SEEKING

ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING ASSOCIATE

About the Student Press Law Center: The Student Press Law Center (“SPLC”) is an independent, nonpartisan 501c(3) based in Washington, D.C. which works at the intersection of law, journalism and education to promote, support and defend the First Amendment rights of student journalists at the high school and college level. Founded in 1974, the Student Press Law Center has a legal hotline which serves thousands of student journalists and advisers across the United States. Thanks to a solid endowment, growing foundation support and generous individual donors, we also engage in training, advocacy and outreach to empower student journalists, promote the value of journalism education and spotlight the need to ensure legal protections for student press freedom through the New Voices movement.

About the New Voices Movement: Due to the Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier Supreme Court decision in 1988, student journalists in public schools in 36 states can currently be censored by school administrators for nearly any reason “reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.” This leads to censorship of important and well-reported stories which may make the school look bad (e.g., sexual misconduct by a teacher, health code violations in the cafeteria, financial mismanagement in the district) or which may deal with controversial topics which make school administrators uncomfortable (e.g., LBGTQ+ issues, teen pregnancy, drug or alcohol use). As a result, newspapers have been confiscated, papers have been defunded, and journalism advisers have lost their jobs for standing up for the First Amendment rights of their students. The New Voices movement seeks to change that.

New Voices is a non-partisan, student-powered grassroots movement for student press freedom. New Voices seeks to pass state-based legislation which restores and protects the rights of student journalists to publish without censorship or prior review, and protects their advisers against retaliation from school officials who are unhappy with student press coverage. As of August 2021 we have already succeeded in 14 states – only 36 (plus territories) to go!! New Voices is a project of the Student Press Law Center and works in partnership with a wide variety of national and state-based partners. To learn more about New Voices, go to www.splc.org/new-voices.

Job Responsibilities

We’re looking for a dynamic, creative, experienced Advocacy and Organizing Associate to help build this powerful movement for student press freedom.

We have committed people in place on the ground (students, teachers, parents, lawyers, professional journalists) ready to do what is necessary to protect student media. We need an Advocacy and Organizing Associate who can work with these groups to train them in advocacy
skills, connect the dots among groups to share best practices and strategies, help analyze opportunities, shape a national narrative, and provide support and ideas whenever needed. The Associate will play a key role in catalyzing and coaching state-based initiatives in target states to ensure the success of New Voices. The Associate will help facilitate activism among state-based groups and will organize national initiatives to support the work of grassroots groups.

Additionally, the Student Press Law Center has expanded our policy and advocacy activities to proactively identify and respond to incoming threats to student press freedom beyond the censorship occurring as a result of Hazelwood. This work will be performed in tandem, and sometimes in conjunction, with ongoing New Voices efforts.

We are looking for someone with a passion for working with young people and who believes deeply in the importance of a free press. We are looking for someone who can organize effective campaigns, develop the leadership of students and young people while working intergenerationally, motivate people, and communicate to a broad range of audiences. We need someone with the right sense of when to push forward and when to step back to ensure that local groups take the lead. We need someone fun to work with who can help shape a national movement and deliver wins on the ground!

**Essential Job Functions**

- Expand reach of New Voices by organizing students and allies to support student press freedom efforts in target states.
- Participate in and support on-the-ground regional activist trainings and state-based activities which include training in effective advocacy, organizing skills, movement building, storytelling, and other related training modules.
- Work closely with SPLC’s legal team to ensure enforcement of existing New Voices laws.
- Develop core campaign materials, blog posts and articles.
- Identify, analyze and monitor legislation impacting student press freedom.
- Manage New Voices website and social media campaigns, in conjunction with SPLC staff.
- Coordinate all aspects of New Voices Student Leaders Institute and year-round work with New Voices Student Leaders.
- Manage New Voices sub-grant program.
- Other responsibilities as determined by the advocacy and organizing director.

**Qualifications**

We will consider exceptional candidates who demonstrate a strong combination of the specific qualifications and skills described below.

- A commitment to student press freedom, the First Amendment and youth-led organizing.
- 1-2 years’ experience developing and leveraging coalitions for campaigns.
- 1-2 years’ experience developing the leadership of others (including supervisory and/or mentorship experience).
- Demonstrable understanding of state-based legislative processes.
- Experience leading and/or training diverse intergenerational groups.
- Strong critical thinking, writing and public speaking skills.
● Strong self-motivation, a “hunger” for campaign success and an eagerness to be challenged
● Ability to make good decisions in a changing environment and anticipate future needs.
● Energetic, flexible, and proactive; a good team player eager to collaborate with all colleagues across the organization, including the senior managers, the Board of Directors, and volunteer leaders
● Ability and willingness to work some nights and weekends
● Ability and willingness to travel nationally approximately 25% of the time, when travel resumes (including overnight and some weekends)
● Personal qualities of integrity, credibility, and a commitment to and passion for SPLC’s mission
● A demonstrated commitment to contributing meaningfully to a workplace where equity and inclusion are core values.

Location

Currently all remote. Office is based in Washington D.C. Candidates in Eastern time zone strongly preferred.

Compensation

The position is full-time and includes generous health, vision and dental benefits. It is a three-year grant-funded position. Compensation will be commensurate with experience but within a range of $55,000 - $65,000.

TO APPLY

Please send a cover letter and resume explaining why you are uniquely qualified for this position to Alexis Mason, SPLC outreach and operations manager at amason@splc.org. Please include examples of previous campaign and organizing work which you have led (examples of written materials, website screenshots and social media posts would be helpful.) Please be aware that SPLC will be conducting a routine criminal background check as part of the screening process. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

The Student Press Law Center strives to achieve excellence through a diverse and inclusive workplace that honors the unique talents and lived experiences of each person. The SPLC actively seeks people who bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives to join us in our work. As an EOE/AA employer, the Student Press Law Center will not discriminate in its employment practices due to an applicant’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, genetic information, veteran or disability status or any other factor prohibited by law.