



**Director, Democracy and Justice Program
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
Newark, Jersey**

Established over two decades ago by Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein, the Institute undertakes dynamic and independent advocacy aimed at toppling load-bearing walls of structural racial inequality to create just, vibrant and healthy urban communities of color.

The Institute employs a broad range of advocacy tools to advance our ambitious racial and social justice agenda, including research, analysis and writing, public education, grassroots organizing, communications, development of pilot programs, legislative strategies and litigation.

As was the case at our founding, this moment calls for racial and social justice advocacy inspired by the fierce urgency of now. In recent years, Jim Crow-like voter suppression has swept across America. The time is now for not only meaningful voting reform, but to also evaluate how we can transform civic engagement and *expand* democracy in New Jersey.

We continue to serve as a leading voice in designing, advocating for and implementing solutions to the systemic racism that has pervaded the Garden State and our nation.

To answer this mighty charge, the Institute advocates for unapologetically progressive and reparative systems that build wealth in urban communities, transform youth justice and build democratic power.

Using a holistic approach to address the unique and critical issues facing New Jersey's urban communities of color, the Institute advocates for systemic reform that is at once transformative, achievable in the state and replicable in communities across the nation

Overview

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice ("Institute") seeks a dedicated, creative, social and racial justice-minded person to serve as the Director of the Democracy & Justice Pillar. This is a unique position that combines rigorous research, policy analysis, litigation and carrying out community-driven advocacy campaigns to help advance our mission and innovative agenda.

This is an exciting opportunity, at a critical time in our history, to advance racial and social justice on behalf of New Jersey's urban communities through the Institute's Democracy and Justice Program.



The Institute’s Democracy & Justice Pillar advocates to build a progressive, policy-driven agenda to protect and expand democracy particularly for people of color in New Jersey; to provide a space for robust discussions with policy makers and elected officials, focused on social justice issues; and prepare voters to realize maximum participation in the next several election cycles and collecting and analyzing data from those elections to identify and offer policy recommendations to address voting barriers. In the last few years, the Institute built coalitions and advocated for various voting reforms in the state, including voting rights restoration, ending prison-based gerrymandering, Census outreach, online voter registration, ballot access during COVID-19, racial equity in redistricting, same-day registration, early voting, and limiting police presence at voting locations.

Over the coming years, the pillar will work on many initiatives to expand democracy in New Jersey, including but not limited to: restore the vote to incarcerated people; institute same day registration, including on election day; restore the right to serve on a jury for people with criminal convictions and explore methods to incorporate voting rights into state law as the federal Voting Rights Act is under attack.

The Director of the Democracy and Justice Program will report to the Institute’s Law & Policy Director. The position, housed in Newark, New Jersey, will require travel throughout the state and occasional travel to national conferences, seminars and events. The position may also require some speaking engagements outside of normal office hours (including on weekends). The Institute has a hybrid work schedule.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of the Democracy and Justice Program, working with the President & CEO and reporting directly to the Law and Policy Director, is responsible for leading a program staff that includes two Associate Counsels, a Policy Analyst, a program associate and legal interns.

The responsibilities of the Director of the Democracy and Justice Program include but are not limited to the following:

- Work in partnership with the Law & Policy Director to (1) implement and manage the Institute’s strategic vision for democracy and justice programs, (2) cast a vision for democracy and justice in New Jersey, (3) set goals for the Program, (4) monitor progress and (5) evaluate outcomes to ensure that objectives are met and in line with the needs and mission of the organization.
- Help execute programmatic functions and supervise and monitor implementation of the Institute’s strategic vision for democracy and justice programs—including the integration of advocacy, legislative initiatives, policy goals, public education, targeted campaigns and litigation.



- Act as a public spokesperson for the Institute on racial and social justice issues, engage in public speaking, and participate in public education activities to articulate the Institute’s views on a broad range of racial and social justice issues to the public and various stakeholder constituencies.
- Build strategic alliances with organizations and individuals to advance the Institute’s mission, engage on shared priorities, and exchange knowledge and information in support of the Institute’s programs and initiatives.
- In partnership with the Law & Policy Director, coordinate with the Chief Operating Officer and staff team to develop and stay abreast of democracy and justice operations, planning, budget, spending and funder compliance.
- In partnership with the Law & Policy Director, collaborate and coordinate with the Director of Development to advance the Institute’s fundraising priorities.
- Write and edit legal and policy briefs, as well as program descriptions, in furtherance of program goals and funder communications.
- Form and maintain relationships with Institute partners, including other legal service agencies, law firms, the cooperating attorney network, law students, community-based organizations, policy institutions, et al.
- Assist the Law & Policy Director and others on the senior management team in fostering internal collaboration, creating professional growth opportunities at the Institute, and promoting a work environment that encourages independent judgment and values self-starters.
- In partnership with the Law & Policy Director, work with the Director of Communications to integrate policy and legal advocacy with communications, including through public education materials, policy reports, white papers, talking points, op-eds and press releases.
- In partnership with the Law & Policy Director, work with community engagement staff to incorporate community outreach and field organizing into program campaigns.
- Develop and manage special projects and initiatives, including litigation, when appropriate.
- Act as a thought partner and collaborative teammate with other Institute Staff and model values of an inclusive and respectful workplace, fostering the same in the staff.

Experience and Qualifications:

The Institute is seeking an ambitious and dedicated Director, with experience challenging systemic racial discrimination through advocacy, to lead the Democracy and Justice Program. The successful candidate will have a strong track record in leadership and driving a vision within a complex and multi-faceted program. An ideal candidate will have personal experience in organizing and coalition building, as well as a track record of strategic development of long-term policy plans.



This position requires the highest integrity, sound judgment and strong communication skills. Given the interconnected nature of the Institute’s work, an ideal candidate must also be able to effectively work in a highly collaborative team environment.

The successful candidate will also have:

- J.D. required
- Significant racial justice and voting rights advocacy experience.
- Ideal candidates will have significant racial justice experience, either through personal connection and history or through work experience, with people harmed by structural racial discrimination.
- An ability to develop and implement multi-faceted campaigns that include litigation, public education, advocacy, and media outreach.
- Ability to work effectively with diverse coalitions and community groups, particularly of color, and to work across political ideology, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic circumstances, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.
- Passion for, and knowledge of, racial and social justice, and a familiarity with the work and mission of the Institute.
- Experience supervising staff and leading teams. Ability to listen, coach, shepherd, and support people to achieve shared goals.
- Excellent research, writing and communication skills; superior attention to detail; ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously; good problem-solving skills; and a positive, professional attitude with excellent judgment, flexibility, determination, and grace in a sometimes high-pressure office.
- Integrity, honesty and a balanced, non-partisan approach.
- The ability to work effectively in a collaborative context, both internally and externally.
- Sophistication about public policy and an intellectual curiosity.

Compensation:

This is a full-time, at-will position. Salary is commensurate with experience and includes excellent benefits, including health, dental/vision, a 401(k) plan with an employer contribution, Medical Expense Reimbursement Program, life insurance, and generous vacation, sick, and holiday leave.

How to Apply:

Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be accepted until the position is filled. Please email your cover letter, resume, two professional writing samples on which you are the



primary author, and three professional references to recruitment@njisj.org. Please submit your application materials via Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Include all attachments in a single email stating, in the subject line, “Director of Democracy and Justice Program”.

The Institute is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities in employment, its programs, and operations. As part of this commitment, the Institute will ensure that persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations. If a reasonable accommodation is needed to participate in the job application process, please contact recruitment@njisj.org or call (973) 624-9400.

The Institute is an equal opportunity employer and values a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture.