

CIVIL RIGHTS DIRECTOR
Location: Flexible, from select states
Classification: Full-time, Exempt
Start Date: Fall 2026

The National Homelessness Law Center (Law Center) seeks a strategic, mission-driven attorney to serve as our Civil Rights Director. The Law Center is the legal arm of the national movement to end homelessness and is looking for a leader compelled by the national housing crisis and energized by our vision of housing as a human right and commitment to dismantling structural racism.

ABOUT THE LAW CENTER:

Founded in 1989, the National Homelessness Law Center is a team of attorneys and advocates dedicated to advancing federal, state and local policies to prevent and end homelessness while fiercely defending the rights of all unhoused persons. Our work, in collaboration with national, state, and local partners, has overturned laws that criminalize homelessness, protected access to affordable housing, helped unhoused children return to school, and shifted public narratives about homelessness towards greater empathy.

Our core conviction is that everyone should have the housing and supportive services they need to thrive, and that no one should be punished for being unable to afford rent. We view homelessness through a structural and anti-racist lens, acknowledging that Black individuals, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, disabled individuals, and individuals experiencing interpersonal violence are disproportionately impacted. We understand that effectively addressing homelessness requires confronting the structural racism and intersecting inequities at its roots.

We are a unionized workplace committed to a spirit of collaboration between the Union and Management and upholding the tradition of the labor movement. We are immensely proud of our skilled 17-person team and our extensive network of volunteer attorneys. The Law Center's budget for 2026 is \$2.7 million. The Law Center is financially sound and maintains a reserve. For more information on our work, explore our website: www.homelesslaw.org.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF POSITION:

The Law Center serves as both the legal arm of the movement to end homelessness and the national leader of the [Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign](#), bringing together and supporting a broad network of legal advocates, housing and service providers, researchers, policy organizations, organizers, and grassroots groups working to advance housing justice. Within this context, the Civil Rights Director will provide strategic leadership for the Law Center's legal, advocacy, and technical assistance work to end the criminalization of homelessness and advance the rights of people experiencing homelessness to access housing, public spaces, and essential services. The Civil Rights Director will align the portfolio's impact litigation, legal advocacy, coalition building, and technical assistance initiatives with the organization's broader strategic goals, anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities, and set the long-term vision and roadmap for the program. This is an exceptional opportunity for an attorney who thrives in a mission-driven, values-aligned organization and is committed to advancing systemic change through litigation, advocacy, and movement partnership.

This is a full-time, exempt role that reports to the Managing Attorney and is excluded from the bargaining unit as a supervisor/managerial position within the meaning of the NLRA. The Civil Rights Director exercises independent judgment in directing staff, managing program resources, and formulating program strategy for the organization.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Strategic Leadership

- Create and implement a cohesive national legal strategy to end criminalization of homelessness and expand access to housing, public spaces, healthcare, and other essential services.
- Advance a movement lawyering approach: The Law Center is evolving into a movement-oriented practice. Inherent in this commitment is the recognition that its litigation strategies must be informed by and build power within directly impacted communities. To reach this goal, the Civil Rights Director will develop relationships with grassroots organizations primarily, though not exclusively, through coalition work to inform and/or engage in Law Center litigation. The attorney in this position will also engage in coalitions of national organizations connecting the Law Center's litigation to strategies of other national partners; The person in this position will ensure that the litigation, policy advocacy, public education and technical assistance efforts support long-term movement goals, complement legislative and communications strategies and are coordinated and mutually reinforcing.
- Identify emerging legal and policy threats to the rights of people experiencing homelessness and set priorities for proactive organizational responses.
- Monitor outcomes, evaluate impact and recommend strategic adjustments to maximize impact

Supervision Work

- Supervise and lead 1-3 program staff to advance the strategy and organizational goals;
- Coordinate the Law Center's co-counseling and technical assistance efforts in cases related to our priorities to decriminalize homelessness and promote access to housing and care;
- Support team members (and conduct as needed) in identifying and developing opportunities for litigation, pre-litigation factual and legal research, and trial or appellate advocacy, all in coordination with local and pro bono partners;

Technical assistance/coalition building work/advocacy

- In collaboration with the Senior Policy Director and Director of Campaigns and Communications, build, convene, and lead national coalitions of legal advocates, civil rights organizations, homelessness service providers, grassroots advocates and allied partners.
- Create and foster collaborative strategies among partners to advance our initiatives.
- Advance movement lawyering projects like the Legal Defense Clinic work.
- Develop tools, guidance documents, model legal resources and training materials that strengthen partner organizations' litigation and advocacy capacity.
- Support partners in responding to emerging legal and policy developments affecting people experiencing homelessness.

