



IRAP International Refugee Assistance Project

Policy Director

New York, NY or Washington, DC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) works through a robust network of staff, pro bono attorneys and law students to fill a major gap in access to legal aid for refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced people. IRAP has become the first advocacy organization to provide comprehensive legal representation to refugees throughout the registration, protection and resettlement processes. As fear, division, hatred, and economic uncertainty persist in the global consciousness and manifest in discriminatory policies, speech, and actions, individuals across the world must respond by demanding and upholding commitments to justice. IRAP is leveraging its volunteers and resources to fight back and ensure that we continue to uphold the humanitarian tradition of welcoming those who are in need of refuge.

IRAP is now seeking nominations and applications for the position of Policy Director.

Since its founding in 2008, IRAP has used legal aid, litigation and policy advocacy to protect and advance the rights of refugees, both domestically and internationally; the organization has also remained committed to developing the next generation of human rights attorneys through its work with law students. The global turn against refugee resettlement coupled with IRAP's highly effective model has led to a period of rapid expansion to meet new levels of demand. In the past two years, IRAP's annual budget has increased from \$2 million to \$9 million, and over the past six years, its staff has grown from ten to seventy.

IRAP has a formidable track record of successful advocacy at the systemic level, having helped enact into law federal legislation offering life-saving visas and legal protections to over 160,000 displaced people. IRAP's unique model utilizes lessons learned in individual casework to advocate for systemic changes that benefit broader refugee populations. Building non-traditional, non-partisan coalitions including veterans, religious groups, and corporate attorneys to advocate for the rights of refugees and displaced persons, IRAP also plays a major role in including refugees in U.S. immigration legislation, advocating for procedural protections for refugees, implementing trauma-sensitive policies for LGBTI individuals and survivors of torture, and extending protections for Iraqi and Afghan wartime allies of the U.S. Government.

Reporting to IRAP's Executive Director, Becca Heller, the Policy Director will lead a team of two attorneys and two communications staff, and as lead for one of the three programmatic departments, will provide critical strategic partnership to the Executive Director as IRAP navigates a new phase of growth. In concert with the team, the Director will advance policy strategies that create and expand pathways to safety for refugees and displaced people, as well as build public support through strategic communications and systemic advocacy.

The ideal candidate will be a seasoned policy leader with a record of success advocating for systemic change and advancing effective strategic communications and messaging campaigns. S/he/they will demonstrate

the capacity to identify opportunities and build relationships that result in meaningful change, garnering broad bi-partisan support while staying true to IRAP's core mission and values. The Director will have experience managing and supervising staff and the capacity to multitask and manage a high-volume workload while remaining flexible and organized. The Director will have six or more years' experience in policy work, such as government or legislative work or advocacy, along with outstanding writing, research, and analytical skills. S/he/they will oversee staff based in New York City and Washington, DC and can be based in either city, with frequent travel to the other.

This search is being conducted by Meredith Horton, Allison Kupfer Poteet, Hallie Dietsch, and Javier Garcia of [NPAG](#). Application instructions can be found at the end of this document.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) is a dynamic and growing legal, policy, and advocacy organization that works to develop and enforce a system of legal and human rights for refugees and displaced people around the world. We are the first organization to provide free and comprehensive legal representation to refugees throughout registration, protection, and resettlement processes. Since IRAP's establishment, we have helped to resettle more than 3,800 individuals to 18 countries.

IRAP operates offices in the U.S. (New York), Jordan (Amman), and Lebanon (Beirut). Our legal services are supplemented by a corps of pro bono lawyers from leading U.S. and international law firms and multinational corporations, and by law students who have created IRAP chapters across the United States and Canada. Through this work, we aim to assist refugees and other displaced people to find safe passage and to transform the landscape of refugee rights in the U.S. and internationally. We are a growing, nimble organization staffed by an innovative and collaborative team that is committed to high standards of quality and close partnerships with our clients, peers, and colleagues.

