprofitprofessionals.com](mailto:SPLC-ALD@nonprofitprofessionals.com). **Southern Poverty Law Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.**

*Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group is a national executive search and consulting firm dedicated to serving the mission-driven community. We partner with global mission-driven clients to deliver highly-tailored, innovative, and strategic senior- and executive-level search services.*

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