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LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute Welcomes Research Fellow Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) announced the selection of the newest Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) Non-Resident Research Fellow Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu, a highly accomplished academic with expertise in criminal justice reform, urban politics, and spatial statistics. For the next two years, Dr. Laniyonu will collaborate with TMI researchers, LDF's Justice in Public Safety Project, and community organizers to provide the public and policymakers with recommendations for alternatives to policing.

Dr. Laniyonu previously served as a Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Policing Equity in New York City, where he worked with TMI Senior Research Fellow Emeritus Professor Phillip Atiba Goff. Dr. Laniyonu has also worked with police departments across the United States to identify and correct racial disparities in police encounters and the use of force by members of the police.

“Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu is widely published and has been keenly engaged in researching the ways in which local approaches to policing impact issues like homelessness, mental health, gentrification, and voting,” said TMI Director Janell Byrd-Chichester. “We are very excited to have him join us at a critical juncture where we are examining the ways in which we must reshape our approaches to public safety and policing.”

“We are incredibly pleased that Dr. Laniyonu — who comes to us with extensive research experience documenting the relationship of policing to political participation and urban gentrification— will join LDF to examine alternatives to policing,” said TMI Senior Researcher and Development Specialist Dr. Kesha Moore. “Across the country, we have seen the outsized role of policing and the harm it has inflicted on countless communities. We need to identify alternatives to policing that prioritize communities and their development.”

“I am honored to join LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute as a Fellow,” said Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu. “The need to empirically confront contemporary policing practices and explore alternatives to policing has never been more urgent. I am thrilled for the opportunity to collaborate with TMI researchers, LDF's Justice in Public Safety Project and the

community organizing team in order to advance public safety initiatives that will truly protect communities.”

Over the years, Dr. Laniyonu has been a Doctoral Fellow at the American Bar Association and a National Science Post-Doctoral Fellow at John Jay College.

Dr. Laniyonu holds a Ph.D. and MA from the University of California and a BA from the University of Maryland. He currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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