

Recruitment Profile

for the position of

Director of Strategic Litigation



RAICES

(Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services)

San Antonio, TX

October 2024

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION | EXECUTIVE SEARCH | BOARD ADVISORY

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: **Director of Strategic Litigation**

Organization: **RAICES** (<https://www.raicestexas.org/>)

Location: **San Antonio, TX**

Reports to: **Legal Director**

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:

RAICES (Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services) is a Texas-headquartered nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive legal and social services to immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking people and families. Established in 1986, RAICES works to support individuals of all ages facing complex legal challenges and provides critical assistance at pivotal stages of the immigration process.

As the largest immigration legal services provider in Texas and a leading refugee resettlement services agency, RAICES believes in a country where everyone has access to legal and social services — no matter where you come from. A place where people don't have to go to court to face a giant institution on their own. A place where people don't have to navigate a maze of local, state, and federal bureaucracies created to keep them out.

RAICES has a current staff of 300-plus (approximately two-thirds of whom are focused on legal services), and an annual operating budget of over \$38 million. The organization maintains a diversified funding portfolio, including public grants and contracts and private philanthropic contributions. The organization is overseen by a six-person Board of Directors. RAICES' strategic litigation efforts began in earnest in 2019 and — like the rest of the organization — has grown significantly in size and scope of work, necessitating a skilled and experienced litigation professional to lead this dedicated unit.

RAICES has been on the frontlines of the fight to defend the human and legal rights of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking people and families for four decades.

*(For more information on **RAICES** see www.raicestexas.org)*

LOCATION:

The Director of Strategic Litigation will reside in Texas. RAICES' headquarters and much of its legal team is based in San Antonio, though RAICES staff live and work throughout the state. Relocation assistance is available for a successful candidate not currently living in Texas.

OPPORTUNITY:

The new Director of Strategic Litigation will be able to leverage the considerable RAICES brand and reputation in building out and leading a best-in-class strategic litigation program. They will have the chance to work with a dedicated and mission-driven legal team and Executive Leadership group who are aligned in their commitment to expand the scope and impact of RAICES' strategic litigation work. This position is an ideal opportunity for an experienced legal professional with personal passion and connection to the communities RAICES serves and a desire to impact policy and system changes in one of the most critical social issues of our time.

THE POSITION:

The Director of Strategic Litigation is responsible for leadership of a specialized, six-person Litigation Unit that sits within RAICES' multi-disciplinary Legal Team. The Litigation Unit acts on appeals of RAICES clients' immigration matters in federal court and initiates strategic lawsuits or actions against parties (including the U.S. Government) violating the human rights of vulnerable immigrants, detainees, and asylum seekers. In addition to maintaining

and managing a personal caseload through all phases of litigation, the Director of Strategic Litigation will work collaboratively with the Legal and Executive Teams to create an integrated litigation strategy to advance RAICES' work and mission.

The Director of Strategic Litigation will provide leadership in shaping legal arguments, developing and delivering case strategies, conducting strategic litigation, expanding RAICES' policy and advocacy capabilities, managing work flows, and mentoring staff attorneys to ensure that all litigation work is conducted to the highest possible standard. This position also works collaboratively with other Legal and Program teams, stakeholders, and key partners, and will act as spokesperson/liaison for RAICES in communications & media, fundraising, and other external-facing activities.

CANDIDATE PROFILE:

You are an experienced and accomplished legal professional who is passionate about human rights and social change. You are drawn to and energized by opportunities to build and grow new programs, strategies, and approaches. You have deep litigation expertise – including at the federal level – and the ability to think creatively about how to use litigation and litigation-adjacent tools to advance a mission. You have content expertise in the areas of immigration, asylum, detention, and/or other directly related human rights issues. You are a skilled manager who prioritizes coaching and professional development and has a track record of building high-performing teams and a values-driven culture. Your career history includes time in policy/advocacy environments and some interest, knowledge, or experience in integrating policy and legal strategies.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

[NOTE: It is understood that no single candidate will have equal expertise across all these areas of responsibility. Successful candidates will demonstrate a compelling combination of many of them and the self-awareness and professional maturity to leverage existing or new resources in the area(s) where they lack personal experience.]