- Collaborate with communications staff to translate complex legal issues into accessible materials for policymakers, advocates, media and the public. Serve as a spokesperson on civil rights and homelessness through presentations, publications, media engagement and public speaking.

Internal Management

- Provide input to the Development Team to help write and report on grants for program work;
- Develop and manage the annual budget for the decriminalization legal unit, including approving expenditures within approved parameters, authorizing outside counsel and expert engagement, recommending budget adjustments, and reporting to the Executive Director on budget performance;
- Serve as a member of the Directors Team, contributing to organization-wide policy formulation, strategic planning, resource allocation decisions, confidential personnel planning, and management decisions affecting the federal response effort.
- Work closely with the Pro Bono Coordinator to identify opportunities for pro bono engagement in federal response work and supervise pro bono projects accordingly.
- Collaborate with other Law Center staff on cross-organizational priorities.
- Travel as required for litigation, conferences, and other in-person events.
- Any other duties needed to help drive to our Vision, fulfill our Mission, and embody our Values.

WHO YOU ARE:

- You have a J.D. and are an attorney admitted and in good standing in at least 1 US jurisdiction.
- You have at least 8 years of social justice attorney experience. Any prior work experience in the housing justice and/or homeless rights fields or relevant life experience is a plus.
- You have at least 4 years of substantial litigation experience on behalf of economically disadvantaged populations, including challenging the criminalization of homelessness. Class-action or systemic impact litigation experience is a plus.
- You have a familiarity with the practice of movement lawyering and experience working with directly impacted individuals and grassroots organizations on organizing, network, or campaign-building.
- You have experience managing a small team.
- You enjoy taking initiative, and you think strategically and creatively.
- You have an understanding of international human rights frameworks and share our belief that all human beings have the right to a basic standard of living that includes safe, affordable housing, healthcare, and freedom from discrimination and cruelty.
- You have a positive and constructive attitude.
- You write clearly and accessibly and have experience editing others' writing.
- You enjoy multi-tasking and thrive in a collaborative and fast-paced work environment.
- You have a justice-oriented understanding of how race and power impact relationships, organizational culture and partnerships. You are committed to a personal and professional practice around deepening this understanding, through continuous learning, reflection and growth.
- You have flexibility for occasional travel 2-4 times per year.

- You must currently reside in, or be willing to relocate at your own expense to, one of the following states: Arizona, District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, or Washington.

SALARY, BENEFITS AND LOCATION:

Salary: To ensure equitable compensation, the attorney will be paid in accordance with the Law Center's salary scale for attorneys, which is based on years since graduation from law school. The scale for this position begins at \$87,500 for attorneys with 8 years since law school graduation and increases \$2,500 for each year beyond that, up to a maximum salary of \$140,000. We do not negotiate the salary scale.

Benefits: Health, dental, vision, life, short and long-term disability insurance all fully employer-paid and a 403(b)-retirement plan with supplemental salary contribution. The Law Center provides vacation leave (20 days per year), sick leave (10 days per year), personal leave (5 days per year), all Federal holidays, and 12 weeks of paid parental leave. In addition, the Law Center closes two weeks per year and has flexible work schedule options. A work laptop is provided.

Location: This position is open to candidates who are legally authorized to work in the United States, and who currently reside in, or are willing to relocate at their own expense to, one of the following states: Arizona, District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, or Washington. Candidates should indicate their state of residence or willingness to relocate to one of the aforementioned states in their cover letter.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

The Law Center is most interested in finding the best candidate for the job and that candidate may come from a less traditional background. We encourage all who feel capable of performing the necessary duties of the role to apply, even if you are unsure your experience exactly matches the criteria of the job description. To apply, send cover letter and resume to HR@homelesslaw.org with "TITLE, Last Name, First Name" in the subject line. **In your cover letter, please indicate what state you currently reside in.** Incomplete applications will not be considered. No phone calls, please.

Application Deadline: Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled with priority given to applications received by **September 9th, 2026.**

AI USAGE:

The Law Center does not knowingly use AI tools to screen applications or make hiring decisions. Likewise, in order to assess candidates' authentic and unique skills, we discourage the use of AI tools to generate cover letters or answer interview questions verbatim.

EEO STATEMENT:

The Law Center is an equal opportunity employer. The Law Center values an inclusive, diverse workplace and does not unlawfully discriminate on any basis prohibited by law. The Law Center encourages applications from all interested persons of any race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,

marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, union activities, or any other legally protected status.

The Law Center is committed to creating a fair and accessible interview process. To request an accommodation, please reach out to hr@homelesslaw.org.