

(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction

ABOUT THE INNOCENCE PROJECT

The Innocence Project works to free the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create fair, compassionate, and equitable systems of justice for everyone. Our work is guided by science and grounded in anti-racism. Since our inception, the Innocence Project has used DNA and other scientific advancements to prove wrongful conviction. To date, we have helped to free or exonerate more than 250 people who, collectively, spent more than 3,600 years behind bars. Our efforts have led to the passage of more than 200 transformative state laws and federal reforms. Today, the Innocence Project continues to fight for freedom, drive structural change, and advance the innocence movement. To learn more, please visit www.innocenceproject.org.

ABOUT THE CENTER ON RACE, INEQUALITY, AND THE LAW AT NYU SCHOOL OF LAW

The Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at NYU School of Law (“The Center”) engages in research, public education, advocacy, and litigation to advance its mission of shaping how people understand, diagnose, and address issues of race and inequality. The Center’s priorities include: shaping the public discourse and consciousness around race and inequality; addressing the influence of race and inequality in the criminal legal system; confronting the racial justice implications of technology and algorithmic decision-making tools in the criminal legal system and other systems that govern people’s lives; challenging the forces that drive racial segregation and economic disadvantage in communities of color; and infusing legal education with a racial justice lens.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Throughout the history of this country, racial bias and discrimination has played an arbitrary and pernicious role in the administration of the criminal legal system and has contributed to the problem of wrongful conviction. Two-thirds of the 254 people freed or exonerated by the IP are people of color and 58% are Black. According to the National Registry of Exonerations, Black people comprise 47% of all known exonerations since 1989, even though they make up just 13% of the U.S. population. Furthermore, Black people are seven times more likely to be wrongfully convicted of murder than white people; a Black person convicted of sexual assault is 3.5 times more likely to be innocent than a white person convicted of such a crime; and innocent Black people are 12 times more likely to be wrongfully convicted of drug possession than innocent white people. The work of the IP has uncovered racial (and other) bias in prosecution, policing, indigent defense, and forensic science.

To further advance the missions of the IP, the **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** will serve as an advisor, thought leader, expert and in-house resource on racial justice, equity, bias and discrimination and its impact on the functioning of the criminal legal system and, particularly, wrongful conviction. The **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** will set the vision for this work and will collaborate with the IP staff to ensure that the substantive work of the organization is consistently guided, informed, and supported by rigorous historical, academic, forensic and social science research and scholarship, legal decisions, and policies/practices that explain, expose, ameliorate and ultimately eliminate racial bias as a factor in criminal legal system decision making. Thus, for example, the **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** will advise on methods to help ensure that the IP’s intake

procedures surface cases where racism may have contributed to the wrongful conviction of an innocent person, that litigation strategies take into account the latest law and science on racial bias and discrimination, that our social work policies and practices are informed by the unique challenges posed by discrimination and unconscious bias and that our policy work and education campaigns contribute to dismantling systemic racism.

The **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** will support and advise all Departments of the IP, including the program teams, but will not play an active role in litigation or policy advocacy campaigns. The **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** is not responsible for the development of internal diversity, equity and inclusion policies, practices or procedures.

The **(Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** will report to the Executive Director of the IP, and will be a member of the IP's Executive Department. The (Special) Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction will also **collaborate with** the NYU Center Executive Director and Faculty Director to produce scholarly writing regarding the role of race in wrongful convictions.

We are interested in every qualified candidate who is eligible to work in the United States. However, we are not able to sponsor visas and we are not an e-verify employer.

The duties of this position require approximately 40 hours of work per week to be performed virtually/in-office. We currently have a hybrid in-office model, with all employees in the office three days per week and the remainder of the week remotely. Wednesday is our organization's "anchor day" where all staff works in the office. The number of required in-office days is subject to change.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a dynamic thought leader and subject matter expert on racial injustice and the intersection of race, civil rights, and criminal justice and wrongful conviction. The ideal candidate will have experience and passion around teaching, training, and/or disseminating research on these topics to broad audiences.

