



SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Chief Legal Officer



**Bridge
Partners**

Executive Search

The Organization:

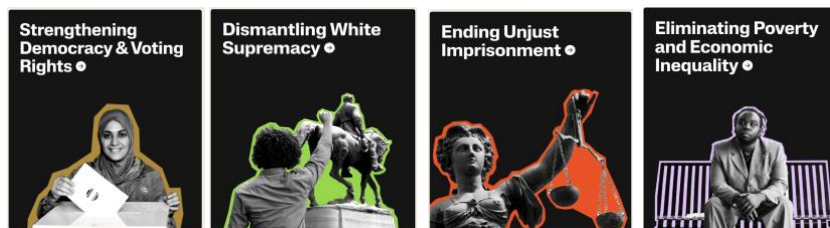
The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is one of the most influential forces for racial justice in the United States, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

Apathy is not an option.

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

Founded in 1971 to ensure that the promise of the Civil Rights Movement became a reality for all, the organization continues to engage in both legal and community-based efforts to topple institutional racism and stamp out remnants of Jim Crow segregation; unmask and defeat some of the nation's most violent white supremacist groups; and protect the civil rights of communities of color, children, women, people with disabilities, immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, incarcerated persons, religious minorities, and many others who face discrimination, abuse, or exploitation.

The work of SPLC touches every part of the country, with a focus on five priority Deep South states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi—regions that have played historic roles in the Civil Rights Movement and remain critical battlegrounds for racial justice. Headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, the organization also maintains offices in Miami, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; Jackson, Mississippi; and Washington, D.C. This network of offices allows the SPLC to implement people-centered programs while developing broader strategies to confront systemic challenges both regionally and nationally. By transforming the Deep South, SPLC is leading the way for the rest of the country.



History

By the late 1960s, the civil rights movement had broken the legal framework of Jim Crow, yet the lived reality of racial inequality persisted. African Americans continued to face exclusion from quality jobs, housing, education, and public life, and few institutions were equipped—or willing—to champion the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. In response to this urgent need, a new civil rights law center was established in 1971 to provide legal representation in cases that few lawyers would take, challenging discriminatory systems and advancing equal protection under the law.

In its early years, the SPLC helped desegregate public facilities, reform state institutions, and secure more equitable political representation. Over the decades, it went on to win landmark victories against violent white supremacist groups, dismantle vestiges of Jim Crow, defend the rights of marginalized communities, and expose extremist activity nationwide. It also expanded into education, launching a nationally recognized anti-bias program.

As the nation has grown more diverse and new manifestations of hate and inequality have emerged, the organization's mission has only become more urgent - guided by a steadfast commitment to justice, dignity, and human rights for all.

Today

At a time when unprecedented and coordinated efforts seek to divide and demoralize those working toward an equitable, inclusive, multiracial democracy, SPLC remains unwavering in its mission to confront racism in all its forms. The organization is rooted in the belief that a society where communities of color thrive benefits everyone, and it is guided by a deep commitment to building a future where white supremacy, poverty, and mass incarceration are relics of the past.

The Southern Poverty Law Center remains committed to championing racial justice with unwavering determination and an unshakable belief in the power of unity. Through its work, the organization continues to build a future where all communities thrive, and discrimination is consigned to history.

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Position Summary:

Reporting to the President & CEO and as a key member of the SPLC executive team, the Chief Legal Officer will be a thought partner and collaborative visionary responsible for shaping, leading and managing a strategic, innovative litigation docket at the federal, state, and regional level.

Effectively managing a large and experienced Legal team – and collaborating across issues, areas, and departments - the CLO will direct and implement the organization's impact legal and litigation strategy at a time when the work of the SPLC has never been more vital.

The successful candidate will have a history of deeply credible and meaningful legal leadership experience in the civil rights space, with leadership in litigation and advocacy.

