



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND
ECONOMIC JUSTICE
Serving Greater Boston Since 1968

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 – 2021

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN 2018

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“The proof that one truly believes is in action.”

BAYARD RUSTIN



Message from the Board Co-Chair and Executive Director

At the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, our work is life-changing and law-changing. Every day, we bring people together to promote equal opportunity and fight discrimination.

Over the past year, our staff has grown by 33% and we have significantly expanded our litigation docket while working closely with our law firm partners and colleagues. Our legal warriors are filing more cutting-edge cases, building our network of community partners, and helping even more small businesses in minority and low-income communities. We are addressing 21st century civil rights challenges:

- Fighting in court against the Trump Administration on behalf of sanctuary communities (Chelsea and Lawrence);
- Protecting Asian-Americans and Latinos from voter disenfranchisement in Lowell;
- Disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline by representing students of color facing unfair discipline in school;
- Protecting children and families from immigration raids and the lawless Bristol County Sheriff;
- Fighting hate in our region through individual representations, community education, and advocacy with local law enforcement;
- Providing free legal support to hundreds of small business owners in low-income communities; and launching innovative programs like FoodBiz101, our accelerator for small businesses in the food industry, and BizGrow, an event where we provided 150 small businesses with free legal support.

To further guide our work and ensure its sustainability, in 2017, we embarked on a strategic planning process. In connection with the effort, we reached out to our many stakeholders, including:

- Lawyers' Committee's Board Members (focus group with 16 participants);
- Community Partners (two focus groups with 11 organizations serving minority and immigrant communities);
- State and Local Bar Associations, including Affinity Bar Associations (focus group with 7 participants); and
- Law Firm Pro Bono Directors (individual interviews with 5 law firms).

The result of this comprehensive process is a dynamic vision for driving the organization forward as we approach our 50th Anniversary in 2018. We are excited to share this vision with you. Here's to moving forward – without fail and without fear.

Sincerely,



Lisa Pirozzolo, Esq.
Board Co-Chair



Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Esq.
Executive Director

Introduction

During the last two years, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice has experienced substantial growth and change. In 2015, we hired Iván Espinoza-Madrigal as Executive Director. As a result of his leadership, the organization has in place a team of talented and dedicated staff, and morale is high. In addition, we have experienced sustainable financial growth, including a 35% revenue increase from 2015 to 2017 as a result of new foundation grants, increased individual giving, and support from an active and engaged Board of Directors. Most importantly, the Lawyers' Committee has become a leading organization promoting equal opportunity and fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. In the past two years, the Lawyers' Committee has been litigating groundbreaking, high-profile cases and engaging in innovative public policy advocacy, comprehensive community education and outreach, significant community economic development, and other legal services that further the cause of civil rights. During this period, the organization has demonstrated a strong capacity to deploy legal resources quickly and effectively to fulfill its mission.

In May 2017, with generous support from the **Barr Foundation**, the Lawyers' Committee embarked on a strategic planning process that culminated with the approval of this Strategic Plan by the Board of Directors in November 2017. The strategic planning process, which was led by a Strategic Planning Committee composed of staff and Board Members, began by collecting information from community stakeholders including the Board, staff, member law firms, community groups, and bar associations among others. The Strategic Planning Committee then met regularly from May to August 2017.

As the result of this process, the Strategic Planning Committee:

- Produced a modernized and streamlined mission statement;
- Created a bold vision statement and a new set of core values with specific definitions to guide the organization's programmatic work;
- Identified four strategic areas for organizational advancement and development;
- Articulated goals and objectives to effectively execute each of the four strategic areas; and
- Will generate a comprehensive workplan to guide the implementation of the strategic plan.

“Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world.”

NELSON MANDELA

Organization Profile and History

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice promotes equal opportunity and fights discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. We do this with creative and courageous legal action, education, and advocacy in collaboration with law firms and community partners. We handle impact litigation as well as legal actions on behalf of individuals. We also engage in community economic development, community education, and public advocacy.

Founded in 1968, the Lawyers' Committee was the first of eight local affiliates of the Washington-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal representation to address racial discrimination. In 1973, the Lawyers' Committee became the first *pro bono* project of the Boston Bar Association and was the only Lawyers' Committee in the country affiliated with a major bar association. Although the organization is now separately incorporated with its own 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, the Lawyers' Committee continues to maintain strong ties to the private bar.