IRAP has developed an innovative legal aid and advocacy model that defends the rights of refugees and assures their passage to safe destination countries. IRAP's approach is grounded in three distinct but interrelated strategies:

- IRAP has created a "virtual public interest law firm" that defies geographical boundaries and provides high quality representation to refugees by a cadre of 1,200 law students and over 800 pro bono attorneys. This model is scalable and allows IRAP to take on an increasing number of urgent refugee cases, as well as respond to immediate crises.
- Through extensive litigation and systemic advocacy, IRAP brings legal challenges to refugee rights violations in the courts, creates legislative solutions to overcoming the legal and bureaucratic impediments in the resettlement process, and develops an enforceable system of legal and procedural rights for refugees and displaced persons worldwide. As the only organization that guide refugees through every step of the resettlement process, IRAP is often able to identify obstacles of which other institutional players are unaware. This unique model utilizes lessons learned in individual casework to advocate for systemic changes that benefit broader refugee populations.
- IRAP trains the next generation of international human rights advocates through its network of pro bono attorneys and law school chapters. These advocates are essential to assuring fairness, decency, and adherence to the rule of law throughout the refugee resettlement process and promoting pro-refugee policies through the country.

This comprehensive advocacy network was successfully activated on January 27, 2017, when President Trump signed an Executive Order implementing the first travel ban. IRAP immediately mobilized lawyers across the country to travel to airports and other ports of entry to prevent them from being turned into prisons or black sites. IRAP filed suit demanding freedom for more than 2,000 travelers imprisoned at airports around the country simply because they were traveling from Muslim-majority countries. In total, it took only 27 hours from the signing of the Executive Order to the emergency court decision demanding that these thousands of people not be deported. IRAP's ability to rapidly mobilize a nationwide network of attorneys and advocates and secure an important legal victory was pivotal – the organization's actions created a movement and ensured that the public was made aware of the chaos and injustice taking place behind closed doors.

IRAP's Legal Services, Litigation, and Policy Departments work together to deliver direct services to refugees and other displaced people, litigate to change the systems and structures that create obstacles to refugee resettlement and the securing of safe passage for those in need, and advocate for U.S. policies that help create and expand pathways to safety for refugees and displaced people.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NEW POLICY DIRECTOR

The Policy Director will lead IRAP's efforts to create and expand pathways to safety for refugees and displaced people. As the team lead for one of IRAP's three programmatic departments, the Policy Director will be a key strategic leader and will manage the two-person communications team in addition to two attorneys. The Director will:

- **Develop a strategic vision and workplan for IRAP's policy agenda and external messaging and communications.** The Policy Director will build and manage partnerships with domestic and international stakeholders and track key federal policy initiatives that are relevant to the IRAP's work. S/he/they will develop in-depth knowledge of key and emerging issues, serve as an in-house resource to staff, and identify ways in which IRAP can align with or respond to those policy developments. The Director will also collaborate closely with IRAP's communications staff to identify policy-relevant messages and findings and shape them for public dissemination. S/he/they will serve as a quality control officer for IRAP reports and publications, ensuring that the information is accurate and timely and that the key issues are communicated properly.
- **Manage a talented team of policy and communications staff.** The new Director will lead IRAP's policy and advocacy work in collaboration with its New York, Beirut, and Amman offices. The new Director will supervise a team of four, providing responsive management and ongoing support and ensuring that the Policy Department is abreast of policy initiatives that are relevant to IRAP's work. Direct reports include the Deputy Policy Director, Policy Counsel, Director of Communications, and, Digital Communications Coordinator.
- **Create infrastructure that supports continued growth and impact.** The new Director will bring strong project management skills and process orientation to the work, making sure that appropriate policies and protocols are in place to support the implementation of effective advocacy and communication strategies. The Director will be a systems-thinker with the ability to listen, motivate, and execute to make the Department's work as efficient and effective as possible. S/he/they will be able to identify new opportunities and successfully integrate new initiatives and partnerships into

the Department's existing work. S/he/they will also develop grassroots leadership among IRAP's law student chapters and attorney volunteer network.

