



For Immediate Release
Monday, January 5, 2026

LDF Media
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LDF Names Laura Kadetsky Chief Operations Officer & General Counsel

Today, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) announced the appointment of Laura Kadetsky as Chief Operations Officer & General Counsel. Kadetsky has over 15 years of experience leading mission-driven national organizations, having most recently served as Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel at New Leaders, a national education nonprofit.

“We are thrilled Laura Kadetsky will join LDF to lead operations and serve as a strategic legal partner as we work to achieve racial justice amid a turbulent social and political landscape,” said **LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson**. “Laura’s proven ability to strengthen organizational infrastructure will help ensure LDF is well positioned to meet current demands, which have escalated in the wake of the federal government’s glaring retrenchment from its civil rights enforcement responsibilities.”

“I am incredibly honored to join the Legal Defense Fund to help fortify internal capacity and further equip the organization to defend democracy and address the pressing challenges facing Black communities,” said **LDF Chief Operations Officer & General Counsel Laura Kadetsky**. “Advancing equitable access to justice and opportunity has been a throughline of my career, and I look forward to continuing to carry out and support this critical work at LDF.”

Prior to her work at New Leaders, Kadetsky was a litigation partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, where she represented international and domestic clients and maintained a robust pro bono portfolio. At Kirkland & Ellis, she received the firm’s Pro Bono Service Award for five consecutive years. Kadetsky has also served on advisory and leadership boards at national and local nonprofits, including the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance, where she serves as an ambassador.

Kadetsky holds a juris doctor from Harvard Law School, where she served as Executive Articles Editor for the *Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review*, and a bachelor’s from Yale University.

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights legal organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957, though it was founded under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall while he was at the NAACP. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) is a division of LDF that undertakes innovative research and houses LDF’s archive. In all media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF (do not include NAACP) and refer to the Institute as LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute or TMI.