

Equity & Inclusion Policy
Approved January 21st, 2017

The ACLU of Nebraska has always valued diversity. The ACLU of Nebraska remains committed to ensuring that equity and inclusion of all people is core to our organizational priorities with specific attention to meaningful equity and inclusion for historically unrepresented or underrepresented groups and individuals. Hereinafter, historically unrepresented and underrepresented groups or individuals, refers to individuals whose personal characteristics represent communities of color, women, LGBT Nebraskans, and Nebraskans with disabilities.

The ACLU of Nebraska will not discriminate based on actual or perceived personal characteristics of any individual representing historically unrepresented or underrepresented groups nor on the basis of any individual's ethnicity; national origin; gender, gender identity, gender expression; religion; sexual orientation; disability; age; marital or familial status; military or veteran status, or political party affiliation. We rely on self-identification in ascertaining an individual's personal characteristics.

All selection and nomination processes for membership, Board leadership, National Board representative, paid professional staff, and any other lay or professional positions within the ACLU of Nebraska shall be guided by this policy. Selection and nomination activities shall be done in a manner that provides equal opportunity for all individuals to participate in ACLU Nebraska activities with specific attention invested in ensuring individuals from historically unrepresented or underrepresented groups can meaningfully engage with ACLU of Nebraska.

We recognize that promoting equity, inclusion and diversity requires continuous assessment of our progress as an organization and a pro-active approach to addressing issues and gaps where they arise and/or are identified. To accomplish these goals we will establish an equity and inclusion plan for ACLU of Nebraska and review it annually or as appropriate.

Equity & Inclusion Plan

1. Appoint Affiliate Equity Officer (AEO)

The Board shall elect an AEO who is not a member of the affiliate staff or a voting member of a current search committee. The AEO shall serve a one-year term. The AEO may be appointed to successive terms. Qualifications include that the AEO should be committed to equity and inclusion as both effective means to accomplishing the mission of the ACLU and as worthy goals in themselves. The AEO should also be ready, willing and able to provide leadership on this issue.

The role of the AEO is to lead the Board in these efforts and to ensure mindfulness of policies and the affiliate's equity and inclusion plan in all affiliate hiring, including execution of responsibilities during executive director searches in close coordination with the National Affiliate Equity Officer. In addition to fulfilling the duties laid out in this job description, the AEO is encouraged to propose new and innovative approaches to this work, as best practices are constantly evolving and there is always more to learn.

Responsibilities include:

- Lead the Board's efforts to continuously evaluate its practices, policies and decisions with the aim of continuous improvement in the areas of equity and inclusion; report to the board annually on the organization's progress.

- Work as a strategic partner to the Executive Director or their delegate to advance equity, inclusion and diversity, meeting regularly to review the organization's Equity and Inclusion Plan.

- Assist the affiliate in complying with national policies related to diversity, equity and inclusion including facilitating participation in the affiliate census, submitting reports and sharing promising practices.

- Ensure that staff recruitment processes are consistent with the affiliate's equity and inclusion plan and apply equity and inclusion best practices in position design, outreach, selection, and orientation.

When the affiliate is hiring a new ED:

- Keep the National Affiliate Equity Officer (NAEO) informed of all stages of the recruitment and search process for an affiliate Executive Director.

- Review and approve the job description and job announcement to ensure compliance with policies and seek final approval from the NAEO,

- Review and approve the hiring memo from the Search Committee and seek final approval from the NAEO.

2. Expand Diversity of ACLU of Nebraska Membership

Efforts to expand diversity in ACLU Nebraska membership are important and are viewed as supportive of, indeed essential to developing a diverse leadership of the organization. Thus, membership recruitment from diverse sectors of the Nebraska

population is to be viewed as an important part of our equity and inclusion plan.

Specific actions include encouraging each board member to actively solicit new members from their personal and professional networks each year with an eye towards expanding with underrepresented groups. Additionally, board and staff will proactively identify community outreach opportunities for engagement with groups that are historically unrepresented or underrepresented to introduce our organization, its mission, and our work and prioritize requests from community and civic groups representing these target audiences in our public education efforts.

3. Expand Diversity of ACLU of Nebraska Lay Leadership

- a. *Board of Directors:* The Board shall have a Nominations Committee to identify candidates for the annual Board election or to fill vacancies on the Board caused by resignation or removal. The AEO shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

The Board Nominations Committee shall review the Equity & Inclusion policy and the current composition of the Board of Directors, and is charged with developing a slate of candidates for the board that meets or surpasses the goals of this policy.

Diversity goals established under this plan are flexible targets, not rigid quotas. Our goals are to ensure meaningful equity and inclusion for historically unrepresented and underrepresented groups within the context of our state's demographics.¹ The ACLU of Nebraska will do this according to best practices which recognize that truly inclusive membership is best achieved when each historically unrepresented and underrepresented groups comprises at least 30% of board membership. Thus, for example, our aspirational goals for a board numbering eighteen, would include at least 5 members representing communities of color, 5 members that are LGBT Nebraskans, at least 2 persons with disabilities, and at least 9 women. The ACLU Nebraska should also take into consideration organizational needs for board membership and thus may consider an individual's occupation, skills, age, and geographical representation.