- **Collaborate with IRAP's leadership team and staff to set a bold vision and set of priorities for the Policy team and the organization.** IRAP's success relies on deeply collaborative and respectful relationships among directors and staff. The new Director will explore opportunities to build creative, strategic policy initiatives and campaigns within the Policy team and to collaborate with directors and staff from the Litigation, Legal Services, Strategy, and Development teams to develop new areas of work and expertise and ensure that staff training and learning opportunities are aligned with current and emerging programmatic needs.
- **Ensure that the Policy team offers a supportive, equitable, and inclusive work environment and upholds principles of anti-oppression in hiring, staff support, client relationships, outreach, and coalition building.** Grounded in IRAP's commitment to justice and equality and its organizational values, the new Director will bring an anti-oppression lens to all aspects of strategy, priority setting, team development, and community engagement. S/he/they will support IRAP's work to reflect the communities it serves and build a culture of inclusion, continuous growth, and openness. S/he/they will help create a respectful and equitable work environment for staff at all levels of the organization and will ensure the same experience for clients, partners, and stakeholders.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be deeply committed to IRAP's mission and understand the critical role that legal aid, litigation and advocacy play in advancing the rights of refugees worldwide. S/he/they will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes and experiences:

- Sophisticated leadership skills and presence developed through management and leadership experience in policy work, with a demonstrable record of success in program management and direct supervision of staff. Experience supervising staff working remotely is a plus;
- Bachelor's degree with six or more years' experience in policy work, such as government or legislative work or advocacy, or master's degree in a relevant field and/or J.D. and authorization to practice law, with four or more years' experience in policy work, such as government or legislative work or advocacy;
- Demonstrated policy experience working with refugees and displaced people, immigrants, or other vulnerable populations preferred, with the ability to design advocacy campaigns and develop strategic plans;
- Commitment to and experience in successfully employing an anti-racist/anti-oppression lens to foster a diverse, equitable working environment and creating diverse teams that reflect communities served;
- Highly organized and flexible; able to multi-task and manage a high-volume workload; and excellent time management skills;
- Strong interpersonal and communications skills, and the ability to understand and handle sensitive and confidential information;
- Sensitivity to client empowerment and to working with clients of all backgrounds, including LGBTI clients, survivors of trauma, and other vulnerable populations;
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with a leadership team to set organizational and departmental priorities and pursue opportunities that further impact across departments;
- The ability to convey and implement a clear vision that is embodied in all levels of the Department;

- Experience developing or improving organizational capacity, with an eye toward opportunities for process improvement;
- Excellent writing, research, analytical, and oral communication skills;
- Experience with Microsoft Suite;
- An optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, patience, and perseverance necessary to advance efforts to ensure displaced persons have greater access to services;
- Fluency in oral and written English required; additional languages (Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Kurdish, Pashto, Somali, and/or Spanish) are a plus;
- Experience speaking to the media on behalf of an organization is preferred; and
- Must be based in New York City or Washington, DC with regular travel to the other location.

The midpoint of the salary range is \$150,000, with actual salary commensurate with experience. IRAP offers an excellent benefits package, including healthcare and retirement plans, a flexible work schedule, and vacation and sick leave.

TO APPLY

More information about IRAP may be found at: <https://refugeerights.org/>.

This search is being conducted with assistance from Meredith Horton, Allison Kupfer Poteet, Hallie Dietsch and Javier Garcia of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to: IRAP-PD@nonprofitprofessionals.com. In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

IRAP believes that diversity is critical to fostering a strong workplace and serving our clients well. We strongly encourage applications from people with lived experiences in the communities that we serve, members of other marginalized communities, and individuals whose identities are underrepresented in the legal profession.