

# The American Civil Liberties Union National Organization (ACLU)



## Organizational Structure

The American Civil Liberties Union national organization (ACLU) comprises two separate corporate entities: the **American Civil Liberties Union, Inc.**, also called the **Union**, and the **American Civil Liberties Union Foundation**, or **Foundation**. The separation exists because of federal regulations governing the kinds of activities that may be supported by tax-deductible gifts. Each of the ACLU's 54 affiliates, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri have the same structure. A description of the two entities and the work they undertake follows.

The **American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri, Inc.**, is a registered 501(c)4 organization. It is the ACLU's membership arm.

When you join the ACLU, your membership fees are paid to this entity, and they are not tax deductible. It is this organization through which we carry out the majority of our lobbying and legislative work, and gifts you make to it beyond your membership fees are also **not tax deductible**.

The **American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri Foundation** is a registered 501(c)3 organization. It is the organization through which we carry out our legal advocacy, litigation and publication work. Gifts to this entity are **tax-deductible**.

Federal laws require that we operate these entities separately; however, gifts to both support the ACLU. Whether you choose to make your gifts to ACLU of Missouri, Inc., or ACLU of Missouri Foundation, you can be confident that your financial contribution will support, promote and defend civil liberties.

## **What we do**

The ACLU of Missouri defends civil liberties and the principles of equality and justice in Missouri through its litigation, legislative and public education programs. The ACLU was founded in 1920 as the first public interest law firm of its kind, and is recognized as the country's foremost advocate of individual rights. We base our work largely on the U.S. Constitution, which, along with state and federal laws, protects certain fundamental rights of individuals against the power of the government and will of the majority. Rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights include:

### **First Amendment Rights**

These include freedom of speech, association and assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

### **Equal Protection of the Law**

The right to equal treatment regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other such classifications. These rights apply to the voting booth, the classroom, the workplace and the courts.

### **Due Process of the Law**

The right to be treated fairly when facing criminal charges or other serious accusations that can result in such penalties as loss of employment, exclusion from school, denial of housing or cut-off of benefits.

### **The Right To Privacy**

The right to a guaranteed zone of personal privacy and autonomy which should not be penetrated by the government or other institutions, like employers, with substantial influence over an individual's rights.

### **Expanding Those Protections**

The ACLU works to extend protection to segments of our population who have traditionally been denied these rights. They include racial minorities, sexual minorities, prisoners, soldiers, people with disabilities and children in the custody of the state.

## **HOW WE WORK**

The ACLU of Missouri is one affiliate in a 50-state network of ACLU offices coordinated by a national office in New York and aided by a legislative office in Washington that lobbies Congress. As an affiliate, the ACLU of Missouri operates in Missouri, taking on civil liberties cases that spring up in the state. In all of our work, we collaborate with the pursuit of common national organization goals.

The ACLU assists thousands of people each year in asserting their rights. We work in the courts through litigation, in communities through public education and advocacy, and through our legislative work at the local and state levels. If you believe your civil liberties have been violated, please proceed to our [Complaints](#) page.

The ACLU, a nonprofit organization, is supported by annual dues and contributions from its members, plus grants from private foundations and individuals. Because we do not solicit or accept government funding, we depend on donations from our members and other supporters. For more information on supporting the ACLU, go to our [Support the ACLU](#) page.

#### **Issues that the ACLU of Missouri Generally Does NOT Accept**

- individual criminal defense;
- complaints about an individual's attorney in a criminal case;
- claims of innocence by prisoners;
- individual employment disputes;

- disputes involving private companies;
- landlord-tenant disputes;
- obtaining green cards/visas for immigrants;
- and only monetary damages.

[Civil Rights](#)

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