Membership by private law firms in the Lawyers' Committee forms the working foundation of the organization. Member law firms fund a significant part of our annual operating expenses and provide millions of dollars in pro bono legal services by co-counseling with the organization. In this manner, the Lawyers' Committee has harnessed the resources and legal talent of Boston's leading law firms to secure the civil rights of its constituencies.

The Lawyers' Committee has also grown, adding new projects and initiatives to fit the changing face of discrimination. While working closely with an ever-increasing number of community partners, it has always remained true to its core mission to challenge discrimination.



Lawyers' Committee Staff (left to right): Priya Lane, Jennifer Navas Portillo, Laura Maslow-Armand, Oren Sellstrom, Oren Nimni, Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Sophia Hall, and Matt Cregor.

Mission, Vision and Core Values

MISSION

We promote equal opportunity and fight discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants through creative and courageous legal action, education, and advocacy in collaboration with law firms and community partners.

VISION

Everyone has equal opportunity to thrive and advance.

CORE VALUES

1. **Collaboration and Partnerships**

We believe in building bridges between diverse constituencies, forging strong partnerships with community allies and law firms, and exercising leadership in areas where we have unique expertise.

2. **Respect for Clients and Communities**

We promote the well-being of our clients and their communities. We respect them, their dignity, and their self-determination.

3. **The Power of Public Engagement**

We value public engagement as a means of amplifying the voices of the communities we serve.

4. **Diversity**

We believe the civil rights movement must be diverse in every respect. We value the insight and credibility that diverse perspectives bring to our organization and to the long-term effort for social change.

5. **Courage, Commitment, and Action**

We value the courage and commitment shown by our staff, partners, and clients to take on challenging issues, often against established interests, in our shared mission to foster equal opportunity and fight discrimination.

6. **Creative Use of the Law to Promote Equality**

We value creativity and expertise in the use of our legal system to achieve social justice and equality.

Strategic Priorities for 2018 to 2021

The Lawyers' Committee's strategic plan was informed by feedback received from our Board Members; staff; community stakeholders and constituents; pro bono law firm partners; and mainstream and affinity bar associations. This extensive feedback helped us identify four strategic priority areas that we believe the Lawyers' Committee should focus on during the next three years. Each of these areas will amplify our organizational and programmatic impact, and will deepen and expand our engagement with community partners and stakeholders:

1. High impact work;
2. Collaboration with law firms;
3. Financial sustainability; and
4. Board engagement and diversity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

HIGH IMPACT WORK

GOAL 1

Develop a dynamic and impactful legal docket/portfolio across multiple practice areas representing clients from diverse communities across Massachusetts, while exploring the potential for extending our geographic reach to surrounding areas.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Evaluate docket/portfolio and assess current gaps. Develop metrics and conduct an assessment by issue areas, geography, and client communities.
- 1.2 Double the number of pro bono law firms involved in our cases.
- 1.3 Based on docket/portfolio assessment, conduct outreach to underserved and underrepresented client communities.
- 1.4 Explore civil rights fellowships with law firms tied to our 50th anniversary.

GOAL 2

Build on our existing strengths as the “go to” organization for education issues, small business matters, and diversity in public employment, while developing expertise in other important racial/immigrant justice issue areas.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Build in-house expertise in housing, voting and other areas in response to docket/portfolio assessment.
- 2.2 Partner with law schools and universities to enhance our expertise.

- 2.3 Develop signature thought leadership events such as BizGrow.
- 2.4 Partner with bar associations for greater visibility.

GOAL 3

Be intentional with respect to the practice areas and types of cases we solicit and attract, while maintaining flexibility to respond to the right opportunities.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 Develop specific criteria for taking employment and housing cases.
- 3.2 Conduct robust outreach in client communities based on docket/portfolio assessment result and newly-created case criteria.
- 3.3 Expand outreach to Board Members and law firms on pro bono opportunities.

GOAL 4

Complement litigation through the development of advocacy work in partnership with community groups and law firms.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Create opportunities for discrete pro bono engagements in advocacy work such as our election protection campaigns and know-your-rights workshops.
- 4.2 Communicate synergies between litigation and advocacy work to Board Members and law firms.

“Boston must become a testing ground for the ideals of freedom.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1965)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

COLLABORATION WITH LAW FIRMS

GOAL 5

Increase multigenerational engagement and support of law firm stakeholders at all levels, including management, associates, and clients.

OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Expand activities to attract diverse stakeholders (e.g., focus on associate cultivation and engagement).
- 5.2 Develop discrete projects to increase the number of people who work with the Lawyers' Committee.
- 5.3 Actively seek meetings with law firm management through an individualized approach with the goal of meeting with every member firm at least once a year (this effort will be launched before December 31, 2017).
- 5.4 Explore activities that connect younger lawyers with firm clients such as BizGrow.
- 5.5 Design and participate in programmatic activities and events that bring prestige to the organization (speaking about our work and clients in panels, workshops, conferences, and community events); and actively participate in external events that bring visibility to civil rights issues and pro bono law firms.
- 5.6 Develop a joint media strategy with law firms and dramatically increase communications efforts, particularly to gain exposure in influential publications.
- 5.7 Hire a media consultant or communications firm to write and pitch profiles for magazines and to focus on digital media before December 31, 2017.
- 5.8 Leverage the Lawyers' Committee's 50th anniversary in 2018.

Member Firms and Organizations

Member law firms support the Lawyers' Committee's work and have members who sit on our Board of Directors.

Anderson & Kreiger, LLP	Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys
Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association
Birnbaum & Godkin, LLP	Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys
Brown Rudnick LLP	Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
Casner & Edwards, LLP	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP	Nixon Peabody LLP
Fair Work P.C.	Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP
Foley Hoag LLP	Ropes & Gray LLP
Goodwin LLP	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
Hogan Lovells LLP	South Asian Bar Association
Holland & Knight LLP	Sugarman, Rogers, Barshak & Cohen, P.C.
Krokidas & Bluestein LLP	Sullivan & Worcester
Latham & Watkins LLP	Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL 6

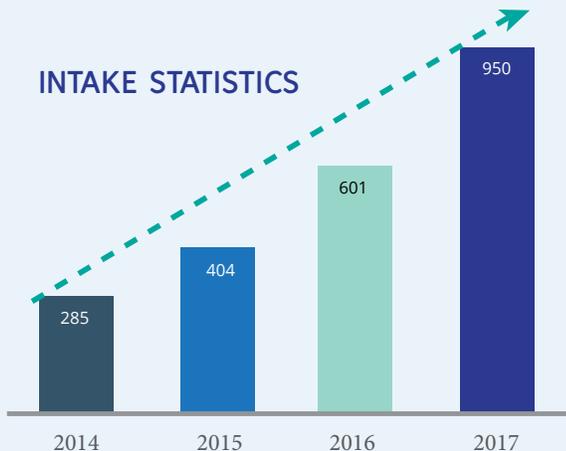
Maintain strong law firm contributions and attract new law firms to support our work while continuing to diversify our funding through attorneys' fees, foundations, individual gifts, and corporations.

OBJECTIVES

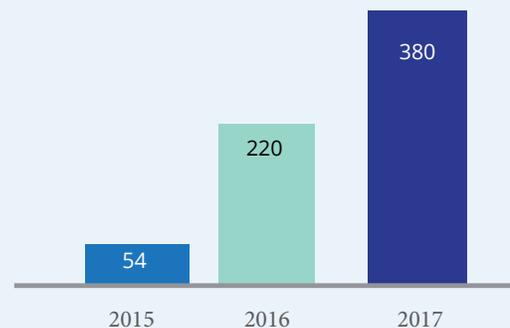
- 6.1 Create new opportunities for law firms to make specific gifts such as the Barshak Litigation Fund or BizGrow.
- 6.2 Creatively establish new named funds (e.g., Barshak Litigation Fund).
- 6.3 Invite past honorees to become advisory Board members.
- 6.4 Increase the number of new major individual donors and develop a plan for major donor cultivation.
- 6.5 Continue aggressively applying for foundation grants locally and nationally by submitting two applications per month.
- 6.6 Creatively tailor and package initiatives to be sponsored by corporations and private businesses.
- 6.7 Leverage the Lawyers' Committee's 50th anniversary in 2018.

In the current climate, there is significant demand for our work. Demand for our work far outweighs our capacity, but we are committed to sustaining our community-driven rapid-response model and our growing network of grassroots partnerships.

INTAKE STATISTICS



SMALL BUSINESSES SERVED



MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP CLIENTS



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

BOARD ENGAGEMENT AND DIVERSITY

GOAL 7

Increase Board member engagement and diversity.

OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 Deepen and expand the work of Board committees with the Lawyers' Committee's staff
- 7.2 Task the Board Affairs Committee with evaluating our current by-laws and making recommendations for updating the by-laws.
- 7.3 Task the Board Affairs Committee with creating a Board Diversity Plan.

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“The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.”

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1963





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