At a point where composition of the Board of Directors falls short of the spirit and intent established by this policy, the Nominations Committee is charged with developing a slate of candidates that has the potential for progress toward improving equity and inclusion goals.

While the Nominations Committee will have the responsibility for contacting and interviewing potential candidates, it is the responsibility of each Board member to assist by providing any names of potential candidates they know to be either (1) members of ACLU Nebraska or (2) who are committed to civil liberties issues and are willing to join ACLU Nebraska. Personal contacts are a key element of

our equity and inclusion plan.

The Nominations Committee shall submit a slate of candidates for Board approval at the March meeting. The Board Nominations Committee report to ACLU Nebraska's Board of Directors shall include a description of its efforts to solicit candidates, including a statement of its equity and inclusion efforts in developing a slate of candidates. The report shall include:

1. The names of all individuals solicited for candidacy;
2. Whether any of these individuals represent class of people historically unrepresented or underrepresented on the board of directors or society at large;
3. The outcome of the discussion with each candidate.

The election ballot mailed to ACLU Nebraska members shall include information about the ACLU of Nebraska's equity and inclusion policy and equity and inclusion plan.

Appointments by ACLU Nebraska's Board of Directors to fill uncompleted terms of office on ACLU's Board shall be made in compliance with the spirit and goals of the equity and inclusion policy and equity and inclusion plan.

- b. National Board Representation:* Affiliate representation to the national ACLU Board of Directors and to the ACLU Biennial Conference by ACLU Nebraska shall reflect the spirit and goals of this policy.

In response to national ACLU's request for timely adoption of a policy regarding affiliate national board representative selection, ACLU Nebraska has adopted the following Policy on the Election of Affiliate Representatives to the National ACLU Board:

We recognize ACLU's categories for a diverse composition of the national Board: 1) people of color; 2) transgender persons; and 3) persons with disabilities. We rely on self-identification in ascertaining an individual's membership in these categories.

Our equity and inclusion goal includes the selection of at least one national Board representative from one of the diversity categories over a ten-year period.

When electing its national Board representative, the affiliate Board shall review the following information: 1) the national Board equity and inclusion policy and goals; 2) the degree to which the national Board has achieved compliance with its equity and inclusion goals for Board composition; 3) the affiliate Board's equity and inclusion policy and goals with respect to its national Board representative; and 4) the equity and inclusion status of each of the affiliate's representatives to the national Board in the preceding ten years.

- c. Delegates to the ACLU Biennial Conference: The selection of the ACLU of Nebraska delegation to the ACLU Biennial Conference shall reflect the spirit and goals of this policy and plan.

4. Professional Staff Opportunities

ACLU Nebraska shall promote and provide equal employment opportunity within all occupational categories and shall implement positive practical efforts to ensure that there will be no discrimination in employment practices. ACLU Nebraska seeks diversity in its work force that reflects its mission to advance equality and which will enable it to reach out effectively to groups and individuals that have been historically unrepresented or underrepresented.

The AEO will work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to follow best practices as outlined by ACLU national in compliance with all equity and inclusion matters when hiring an Executive Director.

The AEO will work collaboratively with the Executive Director to follow best practices as outlined by ACLU national in compliance with all equity and inclusion matters when the Executive Director hires other professional staff.

5. Volunteer Opportunities

ACLU Nebraska office volunteer opportunities are defined as any position of internship, clerkship, or office assistance that is not connected to the Board or a Board committee. All internships shall be advertised in an open fashion that is consistent with the spirit and intent of this policy.

Service on an ACLU Nebraska committee may include volunteer members who are not on the Board. Selection of committee members should be nondiscriminatory and based on whatever skill is required for the committee or simple willingness to serve.

6. Implementation

The Board of Directors shall regularly discuss ways to improve equity and inclusion of the ACLU of Nebraska in regards to membership, lay leadership, professional staff and volunteers including investing in board and professional development and training opportunities.

The equity and inclusion policy shall be distributed to the Board and staff, including to new Board members and staff.

Revision Presented November 2016

ⁱ Updated January 2016.

Nebraska has an estimated 1.8 million citizens; with Nebraska is 50.2% female and 49.8% male.

The estimated racial composition of Nebraska in Census Bureau terms: 89.4 % white; 4.9% African American; 2.2% Asian; 1.4% American Indian or Alaska Native; and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. These are “one race” responses to the census. Some 2.0% identified themselves as members of “two or more races.” Hispanic is an ethnic rather than racial identity. Some 10.2 % of the Nebraska population reported themselves to be Hispanic. Overall, 20.8% of the Nebraska population identify themselves as racial/ethnic minorities.

While the Census Bureau does not detail the representation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people within the state, a reasonable estimate extrapolating from national research is that approximately of 3.8% of Nebraskans would be LGBT.

The presence of people with disabilities in Nebraska was reported at 11%.

Sources: Nebraska Quick Facts from the U.S. Census Bureau <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/31000.html> and Gallup <http://www.gallup.com/poll/183383/americans-greatly-overestimate-percent-gay-lesbian.aspx> and <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>