NONHUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

Position: Litigation Director

About the Nonhuman Rights Project

The Nonhuman Rights Project is the only organization in the United States founded to secure fundamental legal rights for animals.

By bringing litigation grounded in existing legal principles, public values, and modern science, we seek to provide our animal clients with access to a judicial system that has historically been closed to them, secure fundamental rights for animals, and ensure those rights can be meaningfully enforced.

Alongside litigation, we use legal scholarship, amicus advocacy, public policy, communications, campaigns, and strategic engagement with the legal community to help move the law and public understanding forward.

Position Summary

The Nonhuman Rights Project is seeking a Director of Litigation to lead the organization's litigation program and legal team in advancing fundamental legal rights for animals.

The Director of Litigation will oversee the NhRP's litigation across the legal pathways identified in the organization's strategic plan, including advocating for the right to liberty, access to justice, and freedom from cruelty. The Director will serve as lead counsel in selected cases, appear and argue in court, supervise and support legal team members, help guide case selection and litigation strategy, and ensure consistently high-quality legal work aligned with the NhRP's mission and strategy as well as professional ethical obligations.

The role also includes responsibility for effectively managing the legal team, including staff supervision and performance management; close coordination with other departments on communications, development, and public engagement related to the NhRP's legal work; annual work planning and budgeting; tracking litigation timelines and expenses; and conducting post-case retrospectives.

We are looking for an experienced litigator and thoughtful manager who combines excellent legal judgment with strong leadership and organizational skills, and who is excited to help shape and execute innovative litigation strategies in a developing area of law.

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This position reports to the Managing Director of Programs. It is a full-time, remote, U.S.-based position with periodic travel for litigation and organizational events.

Key Responsibilities

Litigation

- Oversee NhRP's litigation in alignment with the organization's mission, strategic plan, and budget
- Supervise and provide guidance to legal team members in conducting litigation in alignment with all legal pathways included in NhRP's strategic plan (including Right to Liberty, Access to Justice, and Freedom from Cruelty), ensuring high-quality work and compliance with all applicable ethical rules
- Serve as lead counsel and argue cases in court
- Implement case selection frameworks and processes in close coordination with the Managing Director of Programs
- Ensure that legal work complies with and fully implements NhRP's strategic plan

Legal Team Operations

- Lead a formal retrospective promptly after each case concludes to document legal learnings, refine legal theories, and optimize future resource allocation
- Supervise and support legal team members through regular one-on-one meetings that, in addition to legal work, focus on workload, priorities, performance, feedback, professional development, and other management needs
- Manage the legal team's day-to-day operations, including managing capacity across the team, conducting performance reviews, ensuring that team members comply with NhRP policies, managing the team's budget, and ensuring strategic use of NhRP resources
- Systematically track departmental workplan progress, ensuring full transparency and alignment with the organization's strategic plan
- Develop and administer effective systems to support the team's work addressing needs such as document filing and retention, templates, workflows, and deadlines

- Proactively inform leadership of significant legal developments and emerging opportunities and risks, and their potential implications for organizational priorities and resources; provide reports on legal team activities and finances on a quarterly basis and as required by the Managing Director of Programs and other members of the Senior Leadership Team
- Work collaboratively with the Managing Director of Programs to develop the legal team's annual budget and workplan in alignment with the organization's budget and strategic plan
- Ensure legal team compliance with all NhRP policies, including those on confidentiality and document retention
- Develop and manage external relationships with experts, pro bono counsel, and others as needed
- Lead and develop legal externship and clerkship programs, including hiring and supervising participants and cultivating relationships with law schools and other sources of legal talent, with support from the Managing Director of Operations
- Manage internal litigation holds related to the legal team's litigation

<u>Communications and Development</u>

- Work with Communications, Development, and other internal colleagues to timely answer questions on the organization's legal work; propose, draft, proofread and/or edit content (such as press releases, supporter emails, campaign materials, annual reports, and donor updates) on cases and legal developments; align public-facing messaging with NhRP legal strategy; help ensure legal accuracy of organizational communications; and supervise legal team members in doing the same
- Represent NhRP on litigation-related matters at public events, act as a media spokesperson, and supervise team members in doing this work
- Actively contribute to maintaining a culture of teamwork and mutual respect throughout the organization

<u>General</u>

- Periodic travel for litigation and events

- Other duties as assigned by the Managing Director of Programs

Qualifications

- J.D. degree from an accredited law school.
- Active admission to practice law in at least one U.S. jurisdiction.
- Significant litigation experience, including responsibility for developing case strategy, drafting substantial briefs and other legal filings; managing cases through multiple stages of litigation; and appearing in court.
- Experience serving as lead counsel or taking a substantial leadership role in litigation.
- Excellent legal research, analytical, writing, and oral advocacy skills.
- Excellent legal judgment and the ability to think strategically about novel, complex, and evolving areas of law.
- Demonstrated ability to supervise, mentor, and develop attorneys and other legal professionals.
- Strong management and organizational skills, including the ability to oversee multiple matters, deadlines, priorities, and competing demands.
- Ability to work collaboratively with organizational leadership and colleagues across Communications, Campaigns, Development, and other functions.
- Ability to communicate complex legal issues clearly and effectively to legal and non-legal audiences.
- Experience in animal law strongly preferred.
- Experience managing budgets and relationships with outside counsel and experts preferred.
- Strong commitment to the NhRP's mission and to advancing fundamental legal rights for nonhuman animals.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this position is $135,000-$150,000, commensurate with the candidate's skill and experience.

The NhRP offers comprehensive health benefits delivered through an Individual Coverage HRA (ICHRA), which provides employer-funded tax-free reimbursements for the individual plan of your choice; flexible paid time off, including all federal holidays; paid parental leave; a 403(b) retirement plan with employer match; and professional development stipends.

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How to Apply

Interested applicants should submit:

- A resume;
- A cover letter describing their interest in and qualifications for the position; and
- Two writing samples, one of which must be a litigation document, such as a brief, that was filed or intended for filing in court.

Materials should be submitted to **jobs@nonhumanrights.org** with “Litigation Director” in the subject line. Priority consideration for applications received by November 20, 2026; open until filled, with applications reviewed on a rolling basis. Select candidates will be contacted and invited to participate in next steps in the selection process.

Additional Information

The Nonhuman Rights Project is an Equal Opportunity Employer and acts in accordance with applicable laws in all of our hiring and employment practices. The NhRP considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender identity, national origin, age, ability, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or any other protected factor under federal, state, or local law. This is a U.S. based position. In compliance with federal law, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility verification form upon hire.