1. Strategy, Outreach & Program Development

- Work with the Legal Director and CEO to create an overall strategy for the Litigation Unit, including assessment, development, and supervision of RAICES' current litigation portfolio;
- Build and directly supervise the Litigation team to successfully implement programs and strategies, and to ensure all cases have a high-quality legal review and are in full compliance with RAICES policies & procedures, contract/grant requirements, and immigration law best practices;
- Collaborate with leadership across all RAICES legal programs, advising on case strategy as it relates to pending or potential litigation;
- Lead case management meetings and debrief sessions and counsel Litigation and Legal teams on ethics issues, in coordination with Legal Director and CEO;
- As RAICES' subject matter expert in litigation:
 - Coordinate with other Legal Units to facilitate information-sharing and coach/train other units and lawyers;
 - Coordinate with External Affairs on proposed legislation affecting immigrants and immigration law;
 - Coordinate with External Affairs to promote cases and client stories;

Program Highlights

Legal and Social Services

Opening over 10,000 cases annually, RAICES represents and collaborates with immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking people and families throughout their years-long affirmative and removal defense immigration cases, including case management services for unaccompanied children and adults in government custody rooted in trauma-informed holistic care.

Refugee Client Services

RAICES centers service recipient needs and strengths through culturally-attuned self-sufficiency programs, including reception and placement, cash and medical assistance, school enrollment, and employment referrals.

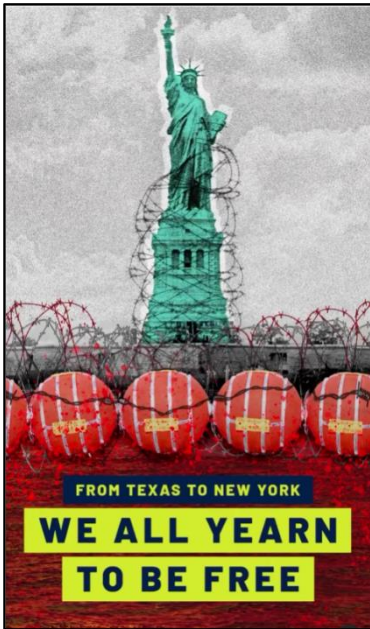
Rights Advocacy

RAICES mounts court challenges against harmful U.S. immigration policies and brings an experienced perspective to the national conversation informed by four decades of on-the-ground community engagement.

(See: [RAICES 2023 Impact Report](#))

- Coordinate with the Case Management Unit to support litigation clients with case assistance or social services and to promote seamless, wrap-around service model;
- Maintain timely and consistent communication with RAICES leadership, staff, funders, community partners, and volunteers to create strong working relationships;
- Build and steward strategically advantageous relationships with external partners, stakeholders, co-counsel, and other external consultants, and serve as a liaison for RAICES in these relationships;
- Work with pro bono counsel and other stakeholders on federal lawsuits;
- Assist in the cultivation and stewardship of donor relationships as needed and to attract and steward pro bono partners;
- With the approval and collaboration of senior management, act as a public representative for RAICES on litigation cases and issues related to impact litigation, including external collaborations, communications, and/or media appearances.

2. Supervision & Staff Development



- Manage and support the Litigation Unit – 1 supervising attorney, 2 staff attorneys, and 2 legal assistants in addition to the Director – with an emphasis on ongoing coaching and mentoring;
- Oversee recruitment, hiring/selection, retention, and evaluation efforts to create a positive, high-functioning, collaborative team culture;
- Develop and implement performance metrics with clear accountabilities, measures for success, and desired outcomes that align with team and organizational goals;
- Thoughtfully manage capacity, prioritize workloads, troubleshoot challenges, and assist staff with professional development plans;
- Ensure team members adhere to all policies & procedures by providing relevant training – including legal ethics – and the most up-to-date guidance regarding immigration law, trends, and policies.

3. Operations

- Work with the Legal Director(s) to develop and monitor intake procedures, case acceptance policies, and caseload targets and limits;
- Review and prepare co-counsel agreements, MOUs, agreements with partners, engagement letters, and other agreements in coordination with the Legal Director and CEO;
- Participate in reviewing grant/contract funding opportunities for RAICES, and maintain a strong, working knowledge of awarded grant/contract requirements to ensure compliance and promote best practices;
- Ensure all staff are trained on grant/contract requirements;
- Ensure program data is consistently collected and reported for monthly financial reports, annual budget submissions, and ongoing budget amendments;
- Ensure all KPIs are tracked and timely reported to leadership on schedule or as requested;
- Participate in the budget process for the Unit and monitor expenses to ensure spending in accordance with the approved budget.

REQUIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE (Must Have):

- Five to ten years of experience practicing complex and sophisticated litigation in federal and appellate courts;
- Ability to develop and articulate an immediate and longer-term vision for litigation programs and how they can be successfully integrated into organizational strategy;
- Exceptional people and team management skills with a minimum of three years of supervisory experience leading other attorneys and legal support staff;
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to build and work in coalitions, and to grow and maintain effective individual and institutional relationships;

- Strong communication abilities, including experience or aptitude for engaging with media, external partners (law firms, coalitions partners, elected/appointed government officials), funding organizations, and high-net-worth donors;
- Experience with and understanding of the creation and management of revenue and expense budgets;
- Juris Doctorate from an ABA-accredited law school;
- Current state bar membership in good standing with the United States;
- Licensed or able to become licensed in the Western District of Texas, 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, and the D.C. District Court;
- Ability to pass a Federal Background Check.

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE (Nice to Have):

- Minimum of three years of experience in nonprofit organizations and leadership;
- Trial experience and/or existing familiarity with civil rights and/or immigration law;
- Demonstrated knowledge and interest in reform of the immigration system and combating systemic injustice;
- Bilingual in English and Spanish;
- Experience incorporating the perspectives of multiple communities, including BIPOC communities, in the consideration of impacts and outcomes of decision-making;
- Understanding and/or experience of managing in a unionized labor environment;
- Understanding and/or experience litigating various statutory and constitutional causes of action, including cases arising under the Federal Tort Claims Act, the Freedom of Information Act, Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, the Administrative Procedures Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act, Bivens actions, and international human rights law;
- Licensed in the Southern and Northern District of Texas.

DESIRED PESONAL QUALITIES & CHARACTERISTICS:

- Strong cultural competence and understanding of the diverse needs, experiences, and contributions of the individuals and communities RAICES engages and serves;
- High levels of professional maturity, emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness;
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing social justice as evidenced by job, pro bono, volunteer, and/or intern experience;
- Strong diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) lens, with the experience to lead by example in centering racial, sexual, and gender equity, as well as disability justice, in all facets of an organization;
- Ability to connect authentically with people at all levels of power, privilege, ability, socio-economic status, and ideologies across the political spectrum;
- Positive and engaging bridge builder, collaborator, and reliable partner – internally and externally;
- Agile, flexible, and adaptable; capable of dealing with energized (often hostile) opposition and complex issues and situations.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

RAICES is offering a market-leading compensation package including a starting base salary in the range of \$130,000 to \$150,000 and generous benefits. Benefits include: comprehensive medical, dental, and vision coverage; generous PTO plus 14 paid holidays annually; 10-week Parental and Postpartum Leave (which can be taken in two nonconsecutive installments); Flexible Spending, Health Spending, and Dependent Care Accounts; 403(b) retirement plan with no waiting period on eligibility, immediate vesting after 90 days, and employer-match up to 4%; professional development opportunities, including biannual employee training allowances and annual subscriptions to LinkedIn Learning, and wellness initiatives including hybrid work schedules and workshops on secondary trauma, grief, and healing.

TO APPLY:

Inquiries, nominations, or applications (including a resume and cover letter framing interest and fit with this Recruitment Profile) can be sent in confidence to: search@kevinchasesearch.com. We are pleased to answer any questions or supply further information.

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of RAICES. RAICES is an equal opportunity employer that champions a diverse workforce and anti-racist principles and practices. KCESG and RAICES do not discriminate on any basis, including sex, age, class, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, ancestry, military status, genetic information, marital status, physical or mental ability or disability, race, religion, sexual orientation; access to public benefits and/or housing voucher assistance; other sources of income that do not conflict with the fundamental values or needs of the organization; veteran status; criminal record provided the past convictions do not impact funding, the organization's values and mission, the employee's ability to perform their core job duties, and licensing requirements; or any other characteristic protected by law.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Kevin Chase, Managing Partner
Kevin@kevinchasesearch.com

Catie DiFelice, Senior Consultant
catie@kevinchasesearch.com

All inquiries or referrals will be held in strict confidence.

Please note that all education, dates of employment, compensation and other information provided will be verified prior to an offer of employment.