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LDF Receives Transformational Grant

NEW YORK—The Open Society Foundations (OSF) announced today it is awarding a \$15 million grant to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. (LDF) the nation’s first and foremost civil and human rights, law organization, in recognition of the vital role civil rights lawyers play in securing, defending, and protecting democracy.

The grant will support LDF’s 80th anniversary. The organization was started under Thurgood Marshall in 1940 with the mission of working to achieve racial justice, equality and an inclusive society. It has been entirely separate from the NAACP since 1957.

“We are deeply grateful to the Open Society Foundations for this generous and important gift,” said [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel of LDF. “Our mission has unapologetically focused on the fight for racial justice and equity. We are encouraged by OSF’s recognition of the importance and significance of our work at this moment in our country. The fight for civil rights is, at its core, a fight for our democracy. But this fight requires resources. OSF is providing critical support as we expand and deepen our work.

“As LDF’s litigation has, for its entire 80-year history, been based primarily in the South, this funding will enable LDF to establish a southern office, which will serve as a regional hub for litigation and policy work, and allow us to work more effectively with local organizers and activists,” Ifill said. “We will also expand the work of the Thurgood Marshall Institute, conducting research and strategic advocacy campaigns to address racial discrimination and inequity. We are deeply appreciative of the confidence that OSF has demonstrated in LDF’s leadership.”

Tom Perriello, Executive Director of Open Society-U.S., praised the organization’s stellar track record on civil rights advocacy, strategic litigation, policy work, and strategic communications. “For 80 years now, LDF has set the standard for pushing this country to live up to our highest ideals of liberty and justice for all,” he said. “At a time when racism, hate crimes and structural inequality are all on the rise, we are proud to deepen our commitment to this landmark institution and its inspiring leader, Sherrilyn Ifill —and urge other funders to step forward to support their vital labors for years to come.”

Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, [LDF](#) seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans. LDF also defends the gains and protections won

over the past nearly 80 years of civil rights struggle and works to improve the quality and diversity of judicial and executive appointments.

The Open Society Foundations works in more than 140 countries around the world to promote vibrant and inclusive societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people. For more information, visit the OSF website [here](#).

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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 and 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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