

# ADVANCEMENT PROJECT

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hybrid-Remote | Washington, District of Columbia  
Applications Due Sunday, October 19, 2025 at 9pm ET

Advancement Project is seeking its next Executive Director (ED) at a pivotal moment in our history; a time when rising authoritarianism is attacking the progress and power of our multiracial democracy and threatening the opportunities, freedom, and safety of brown and Black people nationwide. This is a unique opportunity for an inspiring and adaptive leader to take the helm of a bold and thriving racial justice organization. The next ED will follow the successful leadership of Judith Browne Dianis, who has served as Advancement Project's Executive Director for nine years and as a founding staff member for 25 years.

### About Advancement Project

[Advancement Project](#) is a cutting-edge, no-holds-barred, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to building local power in communities of color across the country. We wholeheartedly believe in the genius of ordinary people to achieve lasting and permanent change. We envision a future where people of color are free – where they can thrive, be safe, and exercise power.

Since its founding in 1999 by three former attorneys from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Advancement Project has grown into a powerhouse organization with over 35 dedicated staff members and a budget of \$8.3 million. Our staff have been members of a collective bargaining unit since 2017 – The Washington-Baltimore News Guild, CWA Local 32035.

Our team of movement lawyers, organizers, advocates, and communicators can be found in the courts, in the media, and on the ground fighting for change. Partnerships are central to our impact locally, regionally and nationally. Through our partnerships with coalitions and local allies, we offer strategy development, research, litigation, training, and communications support. Over the years, we have worked with more than 75 [partner organizations](#) in 18 states to strive for justice against enormous odds.

The [Advancement Project Action Fund](#), our 501(c)(4) sister organization, directly engages in voter education and mobilization around racial justice issues and supports advocacy work to advance policies that help communities of color thrive. Our Executive Director also leads the Action Fund, under the governance of a separate Board of Directors.

Currently, our efforts to build power and dismantle racism are focused on three issue areas:

[Voting Rights](#) | We are leading the way in the emerging voter protection movement. We eliminate barriers to voting and restore voting rights to those who have been disenfranchised. This includes identifying and preventing voter suppression efforts that target voters of color, the illegal removal of voters from the rolls, polling place closures and

consolidations, insufficient notice of changes to voting procedures, barriers to voting by mail, and voter intimidation.

Advancement Project has been fighting to protect electoral power since we served as legal counsel in the 2000 presidential election case in Florida. Since then, we successfully challenged North Carolina's voter suppression law, and we were the founding member of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition that won the ballot initiative striking down the state's ban on voting for those with felony convictions. We also supported legislative efforts to pass the Virginia Voting Rights Act, the first voting rights anti-discrimination law in the South.

**[Policing & Decriminalization](#)** | We are working to end abusive policing and dismantle the prison system so communities can define and build their own visions for safety. We challenge the militarized police enforcement that criminalizes Black, brown, and immigrant communities, and we protect the rights of activists and organizers targeted for exercising their right to dissent. Our work demands divestment from police and incarceration, including ending local police participation in immigration enforcement, and reinvesting in community-led safety solutions rooted in care, equity, and self-determination.

In partnership with movement leaders, strategies like the Stop Cop City campaign are halting the expansion of militarized training facilities and stopping state-sanctioned violence. We continue to stand with organizers in the streets and in the courts to ensure they can protest without fear of government retaliation. And we helped secure concrete wins such as supporting the Close the Workhouse Campaign with Action St. Louis, which forced the city to commit to shutting down a jail and investing those resources back into the community.

**[Education Justice](#)** | We are pioneering the movement to end the school-to-prison pipeline. We fight for access to quality public education and police-free schools, including efforts to defend Black, Latiné, immigrant, and LGBTQIA+ students, and to resist school closures.

We won significant victories in several school districts across the country that reformed disciplinary policies and practices and removed police from schools entirely. This work led to federal guidance on racial discrimination in school discipline. Building and nurturing a grassroots movement of parents and youth was key to this success. For example, along with the Alliance for Education Justice, we launched the National Police Free Schools Campaign, a youth-led campaign to end policing in their schools.

## **The Opportunity**

The Advancement Project's next executive leader will join us at a critical moment in the organization's work, ensuring our ongoing stability and continued impact. Key responsibilities will include:

**Strategic Leadership** | Develop and implement mission-driven strategies that weave together grassroots organizing, movement lawyering, litigation, and communications. Continually develop bold new approaches and evaluate impact in collaboration with our staff and partners.

**Partnering** | Play an active role in establishing and maintaining partnerships with grassroots and national movement allies, and regularly identify opportunities for collaboration and greater impact.

**Communication** | Serve as a public-facing thought leader and spokesperson for our organization, issue areas, and campaigns, in order to increase our visibility, amplify the voices

of partners, and help to shift the narrative. Working alongside the communications team and program leaders, our ED is a visible and inspiring communicator at a host of public speaking engagements, from national conferences to mainstream media appearances.