In addition, the ideal candidate models our IP Values of accountability, collaboration, empathy + compassion, equity, person-centeredness, quality focus, and self-awareness. All Innocence Project employees must embrace, respect and value the rich diversity of perspectives and lived experience of our staff. We recognize and appreciate that our work is better for having varied participants and thought partners. The ideal candidate is someone who thrives in this type of environment.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- Provide ongoing expertise, thought leadership, and strategic vision to various program directors and executive leadership on the role of racial bias and discrimination in the administration of the criminal legal system and the ways in which it contributes to the wrongful conviction of innocent people.
- Build and maintain strong and effective relationships with organizations, academics, researchers, attorneys, organizers, policy advocates and other experts that specialize in the operation of racial bias and discrimination in the criminal legal system and decision making.
- Continuously monitor state and federal court decisions addressing novel and/or significant claims of racial bias and discrimination in (and relating to) criminal justice and the wrongful conviction of innocent people.
- Continuously monitor emerging legal, historical, forensic and social science research and scholarship, and policy landscape regarding the impact of racial bias on decision making especially as applied to the criminal legal system and the wrongful conviction of innocent people.

- Provide regular verbal and written updates, trainings and resources to IP and Center staff regarding relevant research.
- Produce lay and academic publications and original research on the role of race in wrongful convictions, including co-publishing with NYU Center and IP.
- Collaborate with IP Departments on cases, campaigns and strategies involving race, racial bias/discrimination as they lead to wrongful conviction.
- Collaborate with the NYU Center on research and thought leadership regarding race, racial bias/discrimination as they lead to wrongful conviction.
- Attend relevant trainings, conferences and conventions regarding the ways in which racial bias and discrimination in the criminal legal system contributes to the wrongful conviction of innocent people, bring these learnings into the IP's work and position IP as a participant in and contributor to these larger conversations.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- To align with NYU's policy for visiting scholars, a J.D. degree and admission to practice in New York is required
- 8+ years of progressive responsibility in academia, policy advocacy and/or litigation in areas at the intersection of racial justice, civil rights and criminal justice
- A sophisticated analysis and knowledge of racial injustice in America, its history and manifestations, and efforts to address it
- Demonstrated history of collaboration with communities of color on race, criminal justice and civil rights
- Demonstrated project and time management skill, including organization, attention to detail, and follow-through
- Demonstrated experience in creative problem solving, strategic flexibility, and good judgment
- Experience with strategic planning
- Willingness to travel as necessary for speaking events, meetings, and conferences.
- Must be legally authorized to work in the U.S.

KEY COMPETENCIES + VALUES

- Subject matter expertise in racial injustice and the intersections between criminal justice, civil rights and race
- Excellent written and oral communications skills, and the ability to effectively communicate complex issues to diverse audiences
- Excellent research and analytical skills
- Enthusiasm for the work of the IP and for social justice, including a demonstrated commitment to public interest
- Shares in the IP's values of accountability, collaboration, empathy + compassion, equity, person-centeredness, quality focus, and self-awareness
- Enthusiasm for the work of the Innocence Project and for social justice, including a demonstrated commitment to public interest
- Shared commitment to the IP's values of accountability, collaboration, empathy + compassion, equity, person-centeredness, quality focus, and self-awareness

COMPENSATION, BENEFITS & PERKS

The salary for this position is highly competitive and the Innocence Project offers an excellent benefits package, including fully-paid individual health, dental and vision insurance, Flexible Spending Account, 401k

plan with 6% company-match, paid disability and family care leave, adoption and fertility expense reimbursements, and company-paid transportation benefits.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Innocence Project considers the diversity of its workforce to be vital to our organization's success in meeting its mission. We strongly encourage applicants from all cultures, races, educational backgrounds, life experiences, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations, age, gender, and physical abilities to apply. Individuals with personal connections to the criminal legal system are strongly encouraged to apply.

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, it is our policy not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, familial status, marital status, predisposing genetic characteristics, actual or perceived domestic violence victim status, unemployment status, caregiver status, or any other category protected by law.

Upon submission of your application you will be requested to complete an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) survey. This survey is part of our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. The information you provide is voluntary and confidential. Completing the survey helps us track our progress in creating a fair and equitable environment. This data is used for reporting purposes only. Please note, the identities presented in the survey reflect federal language required by law. The Innocence Project acknowledges that not all identities are included and any reference to gender explicitly refers to biological sex. We recognize these terms are limited and we strive to humanize our internal practices. Your completion of the survey is greatly appreciated.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply, please click 'Apply for this Job' below. Upload a resume titled with your name in this format (last name_first name_resume). In the space provided, add a cover letter expressing your interest in the role and the organization's work. Only applications with cover letters will be considered complete applications. Information submitted through this secure site is kept confidential.

SALARY RANGE

For candidates considered at the **Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** level (8-12 years experience):
\$127,500 - \$150,000

For candidates considered at the **Special Advisor on Race and Wrongful Conviction** level (12+ years experience): \$151,725 - \$178,500