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide strategic thought partnership on legal objectives, strategies and priorities to the President and CEO, the Executive Team, the Board, the Legal Department's leadership team, and other members of the organization.
- Participate in organization-wide strategic planning, including leading the development and expansion of new strategies, resources, and policy work.
- Demonstrate change leadership, shaping, guiding and managing the SPLC's litigation strategy while supervising the effective and impactful operations of the Legal Department, including:
 - Managing and supporting the litigation strategies across the various practice groups.
 - Ensuring the Legal Department provides the highest quality legal representation in support of and consistent with the organization's mission, strategic framework, and values.
 - Developing and overseeing any needed structural changes in the Department, including areas of practice, new projects, and the size and locations of the legal staff.
 - Reviewing financial reports and develop and oversee the annual department budgets in compliance with the SPLC's administrative and financial management policies and practices.
 - Recruiting, hiring, coaching, developing, mentoring, training, and motivating a team of highly skilled and collaborative litigation professionals, including attorneys and non-attorney professionals.
 - Working with the organization's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team to assess outcomes and impact of the Legal Department.
- Actively participate in work to promote justice and equity, and incorporate a DEIA lens on the Legal Department's internal and external work.
- Serve as an enterprise leader, bringing an organization-wide perspective to legal strategy and decision-making, and ensuring alignment of litigation priorities with the organization's broader strategic, policy, and communications objectives.
- Build relationships and reinforce existing partnerships internally and externally, to further organizational objectives and maximize impact, including, other human rights and social justice organizations, stakeholders and supporters, and outside pro bono counsel.

The Leader:

- This leadership position requires an accomplished attorney with a distinguished professional record in pursuing justice and strengthening civil rights. The successful candidate will exhibit a longstanding passion for, and commitment to, the work of the organization and for contributing in a meaningful way to its strategy, long-term goals, and impact.
- Candidates must be able to see the big picture in determining and driving a unified litigation strategy consistent with, and in support of, SPLC's mission, vision, and values.
- They will bring the empathy and vision to lead, inspire and manage a large, experienced and complex Legal team, along with experience and understanding of leadership in a geographically dispersed, multi-racial, multi-generational setting, fostering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- In addition to exceptional legal expertise and excellent leadership and management skills, the Chief Legal Officer must be a practical problem solver with strong organizational skills and business acumen. They will thrive in a fast paced, dynamic, innovative, collaborative and high-energy environment.
- Balancing strategic vision with operational excellence, they will be a trusted and approachable advisor, cultivating strong, collaborative relationships across all programs, operations and other leadership functions to advance the organization's evolving agenda and impact.
- With strong communication and relationship-building skills, the Chief Legal Officer will also serve as a compelling external spokesperson and partner to other justice-seeking organizations and stakeholders across the nation.

Key qualifications and professional experiences of the Chief Legal Officer will include:

- JD from an accredited national law school and admission to any state bar in the United States.
- A minimum of 15 years of experience actively litigating and managing a broad range of large, complex federal and state litigation. Strong preference will be given to those with—
 - Foundational litigation training through experience gained in government, a private law firm or an in-house legal department;
 - Substantial social justice/civil rights litigation experience; and/or
 - Leadership experience in a non-profit legal organization;
 - Experience working in a unionized environment is a plus.
- Significant managerial and leadership experience, guiding and developing a high-performing legal team, including direct supervision of litigators.
- Highly strategic mindset and approach to litigation in the context of a broader organizational strategy; communicating and coordinating a unified vision across teams, seeking opportunity for novel theories, anticipating future cases, advocacy & practice areas.
- Demonstrated organizational acumen (looking beyond the legal team) with the ability to recognize the broader consequences of a course of action and its impact on the organization and the communities it serves.

Location:

- Montgomery, AL, Atlanta, GA or Washington, DC.

Compensation:

- SPLC offers competitive compensation, excellent benefits, and a supportive working environment.
- For this position, the base salary range is \$275,000 to \$320,000. Internal equity considerations and the average salary of the peer range will be reviewed before making a final offer.

Disclaimer:

- The statements herein are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the employee in this position. These statements are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required of a person in this position.

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is proud to be an equal opportunity employer, and as an organization committed to diversity and the perspective of all voices, we consider applicants equally without regard to age, caregiver status, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, national origin, on the basis of genetic information, political affiliation, pregnancy, or veteran status.

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If you have an interest in this opportunity, please share a resume and brief cover note to:

Tory Clarke
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Martens Roc
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Priority will be given to applications submitted by June 8th 2026,
although we will continue to receive and review applications until the position is filled.