**Management** | Hire and lead the development and retention of a talented and diverse staff team. Currently, five staff members report directly to the ED — the Deputy Executive Director, the Managing Director of Development, the Managing Director of Campaign Strategies, the Managing Director of Communications, and the Chief Operating Officer. Our ED ensures the ongoing stability and impact of the organization, and its C4 arm, Advancement Project Action Fund. This includes working closely with the Chief Operating Officer to oversee fiscal planning, budgeting, management, human resources, organizational culture, technology, safety and security, union relations, and legal compliance.

**Fundraising** | Closely partner with a robust development team to create and implement annual fundraising plans that will raise just under \$5.2 million in 2025 from foundations (86%), individuals (13%), and corporations (1%).

**Board Relations** | Build and maintain strong relationships with our Board of Directors and ensure they have the tools and information needed for governing the organization.

## **Profile of Our Next Leader**

Advancement Project seeks a visionary, ambitious, strategic, and values-aligned leader to guide us through the next chapter of the organization as we strive to counter the rising tide of anti-democratic and racist forces. Successful applicants will demonstrate most of the following core qualifications:

**Leadership** | A bold executive or senior-level leader in an organization of similar size and complexity to Advancement Project. You most likely have at least 15 years of professional experience. Our next ED will demonstrate a track record in organizational management and effective supervision and team building. They will foster a work environment that values listening and learning, and respects the voices and expertise of colleagues, movement partners, and other stakeholders. They will be skilled at conflict resolution and able to manage through crises. Among the key qualities they will bring to their role are energy, self-awareness, flexibility, optimism, and a focus on accountability.

**Legal Background** | Holds a J.D., and experience with civil rights litigation and movement lawyering is preferred. While there is a strong preference for candidates with a legal background, non-lawyers with deep experience in legal organizations and who can assess the opportunities, risks, and benefits for litigation will also be considered.

**Movement Background** | Shows a dedicated history in radical, leftist, and abolitionist movement spaces that are closely aligned with Advancement Project's focus on racial justice, including our core issue areas – democracy, policing, and educational equity. Our next ED may very well be an experienced organizer in their own right and will absolutely know how to listen to and partner with grassroots and front-line activists.

**Fundraising & Communications** | Demonstrates the experience and skills to lead our fundraising efforts, primarily focused on foundations and individual gifts. Our next ED will be adept at building and maintaining relationships with donors. Knowledge of 501(c)(4) fundraising is a plus. Advancement Project's leader must be a compelling storyteller and skilled writer with the ability to engage and inspire a wide range of audiences.

While each of the above qualifications is critical to the ED's role, we are mindful that some knowledge and skills can be learned and some experiences can be deepened with focused effort. If you have the requisite passion, most of the core qualifications or extraordinary strength in one or more of them, and can envision yourself as Advancement Project's next ED, we encourage you to apply and tell us why.

## **Compensation & Location**

The successful candidate will be offered an annual salary of \$325,000 - \$370,000 depending on experience. This is a full-time, hybrid position that requires a significant presence in the D.C. office, to be negotiated at hiring. If relocation is necessary or desired, Advancement Project will provide a moving stipend of \$7,500. Our Executive Director can expect to travel regularly to represent the organization at meetings, events, and conferences.

Advancement Project's compensation package fosters a human-centered workplace that prioritizes sustainability and work-life balance. This includes paid vacation time that increases with tenure, starting with 15 days during the first two years of employment. We also offer 13 paid holidays and 3 floating holidays, along with office closure between December 24th and January 1st, and Fridays off in the month of August. In addition to time off for illness and other life events, employees are eligible for a fully paid, one-month sabbatical after seven years of employment, and every five years thereafter. Medical insurance is fully covered for all employees, their spouse/partner, and dependents. Advancement Project offers a 403(b) retirement plan and matches 60% of employee contributions (up to 6% of salary), increasing to 70% after five years of employment. Other benefits include a Flexible Spending Account for healthcare, commuting costs, dependent care, and student loan relief.

## **Application Instructions**

Strategies for Social Change® LLC (SSC) is conducting the executive search and transition for Advancement Project. SSC is a woman of color owned, nationally recognized capacity building and leadership development practice dedicated to working with social justice organizations. Advancement Project is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The deadline for applications is Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 9 pm ET. Applicants selected for interviews with our Board-Staff Leadership Transition Committee will be contacted in November 2025. Please upload your application materials using [this link](#).

- A thoughtful and compelling cover letter (no more than 2 pages) that briefly describes your leadership journey and explains why you want to join Advancement Project.
  - A resume (no more than 3 pages) that includes highlights of your communications experience. Links to written work products and/or speaking engagements are helpful, but optional.
  - Contact information for three references, including names, affiliation, relationships to you, email addresses, and phone numbers. References will not be contacted until the final stage of the search, and candidates will be given an opportunity to notify their references in advance.
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